

Across State

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EDITOR IN CHIEF: SANJAY M. BHAIRE

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Maharashtra Assembly Elections 2024: 'BJP finalises names of 110 candidates', say party sources

Mumbai

According to the party sources, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) has finalised the names of at least 110 candidates for the upcoming Assembly Elections in Maharashtra.

However, there is a dispute in some places for candidates' names as there are three to four candidates in some seats so it is taking time for the BJP to decide the final names. On some seats, candidates coming from other parties can be given candidature. When Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) announces the name of its candidate on some of the seats, then only BJP will announce the name of its candidate on that particular seat.

BJP's first list can be released within the next 48 hours, added party sources.

The BJP's central election committee met on Wednesday (October 16) to finalise candidates for the Maharashtra assembly polls as the party looks to balance the dynamics of its aspiration to maximise its share of seats while accommodating the demands of two powerful allies.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi was joined by other CEC members besides



key BJP leaders from the state, including Deputy Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis and the party's state unit president Chandrashekhar Bawankule.

The CEC deliberated upon those seats that the BJP is keen to contest in the elections to the 288-member assembly. BJP sources have expressed the view that the party will look to contest on around 150 seats, leaving the rest for Chief Minister Eknath Shinde-led Shiv Sena and Deputy CM Ajit Pawar-led NCP.

Earlier in the day, Bawankule said Shinde should be willing to make

"sacrifices" in terms of the seat-sharing arrangement for the assembly polls like the BJP has done to keep the alliance intact.

"Chief Minister Eknath Shinde must remain open-minded and be willing to make sacrifices. We, too, have made sacrifices to uphold the alliance. It is evident that the BJP aims to contest the seats we previously held," Bawankule said.

Voting is scheduled on November 20 and the counting will take place on November 23 (Saturday).

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NDA committed to furthering national progress: Modi

Chandigarh

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday said the BJP-led National Democratic Alliance (NDA) is committed to furthering national progress and empowering the poor and downtrodden.

The prime minister made the remarks after chairing a meeting of NDA chief ministers and deputy CMs here, following the swearing-in ceremony of Haryana CM Nayab Singh Saini and his ministerial colleagues.

"We had extensive discussions on aspects of good governance and ways to improve people's lives. Our alliance is committed to furthering national progress and empowering the poor and downtrodden," Modi posted on X.

Senior Union ministers Rajnath Singh, Amit Shah and JP Nadda were part of the deliberations as the NDA looks to build on its win in the Haryana assembly polls as it goes to the assembly polls in Maharashtra and Jharkhand.



No mobile phones inside booths, QR code to give polling station information: BMC Commissioner Bhushan Gagrani

Mumbai

Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) Commissioner Bhushan Gagrani, also the district election officer for Mumbai and its suburbs, Wednesday said mobile phones will not be allowed inside polling booths in the Maharashtra Assembly elections 2024.

"Voters can either leave their phones at home or they can hand them over at the security counter before entering the polling booth. The phones will be returned to them once they come out after casting their vote," Gagrani added.

During the Lok Sabha elections held earlier this year, there was confusion among voters as some polling stations

allowed cell phones inside the booth while some did not.

Gagrani also said BMC ward offices are delivering pamphlets with QR codes to residents, containing all necessary information about polling stations.

"Taking lessons from the recently concluded Lok Sabha elections, we are following a decentralised approach to ensure maximum crowd control and better handling of people. Each polling station will be equipped with basic facilities like drinking water, toilets, seating arrangements, and waiting rooms," Gagrani said.

He also said the BMC is carrying out a survey to identify vulnerable polling



booths, and removing political posters and hoardings from public property.

The municipal commissioner's announcement came a day after the Election Commission announced the dates

of the Assembly polls in Maharashtra.

Mumbai will have 10,071 polling stations with 7,574 in the suburbs and 2,537 in the island city. There are 36 constituencies in Mumbai, with Chandivali having the highest number of voters at 4.46 lakh, and Wadala (2.04 lakh) the lowest.

Four additional municipal commissioners in the BMC and two district collectors of Mumbai city and suburbs have been appointed as additional district election officers.

The 288-member Maharashtra Assembly will go to the polls in a single phase on November 20, with the counting slated to be held on November 23.

MSRTC to add 100 electric buses to its fleet ahead of Diwali

Mumbai

The Maharashtra State Road Transport Corporation (MSRTC) will add 100 electric buses to its fleet this month, ahead of the Diwali festival. These 12-metre-long buses are part of a larger order of 5,150 electric buses placed with Olectra Greentech Limited, according to an MSRTC official. The new buses are expected to operate on

routes including Imamwada-Nagpur, Chandrapur, Nashik, Borivali, and Satara.

Once the full fleet arrives, the buses are likely to be deployed for operations during the Diwali season, the official added. Previously, a wet lease contractor had supplied 130 electric "Midi" buses, each 9 metre long. In addition, 13 buses from a

previous order were recently delivered, completing the contractor's total of 100 buses, with 87 delivered earlier.

These buses are currently in service on the Mumbai-Pune route. The new 12-meter buses, with 45 seats, excluding the driver's seat, are capable of covering up to 400 km on a single charge, with a charging time of just 1.45 hours.



Aaditya Thackeray: MVA will cancel Dharavi revamp contract to Adani once in power

Mumbai

Sena (UBT) leader and MLA Aaditya Thackeray Wednesday accused Chief Minister Eknath Shinde and the BJP-led ruling alliance of allotting an additional 540 acres of land for the Dharavi Redevelopment Project (DRP) outside Dharavi.

He also warned that once MVA government comes to power, the DRP contract and other land allotments to Adani Group will be cancelled.

When contacted, the Adani Group declined to comment on the same.

Aaditya, however, said that the MVA will not scrap the Mahayuti government's Ladki Bahin scheme and the waiver of toll at Mumbai's entry points.

Addressing mediapersons, the former state minister alleged that apart from the actual land of Dharavi, the government has allotted the Mother Dairy land in Kurla, land in Madh Island, salt pan lands in Mulund, Kanjurmarg and Ghatkopar and land of Deonar dumping ground.

Aaditya claimed that the 540 acres of land outside Dharavi will lead to construction of 7 lakh sq ft and as per the generic rental housing development norms, 33 per cent of

it will be used for commercial construction by Adani.

"A total 1080 acres land in Mumbai is being given free of cost to Adani Group in the name of Dharavi Redevelopment. Construction of almost 7,00,000 sq ft outside of Dharavi will generate almost Rs 1,00,000 crore, with no revenue for Mumbai," said Aaditya.

Further pointing out that the 1.5 lakh families in Dharavi, who are ineligible, will be made to buy homes in Mulund, Kurla, Deonar, Madh, Kanjurmarg, Bhandup, Aaditya asked as to whom the project is being developed for.

"Maharashtra has to realise how Mumbai is being handed over to Adani, only because they can't directly break it away from Maharashtra, or win politically. We will scrap the add-on incentives or benefits that go above and beyond the tender, including the incentives in the tender like TDR and premium waivers. We will scrap the proposed PAPs and PTCs across Mumbai, that is a loot of land, in the name of redevelopment. We will ensure every Dharavikar gets a home, and the development is of Dharavi, not Adani group," he said.

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'Ladki Bahin Yojana is the game changer': Ahead of Assembly polls, CM Eknath Shinde, deputies project united front

Mumbai

Setting aside lingering issues over the seat-sharing formula, Chief Minister Eknath Shinde and Deputy Chief Ministers Devendra Fadnavis and Ajit Pawar projected a united front on Wednesday as they presented a report card on the two and a half years of the Mahayuti government in Maharashtra, which goes to polls on November 20.

At a joint press conference held in Mumbai, Shinde, Fadnavis and Pawar, who represent the Shiv Sena, the BJP and the Nationalist Congress Party, respectively, exuded confidence that they would fare better than their opponent, the Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA), in the upcoming elections for 288 Assembly seats.

"The Ladki Bahin Yojana is the game changer. The monthly allowance of Rs 1,500 to 2.5 crore women (in the 18 to 65-year age group) has received an overwhelming response across rural and urban Maharashtra," Shinde said.

After the Lok Sabha polls saw the Mahayuti put up a dismal performance by winning 17 seats as against the MVA's 30, the Shinde government initiated a course correction by announcing a financial assistance scheme for women to consolidate its vote bank. By reaching out to 2.5 crore women through the Ladki Bahin Yojana, the Mahayuti has covered 50 per cent of the 4.6 crore voters in the state.

"The Opposition MVA is utterly confused. The Opposition has sensed that the ground is slipping under its feet with women and the common man reposing faith in the Mahayuti," Shinde said.

Drawing a parallel with the MVA government led by then chief minister Uddhav Thackeray, Shinde said, "In two and a half years, we took 900 decisions, which were essentially to empower



the common man. Whereas during the MVA regime (2019-22), the concept of governance was missing. Instead, they came across as a non-performing and corrupt government."

Fadnavis, who as home minister has come under attack from the Opposition following Baba Siddique's murder, referred to the NCP leader's killing as an "unfortunate incident". "Those guilty will be subjected to the harshest punishment," Fadnavis said.

"The question is, during the MVA regime, their home minister (Anil Deshmukh) was imprisoned for corruption. A police officer planted a bomb outside an industrialist's house. To avoid being exposed, he killed a person. What moral right does the MVA have to talk about law and order?" Fadnavis hit back.

Reflecting on his government's policy decisions in core sectors, Fadnavis said, "The reforms initiated through agriculture and irrigation will go a long way in making Marathwada drought-free and making farming sustainable for farmers. From free

electricity to farmers using 7.5 HP pumps to the installation of solar panels to provide uninterrupted power 12 hours a day, (we) will change the lives and livelihood of farmers."

The decisions taken in the social sector are the mainstay of the government, Fadnavis added. "Whether it is Marathas, OBCs, Adivasis, Dalits, Dhangars and others, we have addressed the concerns of each and every community through welfare schemes," he added.

Fadnavis also referred to the Rs 90,000 crore Wainganga-Nalganga river linking project and the move to channelise surplus water from western flowing rivers to the Godavari basin to resolve the decades-old drought issue in Maharashtra. The ongoing mega irrigation projects will not only make the state drought-free but also resolve the inter-region differences between districts in Marathwada versus North Maharashtra.

Another project highlighted by Fadnavis was the all-weather greenfield deep draft major port at Vadhavan. The project will contribute to the Centre and

the state for 25 to 30 years by generating revenue and employment, he said.

Fadnavis also mounted a scathing attack on the Opposition. "They have a single agenda to criticise the government by weaving a fake narrative as they cannot question us on governance and development work," he said.

Meanwhile, Pawar said that the holistic development approach of the Mahayuti had helped farmers, women, students, and senior citizens through various welfare schemes.

"When the Ladki Bahin Yojana was launched, the Opposition predicted its failure by questioning funding. We proved them wrong as the decision was taken after thorough homework, including budgetary allocation of Rs 45,000 crore for the scheme for a year," Pawar, who holds the finance portfolio, revealed.

"The scheme is not temporary. It will continue and the CM has indicated that allowances will be hiked further," Pawar added. Keeping the Model Code of Conduct in mind, the government had released the November allowance in advance, Pawar said, adding that every beneficiary has received five instalments, a total of Rs 7,500.

Discussing the seat-sharing formula, Fadnavis said, "Talks are underway. We have covered almost 80 per cent of the seats...issues with the remaining seats will get resolved through discussions."

Asked if Union Home Minister Amit Shah has urged Shinde to show more flexibility as the BJP made him CM in place of Fadnavis, who was the front-runner for the post, Shinde said, "There was no such discussion." Fadnavis added, "When we have a meeting, it is between us. How does anybody draw such conclusions?"

Despite poll announcement, Mahayuti, MVA yet to finalise seat-sharing arrangement

Mumbai

Even as the Election Commission of India (ECI) on Tuesday announced that Maharashtra will go for single-phase polls on November 20, the two key political fronts having three major and a bunch of smaller parties on each side, are yet to finalise the seat-sharing arrangements.

Both the ruling Mahayuti and opposition Maha Vikas Aghadi fronts are facing disagreements over the sharing arrangements and it could possibly lead to some rebellion within the parties.

Within Mahayuti — the alliance comprises BJP, Shiv Sena, and NCP— there has been a consent over retaining the seats they are holding, which makes up for consensus at 186 seats (including ten independents), but they are bargaining hard to corner higher number of seats from the remaining ones.

As power play is being seen on remaining 90 seats, the emerging formula within Mahayuti is likely to be : BJP 150 to 155, Shiv Sena 80 to 85 and NCP 50 to 55 seats.

The Shiv Sena and NCP are both looking for at least one seat

each out of 12 constituencies in Nagpur district, which is the stronghold of BJP.

The district NCP unit has laid claim over Nagpur North seat which is currently held by former Congress minister Nitin Raut.

To counter BJP's claim of stronghold, NCP argues that at least on three seats — Katol, Nagpur North and Nagpur West — the BJP candidates lost in 2019 Assembly polls.

Citing this, an NCP leader said that "therefore, going by the caste/ community composition, NCP, with a secular vote bank,

deserves at least one seat" in Nagpur, which also happens to be the home town of Deputy Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis.

The one-upmanship over Dhule City seat has led to bitterness within BJP and Shiv Sena units.

The Shiv Sena feels it is their rightful claim over this seat and BJP should concede willingly keeping the coalition norms in mind. However, BJP's leaders in Dhule have warned that if the party concedes the city to Sena, they will not work for the candidate.

Despite intervention by the state's top leaders, Dhule city leaders have been unrelenting in accommodating their alliance partner. Another seat which is caught in ugly dispute is Parbhani where Shiv Sena and BJP are staking claims. While contesting for the seat which is in Marathwada region, Shiv Sena pointed they have rights over all such seats which were contested in past by Uddhav Thackeray led undivided Sena. While BJP argues in terms of organisational base they are better placed to fight against the opposition.

Uddhav Thackeray's Shiv Sena faces critical test with Maharashtra Assembly elections approaching

Mumbai

Mumbai is often described as a city of sharp contrasts, a characteristic vividly illustrated by its 36 assembly constituencies, which range from the affluent neighborhoods of Malabar Hill to the slum-dominated areas of Mankhurd-Shivaji Nagar.

With the Election Commission announcing that elections in Maharashtra will be held on November 20, the prevailing electoral theme in the bulk of these constituencies in Mumbai will revolve around the Uddhav Thackeray-led Shiv Sena's struggle to reaffirm its political hold in what has traditionally been regarded as the party's bastion. This challenge, particularly following the rebellion led by Eknath Shinde, will serve as a critical test for Uddhav Thackeray.

While Mumbai with a population of 1.24 crore constitutes approximately 11 percent of the state's population, its influence on the undivided Shiv Sena's political landscape has been significantly disproportionate. Nearly 25

percent of the undivided Shiv Sena's 56 MLAs hailed from Mumbai. Following the split, this skew has intensified, with 53 percent of the Shiv Sena UBT's total of 15 MLAs—those still loyal to Uddhav Thackeray—coming from the city.

For the past decade, Mumbai's political arena has been largely dominated by the Shiv Sena and the BJP. In 2014, after breaking their alliance to contest separately, the two parties collectively secured 29 out of the city's 36 seats. This number increased to 30 in the 2019 elections when they reunited in an electoral alliance. However, the subsequent rebellion led by Eknath Shinde, which resulted in a split within the Shiv Sena itself, has significantly shifted the political dynamics for Uddhav Thackeray.

In the wake of the split, a notable wave of sympathy emerged in favor of Uddhav Thackeray, bolstered by tactical alliances with the Congress and the Sharad Pawar-led NCP. This coalition helped the Thackeray faction secure three out of six Lok

Sabha seats in the state. However, the aggressive infrastructure and monetary initiatives championed by the Eknath Shinde government, along with various incentives such as toll waivers in Mumbai, could dilute this initial sympathy.

Since Eknath Shinde ousted Uddhav Thackeray as Maharashtra Chief Minister in June 2022, the last two years have witnessed significant development in city infrastructure, including the launch of multiple Metro lines, new roads, and flyovers throughout the city. These improvements have substantially enhanced travel conditions in Mumbai and are likely to resonate positively with voters.

The Shinde-Fadnavis government is actively promoting its achievements in Mumbai through a robust campaign that highlights infrastructure projects and government initiatives aimed at bolstering their electoral prospects.

