THE PERFECT



CM assures end of Maoism



No of domestic migrants estimated to have lowered by 12 pc



Tiger Woods' immediate goal: Keep his son from beating him

... pg 10

Election rule tweaked to restrict public inspection

ment has tweaked an election rule to prevent public inspection of certain electronic documents such as CCTV camera and webcasting footage as well as video recordings of candidates to prevent their misuse.

Based on the recommendation of the Election Commission (EC), the Union law ministry on Friday amended Rule 93(2)(a) of the Conduct of Election Rules, 1961, to restrict the type of "papers" or documents open to public inspection.

According to Rule 93, all "papers" related to elections shall be open to public inspection.

The amendment inserts "as specified in these rules" after "papers".

Law ministry and EC officials separately explained that a court case was the "trigger" behind the amendment.

While documents such as nomination forms, appointment of election agents, results and election account statements are mentioned in the Conduct of Election Rules, electronic documents such as CCTV camera footage, webcasting



A voter being marked his finger with indelible ink during voting for Punjab Municipal Corporation elections in Amritsar on Saturday.

footage and video recording of candidates during the Model Code of Conduct period are not covered.

"CCTV coverage, webcasting of polling stations are not carried out under Conduct of Election Rules but are the result of steps taken by the EC to ensure a level playing field," a former EC official explained.

An EC functionary said, "There have been instances where such electronic records have been sought, citing the rules. The amendment ensures that only papers mentioned in the rules are available for public inspection and any other document which has no reference in the rules is not allowed for public inspection."

EC functionaries said the misuse of CCTV camera footage from inside polling booths could compromise voter secrecy.

They also said the footage could be used to generate fake narrative using AI.

"All such material is available to candidates, including footage. After the amendment, too, it will be available to them. But other

in the week when a local

foundation organised a fun-

fair to distribute gift items

to kids in southwestern

the police in Abuja an-

nounced that prior permis-

sion must be obtained be-

fore such charity events.

The current economic

hardship under Nigerian

President Bola Tinubu,

who promised "renewed

hope" when he was sworn

into office in May 2023, is

blamed on surging inflation

that is at a 28-year high and

the government's economic

policies that have pushed

the local currency to record

low against the dollar.

After the latest disaster,

Oyo state.

people can always approach the courts to get such electronic records," said another functionary.

Candidates already have access to all documents and papers. Nothing has been amended in the rules in this regard, the functionary

Punjab and Haryana High Court, in the recent Mahmoud Pracha vs EC case, had directed sharing all documents related to the Haryana Assembly elections, including treating CCTV camera footage as permissible under Rule 93(2), with Pracha.

The rule mentioned election papers. The election papers and documents do not specifically refer to electronic records, the EC functionaries said.

In order to remove this ambiguity, the rule has been amended to safeguard the misuse of CCTV camera footage of polling stations, an EC official explained.

A law ministry official said all election papers and documents were otherwise available for public inspection.

GoM for **GST** cess

Jaisalmer: Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Saturday said the GST Council decided to form a group of ministers (GoM) to consider allowing states to levy cess under Goods and Services Tax to overcome financial distress after natural calamities.

Briefing media after the 55th GST Council meeting here, she said, "Everybody agreed, even Andhra Pradesh's minister agreed that a Group of Ministers be formed and Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal, Telangana, volunteered (to be a part of it).'

The Group of Ministers will decide what this cess should be named, whether every disaster can be given a consideration. "So the Group of Ministers will decide on all these details and then the council will decide," Sitharaman said.

Earlier in the day, Andhra Pradesh Finance Minister Payyavula Keshav said that there was a consensus that a GoM be formed to look into the demand for a 1 per cent calamity cess on certain luxury goods.

"The cess will be on luxury items and state specific levy," Keshav said.

In September-October, Andhra Pradesh was hit by floods. "To give us a leverage to come back to normalcy, we have suggested a 1 per cent cess. There was a general consensus to set up -PTI ⋮ ĞoM," Keshav said.



Protesters carry a caricature of impeached South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol during a rally demanding his arrest in Seoul South Korea on Saturday. The sign, front, reads, Rebellion leader.

Germany attacker is a psychotherapy specialist

TALEB A ALSO DESCRIBES HIMSELF AS A FORMER MUSLIM

Magdeburg (Germany): Germany on Saturday was still in shock and struggling to understand the suspect behind the attack in the city of Magdeburg.

Identified by local media as 50-year-old Taleb A, a psychiatry and psychotherapy specialist, authorities said he has been living in Germany for two decades. He was arrested on site after plowing a black BMW into a Christmas market crowded with holiday shoppers Friday evening, killing at least five people and

wounding 200 others. Prominent German terrorism expert Peter Neumann posted on X that he had yet to come across a suspect in an act of mass violence with that profile.

Taleb's X account is filled with tweets and retweets focusing on anti-Islam themes and criticism of the religion while sharing congratulatory notes to Muslims who left the faith. He also described himself as a former Muslim.

He was critical of German authorities, saying they had failed to do enough to combat the "Islamism of Europe".He has also voiced support for the far-right and anti-immigrant Alternative for Germany (AfD)

Some described Taleb as an activist who helped Saudi women flee their homeland. Recently, he seemed focused on his theory that German authorities have been targeting Saudi asylum seekers.

Neumann, the terrorism expert, wrote: "After 25 years in this business' you think nothing could surprise vou anymore. But a 50-year-old Saudi ex-Muslim who lives in East Germany, loves the AfD and wants to punish Germany for its tolerance towards Islamists - that really wasn't on my radar." -AP



People from Thailand pose at their stall during the International Health, Sports & Fitness Festival (IHFF) in Mumbai on Saturday.

Stampede at Christmas charity, 10 die

ing on the ground as people

been treated and dis-

charged while others con-

tinue to receive medical

stampede in a week in Af-

rica's most populous coun-

try as local organisations,

churches and individuals

are increasingly organising

charity events ahead of

Christmas amid the coun-

try's worst cost-of-living

Nigeria have raised ques-

tions about safety meas-

ures in such events. Several

children were killed earlier

The recent stampedes in

crisis in a generation.

It is the second such

Some of the injured have

shouted for help.

care. Adeh said.

Allegations against me false: Arjun Hyderabad: Actor Allu Ar-

iun on Saturday said the incident in which a woman died and her son was injured during the screening of 'Pushpa-2' at a theatre here on December 4 was purely an accident and denied the allegations made by Telangana Chief Minister Revanth Reddy.

Hours after Reddy slammed the actor for holding a roadshow and waving to the crowds at the theatre, without referring to anyone, the 'Pushpa 2' star refuted the allegations and said it was not a procession or a roadshow.

He asserted that he was not against any department or political leader individually or government.

"There is a lot of misinformation that I behaved in a particular way (irresponsibly). These allegations are wrong. It's humiliating and a character assassination. There is a lot of misinformation going on, a lot of false allegations, especially character assassination," he told reporters in a hurriedly held press conference. He said he built up his career and image with the hard work of 20 years and when it is being sabotaged, it really hurts.

in Bharat Jodo: Fadnavis By Correspondent

Nagpur: Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis on Saturday claimed that outfits described by a past Congress government as "frontal organisations" of the Maoists took part in Rahul Gandhi's Bharat Jodo

march.

Speaking at a press conference here along with his deputy Eknath Shinde at the end of the one-weeklong winter session of the state legislature, he also said his government would find out illegal Bangladeshi immigrants living in Mumbai and deport them.

Fadnavis reiterated his allegation, made during the session, that urban Naxal outfits, acting as frontal organisations of the Maoists, participated in Congress leader Rahul Gandhi's

Bharat Jodo Yatra. 'I am not saying this, but the reports of the Congress-led state and central governments prior to 2014 said so,' he said.

Action was taken against some of these organisations under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, he noted.

To a question about the



Naxal organisations took part

Almost a week after the swearing-in the Mahayuti dispensation on Saturday allocated portfolios with CM Devendra Fadnavis keeping the Home Department and Law & Judiciary department. Deputy CM Eknath Shinde got Urban Development and Housing and Public Works department. Another Deputy CM Aiit Pawar got Finance Department.

Public Security Bill, aimed at 'curbing the urban Naxal menace' Fadnavis said it was sent to a joint select committee comprising 21 members from both Houses for scrutiny.

The decision was taken even without the Opposition making such a demand so that nobody should allege that it contains provisions to suppress legitimate dissent, he said.

The committee will be headed by the BJP leader and minister Chandrashekhar Bawankule, he added.

To a question about Somnath Suryavanshi who died in police custody after being arrested following the violent protests in Parbhani city over vandalising of a replica of the Constitution, Fadnavis said Survavanshi was asked by the magistrate when he was produced in the court whether the police had tor-

tured him. He replied in the negative, the chief minister pointed out.

Even the CCTV footage did not disclose signs of tor-

cal report said he was suffering from a respiratory ailment and there were old injury marks on his body, Fadnavis added. Same team, new match

ture while a detailed medi-

Speaking before Fadnavis, deputy CM Shinde said the BJP-Shiv Sena-NCP government was the same team playing a new

match.

It was the continuation of the previous government (which he headed), he said, adding that all existing schemes will continue and development works undertaken in the last two and a half years will be expedited.

Criminals in any case, whoever they may be close to, will not be spared, the deputy CM assured.

Without naming Shiv Sena (UBT) chief Uddhay Thackeray, Shinde took swipes at his former boss' presence during the session.

"When someone resigned as CM, he had also announced that he would quit as MLC (Member of Legislative Council), but did not. He came like a tourist, to save his membership of the House.'

Modi lauds Arabic translator of Ramayana, Mahabharata

Kuwait City: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday met two Kuwaiti nationals here and praised their efforts in translating and publishing India's iconic epics Ramayana and

Abuja: Ten people, includ-

ing four children, have

been killed in a stampede in

Nigeria's capital city as a

large crowd gathered to col-

lect food items distributed

by a local church at a

Christmas event, the police

The stampede occurred

in the early morning hours

at the Holy Trinity Catholic

Church in Maitama, an up-

market part of Abuja, po-

lice spokesman Josephine

Adeh said in a statement,

adding that more than 1,000

people have been evacuated

Viral footage that ap-

peared to be from the scene

showed lifeless bodies lay-

from the church.

said Saturday.

Mahabharata in Arabic. The prime minister also signed copies of the Arabic versions of the two epics.

Expressing his appreciation, Modi in a post on X said, "I compliment Abdullah Al Baroun and Abdul Lateef Al Nesef for their efforts in translating and



publishing these epics. Their initiative highlights the global popularity of Indian culture.'

He also shared some photographs of his meeting with Al Baroun and Al

While Al Baroun translated both the Ramayana and the Mahabharata, Al Nesef managed their publication in Arabic, enabling a wider audience in the Arab world to engage with India's rich cultural

Modi had acknowledged their efforts during a 'Mann Ki Baat' address in October, emphasising their contributions to fostering cultural exchange and promoting Indian heritage on a global platform.

Highlighting their work, he had said that it was "not just a translation, but a bridge between two great cultures. It is developing a new understanding of Indian literature in the Arab world"

Modi arrived in Kuwait

earlier in the day for a twoday visit, where he was greeted with a ceremonial welcome at the Amiri terminal by senior Kuwaiti officials, including First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defence Sheikh Fahad Yousef Saud Al-Sabah, and Foreign Minister Abdullah Ali Al-Yahya.

The prime minister is visiting Kuwait at the invitation of Kuwaiti Emir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah. His visit is the first of any Indian Prime Minister to the Gulf nation in 43 years. The last Indian prime minister to visit Kuwait was Indira Gandhi in 1981.

Upon the arrival at the hotel, Modi met with 101-year-old former Indian Foreign Service (IFS) officer Mangal Sain Handa, who appeared deeply emotional during the meeting. Indian expatriates in Kuwait raised slogans of "Vande Mataram" in solidarity.

-PTI

Legislature session wasted: Oppn



rashtra know who is shield-

ing him." Danve said in an

apparent reference to a

He alleged the govern-

ment didn't announce

measures to alleviate the

plight of cotton, soybean

mands tabled in the session

were meant for regular ex-

penditure. No money was

allocated for carrying out

development works. The

government announced ir-

rigation projects for Vid-

arbha region but didn't re-

lease any funds," Danve

parties raised issues like

corruption in state-run

MSRTC and the bogus med-

Maharashtra Congress

president Nana Patole said

the opposition raised issues

concerning farmers, infla-

tion, and deteriorating law

and order during the

He claimed that 65 per

He wondered whether

the Parbhani incident was

state "sponsored"? "The

chief minister's reply in the

legislatures gave the im-

pression that he was shield-

ing the accused in the Beed

and Parbhani incidents. He

sounded like their

cent of newly-annointed

ministers are tainted.

He said the opposition

alleged.

icines scam

session.

counsel.

"The supplementary de-

minister from NCP.

and paddy growers

Nagpur: Opposition parties alleged on Saturday that the winter session of the Maharashtra legislature was held only for formality as ministers couldn't resolve issues of farmers and others in the absence of portfolios.

Addressing a press conference on the sixth and concluding day of the session in Nagpur, the leader of the opposition in the legislative council. Ambadas Danve, said the government only highlighted old schemes and promises in the legislature.

"Though the Mahayuti government was formed 15 days back and the cabinet was also expanded, portfolios are vet to be allocated. This session saw ministers sitting in the legislature without ministries. This session was just a formality," Danve added.

He said the government failed to reassure farmers, workers, and industries.

Referring to violence in Parbhani city over the desecration of a replica of the Constitution, the suspicious death of an accused in judicial custody, the murder of a sarpanch in Beed, and the attack on a Marathi family in Kalyan, Danve said the government has failed to maintain law and order.

"The main accused in the Beed incident is abscond-

'Education system must not be barrier'

MAHARASHTRA

Pune: RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat has said the education system should act as a facilitator and not a barrier to learning and asserted it was essential to remain rooted in "our basic foundational values" while adapting to changing times.

The RSS chief, who was speaking after inaugurating LokSeva E School in Baner here on Friday, emphasised that education is not a business but a "vrat" (pledge) to create fine hu-

"The education system should act as a facilitator, not a barrier, to learning. It must serve as a tool to empower students rather than functioning solely as a regulator. The role of regulation in education should focus on streamlining processes and ensuring smooth functioning, rather than enforcing rigid 'dos and don'ts' that can stifle the experimental spirit among students," he said.

Hailing the National Education Policy (NEP), the RSS chief said it may have been introduced recently, but discussions to have such a kind of system have been underway for many years, adding that several schools have been imparting "value-based" education for long.

The new education system will be implemented completely, and it will lead the country to the desired dream, he said.

"We need to change ourselves according to the times, but while doing so, we must ensure that we are rooted in our basic foundational values. While sticking to those eternal foundational values, we need to lead ahead and face the

CM assures end of Maoism By Correspondent

Mumbai: Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis on Saturday assured Maoismfree state while asserting that Gadchiroli will emerge as the next 'Steel City'. While replying to the de-

bate on the motions moved by the opposition in the state assembly on the last day of the winter session, Fadnavis made it clear that the government is making all efforts to curb and fully eliminate the menace of Left-Wing Extremism from the state. While emphasising that the state government is committed to speed up development, Fadnavis further said that while an investment of Rs 50,000 crore has come to Gadchiroli so far, Sambhajinagar and Jalna are expected to become the next industrial

Fadnavis said that the northern region of Gadchiroli has already been cleared of the left wing extremism and that there is no recruitment for the Maoist movement from Maharashtra.

So far, 1,500 youth comprising 150 children of families of Maoists have been recruited in the police department and that top Maoists have been either eliminated or made to surrender in Gadchiroli district. He added that Gadchiroli and Chandrapur will be liked with the Samruddhi Mahamarg.

Fadnavis said that during two and half years under the Mahayuti government, Vidarbha received an investment of Rs 1,23,931 crore in 47 mega projects. He claimed that the new regime is the continuation of 2022, saying only the responsibilities have changed.

The Chief Minister said



Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis with DCMs Eknath Shinde, Ajit Pawar, Legislative Council Chairman Ram Shinde and MLCs poses for a group photo on the last day of the winter session in Nagpur on Saturday.

that the Mahavuti government, which has come back to power, will increase the pace of Maharashtra's growth by focusing on balanced development and justice for every section of society

Fadnavis said that the government is focusing on

Gadchiroli: Two Naxalites

security forces in Gadchiroli

carrying a cumulative

surrendered before the

district, police said on

Ramasu Poyam alias

Narsingh (55), a resident

of Gadchiroli, and Ramesh

Kunjam alias Govind (25),

a native of Narayanpur in

surrendered before the

Central Reserve Police

Force on Friday, police

Povam, who carried a

bounty of Rs 6 lakh, was

recruited as a member of

the Tipagadh LOS in 1992

committee member (ACM)

and served as the area

the Health Department.

