

# Across State

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## As Uddhav alleges selective inspections, Mahayuti releases videos of poll officials checking bags of Shinde, Fadnavis, Ajit Pawar



### Mumbai

A day after Shiv Sena (UBT) chief Uddhav Thackeray accused Election Commission officials of checking only Opposition leaders' bags, the Mahayuti



on Wednesday released videos showing the bags of Chief Minister Eknath Shinde and Deputy Chief Ministers Devendra Fadnavis and Ajit Pawar being checked by the officials.

Thackeray claimed his bags had been inspected by election authorities for two consecutive days. The former chief minister posted videos of the inspections, in which he was also heard asking the commission officials to check the bags of ruling politicians, including Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union

### Home Minister Amit Shah.

On Wednesday, Shinde's bags were checked by Election Commission officials when he went to address a campaign rally for a Shiv Sena candidate in Palghar. After his luggage was frisked at the helipad, Shinde said the officials had performed their duties, and took a jibe at Thackeray.

"They were officials from the Election Commission and they performed their duties. They checked my bags; there was no money in my bag. If you have not done anything wrong, then you don't

need to fear. It's a routine check, so there is no need to create any issue out of it. Some people are creating issues unnecessarily," the Shiv Sena leader said, without naming Thackeray.

Similarly, Ajit Pawar's bags were also checked at an airport. Pawar posted on X a video stating that such routine checks are essential to ensure free and fair elections. "While on my way to election campaigning, the Election Commission conducted a routine check of my bags and helicopter. I fully cooperated and

believe that such measures are essential to ensure free and fair elections. Let us all respect the law and support efforts to uphold the integrity of our democracy," the NCP leader posted.

And the BJP shared a video of Fadnavis's bag being checked on November 5 and 7. "Let it be; some leaders have a habit of making drama out of anything. Watch this video. On 7 November in Yavatmal district, our leader Devendraji Fadnavis's bags were checked. But he did not make any video, nor did he create any issue about it. Earlier, on 5 November at Kolhapur airport, Hon. Devendraji Fadnavis's



bags were checked. (This is the video of 5 November). The Constitution should not be used only for show; constitutional values and systems should be followed. We only request that everyone should be aware of the Constitution," the BJP posted on X.

Hitting back at the Sena (UBT) leader, Fadnavis said Thackeray was trying to divert attention and "seeking votes by whining".

"What is wrong with checking bags? We had our bags checked during campaigning, and there was no need for this level of frustration," the senior BJP leader said while campaigning for Mahayuti candidate Sulabha Ganpat Gaikwad in Kalyan East in Thane district ahead of the Maharashtra Assembly elections 2024.

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## To counter Uddhav, BJP posts video showing checking of Fadnavis' bags

### Mumbai

The Maharashtra BJP on Wednesday posted a video on X showing checking of Deputy Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis' bags, and said merely holding the Constitution for "show" is not enough and one must also follow the constitutional system.

Some leaders have the habit of creating "drama", the BJP said in the post, which comes after former CM Uddhav Thackeray's Shiv Sena (UBT) shared videos online over the last two days of his bags being checked by poll authorities.

In the last two days, Thackeray claimed his bags were inspected by the election authorities after he arrived in Latur and Yavatmal districts to campaign for the November 20 state Assembly elections.

Thackeray had also asked if the same law would be applied to Prime



Minister Narendra Modi and other senior leaders of the ruling alliance during their campaign.

On Wednesday, the state BJP unit posted a footage on its social media handle X, showing Fadnavis' bags being checked by security personnel at Kolhapur airport on November 5.

The ruling party in the post along with the video said, "Let it be, some leaders just have a habit of creating drama." The BJP said the deputy CM's bag was checked in Yavatmal district on November 7, but he neither recorded any video nor made a fuss about it.

Earlier, on November

5, Fadnavis' bags were also checked at the Kolhapur airport, it said referring to the video. "Simply holding the Constitution for show is not enough; one must also follow constitutional systems. We only request that everyone respects the Constitution," the BJP said in the post.

On Tuesday, Fadnavis said Thackeray was trying to divert the attention by needlessly protesting about the checking of his bags by poll officials and was "seeking votes by whining".

What is wrong with checking of bags? the senior BJP leader had wondered. Thackeray's frustration was showing, he added.

## Maharashtra Assembly polls: Devendra Fadnavis attacks Owaisi again, accuses AIMM of glorifying 'invaders'



With the poll date approaching, politics in the state heated up with a war of words growing between Deputy Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis and AIMIM chief Assaduddin Owaisi over Mughal king Aurangzeb, with Fadnavis even allegedly using abusive words against the controversial 16th century emperor.

Addressing an election rally on Tuesday, Fadnavis asked Owaisi to refrain from coming to Maharashtra. Attacking Aurangzeb, he said that he was an invader and was being glorified by Owaisi and his party. Fadnavis said that a true Muslim of the country will never consider Aurangzeb and used objectionable words against the Mughal emperor.

"Nowadays this Owaisi has started coming here. My Hyderabad brother, don't come here... You stay there only..

you have no business here. I don't understand what's happening—they are coming here, and threatening.. They are glorifying Aurangzeb here. I want to say that even true Muslims of India do not see Aurangzeb as their hero. Aurangzeb was an invader; he attacked us," Fadnavis was seen stating it in a video which he has posted on his official X account.

The statement came amid the exchange of words between the two leaders for the past week.

Earlier, Fadnavis had called Owaisi a descendant of Razakars. Fadnavis's attack came a day after Owaisi took a jibe at Fadnavis's 'vote jihad' claim, where Owaisi said that while his ancestors were doing 'Jihad' against Britishers for India's independence, Fadnavis's ancestors were writing love letters to the the British.

## Not one street in Mumbai spared of illegal hawkers: Bombay HC to BMC, state

### Mumbai

The Bombay High Court on Tuesday, while asking the BMC and state government to take strict action against the "menace" of illegal hawkers, remarked that not a single lane or area in the city is spared of the same.

After the state lawyer said that there was limited police force available to take action against unauthorised hawkers due to election duties for upcoming assembly polls, the bench questioned why it failed to take sufficient steps in the last five years.

"The problem is routine. People can't enter shops. Despite the police being there, they continue to hawk... There is nothing left in this city... not a single area is spared, no lane is

spared," a bench of Justices Ajey S Gadkari and Kamal R Khata orally remarked while hearing suo motu plea initiated by it in February last year related to unauthorised hawkers/stalls in the city.

The court said that the BMC and state police cannot keep passing the buck or blame each other to keep streets free of illegal hawkers. This came after the civic body submitted that while they remove unauthorised hawkers, it was the duty of the police to keep them off the footpaths.

The state lawyer however said that sufficient personnel and protection is provided as and when the civic body required it and due cooperation was extended for the same.

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# Maharashtra polls 2024: Women, farmers, jobs in focus as BJP, MVA unveil manifestos

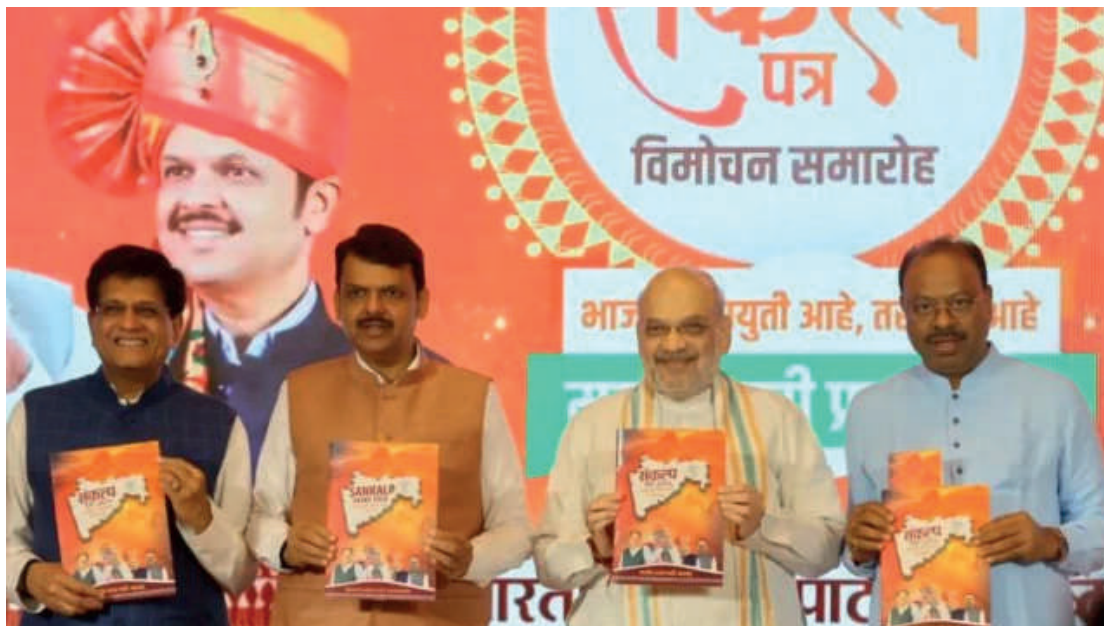
Mumbai

Focusing on women, farmers and jobs, the ruling BJP and the opposition Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) Sunday announced their respective manifestos for the November 20 Assembly polls in Maharashtra. While the BJP promised a stringent anti-conversion law and a hike in the monthly allowance under Ladki Bahin Yojana, the MVA promised a caste census, two-day menstrual leave a month for women employees and a power bill waiver of up to 100 units for households.

Releasing the BJP's 25-point 'Sankalp Patra' in Mumbai, Union Home Minister Amit Shah said that if the party is voted back to power, the monthly allowance under the Ladki Bahin Yojana and the senior citizen pension scheme would be increased to Rs 2,100 from Rs 1,500.

Later in the day, reiterating the promise of Rs 3,000 per month under the Mahalakshmi Scheme for women, Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge released the MVA manifesto, titled 'Maharashtranaama', in Mumbai.

In the manifesto, the MVA promised a two-day leave every month for women employees



during menstruation – a first for the state – and free cervical cancer vaccine for girls in the 9-16 age group.

While Bihar, Kerala and Odisha have the provision for menstrual leave, the Congress-led government in Karnataka earlier this year proposed to introduce a six-day annual period leave in both public and private sector. Recently, the Karnataka Labour Department sought feedback from stakeholders on the matter.

Apart from promising power bill waiver of up to 100 units for households consuming up to

300 units, the MVA manifesto also made a provision of six gas cylinders annually at Rs 500 each for each household.

At the BJP event, Shah targeted Shiv Sena (UBT) supremo Uddhav Thackeray, questioning his alliance with the "ideologically different" Congress and NCP (SP).

"With whom Uddhav Thackeray wants to have an alliance is up to him. I just want to ask Uddhav Thackeray, are you going to request Rahul Gandhi to speak a few good words about Veer Savarkar? Can

you ask Congress to speak well about Bal Thackeray?"

"Today, Uddhav Thackeray is in alliance with those parties that staunchly opposed the abrogation of Article 370, Ram temple in Ayodhya, and legislation on Waqf Board," Shah said.

Shah also claimed that the Congress has plans to give reservation benefits to Muslims by curtailing SC, ST, and OBC quotas.

Raising concerns over the Waqf board, Shah alleged that in Congress-ruled Karnataka, the Waqf Board is usurping land

belonging to farmers. "If the MVA is voted to power, land owned by farmers and people's properties will be acquired forcibly by the Waqf Board," Shah said.

Dismissing the possibility of new political alignments after the elections, he said the Mahayuti alliance of the BJP, Shiv Sena and NCP will be voted back to power.

Despite the alliance, the BJP published its separate manifesto. Ajit Pawar-led NCP also released its own manifesto, while the Shiv Sena is yet to come out with its manifesto.

In a bid to promote industrialisation, the BJP in its manifesto also promised zero-interest loans up to Rs 15 lakh and creation of 25 lakh jobs over the next five years. Under the Akshay Anna Yojana, the poor will be given free food items every month, the party highlighted.

A crop loan waiver and other farmer-friendly policies also featured in the poll manifesto in an apparent attempt to regain the BJP's appeal in the rural belt following the Lok Sabha debacle wherein it won only nine seats across the state.

## PM Modi: Congress states become ATMs for shahi parivar, won't let it happen in Maharashtra

Akola

ALLEGING THAT wherever a Congress government is formed, that state becomes the ATM (automated teller machine) of the "shahi parivar", Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday said "we won't let Maharashtra become the ATM of Congress".

Addressing two rallies, in Vidarbha and Marathwada regions, in the run-up to the November 20 Assembly elections in the state, Modi also reiterated his "ek hai to safe hai" (together, we are safe) call for Dalit, OBC, Adivasi unity. While a division among Dalits, Adivasis and Backward Classes suits Congress's politics, the party is losing its support base due to their unity, he said.

Speaking in Akola, Modi accused the Congress of being the most corrupt party. "Wherever the Congress forms a government, that state becomes the ATM of the party's shahi parivar (Nehru-Gandhi family). As much as Rs 700 crore has been extorted from the liquor business in (Congress-ruled) Karnataka for the Maharashtra polls. Telangana and Himachal Pradesh have also become this



shahi parivar's ATMs... But we will not let Maharashtra turn into the Congress's ATM," he said.

He said the manifesto of the ruling Mahayuti focuses on women's security, job opportunities and expansion of the Ladki Bahin Yojana, while the Maha Vikas Aghadi, comprising the Congress, Shiv Sena (UBT) and Sharad Pawar's NCP, have come out with a "ghotala patra". "The

entire country knows the MVA means corruption, token money and transfer posting business," he said.

Modi also pointed to the importance of the day — November 9 — referring to the Supreme Court's verdict on the Ram Temple in Ayodhya on this day in 2019.

"Today, the country is moving ahead with the goal of developed India and the people know that only BJP and its allies are working seriously to achieve this goal," he said. "That is why the people are electing BJP and NDA governments again and again," he said.