While Chief Minister Eknath Shinde has taken the lead on governance, the political strategy to secure victory in Mumbai is

said to be orchestrated by the BJP's electoral machinery. With 16 MLAs, the BJP emerged as the largest party in Maharashtra and is determined to expand its presence by fielding more candidates from the city. Historically seen as appealing primarily to non-Marathi migrants, the BJP has significantly increased its influence in Mumbai since 2014. This time unshackled by the political demands of Uddhav Thackeray in seat sharing, the BJP plans to capitalize on the goodwill generated by both Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Deputy Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis.

However, two key issues could impact the electoral prospects of the Shinde-led Shiv Sena and the BJP. Recent incidents of deteriorating law and order, notably the fatal shooting of former MLA Baba Siddique have raised concerns among voters. Additionally, large-scale transfer of land in the city to the Adani Group for the Dharavi redevelopment project may become a contentious issue for

the ruling government.

The Congress, another major player in the city, is hopeful of improving its performance after a significant decline—winning only four seats in 2019, down from 17 in 2009. The BJP's focus on ethno-religious identity has eroded support for Congress among its traditional North Indian voter base, leading to a reliance on minority and Dalit communities for its electoral strength. Currently, all four of Congress's sitting MLAs from Mumbai represent Muslim and Dalit-dominated areas. However, with the Muslim community, which makes up nearly 20 percent of the city's population, rallying behind Congress and its newfound alliance with the Shiv Sena, the party is poised for a stronger showing in this election.

Sharad Pawar's NCP, which has not historically had a strong presence in Mumbai, faces challenges, especially with indications that its sole MLA, Nawab Malik, may defect to the Ajit Pawar faction of the NCP.

Eknath Shinde announces Diwali bonus of Rs 29,000 for BMC employees just before Maharashtra Assembly elections schedule is out



Mumbai

Minutes before the Maharashtra Assembly elections 2024 dates were announced on Tuesday, Chief Minister Eknath Shinde declared a Diwali bonus of Rs 29,000 for employees of the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC).

The Election Commission of India (ECI) announced that the Maharashtra Assembly elections will take place on November 20

and the Model Code of Conduct (MCC) has come into effect.

The Diwali bonus announced this year is higher than in 2023 when the state government announced Rs 26,000 as a bonus for civic workers. In 2022, employees received a Diwali bonus of Rs 22,500. Every year, state government agencies and employees working with municipal bodies receive bonuses during the month of Diwali.

The BMC, in a statement, said that the workers' union demanded bonuses, which led to a meeting convened by the chief minister, where the decision was made.

All employees, including municipal officers, subsidised primary teachers, non-teaching staffers, secondary school teaching staffers, lecturers and teaching assistants, will be eligible for the Rs 29,000 bonus. Social health volunteers will get a bonus of Rs 12,000, and kindergarten teachers and helpers will get Rs 5,000.

The ECI also announced the schedule of Jharkhand Assembly elections which will be held in two phases, on November 13 and November 20. The counting of votes in both Maharashtra and Jharkhand will be held on November 23.

Yet another bomb threat, this time for a Frankfurt-Mumbai Vistara flight; 20th in a week

Mumbai

In yet another instance of a social media bomb threat to an Indian airline, Vistara's Frankfurt-Mumbai flight received one, leading to the pilot declaring a general emergency. The flight landed safely at the Mumbai airport early Thursday.

With this, at least 20 flights of Indian carriers have received bomb threats in a week. While the security checks for the latest case were underway, the earlier 19 threats turned out to be fake.

The Vistara Frankfurt-Mumbai flight — UK 28 — was flying over Pakistan when it squawked the 7700 — the code for a general emergency — at around 6 am (IST) on Thursday, according to flight tracking data. The aircraft continued to its destination Mumbai, where it landed at around 7:40 am.

“Vistara flight UK 028...

was subject to a security threat received on social media. As per protocol, all relevant authorities were immediately informed. The aircraft safely landed at the Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj International Airport, Mumbai and was taken to the isolation bay where all customers were disembarked. We are fully cooperating with the security agencies to complete the mandatory security checks,” a Vistara spokesperson said.

Three international flights of Indian carriers had received bomb threats on Monday, while another ten flights had received threats on Tuesday. On Wednesday, there were at least six threats. All the threats came via social media platforms, and eventually turned out to be fake. Apart from small regional airlines, all major scheduled Indian carriers have received these bomb threats.

Main Accused In Salman Khan's Farmhouse Attack Arrested From Haryana

Navi Mumbai:

The Navi Mumbai's Panvel City police on Thursday arrested a shooter named Sukkha from Panipat in Haryana.

An FIR has been registered against him. He is among those accused who had conducted a



recce of Salman Khan's farmhouse in Panvel, Navi Mumbai and was the main accused in the conspiracy to attack Salman Khan's at his farmhouse. Sukkha is being brought to Navi Mumbai.

The police uncovered the plan to attack Salman Khan's farmhouse near Panvel in Navi Mumbai while they were investigating the incident of firing outside the actor's house in Bandra.

On June 1, Navi Mumbai

Police had arrested four people from Lawrence Bishnoi's gang as they had planned to attack actor Salman Khan's car in Panvel. According to the police, there was a plan to order weapons from a Pakistani arms supplier for this attack.

An FIR was registered against more than 17 people including Lawrence Bishnoi, Anmol Bishnoi, Sampat Nehra, Goldy Brar. Further investigation is underway. Navi Mumbai Police said the arrested accused were identified as Dhananjay alias Ajay Kashyap, Gaurav Bhatia alias Nahvi, Waspi Khan alias Wasim Chikna and Rizwan Khan alias Javed Khan: Navi Mumbai Police

Meanwhile, security has been increased outside the apartment of Bollywood actor Salman Khan following the killing of former minister and NCP leader Baba Siddique.

Mr Siddique, a former MLA from Bandra and leader in Ajit Pawar's faction of the Nationalist Congress Party (NCP), was shot near Nirmal Nagar in Bandra.

Nayab Saini Takes Oath As Haryana Chief Minister, PM, Key NDA Allies Present



Chandigarh

Nayab Singh Saini, 54, took oath as Haryana's Chief Minister today for the second time, marking the BJP's record third consecutive term in power in the state. The oath-taking ceremony, held at Panchkula's Parade Ground near Chandigarh, was attended by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Union Home Minister Amit Shah, and top BJP leaders, along with 18 Chief Ministers from National Democratic Alliance (NDA)-ruled states. The mega political

gathering comes just ahead of crucial assembly polls in Maharashtra and Jharkhand and is seen as a show of strength by the party. Haryana Governor Bandaru Dattatreya administered the oath of office and secrecy to Mr Saini, who first assumed the chief minister's role in March earlier this year, replacing former chief minister Manohar Lal Khattar. Besides Mr Saini, BJP leaders Anil Vij, Krishan Lal Panwar and Rao Narbir Singh were among those who were administered the oath of office.

Patil should take responsibility to rebuild the state- Pawar

Pune

Hinting at a bigger role for Maharashtra NCP (SP) president Jayant Patil after the next month's assembly elections, party chief Sharad Pawar on Wednesday said it was everyone's wish that Patil should take "responsibility to rebuild the state." Speaking at the concluding rally of 'Shiv Swarajya Yatra' campaign of the party at Islampur in Sangli district, Jayant Patil's home turf, Mr Pawar said several freedom fighters from this region played a big role in the freedom movement, and it is the responsibility of everyone to create the Maharashtra of their dreams.

"I am very happy the way Jayant Patil is working towards this goal, he is reaching out to every corner of the state, giving confidence to the people. I am



sure that the new generation of the state will rally behind him," Mr Pawar said.

"It is yours, mine and entire Maharashtra's wish that Jayant Patil should take the responsibility to rebuild the state and for that your power is needed," the veteran politician added.

Mr Pawar further noted that the region has historic



significance as Rajaram Bapu (Patil) had started a sugar mill here. "And here we are giving the responsibility to rebuild new Maharashtra to the son of this region and I, all party leaders will stand behind him with all might," said Pawar as the crowd cheered.

Jayant Patil has been the finance and home minister of the state in past governments.

Caste to corruption: factors that will be at play in Maharashtra polls

Mumbai

Immediately after the announcement of poll dates by the Election Commission of India, Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) leader and Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis announced "Shankhnaad (blowing conch)" through a social media post on "X", marking the beginning of the electoral battle in the state.

His political opponent from Nationalist Congress Party (SP) and its state unit chief Jayant Patil also declared blowing of "Tutari" (identifying with party poll symbol of Man blowing Turha) on "X". The single phase poll is scheduled on November 20.

As the two major coalitions — the Mahayuti and the MVA — with three key parties on each side, a bunch of smaller parties and many powerful independents are getting ready for the 288-member state assembly, here are five major factors that could be at play during the polls this time.

The bitterness between the Maratha community and the Other Backward Classes (OBCs) over the reservation issue, especially in Marathwada region, has challenged the social fabric in the region. With 46 seats in the region up for grabs, caste polarisation is likely to play a key role in deciding the winner.

The Maratha agitation led by activist Manoj Jarange-Patil seeking OBC status for Marathas kick-

started from the Marathwada region and spread to different parts of the state. As the government led by Chief Minister Eknath Shinde showed signs of bowing down in front of the demands, the counter-agitation by OBCs opposed the demand as they feared that the inclusion of Marathas will reduce the existing reservation.



The politically powerful Marathas led by Jarange-Patil showed their strength in 2024 Lok Sabha elections where the ruling coalition lost seven out of eight seats in Marathwada. After the Lok Sabha polls, OBC activists Laxman Hake and Navnath Waghmare

called on a week-long hunger strike and the demand was that Marathas should not be given reservation under the OBC quota. Jarange-Patil on Tuesday asked Marathas to come out and vote 100 per cent and defeat those who are opposing the demand of OBC status to the community.

Also, Dhangar community's demand for inclusion in Scheduled Tribe (ST) list and latter's strong opposition has led to yet another crack in the state's social fabric. Last month, the leaders of both the communities jumped on a net installed in Mantralaya, raising their respective demands.

Maharashtra has a total of 25 ST reserved seats while Dhangars command influence in over 20 assembly seats in western Maharashtra's Pune, Sangli, Ahmadnagar, and Solapur.

65 Bullets, YouTube Videos, Bikes: How Baba Siddique Murder Was Planned

Mumbai

Investigation into the murder of former Maharashtra minister Baba Siddique has revealed details of the planning behind the operation which included the acquisition of a substantial cache of bullets, YouTube firearms training, and the careful orchestration of getaway plans. The plotters aimed to ensure the murder was executed with precision, taking no chances on ammunition or escape routes.

So far, four individuals have been arrested, including Haryana resident Gurmail Baljit Singh (23), Uttar Pradesh native Dharmaraj Rajesh Kashyap (19), both alleged shooters; Harishkumar Balakram Nisad (23), and "co-conspirator" Pravin Lonkar, who belongs to Pune.

Nisad and Kashyap belong to the same village as the wanted accused Shivkumar Gautam.

According to police sources, the accused responsible for Mr Siddique's murder - Gurmail Singh (23) and Dharmaraj Kashyap (19) - were equipped with 65 bullets, a stockpile intended to guarantee they would not run out of ammunition. Six of these bullets were fired on the night of October 12, when Mr Siddique was shot dead outside his son Zeeshan Siddique's office in the Nirmal Nagar area in Bandra.

Authorities have recovered two firearms used by the accused - an Austrian-made pistol and a locally manufactured country-made pistol. Alongside these weapons, police found 28 live bullets on Singh and Kashyap at the time of their arrest.

The investigative team also discovered a black bag, located just a short distance from the murder site, containing a Turkish-made 7.62 bore pistol and 30 live rounds. This bag also held two Aadhar cards - one in the name of Shivkumar Gautam, who is also a suspect in the case, and another under the name Sumit Kumar, though both cards bore Shivkumar's photo.

Motorbike Plan Foiled By

motorbike. Out of this amount, ₹ 32,000 was used to buy a second-hand bike, which was intended to be used in the assassination.

Manhunt And Escape Attempts

The investigation has revealed the involvement of several suspects, with the prime accused, Shubham Lonkar, an alleged member of the Lawrence Bishnoi gang who is still at large. Mumbai Police have issued a Look Out



Accident

According to the police, the accused had initially planned to carry out the attack using a motorbike. The idea was for the shooters to ride up to the location, execute the murder, and then escape quickly by bike. However, a traffic accident involving two of the suspects caused them to abandon this plan. Instead, the three perpetrators decided to travel by auto-rickshaw to the site of the crime. After the murder, they quickly changed their clothes to avoid detection.

Harishkumar Balakram Nisad, one of the arrested co-conspirators, had transferred ₹ 60,000 for the purchase of a

Circular (LOC) against Lonkar, who is believed to be attempting to flee to Nepal. His photographs have been circulated at the Nepal border in an effort to prevent his escape.

Lonkar had remained active on social media until just three days before the murder, with responsibility for Mr Siddique's killing reportedly being claimed via his Facebook profile on October 9. His brother, Praveen Lonkar, has been arrested for allegedly providing financial support to the killers.

Authorities have not yet managed to track down Shubham's exact location, but intelligence suggests he may have



been in contact with key criminal networks.

According to the police, the shooters learned to operate guns by watching YouTube tutorials. In the weeks leading up to the murder, the accused rented a house in the Kurla area of Mumbai, where they practised loading, unloading, and handling weapons. Due to a lack of open space, they engaged in "dry practice" drills and rehearsing with unloaded guns.

Investigations also revealed that Shivkumar Gautam, another prime suspect, had experience with firearms from celebratory firings at weddings in Uttar Pradesh, where he is believed

to have honed his shooting skills. Gautam, described as the "main shooter," not only participated in the planning but also trained Kashyap and Singh in the handling of guns. The trio communicated frequently via social media platforms like Snapchat and Instagram, using these apps to stay under police radar while coordinating the assassination plan.

Shubham Lonkar, the key suspect on the run, was previously arrested in January under the Arms Act in Maharashtra's Akola district. His arrest had led to the seizure of more than ten firearms.

Big Supreme Court Ruling On Citizenship Of Immigrants In Assam Before 1971

New Delhi

The Supreme Court has upheld the validity of a key citizenship rule that recognised the Assam Accord, granting citizenship to Bangladeshi refugees who had arrived before 1971. Section 6A of the Citizenship Act was introduced in 1985 to allow refugees from Bangladesh (then East Pakistan), who entered India between 1966-1971, to register as Indian citizens.

A five-judge constitutional bench

led by Chief Justice of India DY Chandrachud upheld the validity of Section 6A by a 4:1 majority with Justice JB Pardiwala dissenting. The bench also comprised Justices Surya Kant, MM Sundresh, and Manoj Misra.

"The court's decision means that the non-resident Indians who came from Bangladesh between January 1, 1966 and March 25, 1971 are eligible for citizenship. Those who have got citizenship under this will retain their

citizenship," the bench said.

The order came on a petition that contended that the arrival of Bangladeshi refugees had impacted the demographic balance of Assam. It said Section 6A of the Citizenship Act violated the political and cultural rights of the original residents of the state.

The Chief Justice said the enactment of Section 6A was a "political solution" to a unique problem faced by Assam since the influx of refugees had

threatened its culture and demography.

"The central government could have extended the act to other areas as well, but it did not do so because it was unique to Assam. The number of migrants coming to Assam and their impact on culture etc. is higher in Assam. The impact of 40 lakh migrants in Assam is more than that of 57 lakh in West Bengal because the land area in Assam is less than that of West Bengal," the Chief Justice said.

Rahul Gandhi Offers Prayers At Valmiki Temple In Delhi



New Delhi

Leader of opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi on Thursday offered prayers at the Valmiki temple on Mandir Marg here on the occasion of Valmiki Jayanti.

Saint Valmiki is the author of the Hindu epic Ramayana and a

revered figure, especially among Dalits. In pictures of Gandhi's visit shared by the Congress on its social media handles, he was seen praying at the Valmiki temple.

He was also seen visiting a room on the temple premises where Mahatma Gandhi had lived for over 200 days.

Man Who Raised 'Pak Zindabad' Slogan To Chant 'Bharat Mata Ki Jai' For Bail

Jabalpur

A man accused of shouting "Pakistan zindabad" was on Tuesday granted bail by the Madhya Pradesh High Court with the condition that he has to salute the national flag at a police station 21 times and raise "Bharat Mata ki jai" slogan twice a month till the end of his trial.

Justice Dinesh Kumar Paliwal granted bail to the accused, Faizal, on the condition that he will regularly report to Misrod Police Station in Bhopal on the first and fourth Tuesday of every month until the case is resolved.