The CAG report asked

the government to fill up

vacancies in the health

sector in a time-bound

manner to ensure optimal

and qualitative delivery of

healthcare services to

people. It said the govern-

ment may also increase

the sanctioned strength of

doctors under the Depart-

ment as recommended in

The public health infra-

structure is overburdened

due to shortages of health-

care institutions, which

are catering to the popula-

tion in excess of the

norms laid down in IPHS,

70 per cent of the work for

constructing new health-

care institutions and 90

per cent of the work for

upgrading healthcare in-

stitutions as per the mas-

ter plan (January 2013 and

June 2014) was not com-

The audit noticed that

the CAG stated.

stated in a release.

Gadchiroli police and the

neighbouring Chhattisgarh,

Saturday.

bounty of Rs 8 lakh

industrial development, river linking projects and irrigation projects to expedite the development in Vidarbha Marathwada.

After Pune, the next industrial magnate will be Sambhajinagar Jalna belt. He added that Vande

Two Naxalites with bounty surrender

in Kutul and Nelnar LOS

According to the police,

Poyam has 12 cases to

his name, including six

encounters, five murders

and an offence of dacoity.

Kunjam, who had a Rs 2

lakh bounty, joined as a

of the Chetna Natya

Kutul LOS in 2021.

due to the Gadchiroli

crackdown on Maoist

activities. Their family

them to lay down arms

after the arrest of their

members also persuaded

police's aggressive

militia member in 2019. He

was recruited as a member

Manch (CNM) in 2020 and

became a member of the

The duo has surrendered

since 2010, it said.

Bharat coaches will be manufactured in the Latur

The men will receive Rs 4.5

lakh each for rehabilitation

Centre and Maharashtra

Gadchiroli police said a

were being lured by the

rehabilitation policy, and

680 active Maoists have

As many as 20 hardcore

this year only. Gadchiroli

Superintendent of Police,

that necessary assistance

those willing to surrender

and join the mainstream

Neelotpal, has assured

would be provided to

state government's

surrendered to date.

Maoists surrendered

surrender-cum-

large number of members

of the banned CPI (Maoist)

as declared by the

government.

The chief minister said that Marathwada has received an investment of Rs 72,839 crore in 34 projects, including Toyota Kirloskar auto project which will generate 40,000 direct jobs and 1 lakh indirect jobs. Fadnavis said that the

government will provide a bonus of Rs 20,000 per hectare to the paddy growers, adding that the government will fulfill all promises mentioned in the

He also announced that the government has paid Rs 5,000 per hectare had been paid to soybean and cotton growers. The procurement of soybean started from 557 centres and so far 23.68 lakh quintal have been procured.

The procurement will continue till January. The guaranteed price of soybean is Rs 4,92 per quintal.

The cotton procurement has already started by CCI through 501 centres. But the cotton growers are selling cotton directly to traders as the price is ranging between Rs 7,200-7,500 per quintal. The cotton production of 427 lakh quintal is expected.

Fadnavis also said that the long-pending Mumbai-Goa highway will be completed as the work has been taken up on war footing.

sion witnessed uproar over

Union Home Minister Amit

Shah's remarks on B R

Ambedkar, violence in

Parbhani city in central

Maharashtra over the des-

ecration of a replica of the

Constitution, and the mur-

der of a sarpanch in Beed.

15th assembly, held after

elections, saw six sittings at

an average attendance of

72.90 per cent, said

The first session of the

Viraj Joshi, grandson of Pandit Bhimsen Joshi, performs at the '70th Sawai Gandharva Bhimsen Mahotsav' in Pune on Friday.

Budget session from March 3

Shortage of manpower at every level of health care: CAG Nagpur: The shortage of pleted as of September

manpower at every level of healthcare institutions under the Maharashtra Health Department and overburdening of infrastructure are the main concerns flagged by the CAG in its audit report.

The Comptroller and Auditor General noted that providing adequate and quality healthcare services to a large population requires a robust healthcare infrastructure and services.

This performance audit report for 2023-2024 was tabled in the legislative assembly on Saturday.

The shortage of doctors, nurses and paramedical staff was 22 per cent, 35 per cent and 29 per cent, respectively in primary and secondary healthcare under the state Health Department

The shortage of doctors, nurses and paramedical staff was 23 per cent, 19 per cent and 16 per cent respectively in primary and secondary healthcare for women hospitals. The shortage is 42 per cent in the cadre of the specialist doctors.

The CAG stated that the



overall shortage of doctors, nurses, and paramedics in the Health Department and Medical Education and Drugs Department was 27 per cent, 35 per cent, and 31 per cent respectively.

The audit also noticed the regional disparity in availability of manpower.

Similarly, vacancies in the trauma care centres under the Health Department and Medical Education and Drugs Department were 23 per cent and 44 per cent, respectively.

The CAG stated vacancies of doctors, nurses, and paramedical staff in AYUSH colleges and hospitals are 21 per cent, 57 per cent and 55 per cent respectively.

The sanctioned strength of doctors was less than the requirement as per Indian Public Health Standards (IPHS), 2012, by 17 per cent under It said a Super Special-

Amravati, constructed at the cost of Rs 31.91 crore in June 2015 remained unutilised for more than three years. Further, 433 works included in the master plan could not be started due to non-availability of land.

Out-Patient Department services in hospitals were inadequate with 93 per cent of rural hospitals having only one registration counter as against two required as per IPHS in seven selected districts. It said 26 per cent of doctors are attending to more than double the minimum number of patients.

Additionally, several specialist OPD services were unavailable in many district hospitals, women's hospitals, and hospitals attached to medical colleges

The audit also noticed the non-availability of radiology and imaging services. Patient-centric diet was not provided in 33 test-checked sub-district and rural hospitals, the

Father-son killed over enmity

Nagpur: A 54-year-old man and his son were murdered allegedly by four persons in Nagpur's Ajni area, a police official said on Saturday.

He identified the deceased as Vijay Balram Savarkar and his son Mayur (27).

"The family owns a furniture shop. Mayur has a criminal record, including a murder case against his name. On Thursday evening, Mayur

over previous enmity and fled. On Friday, Mayur attacked Shubham's brother Badal with an iron rod."

attacked Shubham Kurveti

"Following this incident, Shubham, his associate Sandeep Nade as well as a 17-year-old boy and an unidentified person attacked Mayur and his father with sharp weapons. The two died in hospital

PUBLIC NOTICE

that All that Flat premises being Flat No E-202, on the Second Floor, Manvel Pada Road area admeasuring 44 square feet (Built up area) equivaler to 40.98 square meters (Built up area in the building known as "Sai Roya Sankul Co-op. Hou. Soc. LTD.", lying being and situate at Village Viral East, Taluka Vasai, Dist. Palghar which is owned by LATE. VITHOBA PANDHARINATH GHAVATE, Owne Late. Vithoba Pandharinath Ghavate ha passed away on 17th November 2020 at Virar. This flat is now being prepared for sale by my client, Mrs. Vijaya Vithoba Ghavate, along with Pankaj Vithoba Ghavate, Paresh Vithoba Ghavate, and Suvarna Mayur Thakur. Any person having any claim, interest, right, demand or tenancy right, maintenance, charge lien, mortgage then the said claim, demand, charge be notified informed or communicated with all documentary continuous and continuous proof to me at my address being Offic No.B/301, Sugandhi Heights, Bolin Kharodi Naka, Near Disha Hotel, Bolinj Virar West, Tal-Vasai, Dist.- Palghar, Pir 401 303 within 14 days from the date o publication of this notice and if no such claim, objection or demand is notified informed or communicated to me within treated as waved or surrendered and

Adv. Jitesh Mhatr

All persons are hereby informed

PUBLIC NOTICE

Know by all means that MR. RAFIQ SHAIKH was allotted Room No. 209 by SRA and later Reliable Construction handed the Room 209 to Rafig Shaikh. Reliable Construction transfer all lega ngnis, Flots etc. and formed society now known as **VIKAS SRA CHS LTD.** Mahakali Mandir Road, Opp. Garder Estate, Laxmi Nagar, Goregaon (West)

RAFIQ SHAIKH expired, leaving behind his wife JANNATUNISA RAFIQ SHAIKH and 2 children BILAL RAFIQ SHAIKH AND NAZIYA RAFIQ

The society had no objection to transfer all legal rights share etc. to JANNATUNISA RAFIQ SHAIKH. After JANNATUNISA RAFIQ SHAIKH xpired the society had no obj transfer share/legal rights etc. to BILAL
AND NAZIYA RAFIQ SHAIKH to use

AND NAZIYA KAFIQ SHAIKH to use both half (50%) each.
Bilal and Nazia Rafiq Shaikh was approached by Mr. Ilyas Mansuri to sell the Room 209 and they mutually agreed.
Any person claiming any right or share what so ever by way of ownership mortgage pledge inheritance etc.. in the said Room 209 should in time the under signed in writing with supporting documents in respect of claim within 15 days of Publication of this PUBLIC NOTICE, failing which the claims if any of such persons will be considered as waived or abandoned.

Raiesh Kumar Singh Advocate High Court 9820938076 / 9137439503

A public notice is hereby given, that my client MR. SIDDHARTH LALJI SINGH is one of legal heir of Late. MR. LALJI INDRABAHADUR SINGH. The said MR. LALJI INDRABAHADUR SINGH. The said MR. LALJI INDRABAHADUR SINGH, Gied on 28/11/2024, at Home, Mulund, Mumbai 400080, left behind him MR. SIDDHARTH LALJI SINGH (Son of deceased) & SMT. SUMAN LALJI SINGH (Wife/Widow of deceased). The Said Late MR. LALJI INDRABAHADUR SINGH is holding Shop bearing No. 27, on the GRD Floor, admeasuring 15.70 Square Meters (Carpet area), of Building No. 03, of AVENUE 34.4, Type SG 1, known as "SHREE SHASHWAT", in the Society known as "SHREE SHASHWAT" in the Society known as "SHREE SHASHWAT 44 CHSL.", in the project known as "GLOBAL CITY", lying being and situated at Village DONGARE, Virar West-401303 (The Said Shop) and entitled to 10 (Ten) fully paid up shares of Rs.50/-each bearing Numbers 3451 to 3460 (both inclusive) under Share Certificate No. 346 (The said shares) AND Flat bearing No. 1, on the 3RD Floor, admeasuring 42.26 Square Meters (Carpet area), building known as "STHANU", in the Society known as "STHANU CHSL.", lying being and situated at Village MULUND, Mumbai 400080 (The Said Flat) and entitled to 5 (Five) fully paid up shares of Rs.50/-each bearing Numbers 16 to 20 under Share Certificate No. 346 (The said shares) (hereinafter "the said Flat" and "the said shares" shall be collectively referred to as "the said property").

After death of LATE. MR. LALJI INDRABAHADUR SINGH his shares devolved on the said legal heir namely MR. SIDDHARTH LALJI SINGH his shares sevelved on the said elgal heir namely by MT. SIMAN LALJI SINGH has giving her no objection to transfer the said shares said sh

on the said legal heirs namely MR. SIDDHARTH LALJI SINGH 8. SMT. SUMAN LALJI SINGH in equal proportion and accordingly the said one of legal heir namely SMT. SUMAN LALJI SINGH has giving her no objection to transfer the said shares and interest of deceased in the said Shop to the name of my client MR. SIDDHARTH LALJI SINGH (Son of deceased).

By virtue of Law of inheritance and The Hindu succession Act 1956, my client MR. SIDDHARTH LALJI SINGH is entitled to succeed the estate of deceased. Whoever has any kind of right, title, interest and share in the aforesaid Property, shall come forward with their genuine objection along with certify copy of the documents to support their claim within 14 days from the issue of this Notice, and contact to me at the below mention address. Otherwise it shall be deemed and presumed that my clients are entitled to inherit the aforesaid property, and all future correspondence shall come in effect in my client's favour. And no claim shall be entertained after the expiry of Notice period

ADV. RANJAN HASHA PATIL KUNTI SADAN, BELOW SHREE MANGAL KARYALAY HALL VEER SAVARKAR MARG, VIRAR EAST VASAI, PALGHAR-401305

Pawar meets family of slain sarpanch

THE NCP CHIEF SAYS 'ATMOSPHERE OF FEAR BEING CREATED'

Parbhani: An atmosphere of fear is being created in Beed, NCP (SP) president Sharad Pawar alleged on Saturday while assuring justice to the family of sarpanch Subhash Deshmukh who was murdered recently.

Nagpur: The Maharashtra

legislative assembly was

prorogued on Saturday af-

ter the end of the winter

The budget session of the

Maharashtra legislature

will commence in Mumbai

The prorogation order is-

sued by Maharashtra gov-

ernor C P Radhakrishnan

was read out by Speaker

The six-day winter ses-

session.

on March 3.

Rahul Narwekar.

Pawar and NCP (SP) leaders also met the kin of Somnath Suryawanshi in Parbhani who allegedly died in judicial custody after he was arrested in connection with violence over the desecration of a replica of the Constitution.

"An atmosphere of fear is being created in Beed. We (the opposition) will all counter it collectively. I assure you that we will not rest until the state and Central governments give justice to the family," Pawar said about Massajog sapranch

A day earlier, Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis announced a judicial probe into the alleged murder of the sarpanch and death of Suryawanshi. The state will also provide financial assistance of Rs 10 lakh each to the kin of Deshmukh and Survawanshi.

Fadnavis also announced the transfer of the Beed superintendent of police Avinash Bargal. However, Pawar claimed the government's response was

insufficient. "No amount of compensation can bring back a life or erase the grief of the family. The responsibility for the education

of their children is ours. We will ensure they are not alone in this fight for justice," Pawar said.

Protests in Parbhani had turned violent last week when the replica of the Constitution was vandalised.

"A peaceful protest was held (over the vandalism incident). Why was violence used against protesters? This is not accept-

able." said Pawar while addressing a gathering at the

statue of Babasaheb Ambedkar in Parbhani.

He said the evidence presented by the family of the deceased will be taken to the chief minister and other authorities. "Justice for Somnath's death is non-

negotiable," he added. Fadnavis had also ordered a Special Investigation Team (SIT) probe into the incident, suspended a police sub-inspector, and sent another officer on leave. However, Pawar stressed that more accountability is needed.

Body of missing boy found, toll 15



Mumbai: The body of a seven-year-old boy missing in the ferry-Navy craft crash off the Mumbai coast was recovered on Saturday morning after a three-daylong search operation, an official said.

Naval boats have found the body of Johan Mohammad Nisar Ahmed Pathan, taking the toll in the December 18 tragedy to 15.

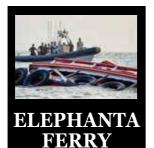
The Navy has launched a probe into one of the deadliest crashes in the city's harbour area.

A naval helicopter and boats of the Navy and Coast Guard were deployed to look for the missing passengers as part of the SAR operation, the official said.

Of the 113 persons on board both the vessels, 15 have died and 98, including two injured, were rescued.

There were six persons on board the Navy craft, of which two survived, the of-

ficial said. The tragedy struck when



the speeding Navy craft undergoing engine trials lost control and collided with a passenger ferry, 'Neel Kamal', off the Mumbai coast.

TRAGEDY

The ferry, with more than 100 passengers, was on its way from the Gateway of India to the Elephanta Island, a popular tourist attraction which has a collection of ancient caves.

According to the documents issued by the Maharashtra Maritime Board (MMB), the boat had permission to carry 84 passengers and six crew members, but it was overloaded, a

police official said. The MMB, which is conducting an investigation into the accident has cancelled the licence of the ferry as the vessel was overloaded, thus violating the Inland Vessel Act. The ferry had a capacity of 90 persons, an official said.

A case has been registered against the Navy craft driver at the Colaba police station, the official said.

Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) sections invoked in the FIR included those related to causing death by negligence, actions that endanger the personal safety or life of others, rash or negligent navigation of a vessel and acts of mischief that cause wrongful loss or damage to individuals or the public.

The accident-affected craft is in the custody of the Navy, and police will demand it whenever needed for investigation, the official said.

May go solo in BMC polls: Raut

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 MVA.

Talking to reporters, 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. Workers want the party to contest the polls solo," he said.

The undivided Shiv Sena controlled the cash-rich BMC for 25 consecutive years — from 1997 to 2022.

The term of the previous elected representatives of the BMC ended in early March 2022, and fresh polls are due for nearly three years now.

Raut said the party's power in Mumbai is undisputed.

"If had we got more seats to contest in Mumbai (during the assembly polls), it would have won them," he said, claiming that it was necessary to win Mumbai or else the city would be separated from Maharashtra.

The Shiv Sena contested 24 seats in Mumbai and won 10, while the Congress fielded candidates for 10 seats and bagged four, and the NCP (SP) contested two seats unsuccessfully.

"Even when the (undivided) Shiv Sena was (in an alliance) with the BJP, we contested the BMC and other civic body polls independently. We are trying to find ways to do it. The MVA will exist in the Pune, Pimpri-Chinchwad and Nashik civic bodies," he said.



Veteran Bollywood actor Nana Patekar with actor Aamir Khan and film director Anil Sharma during a promotional event for his film 'Vanvaas' in Mumbai on Saturday.