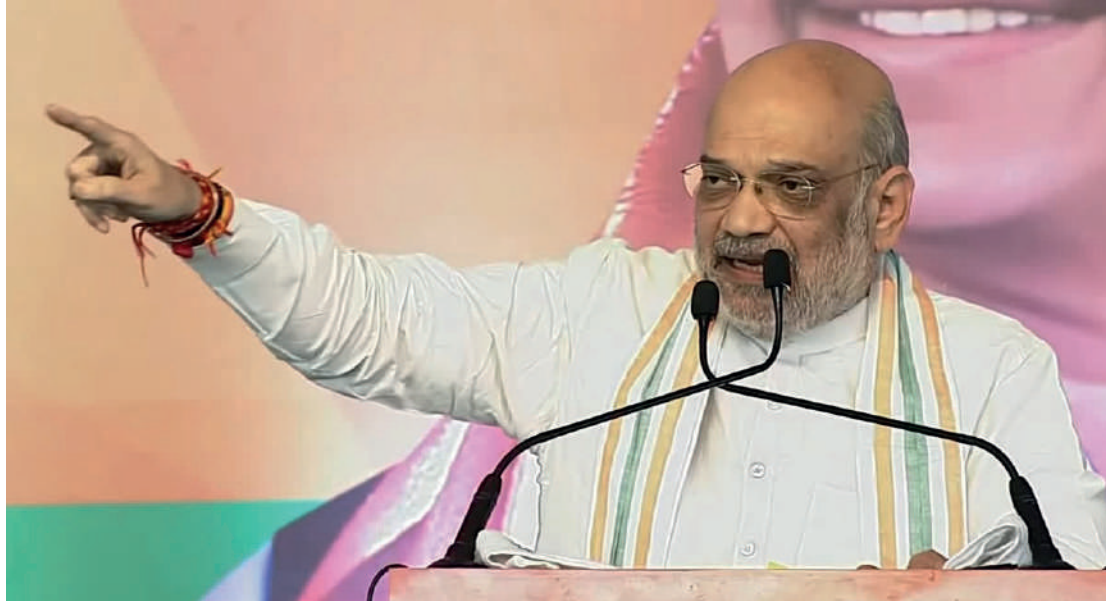
In Nanded, Modi reiterated his claim that "Congress wants the OBCs, Adivasis and Dalits to fight, as a split in their votes will get it back to power". "The Congress's game plan is to divide you into different groups and communities... It hates the OBCs because it cannot digest the fact that an OBC is the PM.. They want to divide the OBC communities into small castes and snatch the power of their unity. If that happens, Congress will snatch the reservation," he said.

# Sonia Ji, Your 'Rahul Aircraft' Will Crash Once Again In Maharashtra Polls: Amit Shah

## Parbhani

Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Wednesday said that the plane named 'Rahul Baba', which has already crashed 20 times, is bound to crash again in the November 20 Maharashtra assembly elections. "Sonia ji tried to land the plane named Rahul Baba 20 times and 20 times the plane crashed. Now again, an attempt is being made to land the plane for the 21st time in Maharashtra. Sonia ji, your 'Rahul plane' is going to crash for the 21st time," Shah said.

Addressing a rally at Jintur in Parbhani district, Shah also accused the Congress of deliberately stalling construction of Ram temple at Ayodhya for years. "PM Narendra Modi built the Ram temple and also constructed the Kashi Vishwanath



corridor which was demolished by Aurangzeb. Now you should be ready to visit Gujarat as the Somnath temple is also being

made of gold," Shah said.

Modi has made the country safe and prosperous, Shah said. "I have visited all the places like

Vidarbha, North Maharashtra, West Maharashtra, Konkan, Mumbai, Marathwada. Do you want to know the result

of Maharashtra Assembly? Listen to me, on November 23, the Maha Vikas Aghadi is going to be wiped out from Maharashtra," Shah said.

On November 23, the Mahayuti (grand alliance) government will be formed here under the leadership of Modi ji, he said. "Rahul Baba's party Congress and his colleagues have passed a resolution in Kashmir to bring back Article 370. Rahul Baba, listen carefully, not only you but even if your fourth generation comes, it cannot bring back Article 370," he said.

Shah said Shiv Sena (UBT) chief Uddhav Thackeray is in alliance with those who opposed renaming Aurangabad to Chhatrapati Sambhajinagar.

## Coming Soon: Era Of Human Vs Machines Combat, Says CDS Anil Chauhan

### New Delhi

Chief of Defence Staff Gen Anil Chauhan on Tuesday underlined the evolving nature of warfare and said a combat has always been between humans but now the world is going to enter an era in which it may be between a machine and human beings and later between machines.

During an interaction session held at the Manohar Parrikar Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses here, he asserted that "we are at the cusp of a major change in warfare".

Three major technologies or trends are going to change the course of warfare, he said. These trends are robotics, celerity meaning hypersonic and extreme automation that is led by artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning and other disruptive technologies, the CDS explained.

### Human vs Machine(s)

"The effect of all this is... since, again... warfare has evolved, combat has always been between a human and a human. That human may be well-protected, well-armed differently, he could be mounted on a mobile platform, it could be a horse in earlier days, it could be an attack helicopter now but combat was always between two

humans," he said.

"Now, we are going to enter an era in which a combat may be between a machine and human being, a machine which is totally autonomous, and tomorrow it could be between machines and machines. That's a big difference in warfare which is going to take place, and that's what I foresee, because of robotics," he elaborated.

### Mahabharata to Crimean War

"Warfare was always fought on one single battlefield. That was almost till the middle of the 19th century, you can say the Crimean War or the American Civil War. There were two technologies which were not developed for warfare that changed the whole course of warfare. One was railroad and the second was the telegraph. Large forces could be mobilised in a short period of time, from one place to the other.

"This is the point where a two-front or multi-front warfare, that concept started evolving. There was only a single battlefield, you could say right from the time of Mahabharata right till the Crimean War," the CDS said.

### Tech effect

According to him, technology has always had an effect on warfare and most of the time technologies were actually



developed bearing in mind how wars are going to be fought. But there are some kind of disruptive technologies which are developed for some other use case but they find use in warfare, he said.

### Robotics

Of the three major technologies or trends that are going to change the course of warfare, the first is robotics, the CDS said. "When I say robotics, it will include technologies like unmanned system, automated kind of a system, it should also include exoskeleton to enhance human capabilities."

### Celerity

The second important trend that I see, I have named it celerity, that has to do with

velocity and speed. This is coming out due to hypersonic, both glide sand cruise, sensor technologies at one end and ballistic at one end. And drones and even swarm drones," he said.

These technologies are going to make weapon systems almost undetectable, inaudible and "untargetable". So, vulnerabilities of all forces across long ranges are going to increase, the Gen said.

### AI, ML

"The third technology which is advancing is... automation or extreme automation that is led by artificial intelligence, machine learning, big data and that is going to help you take decisions better and faster. That will help transit from net-centric warfare to data-centric warfare," he said.

He underlined that in net-centric warfare, one is looking at "information superiority" and in data-centric, one is looking at "cognitive superiority".

These are the three technological trends which are going to shape warfare in the future. There are others too, like quantum technology and advanced material. But a combination of technologies would be "more disruptive", he said.

# MVA Can Win 150 Plus Seats In Maharashtra, Says Congress Internal Survey

**New Delhi**

Maha Vikas Aghadi was likely to win over 150 out of 288 Assembly seats in Maharashtra and the Congress could emerge as the single largest party, an internal survey of the grand old party has shown.

The survey done ahead of the last leg of campaigning shows that 'subjugation of local interest' and 'shift of big investment to Gujarat' by Delhi, (read BJP-led Centre) besides alleged corruption by the state government were the factors going against the ruling coalition Mahayuti.

Another factor that drove the voters towards the opposition MVA was the 'stabbing in the back' of two big regional leaders Sharad Pawar and Uddhav Thackeray allegedly by the BJP had contributed to the anti-Mahayuti sentiment.

"I can confidently say that a tally of 150 plus looks very doable for the MVA. Within the alliance, Congress can emerge as the single largest party but much would depend on how our allies also perform. From the feedback that I have, 50 or 60 seats out of the 102 it is contesting for the



Congress, 50 out of 95 the Shiv Sena UBT is contesting and 50 out of 85 the NCP-SP is contesting, is a reasonable score. Besides, we would fetch 3 or 4 seats out of the seven our allies are contesting," All India Congress Committee (AICC) observer for Maharashtra TS Singh Deo told ETV Bharat.

According to Singh Deo, former deputy chief minister of Chhattisgarh, "There was a strong undercurrent among the voters

that the interests of Maharashtra were overlooked by the BJP-led Centre which broke the two strong regional parties Shiv Sena and NCP to gain power through illegal means. Plus, they also acknowledge the fact that over the past two years, Maharashtra lost a lot of big investment which could have created jobs for the locals to neighbouring Gujarat."

Singh Deo who has been travelling across major parts of

the western state said he noticed cooperation among local MVA workers was also taking place besides the occasional coming together of top leaders.

"The cooperation among the local alliance workers is also taking place besides the congregation of top leaders at select rallies. Recently, I saw a Congress candidate's election office operating from the local NCP-sp office in the Pune region.

Over the next few days Telangana chief minister Revanth Reddy is likely to campaign for Shiv Sena UBT leader Aditya Thackeray in Worli seat in Mumbai where he is pitted against Shiv Sena Shinde's Murli Deora, who is ex-Congress," said Singh Deo.

The Congress veteran said that while the MVA campaign had been positive the Mahayuti leaders were also trying to play up the Maharashtra card to gain traction.

"The MVA is putting up a good fight on the ground against the Mahayuti which has to deal with the sentiment among the voters that Maharashtra's pride was compromised by the saffron party and the breakaway groups like Shiv Sena Shinde and NCP-AP were on the BJP side. The original Shiv Sena and NCP were built by stalwarts like Bala Saheb Thackeray and Sharad Pawar basically to promote the Maharashtra pride but they were back-stabbed by their own leaders," Singh Deo added.

The 288-member Maharashtra Assembly elections are slated for November 20, and the counting will be on November 23.

# BJP Will Get Two-Thirds Majority In Jharkhand, Says Chouhan

**Bhopal**

Union minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan on Wednesday expressed confidence that the BJP will get two-thirds majority in Jharkhand, where the first phase of polling is underway. He also said that people will vote for his party in order to end the "corrupt" rule of the Jharkhand Mukti Morcha (JMM)-Congress-Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD) alliance.

Chouhan is Bharatiya Janata Party's assembly election in-charge in Jharkhand. "I am continuously keeping a tab on Jharkhand. The way polling is going on there, BJP is getting more than two-thirds of majority in the first phase of voting," the Union Agriculture Minister told reporters after casting his

vote in his native village Jait under the Budhni assembly seat.

Voters supporting the BJP are coming out to vote in large numbers, he said. "Not only BJP supporters, but common people also want a change in the regime. The people of Jharkhand will defeat the corrupt and dishonest alliance of JMM, Congress and RJD, which has supported the Bangladeshi infiltrators," Chouhan claimed.

"People have faith in Prime Minister Narendra Modi. They are voting for the BJP and the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) for development and for the protection of 'roti, beti and mati' (food, daughter and soil) in Jharkhand to end the corrupt rule, for the welfare of the youth, farmers, mothers, sisters, and



for the better future of the children. We are winning with a huge majority," he said.

The second phase of voting in Jharkhand will take place on November 20, and counting is scheduled for November 23. Chouhan also said that BJP candidate for the Budhni assembly bypoll, Ramakant Bhargava, will win this seat.

The byelection to the Budhni seat was necessitated following the resignation of Chouhan, who was elected from the Vidisha Lok Sabha seat and became a Union minister. The Congress has fielded former minister Rajkumar Patel against BJP's Bhargava.

# 'Totally Unconstitutional': SC Lays Down Pan-India Guidelines In Key Verdict Against 'Bulldozer Justice'

## New Delhi

Censuring the trend of 'bulldozer justice' in several parts of the country, the Supreme Court on Wednesday laid down comprehensive guidelines against such arbitrary demolitions calling them "totally unconstitutional" and in violation of the principle of separation of power.

The apex court said the "chilling sight" of bulldozers demolishing a building when the authorities have failed to follow the basic principles of natural justice is a reminder that "might was right". It said demolishing any citizen's property merely because he is an accused or even a convict without following the due process as prescribed by law would be "totally unconstitutional".

A bench of Justices B R Gavai and K V Viswanathan made the observations as it delivered its verdict on pleas seeking framing of guidelines on the demolition of properties in the country. It had reserved its verdict in the matter on October 1.

## 'Mandatory procedural safeguards'

Exercising its power under Article 142, the bench outlined mandatory procedural safeguards to be observed across the nation, with specific rules for all states and union territories to ensure transparency and accountability.

- The bench said the concerned authorities are required to issue a "speaking order" explaining the decision to demolish a property.
- It said that all demolitions are to be recorded on video, ensuring evidence of compliance with the court's guidelines.
- The court directed that no property may be demolished without prior written notice, and said that owners should be given at least 15 days to respond.
- The bench said notices must also be served by registered post

and displayed on the structure in question, and it should detail the grounds for demolition and also give a fair window to contest, and the affected persons should have a personal hearing before demolition is undertaken.

- The bench clarified violation of its order by any officer would lead to contempt proceedings and prosecution separately and the officer would be held responsible for restitution of the property and payment of damage in such cases.
- The apex court said its order should be sent to all the High Courts and

state governments for issuance of a circular for the officers concerned.

- SC observations: 'High-handed actions'; 'Executive Cannot Declare A Person Guilty'

Stressing that the executive cannot replace the judiciary, the bench said the rule of law provides a framework and value system to reign in the arbitrary exercise of state power and prevent abuse of power.

"We have concluded that the executive in an arbitrary manner demolishes the house of a citizen only on the ground that they are accused of a crime then it acts contrary to the principles of rule of law," the bench noted. It said the executive acting as a judge and inflicting a penalty of demolition on the ground on an

accused violates the principle of separation of power.

The apex court said the right to shelter is one of the facets of fundamental right under Article 21 of the Constitution and added, "It is not a happy sight to see women, children and aged people rendered homeless in such fashion".

"We are of the view that in such matters the public officials, who take the law in their hands should be made accountable for such high-handed actions," said the bench.