As part of his bail conditions, he will have to stand in front of the tricolor flag displayed at the station and salute it 21 times while chanting "Bharat Mata ki jai."

"I am of the view that applicant (Faizal) may be released on bail by imposing some conditions which may enthuse in him the sense of responsibility and a pride for the country in which he is born and living," Justice Paliwal said.

The state government's counsel opposed the bail, saying the applicant was a "habitual offender" and 14 criminal cases were registered against him.

"By shouting the slogan of 'Pakistan Zindabad, Hindustan Murdabad', he attempted to promote enmity between different groups and his act amounts prejudicial to maintenance of harmony and national integration," the counsel said.

"He is openly shouting slogans against the country in which he was born and brought up. If he is not happy and satisfied in this nation, he may opt to live in the country of his choice for which he raised the slogan of 'zindabad'," the counsel added.

Faizal was arrested in May after a video surfaced of him shouting slogans hailing Pakistan and denouncing India.

He is required to visit the police station between 10 am and 12 pm on the specified days.

Omar Abdullah's First Decision After Becoming CM: No Green Corridor

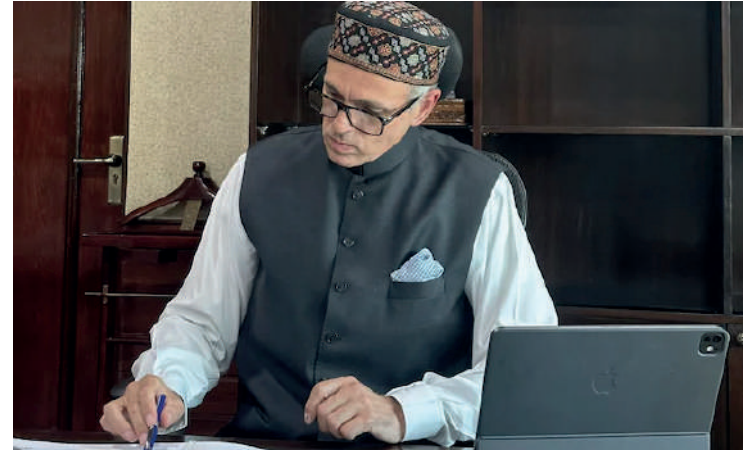
Delhi

Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Omar Abdullah instructed police in the Union Territory to not demarcate a "green corridor" or stop traffic when he travels by road, in one of the first orders after taking oath on Wednesday.

Mr Abdullah urged his Cabinet colleagues to follow "people-friendly" conduct, as their aim is to serve the people and not inconvenience them. He also said that use of stick or aggressive gestures during road movements is to be avoided.

I have spoken to the DG @ JmuKmrPolice that there is to be no "green corridor" or traffic stoppage when I move anywhere by road. I have instructed him to minimise public inconvenience & the use of sirens is to be minimal. The use of any stick waving or aggressive gestures is to be...

The National Conference leader was administered the oath of office and secrecy by the LG Manoj Sinha at Sher-i-Kashmir International Conference Centre (SKICC) in Srinagar. Surinder Kumar, MLA from Nowshera



in Jammu, was sworn in as the Deputy Chief Minister of Jammu and Kashmir along with other ministers.

Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge, Leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi, Congress general secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra and other leaders of INDIA bloc were also present for the swearing in ceremony. However, the Congress sat out of the state Cabinet.

After taking oath, Omar Abdullah received a guard of honour at Civil Secretariat in Srinagar and held his first

maiden meeting with secretaries of various departments.

Omar Abdullah, who is heading the National Conference-led government in the state, has backing of other parties in INDIA alliance and four independents. The NC-Congress alliance won majority in the assembly polls, together bagging 48 of 90 Assembly seats.

The BJP put up a impressive performance bagging 29 seats. Peoples' Democratic Party won three seats and one seat each was won by the People's Conference, CPI-M and AAP. Seven seats were won by the Independents.

Omar Abdullah On Choosing Ex BJP Leader Surinder Choudhary As His Deputy

Srinagar

Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Wednesday chose party leader Surinder Choudhary from Nowshera in Jammu as his deputy, saying he did so to give a voice to the people of the region and make his government inclusive.

"Our endeavour will be to take everyone along," the National Conference leader told reporters after being sworn in. Five ministers -- Sakina Masood (Itoo), Javed Dar, Javed Rana, Surinder Choudhary and Satish Sharma -- also took the oath of office.

There are three vacancies and "they will gradually be filled", Mr Abdullah said. He said Mr Choudhary -- a former member of the PDP and the BJP who emerged a giant killer when he defeated BJP's J-K president Ravinder Raina from Nowshera



by 7,819 votes -- was chosen as deputy chief minister so people of Jammu do not feel left out from the government. "I had said that we will not allow Jammu to feel that they do not have a voice or representatives in this government. I have chosen a deputy chief minister from Jammu so that the people of Jammu feel that this government is as much theirs as it is of the rest," he said. In the 2014 assembly elections, Mr Raina won the Nowshera seat by defeating Mr Choudhary, who was then fighting on a PDP ticket, by a margin of over 10,000 votes.

Mr Choudhary resigned from

the PDP in 2022 to join the BJP before ending his over-a-year-long association with the party to join the NC in July last year.

This is the first elected government since 2019 when Article 370 was abrogated from Jammu and Kashmir and the state was bifurcated into the union territories of Jammu and Kashmir, and Ladakh. In the assembly elections held recently, the National Conference won 42 out of the 90 seats while alliance partner Congress bagged six. Together, the two pre-poll allies hold a majority in the 95-member assembly -- five members are to be nominated by the LG.

India To Drive Global Energy Demand Over Next Decade: Report

New Delhi

: India is poised to experience more energy demand growth than any other country over the next decade due to its large population and rising demand from all sectors, according to a new report by the International Energy Agency.

The World Energy Outlook 2024 report also said that coal will remain a major part of India's energy mix for the next few decades, with the country projected to add about 60 gigawatts of new coal-fired power capacity by 2030, even though some older coal plants will retire.

India overtook China in 2023 to become the most populous country in the world, even as its fertility rate dropped below the replacement level.

"The population size and the scale of rising demand from all sectors mean that India is poised to experience more energy demand growth than any other country over the next decade," the IEA report said.

According to the Stated Policies Scenario (STEPS), the report said that India is on track to add over 12,000 cars daily to its roads from now until 2035. Built space is expected to increase by over 1 billion square metres annually, which is larger than the total built space in South Africa today.

India's iron and steel production is on track to grow by 70 per cent by 2035, cement output is set to rise by nearly 55 per cent, and the number of air conditioners is projected to increase by more than 4.5 times, resulting in electricity demand from air conditioners exceeding Mexico's total expected electricity consumption by that year.

The total energy demand in India is

projected to increase by nearly 35 per cent, and its electricity generation capacity is likely to triple to 1,400 GW by 2035.



The IEA said while India is committed to achieving net zero emissions by 2070, coal will continue to play a significant role in the energy mix for the next few decades.

India is expected to add about 60

gigawatts of new coal-fired power capacity by 2030, even though some older coal plants will retire. Coal-based electricity generation is projected to increase by over 15 per cent, the report stated.

Coal provided 40 per cent of the energy used in industries like steel, cement, and manufacturing in 2023. By 2035, coal use in industry is expected to grow by 50 per cent, according to the report.

India, the world's second-largest consumer of coal for electricity generation after China, saw the share of coal-fired power generation rise to 75 per cent in 2023-24, up from 71 per cent in

2019-20.

According to the IEA, while coal consumption fell in Europe and the US in 2023, it rose by 8 per cent in India and 5 per cent in China.

Supreme Court Commutes Death Penalty Of Man Guilty Of Killing Daughter

New Delhi

The Supreme Court on Wednesday commuted the death penalty of a man, who murdered his pregnant daughter for performing an inter-caste marriage against her family's will and sentenced him to 20 years in jail instead.

A bench of Justices B R Gavai, Aravind Kumar and K V Viswanathan upheld the conviction of Eknath Kisan Kumbharkar from Nashik district in Maharashtra for murdering his daughter while setting aside his death penalty.

"The order of conviction as recorded by the trial court and confirmed by the high court of judicature at Bombay vide order dated August 6, 2019 in confirmation case...is affirmed. However, the sentence of death penalty imposed by the courts below under Section 302 is converted to 20 years of rigorous imprisonment without remission," held the bench.

The top court clarified that Kumbharkar will not be entitled to make any representation for remission till he completes 20 years of actual rigorous imprisonment.

After going through the convict's reports, the bench said, "We find that the present case

would not fall in the category of 'rarest of rare cases' wherein it can be held that imposition of the death penalty is the only alternative. We are of the considered opinion that the present case would fall in the category of middle path as held by this court in various judgments." On April 25, the top court had called for the convict's prison conduct reports from Yerawada Central Jail, apart from the probation officer's report, his psychological evaluation and mitigation investigation report.

The bench observed that appellant hails from a poor nomadic community in Maharashtra.

"He had an alcoholic father and suffered parental neglect and poverty...Neither the appellant nor any of his family members have any criminal antecedent. It cannot be presumed that the appellant is a hardened criminal who cannot be reformed. Hence, it cannot be said that there is no possibility of reformation, even though the appellant has committed a gruesome crime," the bench noted.

According to the prosecution, Kumbharkar had murdered his pregnant daughter Pramila on June 28, 2013 for marrying a man from a different caste against the father's wishes.

The bench said the man was 38-years old at the time of the crime without any criminal antecedents and underlined the various other mitigating circumstances in his favour.

The medical reports of the appellant would disclose that he has speech issues, and he has undergone an angioplasty in 2014, apart from suffering other serious ailments. The conduct report from the prison would disclose that the behaviour of the appellant in the jail is satisfactory with everyone for the past six years. Considering these factors....even though the crime committed by the appellant is unquestionably grave and unpardonable, it is not appropriate to affirm the death sentence that was awarded to him," it held.

Death sentence should not be imposed only by taking into consideration the grave nature of crime but only if there is no possibility of reformation by a criminal, it added.

"Being conscious of the fact that sentence of life imprisonment is subject to remission, which would not be appropriate in view of the gruesome crime committed by the appellant, the course of middle path requires to be adopted in the instant case," the top court held further.

"Enough Evidence For ED": BJP Leader Shaina NC On MUDA Land Allotment Scam

Mumbai

BJP leader Shaina NC hit out at the ruling Congress and Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah for the Mysuru Urban Development Authority (MUDA) scam, saying there is "enough evidence" for the Directorate of Enforcement (ED) to do its "job."

The ED which started a probe against the Karnataka CM in connection with the alleged MUDA land allotment scam has filed the chargesheet on Tuesday.

"There is ample evidence, whether it is the resignation of the chairman, or the Karnataka CM offering to return the land as received by compensation, and the fact that money was distributed in the Lok Sabha election, is enough evidence for the ED to do its job and file its chargesheet," she told ANI on Wednesday.

Calling the MUDA scam as a "huge corruption pile," she said, "The MUDA scam is a huge corruption pile and the chairman has resigned. The Karnataka CM Siddaramaiah has offered to return the land in terms of compensation. This makes it amply clear that there

was corruption."

Earlier, MUDA chairman, Mari Gowda tendered his resignation citing health issues.

I have given my resignation to the Secretary of the Urban Development Department, the CM instructed me to resign, so I have resigned. My health is not good, so I resigned. MUDA investigation is ongoing. Let the investigation take place. The investigation will reveal the truth. There is no pressure on me. I resigned due to ill health. The CM has not put any pressure on me regarding the issue" Mr Gowda said.

Additionally, BJP MP Sambit Patra also hit out at the Karnataka CM, saying, "Karnataka CM Siddaramaiah had offered to return the land he received as compensation. Both these things make it clear that Congress leader Siddaramaiah is embroiled in the MUDA scam head to toe. The ED filed a chargesheet yesterday. The chargesheet says that Karnataka Maharshi Valmiki Schedule Tribes Development Corporation's fund which was meant for the SC/ST was diverted for Lok Sabha polls."

"As We Had Said, No Evidence Whatsoever": India On Justin Trudeau's Deposition

New Delhi

In a late night post by the Ministry of External Affairs, India affirmed its stand on the massive diplomatic row with Canada. Putting the responsibility of the disastrous diplomatic fallout squarely on Justin Trudeau, the foreign ministry reiterated that "Canada has presented us with no evidence whatsoever".

In its terse-but-sharp response to Mr Trudeau's deposition at the Commission of Inquiry, the foreign ministry wrote in its post-midnight statement that "What we have heard today only confirms what we have been saying consistently all along - Canada has presented us (India) no evidence whatsoever in support of the serious allegations that it has chosen to level against India and Indian diplomats".

Putting the onus of the grave diplomatic situation entirely on the incumbent Prime Minister of Canada's conduct, the statement noted that "The responsibility for the damage that this cavalier behaviour has caused to India-Canada relations lies with Prime Minister Trudeau alone."

JUSTIN TRUDEAU'S LATEST REMARKS

Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau testified before a Commission of Inquiry on Wednesday where he acknowledged and admitted that he only had intelligence-based speculation and no "hard evidentiary proof" when he alleged the involvement of Indian government agents in the killing of Khalistani terrorist Hardeep Singh Nijjar last year.

Stung by India's sharp rebuttal to his "absurd" allegations, and less than 48 hours after New Delhi kicked out



six top Canadian diplomats over their Prime Minister's "politically motivated" behaviour, Mr Trudeau tried to hit back aggressively claiming that "The Indian government made a horrific mistake in thinking that they could interfere as aggressively as they did in the safety and sovereignty of Canada."

Testifying before the public inquiry into foreign interference in federal electoral processes and democratic institutions, Mr Trudeau went on to allege that Indian diplomats were "collecting information on Canadians who are in disagreement" with the Government of India and allegedly "passing it to the highest levels within the Indian government and criminal organisations like the Lawrence Bishnoi gang" - another claim that neither Mr Trudeau, nor the Canadian government or authorities have any proof of.

When the same claim was made by Mr Trudeau two days ago, New Delhi had said in its statement at the time that, "The Canadian government has not shared a shred of evidence with the Government of India, despite many requests from our side. This latest step follows interactions that have again witnessed assertions without any facts. This leaves little doubt that on the pretext of an investigation, there is a deliberate strategy of smearing India for political gains."

TRUDEAU'S SUPPORT TO 'KHALISTAN' EXTREMISTS

India has repeatedly said that the main issue between the two countries is that of Canada, especially Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, giving space and shelter to pro-Khalistan separatists and extremists operating from Canadian soil with impunity.

Mr Trudeau has also been seen openly supporting radicals by attending separatist rallies and even sharing space with declared terrorists. Mr Trudeau has attempted to justify such actions by calling it "Canadian freedom of speech and expression".

India has stated that the reason behind Mr Trudeau's words and actions are "his vote bank" - extremists and radicals who are crucial for his electoral gains.

"Prime Minister Trudeau's hostility to India has long been in evidence. In 2018, his visit to India, which was aimed at currying favour with a vote bank, rebounded to his discomfort. His Cabinet has included individuals who have openly associated with an extremist and separatist agenda regarding India. His naked interference in Indian internal politics in December 2020 showed how far he was willing to go in this regard. That his government was dependent on a political party, whose leader openly espouses a separatist ideology vis-a-vis India, only aggravated matters," the Government of India had said in a statement.

Justin Trudeau's latest remarks come two days after he called the Indian High Commissioner a "person of interest" in the "murder" investigation of Khalistani terrorist Hardeep Nijjar. India trashed Mr Trudeau's allegations, describing them as "preposterous imputations."

Hardeep Singh Nijjar, who was declared a terrorist by India, was shot dead outside a gurdwara in Surrey, British Columbia, on June 18 last year.

S Jaishankar's Huddle With Indian Diplomats In Pak Includes A Morning Walk

Islamabad

External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar took a leisurely morning stroll within the Indian High Commission campus in Islamabad, Pakistan, on Tuesday. He was on an official visit to Pakistan to attend the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation conclave.

In a post on X (formerly Twitter), Mr. Jaishankar stated, "A morning walk together with colleagues of Team @ IndianPakistan in our High Commission campus."

He also planted a sapling at the premises of the Indian High Commission. He was accompanied by officials of the Indian High Commission.

Mr. Jaishankar met with Mongolian



Prime Minister Oyun-Erdene Luvsannamsrai on Tuesday, on the sidelines of the SCO Summit in Islamabad, Pakistan. The two leaders discussed ways to strengthen bilateral relations between India and Mongolia, with Jaishankar expressing his delight in exploring opportunities for deeper cooperation.