Relief to Dharavi's upper floors

CERTIFIED RESIDENTS WILL GET 300 SQ FT HOME IN MUMBAI, BUT OUTSIDE DHARAVI, AT A NOMINAL RENT FOR 25 YEARS

By Correspondent

Mumbai: In a first-of-itskind initiative under the Slum Rehabilitation Authority (SRA), the Dharavi Redevelopment Project (DRP) has introduced a unique policy to include residents of upper-floor tenements, making it the most inclusive and humancentric redevelopment plan in Maharashtra's history.

Traditionally, upperfloor tenements in slums have been deemed illegal and excluded from slum rehabilitation projects. This has led to outright displacement of residents, who are often left with no alternatives. These upper-floor residents often relocated to

other slums, creating new illegal structures and perpetuating a cycle of displacement. To address this issue and work towards a slum-free Mumbai, the state government has devised this thoughtful strategy under the Dharavi Redevelopment Project, ensuring housing provisions for those living in upper-floor dwellings as

As per a Government Resolution (GR), issued on October 4, 2024, all upperfloor tenement holders in Dharavi up till November 15. 2022, are qualified for rehabilitation on a hirepurchase scheme. Under this scheme, tenement holders will get 300 sq ft home in Mumbai, but outside Dharavi, at a nominal rent for 25 years, after which they will gain ownership of the unit.

The policy also offers flexibility, allowing residents to make a lump-sum payment at any time within the 25 years' period to secure the title ownership of the unit. The rent and the unit purchase amount will be determined and collected by the DRP/State Government.

The GR states that only upper-floor residents who provide documents like electricity bill, registered sale or rental agreement, Aadhaar card, ration card, passport mentioning the floor, or an affidavit certified by the eligible groundfloor resident will qualify for the hire-purchase scheme.

"Under the hire-purchase scheme, Dharavikars will move into modern housing with essential amenities such as private toilets and kitchens, ensuring dignity, privacy, and a better quality of life," a DRP-SRA official said. The buildings will be maintained by the developer for 10 years post-rehabilitation, reducing financial burdens on residents. Moreover, 10% of the builtup area of the buildings will be developed commercially, creating a permanent income source for the

School bus driver found drunk

AN ALERT TRAFFIC COP NOTICES BUS FERRYING STUDENTS SWERVING, HALTS IT

Thane: The alertness of a **Raut recce: Four** traffic policeman in Kalyan staffers of telecom in Thane led to the detection of an inebriated driver who was ferrying 26 school students to a football tournament, an official said on Saturday.

The incident took place at Subhash Chowk on Friday when the bus was on its way from Ulhasnagar in the district to Virar in neighbouring Palghar, the official said.

"Constable Suresh Patil noticed the bus was swerving despite the road being clear and the driver did not seem to be in complete control. He got the bus to stop and subjected driver Surendra Gautam to a breathalyser test, which returned positive," Kalyan traffic police senior inspector Rajesh Shirsat said.

"If Patil had not acted quickly, the bus could have met with an accident. The driver was fined and will face further action, while the bus has been seized and its owner notified. We arranged another bus for the students to reach Virar for the football tournament," Shirsat added.

firm interrogated, released

Mumbai: Police interrogated four persons in connection with suspected recce outside Shiv Sena (UBT) leader Sanjay Raut's bungalow here and later released them after verifying that they were employees of a telecom network services company, an official said on Saturday.

The men were employees of Insta ICT Solution, a telecom network services company, and were testing the network in the area on Saturday, the official said.

He said four men were interrogated and later released after the police verified their roles and designation with the company.

On Saturday, two men on a motorcycle were seen outside the Sena (UBT) leader's bungalow 'Maitri' in the Bhandup area around 9.30

Finding it suspicious, some people waiting outside the bungalow alerted Raut's younger brother, MLA Sunil Raut.



Contestants flex their muscles as they compete in the bodybuilding event at the International Health, Sports & Fitness Festival (IHFF) in Mumbai on Saturday.

Vitor, Akanksha survive to make Squash finals

By Correspondent

Mumbai: Top seeds Viktor Byrtus and Akanksha Salunkhe scored hardfought 3-2 wins in the men's and women's semi-final competitions of the 79th Western India Slam, a USD 9,000 prize-money Professional Squash Association (PSA) Challenger event and played at the CCI courts on

The Czech number one Byrtus had quite a fight on hand before he overcame Netherlands fourth seed Rowan Damming 7-11, 11-9, 11-5, 1-11, and 11-8 in a well-

contested encounter. India's top seed Akanksha Salunkhe also encountered a strong challenge from Egypt's fifth seed Jana Swaify before clinching an 11-5, 12-14, 15-13, 5-11, and 12-10 in a tight game.

Results - Women's semifinals: 2-Anahat Singh (IND) bt. 3-Nour Khafagy (EGY) 3-1 (11-4, 12-14, 11-9,

1-Akanksha Salunkhe (IND) bt. 5-Jana Swaify (EGY) 3-2 (11-5, 12-14, 15-13, 5-11, 12-10).

Men's semi-finals: 1-Viktor Byrtus (CZE) bt. 4-Rowan Damming (NED) 3-2 (7-11, 11-9, 11-5, 1-11,

New Ministers and their portfolios

Chandrashekhar Bawankule - Revenue Radhakrishna Vikhe-Patil -Water Resources

Hasan Mushrif - Medical Education Chandrakant Patil -

Higher and Technical Education Girish Mahajan – Water Resources (Vidarbha, Tapi)

Ganesh Naik - Forest Gulaorao Patil -

Water Supply & Sanitation Dadaji Bhuse - School education Sanjay Rathod -Soil & Water Conservation

Dhananjay Munde - Food, Civil Supplies & Consumer Protection

Mangal Prabhat Lodha -Skill Development, Employment, Entrepreneurship & Innovation Uday Samant - Industries

Jaykumar Rawal -Marketing, Protocol

Pankaja Munde – Environment & Climate Change, Animal Husbandry Ashok Uike – Tribal Development

Shambhuraj Desai – Tourism, Mining, Ex-Servicemen Welfare Information Ashish Shelar - IT, Cultural Affairs Dattatray Bharne -

housing societies.

Sports & Youth welfare, Minorities

Development & Aukaf Aditi Tatkare -

Women & Child Development Shivendrasinh Bhosale - Public Works (Excluding Public Enterprises)

Manikrao Kokate - Agriculture Jaykumar Gore -Rural Development, Panchayati Raj

Narhari Zirwal – Food & Drug Administration, Special Assistance

Sanjay Shirsat – Social Justice Pratap Sarnaik - Transport Bharat Gogavale -

Employment Guarantee, Horticulture, Salt Pan Land Development

Makarand Patil -Relief & Rehabilitation Nitesh Rane – Fisheries, Ports Akash Phunkar – Labour

Babasaheb Patil - Co-operation Prakash Abitkar - Public Health

Ministers of State

Ashish Jaiswal - Finance & Planning, Agriculture, Relief & Rehabilitation, Law & Judiciary, Labour

Madhuri Misal - Urban Development, Transport, Social Justice, Medical Education, Minorities Development & Aukaf

Pankaj Bhoyar - Home (Rural), Housing, School Education, Co-operation, Mining Meghna Bordikar - Public Health & Family Welfare. Water Supply & Sanitation, Energy, Women & Child Development, Public Works (Public Enterprises) Indranil Naik - Industries, Public Works, Higher & Technical Education, Tribal Development, Tourism, Soil & Water Conservation

Yogesh Kadam - Home (Urban), Revenue, Rural Development & Panchayati Raj, Food Civil Supplies & Consumer Protection, Food & Drug Administration

Rafi is my musical father, says Sonu Nigam

By Komal Panchamatia

Mumbai: There can be no comparison between a father and a son. For Sonu Nigam, who considers Mohammed Rafi his "musical father", the very idea of comparing himself to the legendary singer is unthinkable.

After all, whatever he sings, he can never be quite like the master himself, said Nigam ahead of Rafi's 100th birth anniversary on December 24.

"Rafi sahab was the prime reference point. It was like 'Be like him, he can sing a qawwali, a bhajan, a sad song, a high-pitch song, a semi-classical'. So that's what a singer should be like. He was my inspiration," Nigam told PTI.

It began right in child-

Nigam's singer parents - Agam and Shobha - encouraged him to emulate the great Rafi who covered the spectrum of every genre and emotion through his effortlessly versatile voice. "He (Rafi) has helped me be what I'm today and I still keep learning from him. He is my musical father," Nigam said.

The 51-year-old, sometimes compared to Rafi, gave his career's first performance when he was just four. The song was "Kya Hua Tera Vada" from the 1977 film "Hum Kisi Se Kam Nahin".

And on Tuesday, Nigam will pay tribute to his guru with a special concert in



Mumbai to celebrate Rafi's 100th birth anniversary. Regarded perhaps as the greatest playback singer of Hindi cinema, Rafi lent his

voice to evergreen songs such as "Main Zindagi Ka Saath Nibhata Chala Gava". "Kaun Hai Jo Sapnon Mein Aaya", "Aaja Aaja", "Parda Hai Parda", "Gulabi Aankhein" and "Kya Se Kya Ho Gaya" among many thousand others.

Nigam, popular for tracks such as "Suraj Hua Madham", "Kal Ho Naa Ho", "Saathiya" and "Abhi Mujhmein Kahin", is not worried about comparisons with Rafi.

"They will compare but

they must understand but he is my father. You cannot compare a father and son. The father will always be the father. No matter what I sing, I will never be able to be like him," he added.

Rafi, the voice behind the movie greats like Dev Anand, Shammi Kapoor, Guru Dutt, Dharmendra and many other leading stars, passed away at the age of 55 in 1980 due to a heart attack. Nigam was only seven at the time.

"I've done hundreds of

cover versions of his songs. That has been my net practice. I used to make notes from his songs and add pointers. I've studied Rafi sahab properly. I've gone into the detailing of Mohammed Rafi like nobody

"Rafi sahab was an amazing versatile singer. I've tried to imbibe that quality in me. I've also tried to sing all kinds of songs. Rafi sahab was an introvert, I'm not an introvert, I speak. Rafi sahab wouldn't speak that much," the self-confessed fan said. He said he could never

meet his idol but it doesn't "He lives inside me so I

don't really miss not meeting him," he added. "I'm touched and hum-

bled that I'm getting this chance to perform his songs on his 100th birthday."

The concert, titled "Sau Saal Pehle" is organised by NR Talent & Event Management.

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Germany attack, latest to use vehicles as deadly weapons

London: A car-ramming at a Christmas market in Germany, which police are treating as an attack, is the latest in a grim series of events in which vehicles have been used as deadly weapons.

There have been a spate of such attacks over the past decade, some committed by groups but most by individuals. The motives – where they could be established - have varied widely Some were inspired by Islamic militant groups such as al-Qaida and ISIS, which encouraged followers to carry out lowcost, low-tech attacks with cars and trucks. Others have been linked to mental illness, far-right extremism and online misogyny.

What law-enforcement authorities term "vehicle as a weapon attacks" have reshaped cities around the world, as planners erect concrete barriers around public spaces and build anti-vehicle obstacles into new developments.

Here are some major vehicle attacks:

MAGDEBURG, Germany, December 20. 2024: At least five people are killed and more than 200 iniured when a car slams into a Christmas market in eastern Germany. The suspect, who was arrested, is a 50-year-old doctor originally from Saudi Arabia who had expressed anti-Muslim views and support for the far-right AFD

ZHUHAI, China, November 11, 2024: A 62-year-old driver rams his car into people exercising at a sports complex in southern China, killing 35 people in the country's deadliest mass slaying in years. Authorities said the perpetrator was upset about his divorce but offered few other details.



LONDON, Ontario, June 6, 2021: Four members of a Muslim family die when an attacker hits them with a pickup truck while they are out for a walk, in what Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau calls "a terrorist attack, motivated by hatred." White nationalist attacker Nathaniel Veltman was sentenced to life in prison.

TORONTO, April 23, 2018: A 25-year-old Canadian man, Alek Minassian, drives a rented van into mostly female pedestrians on Yonge St., the main thoroughfare in Toronto, killing 10 people and injuring 16. Minassian told police he belonged to the online "incel" community of sexually frustrated men.

NEW YORK, October 31, 2017: Sayfullo Saipov, an Islamic extremist from Uzbekistan, drives a pickup truck onto a popular New York City bike path, killing eight.

BARCELONA, August 17, 2017: A man driving a van slams into people on the Spanish city's crowded Las Ramblas boulevard, killing 14

and injuring many others. Several

members of the same cell carry out

a similar vehicle attack in the near-

by resort town of Cambrils before

they are shot dead by police. The

Islamic State group claimed responsibility. CHARLOTTESVILLE, Virginia, August 12, 2017: During a "Unite the Right" rally, white supremacist James Alex Fields Jr. intentionally drives his car into a crowd of counter-protesters, killing one woman

and injuring dozens of people. LONDON: March 22, 2017: British man Khalid Masood rams an SUV into people on Westminster Bridge, killing four, before stabbing to death a policeman guarding the Houses of Parliament nearby. He is shot dead.

June 3, 2017: three attackers drive a van at pedestrians on London Bridge before stabbing people in nearby Borough Market. Eight people are killed and the attackers shot dead by police.

June 19, 2017: Darren Osborne, a

man radicalised by far-right ideas, drives a van at worshippers outside a mosque in London's Finsbury Park area, killing one man and injuring 15 people.

MELBOURNE, Australia, January 20, 2017: Six people are killed and more than 30 injured when a car hits lunchtime crowds at a pedestrian mall in Australia's secondlargest city. Perpetrator James Gargasoulas is found to have been in a state of drug-induced

BERLIN, December 19, 2016: Anis Amri, a rejected asylum-seeker from Tunisia, plows a hijacked truck into a Christmas market in the German capital, killing 13 people and injuring dozens. The attacker is killed days later in a shootout in Italy.

NICE, France, July 14, 2016: Tunisian-born French resident Mohamed Lahouaiej-Bouhlel drives a rented truck for more than a mile (almost 2 kilometres) along a packed seaside promenade in the French Riviera resort on the Bastille Day holiday, killing 86 people in the deadliest attack of its

APELDOORN, Netherlands, April 28, 2009: Former security guard Karst Tates drives a car into parade spectators in an attempt to hit an open-topped bus carrying members of the Dutch royal family. Six people are killed and Tates dies of injuries the next day, leaving his full motive a mystery.

CHAPEL HILL, North Carolina, March 3, 2006: University of North Carolina graduate Mohammed Taheri-Azar drives an SUV into a crowd at the university, lightly injuring nine people, in a self-professed bid to avenge Muslim deaths



A student checks a weapon during the 2nd Annual Festival of Ladakh Jammu Kashmir Economic Growth and Development Dialogue (LEAD) in Jammu on

Priest murdered in B'desh, **ISKCON** condemns

Kolkata: ISKCON Kolkata on Saturday condemned the 'murder' of a Hindu priest allegedly by Bangladeshi extremists at a cremation ground temple in Natore and accused the neighbouring country's interim government of failing to protect religious minorities, who continue to face "unabated torture and killings" following the fall of Sheikh Hasina's administration.

ISKCON Kolkata spokesperson Radharamn Das posted a video on X and said, "Shocked to hear about the attack on the temple located in #Natore's Kashimpur Central Shmashana in Bangladesh. Valuables were looted, and the temple's shebait, Tarun Chandra Das, was brutally murdered. His lifeless body was discovered with his hands and feet tied. Even Hindu crematoriums are

PTI could not independently verify the authenticity of the video, but the viral footage allegedly showed the body of the middle-aged priest, found with his hands and feet According to Das, the priest was likely tortured

before being killed, as his hands and feet were tied. "Miscreants also looted the temple," he said, adding that Bangladesh police termed the incident a case of robbery. Questioning police's

claim of dacoity, Das asked, "How is it that incidents of robbery and violence are disproportionately targeting Hindus?" Another monk, con-

demning the priest's 'killing', said, "Dialogue alone is not enough, as the situation continues to deteriorate." He said, "According to an

minorities in Bangladesh have been reported this year up to December 8. This number is likely understated, as many incidents go unreported.'

Indian government report,

2.200 cases of violence

against Hindus and other

Meanwhile, a social media post on the 'Voice of Bangladeshi Hindus' page showed a temple where idols of Hindu deities were vandalised. The post alleged that members of the Jamaat had attacked a Hindu temple in Jharbari village, Birganj Upazila, and smashed idols inside.

Monks tracking developments in Bangladesh noted that Hindus are facing relentless attacks and persecution. "Homes are being vandalised, property are being seized, and attacks on temples show no signs of abating," they observed.

Eminent Muslims hails Bhagwat

New Delhi: A civil society group comprising eminent Muslims including former chief election commissioner S Y Quraishi, on Saturday hailed RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat's remarks batting for an inclusive society and hoped that this will be a guide to many who are "attacking the very fabric" of the country.

Bhagwat had expressed concern over resurgence of several temple-mosque disputes and said certain individuals, after the construction of Ayodhya Ram temple, seem to believe they can become leaders of Hindus by raking up such

Delivering a lecture on "India: The Vishwaguru" at Sahjeevan Vyakhyanmala (lecture series) in Pune on Thursday, Bhagwat advocated for an inclusive society and said the world needs to be shown that India can live together in harmony.