"The officials should also be informed that if the demolition is found to be in violation of the orders of this Court, the officers concerned will be held responsible for restitution of the demolished property at his/

their personal cost in addition to payment of damages", the apex court said.

Justice Gavai, who pronounced the judgment on behalf of the bench, said that for the executive to act transparently to avoid the vice of arbitrariness, the court is of the view that certain directives need to be formulated, which will ensure that public officials would not act in a high-handed manner, and accountability must be fastened upon them.

The bench said even the accused or convicts have certain rights and safeguards in the form of constitutional provisions and the state and its officials cannot take arbitrary measures against the accused or a convict without following the due process as sanctioned by the law.

## 20 Companies of Central Forces Rushed to Manipur after Spate in Violence

### Guwahati

With a spate in violence recently, particularly in Jiribam region of Manipur, Central government has decided to rush 20 additional companies of Central Armed Paramilitary Forces (CAPF) to Manipur to assist the existing security forces in containing the situation.

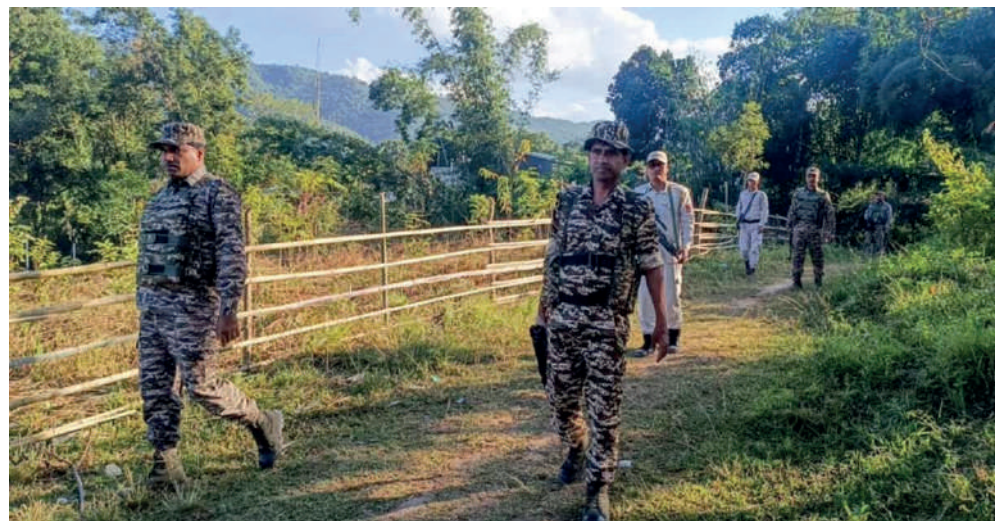
Sources said that the Ministry of Home Affairs have sanctioned 15 companies of CRPF and five companies of BSF to be sent to Manipur immediately due to the recent spate in violence. With the additional 20 companies of CAPF arriving in the state, there will be a total of 218 companies of central forces deployed in Manipur.

Meanwhile, amid the curfew imposed by the district administration and shutdown call by different tribal organizations, suspected miscreants on Wednesday morning set on fire two trucks carrying essential commodities to the ethnic strife-torn state.

Fresh round of violence started in Manipur's Jiribam district since Thursday when armed miscreants set on fire at least ten houses at a village and allegedly burnt a woman alive.

In a retaliatory attack on Saturday another woman was killed in a village in Bishnupur by armed miscreants.

On Monday, CRPF forces deployed in Jakuradhor area in Jiribam killed ten armed



miscreants during an encounter. Police said that the armed miscreants came to attack a police station which had sheltered some displaced families.

Police had also recovered two bodies of civilians from the area even as six persons including three women and three minor children have still remained missing.

The killing of the ten armed miscreants have led to further deterioration of the situation with the Kuki and Hmar organizations terming the ten deceased as 'village volunteers' and not as armed miscreants as claimed by the police. The Kuki and Hmar organizations have also called for shutdown of all the hill

areas in protest against the killing by the CRPF personnel.

On Wednesday two trucks carrying rice, onion and potatoes to Longmai, Noney and Tamenglong districts were stopped by armed miscreants on National Highway no 37 and were sent on fire.

It may be mentioned here that Manipur has been burning due to clashes between two ethnic communities -- the majority Meiteis and the minority Kukis since May last year. The violence has so far claimed a human toll of over 240 people and displaced over 65,000 belong belonging to both the communities.

## Respite from Food Inflation after January Only: NITI Aayog

### New Delhi

India's food inflation has recently surged to 10.9 percent, its highest level in 15 months, primarily driven by rising vegetable prices. In an exclusive interview with ETV Bharat, Ramesh Chand, a member of NITI Aayog, stated that food prices are expected to remain high until January 2025, when fresh crops of onions, potatoes, and other vegetables are expected to bring relief. He further noted that the increase in vegetable prices is the main factor contributing to the current inflationary trend.

Ramesh Chand mentioned that food inflation will begin to

of rice and cereals in the upcoming Kharif season.

### Inflation Status

In October, the Consumer Price Index (CPI) inflation rose to 6.21 percent, up from 5.49 percent in September and 4.87 percent in October 2023. The Consumer Food Price Index (CFPI) was even higher, at 10.87 percent. Urban CPI was recorded at 6.68 percent, while rural CPI was 5.62%. Similarly, rural CFPI stood at 10.69%, and urban CFPI was at 11.09 percent. As a result, inflation reached a 14-month high of 6.2 percent in October, breaching the RBI's tolerance limit for inflation management.



decline after two months as new crops hit the market. By the start of the Rabi season, he expects inflation to return to a more comfortable level. He also noted that global inflationary pressures are contributing to the rise in food prices.

He explained that the Consumer Food Price Index (CFPI) is trending upwards, mainly due to the prices of three key vegetables: tomatoes, potatoes, and onions. Once the new crops of Onion and Potato are available, prices are expected to fall, and inflation will decrease. Regarding onions, he mentioned that unseasonal weather had damaged some crops, which created upward price pressure. Additionally, the opening of onion exports further contributed to rising prices. However, he emphasized that the demand from farmers for export opportunities is legitimate, and banning exports for an extended period isn't feasible.

### Healthy Crop Outlook

Chand also highlighted that due to good rainfall and favorable water reservoir conditions, India is likely to see a record production

At the national average of 6.21 percent, there are 10 states where inflation exceeds this level. These states are Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Gujarat, Haryana, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Odisha, Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh, and Uttarakhand. In contrast, Delhi recorded the lowest inflation at 4.01 percent.

Notable changes in food prices were observed in October. Inflation dropped in categories like Pulses & products, Eggs, Sugar & confectionery, and Spices. However, food inflation overall was still high, mainly due to rising prices for vegetables, fruits, and oils & fats.

In October 2024, the year-on-year housing inflation rate was 2.81%, slightly higher than the 2.72% recorded in September. This data is based on the housing index, which focuses on urban areas only.

For electricity, the national index for October 2024 stood at 162.5, with an inflation rate of 5.45%. This was a small increase from September, when the index was 162.4 and inflation was 5.39%.

## Prez Murmu To Inaugurate LokManthan-2024 In Hyderabad On Nov 22

### Hyderabad

President Droupadi Murmu will inaugurate LokManthan-2024, a colloquium of nationalist thinkers, in the city on November 22. Former Vice President M Venkaiah Naidu, Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat, and other dignitaries are also expected to attend the event to be held from November 21 to 24.

Organised by Prajna Pravah, an organisation of 'nation-first' intellectuals, researchers, and academicians, the event will feature debates on various topics as well as cultural programmes. The President is scheduled to inaugurate the event on November 22, according to J Nandakumar, national convener of Prajna Pravah.

The exhibition and cultural programmes for LokManthan will

begin on November 21, he added. Delegates from foreign countries, including groups that follow pre-Abrahamic traditions, will also participate and perform cultural dances and other exhibitions. The Yazidis, who faced attacks by ISIS, are also expected to attend the conference.

LokManthan, a biennial event, was previously held in Bhopal, Ranchi, and Guwahati, starting in 2016.

## After Stabbing Doctor In Chennai Hospital, Patient's Son Walks, People Shout 'He Hacked Him'

### Chennai

A short video of the capture of the assailant, who stabbed a doctor at the Kalaingar Centenary Government Multi-speciality hospital in Tamil Nadu capital Chennai over the treatment of his mother on Wednesday, showed him as walking away after the attack.

The video shows the assailant, identified by the police as Vigneshwaran from Perungalathur, walking through the hospital where he is seen throwing away something. Multiple private security guards walking past him are seen acting as mute spectators with none of them stopping him but steering clear of him.

In the video, the onlookers are heard pleading to the security guards to capture the assailant as he had attacked the doctor. They are also seen repeatedly asking the guards to alert the police so that the attacker could be caught. In a few seconds, a man in civvies



is seen confronting the assailant, who is seen resisting it. Another man who comes from the behind is seen hitting the accused on his head while the other who earlier confronted him is heard asking why he did that to the doctor. The suspect is heard retorting to the question.

"You were least bothered about the doctor gave wrong treatment to my mother. Now, you seem to worried," the assailant says in the video.

The video shows the accused

made to sit down on the floor by the people who repeatedly ask the guards to alert the police. They are also heard asking for a rope to tie the accused down so that he would not be able to escape from the scene. The video concludes when the attacker is pinned down by the security guards.

The over 40-second video has been verified to have been shot on the premises of the government hospital and is being widely shared on video and message sharing platforms.

## Delhi's air quality turns 'severe' for first time this season

### New Delhi

Delhi's air quality turned 'severe' for the first time this season on Wednesday, with the AQI soaring to 418.

In comparison, the national capital's 24-hour average Air Quality Index (AQI) -- recorded at 4 pm every day -- stood at 334 on Tuesday.

At 9 am on Wednesday, the air quality was 'very poor' with a reading of 366.

An AQI between zero and 50 is considered 'good', 51 and 100 'satisfactory', 101 and 200 'moderate', 201 and 300 'poor', 301 and 400 'very poor', 401 and 450 'severe' and above 450 'severe plus'.

Of the 36 monitoring stations in Delhi, 30 reported air quality in the 'severe' category, according to the Central Pollution Control Board.



# Bulldozer justice: SC says executive can't become judge, demolish accused house

**New Delhi**

Noting that the right to shelter is a fundamental right under Article 21 of the Constitution, the Supreme Court on Wednesday declared 'bulldozer justice' unconstitutional and said the Executive cannot demolish the residential and commercial properties of persons only on the ground that they were accused or convicted of a crime.

"If a property is demolished only because a person is accused, it is wholly unconstitutional. Executive cannot determine who is guilty and cannot become a judge to decide if he is guilty or not and such an act will be a transgression of limits," a Bench led by Justice BR Gavai said.

It is not a happy sight to see women, children and aged persons dragged to the streets overnight. Heavens would not fall on the authorities if they hold their hands for some period," it said.

The top court, however, said, "We clarify that these directions will not be applicable if there is any unauthorized structure in any



public place such as road, street, footpath, abutting railway line or any river body or water body and also to cases where there is an order for demolition made by a court of law."

"The chilling side of bulldozer reminds us that constitutional values and ethos do not allow such abuse of power. Such an action also cannot be against someone who is convicted of a crime since such an action by executive will be illegal and executive shall be then guilty of taking law into their own hands," said the Bench

which also included Justice KV Viswanathan.

Exercising its powers under Article 142 of the Constitution, the Bench laid down detailed guidelines on demolition of properties. It said no demolition should be carried out without a 15-day prior show cause notice and without giving a hearing to the affected persons.

It said the affected party needed to be given some time to challenge the order of demolition before an appropriate forum. "We are further of the view that even in

cases of persons who do not wish to contest the demolition order, sufficient time needs to be given to them to vacate and arrange their affairs," it added.

The Bench said, "The State cannot replace the Judiciary in performing core functions and will be wholly unjust if the State demolishes such properties without following due process of law. If the Executive in an arbitrary manner demolishes property of a person only on the basis that person is accused of crime it violates separation of powers," it said.

"When a particular structure is chosen all of a sudden for demolition, and the rest of the similarly situated structures in the same vicinity are not even being touched, mala fides may loom large.

"In such cases where the authorities indulge in arbitrary pick and choose of the structures and it's established that soon before initiation of such an action an occupant of the structure was found to be involved in a criminal case a presumption could be

drawn that the real motive for such demolition proceedings was not the illegal structure but an action of penalising the accused without even trying him before the court of law," it said, adding such a presumption was rebuttable.

The top court said that violation of any of the directions would lead to initiation of contempt proceedings, in addition to prosecution and if a demolition was found to be in violation of the its orders, the officers concerned will be held responsible for restitution of the demolished property.

"The Registrar Judicial is directed to circulate a copy of this judgment to the Chief Secretaries of all the states, union territories and Registrar Generals of all the High Courts. All state governments shall issue circulars to all the district magistrates and local authorities intimating them about the directions issued by this court," the Bench said.

## Won't allow oral mentioning for urgent case hearings: CJI

**New Delhi**

Asserting his powers as the 'master of roster', Chief Justice of India (CJI) Sanjiv Khanna on Tuesday said no oral submissions for urgent listing and hearing of cases will be allowed henceforth.

A day after taking over as the CJI, Justice Khanna urged lawyers to either send emails or written letters for urgent listing of cases, instead of following the usual practice of orally mentioning of cases in the morning before the listed matters. "No oral mentioning anymore... Only email or written slip/letters. Just state the reasons for urgency," CJI Khanna told lawyers after a few of them sought permission to mention certain matters for urgent listing.

His predecessor Justice DY Chandrachud could not strictly implement it as despite his repeated instructions, lawyers would usually gather in his court at 10.30 am to mention cases for urgent listing and hearing. Justice Khanna, who was sworn in as the 51st CJI by President Droupadi Murmu at the Rashtrapati Bhavan on Monday, has outlined a citizen-centric agenda for judicial reforms as he said ensuring easy

access to justice and equal treatment to citizens regardless of their status was the constitutional duty of the judiciary.

With a focus on criminal case management, the CJI pledged to prioritise reducing trial durations, adopting a systematic approach, and ensuring that legal procedures are not gruelling for citizens. He also highlighted the importance of promoting mediation to resolve disputes efficiently and provide timely justice.