This meeting marks a significant moment in India-Mongolia ties, building on the strategic partnership established during Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to Mongolia in 2015.

He also attended a dinner reception hosted by Pakistan Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, where they exchanged warm

gestures, shaking hands and sharing pleasantries

Mr. Jaishankar received a warm welcome upon his arrival at Rawalpindi airport, courtesy of Ilyas Mehmood Nizami, Director General (South Asia) of Pakistan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, at Nur Khan Airbase. The occasion was made even more special by children dressed in vibrant traditional attire, who presented him with beautiful flower bouquets, setting a gracious tone for his visit.

The Ministry of External Affairs said that the meeting focused on the trade and economic agenda of the organisation. Mr Jaishankar led the Indian delegation at the 23rd Meeting of the SCO.

India-Canada spat

THE escalation of the bitter dispute between India and Canada that has simmered for over a year marks a new low in relations. India has gone beyond denouncing Canada's fresh charge that top Indian diplomats are 'persons of interest' linked to the killing of radical Sikh leader Hardeep Singh Nijjar — designated a terrorist by India — in June 2023. New Delhi has openly expressed its lack of trust in Prime Minister Justin Trudeau. It has accused him of showing hostility towards India as part of vote-bank politics.

The allegations levelled are driven by his domestic agenda. A flurry of diplomatic exits has deepened the chill. Unlike the spat last year, there seems little effort to exercise restraint. The gloves are off, and it is Trudeau who must take the blame.

Increasingly unpopular at home after almost nine years in office, Trudeau is



facing pressure from within the ruling Liberal Party to quit. Amid mounting discontent, his party is projected to lose the elections that must be held by October next year. Trudeau's appeasement of Sikh extremist elements is being linked to

a desperate bid to hold on to power. His decision to go public, yet again, with a new set of allegations implicating India has the potential to rupture ties to a point of no return. It also intensifies a broader diplomatic crisis. New Delhi has repeatedly voiced concern over the support for separatist movements within Canada. The issue now assumes centre stage.

The Indian government faces the curious allegation of running a criminal network to target Sikh separatists. It's strange, given that India has been asking Ottawa to rein in Indian-origin gangsters. An offensive brand of politics is jeopardising India-Canada ties. It is in neither country's interest. Diplomacy must prevail, behind closed doors.

// satyasya paramam nidhānam //

We would like to hear from you. Please share your comments on editor.acrossstate@gmail.com



If you set your goals ridiculously high and it's a failure, you will fail above everyone else's success.

-James Cameron

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SPACEX has redefined the boundaries of space technology with its remarkable achievement of catching a returning rocket booster directly on the launch pad using robotic arms. This feat, part of SpaceX's Starship programme, brings the world closer to sustainable space exploration. It showcases a leap forward in reusable rocket technology that could drastically reduce costs for future missions. The accomplishment reflects the company's dedication to the principle of "making life multi-planetary", an ambition to which Elon Musk often alludes.

Awestruck spectators watched as Starship's 400-foot frame lifted off from Texas and arced across the Gulf of Mexico, only



to return minutes later for a flawless capture by SpaceX's towering "chopstick" arms. The manoeuvre showcased innovation that goes beyond rocket science — melding automation, precise control and structural resilience into a symphony of advanced mechanics.

This accomplishment is not merely about technological spectacle; it holds significant potential to reshape global space exploration strategies. Reusable rockets could allow agencies like ISRO to lower costs and increase mission frequency, supporting

ambitious programmes like Chandrayaan and Mangalyaan. Moreover, reusable technology is a greener approach as it reduces material waste and space debris, aligning with global efforts to minimise environmental impact. Global collaboration could expand this innovation's reach, allowing space agencies such as NASA, ESA and ISRO to explore joint missions and advance human spaceflight. SpaceX's technology provides a promising roadmap for future partnerships, benefiting agencies, scientists and the next generation of STEM professionals. Once the stuff of science fiction, reusable rockets are now becoming a reality.

Reusable rockets

SpaceX paves way for sustainable space era

Unsafe in Bangladesh

Yunus cannot abdicate responsibility

A SENSE of frustration is visible in India's strong condemnation of the attacks on Hindu temples in Bangladesh. Ever since former Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's ouster following the political upheaval in early August, New Delhi has repeatedly voiced concern about the safety and security of Bangladesh's minorities. It is ironic that the targeting of symbols

protecting religious freedom and periodic visits to temples.

Certainly, these are testing times for India-Bangladesh ties. New Delhi's reticence over the demand to deport Hasina to face trial is possibly raising hackles in Dhaka. For some in the new regime, riling India is the perfect way with which Bangladesh can look its powerful neighbour

in the eye — however misconceived the notion. Still, both sides must be fully aware of the grave consequences of any delay in bridging the growing distrust. Diplomatic channels need to be activated soonest at full throttle. First and foremost, though, Dhaka must crack the whip. To act — or not to act — cannot constitute leverage.

Especially not when the reins of power are with Muhammad Yunus, the West's poster boy of all that is noble.

There's a lesson in what's taking place in Bangladesh, for India as well. Side-stepping the elephant in the room would be as deplorable as not calling out Dhaka. Let's not be in denial about minority-bashing at home. This vile absurdity must end. It's a disservice to India and Indians.



of Hindu identity continues unabated under the watch of Nobel Peace Prize winner Muhammad Yunus. There have been multiple instances of desecration, vandalism and robbery at shrines and puja pandals. Yunus' contention that these attacks are politically motivated and not communal amounts to a singular abdication of responsibility. A systematic pattern of hate is being allowed to gain ground in Bangladesh, despite his assurances of

THE Congress is showing all signs of a sore loser following its decisive defeat in the Haryana Assembly elections. The party has let its narrative slip, failing to build on the momentum from the earlier parliamentary successes. But, rather than accepting the people's mandate and honouring India's post-Independence tradition of smooth transitions, the Congress has chosen to indulge in an unproductive blame game. Accusing the incumbent BJP-led government of manipulating electronic voting machines (EVMs), it filed an official complaint with the Election Commission. Such an unprecedented move reeks of little more than arrogance and desperation.

Fortunately, a glimmer of pragmatism has prevailed. The Congress has since toned down its EVM accusations, opting to pause the line of attack until it gathers "enough evidence." However, other developments following the results point to deeper challenges for the grand old party. Rather than addressing the

THE Congress is showing all signs of a sore loser following its decisive defeat in the Haryana Assembly elections. The party has let its narrative slip, failing to build on the momentum from the earlier parliamentary successes. But, rather than...

infighting that likely contributed to its downfall, the Congress seems poised to let its divisions deepen. Key figures in the Haryana unit, such as Bhupinder Hooda and Kumari Selja, were conspicuously absent from the high-command meeting convened to discuss the devastating loss. The long-standing feud between these two leaders exemplifies the toxic factionalism that plagued the Congress'

Gracias, Rafael

Spaniard's retirement ends an era



RAFAEL NADAL possibly sensed the writing on the wall at the 2022 Laver Cup when he played alongside Roger Federer in the Swiss star's final tournament. Both of them wept as the Federer era ended. Two years on, the 38-year-old Spaniard, indisputably one of the greatest tennis players in history, has called time on his iconic professional career. Along with Federer and Novak Djokovic, Nadal formed the 'Big Three', dominating the men's game from the early 2000s. His success came despite being plagued by a series of

injuries, attributed to all the blazing intensity he brought to his game. For years, he has also suffered from a rare condition affecting his feet. In this life, everything has a beginning and an end, Nadal said, announcing his retirement on Thursday. For his legion of fans, it's an emotional moment — tough to accept, but time to say gracias, thank you, to the 22-time Grand Slam champion for the memories.

Nadal's list of achievements is stupendous. He is the second-most successful men's singles player of all time, behind only Djokovic. Known as the 'King of Clay', Nadal won the French Open singles title a record 14 times, his first just days after his 19th birthday in 2005. A four-time US Open champion, he won both the Australian Open and Wimbledon twice. There's more — an Olympic singles and doubles gold. He will represent Spain in his last appearance at next month's Davis Cup Finals. Playing alongside him will be Carlos Alcaraz, long seen as his heir.

For the entirety of his career, Nadal competed with ferocity on the court. The instant the match ended, it would be relaxed grace. Doubts are good, he once said, for any admission of superiority would be a sign of weakness. More power to you, Rafael Nadal!

A bitter defeat

them of placing personal ambitions above party goals. While these allegations may hold some water, deflecting blame without introspection will only perpetuate the fractures within the party. Only



election campaign, undermining the party's strength on the ground.

To make matters worse, Rahul Gandhi has distanced himself from responsibility. He has, instead, attributed the loss to the self-interest of local leaders, accusing

by realigning itself around common objectives can the Congress hope to reclaim its relevance as a strong opposition voice, both in Haryana and the country.

Gentle giant

Ratan Tata was a shining beacon

THE visionary industrialist had a profound impact on India's economy, but Ratan Naval Tata's crowning glory was the respect he commanded across the spectrum in India and abroad. The outpouring of grief over his demise, at the age of 86, bears testimony to his popularity. The chairman of Tata Sons for more than two decades, he wrote his epitaph himself: 'I hope people would say that I was able to lead the group with dignity and that I tried to do the right thing.' The sense of purpose and quiet confidence he exhibited, or the entrepreneurial instincts he nurtured, were exceptional traits. What set him apart in the ever-growing club of business tycoons and endeared him to millions was the high standard of probity and conduct he swore by. He cultivated a reputation for straight-dealing. His humility, the innumerable philanthropic projects he steered, his passion for start-ups, as well as his love

for animals, all added to the persona. He was a rarity, a shining beacon in an age of greed and ostentation.

Born in 1937, Ratan Tata's life spanned a period of enormous change for India. In 1991, he took over from his uncle and mentor JRD Tata as head of one of India's biggest conglomerates. This coincided with India's economic opening to the world. As the group boldly ventured abroad, Ratan Tata emerged as a brand ambassador for India Inc, and later its elder statesman. His pet project, the ultra-cheap Nano, hit a political wall in West Bengal and then the car registered dismal sales. It was a harsh lesson about the limitations of a grand vision.

Ratan Tata never married. 'If I had a family, I could not have spent as much of my time involved with the group,' he said. His family is spread far and wide, mourning the loss.



Right to protest

Normalisation of disruption is not good

THE right to protest is protected under Article 19 of the Constitution. Citizens have a right to assemble peacefully and protest against the action or inaction on the part of the State. What's becoming an issue of concern, particularly in Punjab, is the repeated recourse — almost a given — to blocking roads and railway tracks when something irks someone. The protesters base their argument on past experience, which is that memorandums and dharnas count for little and only the disruption of traffic and essential services has the desired effect of forcing the authorities to take cognisance. The counter-argument is equally persuasive. What purpose does it serve to inconvenience fellow citizens day in and day out? If the authorities are at fault, why make the people suffer? The normalisation of disruption is a telling commentary on a State that does not care — for protesters and public alike.

It is essential to guard against a citizen versus citizen binary taking root. A situation, where both protesters and citizens harbour the notion of

being victims, does not augur well for democracy. It dilutes the legitimate demand of protesters and makes citizens immune to legitimate causes. No one gains. The use of the term 'andolanjeevi', in the protests against the Modi government's three farm laws drew criticism, and rightly so. People in our region stood as one, in solidarity with the protesting farmers. If these selfsame citizens — known for backing a worthy cause — increasingly feel they are at the receiving end, those leading the protests need to introspect. The methods being adopted are not helping.

Meanwhile, another 'andolanjeevi', the well-known Ladakhi activist Sonam Wangchuk is not being allowed to have his say in Delhi. Section 144, the Rajera section in the revamped penal code, has been imposed all over the capital's New Delhi district, prohibiting the gathering of more than five people. This is unimaginable in Punjab. That is why we must further nurture the tradition of talking truth to power, but not at the cost of societal disjointedness.

Question of fair play

HC halts Punjab panchayat polls

THE stay by the Punjab and Haryana High Court on panchayat elections in 275 Punjab villages has cast a shadow over the entire electoral process. Triggered by allegations of arbitrary rejection of nomination papers, the court's intervention raises questions about transparency and fair play in the state's grassroots democracy. The court's stance reflects its deep concerns over democratic integrity in electoral procedures. At the heart of the issue is the widespread complaint that nominations were dismissed without due cause or personal hearings, seemingly to benefit candidates aligned with the ruling party. Such irregularities strike at the core of democratic principles, eroding public confidence not only in local governance but also in the broader political fabric of the state.

With over 3,600 nominations for sarpanch posts rejected and complaints of procedural lapses, accusations are mounting against the state government for undermining democratic norms. Several aspirants have had their papers rejected after

symbol allotment, sparking further outrage and prompting an official inquiry. An unusual development also saw all 72 sarpanches in Patti, Tarn Taran, elected unopposed — although touted by some as democratic consensus, this certainly raises questions about transparency. Sarpanches were elected unopposed across some other districts too, with over 20,000 candidates withdrawing, allegedly under pressure; certainly, the whole process seems more than opaque. Along with reports of officials opting out of poll duty to avoid potential violence, the developments suggest an environment unconducive to fair electoral practices.

The state government, however, has denied allegations of bias. As the court prepares for a hearing on October 14, the question remains — will the government ensure a transparent and accountable election process? In the long run, democracy in Punjab depends on a credible response to these allegations and a commitment to rectifying flaws in the electoral machinery.

At 5.49%, retail inflation hits 9-month high in Sept



New Delhi

Driven by sharp increase in food prices, India's retail inflation rose to its highest level in 2024. The All-India Consumer Price Index (CPI) inflation for September 2024 increased to 5.49 per cent from August's 3.65 per cent, according to the data released by the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation on Monday. Earlier in December 2023, retail inflation had stood at 5.69 per cent.

Data showed that food inflation rose sharply to 9.2 per cent in September from 5.66 per cent in the preceding month. This sharp uptick was led by an acceleration in the prices of vegetables (35.99 per cent) and fruits (7.65 per cent).

Sujan Hajra, Chief Economist and Executive Director, Anand Rathi Shares and Stock Brokers, said, "India's CPI for September rose to 5.49 per cent. The RBI had projected the quarterly average at 4.1 per cent in its last monetary

policy committee, thus expecting the September-2024 CPI around 5 per cent."

"The current rise is attributed to the increased prices of vegetables which went up 36 per cent year-on-year. With normal monsoon, we expect fresh supplies to hit the market in coming days and the food prices to remain moderate," added Hajra.

"The headline inflation is likely to range around 4.5-5 per cent in the next couple of months, above the RBI's target of 4 per cent. Thus, the RBI may still hold the repo rate steady and watch closely the food price trajectory and geopolitical events," he said.

Meanwhile, the housing sector in urban areas experienced a year-on-year inflation rate of 2.78 per cent, a slight increase from the previous month's rate of 2.66 per cent. The All-India Electricity index reached 162.5 and the inflation rate stood at 5.45 per cent.

Netanyahu condoles Ratan Tata's death; calls him 'proud son of India'

Tel Aviv

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has condoled the death of Indian industry titan Ratan Tata, calling him a champion of the friendship between Israel and India.

The former Tata Group chairman passed away on Wednesday evening aged 86.

In a post on X addressed to Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Netanyahu highlighted Ratan Tata's contributions to fostering Israel-India ties.

"To my friend, Prime Minister @narendramodi. I and many in Israel mourn the loss of Ratan Naval Tata, a proud son of India and a champion of the friendship between our two countries," he said on Saturday.

Netanyahu asked Prime Minister Modi to convey his condolences to Ratan Tata's family.

"In sympathy, Benjamin Netanyahu," he said as he concluded the post.

RIL Q2 profit falls 5%

Reliance Industries Ltd (RIL) on Monday reported a 5 per cent fall its net profit in the July-September quarter as weak oil refining and petrochemical business hurt its operational performance.

Its consolidated net profit fell to Rs 16,563 crore (Rs 24.48 per share) in second quarter of the fiscal as compared to Rs 17,394 crore (Rs 25.71 a share) in the same period last year, according to a firm's statement.

While retail and telecom businesses posted steady performance, the oil-to-chemical (O2C) business, which is made up of twin oil refineries at Jamnagar in Gujarat and petrochemical units saw margins shrink on



global oversupply. The profit before tax dropped 2 per cent to Rs 43,934 crore. The financial performance was also impacted by finance costs rising by 5 per cent, primarily due to higher debt. Also, depreciation rose by 2.3 per cent.