In a letter to Bhagwat, the group Citizens for Fraternity said, "We are immensely pleased by your comments made at Pune. We, as Bhartiya Muslims, and indeed Christians, have been immensely concerned on recent utterances by a



section of society as well as by incidents that have taken place in the recent past and which have led to grave communal tensions.

"Therefore, a statement from the Sarsanghchalak carries immense weight and gives hope to all rightthinking people in Bharat as indeed across the world," the letter signed by Quraishi, former Delhi Lt Governor Najeeb Jung, former Aligarh Muslim University Vice Chancellor Zameer Uddin Shah, former MP Shahid Siddiqui and industrialist Saeed Sherwani

Highlighting the plurality of Indian society, the RSS chief said Christmas is celebrated in Ramakrishna Mission, adding only we can do this because we are

"Every day a new matter (dispute) is being raked up. How can this be allowed? This cannot continue, India needs to show that we can live together," he said.

Vrindavan temple urges visitors on dressing

Mathura: Vrindavan's Thakur Bankebihari Temtors to "dress modestly" and refrain from wearing "indecent clothes" while on the temple premises.

The appeal was made given the expected rush to the temple ahead of the New Year. "... attire such as miniskirts, torn jeans, half pants, and night suits is inappropriate for the temple setting, as it undermines the sanctity and dignity of the place," the temple authorities said.

The appeal was made through media channels and banners, put up across the city, especially roads leading to the temple.

Munish Sharma, the temple manager, said the initiative was aimed at "preserving the cultural dignity" of the temple.

"We have seen instances where devotees, particularly from outside the region, arrive dressed in casual tourist attire like jeans and t-shirts. This is not following the temple's respect for tradition," he said.

Every year, thousands of people visit Thakur Banke-



Artists perform during the 'Karavali Utsav' in Mangaluru, Karnataka on

Shrijith's 150 trumps beat Mumbai

Ahmedabad: KL Shrijith's whirlwind unbeaten 150 trumped Shreyas Iyer's fiery 114 as Karnataka etched a memorable sevenwicket win over Mumbai in a Group C match of the Vi-

jay Hazare Trophy. Shreyas' unbeaten 55ball knock (5x4, 10x6) combined with fifties from Ayush Mhatre (78, 82b), Hardik Tamore (84, 94b) and Shivam Dube (63 not out, 36b) guided Mumbai to an imposing 382 for four in 50 overs.

But Shrijith, who was sold to Mumbai Indians for Rs 30 lakh in the recent IPL auction, hammered 150 off 101 balls with 20 fours and four sixes to help Karnataka scale down 383 with 3.4

overs to spare. He was ably supported by KV Aneesh (82, 66b), Praveen Dubey (65 not out, 50b) and captain Mayank Agarwal (47, 48b)

Virat, Utkarsh power Jharkhand

Explosive left-hander Utkarsh Singh (82, 99b, 7x4) and centurion Virat Singh (109 not out) helped Jharkhand to successfully chase Assam's challenging 257 for 9 in their seven

wicket canter.

The 26-year-old Utkarsh and Virat, both mentored by former India skipper MS Dhoni, raised 141 runs for the third wicket in just 25 overs as Jharkhand made a strong start to their campaign.

Hardik-less Baroda win India all-rounder Hardik Pandya will not be available for the league stage matches of the Vijay Hazare Trophy because of personal reasons, but he will join Baroda if they progress to

SpaDeX: launch vehicle moved to First Launch Pad

Bengaluru: The launch vehicle of India's SpaDeX mission has been integrated and moved to the first launch pad of Satish Dhawan Space Centre, Sriharikota, ISRO said on Saturday.

This mission is intended to develop and demonstrate a technology needed to dock and undock spacecraft in space, apart from other things.

"The launch vehicle has been integrated and now moved to the First Launch Pad, for further integration of satellites and launch preparations," ISRO said in a post on X.

SpaDeX mission is a costeffective technology demonstrator mission for the demonstration of 'in-space docking' using two small spacecraft launched by PSLV, ISRO said in an explainer on the subject.

This technology is essential for India's space ambitions such as Indian on Moon, sample return from the Moon, the building and operation of Bharatiya Antariksh Station (BAS), ISRO stated in an explainer.

In-space docking tech-



nology is essential when multiple rocket launches are required to achieve common mission objectives. Through this mission. India is marching towards becoming the fourth country in the world to have space docking technology, it added.

After the successful launch of the PSLV-C59/ Probas-3 mission on December 9, ISRO chairman and secretary of the Department of Space, S Somanath said a similar mission was coming up with the launch of PSLV-C60 in December itself. SpaDeX mission was floated to develop and demonstrate the technology needed for rendezvous, docking, and undocking of two small spacecraft (SDX01.

Man-made products storing 8.4 bn tonnes of carbon

New Delhi: About 8.4 billion tonnes of carbon is estimated to have been accumulated and stored in long-lasting products from around the world made by humans, such as plastics and buildings, between 1995 and 2019,

according to a study. Researchers at the University of Groningen in the Netherlands said this 'fossil carbon' added to the 'technosphere' -- the sum of all human-made objects, both in use and discarded -- equals around 93 per cent of carbon dioxide emissions from around the world in

They added that the carbon locked up in the 'technosphere' has a huge potential to add to greenhouse gas emissions

Increasing the lifetime of products and recycling rates are two ways to reduce the amount of fossil carbon entering waste streams, the researchers suggested.

"Over these 25 years (1995-2019), 8.4 billion tons of fossil carbon have accumulated, with approximately 0.4 billion tons added each year, with a huge potential for further contribution to anthropogenic greenhouse gas emissions," the authors wrote in the study published in the journal Cell Reports Sustainability.

Ecological economist and senior author Klaus Hubacek, Uni-



versity of Groningen, said, "We have accumulated more carbon in human-made stuff on the planet than there is carbon in the natural world, but we completely overlook it, and those stocks get bigger and bigger.'

"The message is to look at

stocks rather than just flows," Hubacek said.

To estimate these stocks, the researchers used publicly available data on inputs and outputs of material from different economic sectors for 2011 -- the only year for which such data exists at the global level.

The team then calculated the amount of carbon flowing in and out of the sectors by using the average carbon content of different products. For example, plastics are estimated to contain 74 per cent fossil carbon on average.

The analysis considered not only final products such as durable plastics and bitumen (used in roads) but also fossil carbonbased feedstocks that are used as intermediate products in different industries, the researchers

They found that in 2011, nine per cent of fossil carbon was accumulated in long-lasting products within the technosphere -and if this were to be emitted as the greenhouse gas carbon dioxide, it would roughly equal the European Union's emissions that year (3.7 gigatonnes vs. 3.8 gigatonnes).

Further, buildings and infrastructure were found to account for the highest stored amounts of fossil carbon (34 per cent).

QUOTE OF THE DAY

"Nehru was not in favour of reservation. He believed it would cause division in society. His thought was also against the



scheduled caste. Ambedkar fought elections twice from Maharashtra. Nehru felicitated the candidate who defeated Ambedkar."

Jitan Ram Manjhi, Union minister, MSME

Bihar govt takes over Bettiah Raj land

complete takeover by the Bihar government of about 15,358 acres of land belonging to the erstwhile princely estate of Bettiah Raj, one of the largest zamindari of the state, with the notification to this effect being issued in the Gazette, an official said.

The 'Vesting of Bettiah Raj Properties Act—2024's gazette notification dated December 11 followed a bill passed by the state legislature in the winter session last month.

Earlier, properties of the estate were managed by the Court of Wards, Board of Revenue (Bihar Government)

"All the existing

properties, to the knowledge of the court and being looked after by the court, of the Bettiah Raj, located in or outside the state of Bihar, whether movable or immovable, shall stand vested with the state government from the date on which this Act comes into force. Bettiah Raj Properties means and includes all movable and immovable properties of the erstwhile Raja of Bettiah", says the gazette

notification. "With the publication of gazette notification of the 'Vesting of Bettiah Rai Properties Act—2024', now the Board of Revenue of the state government is framing rules of the Act which will be further approved by the state cabinet", Additional Chief Secretary (ACS), Revenue and Land Reforms department, Dipak Kumar Singh told PTI on Saturday.

The Act has been passed with a view to ensure effective protection and management of Bettiah Raj land, said the ACS.

According to office of the Court of Wards, Bettiah Raj (authority which used to manage properties of the estate earlier), details of properties were submitted to the Secretary, Board of Revenue, on September 9, 2021, total land—15,358.60 acres, worth Rs 7957.38 crore -- belonging to

the concerned estate are in Bihar and Uttar Pradesh

Out of a total of 15,358.60 acres of land, 15,215,33 acres is in Bihar and 143.26 acres is in Uttar Pradesh. According to officials, a large chunk of land that came under the erstwhile Bettiah Raj has been encroached upon over the years.

Cities in Bihar where land belonging to Bettiah Estate are located include: 9758.72 acres in West Champaran, 5320.51 acres in East Champaran, 35.58 acres in Gopalganj, 7.29 acres in Siwan, 4.81 acres in Patna, 88.41 acres in Saran.

Similarly, cities in Uttar Pradesh where land belonging to Bettiah Estate are located include: Kushinagar (61.16 acres), Maharajganj (7.53 acres), Varanasi (10.13 acres), Gorakhpur (50.92 acres), Basti (6.21 acre), Allahabad (4.54 acre), Ayodhya (1.86 acre).

"The Court of Wards, consequent upon vesting, shall hand over all the papers, documents, records, maps and all relevant information to the concerned Collector of the districts where the properties of Bettiah Raj

are located", says the notified Act. All existing leases or the existing privileges upon the lands and properties of the Bettiah Raj Properties shall stand extinguished from the date of such notification, it said. All Bettiah Raj properties vested in the state under this act shall be free from all encumbrances and shall be exempt from attachment, seizure or sale. "All salami, rents, cess, royalties and revenues in respect of lands comprised in Bettiah properties or tenure on or after the date of vesting shall be payable to the state and any payment made otherwise shall not be binding on the state", it said.

IRI) बेतिया राज घराना में आपका स्वागत है (बेतिया

The last raja of Bettiah Raj, Harendra Kishore Singh, died heirless on March 26, 1893, leaving behind two widows, Maharani Sheo Ratna Kunwar and Maharani Janki Kunwar.

Maharani Sheo Ratna Kunwar who succeeded to the estate of Raja Harendra Kishore Singh on his death as his senior widow died on March 24, 1896 and on her death Maharani Janki Kunwar became entitled to the possession of the estate. Since it was reportedly found that Maharani Janki Kunwar was not able to administer the estate, its management was taken over by the Court of Wards.

Four of family killed in fire

Dewas: A couple and their two children were killed in a fire that broke out at a milk parlour-cum-house in Madhya Pradesh's Dewas district in the early hours of Saturday, police said.

The blaze erupted on the premises in the Nayapura area around 4.45 am, an official said.

'We received information about a fire in a milk parlour in Nayapura, and a family was living in the same premises," Nahar Darwaja police station in-charge Manju Yadav told

She said the victims, a couple and their two children, died of suffocation and burn injuries. A team from the fire brigade has brought the blaze under control, the official said.

According to police, Dinesh Karpentar (35), his wife Gayatri (30), 10-yearold daughter Ishika (10) and seven-year-old son Chirag died in the fire.

Superintendent of Police (SP) Puneet Gehlot said Dinesh owned a dairy on the ground floor of the building and lived with his family on the second floor.

"We are probing into the cause of the fire. The dairy was on the ground floor, and the family was on the second floor while the first floor was vacant," the official told reporters.

He said the fire started on the ground floor, and it is suspected that it intensified as some inflammable material was stored there.

The SP said the family could not be rescued despite being on the second floor and could not escape.

Based on an investiga-The exact cause for the tion report of the Directofire will be known after the rate of Civil Rights Enforensics team conducts a forcement (DCRE), the Social Welfare Department probe, he said, adding that the fire has been controlled. directed the state police

over caste discrimination chief to initiate legal action on the complaint of the said associate professor.

Samajwadi Party workers protest against Union Home Minister Amit Shah

IIM-B director booked

over his remarks on BR Ambedkar in Noida on Saturday.

According to police, Gopal Das, an associate professor at IIMB, alleged that eight persons deliberately revealed and publicised his caste at workplace and he was denied equal opportunity.

He further alleged that he was also threatened and mentally harassed.

In a statement issued earlier, the IIMB claimed that rather than harassment or discrimination, Das has received all forms of support from the Institute since his recruitment in 2018, starting with his applying for the position of Assistant Professor, but being offered the role of Associate Professor based on his qualifications and

According to IIMB, he has received significant incentives since he joined IIMB for his research and teaching, in addition to his salary as Associate Professor as per the 7th central pay commission of the Government of India. He has been given positions of responsibility including Chairperson, Institutional Review Board; Member, Career Development Services Committee and Member,

"He has taught courses of his choice across different academic programmes

Dr Das's allegations of

Arrest warrant against cricketer Robin Uttappa

Bengaluru: An arrest warrant has been issued against former India cricketer Robin Uttappa in connection with alleged fraud related to Employees' Provident Fund (EPF) deposits, officials said on Saturday

The warrant of arrest issued by Shadakshara Gopala Reddy, Regional Provident Fund Commissioner - II and Recovery Officer, K R Puram stated that Rs 23,36,602 is to be recovered from Uthappa, the defaulter.

The former cricketer is the director of Centauries Lifestyle Brands Pvt Ltd, Indiranagar.

In his order to the Station House Office of Pulakeshinagar Police Station, the senior officer stated, "Due to non remittances of dues, this office is unable to settle the Provident Fund accounts of the poor workers. In view of the above, you are kindly requested to execute the enclosed warrant of arrest through the Thana incharge under whose jurisdiction Sri Robin Uthappa

resides. "In this connection it is kindly requested to arrest the employer under Rule 73



of IInd Schedule to Income Tax Act 1961 and Income Tax (CP) Rule 1962 and Section 8B of Employees' Provident Funds and Miscellaneous Provisions Act, 1952, and produce him before the undersigned on or before 27.12.2024 for further proceedings through your official.

The order stated, "In exercise of the power conferred on me under section 8B of the Employees' Provident Funds and Miscellaneous Provisions Act, 1952,... command you to arrest the said defaulter and bring him before the undersigned as soon as practicable and in any event within 24 hours of his arrest (exclusive of the time required for the journey) unless the defaulter pays the said amount of Rs 23,36,602 and Rs 5,000 for the cost of executing this process.

However, a senior police officer said, "The address mentioned in the arrest warrant issued by the Regional Provident Fund Commissioner is an old one and the concerned person does not stay at this address anymore. Our team had gone to the given address and verified. As per information, he vacated the mentioned address over a vear ago. We have informed the same to the concerned officer. Further decision will be taken by the concerned authority which issued the arrest warrant."

Geyser gas leak kills girl

Aligarh: A 16-year-old school girl died of asphyxiation while bathing following a geyser gas leak in the bathroom at her house here, police said on Saturday.

The incident happened in Kuldeep Vihar colony on Friday when Mahi's mother had gone to a nearby shop, according to family members.

They said that upon returning she found the bathroom door locked and her daughter did not respond to her calls.

Mahi's brother, Madhav said the bathroom door was locked from outside, a precaution the family took due to the girl's previous fainting episodes while bathing.

The door was opened and Mahi was taken to the Jawaharlal Nehru Medical College Hospital where doctors declared her dead upon arrival, the police

Family sources said that she had fainted in similar circumstances two years ago but had recovered.

They attributed the incident to the lack of ventilation in the bathroom that led to the girl's death.



been registered against the

director and seven profes-

sors of the Indian Institute

of Management, Bangalore

(IIM) for allegedly discrimi-

nating against a Dalit asso-

ciate professor on the basis

Based on the complaint

from the associate profes-

sor, a case was registered

on Friday against the direc-

tor and other faculty mem-

bers of IIMB under the

Scheduled Castes and the

Scheduled Tribes (Preven-

tion of Atrocities) Act and

"We received the com-

plaint and filed a case. How-

ever, those named in the

FIR claimed that they ob-

tained a stay order from the

court the same evening.

But we are yet to receive the

order," a senior officer said.

Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita.

of his caste, police said.

the interiors of the Dal Lake in Srinagar on Saturday.

The priest of the Kalki Vishnu temple, Mahendra Prasad Sharma said it is good that the survey team came for a visit.

"There is a 'krish koop'

the visit by the ASI, Sambhal Sub-Divisional Magistrate Vandana Mishra said, "A team of the ASI visited the 'Kalki Vishnu' temple. There is a 'krish koop' here which is said to be an ancient well. Its age is yet to be determined. The team stayed for about 15 minutes and also visited the temple.'

On Friday, a four-member team of the ASI surveyed the recently-discovered Shri Kartik Mahadev temple, five pilgrimage sites and 19 'koops' (wells).

The temple housed an planned to reopen.

Sambhal District Magistrate Rajender Pensiya had earlier told reporters that the ancient temple and the well were being excavated.