Justice Khanna has identified pressing challenges facing the judiciary, including the need to reduce case backlogs, make litigation affordable, and simplify complex legal processes. Recognising that the justice system must cater to all citizens, he outlined a vision to make courts more approachable. "Making judgments comprehensible to the citizens and promoting mediation will be a priority," he had said on Monday.

"Judiciary is an integral, yet distinct and independent part of the governance system. The Constitution trusts upon us the role of constitutional guardian and protector of fundamental rights," he added.

## Illegal infiltration: ED arrests 2 Bangladeshi nationals, 1 Indian

**Ranchi**

Three people, including two Bangladeshi nationals, have been arrested by the ED during searches connected to a money laundering case related to illegal Bangladeshi infiltration into Jharkhand, official sources said on Wednesday. Rony Mondal and Sameer Chowdhary are nationals of the neighbouring country while Pintu Halder is an Indian. The three, suspected to be touts, were arrested on Tuesday night from West Bengal in the Bangladeshi Infiltration case for facilitating illegal human trafficking in India, the sources said. The three have been taken into custody under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA), they said. The federal probe agency had launched searches at 17 locations in poll-

bound Jharkhand apart from West Bengal in this money laundering case on Tuesday. "Incriminating" items like fake Aadhaar cards, forged passports, illegal arms, immovable property documents, cash, jewellery, printing paper and machines and blank proforma used for forging Aadhaar ID were recovered during the raids, the federal agency had said in a statement on Tuesday. Polling is on in 43 Assembly seats of Jharkhand on Wednesday. The remaining 38 seats of the state will vote on November 20.

The ruling Jharkhand Mukti Morcha (JMM) had slammed the BJP-led Centre, alleging that the central agency's action was an attempt to "help the saffron camp establish its Bangladeshi infiltration narrative".



## Global Carbon Emissions Inch Upwards In 2024 Despite Progress On EVs, Renewables And Deforestation

Oslo

Carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) emissions from fossil fuels continue to increase, year on year. This sobering reality will be presented to world leaders today at the international climate conference COP29 in Baku, Azerbaijan. Our latest annual stocktake shows the world is on track to reach a new record: 37.4 billion tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> emitted from fossil fuels in 2024. This is an increase of 0.8% from the previous year.

Adopting renewable energy and electric vehicles is helping reduce emissions in 22 countries. But it's not enough to compensate for ongoing global growth in fossil fuels. There were also signs in 2023 suggesting natural systems may struggle to capture and store as much CO<sub>2</sub> in the future as they have in the past. While humanity is tackling deforestation and the growth in fossil CO<sub>2</sub> emissions is slowing, the need to reach an immediate peak and decline in global emissions has never been so acute.

The Global Carbon Project

The Global Carbon Budget is an annual planetary account of carbon sources and sinks, which soak up carbon dioxide and remove it from the atmosphere. We include anthropogenic sources from human activities such as burning fossil fuels or



making cement as well as natural sources such as bushfires.

When it comes to CO<sub>2</sub> sinks, we consider all the ways carbon may be taken out of the atmosphere. This includes plants using CO<sub>2</sub> to grow and CO<sub>2</sub> being absorbed by the ocean. Some of this happens naturally and some is being actively encouraged by human activity.

Putting all the available data on sources and sinks together each year is a huge international effort involving 86 research organisations, including Australia's CSIRO. We also use computer models and statistical approaches to fill out the remaining months to the end of the year.

This year's growth in carbon emissions from fossil fuels is mainly from fossil gas and oil, rather than coal. Fossil gas carbon emissions grew by 2.4%, signalling a return to the strong

long-term growth rates observed before the COVID pandemic. Gas emissions grew in most large countries, but declined across the European Union.

Oil carbon emissions grew by 0.9% overall, pushed up by a rise in emissions from international aviation and from India. The rebound in international air travel pushed aviation carbon emissions up 13.5% in 2024, although it's still 3.5% below the pre-COVID 2019 level.

Meanwhile, oil emissions from the United States and China are declining. It's possible oil emissions have peaked in China, driven by growth in electric vehicles. Coal carbon emissions went up by 0.2%, with strong growth in India, small growth in China, a moderate decline in the US, and a large decline in the European Union. Coal use in the US is now at its lowest level in 120 years.

## Trump creates 'efficiency' department; Elon Musk, Vivek Ramaswamy to lead

Washington

US President-elect Donald Trump said on Tuesday Elon Musk and former Republican presidential candidate Vivek Ramaswamy will lead the newly created Department of Government Efficiency.

Musk and Ramaswamy "will pave the way for my Administration to dismantle Government Bureaucracy, slash

company Tesla, social media platform X and rocket company SpaceX, while Ramaswamy is the founder of a pharmaceutical company who ran for the Republican presidential nomination against Trump and then threw his support behind the former president after dropping out.

Musk gave millions of dollars to support Trump's presidential campaign and made public appearances with him.

Trump had said he would offer Musk, the world's richest person, a role in his administration promoting government efficiency.



excess regulations, cut wasteful expenditures, and restructure Federal Agencies," Trump said in a statement.

Trump said their work would conclude by July 4, 2026, adding that a smaller and more efficient government would be a "gift" to the country on the 250th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence.

The appointments reward two Trump supporters from the private sector.

Musk leads electric car

The acronym of the new department - DOGE - coincides with the name of the cryptocurrency Dogecoin that Musk promotes.

"This will send shockwaves through the system, and anyone involved in government waste, which is a lot of people!" Musk said, according to Trump's statement, which called the new government initiative "potentially 'The Manhattan Project' of our time," referring to the U.S. plan to build the atomic bomb that helped end World War Two.

## Public Mourns 35 Killed In Attack At Sports Complex In Southern Chinese City

ZHUHAI, China

Members of the public paid their respects Wednesday to people killed by a driver who rammed into people exercising at a sports complex in southern China, as the country mourned, but little information was available about the suspect or the victims in the attack.

The crash Monday night in Zhuhai killed 35 people and severely injured 43 others, and the driver was detained as he was trying to escape. Authorities said the 62-year-old man with the surname Fan was upset over his divorce settlement.

Members of the public had started bringing flowers in honour of the victims Tuesday night and continued into Wednesday. There was a light police presence in the morning at the Zhuhai sports



complex, which was closed until further notice, but the number of officers increased as the morning passed.

While police allowed people to leave bouquets in memory of the dead just outside the entrance of the sports complex, volunteers then quickly moved the flowers inside to the sports centre. "May

there be no thugs in heaven," said the message on one bouquet. "Good deeds will be rewarded and evil deeds will be punished."

The attack on occurred on the eve of the Zhuhai Airshow, an aviation exhibition sponsored by the People's Liberation Army that is held every two years. China authorities often make

extra efforts to tightly control information around major or sensitive events like the airshow. Censors also take extra care around major catastrophes or violence, often censoring eyewitness accounts.

Clear information on the death and injury toll was not available for almost 24 hours after the attack. Videos were quickly censored inside China, though they circulated outside the Great Firewall. They were posted by Teacher Li, an artist turned dissident who runs an X account with 1.7 million followers that posts crowdsourced videos about news in China.

Articles from Chinese media featuring interviews with survivors were quickly taken down on Monday and Tuesday. The news that trended about

the attack was largely based on official statements from authorities.

Police said their preliminary investigation found Fan was dissatisfied with the split of financial assets in his divorce. Beyond that description, further information was not available on his divorce or alleged motive.

Chinese leader Xi Jinping called for the "strict" punishment of the perpetrator according to law, in a statement Tuesday evening. He also called on all local governments "to strengthen prevention and control of risks at the source, strictly prevent extreme cases from occurring, and to resolve conflicts and disputes promptly," according to the official Xinhua news agency.

# SC's divided verdict

THE Supreme Court's decision to revisit Aligarh Muslim University's (AMU) minority status marks a pivotal moment in the discourse on minority rights within India's education system. By a narrow 4-3 majority, the court on Friday overturned the 1967 S Azeez Basha vs Union of India ruling, which had denied AMU's minority status on the grounds of its establishment by statute. The majority, led by Chief Justice DY Chandrachud, argued that the focus should be on AMU's origins rather than its formal incorporation. Dissenting Justices Surya Kant, Dipankar Datta and SC Sharma, however, countered that genuine minority institutions should retain administrative control.

Established by the Muslim community in 1875 and later formalised under British-era legislation in 1920, AMU's founding intent is central to this re-evaluation. Under this interpretation, AMU's identity is tied

to its origins, even if it is now subject to government oversight. This perspective also asserts that minority institutions need



not be exclusively controlled by members of their founding community, nor must they solely serve that community to retain their minority status.

The SC ruling has deferred the final

decision on AMU's status to a three-judge Bench. This rekindles the possibility for AMU to reserve seats for Muslim students, which could strengthen its mission to serve the community. The decision assumes significance as it comes amid broader conversations about minority rights, autonomy and the balancing act between government regulation and community-led education. The court's nuanced stance recognises that education rights for minorities are essential for fostering diversity within India's academic landscape. A favourable verdict may set a precedent, not only for AMU but also for other institutions seeking minority status, potentially reshaping the country's approach to minority rights in education.

// satyasya paramam nidanam //

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

*Do not go where the path may lead, go instead where there is no path and leave a trail.*

-Ralph Waldo Emerson

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## Back in the saddle

### India and the world must deal deftly with Trump

THE incorrigible Donald Trump is averse to expressing regret for his actions. But he did lament the other day that he shouldn't have left the White House after losing the 2020 presidential election. Now, he is all set to reoccupy the much-vaunted seat of power after winning the 2024 poll. Another loss would have made him raise hell and incite his supporters to protest against the verdict — like they did during the Capitol Hill mayhem on January 6, 2021 — but this frightening scenario has been averted. Trump is back in the saddle, and the world will have to deal with this unpredictable character all over again.

India won't find it easy



to handle the man who calls Prime Minister Narendra Modi "my good friend" and yet describes the country as a "very big abuser" in the trade realm. During his election campaign, Trump had criticised India for imposing hefty tariffs on US goods and called for a tit-for-tat policy in bilateral trade relations to make America

"extraordinarily wealthy again". It is feared that the Republican administration will levy higher tariffs on over \$75 billion worth of Indian exports to the US. What's more, Modi's 'Make in India' campaign might come into conflict with Trump's 'America First' approach. Employment-based immigration

could take a hit as well, considering the surge in the denial rate for H-1B visas during Trump 1.0.

On the diplomatic front, New Delhi will be hoping that Modi's good rapport with Trump will help in papering over differences regarding the Gurpatwant Singh Pannun case. Trump's distrust of the US Justice Department and the FBI, whom he has repeatedly accused of being biased against him, could give India a much-needed breather in this vexed matter. The BJP-led government would also expect that he won't lose sleep over alleged human rights violations in India. However, when Trump is at the helm, the wisest course is to expect the unexpected.

## Beyond the boundary

### India should reconsider Pak tour decision

INDIA'S decision to forego travelling to Pakistan for the ICC Champions Trophy in 2025 reflects a strained chapter in the long-standing India-Pakistan cricket rivalry. The stance disrupts a promising avenue for sports diplomacy, which could



foster goodwill between the two cricket-crazed nations.

The Champions Trophy is set to feature matches in Lahore, Rawalpindi and Karachi, with the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) arranging India's games near the border for logistical ease. Additionally, the PCB has proposed a hybrid model, allowing India to set up a base in New Delhi or Chandigarh with chartered flights to Lahore for matches, prioritising

India's security concerns. Such an approach could ease travel issues while fostering a historic instance of cooperation between the two boards. Unfortunately, the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) has opted out, citing security concerns, but without significant diplomatic outreach.

In previous years, Pakistan has demonstrated goodwill by travelling to India for events like the T20 World Cup in 2016 and the ODI World Cup in 2023. By choosing not to reciprocate, India risks undermining sports as a bridge for peace. Cricket diplomacy has previously served as a symbolic yet significant platform for easing tensions. Participating in the Champions Trophy could have reinforced India's commitment to building constructive ties with its neighbours, regardless of political differences. By reconsidering its decision, India could strengthen regional stability and uphold the spirit of sportsmanship on the international stage. Let cricket remind us of its unifying power and transcend the political divide — after all, sports diplomacy isn't about victories on the field alone, but also the progress we make beyond it.

## Manipur's misery

### Central, state govts letting people down

MANIPUR has been unravelling for the past year and a half, and there is little reason to hope that things will improve anytime soon. There has been a fresh escalation of violence, with farmers working in paddy fields being targeted by snipers on hilltops. The killing of two women — one was gunned down and the other burnt alive — shows the sheer brazenness of



militants. More than 200 people have been killed and thousands rendered homeless in ethnic clashes between Meiteis and Kukis since May last year. The 'double-engine' government has miserably failed to restore peace and public order. Nevertheless, Chief Minister N Biren Singh continues to be in the saddle, with the BJP high command stubbornly persisting with him.

Biren's troubles are mounting, with

a Kuki organisation demanding a court-monitored SIT probe into his alleged role in inciting ethnic violence. The outfit has approached the Supreme Court on the basis of some leaked audio clips. With the court asserting that it does not appreciate any attempt to "brush things under the carpet", the CM's position has become even more untenable. The onus is on the petitioner to prove the authenticity of these potentially damning clips.

The Centre's attempts to bring the warring sides to the negotiating table have been fruitless. There is a huge disconnect between the Union Government and the local people, whose concerns and aspirations remain unaddressed. Two of its contentious decisions — fencing the India-Myanmar border and scrapping the Free Movement Regime — have been staunchly opposed by several tribal organisations in Manipur.

They have cited a threat to the social, cultural and economic ties between tribal communities living on both sides of the border, but the Centre seems to be in no mood to do a rethink. This intransigence has further alienated residents of the strife-torn state. Leaving Manipur to fend for itself can be perilous for the security of the entire North-East, which has been battling insurgency for decades.