Jio profit jumps 23.4%

Jio Platforms on Monday reported a 23.4% year-on-year rise in its consolidated net profit for Q2 FY25 to Rs 6,539 crore, as average revenue per user surged to Rs 195.1 per month.

RBI Governor pitches for reducing cost, time of remittances

Mumbai

Reserve Bank Governor Shaktikanta Das on Monday made a case for reducing time and cost of overseas remittances, which are important for developing economies.

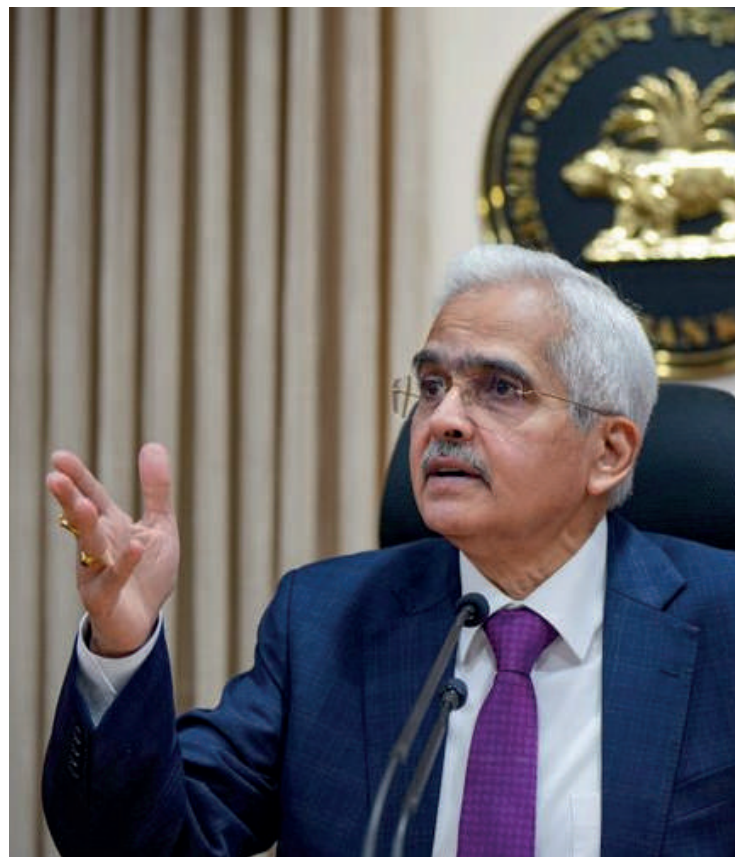
The new technology and payments system can be used for expediting and expanding cross-border payments, he noted.

"Remittances are the starting point for many emerging and developing economies, including India, to explore cross-border peer-to-peer (P2P) payments. We believe there is immense scope to significantly reduce the cost and time for such remittances," Das said in his keynote address at the conference on 'Central Banking at Crossroads'.

Besides, he said, the feasibility of expanding real-time gross settlement (RTGS) to settle transactions in major trade currencies such as dollar, Euro and Pound can be explored through bilateral or multilateral arrangements.

India and a few other economies have already commenced efforts to expand linkage of crossborder fast payment systems both in the bilateral and multilateral modes, he said.

The Central Bank Digital Currency (CBDC) is another



area which has the potential to facilitate efficient cross-border payments, he added.

Going forward, he said, harmonisation of standards and interoperability would be important for CBDCs for cross-border payments and to overcome the serious financial stability concerns associated with cryptocurrencies.

The RBI Governor also raised concerns over misuse

of Artificial Intelligence in the banking space saying it could lead to more cyber-attacks and data breaches.

"Banks and other financial institutions must put in place adequate risk mitigation measures against all these risks. In the ultimate analysis, banks have to ride on the advantages of AI and Bigtech and not allow the latter to ride on them," he said.

Average airfares around Diwali drop 20-25 per cent on many routes

Mumbai

Air passengers might have a reason to smile this Diwali season as average airfares on many domestic routes have dropped 20-25 per cent compared to the year-ago period, according to an analysis.

Increased capacity and the recent fall in oil prices are considered to be among the factors for the fall in air ticket prices.

The analysis by travel portal ixigo showed that average airfare on the domestic routes have declined in the range of 20-25 per cent.

The prices are for one-way average fare on a 30 days APD (advanced purchase date) basis.

For 2023, the time period considered is November 10-16 while it is October 28-November 3 for this year. This is the time around Diwali.

The maximum decline of average airfare is 38 per cent for a Bengaluru-Kolkata flight to Rs 6,319 this year from Rs 10,195 last year, as per the analysis.

The ticket price on Chennai-Kolkata route has fallen 36 per cent to Rs 5,604 from Rs 8,725.

The average airfare for Mumbai-Delhi flight has dropped



34 per cent to Rs 5,762 from Rs 8,788. Similarly, there is a 34 per cent decrease in ticket prices on Delhi-Udaipur route to Rs 7,469 from Rs 11,296.

The decline is 32 per cent on Delhi-Kolkata, Hyderabad-Delhi, and Delhi-Srinagar routes.

"Last year, airfares around Diwali had surged due to limited capacity, primarily driven by the suspension of Go First airline. However, this year we've seen some relief as additional capacity has been added since then, leading to a 20-25 per cent YoY (year-on-year) dip in average airfares across key routes for the last week of October," ixigo Group CEO Aloke Bajpai told PTI.

According to him, the decline in oil prices, down 15 per cent this year, may have also contributed to this downward trend, offering travellers more affordable options during the festive season.

Currently, oil prices are slightly on the upward trajectory amid rising geopolitical tensions.

Meanwhile, there has been a hike in airfares of up to 34 per cent on certain routes.

While the ticket price has jumped 34 per cent on Ahmedabad-Delhi route to Rs 8,758 from Rs 6,533, the rise is 33 per cent on Mumbai-Dehradun route to Rs 15,527 from Rs 11,710, the analysis showed.

Indian company among dozen sanctioned by US for illicitly carrying Iranian oil



New Delhi

An Indian shipping firm is among the dozen-odd companies sanctioned by the US for allegedly carrying Iranian oil for sale to buyers in Asia days after slapping restrictions targetting Iran's energy trade for its October 1 attack on Israel.

Gabbaro Ship Services, the India-based company, was involved in the transport of Iranian petroleum as the technical manager of crude oil tanker Hornet and knowingly engaged in a significant transaction for the transport of petroleum from Iran as part of a 'Ghost Fleet', the State Department alleged.

The latest American sanctions against several companies across the world comes in response to Iran's October 1 ballistic missile attack on Israel.

"This attack targeted Israel's most populated city, Tel Aviv, and could have killed hundreds if not thousands of innocent people," US National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan said.

Following that attack, the US had made it clear that Iran would face severe consequences, he said, and added, the Departments of the Treasury and State on Friday announced the "new and significant measures to more effectively target Iran's energy trade."

"The new designations today also include measures against the 'Ghost Fleet'

that carries Iran's illicit oil to buyers around the world. These measures will help further deny Iran financial resources used to support its missile programmes and provide support for terrorist groups that threaten the United States, its allies, and partners," Sullivan said.

The Treasury claimed Iran's oil exports are enabled by a network of illicit shipping facilitators in multiple jurisdictions which, "through obfuscation and deception," load and transport Iranian oil for sale to buyers in Asia.

Prominent among them include United Arab Emirates-based Max Maritime Solutions FZE (Max Maritime), which used vessels under its management to conduct multiple ship-to-ship transfers of Iranian oil with vessels affiliated with the US-designated National Iranian Tanker Company (NITC), it alleged.

The NITC moves Iranian oil for National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC) to transport it to refineries in the China.

Among the companies sanctioned by the State Department are Suriname-based Strong Roots Provider NV, Glazing Future Management NV, Engen Management NV; India-based Gabbaro Ship Services Pvt Ltd; Malaysia-based Alya Marine Sendirian Berhad, and Hong Kong-based Celia Armas Ltd.

Tata proved to be an excellent steward of JLR, will inspire generations of biz leaders: Ford

Ford Motor Company chairman Bill Ford on Saturday said he is "saddened" by the death of industry titan Ratan Tata earlier this week.

"Ratan was a leader of vision and integrity and proved to be an excellent steward of Jaguar and Land Rover," Ford said in a statement.

Tata's legacy will continue to inspire future generations of business leaders and entrepreneurs, Ford, the great-grandson of Henry Ford, said.

Tata, who is credited with taking the salt-to-software conglomerate to newer heights during the over two decades of leading it, died at a city hospital on Wednesday after a brief illness. He was 86.

In 2008, group company Tata Motors bought JLR from Ford for USD 2.3 billion in an all-cash deal.

Ford recalled that he had met Tata only once in person and described the meeting as "warm and cordial".



The two spoke about the challenges and joys of running family businesses and our mutual love of cars during the meeting, the 67-year-old Ford added.

Denying claims of Tata feeling "humiliated" at the meeting as described by one of the Tata group veterans who attended the meeting, Ford said some accounts of their meeting "could not be any further from the truth".

Industrial output dips marginally



New Delhi

After a gap of nearly two years, India's industrial production turned negative as it contracted by 0.1 per cent in August, mainly due to a decline in the mining and power generation sectors' output, in addition to an almost flat expansion in the manufacturing sector.

According to the data released by the National Statistical Office (NSO), factory output growth based on the Index of Industrial Production (IIP) has also been revised downwards for July to 4.7 per cent from the earlier estimate of 4.8 per cent.

Direct tax collection grows 18 % to Rs 11.25 lakh crore

New Delhi

Net direct tax collection grew 18.3 per cent to about Rs 11.25 lakh crore as of October 10 this fiscal, government data showed on Friday.

The mop-up includes personal income tax collection of Rs 5.98 lakh crore and corporate tax collection of Rs 4.94 lakh crore. Securities Transaction Tax (STT) stood at Rs 30,630 crore, while other taxes (including equalisation levy and gift tax) earned Rs 2,150 crore.

The income tax department had collected Rs 9.51 lakh crore during the same period a year ago. Refunds worth Rs 2.31 lakh crore were issued between April



1 and October 10, a growth of 46 per cent.

On a gross basis, direct tax collection grew 22.3 per cent to Rs 13.57 lakh crore.

The collection includes PIT (personal income tax) of Rs 7.13 lakh crore and corporate tax of Rs 6.11 lakh crore.

Half-brother Noel succeeds Ratan Tata as Chairman of Tata Trusts

Mumbai

Noel Tata, the half-brother of late Ratan Tata, will be the next Chairman of Tata Trusts, sources said on Friday.

The 67-year-old Noel was chosen by the board to lead the string of philanthropic trusts that control the Tata empire.

Having functioned mostly under the shadows of his illustrious half-brother, Noel will now have the responsibility of leading the Tata Trusts—broadly comprising Sir Ratan Tata Trust & Allied Trusts, and Sir Dorabji Tata Trust & Allied Trusts—that hold a controlling 66 per cent stake in Tata Sons, the holding and promoter firm of Tata Group companies.

He is already a trustee on the boards of Sir Ratan Tata Trust and Sir Dorabji

Tata Trust.

Known to keep a low profile, Noel has been a trustee on the important trusts, and was also seen at the cremation of his half-brother on Thursday.

The meeting of the Tata Trusts board was held to choose the successor to Ratan Tata after his demise on Wednesday. A formal announcement of the successor is expected later in the day.

Noel has been involved with the Tata Group since 1999, and chairs the successful retail arm Trent, which looks after chains like Westside and Zudio and commands a market capitalisation of over Rs 2 lakh crore. He is also the chairman of Voltas and Tata International.

Noel is married to Aloo Mistry, the



sister of the late Cyrus Mistry and a part of the Shapoorji Pallonji family, which is the single largest private shareholder of Tata Sons with more than 18.4 per cent holding.

Relations between the Shapoorji Pallonji group and the Tatas have not been warm since the sacking of Cyrus Mistry from the chairmanship of Tata Sons.

Tata Sons operates all commercial enterprises in the group and collectively reported revenues of USD 165 billion last year.

Noel was seen as a front runner to succeed Ratan Tata at Tata Trusts, and there was also speculation about Ratan Tata's long-time confidante Mehli Mistry.

According to some reports, Mehli, who is already a trustee on the Tata Trusts, is being considered to be made as a permanent trustee. However, there was no confirmation of the same.

45 per cent of woman entrepreneurs lack financial emergencies savings: Report

A significant number of woman-owned micro businesses in India lack savings for financial emergencies, making them highly vulnerable to economic shocks, said a report.

The report titled 'Decoding the Financial Health of Woman-Owned Micro-Businesses (wMB) in India' was prepared by MicroSave Consulting (MSC) in collaboration with Sa-Dhan and supported by JPMorgan Chase.

The research covers six regions — Delhi-NCR, Gujarat, Maharashtra, Telangana, Karnataka, and Tamil Nadu —

providing data-driven insights and calls for targeted interventions.

Data was collected through 1,460 computer-assisted personal interviews, key informant interviews with financial institutions and enterprise support organisations, and comprehensive desk research.

Interviews with 150 woman-owned micro businesses across the six regions revealed insights into their financial decision-making processes, challenges and motivations.

The report indicated that 45 per cent

of woman entrepreneurs lack savings for financial emergencies, making them highly susceptible to economic shocks.

Additionally, many face challenges in distinguishing between personal and business finances, which complicates cash flow management and hinders the maintenance of accurate financial records.

It further said 60 per cent of respondents did not maintain any written records for their operations.

Among these, 55 per cent believe separate records are unnecessary due to small profit margins or scale, while others

find maintaining records too complex. As a result, they struggle to track business performance and assess financial health.

About 55 per cent of these businesses do not employ any staff and operate as solo ventures, which limits their contribution to job creation and the broader economy.

Autonomy is another significant issue for woman micro-entrepreneurs, with approximately 44.3 per cent relying on their spouses or other family members for business support, highlighting a considerable dependence on external assistance, it said.

Biden, Netanyahu, and the game theory spectacle in the Middle East

Biden's legacy in the Middle East has been characterised by his unwavering support for Israel, ushering a comparative paradigm tracing back to his predecessors, most significantly Truman, who recognised Israel as an independent state in 1948. The core reasons for historically strong US support for Israel have been the Jewish population's history of persecution and for America to secure a democratic ally in the Middle East in a strategically volatile Gulf. Another explanation of America's support for Israel can be traced back to Mearsheimer and Walt's 'The Israel Lobby' (2007). The theory conjectures that Bush's war on Iraq (2002) was to secure Israel's, and by extension, America's position in the Middle East, given Iraq's history of conflict with Israel and Saudi Arabia. A pro-Israel policy is a legacy that Biden inherited but what he leaves behind for the next administration is critical.

The Israeli decision to conduct a precision strike inside Beirut to kill Hassan Nasrallah was conveyed to U.S. Secretary of Defense Llyod Austin after the Israeli jets had scrambled, leaving the Biden administration extremely annoyed.

America, since the 1970s, has provided billions to Israel in military aid and will continue to do till 2028, backed by a Congressional Understanding. Since 2021, Biden's policy focus in the region has been to develop a Middle-East 'security network' by way of which Israel has some regional assurances. This network, which primarily involved the UAE, Saudi Arabia, and Jordan, assisted Israel in intercepting the attacks on it by Iran in April this year. Yet, Israeli ground actions in Gaza and now inside Lebanon have become progressively less controllable by Biden. The Israeli decision to conduct a precision strike inside Beirut to kill Hassan Nasrallah was conveyed to U.S. Secretary of Defense Llyod Austin after the Israeli jets had scrambled, leaving the Biden administration extremely annoyed. A prerequisite for building a security cushion inside the Middle East requires consistency and trust, both of which are absent in the current Israel-US conversations. This may be because there is a fundamental divide in the vision and end goal that both DC and Tel Aviv seek in the region. For Biden, a lame-duck president, peace in the region through a ceasefire may be his last moonshot at a legacy. For Netanyahu, his cabinet's push to reshape the Middle East by establishing a long-lasting deterrence weighs heavier. Between an escalation of dominance in the region by Israel and the creation of the

Palestinian state lies the danger of a regional war which seems the most immediate possibility.

What has added to Biden's conundrum is the US' successively depleting control over other Middle-East powers such as Iran. Trump's withdrawal from the JCPOA (Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action) was a lost opportunity for the Biden administration. Subsequently, the

Israel to refrain from escalating its attacks on Hezbollah, with Biden calling for a ceasefire. Israel has intensified operations in Beirut and its purported attack on UNIFIL personnel inside Lebanon may have spotlighted Biden in an undesirable way.