Diversity and Inclusion Committee. of the Institute.

discrimination against the Institute and its faculty arose only when his application for promotion was put on hold because of complaints of harassment lodged by some doctoral students against him. An enquiry conducted by IIMB as per the rules, with the committee including a reputed academic from the SC category from an eminent institution, found that the students' complaints were justified," it stated.

ASI survey at temple

The Kartik Mahadev Sambhal: An Archaeologithe temple premises, inside cal Survey of India (ASI) the old boundary," he said. Speaking to PTI about

team inspected an old well on the 'Kalki Vishnu' temple premises here on Saturday, a day after the agency conducted a survey of a recently discovered temple in the district.

(well) here. It is not closed but there is no water in it. This well is mentioned in the 'Skanda Purana' along with all pilgrimage sites of Sambhal... this well is on

temple (Bhasma Shankar temple) was reopened on December 13 after the authorities said they stumbled upon the covered structure during an antiencroachment drive.

idol of Lord Hanuman and a shivling. It had remained locked since 1978. The temple also has a well nearby which the authorities had

target Kolkata: The eight susist outfit Ansar-al-Islam Bangladesh, who were re-

'Chicken's

Neck' was

cently arrested, had been planning to target the 'Chicken's Neck' connecting West Bengal's Siliguri with the northeastern states, a top police officer said.

They wanted to create large-scale instability in the corridor by carrying out synchronised attacks and fomenting instability, he said.

The West Bengal Police recovered pen drives and documents from two suspected members of the terrorist outfit, who were arrested in Murshidabad district.

ADG Supratim Sarkar told reporters on Friday that the duo was part of a group of eight people apprehended by Bengal, Kerala and Assam police.

Inquiries revealed they had specific plans to target the 'Chicken's Neck', also known as the Siliguri Corridor - the only connectivity with the seven states of the northeast.

Sarkar said the state police had got a tip-off about a sleeper cell of the outfit, which was active since August.

QUOTE OF THE DAY

"The ECI, instead of complying with the judgment, rushes to amend the law to curtail the list of what can be shared. Why is the ECI so



Assembly, Debabrata Saikia, has written to the Chief Justice of India, accusing the state's Advocate General, Devaiit Lon Saikia, of violating the Constitution by taking up roles as acting BCCI secretary and an ICC director.

Guwahati: Leader of Opposition in Assam

In the letter sent to the CJI on Thursday, Saikia claimed that the advocate general has breached the privileges and duties of his position by taking "office of profit/positions of pecuniary gains against norms and

The advocate general, however, said there was no question of 'office of profit' as both the posts in BCCI and ICC were hon-

ourary in nature. A copy of Debabrata Saikia's letter was

Saikia in dock over BCCI position also marked to the governor, chief minister and chief secretary of Assam, and the

> The Congress leader pointed out that Saikia was appointed as the advocate general of the state on May 21, 2021, and he had sworn his allegiance and abidance to the rules and restrictions under Article 165 of the Indian Constitution.

chairman of Bar Council of India.

Among such regulations are the advocate general holding himself up to the guidelines stipulated to be adhered to by any high court judge, give advice to the government on legal matters and also the right to

speak in, and otherwise take part in the proceedings of the legislative assembly. Saikia said that the advocate general was

appointed as the acting secretary of the Board of Cricket Control of India (BCCI) on December 12 this year, and will continue in this role until September 2025, when the vacancy is to

be permanently filled. Due to his position as secretary of BCCI, Saikia was also appointed as a director of the International Cricket Council (ICC), the Congress MLA added.

While expressing delight at the appointment of a person from the state to top positions in the cricket bodies, the leader of opposition added, "...we also plead that Sri Saikia should hold himself in utmost regard and commitment towards the Constitution of India and responsibilities betrothed upon him by the Government of Assam and people of Assam with the topmost priority before any other commitments.'

The Congress leader claimed that Saikia has violated the privileges of the assembly by taking a secretarial position along with the position of director which have several pecuniary benefits by a foreign organisation (ICC) and a non-governmental organisation (BCCI) in violation of the principles of 'office of profit'.

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No of domestic migrants estimated to have lowered by 12 pc

domestic migrants is estimated to have lowered by around 12 per cent to 40.20 crore between 2011 and 2023, indicating increased economic opportunities across the country, said a report by prime minister's economic advisory panel EAC-PM

According to a working paper by the Economic Advisory Council to the Prime Minister (EAC-PM), the number of domestic migrants stood at 40,20,90,396 in 2023, which was 11.78 per cent lower compared to the figure registered as per Census 2011.

The paper titled '400 Million Dreams! Examining volume and directions of domestic migration in India using novel high frequency data', said as per Census 2011, the total number of migrants stood at 45,57,87,621

"Overall domestic migration in India is slowing. We estimate the overall number of migrants in the country, as of 2023, to be 40,20,90,396. This is about 11.78 per cent lower as compared to the number of migrants enumerated as per Census 2011 (45,57,87,621)," it

Consequently, the paper said, the migration rate which stood at 37.64 per cent of total population as per Census 2011, is estimated to have reduced to 28.88 per cent.

"We hypothesize that this is on account of availability of improved services such as education, health, infrastructure and connectivity as well as improved economic opportunities in or near in major sources of migration and is an indicator of overall economic



ing intra-state migrants) has

are the new entrants and

while Andhra Pradesh and Bi-

har are now ranked a notch

While pointing out that

West Bengal, Rajasthan and

Karnataka are the states

showing the maximum growth

in percentage share of the ar-

riving passengers, the report

said Maharashtra and Andhra

Pradesh are the states where

the percentage share of total

"Mumbai, Bengaluru Ur-

ban, Howrah, Central Delhi,

Hyderabad are the districts

attracting most migrant arriv-

als, while Valsad, Chittoor,

Paschim Bardhaman, Agra,

Guntur, Villupuram and Sa-

harsa are the top origin dis-

As per the paper, at the state

level, Uttar Pradesh-Delhi;

Guiarat-Maharashtra: Telan-

gana-Andhra Pradesh, and

Bihar-Delhi emerge as the pri-

"At the district level, Mur-

shidabad-Kolkata; Paschim

Bardhaman-Howrah: Valsad

-Mumbai; Chittoor-Bengaluru

mary dyads of movement.

tricts," it said.

migrants has reduced.

"West Bengal and Rajasthan

changed

growth," noted the paper authored by former EAC-PM chairman Bibek Debroy.

The paper used three highfrequency and granular data sets -- Indian Railway Unreserved Ticketing System (UTS) data on passenger volumes; mobile telephone subscribers roaming data from the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI), and district level banking data to understand the likely impact of migration at the places of

Looking at the spatial dimensions of travel, the paper said, the top origin districts are coalesced around major urban agglomerations viz. Delhi, Mumbai, Chennai, Bangalore, Kolkata etc.

Not only is this in line with gravity models of migration but perhaps also is a tentative confirmation of priors i.e short distance migration accounts for the largest share of migrants and that distance has a negative effect on labour flows, it added.

The report also noted that the composition of the top five states that attract maximum number of migrants (includthe most popular routes for migration between districts," the paper said, adding that this has implications for urban planning as well as for planning of transportation

Using TRAI's mobile phone roaming data, the report finds that April-June is the high months for movement with November-December witnessing secondary highs.

A secondary high in winter time is perhaps indicative of travel around the festival/ marriage season. January, on the other hand, appears to be the month of lowest travel, it

As per Census 2011, just five states -- Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, Bihar and West Bengal -- together account for about 48 per cent of the total outbound migrants, which includes within-state migrants as well.

Similarly, just five states --Maharashtra, Uttar Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh, West Bengal and Tamil Nadu -- together account for about 48 per cent of all incoming migrants. This includes within-state migrants as well.

In the period from 1991 to 2001, the compounded annual growth rate of the number of migrants was 2.7 per cent. This increased to 3.7 per cent during 2001 to 2011.

Interestingly, in the period from 1991 to 2001, India's workforce grew from 3.17 crore to 4.02 crore (an annual average growth of 2.6 per cent), whereas from 2001 to 2011, the workforce grew from 4.02 crore to 4.82 crore (an annual average growth of 1.99 per cent). **-PTI**

MONEY MATTERS

Dividends: The Santa Claus of Stocks



By Kaustubh Kale

very year, investors eagerly anticipate dividends, much like children waiting for Santa Claus. These distributions of corporate profits, paid to shareholders, are one of the most rewarding aspects of owning stocks. While stock price appreciation is a major driver of returns, dividends often act as a reliable, consistent gift that keeps on giving.

A Seasonal Surprise

Just as Santa delivers presents annually, many companies reward their shareholders with periodic dividends, often on a quarterly or half-yearly basis. This predictable payout can be especially comforting during market volatility, making regular dividend payments feel like getting a holiday bonus throughout the year.

The Gift That Keeps Giving

What makes dividends special is their ability to compound over time. Reinvesting dividends allows investors to buy more shares, which in turn generates additional dividends. This creates a snowball effect, where earnings grow year after year. Like Santa's never-ending sack of presents, a well-chosen dividend-paying stock can continue rewarding investors far into the future.

In many ways, dividends are like rental income from real estate—they provide a steady cash flow that keeps your motivation to stay invested, even when market conditions fluctuate.



For example, companies in sectors like consumer-facing industries, information technologv. pharmaceuticals, government-owned enterprises, and multinational corporations are known for their generous and steady dividend payments. Dividends provide stability in a portfolio and over time these steady payments—when combined with reinvestment—can lead to substantial wealth

A Sign of Financial Health

accumulation.

Dividends also serve as a sign of a company's financial wellbeing. Much like Santa's arrival signals joy and prosperity, a regular dividend payout indicates that a company is generating sufficient profits and has confidence in its future. Strong dividend payouts reflect not only paper profits but also healthy cash flows, suggesting robust operations. Investors view dividends as a positive indicator of sound management and fiscal stability. It's a message to shareand we believe in the long-term success of our business."

Apart from dividends, it's crucial to assess other metrics like growth rate, return ratios, and debt-to-equity ratio to ensure the company is genuinely growing, converting profits into cash flows, and capable of distributing them sustainably.

Not Every Stock Is Santa

However, not all companies can play Santa Claus. It is important to research well or take help or an advisor so that you choose the right companies to invest in.

In short, dividends are the stock market's Santa Clausbringing joy, wealth, and the promise of a prosperous future to those who are patient and wise with their investments.

(The author is a Chartered Accountant and CFA (USA). Financial Advisor. Views personal. He could be reached on 9833133605.)

Discount if ticket booked through RRTS app

New Delhi: Namo Bharat travel through paperless a 10 per cent discount on tickets purchased through the RRTS Connect mobile application as part of the "loyalty points program" launched by NCRTC, an official statement said.

National Capital Region Transport Corporation (NCRTC) Managing Director Shalabh Goel launched the initiative at the Sahibahad Regional Rapid Transit System (RRTS) station on Saturday and also unveiled the first edition of Namo Bharat Times, a bi-monthly commuter newsletter.

Under the loyalty points program, passengers will earn one point for every rupee spent on Namo Bharat train tickets

Each loyalty point is valued at Rs 0.10 (10 paise) and will be credited to the passenger's account. These points can be redeemed for ticket purchases, the statement added.

This initiative will not only benefit passengers monetarily but also encourage the use of digital QR tickets through the 'RRTS Connect' app, simplifying

"Every new user will receive Rs 50, which is equivalent to 500 loyalty points, upon downloading the app. They can earn an additional 500 lovalty points by referring the RRTS Connect app to other users. Both the referrer and the referee will receive Rs 50, equivalent to 500 loyalty points each, which will be credited to their respective accounts," the statement said.

All accrued loyalty points will remain valid for one year from the date of credit, encouraging frequent, sustainable travel and ongoing app engagement. The 'RRTS Connect app is available for download on the Google Play Store and Apple App Store

Namo Bharat Times will be freely available for download on all digital platforms of NCRTC, such as ncrtc.in, rrts.co.in, and the 'RRTS Connect' app. The newsletter will keep Namo Bharat commuters informed about new initiatives and recent develop-



A child stands next to models of Santa Claus at a shop ahead of the Christmas festival in Hyderabad on Friday.

Andhra, PhysicsWallah deal

Amaravati: The Andhra Pradesh government and EdTech company Physics-Wallah have signed an agreement to set up a University of Innovation (UoI) at an investment of up to Rs 1.000 crore.

The UoI is set to emerge as the first institute of eminence in the state and aligns with Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu's aim to provide the state's youth with education in Artificial Intelligence (AI) and other emerging

technologies. "We are committed to investing up to Rs 1,000 crores by GSV Ventures - US and other investors, the purpose is to create an institution that combines academic learning with industry relevance. The UoI will help learners with the skills they might need in a constantly evolving job market, in an attempt to foster entrepreneurship and innovation," said Physics-Wallah founder and chief

The UoI will work towards blending academic excellence, innovation, and

a press release on Friday.

executive Alakh Pandey in

research, focusing on addressing key challenges in education employability.

Following a hub and spoke model, the varsity will serve as a central hub with satellite centres across the southern state serving as spokes.

Further, in a bid to keep the curriculum aligned with the market, Physics-Wallah is collaborating with industry partners like Amazon Web Services India Pvt Ltd to provide industry-relevant education.

management (AUM) of the National Pension System are expected to touch Rs 15 lakh crore by the end of current fiscal year, Pension Fund Regulatory Development Authority Chairman Deepak Mohanty said.

At a media interaction

following the official

launch of the Association

of NPS Intermediaries, Mo-

hanty also said the take up

rate by the employees in the

corporate sector remains a

This Association of NPS

comprises stakeholders in-

cluding pension fund man-

agers, points of presence

(bank and non-bank), cen-

tral record keeping agen-

cies, trustee banks, custodi-

ans, aggregators, annuity

service providers, pension

agents, retirement advi-

sors, and other industry

The association aims to

represent the interests of

all intermediaries in the

NPS ecosystem, promote

NPS as a reliable, flexible,

and tax-efficient retirement

product, focus on subscrib-

er welfare by ensuring

smooth and transparent

processes within the sys-

tem and also to collaborate

with regulators and policy-

challenge.

participants.

makers to improve the NPS framework

'Take up rate by corporate

employees a challenge'

"The total subscribers (in the pension sector) at this moment are more than 8 crore (including 6.4 crore in Atal Pension Yojana), out of which in NPS there are about 1.6 crore subscribers and the corpus what people are contributing to the pension system is almost Rs 14 lakh crore, and given that situation, our expectation is that by the end of the year, it should Rs 15 lakh crore," Mohanty said.

Of the 1.6 crore NPS subscriber base, 62 lakh are from the private sector and

18 lakh from corporate. "So, that is the big challenge. We have about 18,000 corporates, including big corporates, who have joined NPS, but the take up rate by employees is less partly because there are so many things (and) partly, because of lack of awareness that we are trying to

The launch of the Association of NPS Intermediaries is a significant milestone for the pension sector, he said adding, "I am confident it will further strengthen and redouble our efforts in creating awareness to expand pension coverage in India through collective efforts and feedback mechanism."

He noted that the pension potential for NPS is very high as 80 per cent of the workforce in the country is in informal sector.

He said there are different ways of expanding NPS with expanding the intermediary base among one of them, and added that PFR-DA has requested the sponsor banks -- of RRBs that they should provide NPS as they being in the semi-urban and rural areas are doing well in case of Atal Pension Yojana.

"So, we are expanding the intermediary base and to target younger cohort of population, we are collaborating with the digital companies by giving them POP (point of presence) licence so that they can reach the younger cohort and those who are digitally savvy."

Housing sales in Dec quarter to fall in top cities

New Delhi: Housing sales are estimated to fall 21 per cent annually across nine major cities during October-December period to 1.08 lakh units on high base effect, according to PropEquity.

Real estate data analytics firm PropEquity on Saturday released the sale numbers for India's top nine housing markets -- Delhi-NCR . Mumbai. Navi Mumbai. Kolkata, Bengaluru, Pune, Hyderabad, Chennai, Thane. It has estimated sales to rise only in Delhi-NCR.

As per the data, the total sales of residential properties across the nine cities are likely to decline to 1,08,261 units in the current

quarter as against 1,37,225 units in the same period last year.

However, sales are likely to rise 5 per cent from 1,03,213 units in the preceding September

Samir Jasuja, CEO & Founder of PropEquity, said the sales have declined on annual basis because of high base effect.

He said the sales are likely to rise quarter-on-quarter on the back of festive demand.

"A closer look at the numbers reveals that despite the drop, the supply to absorption ratio in 2024 remains the same as in 2023 which indicates that the fundamentals of the real estate sector are strong



and healthy," Jasuja said.

Housing sales are estimated to fall in Hyderabad by 47 per cent to 12,682 units during October-December 2024 from 24,044 units in the year-ago period.

In Bengaluru, sales could drop 13 per cent to 14,957 units from 17,276 units, while Chennai might see a 9 per cent drop to 4,266 units

Housing sales in Mumbai are likely to fall 27 per cent to 10,077 units from 13,878 units.