IN a significant turn, Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau has acknowledged the presence of Khalistan supporters within Canada, while emphasising that they do not represent the broader Sikh community. His comments, coming amid escalating diplomatic tensions with India, reflect a careful balancing act. While recognising concerns about Khalistani extremism, he distances this fringe group from the Canadian Sikh majority, who largely integrate peacefully within Canadian society. The acknowledgment follows recent violent incidents, including an attack by Khalistan activists on worshippers at a Hindu temple in Brampton, Ontario, which drew widespread condemnation. Canada's government condemned the incident, reinforcing Trudeau's stance on religious freedom and safety for all Canadians. Following this, India had intensified its demand that Canada curb the extremist elements.

Trudeau's diplomatic approach seems

## Adopt firmer stance

### Trudeau's shift on extremism misses mark

geared towards containing domestic extremism while avoiding alienating Canada's influential Sikh population. It is on the lines of his vote-bank politics and his reluctance to disrupt ties with a vocal diaspora segment. Further complicating the situation, Canada has imposed visa curbs on international students, a large chunk of whom are from India, citing a strain on housing and resources. These



new restrictions may exacerbate tensions, particularly as Canada's educational ties with India are vital to its economy.

Going forward, Canadian leaders must

adopt a firmer stance on extremism to ensure security and diplomatic harmony. While Trudeau's acknowledgment may appear a step towards transparency, his reluctance to curb extremist groups more forcefully risks emboldening factions whose actions strain international relations. The shift in the stance does little to quell the diplomatic fallout of his public disclosure that intelligence — not concrete evidence — underlies Canada's allegation of Indian involvement in the killing of Hardeep Singh Nijjar, a Khalistan activist.

# Polluter penalised

## NGT cracks whip on Panipat thermal plant

AMID India's efforts to reduce dependency on fossil fuels and spur a transition to clean energy, the National Green Tribunal (NGT) has imposed a penalty of Rs 6.93 crore on the Panipat Thermal Power Station for causing air pollution and soil contamination. The tribunal's message is loud and clear: those who violate laws and cause damage to the environment will have to pay hefty compensation. Fly ash from the thermal plant has been playing havoc with the health of residents of nearby villages, causing serious respiratory problems and increasing the likelihood of accidents due to reduced



visibility on roads.

The NGT has also laid bare the polluter's half-hearted approach to environmental protection,

stating that mere plantation of trees without ensuring their survival is not good enough as a remedial measure. The fine is expected to prompt polluting

industrial units to mend their ways. India has done well to reduce fiscal subsidies in the oil and gas sector by 85 per cent in a decade (2013-23), but a far bigger push is needed to reach the ambitious target of achieving 50 per cent of its installed power capacity from non-fossil fuel sources by 2030.

Even as the COP29 climate change conference is set to begin today in Azerbaijan, the World Health Organisation has

called for ending fossil fuel subsidies and reliance. It has recommended investment in clean, sustainable alternatives that can curb diseases that are surging due to pollution and also cut carbon emissions. Health has to be a priority not only for India but for the entire world while taking action against climate change. Regular monitoring and strict implementation of laws can deter industries from poisoning precious natural resources such as air, water and soil. A zero-tolerance approach is a must to stave off the environmental and health emergency.

## All over for Jet Airways

### Fiasco holds lessons for civil aviation sector

THE prolonged ordeal of Jet Airways' creditors, employees and other stakeholders is set to end as the Supreme Court has ordered the liquidation of the grounded air carrier's assets. The court set aside the contentious decision of the National Company Law Appellate Tribunal (NCLAT), which had upheld the resolution plan and approved the transfer of the airline's ownership to the winning bidder, Jalan Kalrock Consortium. The latter's failure to meet its financial obligations, which included pumping Rs 350 crore into the moribund airline and paying Rs 226 crore in employee salaries, sounded the death knell for Jet Airways. The revival plan never took off in the absence of requisite funding.

After GoFirst, Jet has become the second major airline in India to be liquidated under the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC). This is disheartening news for the country that prides itself on having the third-largest domestic aviation market in

the world, after the US and China. The shrinking number of players in the civil aviation sector is a matter of concern. Timely course correction is a must to pull financially stressed airlines back from the brink.

The court has rightly highlighted the need for stricter adherence to the IBC, which was enacted in 2016 by the Union Government as an "effective deterrent against unscrupulous borrowers". The most important lesson from the Jet fiasco is that insolvency resolution should be done in a time-bound manner so that lenders don't have to wait for years for loan recovery. The decisions of appellate bodies such as the NCLAT should be marked by consistency as well as transparency. Defaulting bidders who try to pass the buck must be taken to task. The long-term success of the government's regional air connectivity scheme, UDAN (Ude Desh ka Aam Nagrik), hinges on giving ailing airlines a new lease of life.

## SC's balancing act

### Guarding property rights in new economic era

IN a landmark ruling, the Supreme Court on Tuesday decisively clarified that not all private property can be classified as "material resources of the community" for redistribution by the state under Article 39(b) of the Constitution. The verdict, delivered by a nine-judge Bench led by Chief Justice DY Chandrachud, draws a firm line between private ownership and public resources. It emphasised a nuanced, context-specific approach. At the heart of the ruling is the recognition that not all privately held resources necessarily serve the "common good" when redistributed. The SC outlined specific criteria for determining whether a private asset falls within the community's material resources: its inherent characteristics, scarcity and impact on societal welfare. This protects individual ownership while ensuring that essential resources, such as natural reserves or spectrum, can be made available for the public benefit when necessary. Significantly, the decision

departs from the broad socialist interpretations of the 1970s, which cast a wide net over private assets as public resources. The majority opinion challenges earlier expansive views by underscoring India's evolution towards a market-oriented economy. It asserts that endorsing a singular economic ideology contradicts the flexible, democratic principles embedded in the Constitution.

This verdict marks a prudent shift in balancing economic policy with constitutional rights. By ruling that the judiciary's role is to respect the "intent of the framers to lay down the foundation for an economic democracy", the SC reaffirms the importance of elected representatives in shaping economic choices. This restraint is crucial as India's economic landscape expands to include new industries and complex assets. It underlines the court's commitment to safeguarding individual property rights while prioritising common good judiciously.

## Inflation soars to 14-month high of 6.2% in October



### New Delhi

Retail inflation breached the Reserve Bank's upper tolerance level, soaring to a 14-month high of 6.21 per cent in October mainly on account of rising food prices.

Inflation based on the consumer price index (CPI) was 5.49 per cent in September and 4.87 per cent in the year-ago month.

Retail inflation trended below the RBI's upper tolerance band of 6 per cent since September last year. It was at 6.83 per cent in August 2023.

The RBI, which mainly factors in the CPI while arriving at its bi-monthly monetary policy, has been tasked by the government to ensure retail inflation remains at 4 per cent with a margin of 2 per cent on either side.

According to the data released

by the National Statistics Office (NSO) on Tuesday, inflation in the food basket increased to 10.87 per cent in October, compared to 9.24 per cent in September and 6.61 per cent in October 2023.

"Year-on-year inflation rate based on All India Consumer Price Index (CPI) for the month of October 2024 is 6.21 per cent. Corresponding inflation rates for rural and urban are 6.68 per cent and 5.62 per cent, respectively," the NSO said. The NSO data showed that during October 2024 significant decline in inflation was observed in the 'pulses and products', eggs, 'sugar and confectionery' and spices subgroup. "High food inflation in October 2024 is mainly due to increase in inflation of vegetables, fruits and oils and fats," the NSO said.

## Musk's Starlink has to comply with all rules for licence in India: Scindia



### New Delhi

Elon Musk-owned Starlink will have to comply with all

norms to get licence for services in India, Union telecom minister Jyotiraditya Scindia said on

Tuesday.

The minister said the satellite internet services provider is in process of completing all the requirements and will get licence once they complete the process.

"They (Starlink) have to comply with all rules to get the licence. You have to look at it from security perspective as well. They are in process of doing it. Once all requirements are met they will get the licence," Scindia told reporters.

He was replying to a question on status of licence for Starlink.

At present, the government has issued licence to Bharti Group-backed OneWeb and Jio-SES joint venture, Jio Satellite Communications.

## Inflows in equity schemes rise 21% to Rs 41K crore in October

### New Delhi

Equity mutual funds witnessed a record inflow of Rs 41,887 crore in October, marking a surge of over 21 per cent on a month-on-month (MoM) basis, according to the Association of Mutual Funds in India (AMFI) data. Inflows into equity schemes fell by 10 per cent in September to Rs 34,419 crore from Rs 38,239 crore in August. Also, the monthly mutual fund SIP (Systematic Investment Plan) crossed the Rs 25,000 crore mark for the first time in October and stood at Rs 25,323 crore against Rs 24,509 crore in September. According to Feroze

Azeez, Deputy CEO, Anand Rathi Wealth Limited, amidst market volatility, AMFI data shows a trend which is favouring diversified equity funds which are mostly large cap and mid cap oriented. The SIP contributions have consistently reached new peaks over the past year, marking a 48 per cent YOY growth and reflecting positive market sentiment."

Among the equity categories, all 11 categories received inflows. Sectoral and thematic funds received the highest inflows of around Rs 12,278 crore in October. Flexi cap funds received Rs 5,180 crore inflows.

## Bitcoin may touch \$100,000 by January end after Trump takes office

### New Delhi

World's biggest cryptocurrency Bitcoin is heading towards \$100,000 amid US President-elect Donald Trump's pro-crypto stance and promise for clearer cryptocurrency regulations.

On Tuesday, the Bitcoin price was hovering around \$87,880 apiece. Bitcoin price has surged about 30 per cent since the US election.

According to Nigel Green of deVere Group, "Bitcoin could hit \$100,000 by the end of January 2025 after Donald Trump takes office".

The bullish prediction from Green comes after the cryptocurrency has experienced a staggering 93 per cent price rise year-to-date.

"We expect that this is just the beginning, with the cryptocurrency set to break more records under an incoming Trump administration. President-elect's crypto-



friendly stance signals a transformative moment for Bitcoin and the broader digital asset market," said Green.

Trump administration has a clear mandate to regulate crypto constructively, and his plan to elevate Bitcoin to a strategic asset class is a powerful endorsement.

"This is the most significant tailwind we've seen for Bitcoin since its inception. With inflation concerns on the rise amid looming economic policy shifts, Bitcoin's role as a hedge against eroding cash value is also gaining traction," he mentioned.

While inflation pressures have eased with recent rate cuts globally, the Trump administration's ambitious spending plans and potential tariffs could quickly reignite upward pressure on prices.

This inflationary backdrop is encouraging investors to turn to Bitcoin as a safeguard against diminishing purchasing power, said the deVere Group CEO.

According to Raj Karkara, COO, ZebPay, as more investors turn to Bitcoin, we anticipate this momentum could continue.

"This landmark moment demonstrates Bitcoin's resilience and reinforces its appeal within the financial markets," he added.

Vishal Sacheendran, Head of Regional Markets at Binance, said that clearer rules and a friendlier stance towards crypto businesses has the potential to increase investor confidence, encouraging further innovation and mainstream adoption of virtual digital assets.

"It is also important to note that in a bull market like this, investors should also remain mindful, conduct thorough research, and not make investment decisions solely based on market sentiment or hype," he said.

# Vistara bids adieu with last flight to Singapore

## New Delhi

After operating for nearly 10 years, full service carrier Vistara flew into the sunset on Tuesday early morning operating its last flight from the national capital to Singapore.

Vistara -- a joint venture between Tatas and Singapore Airlines -- has now merged with Air India, creating an enlarged entity that is now the country's largest international carrier and second-largest domestic carrier.

UK115 flight from Delhi to Singapore was the last flight of Vistara with the code 'UK' while UK986 from Mumbai to Delhi was the carrier's last domestic flight.

Starting a new chapter in India's fast-growing civil aviation



space, the merged entity operated its first flight with the code 'AI2286' from Doha to Mumbai.

In the domestic sector, the integrated entity's first flight AI2984 took off from Mumbai to

Delhi. All the four flights landed at their respective destinations early in the morning on Tuesday, according to information available on the flight tracking website Flightradar24.com.

According to an official, the two airlines have been merged, passengers are being issued Air India boarding passes and check-in counters of Vistara at airports have become that of Air India.

The code 'AI2XXX' is being used for Vistara flights that are being operated by Air India post the merger to help passengers identify the Vistara flight at the time of booking.

On Monday, an official said the integrated entity will be operating services on 103 domestic and 71 international routes. With the merger, first announced in November 2022, Singapore Airlines will have a 25.1 per cent stake in the integrated entity, which will operate more than 5,500 weekly

flights on local and international routes.

A formal announcement about the merger is expected later in the day. Tata Group has led the consolidation wave in Indian aviation with two major mergers in less than two months -- AIX Connect was integrated with Air India Express on October 1 and now the merger of Vistara with Air India.

Air India, Vistara and AIX Connect together had a domestic market share of little over 29 per cent in September, as per latest official data. Together, the Air India group has an operational fleet of 298 aircraft -- around 208 with Air India and about 90 with Air India Express.

# Time for homebuyers to define demand for realty projects

## New Delhi

At a time when there is a mad rush to launch new projects in and around the airports across the cities of India, a developer in Bengaluru opted to go in the diametrically opposite direction. Prima facie, what appeared to be a case of finding a better or affordable land parcel in that given location of South-West Bengaluru had a strategy that very few adopt in the business of Indian real estate.

The strategy to define demand through scientific research. In this case, the demand in the market was assessed through a consumer psychograph study -- what consumers want; what they need; where are the gaps; and how a new housing project could fill in that gap.

Most of the housing projects are launched in this part of the world based on peer pressure or gut feeling of the developer. Getting the consumer feedback before conceptualising a housing project and scouting for the land parcel for the same is not very common in India.

Research reports in the sector are very generic in nature and mostly rely on the empirical evidence of launches, absorption and price trends.

Hence, many of the developers with housing

projects having sizable unsold units wonder what went wrong; why there are no buyers in the market as assumed. Sarveshaa SB, CMD of Bhadra Group, says that in a country where the reports of housing shortage

a gap in what the homebuyers want and what is there in the market. It also adds up to the client acquisition cost of the developer, and squeezes the profit margins," says Sarveshaa.