The Biden administration is torn between standing with an ally and battling a perception that it is

the UAE, given the billions worth of technology trade between the US and UAE, with expanding AI developments. More importantly, Israel serves as a counterbalance to Russian-Chinese joint influence in the region with both taking clear positions against Israel since Israel's response to the 7 October attacks.

For the Biden administration,



address to a joint session of the US Congress earlier this year and his rather public meeting with Trump on the same trip. That the Democrats rejected an Israel-only Bill, stopping a 17.6-billion dollar funding towards Israel earlier this year has also signalled a prospective policy stance under a likely Harris administration.

Domestic political trends in the US chart two different paths for US-Israel relations under a Kamala Harris government or a Donald Trump administration, even if varying slightly.

Before the recent Israel-Hamas conflict, America's Middle East policy had focused on peaceful diplomacy and a gradual reduction of influence fronted by its withdrawal from Afghanistan, which allowed China to gain a foothold in the region. Biden wouldn't want to risk turning the Middle East into a battleground between China and the US. Moreover, the fallout from the 7 October events, including the strain on US-Saudi relations, could give China a greater opportunity to further its influence. However, Biden may be racing against time to leave behind a legacy of supporting Israel for maintaining significant US stakes in the Middle East, in turn allowing it to refocus more attention on the Indo-Pacific.

Despite US Secretary of State Antony Blinken's 10-time visit and Biden's "countless talks" with Israel a cease-fire deal remains elusive. Israel has signalled a choice for independent decision-making when required and the US has refused to supply the IDF towards its specific attacks which might harm civilians. As neither Hamas nor Israel refuses to back down, the situation is turning into a classic game theory spectacle.

As Kamala slightly edges Trump out in popular support according to the latest polls and Netanyahu becomes increasingly unpopular among the American populace, will Kamala uphold Biden's Israel policies? It is clear, as of now, that Kamala views Iran as a destabilising force in the Gulf. She has stated support for Israel but also expressed concern regarding the killing of thousands of Palestinians. She has also assured that the US would continue to pressure Israel for a ceasefire, a stronger stance than Biden. As Arab-Americans hope for Harris' distance from Netanyahu, currently, there isn't much difference between Biden's and Harris' Middle-East approach, as she could inherit an increasingly volatile Gulf.

question of what could a nuclear Iran mean for the region has grown starker for US allies in the region—Israel and Saudi Arabia—which seek their own security guarantees from the US. Resultantly, under Biden's presidency, Iran's violation of IAEA's terms notwithstanding, Netanyahu, Tehran, and Riyadh have all wrangled with DC on whether the JCPOA should be revived. Now that Iran has attacked Israel twice within months, that conversation has been further relegated.

The question of what could a nuclear Iran mean for the region has grown starker for US allies in the region—Israel and Saudi Arabia—which seek their own security guarantees from the US

While the Biden administration has called Iran "dangerous" and remains a steadfast ally of Israel, the US has depicted a milder regional approach urging Netanyahu to find alternatives to striking Iranian oil fields and advising Israel against attacking Iranian nuclear sites. However, in a vague comment later the same week, on 3 October, Biden indicated that the US and Israel might be in talks regarding attacking Iran's oil industry. But again, Tel Aviv has demonstrated America's limited control over it: as America advised

the US which is fuelling the war. An election year in the US has made this gap seem even more yawning. The US-Israel relations may be witnessing its most testing moment. The Israel-Hamas war and ensuing regional tensions have laid bare deep divisions in the American social fabric. While there is a clear assessment of the indispensability of Israel as the US' most important ally in the Middle East, indeed in the world, the campus protests and rising antisemitism in the US suggest there is a growing gap between the political dispensation and a rapidly changing demography in the US which is symbolic of a generational divide. As protests across America and the world against Israel intensified, the Democratic party sought to recalibrate as it saw at stake the votes of 3.5 million Arab Muslims residing in the States.

The Israel-Hamas war and ensuing regional tensions have laid bare deep divisions in the American social fabric.

In the larger global strategic puzzle, Israel has been an important cog in America's Middle East wheel, particularly with its strategic dependence on Israel. To be sure, through Israel's tech advancements, the US wants to influence industrial expansion in

the growing influence of China in the Middle East has piled on its regional strategic calculations. Not only has China condemned Israel's actions but its growing footprints in the region through its investments depict a more favourable view of it than of the US. China-led negotiations between Tehran and Riyadh may well have sown the seeds for a future talk between the two sides, should Israel's actions compel them to. As such, Israel's actions will become the greatest externality shaping the course of Biden's negotiations with the 'Arab Quint' to shape America's regional interests. Perhaps the starkest example in this regard is the Saudi-Israel normalisation. As much as Saudi Arabia wants Iran to cut to size and a region without its 'axis of resistance', normalisation with Israel without definitive forms in the negotiations for a Palestinian state is hard to imagine.

Meanwhile, domestic political trends in the US chart two different paths for US-Israel relations under a Kamala Harris government or a Donald Trump administration, even if varying slightly. For Israel, particularly the Netanyahu government, a Trump administration would be more favourable. Preliminary signals have already been sent with Harris skipping Netanyahu's

Changing threads: Bangladesh's setback fuels India's RMG surge

Bangladesh's economic difficulties, exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, have reached a critical point. The pandemic's disruption to global supply chains hit Bangladesh particularly hard, as its economy is heavily dependent on exports, with the ready-made garment (RMG) sector contributing to around 80 percent of its total export earnings. Despite showing signs of recovery in 2021 and 2022, rising inflation and global supply chain disruptions soon resurfaced. By mid-2024, inflation had risen past 11 percent, with food prices climbing even higher, pushing the country into a precarious economic position.

Foreign exchange reserves have been dwindling at US\$21.8 billion, only covering 2.5 months of imports, which is well below the International Monetary Fund's (IMF) recommended target of 3.6 months of import coverage by 2027. The interim government has turned to external lenders such as the IMF to stabilise its economy and requested a US\$5 billion soft loan from China. However, these loans offer only short-term relief and come with strict conditions. Without significant reforms in its financial and industrial sectors, Bangladesh risks further economic instability, which could have long-lasting repercussions for its people and global standing.

Without significant reforms in its financial and industrial sectors, Bangladesh risks further economic instability, which could have long-lasting repercussions for its people and global standing.

In addition, rising unemployment and shrinking remittance inflows have exacerbated the situation for millions of Bangladeshi families. Beyond these immediate concerns, Bangladesh's banking sector has long been marred by structural issues such as non-performing loans, corruption, and weak regulatory oversight, further hampering economic stability. These structural weaknesses destabilised the country's RMG sector, sparking growing worker discontent. Protests have become more frequent, driven by stagnant wages

and deteriorating working conditions. Political instability worsened in August 2024, with Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina resigning after 15 years in power, leading to factory closures due to violent demonstrations. As a result,

and production capacity provide a stable alternative. This shift presents an opportunity for India to expand its ready-made garment market share, which has hovered at around 3 percent for years.

comes at a crucial time for the country as it grapples with its unemployment issues. As of mid-2024, India's unemployment rate hovered above 8 percent, with significant joblessness concentrated among low- and

with basic economic principles, where an increase in labour supply can result in lower wage costs if labour demand remains steady. The Heckscher-Ohlin model, which predicts that countries will specialise in industries that make intensive use of their abundant factors of production, also supports India's growing prominence in garment manufacturing.

The Heckscher-Ohlin model, which predicts that countries will specialise in industries that make intensive use of their abundant factors of production, also supports India's growing prominence in garment manufacturing.

Yet, while India stands to gain in the short term, there are potential risks. Without corresponding increases in labour productivity, wage stagnation could set in, limiting long-term economic benefits. Moreover, regions that initially benefit from increased RMG orders must also invest in improving production efficiency and fostering innovation to sustain growth. Relying too heavily on low-cost labour could hinder India's ability to climb the value chain in the global garment industry.

Finally, Bangladesh's competitive edge in the RMG industry, historically built on low labour costs, is now under threat as global brands diversify their supply chains, eroding the country's comparative advantage. With over 4 million workers employed in the RMG sector, its decline would lead to widespread unemployment, affecting related sectors like retail, housing, and services. High inflation, dwindling foreign exchange reserves, and political instability exacerbate the situation. Bangladesh's heavy reliance on RMG, without sufficient export diversification, makes it highly vulnerable to external shocks. To safeguard its economic future, the country must urgently implement reforms, stabilise the political landscape, and invest in other manufacturing and service sectors, transitioning towards more economically viable industries.



international buyers have shifted their orders to other nations, including India and Sri Lanka, raising concerns about Bangladesh's long-term stability and economic outlook.

Market forces drive global garment orders to India

In response to Bangladesh's political unrest, global market dynamics have shifted orders away from its RMG sector to other countries, with India emerging as a key beneficiary. International apparel brands, concerned about supply chain disruptions, have redirected their orders to India, particularly the Tiruppur knitwear hub. Within two weeks in September 2024, India secured orders worth INR4.5 billion (around US\$54 million) from well-known global brands such as Germany's KiK, the Netherlands' Zeeman, and Poland's Pepco. Indian companies like Raymond have also reported a surge in garment supply inquiries as they step in to fill the void created by Bangladesh's crisis. International brands seeking reliable suppliers have turned to India, where labour availability

India's strength lies in its abundant young workforce. Bangladesh's RMG sector employs around four million workers, many of whom are women, and the country has long relied on its low labour costs to stay competitive in the global market. The 18 to 35 age group represents the bulk of the workforce, with 92.4 percent of workers under 35 and only 7.6 percent above 35. This demographic is crucial due to the sector's physical demands, making young adults the primary labour pool. However, India's 18-35 age group—estimated to be around half a billion people—dwarfs Bangladesh's total population, positioning India well to absorb increased demand. India's workforce and capacity to produce at competitive prices give it an edge in the global market.

International brands seeking reliable suppliers have turned to India, where labour availability and production capacity provide a stable alternative.

The shift in garment production to India also

medium-skilled workers. This new wave of RMG orders presents an opportunity to create jobs, particularly in some areas of Tamil Nadu, Karnataka and West Bengal, where the garment industry is a significant employer. By absorbing more RMG production, India can also help alleviate its unemployment challenges, especially for younger workers entering the job market with limited opportunities. However, this surge in orders must be handled carefully to avoid potential downsides such as wage stagnation or over-reliance on low-skilled jobs. The challenge for India lies in balancing the immediate need for job creation with the long-term goal of increasing productivity and ensuring that workers are adequately trained to meet global standards.

Navigating shifts in the global garment industry

India's large labour pool offers a natural advantage in the global garment industry, allowing manufacturers to lower production costs and attract more international orders. This shift is aligned

China in the Mekong: The evolving dragon

Sustaining the lives of over 65 million people, the Mekong River is a crucial lifeline for the six co-riparian Southeast Asian countries—China, Myanmar, Thailand, Lao PDR, Cambodia, and Vietnam. Given its rich biodiversity and fertile landscape, the Mekong impacts the food security and economic opportunities for tens of millions of people, in sectors such as agriculture, trade, connectivity, tourism and hydropower generation. Not only does the Mekong originate in China—thus granting it unfiltered access—but as the region's superpower, China's behaviour in the Mekong basin holds grave significance for the food, water, energy and economic security of the other downstream riparian nations. In the era of increasing climate security and the evolving geopolitical order, unpacking China's evolving role and participation in the Mekong Basin emerges as an interesting exercise.

The MRC streamlined the aims and responsibilities of the LMB when it came to the sustainable development, utilisation, and conservation of the Mekong River, and has played an important role in the dissemination of basin-wide hydrological data.

Given its significance, the sustainable development of a critical transboundary water resource such as the Mekong is a must. And yet, regional cooperation and integrated management for it has been limited. Following the Second World War, the Lower Mekong Basin countries (LMB) of Thailand, Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia chose to collaborate to foster the development of the Mekong River. This resulted in the establishment of the United Nations-backed Mekong Committee in 1957, which ultimately gave way to the establishment of the Mekong River Commission (MRC) in 1995. The MRC streamlined the aims and responsibilities of the LMB when it came to the sustainable development, utilisation, and conservation of the Mekong River, and has played an important role in the dissemination of basin-wide hydrological data. However, any attempt at meaningful development and conservation of this river has emerged inadequate, without the engagement of the upstream regional hegemon, China. Despite being a dialogue partner of the MRC, the notable lack of involvement by China has significantly stymied the MRC's capacity to monitor or regulate the rapid rate of industrialisation, urbanisation, and infrastructural development in the Mekong Basin, leading to significant hydrological changes in the river's ecology. Since 2002, China has only shared water level and

rainfall data for the annual flood season (June–October), which has undermined the LMB's ability to design accurate drought and flood models. It was only in 2020 that China agreed to share year-round flood data.

Due to the mountainous terrain that the



river traverses, combined with its sheer volume, this river possesses an innate potential for hydroelectricity generation. Leveraging this potential along with its advantageous upstream positioning, China has, since the early 1990s, embarked on a unilateral spree of constructing dams and developing water resources for economic growth, transportation, and energy consumption. There are eleven major dams constructed, to date, along the mainstream and over 95 dams along the tributaries as they flow through Chinese territory.

China has been accused of purposely holding water in its reservoirs, which has had disastrous consequences for the LMB.

China's approach to the Mekong can be understood through two pillars. The first is 'rights protection' under which China asserts its territorial prerogative to use and develop the Mekong waters flowing in its borders as it deems fit. The second is China's modernist development approach to fostering growth in the Mekong Basin. This paradigm combines achieving economic stability and regional development, with the construction of dams and other infrastructure to control transboundary waterways. However, the unchecked development has come at the expense of severe ecological damage. Long-term hydrological tracking of the basin shows that the presence of the upper riparian dams has caused a fundamental shift in the river's flow, and seasonal

volume and triggered extreme climatic variations. Moreover, China has been accused of purposely holding water in its reservoirs, which has had disastrous consequences for the LMB. In combination with the low levels of precipitation, such moves trigger droughts, increase sediment load, and upend the food security for

Mekong Cooperation (LMC) initiative, marking a shift in their Mekong policy, towards strengthening and institutionalising multilateral interactions in the Mekong Basin. This venture was aimed at enhancing political security, sustainable and economic development, and furthering socio-cultural ties in the Mekong Basin. As such, it identified five priority areas: connectivity, production capacity, cross-border cooperation on economic and water resources, and poverty reduction. This move signalled a welcomed openness and region-first approach from China with the LMC being lauded as an example of "win-win cooperation".

However, not all riparian stakeholders regard China's involvement in the Mekong as benevolent. Many of the hydroelectric projects funded by China in the LMB have not garnered the output the host countries wished for, contributing towards the Chinese 'debt trapping' narrative. From dam breaches in Laos and the inadequate rehabilitation and compensation for displaced populations in Cambodia to the creation of 'ghost towns' in Thailand, Chinese (backed) hydropower initiatives have caused immense agony to the inhabitants of the basin.

Mekong's co-riparian nations are re-assessing the trade-off between development gains and environmental protection.

Thus, China's involvement in the Mekong remains difficult to characterise. At the 'State' level, China leads and frames co-riparian interactions, and through the LMC, has been able to overcome some of the implementational gaps in the MRC's ability to coordinate and regulate development in the Mekong Basin. However, the on-ground impact of the Chinese model of development has threatened the security of the LMB, its people and the river's ecology. In the era of compounding climate crises, the "upstream superpower's" traditionalist developmental mindset is being directly challenged by the consequent environmental degradation. Mekong's co-riparian nations are re-assessing the trade-off between development gains and environmental protection. With Cambodia placing a moratorium on the construction of any mainstream Mekong dam, and environmental activists in Myanmar successfully blocking the construction of the Myitsone Dam; many are left questioning the limits, veracity, and long-term viability of the "win-win" Mekong partnership spearheaded by China.

the lower riparian countries. China has denied these allegations of deliberately obstructing the river flow, maintaining that the dams serve the purpose of flood control.

Despite the long-term ecological disruption and backlash from various environmental activist and civil society groups, the "dam building boom" has only intensified over the years, due to increasing domestic water and energy needs, the expanding mandate of the Belt and Road Initiative, and the deepening of energy trade and foreign investment amongst the Southeast Asian countries. Under the country's "Going Out" policy—which aims to mobilise external investments and control natural resources abroad—Chinese development banks and State Owned Enterprises (SOEs) have backed numerous dam constructions in the LMB. Their involvement has ranged from providing financial support, and equipment, to providing managerial and technical expertise. It is estimated that there are currently over 50 dams in the other Mekong riparian nations, supported by China.