A 13 per cent decline is seen in Navi Mumbai to 7,478 units from 8,607 units, while a 16 per cent drop is imminent in Thane to 21,893 units from 26,099 units.

Kolkata is likely to witness a drop of 33 per cent to 3,763 units from 5.653 units.

Sales of residential properties in Pune could decline 24 per cent to 20,230 units from 26,641 units.

The Delhi-NCR market is set to buck the trend. Sales in the NCR market are set to rise 25 per cent to 12,915 units during December quarter 2024 from 10,354 units in the year-ago period.

Vivek Singhal, CEO, Smartworld Developers, said the Delhi-NCR market, especially Gurugram, is witnessing a strong demand from end-users as well as

He said the demand of luxury homes in Gurugram has been unprecedented in the last few years.

Vijay Harsh Jha, founder and CEO of property brokerage firm VS Realtors, said the real estate market continues to display strong growth. "The rise in sales and launches from previous quarter indicates that the festive season demand was broadly in line with our expectations."

QUOTE OF THE DAY

"The Centre has already constituted the National **Organic Corporation** Ltd to boost the sector. I urge all the CMs (in the northeast) to sign agreements with NOCL for packaging, marketing and



exporting of organic products." Amit Shah, Union Minister, Home

Attack on Christmas market in Germany: Death toll rises to 5

Magdeburg: Germans on Saturday mourned both the victims and their shaken sense of security after a Saudi doctor intentionally drove into a Christmas market teeming with holiday shoppers, killing at least five people, including a small child, and injuring

Authorities arrested a 50-year-old man at the site of the attack in Magdeburg on Friday evening and took him into custody for questioning. He has lived in Germany for nearly two decades, practising medicine in Bernburg, about 40 kilometers (25 miles) south of Magdeburg. officials said.

The governor of the surrounding state of Saxony-Anhalt, Reiner Haseloff, told reporters that the death toll rose from two to five and that more than 200 people in total were injured.

Chancellor Olaf Scholz said that nearly 40 of them "are so seriously injured that we must be very worried about them.'

Several German media outlets identified the suspect as Taleb A., withholding his last name in line with privacy laws, and reported that he was a specialist in psychiatry and psychotherapy

Mourners lit candles and placed flowers outside a church near the market on the cold and gloomy day. Several people stopped and cried. A Berlin church choir whose members witnessed a previous Christmas market attack in 2016



come across a suspect in an

act of mass violence with

business' you think nothing

could surprise you any-

more. But a 50-year-old

Saudi ex-Muslim who lives

in East Germany, loves the

AfD and wants to punish

Germany for its tolerance

towards Islamists — that

really wasn't on my radar, "

Neumann, the director of

the International Centre

for the Study of Radicaliza-

tion and Political Violence

at King's College London,

The violence shocked

Germany and the city,

bringing its mayor to the

verge of tears and marring

a festive event that's part of

a centuries-old German tra-

dition. It prompted several

other German towns to can-

cel their weekend Christ-

mas markets as a precau-

tion and out of solidarity

with Magdeburg's loss. Ber-

lin kept its markets open

but has increased its police

string of extremist attacks

in recent years, including a

knife attack that killed

Germany has suffered a

presence at them.

Magdeburg is still

wrote on X.

shaken

"After 25 years in this

that profile.

sang Amazing Grace, a hymn about God's mercy, offering their prayers and solidarity with the victims.

The man behind the attack

There were still no answers Saturday as to what caused him to drive into a crowd in the eastern German city of Magdeburg.

Describing himself as a former Muslim, the suspect shared dozens of tweets and retweets daily focusing on anti-Islam themes, criticising the religion and congratulating Muslims who left the faith.

He also accused German authorities of failing to do enough to combat what he said was the "Islamism of Europe." Some described him as an activist who helped Saudi women flee their homeland. He has also voiced support for the farright and anti-immigrant Alternative for Germany (AfD) party.

Recently, he seemed focused on his theory that German authorities have been targeting Saudi asylum seekers.

Prominent German terrorism expert Peter Neumann said he had yet to eight at a festival in the western city of Solingen in August.

Magdeburg is a city of about 240,000 people, west of Berlin, that serves as Saxony-Anhalt's capital. Friday's attack came eight years after an Islamic extremist drove a truck into a crowded Christmas market in Berlin, killing 13 people and injuring many others. The attacker was killed days later in a shootout in

A recount of the horrifying attack

Thi Linh Chi Nguyen, a 34-year-old manicurist from Vietnam whose salon is located in a mall across from the Christmas market, was on the phone during a break when she heard loud bangs and thought at first they were fireworks. She then saw a car drive through the market at high speed. People screamed and a child was thrown into the air by the car.

Shaking as she described the horror of what she witnessed, she recalled seeing the car bursting out of the market and turning right onto Ernst-Reuter-Allee street and then coming to a standstill at the tram stop where the suspect was

The market itself was still cordoned off Saturday with red-and-white tape and police vans every 50 meters (about 54 yards). Police with machine pistols guarded every entry to the market



for rape victims after 50 men were convicted of raping or sexually assaulting Gisele Pelicot in a landmark trial

Government funding bill clears Congress, averting shutdown

Washington: Facing a government shutdown deadline, the Senate rushed through final passage early Saturday of a bipartisan plan that would temporarily fund federal operations and disaster aid, dropping President-elect Donald Trump's demands for a debt limit increase into the new

House Speaker Mike Johnson had insisted Congress would "meet our obligations" and not allow federal operations to shutter ahead of the Christmas holiday season. But the day's outcome was uncertain after Trump doubled down on his insistence that a debt ceiling increase be included in any deal — if not, he said in an early morning post, let the closures "start now."

The House approved Johnson's new bill overwhelmingly, 366-34. The Senate worked into the night to pass it, 85-11, just past the deadline. At midnight, the White House said it had ceased shutdown preparations.

"This is a good outcome for the country, "Johnson said after the House vote, adding he had spoken with Trump and the presidentelect "was certainly happy about this outcome, as

President Joe Biden, who has played a less public role in the process throughout a turbulent week, was expected to sign the measure into law Saturday.

"There will be no government shutdown," Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer said.

The final product was the third attempt from Johnson, the beleaguered House speaker, to achieve one of the basic requirements of the federal government keeping it open. And it raised stark questions about whether Johnson will be able to keep his job, in the

face of angry GOP colleagues, and work alongside Trump and billionaire ally Elon Musk, who called the legislative plays from afar.

Trump's last-minute demand was almost an impossible ask, and Johnson had almost no choice but to work around his pressure for a debt ceiling increase. The speaker knew there wouldn't be enough support within the GOP majority to pass any funding package, since many Republican deficit hawks prefer to

low more debt. Instead, the Republicans, who will have full control of the White House, House and Senate next year, with big plans for tax cuts and other priorities, are showing they must routinely rely on Democrats for the votes needed to keep up

slash federal government

and certainly wouldn't al-

of governing. "So is this a Republican

with the routine operations

bill or a Democrat bill?" scoffed Musk on social media ahead of the vote.

The drastically slimmeddown 118-page package would fund the government at current levels through March 14 and add \$100 billion in disaster aid and \$10 billion in agricultural assistance to farmers.

Gone is Trump's demand to lift the debt ceiling, which GOP leaders told lawmakers would be debated as part of their tax and border packages in the new year. Republicans made a so-called handshake agreement to raise the debt limit at that time while also cutting \$2.5 trillion in spending over 10

It's essentially the same deal that flopped the night before in a spectacular setback — opposed by most Democrats and some of the most conservative Republicans — minus Trump's debt ceiling demand.

PM Modi arrives in Kuwait on 2-day visit

Kuwait City: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday arrived here in the Gulf nation on a two-day visit where he will meet the Indian diaspora and hold talks with Kuwaiti leadership to "strengthen the India-Kuwait friendship across various sectors"

Modi is visiting Kuwait the invitation of Kuwaiti Emir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah. His visit to Kuwait will be the first of any Indian Prime Minister to the Gulf nation in 43 years.

"Landed in Kuwait to a warm welcome. This is the first visit by an Indian PM in 43 years, and it will undoubtedly strengthen the India-Kuwait friendship across various sectors. I look forward to the programmes scheduled for later today and tomorrow,' PM Modi posted on X.

On his arrival, Modi was warmly received by Sheikh Fahad Yousef Saud Al-Sabah First Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Defence & Interior of Kuwait.

"A new chapter in the making! PM @narendramodi arrives in Kuwait to a ceremonial welcome. Warmly received by H.E. Sheikh Fahad Yousef Saud Al-Sabah First Deputy PM, Minister of Defence & Interior of Kuwait, H.E. Abdullah Ali Al-Yahya, FM of Kuwait & several other Ministers & dignitaries at the airport," Ministry of External Affairs official spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said in a post on X.

During the visit, Modi will hold discussions with the leadership of Kuwait and also interact with the Indian community. In his departure state-

ment, he said his talks with top Kuwaiti leadership would be an opportunity to chalk out a roadmap for a futuristic partnership between India and Kuwait.

"We deeply value the historical connection with Kuwait that has been nurtured over generations. We are not just strong trade and energy partners but also have shared interest in peace, security, stability and prosperity in the West Asia region," he said.

Modi said he was looking forward to his meetings with the Emir, the Crown Prince and the prime minister of Kuwait. He will also attend the opening ceremony of the 26th Arabian Gulf Cup here in Kuwait. The last Indian prime minister to visit Kuwait was Indira Gandhi in 1981.



Prime Minister Narendra Modi being received by Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defence of Kuwait Sheikh Fahad Yousef Saud Al-Sabah and others upon his arrival at the airport, in Kuwait on Saturday. Pic: AP/PTI

Rocket fired from Yemen strikes Tel Aviv

Tel Aviv: The Israeli military says a rocket fired from Yemen hit an area of Tel Aviv overnight, leaving 16 people slightly injured by shattered glass from nearby windows.

A further 14 people sustained minor injuries as they rushed to shelters when air raid sirens sounded before the projectile hit just before 4 am Saturday, the military said.

The attack comes less than two days after a series of Israeli airstrikes on Yemen's Houthi rebel-held capital, Sanaa, and port city of Hodeida killed at least nine people. The Israeli strikes were in response to a Houthi attack in which a long-range missile hit an Israeli school building. The Houthis also claimed a drone strike targeting an unspecified military target in central Israel

on Thursday. The Israeli military says the Iran-backed Houthis have launched more than 200 missiles and drones during the Israel-Hamas war in Gaza. The Houthis have also been attacking shipping in the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden — attacks they say won't stop until there is a ceasefire in Gaza. The Israeli strikes Thursday caused "considerable damage" to the Houthi-controlled Red Sea ports "that will lead to the immediate and significant reduction in port capacity," United Nations spokesman Stephane Dujarric said. The port at Hodeida has been key for food shipments into Yemen in its

decade-long civil war. UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said both sides' attacks risk further escalation in the region and undermine UN mediation

Key ally vows to topple Canadian PM Trudeau

Toronto: The future of Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's leadership appeared increasingly uncertain after New Democratic Party (NDP) leader Jagmeet Singh, a key ally, said he would introduce a motion to topple the minority Liberal government.

Singh, whose party has been helping keep Trudeau in office, announced in an open letter posted on social media that he would declare a loss of confidence in the Trudeau-led Liberal government next year, a move that would trigger an early election if other opposition parties support his move.

Canada's next election must be held on or before October.

Singh is the last of Canada's three main opposition parties to turn on Trudeau. In his letter, Singh said the Liberals were unde-

serving of "another chance. "That's why the NDP will vote to bring this government down and give Canadians a chance to vote for a

for them," he wrote. He said the New Democrats plan to use their next opposition day in the House

government who will work



of Commons — during which opposition priorities are given precedence over government business — to introduce the vote. The House is currently

on its winter break and is set to resume on January Singh's letter came as

questions swirled about the future of Trudeau, with at least 21 Liberal MPs now calling for him to resign, CBC News reported.

Singh's announcement is the latest in a series of political setbacks suffered by Trudeau this week after the resignation of Chrystia Freeland, his deputy prime minister and finance

minister. Freeland quit hours before she was set to deliver an economic statement on Monday, citing political disagreements between her and Trudeau on the "best path forward for Canada"

in light of tariff threats posed by US President-elect Donald Trump. "No matter who is lead-

ing the Liberal party, this government's time is up, Singh's letter read.

Singh also said the Liberals have frequently not lived up to their promises and that the time for change is now. The letter was released just before Trudeau announced his revamped front bench on Friday morning.

The New Democrats ended their parliamentary alliance with the Liberals in early September, but have repeatedly declared confidence in the government when the Conservatives have introduced votes to bring the Liberals down.

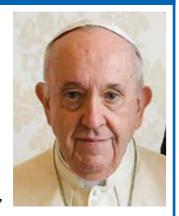
Conservative leader Pierre Poilievre has repeatedly called for an election as soon as possible.

Had Singh voted with the Conservatives, "we would be a third of the way into an election campaign right now," Poilievre told reporters on Friday.

"But he suddenly had an epiphany and says that he can no longer support the costly chaos that he has enabled as part of the NDP-Liberal coalition."

QUOTE OF THE DAY

"Gossip is an evil that destroys social life, sickens people's hearts and leads to nothing. The people say it very well: Gossip is zero. Beware of this."



Pope Francis, Head, Catholic Church

By Yoshita Singh

United Nations: Meditation transcends all religions and borders and is also a powerful instrument of diplomacy in the current global landscape marked by escalating conflicts and deep-seated mistrust, top spiritual and UN leaders said on the first World Meditation Day commemorated

The Permanent Mission of India to the United Nations organised a special event 'Meditation for Global Peace and Harmony' to mark the first World Meditation Day at the global body's headquarters on Friday.

"Today meditation is not a luxury, as it was thought, but it is a necessity," spiritual leader Gurudev Sri Sri Ravi Shankar said in his keynote address at the packed event attended by UN Ambassadors, officials, staff, civil society members as well as members of the Indian-American diaspora.

"Meditation is something you can do anywhere, everywhere, by everyone.



Meditation transcends all religions, borders: Leaders

In this sense, international Meditation Day plays a very important role and opens the door to those who have some reservations," he

He underscored that meditation "transcends all religions, all geographical boundaries and age groups

so it is very, very useful in many, many wavs.'

President of the 79th session of the UN General Assembly Philemon Yang said in his remarks that meditation "transcends borders, faiths, traditions and time, offering each of us the opportunity to pause, to listen

and to connect with our inner selves.' Earlier this month, the

193-member UN General Assembly unanimously adopted a resolution declaring December 21 as World Meditation Day.

India was a member of the core group of countries that guided the unanimous adoption of the resolution titled 'World Meditation Day' in the UNGA. Andorra, Liechtenstein, Mexico, Nepal and Sri Lanka were the other members of the core group.

Under-Secretary-Gener-

al for Operational Support Atul Khare said at the event that at the UN, civilian and uniform personnel work tirelessly on the world's most pressing challenges with colleagues operating under high pressure, including in high-risk environments, often far away from their family and country of origin. While the physical safety of peacekeepers of is of utmost importance, it is equally critical that their mental health is also taken care of, he said.

MY CORNER

Self-imposed Celibacy



Sudhir Brahme

hese are not the celebrities ostentatiously delaying marriage, nor are they couples in live-in relationships, priests or ascetics. Instead, they are men and women who have consciously chosen to stay single, rejecting the idea of marrying a farmer or a man earning less than their salaried counterparts.

In rural Maharashtra, a generation of men and women in their 40s is opting to remain unmarried, challenging long-held traditions that prioritize early marriage. This trend, particularly noticeable in the last decade, has escalated in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. Once restrictions were lifted, mass weddings took place—but they were largely for the working class. This shift has ignited discussions about how careers, social expectations, and changing attitudes are reshaping marriage in these communities.

At the heart of this shift is 85-year-old Ratnakar Pagare, a veteran community organizer from Sangamner. Through his Vadhu-Var Suchak Mandal, which connects educated professionals, he has witnessed many women, particularly from the tech sector, reject marriage proposals from farmers, despite their parents' desire for a rural, land-rich life. For these women, the allure of a city-based career far outweighs the appeal of rural living.

Women raised in urban areas are increasingly rejecting the prospect of farm life, despite its potential for significant financial returns. Interestingly, it is often the mothers of these women who are the real deterrents, discouraging their daughters from marrying farmers, fearing that rural life would hinder their daughters' career ambitions.

This issue goes beyond individual preferences and speaks to deeper societal shifts. An anonymous political leader from the region points to a worrying

trend: in some communities, nearly 98 percent of families are fixated on securing an heir to their property, but the new generation of educated women is increasingly uninterested in this traditional expectation. They are prioritizing their careers over family life, even if it means foregoing marriage.

The allure of urban life, with its promise of career stability and high-paying jobs, has only intensified this shift. The relative financial security of city-based jobs—often tied to the IT sector—has further discouraged rural men and women from considering marriage. For these urban dwellers, the prospect of returning to their ancestral land seems less appealing.