Abhishek Kapoor, Group



contradict the reports of unsold inventory, it is time to make a strategic shift in the mindset. According to him, if the buyers are defining the demand and if they are asked beforehand as to what kind of project they are looking for and at what price point, the housing project will never face the sales logjam.

"From my experience, I can vouchsafe that even with a housing project facing slow sales, enquiries and footfalls are not always slower. What does it say? It clearly suggests there is

CEO of Puravankara Limited, agrees that demand in real estate is driven by a combination of end-user requirements, economic conditions, and demographic shifts. Infrastructure development, supply, market dynamics, and commercial activities, too, play a key role.

In India, strong demand continues to come from end-users, especially for larger living spaces and properties offering a higher standard of living. The trend towards home

ownership in critical urban areas and rising aspirations for premium housing reinforces the ongoing demand.

"In India's diverse demographic landscape, balancing empirical data with on-the-ground market trends is crucial since data collection and analytics are more recent phenomena. We gather market insights from data analytics firms and property consultants, which help us understand supply and absorption trends, current prices, and appreciation potential. In addition to this data, we conduct survey with channel partners operating in specific micro-markets to gain deeper insights into supply gaps and consumer demand. Combining this with our expertise and knowledge and the performance of our past projects, we can assess demand more accurately in heterogeneous markets. Going forward, as data quality improves, demand and supply assessment will only get better," says Kapoor.

Vimal Nadar, Head of Research at Colliers India believes demand in real estate refers to the desire and ability of consumers, be it end-users or investors to purchase or lease properties in a given market. For instance, residential real estate demand is indicated by

the number of housing units sold in a particular market within a particular period. Unit launches indicate developer confidence in the housing market and is typically reflective of anticipated housing sales in the near mid-term.

"In commercial real estate, demand is primarily assessed in terms of gross area leased in multi-tenanted office buildings. Outright sale volume also reflects investor or end-user confidence in the long-term usage of commercial developments," says Nadar.

The fact remains that the majority of unsold housing projects across the cities of India clearly suggest that these were launched without any scientific demand assessment of the home buyers. Such projects face slow sales, higher client acquisition cost, closer to delivery sales adding interest cost of the project, and at lower price point than the competing projects in the same micro market.

In contrast, the developers who are able to define demand with realistic demand benchmarking are the ones who command a premium with lower client acquisition cost and higher profit margins. These projects also add to the brand recall and goodwill of the developers.

# India to become \$35 trillion economy in 25 years: Goyal

New Delhi

Union Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal on Friday said India's growth story will take the country's \$3.5 trillion economy now to \$35 trillion in the next 25 years.

Addressing the inaugural session of Amazing Goa Global Business Summit 2024, Goyal said the 21st century belonged to India, and it was on track to become the third largest world economy in three years.

CM Pramod Sawant, former Union minister Suresh Prabhu and others were present during the inaugural function of the summit, an initiative of the Vibrant Goa



Foundation.

"Prime Minister Narendra Modi has rightfully said the 21st century is India's century. He

also said that the 21st century has stopped being small. What we do today is the best and the biggest," Goyal said.

# Zomato, Swiggy breached antitrust laws, claims CCI



Mumbai

An investigation by the Competition Commission of India (CCI) found that food delivery giants Zomato and SoftBank-backed Swiggy breached competition laws, with their business practices favouring select restaurants listed on their platforms, documents show.

Zomato entered into "exclusivity contracts" with partners in return for lower commissions, while Swiggy guaranteed business growth to certain players if they listed exclusively on its platform, according to non-public documents prepared by the CCI.

Exclusivity arrangements between Swiggy, Zomato and their respective restaurant

partners "prevent the market from becoming more competitive", the CCI's investigation arm noted in its findings reviewed by Reuters on Friday.

The antitrust investigation against Swiggy and its top rival Zomato began in 2022 after a complaint by National Restaurant Association of India about the impact on food outlets of alleged anti-competitive practices of the platforms.

The CCI documents are not public, in line with its confidentiality rules, and were shared with Swiggy, Zomato and the complainant restaurant group in March 2024. Their findings have not been previously reported.

# SBI's Q2 profit jumps 23%

Mumbai

State Bank of India (SBI) on Friday reported a 23 per cent jump in consolidated net profit for the September quarter at Rs 19,782 crore, helped by an increase in non-interest income and treasury profits. On a standalone basis, the...

State Bank of India (SBI) on Friday reported a 23 per cent jump in consolidated net profit for the September quarter at Rs 19,782 crore, helped by an increase in non-interest income and treasury

profits.

On a standalone basis, the country's largest lender reported



a net profit of Rs 18,331 crore as against Rs 14,330 crore in the year-ago period and Rs 17,035 crore in the preceding quarter.

Its core net interest income grew 5.37 per cent despite a 15 per cent increase in advances, as a 0.15 per cent narrowing in the net interest margin to 3.14 per cent caused a pull.

Non-interest income grew 42 per cent to Rs 15,271 crore helped by gains on forex and treasury. Newly appointed chairman CS Setty said the bank was maintaining the 14-16 per cent advances growth target for the fiscal, but lowering the deposit growth target to around 10 per cent.

# Pantomath's Bharat Value Fund invests Rs 235 crore in Haldiram Bhujawala

New Delhi

Kolkata-based Haldiram Bhujawala Ltd has announced the successful closure of its private placement round, with Pantomath's Bharat Value Fund (BVF) investing Rs 235 crore in the company for minority stake. The company will use the funds to expand its manufacturing and markets outside of Eastern and North-Eastern Indian markets.

Having a legacy of more than six decades in snacks and savoury industry, the company retails its products under the brand name of "Prabhujii" offering a broad product portfolio with 100+

SKUs, which enjoys brand recognition, especially in Eastern and North-Eastern Indian markets, besides running the quick



service restaurants in West Bengal and North-Eastern States.

"Leveraging our industry insights alongside BVF's support, we are strategically positioned to enhance

shareholder value and drive growth. This partnership lays a solid foundation for

generating long-term economic benefits, ensuring a prosperous future for all stakeholders," Manish Agarwal, Managing Director, Haldiram Bhujawala Limited, said.

The snacks market, one of the fastest-growing sectors in India, was estimated to be worth Rs 42,600 crore in FY24, which is expected to reach Rs 95,500 crore by FY32, registering a CAGR of 11%. Organised players in this market, who enjoy a substantial market share, are expected to be the key contributors to this growth.

# Historicising the Arthaśāstra: Early Fiscal-Military States in South Asia

Early texts from this region, such as the Brāhmaṇas, do not mention anything like a state and indicate only chiefships and oligarchies intent on suppressing a volatile class of Kṣatriya barons. Within this milieu were pastoral tribes operating as war bands, available for mercenary hire or ready to wage war themselves. In this scenario, archaic procedures of fighting over pastures, such as the rājasūya (raids for booty and subsequent distribution) and the aśvamedha (realignment of pasture usage protocols by letting a horse run free to choose its pastures) appear to have been repurposed as the great Śrauta (fire sacrifice) ritual to dominate fluid surroundings. They now centred on the establishment of territorial kingdoms daring rivals to impede the procedures. One social function of the elaborate sacrificial religion was possibly to divert the energies of barons and chiefs away from endless wars.

Out of this turmoil is said to have emerged 16 'greater janapadas' (mahajanapadas); in reality, the lists of these 16 vary across sources, with later ones including more of eastern janapadas. This indicates a gravitation of power and prosperity towards the east, where greater rainfall supported better agriculture, surpluses, and populations. Janapadas on the Gangetic plains tended to be agropastoralist—sedentary agricultural groups that extended satellite 'ranches' into open areas, the latter themselves turning sedentary in time. On the fringes, along the 'inner frontier', roamed tribal groups following free-ranging herdsmanhood, labelled vrātya in memory of an archaic rite of passage that comprised living as brigands and cattle-rustlers in the wilderness. Such freebooting war-band tribes maintained their saṅgha (joint decision-making/ democratic) format, and often formed their own states—the Kamboja and Gopa (Yadava) founded states in North Bengal and Bardhaman in historical times. The apprehension of itinerant tribes capturing political power comes across in the 5th-century CE Sanskrit play Mṛt-shakatikā (or Mṛcchakatikā, 'The Little Clay Cart').

Oligarchy was the foundational political format of the janapadas, many of which were gaṇa/saṅgha in their decision-making and of vrātya origin. Magadha and Kosala, two mahājanapadas featuring in all lists, demonstrate the earliest transitions to monarchy. Magadha, indeed one of the few janapadas not named after a tribe, went on to a remarkable career of monarchy spanning the better part of a millennium. Among its kings was the legendary Jarāsandha, mentioned in the Mahabharata; during the time of the Buddha, it was ruled by the Haryanka dynasty. The Haryanka were followed by a string of lineages—Śiśunāga, Nanda, Maurya, Śuṅga, and Kāṇva, and, after a hiatus when the centre of political gravity seemed to have shifted to Mathura due to Scytho-Parthian and Kushan activity, the Gupta. The political centre of the later Pāla rule was also a little east of Magadha.

While these polities emerged due to ease in taxing sedentary populations, they needed to also reign in the 'chaos and lawlessness' prevailing across the inner frontier. Entire passages in the Arthaśāstra deal with the subjugation of the saṅghas. Anticipating the Arthaśāstra's recommendation by a century or more, the Haryanka ruler Ajātasatru brought the gaṇasāṅghas of the Sakyas, Kāśī-Kośala, and Vṛjji (Licchavis of Vaisali) to heel; many kings played early rounds of the 'Great Game' with the Vrātya horse-dealers, for which the Ugra secret police

and Kaṅṭhaka-śodha assassins recommended by the Arthaśāstra came in handy. The states also needed to extend their writ across the riverine system infested by the hiṅśrka pirates. The Arthaśāstra ascribes the task of reining



them in to the king's inland navy.

Character of the Magadhan Army

Magadha carried its arms across the length and breadth of the subcontinent. The last king of the Nanda dynasty, Dhana-Nanda (whose

## PART III

regnal title was Augrasainya) is probably the same as the 'Agrammes of Palibothra' mentioned in Greek records; his army's reputation was such that Alexander's troops refused to fight him. A detailed examination of Magadhan campaigns shows it destroying local lords, Vrātya tribes, Scythian remnants, forest chiefs, and smaller versions of itself. The army was famed for its four divisions or 'caturaṅga': infantry and elephants, with chariotry and cavalry in auxiliary roles. Magadha's position gave it control over large surpluses and non-agrarian populations, which enabled it to raise and maintain such a massive army. Greek historians Strabo and Arrian have stated that Magadha society of that time was divided into seven classes, of which the two largest were farmers and soldiers. Magadha kings would also access the iron mines and elephant-yielding forests of Chhotanagpur and Central India, engaging in campaigns against the Ātavīs (forest tribes regarded as 'beyond the pale', though often engaging in regular trade with settled kingdoms) and Vyāghrarājas (chieftains of tribes in tiger infested regions). Its authority over the riverine system allowed it to control mercantile networks and logistically support distant campaigns.

The historian and diplomat Megasthenes has noted that Magadhan troops were heavily paid, had servants to look after their weapons and horses, and spent their leisure time in "idleness and drinking bouts, being maintained at the expense of the royal treasury," making merry when not engaged in war "so that they make their expeditions quickly when need arises since they bring nothing else of their own but their bodies." The Arthaśāstra lists six kinds of troops that could be available to a king in times of war: the maula (standing army), the bhṛtya (hirelings), the śreṇi (mercenaries supplied by guilds), the mitra (troops provided by allies), the amitra (deserters from the enemy camp), and the ātavīs (tribals); it enjoins that maula and bhṛtya are preferable to śreṇīs; it also insists that all retiring soldiers should surrender their weapons and other gear before leaving. Taken together, these suggest a standing army of regulars, equipped by the government. It was the creation of such a standing army that enabled Magadha to reduce

its dependence on śreṇi troops, mercenaries, hostages, renegades, and prisoners.

Though the Arthaśāstra is silent on the training of soldiers, it provides comprehensive and strict guidelines for their discipline.

The Anguttara Nikāya, which dates from the same period, maintains that a recruit's worth lay in the aptitude displayed during training and not social origin. In all, Magadha was best poised among the janapadas to raise and maintain a well-trained standing army made up of regular soldiers who were paid a salary and not per assignment as was usual for contracted armies. The army was one of the seven wings of the state and gave Magadha a strong bargaining position with which it managed to suppress if not stamp out inimical forces, sweeping away opponents, including lesser versions of itself, and outlasting them with superior logistics.

Administrative Machinery and Taxation

There is little empirical reference to the six kinds of troops (mentioned earlier) recommended by the Arthaśāstra, but the very success of Magadha suggests their existence in one form or the other. There had to be organisations to recruit, equip, and train the four wings of the caturaṅga, and commissariats to manage overland and overwater logistics. Overland logistics was managed by the Go-adhyakṣa, who possibly worked through the network of sārthavāhas (caravan operators) referred to repeatedly in period literature and apparently surviving up to the 19th century as the freelancing Banjaras and Lubanas. The Navādhyakṣa was responsible for water transport logistics, as well as keeping the rivers free of hiṅśrka pirates. That Candragupta Maurya was able to dismiss the hordes of sutlers and traders that usually accompanied every army on campaigns shows how effective his system was.

Moving on from the army, the Arthaśāstra desired that the bureaucratic administration be effective and enlightened, collecting revenue efficiently, but not in a rapacious manner. Dhana-Nanda was notorious for his parsimony and acquisitiveness; his introduction of a new scale of measure was much resented. Megasthenes' observations that under Mauryan rule, taxes were fixed fairly and strictly collected, and evasions penalised, bear out these concerns. Institutionalised administration was not a Mauryan innovation—the Vinaya texts say that the Haryanka dynasty (which came much before it) had three classes of non-hereditary officials, the Senānāyaka Mahāmāttas, the Vohārika Mahāmāttas, and the Sabbāththakas—generals, judges, and officers in charge of general affairs, respectively. Another indication of the fiscal-military state at work comes from Megasthenes who says that with falling revenue collection, later rulers of Magadha had to debase their currency (reduce metal content in coins) to pay administrators, bureaucrats, and the standing

army, ultimately weakening the state.