Under the country's "Going Out" policy—which aims to mobilise external investments and control natural resources abroad—Chinese development banks and State Owned Enterprises (SOEs) have backed numerous dam constructions in the LMB.

In 2016, China launched the Lancang-

The India model: A blueprint for harnessing Africa's STEM diaspora

Africa can learn from the Indian diaspora's global success in fostering social, cultural, and economic progress. By harnessing the entrepreneurial spirit of their own diaspora, African countries can drive economic growth and advance Sustainable Development Goals. Modern economies rely on scientific and engineering research for growth. In today's interconnected world, diaspora communities, including those from India, play crucial roles in global politics. About 30 million Africans, many with advanced degrees and entrepreneurial skills, now live abroad, contributing to sectors like finance, IT, and agriculture to support their host countries' development. Many actively advocate for policies to improve Africa's future through political engagement and charitable efforts.

According to the UN's World Migration Report 2022, India had the most significant number of citizens living abroad, with over 18 million Indians making a significant global impact. For example, with a median household income of about US\$150,000 annually, Indian immigrants make the most money among any migrant group in the United States (US). In Australia, the average annual household income for Indian migrants is about US\$87,000, while the average family income for Chinese migrants in the US is approximately US\$58,000.

About 30 million Africans, many with advanced degrees and entrepreneurial skills, now live abroad, contributing to sectors like finance, IT, and agriculture to support their host countries' development.

About 1.4 billion people live in 54 African nations, with projections of 2.5 billion in 25 to 30 years. This growth raises questions about energy, climate change, and food security. The article explores India's strategy in leveraging its diaspora for scientific advancement and considers how African nations can learn from this approach to utilise their own diaspora professionals for development.

African STEM diaspora

Sadly, the contribution to scientific advancement of both government and private researchers in Africa remains bare minimum due to inadequate funding from African governments. This limits opportunities for ambitious research. To enhance their scientific output, Africa must foster collaborations with local and global partners and engage with the African STEM diaspora. Additionally, private sector businesses should connect with African STEM researchers who have developed innovations in fields like chemical production, medical devices, vaccines, and pharmaceuticals, which can help tackle challenges in Africa and

beyond.

In other words, Africa needs a strategy to effectively promote its discoveries and innovations. Expanding research for commercial purposes would be advantageous, encouraging those who left the continent in search of STEM opportunities to return and collaborate. This strategy might open up new economic opportunities for the middle class, which is expanding and has a higher amount of disposable income.

Private sector businesses should connect with African STEM researchers who have developed innovations in fields like chemical production, medical devices, vaccines, and pharmaceuticals, which can help tackle challenges in Africa and beyond.

Global corporations like IBM,

Industries, both founded or led by diaspora returnees.

Recent advancements in sciences have strengthened India's ties with its diaspora, thanks to professionals educated in Western institutions who returned with valuable knowledge and skills. This strategy proved especially effective during the pandemic, making India the world's leading vaccine producer. African governments should take note of this approach.

Furthermore, the government has introduced the Vaishvik Bhartiya Vaigyanik (VAIBHAV) fellowship programme to connect academic and research institutions with the scientific diaspora. This initiative aims to deepen ties with

will soon connect with Indian academic institutions to develop a collaborative network focused on advanced research in priority areas set by the Indian government. They will address key concerns through joint research and share best practices. The fellowship covers travel, accommodation, contingencies, and a monthly grant of INR 400,000 (US\$5000) for up to three years. Each fellow can choose an Indian institution for collaboration and dedicate up to two months annually over three years to the project.

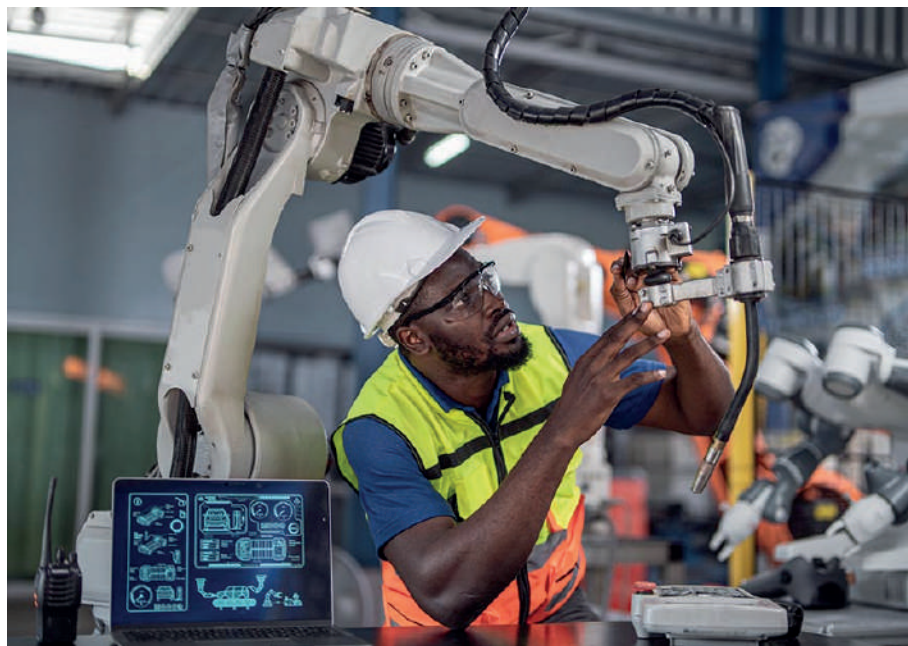
Way forward

Over the past few decades, technological advancements have allowed significant growth in the IT sector in developed countries, benefiting local communities and boosting tax revenue. Many have found jobs as programmers, product managers, and analysts in multinational corporations. Africa can replicate this success by supporting its domestic IT companies, whether they stem from lab innovations, startups, or academic projects. This approach would create more job opportunities for Africans, particularly new graduates.

With a projected population of 2.5 billion in the next 25 years, Africa must develop innovative solutions grounded in science and engineering while valuing the expertise of its global community.

Furthermore, Africa can build a strong knowledge economy by engaging its diaspora in science and technology, enhancing its global soft power. This collaboration should yield financial support, technical assistance, and the sharing of ideas. As the continent faces significant challenges in the coming decades, leveraging the diaspora as a powerful resource is crucial. With a projected population of 2.5 billion in the next 25 years, Africa must develop innovative solutions grounded in science and engineering while valuing the expertise of its global community.

Africa can learn from the Indian diaspora's global success in fostering social, cultural, and economic progress. By harnessing the entrepreneurial spirit of their own diaspora, African countries can drive economic growth and advance Sustainable Development Goals. African countries should collaborate with their skilled diasporas to conduct scientific research and accomplish their objectives, taking inspiration from the Indian diaspora's history of creating prosperous economies and transforming cultures.



Nestlé, and Google have established research and development centres in key African nations, recognising the importance of fostering local innovation. For example, Google has an AI research facility in Ghana, and IBM operates centres in South Africa and Kenya. Many of these companies have also hired diaspora professionals to leverage both local and global expertise. However, significant untapped potential remains, and Africa can learn from India's experience in this area.

The "India Way" of engaging its scientific diaspora

Strengthening connections with the Indian diaspora has become a key aspect of India's foreign policy under Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Acknowledging the diaspora's potential, the Indian government offers tax exemptions and other incentives to those who return to start businesses. Notable examples include Wipro and Reliance

the diaspora by promoting best practices, knowledge exchange, and collaborative research in cutting-edge science and technology, thereby enhancing the research ecosystem in India's educational institutions.

The VAIBHAV fellows will soon connect with Indian academic institutions to develop a collaborative network focused on advanced research in priority areas set by the Indian government.

Under the Ministry of Science and Technology, the fellowship program aims to support 75 distinguished scientists and technicians of Indian descent (NRI/OCI/PIO) conducting research in their home countries. The program covers 18 key areas, including quantum technology, health, and agriculture. After reviewing 302 applications, the Apex Committee recommended 22 VAIBHAV Fellows and two distinguished VAIBHAV Fellows.

The VAIBHAV fellows

Eat in moderation and make exercise a way of life, says actor Arjun Bijlani



Television's current heartthrob Arjun Bijlani likes to take a break from his work to reboot his body and mind, but never ever he takes a break from his fitness regimen. Hear it from the *Pyaar Ka Pehla Adhyay*: Shiv Shakti actor...

How do you stay in shape?

Life can be fast-paced and demanding, leaving little time for things like exercise and entertainment. However, I never compromise on my commitment to fitness. I manage my time in some way or another. Even during short breaks, I make sure to stretch and do core workouts. After work, I head to the gym for strength and functional training. I've also adapted to working out anywhere, ensuring I stay on track with my fitness routine.

Gym or home workout?

Both. I try to make the most of my time, so I incorporate exercises during breaks, and when free go to the gym. There I focus on strength and functional training, but I've also created workout spaces wherever I am.

What does fitness mean to you?

Fitness is not just about looking good, it's about feeling good too. My workout routine keeps me energised and focused throughout the day. It helps me manage stress better and prepare for anything that comes my way. Staying fit is a lifestyle choice, and it positively impacts both my personal and professional lives.

Do you follow a strict diet?

I eat everything, but in moderation. Instead of indulging, I just taste things, especially sweets. I detoxify by drinking green tea and skipping desserts completely. I also take plenty of water. My mantra is simple — eat carefully and enjoy life.

What keeps you motivated?

Discipline and prioritising my health is motivation enough. Fitness is more than just a goal for me; it's part of who I am. No matter how busy I am, I believe it's important to take care of myself. Staying active and fit helps me remain ready for whatever challenges come my way, and it keeps me feeling positive.

Being an actor, is there's any pressure to look fit?

Absolutely, there is pressure, but I see it as a positive one. Staying fit is part of the job, but more than that, it's about feeling confident and healthy. Fitness isn't just about how you look; it's about how you feel. If you feel good inside, it reflects on the outside. So, I don't just work out to look fit on screen, but to maintain my overall well-being.

Share two fitness tips...

First, consistency is the key. Whether it's a quick 15-minute routine or a full workout, make sure you stay consistent with it. Second, hydrate well. Drinking enough water throughout the day keeps your body functioning optimally and helps in recovery after workouts.

Varun Dhawan and Samantha make fans drool over their dapper looks in Citadel: Honey Bunny

Varun Dhawan has teamed up with Samantha Ruth Prabhu for Raj and DK's show *Citadel: Honey Bunny*. The web series is a spin-off of the American spy action series *Citadel*, which starred Priyanka Chopra and Richard Madden.

The trailer for Varun Dhawan-starrer was released at a star-studded event in Mumbai. On Wednesday, the Student of the Year star posted a series of stylish pictures, asking fans, "Do you like Agent Bunny?" In one of the shots, he is seen posing with Samantha. Varun looked dapper in black suit, while the *Oo Antava* star sported a chic black outfit.

At the trailer launch of *Citadel: Honey Bunny*, the *Jug Jugg Jeeyo* actor reminisced about a time



when Aditya Chopra was hesitant to cast him in an action film. Varun shared that he persistently pursued Chopra, who eventually told him, "I can't do that because I can't give you that budget right now. You're not at a point where I can allocate such a large budget."

In *Citadel: Honey Bunny*, Varun will portray stuntman Bunny, while Samantha plays a spy in the series. This project marks the first on-screen collaboration between the two actors.

The series follows Varun and Samantha as they embark on a globetrotting mission. It also features Kay Kay Menon, Saqib Saleem, and Sikandar Kher in pivotal roles. The series will premiere on Prime Video India on November 7.

Varun will also appear in Anurag Singh's war drama *Border 2*, alongside Sunny Deol, Diljit Dosanjh, and Suniel Shetty's son, Ahan Shetty. The movie is set for release on January 23, 2026.

Rashmika Mandanna to promote cyber safety

Rashmika Mandanna, who fell victim to a deepfake video earlier this year, has been appointed as the National Ambassador for the promotion of cyber safety. The actress has been appointed by the Indian Cybercrime Coordination Centre of the Ministry of...

Rashmika Mandanna, who fell victim to a deepfake video earlier this year, has been appointed as the National Ambassador for the promotion of cyber safety.

The actress has been appointed by the Indian Cybercrime Coordination Centre of the Ministry of Home Affairs. She said as someone who has experienced this, she was dedicated to raising awareness about these issues. Rashmika said in a statement, "Cybercrime is a dangerous and pervasive

threat that affects individuals, businesses and communities worldwide. As someone who has experienced this, I am dedicated to raising awareness about these issues and promoting the message of cyber safety to drive positive change. It is crucial that we come together to combat these threats and protect our digital spaces."

Rashmika will spearhead nationwide cyber awareness campaigns aimed at educating the public on various cybercrime threats, including online fraud, deepfake videos, cyber bullying, and malicious

The actress' deepfake video started a conversation on the inappropriate use of technology, prompting numerous celebrities to voice their concerns.



Rakul Preet Singh suffers serious gym injury



Actress Rakul Preet Singh, who will be next seen in 'De De Pyaar De 2', recently suffered a serious injury. An 80 kg deadlift during her workout session resulted in an injury to her back. The actress has been on bed rest for more than a week now and is said to be recuperating steadily.

A well-placed source said, "Rakul has been on bed rest for the last few days and the situation has been quite scary. It all started on the morning of October 5, when Rakul was doing her workout. She did an 80 kg deadlift without wearing a belt, which resulted in a spasm on her back."

However, the actress pushed herself and still kept resulting in the aggravation of injury following which she has been suggested bed rest by medical experts.

The source further mentioned, "Despite this, she continued to shoot for 'De De Pyaar De 2' taking a muscle relaxant in order to fulfill her commitment, for 2 consecutive days. After 3 days of bearing the pain she visited the physios, and each time the pain would be back after 3-4 hours. She continued the physio but on October 10, an hour before her birthday party, she went through

the worst situation."

The injury had resulted in an excruciating situation wherein her L4, L5, and S1 nerves got jammed. Soon after her BP dropped, she broke into a sweat and she was made to sleep on the bed.

"It was quite an eventful birthday with muscle relaxants and injections given to her. It's been five days now since she's recovering and it's a slow and steady process. Rakul is someone who always pushes her body. Instead of resting, she continued shooting which resulted in a drastic situation. But this is a lesson learnt and hopefully, she will recover soon," the source added.

Bhumika Chawla recalls being replaced by Kareena Kapoor in 'Jab We Met'

Bhumika Chawla, best known for her role as Nirjara in Salman Khan's blockbuster film 'Tere Naam,' once spoke about being replaced in the films 'Jab We Met' and 'Munna Bhai MBBS'.

In an interview with RJ Siddharth Kannan, the actress shared that the only time she felt disappointed was when Kareena Kapoor replaced her in Imtiaz Ali's movie 'Jab We Met.'

Bhumika also revealed that she was replaced by Gracy Singh in the Sanjay Dutt-led project 'Munna Bhai MBBS.'

'Bhool Bhulaiyaa 3' title track: Pitbull, Diljit Dosanjh collaborate for Kartik's film



The excitement surrounding 'Bhool Bhulaiyaa 3' continues to grow, with the release of a teaser for the film's title track, featuring a collaboration between global music icon Pitbull, known as Mr. Worldwide, and Punjabi music sensation Diljit Dosanjh.

Following the recent release of the film's trailer, this partnership blends Bollywood's vibrant energy

with international beats. Kartik Aaryan, who reprises his role as Rooh Baba, leads the track with his signature dance moves and charismatic style.

The teaser released on Tuesday by the makers of the film has added to the anticipation of the song's release.

Composed by Tanishk Bagchi, who is known for his chart-topping recreations, and

featuring original compositions by Pritam, the title track is set to uphold the musical legacy of the 'Bhool Bhulaiyaa' franchise. The collaboration brings together a dynamic trio: Pitbull, Diljit Dosanjh, and Neeraj Shridhar with a focus on modern sounds intertwined with traditional Indian elements.

Directed by Anees Bazmee and produced by Bhushan Kumar, Bhool Bhulaiyaa 3 follows in the footsteps of its predecessors, combining horror and comedy. The film also stars Madhuri Dixit, Vidya Balan, and Triptii Dimri, making it a highly anticipated Diwali release.

Set to hit theatres on November 1, 'Bhool Bhulaiyaa 3' faces a significant box office challenge from Rohit Shetty's 'Singham Again'. With both films generating considerable buzz, the clash promises to be a thrilling showdown in theatres.

Meet the Asli Singham!