The rapid pace of urban development has contributed to a disconnect from rural life. This growing urbanization has made village life seem less desirable while the constant migration to cities and, increasingly, abroad, offers an escape from what many see as a stagnant rural economy.

But while urban life offers a degree of financial assurance, it is not without its emotional toll. Dr. Neha Kode, a psychologist from Nashik, warns that the decision to remain unmarried can result in feelings of inferiority and depression, particularly for men. In rural areas, where family and community often define an individual's identity, the absence of marriage can lead to stigma, and in some cases, suicidal thoughts. She argues that the emotional impact of this societal shift deserves attention and calls for a broader debate in Maharashtra's Legislative Assembly.

As the desire for professional success and financial stability continues to shape the lives of rural women in Maharashtra, the question remains: will the institution of marriage ever return to its traditional form, or is this a permanent transformation in the way people approach family life in India? The generational divide is clear, and its implications are only beginning to unfold. In rural Maharashtra, it seems, the future of marriage may no longer be shaped by tradition, but by the choices of a new, career-focused generation.

(The author is a senior journalist. Views personal.)

FORGOTTEN HISTORY

Navigating Empire: Jane Austen's Sailor Brothers in the Far East



Laurence Westwood

he year was 1810, the place was Canton a city on the edge of Qing Dynasty China, where trade and tension often mingled in precarious balance. Captain Francis Austen, commanding the Royal Navy's St Albans, found himself in an unenviable position. The charges were serious: three British sailors, perhaps from the East India Company's Royal Charlotte, had allegedly ventured ashore, sparking a violent altercation with the local Chinese. In the aftermath, a shoemaker named Hoan a Xing lay dead, his life claimed by a knife's edge. The Chinese authorities, unvielding in their demands, insisted that the culprits be handed over before they would allow the East India fleet to depart. Yet Austen's dilemma was far from simple. The fleet's departure could not be delayed—costs would mount, and the monsoon loomed, a looming menace to their journey home. But sailing without Chinese consent was a gamble that could imperil not just this voyage, but the future of Britain's trade with China itself.

With no one more senior to turn to, at the far reaches of the expanding British Empire, responsibility lay heavy across the shoulders of Royal Navy captains – not just for naval concerns but also for matters of high diplomacy and trade. As it was, Francis Austen was a remarkable man, extremely talented and able, destined by the end of his stellar career to be knighted and promoted to Admiral of the Fleet, the highest rank of the Royal Navy.

But he was not an easy man to serve under. A devout Evangelical, reserved, and severe in his private life, he was a strict disciplinarian and commanded what was known, sarcastically, as a 'praying ship' – though any criticism of him should perhaps be tempered somewhat by the violent and gruelling times through which he lived. He was also a somewhat disap-

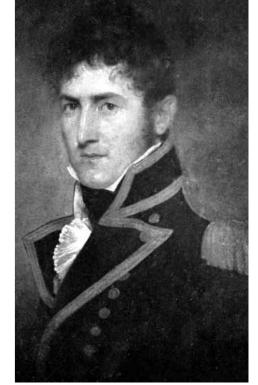
pointed man, having commanded the 84-gun Canopus back in 1805 when, just prior to the Battle of Trafalgar, it had been detached from Nelson's fleet to pick up supplies, thereby narrowly missing the famous action as well as all the fame and wealth that would have resulted from it – if he had survived, that is.

He had a younger brother also in the service, who would also enjoy an extraordinary career, rising to the rank of Rear Admiral. But Charles Austen, though just as religious as his elder brother, was a very different sort of man: warm, easy-going, and blessed with a natural charm. His crews adored him. In 1810, at the time of his elder brother's diplomatic problem in Canton, Charles Austen was in command of the 74-gun Swiftsure, on the North American station, blockading American trade with Napoleonic Europe, looking out for Royal Navy deserters serving on American ships, and intercepting slave traffic between the British West Indies and the southern American states.

Both men would regularly write home. One can only imagine what it was like for their sister, in 1810 living a quiet life in a cottage in the village of Chawton, Hampshire, reading letters from her brothers sent from the farthest ends of the world. In two of her novels, Mansfield Park and Persuasion, she, Jane Austen, would feature sailors strongly. But, in these novels, naval officers would be seen only in an English domestic setting. There would be no descriptions in her novels of the brutalities of life in the Royal Navy: the bloody battles, the maimed and killed, the diseases, the floggings, or indeed the drunkenness and fighting on shore that was giving Francis Austen a diplomatic headache in Canton.

Francis Austen resolved the Canton crisis by demanding credible witnesses to the killing of Hoan a Xing before any British sailors could be handed over. On February 11, 1810, he cross-examined two witnesses whose accounts were vague and contradictory. With no clear evidence linking British sailors to the crime—especially as American sailors, similarly dressed, were also in the area—Chinese officials allowed the fleet to depart, though Austen vowed to continue his investigation. The East India Company praised Francis Austen for his skill and test

Francis would indeed continue to investigate, discovering that three British sailors



from Cumberland, another East India Company ship, had been involved in a fight with some Chinese in Canton, though they denied murder. Again, with changing stories and contradictory statements, he was unable to establish who had actually murdered Hong a Xing.

After many more adventures, Francis Austen would eventually die peacefully at home in Hampshire at the age of 91, outliving his literary sister by many years. Charles Austen, whose career was every bit as successfully eventful as that of his elder brother, would succumb to cholera at the age of 71 while leading British forces during the Second Burmese War, much to the distress of his adoring men.

By the 1920s, long after her illustrious naval brothers had been forgotten, Jane Austen would at last be recognised by scholars as a great English novelist. She would also get to see China for herself, her novel Pride and Prejudice finally being translated there in 1935.

(The author is a novelist with an abiding passion for Chinese history. Views personal.)

NEWSMAKER OF THE WEEK

The Reluctant Heiress Takes Centre Stage



Shoumojit Banerjee

The winter session of Parliament offered a rare tableau: the three Gandhis-Sonia, Rahul. and Privanka—walking into the Lok Sabha together. Among them, Priyanka Gandhi Vadra, freshly elected as the MP from Wavanad. stood out, not only for her sartorial choices but also for her audacious political messaging. As she took the oath holding a copy of the Constitution, dressed in a traditional Kerala Kasavu saree, it was clear she was embracing both the symbolism of her new role and the weight of her family's political legacy.

Her first parliamentary session was as theatrical as it was symbolic. Whether carrying a bag emblazoned with "Palestine" or wielding props inscribed with slogans against the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), Priyanka signaled her intent to challenge the government on its policies and its messaging. The Palestine tote, in particular, drew ire from BJP members, who accused her of pandering to minority voters. Priyanka dismissed the controversy as "patriarchy," asserting her right to wear and carry what she pleased.

For decades, Priyanka has been seen as the 'reluctant Gandhi,' a figure who could electrify Congress party loyalists yet preferred the shadows to the spotlight. Her grandmother, Indira Gandhi, was India's first female Prime Minister, a symbol of charisma and iron will. Priyanka, with her striking resemblance to Indira, has often been cast as the political heir apparent. Yet, until now, she resisted fully stepping into that role.

Priyanka's trajectory has been

anything but linear. Born into India's most prominent political dynasty, she grew up amidst the privileges and perils of power. The assassination of her grandmother in 1984 and her father, Rajiv Gandhi, in 1991 deeply influenced her guarded approach to public life. After pursuing psychology and a master's degree in Buddhist studies, she married Robert Vadra, a businessman, and largely avoided political headlines, preferring to raise her two children in relative privacy.

When she did step into the limelight, it was often as a behind-thescenes strategist, crafting campaigns and canvassing votes for her brother, Rahul Gandhi, and her mother, Sonia Gandhi. Her eloquence and ability to connect with crowds earned her a devoted following. Party workers donned "Priyanka Sena" t-shirts, and her roadshows in Uttar Pradesh were marked by fervent support, despite Congress's electoral struggles in the region.

Her official entry into electoral politics came in 2019, as Congress's general secretary in charge of eastern Uttar Pradesh. The assignment was widely seen as a test run, though Congress faltered in the elections. This year's landslide victory in Wayanad, however, marked a turning point. Priyanka entered Parliament not just as a Gandhi, but as a politician with a constituency to represent.

While her gestures in Parliament were controversial, they also underlined a broader strategy of personalizing her opposition to the BJP's policies. Priyanka has project herself as a voice for the disenfranchised, whether Muslims in India or Palestinians abroad, a tactic that has evoked both admiration and criticism.

Her political ascent is not without complications. Her husband, Robert Vadra, has been embroiled in allegations of money laundering and questionable land deals. The accusations have cast a shadow over Priyanka's public image.

public image.
Internally, her rise has also reig-



nited debates about dynastic politics within Congress. For a party struggling to revive its fortunes after successive defeats, Priyanka represents both hope and risk. While her surname carries weight, critics argue it underscores Congress's dependence on the Gandhi family rather than fostering new leadership.

Priyanka's speeches blend sharp critiques of the government with appeals to India's pluralistic traditions, echoing her grandmother's style. But the India she seeks to lead is vastly different from the one Indira governed. Polarized along religious and ideological lines, today's electorate demands more than nostalgia for Congress's past glories.

As Priyanka settles into her role, her challenge will be to transcend the symbolic and deliver substantive results. Whether addressing economic disparities, or environmental challenges, she must prove her mettle not just as a Gandhi but as a leader for a new India.

For now, she remains the oncereluctant heir who has finally stepped into the spotlight, eclipsing even Rahul Gandhi in the current Parliamentary session.

STATES WATCH

A Grim Reminder of Unkept Promises

he farmers of Punjab, whose fields have long been the crucibles of India's agricultural success, are now setting the stage to highlight rural despair. The 2020–21 farmers' protests, which forced the government to repeal controversial agricultural laws, were seen by many as a victory. Yet, two years later, a new wave of protests reveals that the core issues, most notably a legal guarantee for Minimum Support Prices (MSP), remain unresolved.

The latest agitation, led by factions like the Samyukta Kisan Morcha (Non-Political) and Kisan Mazdoor Morcha, reflects a mix of frustration and determination. These groups have camped at Punjab-Haryana border points since February, undeterred by the barricades, the arrests, or the Centre's reticence. Jagjit Singh Dallewal, a 70-year-old farmer leader whose fast-untodeath has now crossed over three weeks, embodies this struggle.

The farmers' demands are pressing. Chief among them is the legal guarantee of MSP—a measure that could provide much-needed financial stability to millions of farmers. Other demands include rolling back the Electricity (Amendment) Bill, waiving farm loans, and ensuring justice for victims of past violence like the Lakhimpur Kheri massacre.

Farmers' organizations have also rejected the Centre's draft National Policy Framework on Agricultural Marketing, warning of a more intense agitation than in 2020 if the policy is implemented.

At a meeting with Punjab Agriculture Minister Gurmeet Singh Khuddian, leaders of 32 farmers' unions, aligned with the Samyukta Kisan Morcha, voiced unanimous opposition, declaring that the poli-

cy's push toward corporatisation of marketing would be resisted stronger than before. Farmers demanded that grain storage infrastructure remain in the public sector and accused the Centre of withholding Punjab's Rural Development Fund to promote corporate interests.

Farmer leaders have suggested reopening trade routes through Pakistan's Wagah border to access Middle Eastern markets, while urging support for crop diversification to reduce India's \$15 billion annual oilseed imports.

Khuddian assured farmers that Punjab would block the policy's implementation if it jeopardized their interests, vowing further consultations. However, as anger grows, the Centre risks reigniting a movement that reshaped India's agrarian land-scape just three years ago.

Thus far, the government's re-

sponse has been both predictable and inadequate. It has reiterated commitments to agricultural reforms while sidestepping the core issue of MSP. The irony is glaring: a parliamentary panel has recommended exactly what the farmers demand—a legally binding MSP—stating it could reduce suicides and uplift the rural economy. Yet, the Centre has not acted, seemingly

paralyzed by fears of fiscal

strain and political fallout.

For Punjab's farmers, this is not just about economics but about trust. From their perspective, the BJP-led government's unfulfilled promiseswhether from Narendra Modi's Gujarat days or the pledges made during the Ramlila Maidan protests 2018—have eroded the faith that once bound the farmers to the state. This betrayal of trust, amplified by historical neglect of reports like the Swaminathan Commission's recommendations, fuels the current

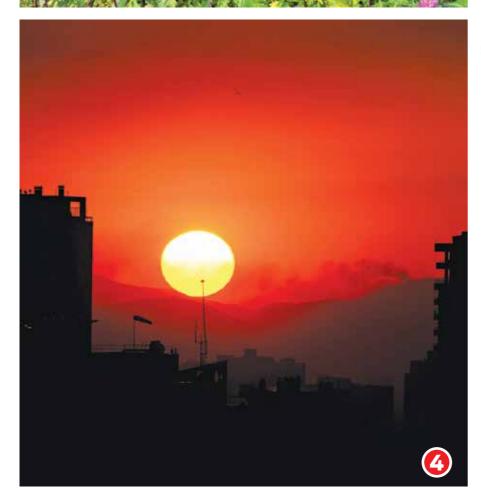
The consequences of inaction are perilous. Protests have disrupted rail services and trade in Punjab, and tensions at border crossings hint at wider unrest. Dallewal's deteriorating health casts a sombre shadow over a movement that could escalate into a crisis with dire humanitarian and political implications.

Needless to say, the Centre will have to act swiftly if it wants to prevent a reprise of the 2020-21 protests. Legal guarantees for MSP, though fraught with logistical challenges, are not insurmountable. They represent a moral and political imperative for a government that claims to champion farmers. Ignoring these demands risks not only economic instability in India's breadbasket but also a broader erosion of trust in democratic institutions.









KALEIDOSCOPE

- 1. A woman plucks aster flowers at an orchard, in Nadia on Saturday.
- 2. Sadhus of Shri Panchayati Akhada Niranjani arrive at Prayagraj railway station ahead of the Mahakumbh festival in Prayagraj on Saturday.
- 3. Snow falls as a couple walks along the Commonwealth Avenue Mall in the Back Bay neighborhood in Boston on Friday.
- 4. The sun sets in Santiago, Chile on Friday as a forest fires burns on the outskirts of the capital.
- 5. School students during Christmas celebrations in Moradabad on Saturday.

All Pictures PTI, AP



EXPLAINER

Why Are Thousands of Jews Leaving Israel?

eaving Israel is easier, Shira Z. Carmel thinks, by saying it's just for

now. But she knows better. For the Israeli-born singer and an increasing number of relatively well-off Israelis, the October 7, 2023 Hamas attack shattered any sense of safety and along with it. Israel's founding promise: to be the world's safe haven for Jews. That day, thousands of Hamas militants blew past the country's border defences, killed 1,200 people and dragged 250 more into Gaza in a siege that caught the Israeli army by surprise and stunned a nation that prides itself on military prowess. This time, during what became known as Israel's 9/11, the army didn't come for

Ten days later, a pregnant Carmel, her husband and their toddler boarded a flight to Australia. which was looking for people in her husband's profession. And they spun the explanation to friends and family as something other than permanent — "relocation" is the easier-to-swallow term acutely aware of the familial strain and the shame that have shadowed Israelis who leave for good.

"We told them we're going to get out of the line of fire for a while," Carmel said more than a year later from her family's new home in Melbourne, "It wasn't a hard decision. But it was very hard to talk to them about it. It was even hard to admit it to ourselves.

Thousands of Israelis have left the country since October 7, 2023, according to government statistics and immigration tallies released by destination countries such as Canada and Germany. There's concern about whether it will drive a "brain drain" in sectors like medicine and tech. Migration experts say it's possible people leaving Israel will surpass the number of immigrants to Israel in 2024, according to Sergio DellaPergola, a statistician and professor emeritus of Hebrew University in Jerusalem.

"In my view, this year people entering will be smaller than the total of the exit." he said. "And this is quite unique in the existence of the State of

Early information points to a surge of Israelis leaving

The October 7 effect on Israeli emigration is enough for prominent Israelis to acknowledge the phenomenon publicly and warn of rising antisemitism elsewhere.

"There is one thing that worries me in particular: talks about leaving the country. This must not happen," former premier Naftali Bennett, a staunch critic of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, tweeted in June after a conversation with friends who were leaving. Israel, he wrote, needs to retain the talent. "Who wants to return to the days of the wandering Jew, without real freedom, without a state, subject to every anti-Semitic whim?

Thousands of Israelis have opted to pay the financial, emotional and social costs of moving out since the Oct. 7 attack, according to government statistics and families who spoke to The Associated Press in recent months after emigrating to Canada, Spain and Australia. Israel's overall population continues to grow toward 10 million people.

But it's possible that 2024 ends with more Israelis leaving the country than coming in. That's even as Israel and Hezbollah reached a fragile ceasefire along the border with Lebanon and Israel and Hamas inch toward a pause in

Israel's Central Bureau of Statistics estimated in Septem-



ber that 40,600 Israelis departed long-term over the first seven months of 2024, a 59 per cent increase over the same period a year earlier, when 25,500 people left. Monthly, 2,200 more people departed this year than in 2023, CBS

The Israeli Ministry of Immigration and Absorption, which does not deal with people leaving, said more than 33,000 people have moved to Israel since the start of the war, about on par with previous years. The interior minister refused to comment for this

The numbers are equally dramatic in destination countries. More than 18,000 Israelis applied for German citizenship in 2024, more than double the same period in 2023 and three times that of the year before, the Interior Ministry reported in September.