Impersonal Institutions and Meritocracy

The Arthaśāstra repeatedly insists on merit being made the primary criterion for state service, be it for soldiers or administrators. Empirical indications bear out that Magadha did implement this. In spite of dismissing mercenaries, Candragupta Maurya was able to commence his campaigns immediately after the takeover of Magadha possibly because erstwhile Nanda generals like Bhaddasāla provided him their services (as indicated in the Milindapañha). This indicated that such generals were servants of the state and not of particular dynasties. In Viśākhadatta's play Mudrārākṣas (Keeper of the Royal Seal), the eponymous prime minister (āmātya rākṣas), obsessed with loyalty to the now ousted Nandas, is ultimately won over by the logic of loyalty to the state of Magadha and not to a particular dynasty.

It is noteworthy that Magadha was named and not a particular dynasty which ruled it—in other words, ministers and generals were professionals serving the state of Magadha and not individual dynasties or clans. Coeval texts suggest that except for princely governors at the highest levels, most military and administrative positions, including the highest (antarvaśika), were held by individuals appointed on merit who were paid in cash. It should be noted that the Arthaśāstra includes repeated injunctions to carefully select and promote military and bureaucratic professionals for their ability and not their family connections. These administrators, governors, their deputies, and overseers, somewhat resembled the 'educated middle class' of modern times, putting a wider set of talents at the disposal of the state.

Even the monarchy was a meritocracy to some extent. After the Haryanka dynasty, all those that followed were of non-noble origin. The Śiśunāga started as ministers, the first Nanda (Mahāpadma) was either the offspring of the last Śiśunāga king Nandivardhana by a slave woman, or of his chief queen by her masseur. Some dynasties, whatever the truth, insisted upon their noble lineages, while others rejected them; their detractors denigrated them as upstarts. The Nanda title of Sarva-Kṣatrāntaka (Destroyer of the Baronry) suggests that it was not of Kṣatriya origin. The Mauryas themselves were probably the Vrātya Moriya of the Himalayan foothills, with strong north western affiliations—Kauṭilya is associated with Takṣaśilā, i.e., Taxila, while Candragupta was probably the 'Sandrokottus' who, according to Greek historians, met Alexander, suggesting that he was already influential and ambitious. Kharavela of Toṣālī, who would create a state similar to Magadha a century later, who probably recovered Magadha from the Indo-Greeks and campaigned till Mathura in the West, was affiliated with the Meghavāhana line of Rāvaṇa. Even Bimbisara, the first ruler of the Haryanka dynasty, is often found addressed by the honorific 'śreṇika,' which associates him with guilds.

The military, bureaucratic, and administrative machinery being meritocratic, probably also respected civic inheritance, and retirement (after a certain age). Candragupta himself retired to Jaina monasteries in the Deccan in 298 BCE, having handed over authority to his son Bindusāra.

TO BE CONTD..



# Breath by breath: The fight against pneumonia's toll

The persistent *Streptococcus pneumoniae* bacteria, which was first identified by more than a century ago by microbiologists Louis Pasteur and George Sternberg, has become one of humankind's greatest foes. Each year, pneumonia remains among the leading causes of death worldwide, particularly in low- and middle-income countries where healthcare access is limited. The death toll for India is staggering, with more than 127,000 children under five dying from pneumonia each year. This accounts for 14 percent of the deaths within this age group. Observed on 12 November, World Pneumonia Day serves as a reminder of these fatalities and the urgent need for focused prevention measures.

The burden of pneumonia falls hardest on India's most vulnerable citizens: children, the elderly, the malnourished, and those with chronic diseases. Poor air quality in crowded cities and using solid fuels for cooking add to this burden. However, its burdens affect families beyond just illness: treatment costs an average of US\$ 25.6 per episode for elderly patients, and indirect costs (which comprise three-fourths of the total costs) through lost productivity may drive the lowest-income households to their knees.

Each year, pneumonia remains among the leading causes of death worldwide, particularly in low- and middle-income countries where healthcare access is limited.

The imperative to act is clear given the risks. Expansion of pneumococcal vaccinations nationwide could prevent millions of cases and eventually save more than US \$1 billion in healthcare costs within five years. This highlights both the dual medical and economic benefits of investing in prevention.

Understanding the burden of pneumonia

Pneumonia is a major cause for concern, especially for children under the age of five. Incidence rates exceeding 500 cases per 1,000 children were reported in 2015 for states such as Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh, indicating that the burden may be acute in some regions. Among adults aged 65 and older, information on pneumonia rates is limited, but studies indicate a concerning burden. *Streptococcus pneumoniae* has been identified as the leading cause of community-acquired pneumonia (CAP), responsible for nearly two-thirds of global bacterial pneumonia cases. Other pathogens responsible include *Klebsiella pneumoniae*, *Staphylococcus aureus*, *Haemophilus influenzae* type b (Hib), and the Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV) which particularly targets children below the age of five. These infection rates are driven by a plethora of socioeconomic and environmental factors that may increase one's susceptibility to the infection and limit access to adequate and timely care.

Socioeconomic conditions profoundly shape the pneumonia burden in India. Poverty limits access to healthcare, nutritious food, and proper housing—all essential for a good immune system that



prevents infections. Overcrowding in homes and unhygienic conditions prevail in most households of a lower socioeconomic status. People in such families often live in poorly ventilated housing units, where the chance of respiratory infections spreading is high. As many poorer families still rely on solid fuels such as wood or dung for cooking and heating, the risk is compounded, doubling the rate of childhood respiratory infections and contributing to the figure of 44 percent pneumonia deaths in children under five globally. Education level, especially of the mother or primary caregiver, has an impact on health awareness and healthcare-seeking behaviours. A less educated caregiver may not notice early signs or know about the availability of vaccines, thus delaying the time taken to report to healthcare facilities, which increases mortality. This can be observed more in rural locations where health services are limited, and health education projects are harder to access.

Overcrowding in homes and unhygienic conditions prevail in most households of a lower socioeconomic status.

Critical gaps in health infrastructure further compound the problem of dealing with pneumonia in India. Vaccine coverage remains patchy due to logistical problems and unawareness. There is a shortage of skilled health workers and major medical consumables, including oxygen therapy units, which are needed for the treatment of pneumonia in rural and other deprived parts of the country. Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR) makes the problem even worse, as a resistant pathogen can cause longer stays in hospitals and result in the use of costly broad-spectrum antibiotics, with increased mortality and costs to healthcare. Pneumonia will need targeted investments in health access, public education, nutritional programmes, cleaner cooking technologies, and AMR control efforts to build resilience against this persistent threat.

The role of adult vaccination

In India, for the majority, vaccination is almost synonymous with the vaccination of children. However, among the older population, mortality due to pneumonia is so common that it is often called "The Captain of Death,"

and it is proven that pneumococcal vaccination prevents or lessens the severity of a major subset of pneumonia cases. However, a systematic review that surveyed research articles from 2010 to 2020 regarding vaccination in the Indo-Pacific, found that the adult pneumococcal vaccination rate in India is one of the lowest in the region.

This is not specific to pneumococcal vaccines and is reflective of a broader trend in India of very low adult vaccination rates. A literature survey published in 2020 found that adult vaccination coverage in India is "negligible," with a primary barrier being the lack of national adult vaccination guidelines.

A systematic review that surveyed research articles from 2010 to 2020 regarding vaccination in the Indo-Pacific, found that the adult pneumococcal vaccination rate in India is one of the lowest in the region.

For the first time in history, the Longitudinal Ageing Study in India (LASI) 2017-18 collected systematic data on the vaccination coverage of older adults (aged above 45) across India. Across the four categories covered under the survey, namely influenza, pneumococcal, typhoid and hepatitis B vaccines, the estimated proportion of respondents above 45 years of age who reported ever being vaccinated was 1.5 percent. As Figure 1 demonstrates, pneumococcal vaccination has the lowest coverage across age groups, both for older men and women. An analysis published in the World Health Organization (WHO) Bulletin in 2022 shows that being male, an urban resident, a wealthier household, more years of schooling, existing medical conditions and sedentary behaviours were all significant predictors of vaccine uptake. Given the high social and economic cost of vaccine-preventable conditions like pneumonia among the older population, such low vaccination coverage requires immediate policy attention.

Economic toll on the nation

Beyond pneumonia's impact on health, it poses a significant economic burden on both households and the healthcare system. The direct costs of treatment are substantial.

They encompass hospitalisation, medication, diagnostics, and other healthcare services. A 2014 study estimated it to be INR 249,199 for ventilator-associated pneumonia (VAP) after adjusting for demographic characteristics. The cost for community-acquired pneumonia (CAP), according to another 2024 study, varied across facilities, averaging INR 210,862 in private hospitals and INR 5,575 in government hospitals for inpatient treatment and INR 4,121 in private and INR 200 in government facilities for outpatient treatment.

The immense economic strain on rural and low-income families with children who have pneumonia, causes many of them to rely on external financial support to meet the expenses.

Indirect costs such as the loss of productivity, the burden on caregivers and financial strain, particularly on low-income families, further exacerbate the economic toll. CAP patients experienced prolonged cough and fatigue, with hospitalised patients missing, on average, 16 work days, and non-hospitalised patients missing nine. 97 percent of the patients required support from family, friends and caregivers during their recovery. For caregivers of children receiving treatment at public facilities, 77 percent reported missing work, as opposed to 26 percent for private facilities. The immense economic strain on rural and low-income families with children who have pneumonia, causes many of them to rely on external financial support to meet the expenses.

Research conducted in 2023 suggested variations in the total economic burden and also in the direct and indirect costs across regions. For instance, in Pune, the economic burden of pneumonia is driven by high direct costs, while in Chennai, indirect costs are the predominant factor. The disparities are further exacerbated by limited health insurance coverage. Preventative measures could significantly reduce this strain.

Policies aimed at improving air quality can further alleviate the economic burden of the disease. Direct costs can be reduced by providing subsidised services, insurance coverage, and more affordable private care options, whereas indirect costs can be reduced by strengthening caregiver support and social

safety nets to alleviate the strain.

The Indian landscape

India has made significant progress in tackling pneumonia, especially through its implementation of the pneumococcal conjugate vaccine (PCV) under the Universal Immunization Programme (UIP) in 2017 and Mission Indradhanush. By 2022, 83 percent of infants were vaccinated with PCV, demonstrating the nation's commitment. This effort has contributed to a reduction in under-five mortality rates, which fell from 45 per 1,000 live births in 2014 to 32 per 1,000 in 2020.

The National Health Mission and domestic budget allocations, as well as funding from international donors like Gavi and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation have increased overall funding.

In December 2020, the Serum Institute of India also rolled out Pneumosil, the first PCV developed indigenously, enhancing access and affordability. Leading organisations like the Indian Academy of Pediatrics (IAP) and the Indian Council of Medical Research have sound guidelines for diagnosing and managing pneumonia so that front-line healthcare providers are well-equipped to handle this public health challenge. Despite these welcome changes, challenges remain as discussed earlier. Low vaccination coverage persists in rural areas, and public awareness of pneumonia prevention needs improvement. Therefore, funding for these initiatives is very essential. The National Health Mission and domestic budget allocations, as well as funding from international donors like Gavi and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation have increased overall funding. Ongoing monitoring through systems, such as the Integrated Disease Surveillance Programme (IDSP), is critical in ensuring that India can adapt and step up to the situation.

A resilient future against pneumonia demands mass vaccination for both children and senior citizens, cleaner air, and better healthcare access. Investing in adult immunisation, social safety nets, and affordable care is the need of the hour to reduce pneumonia's toll on India's most vulnerable—a breath at a time.

# Addressing the goal of clean energy transition

Energy is a key requirement for a country's development. Every primary, secondary, and tertiary sector activity, such as agriculture, education, health care, manufacturing, construction and transportation requires energy.

Energy needs vary across the world's regions. The important determining factors in this regard are the size of a population, the rural-urban status of settlements, and the scale of activities undertaken. For example, some less populated, high-tech nations can consume a lot of energy. Similarly, populous cities can have enormous energy needs.

Generally, nations derive energy from a combination of sources. These mainly include coal, oil, and natural gas (or fossil fuels). Some have developed nuclear power production capabilities. However, there is an increasing recognition of the fact that the current practice of drawing energy from fossil fuels is resulting in their depletion and disturbing the ecological balance.

Another concern is the release of pollutants in the air due to the burning of fossil fuels, which has adverse effects on living beings and the environment. Some of these negative impacts include ocean acidification, extreme weather conditions (i.e. long-duration heatwaves, intense cyclonic activity and rainfall resulting in landslides and flooding), global warming, air and water pollution, loss of biodiversity, and a decline in people's health.

There is an increasing recognition of the fact that the current practice of drawing energy from fossil fuels is resulting in their depletion and disturbing the ecological balance.

The aforementioned impacts are an important reason for an increasing number of nations shifting to cleaner (i.e. environment-friendly) and renewable energy sources, such as hydropower, municipal waste, wind, solar, biomass, geothermal and biogas.

In this regard, the UN cautions nations against the continued use of fossil fuels and suggests measures for reducing dependence. Further, the World Economic Forum has developed a framework and index to assess where countries lie on energy transition. The Energy Transition Index (ETI) values are derived based on a review of two aspects: the current energy system performance and readiness for transition. The results show that the European countries of Sweden, Denmark, Finland, Switzerland and France received the highest ETI scores; emerging economies (including Brazil and China) made notable progress though disparities in investments and regulation remain. Of the total 120 countries reviewed in 2024, India ranked 63rd.

This article describes clean energy initiatives introduced in select nations and the progress achieved in this endeavour.

## International initiatives

Countries are in various stages of energy transition. Sweden, for example, is described as a leader in building a

low-carbon economy. The government has taken advantage of their natural resources and uses a combination of renewable energy sources. Its dependence on fossil fuels is reduced through the policy instruments of taxes (carbon tax), permits, regulations, targeted Research and development (R&D), climate funding schemes, and investment grants.