Ajay Devgn and Kajol fans are in for a treat as both husband and wife will be seen in cop avatars in their respective projects, Singham Again and Do Patti. On Monday, Kajol was seen in a fun mood at the trailer launch of Do Patti in Mumbai as she called herself Asli Singham.



Bhumika said, "The only time I felt bad was when I signed Jab We Met and it didn't happen. I was the first one, Bobby (Deol) and me, when it was called Train. Then, it was Shahid (Kapoor) and me, and then Shahid and Ayesha (Takia), and then Shahid and Kareena (Kapoor). That's how things happened but it's okay. I only felt bad once and then never again because I just moved on. I don't think much about it."

She added, "I had signed up for Munna

Bhai MBBS but it didn't happen. Kannathil Muthamittal with Mani (Ratnam) sir didn't happen."

She also shared details of her conversation with Rajkumar Hirani, where he reassured her that her replacement wasn't due to any mistakes on her part.

He explained that decisions like these are common in the entertainment industry and often happen for various reasons beyond the actor's control.

Australia series will be true test of young Jaiswal's talent

Yashasvi Jaiswal was oblivious to the cheers of a handful of spectators as he walked across a soaked M Chinnaswamy Stadium turf on Wednesday, chatting intensely with assistant coach Abhishek Nayar.

There was no pressing demand for him to spend an hour at indoor nets as rain held up the first day's play of the opening Test between India and New Zealand.

After all, he is going through a roseate phase in Test cricket. But that deep caring for his craft and a focused mind will come in handy when Jaiswal crosses over to Australia next month for the biggest challenge yet in his fledgling career, feels his childhood coach Jwala Singh.

"At this level, it is more about how you handle pressure. You can always work on technique, but if you don't have the right attitude and mindset then you will end up as a failure. But fortunately, Yashasvi has a mature head on his shoulder," Jwala said when he was informed about skipper Rohit Sharma's high evaluation of his younger colleague. "It is even more true when you go and play in Australia because they play some hard cricket there and put a lot of pressure on the opposition," he added.

As someone who saw Jaiswal from a very young age, Jwala feels that the 21-year-old has grown as a batsman since making



his debut in 2023 against the West Indies.

"I think being around players like Rohit and Virat (Kohli) has helped him a lot. After all, there is nothing like learning from such masters," he said.

Since his baptism in international cricket, Jaiswal has made 1,217 runs in 11 Tests at an average of 64.05 and has three daddy knocks — 171, 209 and 214.

So, what are the changes that he has observed in the left-hander in the last one year or so? "He always has been aggressive as a batsman. Earlier, he had a tendency to attack almost every ball, especially fast bowlers, but now he uses aggression more judiciously. Yashasvi now has more awareness of his game. He has better awareness about which ball to attack and which

one to let go. Of course, he has also become a very good fielder now, especially in slip region," Jwala said.

The trait was visible in Jaiswal's batting during a breakout series against England earlier this year. It was not entirely surprising then that he became only the second Indian batter after the legendary Sunil Gavaskar to score over 700 in a series.

Rohit had little doubt about the skill level and adaptability of Jaiswal. "He has got the game to play in all sorts of conditions. You can bet on him and expect him to do wonders for the team. We've found a great player. Now, it is just about how he manages himself in the next couple of years," said Rohit.

So far, the signs have been encouraging.

Champions Trophy without India not an option: ECB

England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) chiefs are confident a solution can be found if India do not travel to Pakistan for the 2025 Champions Trophy, adding that India's participation is necessary to protect the tournament's broadcast rights.

Pakistan, who won the last edition of the Champions Trophy in England in 2017, will host the February 19-March 9 tournament.

BCCI vice-president Rajeev Shukla said last month the final decision over whether India will travel to Pakistan for the Champions Trophy would be taken by the government.

"I know Pakistan are expecting India to travel," ECB chief Richard Gould said.

Gould and ECB chair Richard Thompson are in Pakistan for England's three-Test series and have met with Pakistan



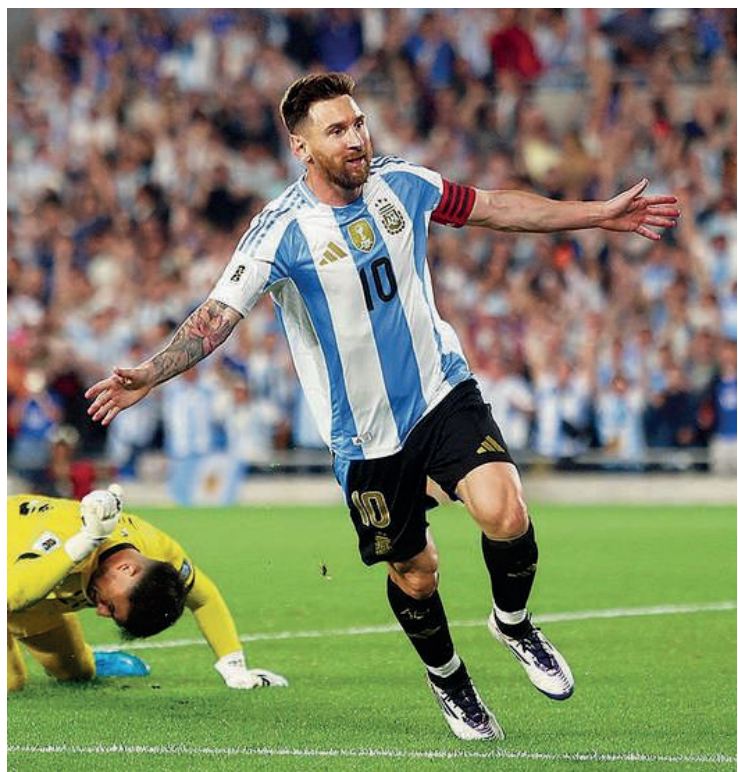
Due to their soured political relations, India have not visited Pakistan since 2008 and the rivals play each other only at multi-team events.

Pakistan also hosted the Asia Cup last year but eventual winners India played all their matches in Sri Lanka under what the organisers called a "hybrid model". At the time, India said they did not get permission from their government to tour Pakistan.

Cricket Board officials during the ongoing second Test in Multan.

"There are lots of different alternatives and contingencies available if that doesn't happen. I wouldn't have thought (it would be played without India), because if you play the Champions Trophy without India the broadcast rights aren't there, and we need to protect them.

"Hopefully, we can have the fullest possible competition in Pakistan."



Messi hat-trick drives Argentina

Lionel Messi scored his 10th international hat-trick and had a hand in two more goals as Argentina thrashed Bolivia 6-0 in South American qualifiers for the 2026 World Cup in front of an adoring home crowd at the Monumental stadium on Tuesday.

Making only his second international appearance since recovering from an injury sustained at the Copa America in July, Messi capitalised on a mistake by defender Marcelo Suarez to open the scoring in the 19th minute. Lautaro Martinez scored from Messi's quick cross in the 43rd minute.

Argentina made it 3-0 just before the break, with Messi setting up Julian Alvarez to score. Lionel Scaloni's side controlled the second half. Substitute Thiago Almada made it 4-0, scoring from Nahuel Molina's pass in the 70th minute with the venue

transformed into an Argentine party.

Messi, 37, gave fans more reason to celebrate in the closing moments, beating two Bolivia defenders before unleashing a fierce shot to score his second. Messi needed only two more minutes to complete the hat-trick, joining Portugal's Cristiano Ronaldo with the most in men's internationals, the Argentine skipper scoring with a left-footed drive to take his tally to 112 goals for his country. "It's really nice to come here, to feel the affection of the people, it moves me how they shout my name," Messi said.

Argentina are top of the standings with 22 points, having returned to winning ways after losing to Colombia last month and drawing with Venezuela last week.

World cup final: Standing tall



For the second successive day, the hosts could win just a solitary medal as most of the shooters melted during crucial moments at the ISSF World Cup Finals.

While Akhil Sheoran saved the blushes with a bronze medal in the 50 metres rifle 3 positions competition, both Rhythm Sangwan and Simpranpreet Kaur Brar faltered in the 25m sports pistol event when there was a chance to make it to the podium.

Sheoran, who has also won a bronze medal at the World Championships, clinched his first ever World Cup Final medal after totalling 452.6 points. The gold medal was won by Hungary's Istvan Peni, who scored 465.3, while the silver medal went to Czech Republic's Jiri Privratsky, who finished with a total of 464.2 points. India's Chain Singh finished seventh after scoring 409.3 points.

Sheoran was outside the medal placing after prone and kneeling but roared back into contention in the standing position and jumped from the mid-table to a podium spot.

In fact, Sheoran and Chain were lying in the sixth and seventh spots, respectively, at the end of the first 15 kneeling position shots in the 45-shot final. However, once the kneeling shots were completed with Chain bowling out, the fight for the bronze medal was between Sheoran, Privratsky, Liu Yukun, the reigning Olympics champion from China, and Kostantin Malinovskiy.

Malinovskiy faltered after registering 9.2 and Liu fell behind Sheoran by 0.2 of a point after the Indian shot a 10.7 followed by a score of 10.4. With his next shot, which was the 43rd, he bagged the bronze.

Jasprit Bumrah has always been in our leadership group: Rohit Sharma

India skipper Rohit Sharma has vindicated Jasprit Bumrah's promotion as the vice-captain for the three-Test series against New Zealand, terming the lead pacer as an integral part of the leadership group.

Bumrah's elevation to vice-captaincy for the Test series came as a bit of surprise as India did not have a deputy to Rohit in the recent series against Bangladesh. The decision has been viewed as a precursor to Bumrah stepping in as India's skipper during the tour to Australia. Rohit is set to miss at least one Test Down Under due to personal reasons.

"Bumrah has played a lot of cricket. I've played a lot of cricket with him. He understands the game pretty well. He's got a good head on his shoulders. When you talk to him, he understands the game," Rohit said.

"Tactically, I can't say much because he has not captained much. He was captain in one Test match and a couple of T20s, I guess," he added.

Bumrah had led India in the rescheduled Test against England in 2022 and marshalled the side in the T20I series against Ireland last year. "He understands what is required. When you are in a situation where you need a leader to step up, I think Bumrah will be one of them. So, over the past, he's always been in our



leadership group," said Rohit.

The 37-year-old said his premier pacer has seamlessly moved to the role of a mentor to the young pacers in the team. "Whether it is speaking to the bowlers who have just come into the squad, whether it is discussing about how to move forward as a team, he's always been part of that leadership group. So, it's probably the right thing to just have him around and speak to the bowlers and internally discuss how to take the team forward," he said.

Waiting for Shami

Rohit also virtually ruled out Mohammed Shami from the upcoming Test tour of Australia, saying that the pacer's recovery from an ankle surgery has been hampered by swelling in knees and it would not be right to take an "undercooked" version of him for the marquee showdown.

Shami last played for India during the ODI World Cup final last year and has been recuperating from an ankle surgery after that.

"To be honest, right now, it's pretty difficult for us to make a call on him, whether he'll be fit for this series or Australia series. He recently had swelling on his knee, which was quite unusual," Rohit said. "He was in the process of getting fit, getting close to 100 per cent, he had swelling in his knee, that put him back a little bit in his recovery. So, he had to start again. Right now, he's at NCA, he's working with the physios and the doctors at NCA," he added.

Rohit said the team management wants Shami to regain full fitness before returning to top-flight cricket.

Don't feel pressure of expectations: D Gukesh

First-time challenger D Gukesh on Tuesday insisted he is not weighed down by the favourite's tag heading into the World Championship clash against China's Ding Liren, having enjoyed a purple patch after overcoming a rough phase. The 18-year-old won the Candidates tournament in April to become the youngest challenger to the world title. He will take on Liren in Singapore from November 20 to December 15 for the coveted title and a prize fund of \$2.50 million. "I'm glad that people say this (that I am expected to win) and in general, I'm happy with my form. But it doesn't really add any pressure," Gukesh said. "I think it's just the pressure of playing in the World Championship. But there is no additional pressure by what people are saying. I just want to play a good game in every round and see what happens."

The teenager has been in sensational form since



winning the prestigious Candidates and recently guided India to their maiden Chess Olympiad victory.

On the other hand, Liren, the highest-rated chess

player of all time, took a break from the game after defeating Russian GM Ian Nepomniachtchi at the World Championships due to his battle with depression. The 31-year-old made his return earlier this year but has faced challenges with a significant drop in form.

Gukesh has largely been discreet about his plans for the World Championship, and when questioned about his match against Liren, the Indian chose to remain guarded. "For me, it's just a match against a very strong player. And I'm sure he'll be coming to the match with the right spirit and he'll be trying his best," Gukesh said.

So my approach is just to treat every game just with the utmost respect and energy and give it my best."

Not only did Gukesh play a crucial role in securing the title for the men's team at the Olympiad, his nine wins out of 10 games on the top board also fetched him an individual gold.

Minister eager to make sports bill a reality



New Delhi

Sports Minister Mansukh Mandaviya is confident that the draft of the National Sports Governance Bill, 2024, will see the light of day.

Many former Sports Ministers had tried in the past but failed to make the bill a reality. Ajay Maken, who was in charge under the last UPA government in 2011, failed to push it beyond the cabinet as the touchy issue of bringing the BCCI under the purview of the bill had his own cabinet colleagues, including Sharad Pawar, opposing it. NDA's Kiren Rijiju had also reiterated the fact that a Sports

Bill was the need of the hour but failed to make any headway.

Now Mandaviya, who took over the reins of the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports (MYAS) in June, has taken up the big job. The draft was uploaded on the MYAS website last week. Ministry sources told The Tribune that Mandaviya is determined to first end consultations with all the stakeholders, including the National Sports Federations (NSF), athletes and coaches.

Once that is done, a cabinet note would be circulated and then

the bill will be introduced in the Parliament either in December or early next year.

"The bill will be a reality soon. The minister is yet to finish all his consultations. Once that is done and all the inputs get incorporated, a cabinet note will be made and then we will move from there," a ministry official said on Monday.

The bill has quite a few pointers, including establishment of the Sports Regulatory Board of India, which would grant recognition to the NSFs and ensure compliance. It also seeks setting up an Appellate Sports Tribunal to handle all sports-related disputes and reducing reliance on civil courts for faster resolution. The tribunal will have no jurisdiction to hear issues related to the Olympic, Commonwealth and Asian Games.

The draft also demands that at least 10 percent of voting members in the general body of all the sports bodies should comprise sportspersons of outstanding merit.

"This bill stands to support the athletes as more often than not it is them that get caught up in disputes in the federations. So

the minister is taking extra care to safeguard their rights and that is why he is very keen to interact with athletes and coaches before going forward," the source said.

Avoid Seeking Appreciation On Social Media: CBI Director Tells New Officers

New Delhi

CBI Director Praveen Sood told new recruits on Wednesday to not seek appreciation on outside platforms like social media.

Addressing a batch of newly inducted sub-inspectors at the investiture ceremony, Praveen Sood said the true learning of the officers begins now as they embark on the real work during their deployment for investigation, prosecution etc, which offers enormous opportunities to further sharpen the skills.

The director told the officers to keep learning from the experiences and never feel disheartened by challenges or failures as that would give an

IOA doesn't pay heed to our advice, says Mary Kom



Boxing great MC Mary Kom, who is also the chairperson of IOA's athletes' commission, says she has stopped giving suggestions to the National Olympic Committee as it doesn't pay attention to them.

Mary Kom was among 10 elite sportspersons who were elected on the IOA athletes' commission back in November 2022.

The IOA is currently

witnessing intense infighting with a section of the office-bearers questioning the governance of president PT Usha, who has denied all allegations against her.

"I am not into the IOA functioning. We shared so many things with IOA but they don't listen to it. I have a voice but they don't listen to what I suggest. I don't know politics and I don't want to blame anyone," Mary Kom said.

opportunity to enhance one's knowledge and expertise.

The CBI offers immense opportunities for "appreciation of good work internally" and

officers to maintain a healthy work-life balance without ignoring their families.

The ceremony saw induction of 92 sub-inspectors in the agency.

The CBI director also conferred medals and awards to new recruits.

"Srivathsan V was awarded the DP Kohli Award for Best All-Round SI Trainee and also DCBI Trophy for Indoor Studies. Raj Kiran was awarded Trophy for Cyber Crime

Investigation. Vimal Singh Adhikari was selected for the John Lobo Trophy for Best Outdoor and Megha Parashar received the CBI Academy Trophy for Dedication and Exemplary Conduct," a statement from the agency said.

told the new officers "not to look for appreciation through outside platforms like social media", a statement from the agency said.

He said the officers must remain insulated from external influences.

Praveen Sood also advised