Canada, which has a threeyear work visa program for Israelis and Palestinians fleeing the war, received 5,759 applications for work permits from Israeli citizens between January and October this year, the government told The Associated Press. In 2023, that number was 1,616 applications, and a year earlier the tally was 1,176 applications, according to Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada.

They want to wake up in the morning and enjoy life

Other clues, too, point to a notable departure of Israelis since the October 7 attacks, Gil Fire, deputy director of Tel Aviv Sourasky Medical Center, said that some of its star specialists with fellowship postings of a few years in other countries began to waver about returning.

"Before the war, they always came back and it was not really considered an option to stay. And during the war we started to see a change," he said. "They said to us, We will stay another year, maybe two years, maybe more."

Fire says it's "an issue of concern" enough for him to plan in-person visits with these doctors in the coming months to try to draw them back to Israel.

Michal Harel, who moved with her husband to Toronto in 2019, said that almost immediately after the attacks the phone began ringing — with other Israelis seeking advice about moving to Canada. On Nov. 23, 2023, the couple set up a website to help Israelis navigate moving, which can cost at least 100,000 Israeli shekels, or about \$28,000. Harel and other Israeli relocation experts said.

Not everyone in Israel can just pack up and move overseas. Many of those who have made the move have foreign passports, jobs at multinational corporations or can work remotely. People in Gaza have even less choice. The vast majority of Gaza's 2.3 million people have been displaced by relentless Israeli bombing since Oct. 7, 2023, yet no one has been able to leave the enclave since May. Before then, at least 100,000 Palestinians are believed to have left Gaza.

Health officials in Gaza say Israeli bombing has killed more than 45,000 people.

Speaking by phone last month, Harel reported that the site has received views from 100,000 unique visitors and 5,000 direct contacts in 2024 alone.

"It's people who want to move quickly with families, to wake up in the morning and enjoy life," she said. "Right now (in Israel), it's trauma, trauma, trauma.'

"Some of them," Harel added, "they want to keep everything a secret.'

Leaving Zion, a threat to Israel and a shame?

Aliva — the Hebrew term for used for immigration, literally the "ascent" of Jews into Israel — has always been part of the country's plan. But "yerida" — the term used for leaving the country, literally the "descent" of Jews from Israel to the diaspora, emphatically

For Israel's first decades of independence, the government strongly discouraged departing Israelis, who were seen in some cases as cowardly and even treasonous. A sacred trust and a social contract took root in Israeli society. The terms go — or went — like this: Israeli citizens would serve in the military and pay high taxes. In exchange, the army would keep them safe. Meanwhile, it's every Jew's obligation to stay, work and fight for

Israel's survival. "Emigration was a threat, especially in the early years (when) there were problems of nation-building. In later decades. Israel became more established and more self-confident," said Ori Yehudai, a professor of Israel studies at Ohio State University and the author of "Leaving Zion," a history of Israeli emigration. The sense of shame is more of a social dynamic now, he said,

but "people still feel they have to justify their decision to

Shira Carmel says she has no doubt about her decision. She'd long objected to Netanvahu's government's efforts to overhaul the legal system, and was one of the first women to don the blood-red "Handmaid's Tale" robes that became a fixture of the anti-government protests of 2023. She was terrified as a new mom, and a pregnant one, during the Hamas attack, and appalled at having to tell her toddler that they were gathering in the bomb shelter for "hugging parties" with the neighbors. This was not the life she wanted.

Meanwhile, Australia beckoned. Carmel's brother had lived there for two decades. The couple had the equivalent of a green card due to Carmel's husband's profession. In the days after the attack. Carmel's brother alerted her to the possibility of a flight out of Israel for free, if on very short notice, which she confirmed with the Australian embassy in Israel. Basic logic, she says, pointed toward moving.

And yet. Carmel recalls the frenzied hours before the flight out in which she said to her husband in the privacy of their bedroom: "My God, are we really doing this?

They decided not to decide, opting instead for: "We're just getting on a plane for now, being grateful." They packed

On the ground half a world away, weeks became months. And they decided: "I'm not going to go back to try to give birth in the war." In December. they told their families back in Israel that they were staying "for now."

"We don't define it as forever," Carmel said Tuesday. "But we are for sure staying for the foreseeable future.'

TIGER WOODS' IMMEDIATE GOAL:

Keep his son from beating him

Orlando: Tiger Woods turns 49 at the end of the month and he has one pressing goal that relates to his golf. He wants to prolong that inevitable day when his son beats him over 18 holes.

They will be playing with - not against - each other this week for the fifth straight year at the PNC Championship, a 36-hole tournament so meaningful to them and everyone else in the field that Woods was determined to play for the first time since a sixth back surgery in September.

Word got out, however. that 15-year-old Charlie finally beat his 15-time major champion dad.

"He beat me for nine holes," Woods said, an important clarification to

"He has yet to beat me for 18 holes. That day is coming. I'm just prolonging it as long as I possibly can."

As for the details, Woods talked about the typical banter between them and how much fun they have. It was clear he was not going to share the hole-by-hole of the loss.

Winning is a goal, but not the priority, at the PNC Championship. It's a happy end of the year for all 20 teams at the Ritz-Carlton Golf Club Orlando, an event that pairs the winners of majors or The Players Championship with a family member.

Woods played five tournaments this year and com-

Ahmedabad: Anmolpreet

Singh smashed the quick-

est List A hundred by an

Indian, a 35-ball effort, to

guide Punjab to an easy

nine-wicket win over

Arunachal Pradesh in a

Group C Vijay Hazare

Anmolpreet, who went

unsold in the recent IPL

auction, broke the record of

former India all-rounder

Yusuf Pathan, who had

scored a hundred off 40

balls for Baroda against

third fastest List A hundred

This knock is also the

Maharashtra in 2009-10.

match here on Saturday.



pleted only one of them, making the cut at the Masters for a record 24th consecutive year. He had to play 23 holes on Friday at Augusta National in a raging wind, posting a 72 for his best round of the year. He followed that with an 82. an example of ups and downs from a player whose body has been wracked with injury.

"I'm not going to feel what I'm used to feeling," Woods said.

"The recovery has gotten to be the hardest part. But over the course of rounds, weeks, months, it gets harder.'

He missed the cut in the next three majors and then had surgery on his lower back in September to alleviate some of the spasms he had been feeling. The timing of the surgery was related to the PNC Championship.

Woods chose not to play the Hero World Challenge in the Bahamas two weeks ago, saying he wasn't competitively sharp enough to handle Scottie Scheffler. Patrick Cantlay and Justin Thomas among a 20-man field of players from the top 40 in the world.

This might as well be his fifth major because he plays with his son.

"That was one of the reasons why I had the surgery done earlier, so that hopefully I could give myself the best chance to be with Charlie and be able to play,"

"I'm not competitive right now, but I just want to be able to have the experience again. This has always

out, 25b) milked 153 runs

for the unbroken second

wicket alliance to guide

bowled out for 164 with

pacer Ashwani Kumar and

leg-spinner Mayank Mar-

kande taking three wickets

Brief scores: Arunachal

Pradesh: 164 all out in 48.4

overs (Tech Neri 42, Hardik

Varma 38: Ashwani Kumar

3/37, Mayank Markande

3/31) lost to Punjab: 167/1

in 12.5 overs (Anmolpreet

Singh 115 not out) by 9

Earlier, Arunachal were

Punjab home.

apiece.

ing the golf ball. Woods plans to rely on his son's tee shots in the scramble They will play the open-

year, filling out and pound-

ing round Saturday with Justin Leonard and son Luke, who goes to The Benjamin School in North Palm Beach with Charlie and is going to Villanova next year.

Charlie Woods went through US Open qualifying for the first time this year and failed to advance out of the first stage. He qualified for the U.S. Junior Amateur at Oakland Hills but didn't come close to making it to match play.

Woods appreciated that his son is under a spotlight few others his age face.

"I was always reminding him, Just be you.' Charlie is Charlie. Yes, he's my son. He's going to have my last name and it's going to be part of his core. But I just want him to be just himself and be his own person. That's what we can only do" Woods said.

"I always encourage it, for him to carve his own name, carve his own path and have his own journey,"

"I think he's doing a great job. In this day and age where everyone is basically media, with all the phones, being constantly filmed and constantly people watching, that's just part of his generation, and that's part of the world that he has to maneuver through." -AP : gles second round



Players of Saint Joseph (in green) and SRM Welkin in action during a football match, on the first day of Chillai-Kalan, a 40-day harshest winter period, in Srinagar on Saturday.

Mithun Manjunath, Sourabh Varma progress

Bengaluru: Former champions Mithun Manjunath and Sourabh Varma relied on their experience to pack off their much younger opponents in the second round of the 86th Senior Nationals Badminton tournament here on Saturday.

Defending champions Chirag Sen and Anmol Kharb also had easy outings.

Mithun defeated third seed Bharat Raghav 21-9, 21-18 before Varma got the better of Abhinav Garg 21-17, 21-17 in the men's sin-

Chirag Sen also started his campaign in style with a 21-15, 21-15 win over Jeet In women's singles, An-

mol hammered Deepali Gupta 21-8, 21-6, while last edition's runner-up Tanvi Sharma also eased into the third round with a 21-8, 21-6 win over Flora Engineer.

While the favourites put their best foot forward, there were a few upsets that underlined the depth of talent in Indian badminton.

In women's singles, Ruiula Ramu shocked 10th

seed Surva Charishma Tamiri 21-19, 19-21, 21-17 while Jiya Rawat came from a game behind to beat ninth seed Shruti Mundada

25-27, 21-14, 21-10. In the men's singles section, Rohan Gurbani proved too good for 11th seed K Lokesh Reddy, winning 21-15, 21-1, while Raghu M defeated 15th seed

Karthik Jindal 21-19, 21-16. In women's doubles, Kanika Kanwal and Bharti Pal combined to upset sixth seeds Amrutha P and Radhika Sharma 25-23, 21-17.



Roma Hemvani holds 'Aquatic Meditation Mudra' while floating on water in Lucknow on Saturday. Hemvani set a new record for holding 'Aquatic Meditation Mudra' while floating on water.

Fastest List A hundred by an Indian

behind Aussie Jake-Fraser

McGurk, who smashed a

29-ball ton for South Aus-

tralia against Tasmania in

2023-24, and South African

AB de Villiers' 31-ball hun-

dred against the West In-

dies at Johannesburg in

The right-handed An-

molpreet made 115 off 45

balls (12x4, 9x6) as Punjab

chased down a target of 165

in just 12.5 overs, reaching

After the early fall of

skipper Abhishek Sharma

(10), Anmolpreet and

Prabhsimran Singh (35 not

2014-15.

167 for one.

Tendulkar praises girl's bowling

lights of the year for us as a

family, and now we get to

have that moment together

The surgery was on his

back, but Woods said his

right leg, which was man-

gled in a February 2021 car

crash outside Los Angeles,

remains the biggest physi-

Even so, he chose to walk

the pro-am on Friday in-

stead of riding a cart, which

is allowed for players be-

cause the tournament is co-

sanctioned by the PGA

Team Woods has yet to

win since they began play-

ing in 2020. They finished

second the following year

by two shots to John Daly

and his college son, when

Charlie was 12. He is adding

inches to his height every

Tour Champions.

cal obstacle.

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 exchange that created a lot of

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.

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.

-PTI

McSweeney feel 'devastated' after being axed from team

Melbourne: Rookie Australia opener Nathan Mc-Sweeney admitted feeling "devastated" after being dropped for the last two Tests of the Border-Gavaskar Trophy against India but vowed to work hard to reclaim his spot in the national team.

McSweeney was on Friday dropped by the national selectors, who handed a maiden call-up to teenage sensation Sam Kontas.

"Yeah. I mean devastated, I get the dream come true and then didn't quite work the way I wanted," McSweeney told Channel 7.

"But it's all part of it, and I'll get my head down and get back in the nets and work really hard and hopefully be ready to go for the next opportunity.

The 25-year-old, who made his Test debut in the series-opener in Perth, struggled at the top with scores of 10, 0, 39, 10 not out, 9, and 4 in his six innings. He was dismissed by Indian pacer Jasprit Bumrah four times during the series.

"It's the game we're in. If



you don't take an opportunity and you're not performing as well as you want to, your position's never safe," McSweeney said.

"So I missed out a few times with the bat and unfortunately wasn't able to take my opportunity, but as I said, I'll work really hard to make sure that if the opportunity comes around again, I'm definitely ready."

Australia's chairman of selectors George Bailey acknowledged the decision was "hard" and said it had been "deliberated a lot."

However, former skipper Michael Clarke felt the move to drop McSweeney could potentially "end his career."

McSweeney, primarily a middle-order batter, had

against India A before the squad for the first Test was announced. Despite his lack of experience as an opener, he had shown promise in Adelaide's first innings, negotiating challenging conditions alongside Marnus Labuschagne. Australia great Mike

opened for Australia A

Hussey sympathised with McSweeney, calling the decision "tough.' "I really feel for Mc-

Sweeney. I think it's tough on him. Tough call," Hussey said on Fox Cricket.

"I don't know (if it was the right call). It's a tough one on him. It's not easy. The ball's been moving around quite a lot for the openers. A lot of batters at the top of the order have been battling away."

With all-rounder Cameron Green set to return from injury later in the year, competition for spots in the Australian middleorder is expected to intensify, making McSweeney's path back to the team even more challenging.

India to host ISSF Junior **World Cup**

New Delhi: India has been awarded the hosting rights for next year's Junior World Cup involving competitions in rifle, pistol and shotgun disciplines, the National Rifle Association of India (NRAI) said on Saturday.

This will be the country's third top International **Shooting Sport Federation** (ISSF) event in recent times after the senior World Cup in Bhopal in 2023 and the season-ending World Cup Final earlier this year, reinforcing India's stature as one of the sport's top destinations in the world.

The dates of the tournament though are yet to be finalised. The national federation's president Kalikesh Narayan Singh Deo, said, "We had a fruitful executive committee meeting of the ISSF in Rome last month and all member federations as well as the ISSF president Luciano Rossi was all praise with the way India has been hosting top international shooting competitions.

'It is time to set the burden of being you down'

ASHWIN'S WIFE PENS HEARTFELT TRIBUTE AFTER HIS SUDDEN RETIREMENT

Chennai: Ravichandran Ashwin's wife Prithi Narayanan has penned a heartfelt tribute for her husband following his recent retirement from international cricket, saying "it is time to set the burden of being you down" and embrace life beyond the game.

Ashwin made a surprise announcement of his retirement after the drawn third Test at Brisbane. The veteran off-spinner picked up just one wicket during the tour, including the 10-wicket loss at Adelaide.

The 38-year-old retired with a stellar record of 537 Test wickets at an average of 24, in addition to scoring 3,503 runs, including six centuries. He also claimed 156 wickets in ODIs and 72 in T20Is

Describing her tribute as a "Love letter from a fan girl", Prithi wrote on instagram: "Dear Ashwin, from not knowing how to put a kit bag together to following you to stadiums all over the world, rooting for you, watching you and learning from you, it has been an absolute pleasure. The world you introduced me to give me the privilege to watch and enjoy a sport that I love

from close quarters. "It also showed me how

much passion, hardwork and discipline is needed to keep your head above water. And sometimes even that is not enough. I remember us talking about why you, R Ashwin, had to do all of this and a lot more to even stay relevant in the scheme of things."

Ashwin, who debuted in 2011 against the West Indies, earned a reputation for his relentless pursuit of excellence. His near-equal tally of 269 wickets against right-handers and 268 against left-handers high-



lights his versatility. "How awards, the best of stats, the POMs, the accolades, the records didn't matter if you didn't sharpen your skill sets constantly and did not put in the work. Sometimes, nothing

"As you end your wonderful international run, I only want to tell you that it's all good. It is all going to be good. It is time to set the burden of being you down. Live life on your terms, make space for those extra calories, make time for your family, make time to

is enough," Prithi

continued.

share memes all day, create a new bowling variation, bug our kids out of their minds. Just do it all." Prithi, who has been a

do absolutely nothing,

constant companion on Ashwin's cricketing journey, reflected on his meticulous approach to his craft.

"When I saw Ashwins PC, I thought of small and big moments. Many many memories over the last 13-14 years. The big wins , the MOS awards, the quiet silence in our room after an intense game, the sound of the shower running for much longer than usual on

some evenings post play, the scratch of pencil over paper as he scribbled thoughts down, the constant streaming of footage videos when he is making a game plan, the calm of meditative breathing before leaving for each game, certain songs playing on repeat while he unwinds.

"The times we weeped in joy - after the CT final, after the MCG win, after the Sydnev draw. The Gabba win. after making a comeback in T20s...the times we sat in silence and the times when we had our hearts broken,"