Among the nations of the Global South, Brazil, India, Morocco, and Kenya are making progress on this path. In Brazil, although the use of fossil fuels continues, the share of renewables, bio-energy and waste, and biomass in its energy mix is significant. The government has invested in wind, solar, and biomass



development, along with grid expansion and modernisation. It also supports the participation of independent power producers. Some of its achievements are reduced oil imports due to ethanol blending and distributed electricity generation using solar power.

In Brazil, although the use of fossil fuels continues, the share of renewables, bio-energy and waste, and biomass in its energy mix is significant.

In Morocco, a large solar power plant spread over 3,000 hectares of land is operational. Its location was chosen based on annual solar radiation intensity. The 580 megawatts of electricity produced is sufficient to power the homes of 2.3 million people. For the plant's functioning, however, around 3 million cubic metres of water per year and 19 tonnes of diesel fuel per day are required. Kenya, on the other hand, has harnessed the power of wind to generate electricity. Its 310 megawatts onshore wind power project provides reliable, low-cost energy to the national grid that supplies power to around 1 million households.

## Progress in India

India's ETI score is slightly better than that of Morocco and Kenya. As of 30 September 2024, the country had an installed power capacity of 453 gigawatts (GW). The share of various

power sources in this total is: coal 48 percent, solar 20 percent, wind 10.5 percent, hydro 10 percent, oil and gas 6 percent, bio-power 2.5 percent, nuclear 2 percent and small-hydro 1 percent. Year-wise data for installed capacity and generation by power source from 2015-16 to 2023-24 show that while coal remains a dominant source, the share of renewables (especially solar power) is growing.

According to the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE), India's installed renewable energy capacity (including large hydropower) on 30 September 2024 was 201.46 gigawatts. Thus, the share of installed renewable

In addition, the practice of ethanol blending—a by-product of sugarcane processing—in petrol is being promoted to reduce the dependence on imported oil and address environmental concerns. By September 2024, 16.23 billion litres of ethanol were produced in the country.

For the year 2024-25, INR 191 billion is allocated to the MNRE for the implementation of schemes and projects. The share of various initiatives in the total amount (INR 191 billion) allocated is solar 87 percent, wind 4 percent, green energy corridor 3 percent, green hydrogen 3 percent, bio-energy 2 percent, and hydro 0.3 percent. This is a substantial hike from the previous year's allocation of INR 78.48 billion.

Among the various clean energy initiatives mentioned above, notable progress is observed in the development of the solar power sector. The country has a solar energy potential of 748 GW, and the national government offers numerous incentives for its harnessing, such as 100 percent Foreign Direct Investment (FDI), a waiver of inter-state transmission system charges and financial support to consumers and stakeholders. With this support, solar street lights are provided, students are given solar lamps, solar power plants are installed in government institutions, rooftop solar systems are set up in residential areas, solar parks and mega power projects with common infrastructure are developed, solar pumps for farmers are installed and areas inhabited by particularly vulnerable tribal groups are equipped with electricity.

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The case of the Bhadla Solar Park developed in the Thar desert of Rajasthan is worth mentioning. The park has millions of solar panels and supporting infrastructure spread over 5,666 hectares of land with the capacity to produce 2.25 gigawatts of power. The facility offers a reliable electricity supply in neighbouring regions, even though dust storms sometimes reduce electricity production due to dust settling on solar panels.

The global clean energy transition agenda is driven by social, environmental and economic concerns. To address these problems, an increasing number of nations are tapping into clean and renewable sources of energy. In India too, numerous solar, wind, small hydro and bio-energy projects have been implemented. However, nations still have a long way to go. Development goals, energy demand, current energy system performance and readiness for transition vary by nation, with reliance on polluting fuels continuing to remain high.

energy capacity (201.46 GW) in India's total installed power capacity (453 GW) is about 44 percent, and the renewable energy constituents in order of significance are solar (90.76 GW), wind (47.36 GW), large hydro (46.93 GW) biomass cogeneration (10.72 GW), small hydro (5.08 GW), and waste to energy (0.60 GW). The four states of Rajasthan, Gujarat, Tamil Nadu and Karnataka account for a little more than one-half of the total installed renewable energy capacity.

Wind and small hydropower projects have been supported at various locations in the country based on available potential, and work is in progress on the development of wind-solar hybrid systems.

The progress in India's renewable energy sector is due to the support provided by the national government under various clean energy initiatives, namely the national solar mission, the national bio-energy programme (includes waste to energy, biomass, and biogas programmes), the green energy corridor, and the national green hydrogen mission. Further, wind and small hydropower projects have been supported at various locations in the country based on available potential, and work is in progress on the development of wind-solar hybrid systems.

# President Donald Trump and the next four years

The return of Donald J. Trump as President of the world's most powerful nation has great embedded expectations. From inward-looking domestic economic shifts to outward disruptions through international geopolitical swings, Trump's presidency, over the next four years, is going to be unpredictable.

And yet, in the overall sense of the recent shifts in global politics, the results are predictable. What is clear is that people across democracies are fed up with the Left and their stretched domains. Here, the power accorded to the fringes of the Left by agenda-chasing governments and ideology-driven media has delivered votes to the Right.

From the European Union (EU) to the United States (US), the use-by date of the Left agendas has been rejected in electoral battles. The commonality in the way Americans and Europeans voted centres on the inability or unwillingness of governments to tackle illegal migrants wreaking havoc in these geographies. High inflation led by the Ukraine-Russia war is another concern, along with recession and the lack of jobs.

The commonality in the way Americans and Europeans voted centres on the inability or unwillingness of governments to tackle illegal migrants wreaking havoc in these geographies.

The case of the world's largest democracy—India—is unique: despite narratives, the country refuses to be cleaved into a Left-Right divide, even though the third term of Prime Minister Narendra Modi has been labelled 'Right'. Modi will now have the company of Trump as being labelled anti-democratic, even though their democracies voted them back to power—Trump for a second term and Modi for a third.

Beyond these labels lie bigger questions about how Trump's second—and final—term will play out and what his voters and the world at large can expect. Under his "Make America Great Again" electoral stance, he made 20 promises. These include sealing the border, ending outsourcing and turning the US into a manufacturing superpower, defending free speech, restoring peace in Europe and West Asia, maintaining the US dollar as the world's reserve currency, keeping men out of women's sports, and deporting pro-Hamas radicals and making college campuses "Safe and Patriotic Again".

## Security and geopolitics

Underlying several of these 20 core promises is a perception that the US is a declining power, which Trump will attempt to change. His first few moves, therefore, will be around security and geopolitics. In the Russia-Ukraine war, which both Russia and the West wish to end, Trump will wade in and be counted. A new deal around a new compromise, recognising new red lines, will usher in an uncomfortable peace in the region. Kyiv will likely lose some of its territory, Moscow will get a face save, and Brussels will continue to hold peace conferences while twiddling its thumbs.



Trump will also enforce his earlier demand on Brussels—to finance its own security. So far, Europe's security cover has been provided by the US. In his first term, Trump had made it clear that the EU would have to pay for its security, with 2 percent of its GDP. He is likely to revise that demand alongside more Europeans in military service. Compliance by the EU will be a key determinant of the degree of US presence in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). Germany has begun conversations around conscriptions; other countries will follow.

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The other war—between Israel and Hamas and Hezbollah, supported by Houthis and Iran—will get a different treatment. He is likely to ignore pressures of moral support to Hamas domestically while engaging the region. Deporting "pro-Hamas radicals" is easy in speech but may be difficult to execute. Iran is already feeling the first impact of Trump, with its currency crashing soon after Trump's victory; how finance pressures security remains to be seen.

In his first term, Trump called out China. As his second term begins, China's President Xi Jinping is already making conciliatory statements seeking ways to get along. "History has shown that China and the United States benefit from cooperation and suffer from confrontation," Xi said. On his part, Trump, while countering China, will likely have a more transactional approach.

This approach will trickle down to India as well. In his first term, Trump promoted defence partnerships and arms sales to India. This is likely to continue. Here, the arena of transaction is the Indian Ocean Region. So, surface-level changes aside, expect the overall direction of the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (Quad) to continue.

The region also houses Bangladesh under Chief Advisor Muhammed Yunus.

Here, Trump's engagement is likely to get tougher, his support to Hindus and condemnation of the "barbaric violence" against them stronger; without addressing the violence, Yunus has sent a message of "peace, harmony, stability, and prosperity for all". How this translates into the end of violence against Hindus present there will be watched closely. And whether Trump's support for Hindus extends to the community under attack in Canada, whose Prime Minister Justin Trudeau has been whitewashing the crimes, remains to be seen.

## Business and regulation

For a long time, Trump supporter and the world's wealthiest man Elon Musk has been complaining about over-regulation and the accompanying fines as "lawfare". Musk is likely to head a new government efficiency commission tasked with cutting US\$2 trillion from the US\$6.75 trillion federal budget. Not one to stretch time, the US can expect quick recommendations and actions. This will hurt a few incumbents in the short term but will be good for the country in the medium term, the results of which will show up before Trump's term ends.

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A regulatory rethink of the sort with two mega disruptors at the wheel will result in speedy growth. This is something India started in the second term of Modi when Parliament enacted the Jan Vishwas (Amendment of Provisions) Act in August 2023 to decriminalise a few economic offences. But this step is merely the framework of a larger rationalisation ahead—out of 26,134 imprisonment clauses for doing business, this law decriminalised only 113. Jan Vishwas 2.0 is underway.

At the Union Government level, the task is not as big: 5,239 clauses need to be rationalised. Once done, this will reduce rent-seeking and corruption by the bureaucracy, India's homegrown deep state that is unwilling to change. It is up to the Union Minister of Commerce & Industry, Piyush Goyal, to own this and usher in change rather than attributing challenges solely to the industry. He has the data, he has the mandate, he even has the intent, but all of it seems to be getting hijacked by inertia. Perhaps Musk's approach could serve as an inspiration for Minister Goyal.

There is an unintended consequence of Trump wanting to turn the US into a manufacturing superpower. It would mean an inward-looking economic entity. Trump will attempt to make the US attractive to entrepreneurs from across the globe, particularly in cutting-edge industries. But how that will translate into higher labour wages is unclear. For countries like India or Vietnam that wish to expand their manufacturing, it would mean in being direct competition with the US.

An inward-looking economy will also mean a rationalisation of tariffs. Here, countries such as India will be on the back foot. In his first term and the run-up to his second term, he had termed India a "tariff abuser". A low-hanging political fruit, tariffs will be an important conversation between the two democracies. As India's second-largest trading partner, trade is a glue between the two countries.

Trump will attempt to make the US attractive to entrepreneurs from across the globe, particularly in cutting-edge industries.

But with trade at US\$118 billion against a GDP of US\$4 trillion, it is nowhere close to where it should be. As a US\$10 trillion economy, trade should organically rise to US\$300 billion. The challenge, however, is to take it to US\$1 trillion. Managing tariffs, therefore, will be a crucial point of bilateral negotiations. Both countries need to take a grand strategy approach to trade and economics, merging security, technology, and strategy into the economic discourse.

The last leg of Trump's economic policy could see a legitimisation of cryptocurrencies. Much of that is easier said. Cryptocurrencies come with their own set of challenges. Even a country as technologically advanced as the US will not be able to make this transition without hurting its people. Work on legitimising cryptocurrencies will continue with great fanfare, but it is unlikely that the country will shift.

The power of the dollar as the world's reserve currency lost its credibility when the West (the EU and the US) ejected Russia from SWIFT. On the contrary, it has forced the rest of the world to think about alternatives, such as the common currency creation by BRICS nations. Embracing cryptocurrencies alone will not deliver credibility; bringing Russia back into SWIFT could—the chances of which seem high in Trump's second term.

The power of the dollar as the world's reserve currency lost its credibility when the West (the EU and the US) ejected Russia from SWIFT.

Finally, there are other issues, such as visas. Here, despite Trump's goal to "stop the immigration invasion," Indians have a better shot. It is not immigrants that Trump is likely to stop or deport; it is illegal immigrants. Most Indians enter the US through the front door. Minor changes in immigration policy notwithstanding, the US will remain open to talent and, hence, Indians.

Above all, the return of Trump shows how mainstream media, with all its biases, narratives and ideologies, has become irrelevant to voting outcomes. Too busy endorsing Democrats, too obsessed with a far-Left future and too deaf to voices on the ground (and on podcasts), the US mainstream media will continue to condemn voters who have shifted lock, stock, and conversations to X, which Elon Musk defined as "real-time source of truth".

## Rupali Ganguly files defamation notice against stepdaughter Esha Verma



Actor Rupali Ganguly has sent a defamation notice to her stepdaughter, Esha Verma, seeking compensation of Rs 50 crore for 'maliciously' her character and personal life.

The legal notice was in response to Esha's 'false' and 'damaging statements'. Ganguly, through her lawyer, Sana Raees Khan, has claimed compensation of Rs 50 crore, which her stepdaughter is liable to pay. She has also asked for an unconditional public apology immediately, failing which Ganguly has threatened legal measures.

The legal notice addresses Esha, "Our client states that she was shocked to see the posts and comments published by you on various social media platforms including Twitter (now X), Instagram, and Facebook. Our client states that it is apposite to put the true and correct facts leading to the issuance of the present notice..."

The notice also mentions that Rupali Ganguly underwent mental trauma because of which she had to seek medical assistance and that she was humiliated on set and lost professional opportunities.

It is also said that Ganguly wanted to maintain a 'dignified silence' but was compelled to initiate the defamation notice because of how her and Ashwin Verma's 11-year-old son was dragged into the matter.

In the notice, it was clarified that Rupali Ganguly was friends with Ashwin Verma for 12 years, before he separated from his second wife, Esha Verma's mother in 2009. It was also said that Ganguly, along with Verma, tried to help Esha get a break into the entertainment industry by providing opportunities for photoshoots and making special arrangements for auditions.

It all started when a Reddit post went viral after a user shared snippets of an old Facebook comment made by Esha. In the comment, she accused Ganguly of having an affair with her father Ashwin while he was still married to her mother, describing Rupali as "cruel-hearted".

The post quickly made waves online, leading Ashwin to issue a statement on X denying the claims. In response, Esha posted on Instagram, saying, "There's a darker side to this story... All I ask for is compassion as it unfolds."

## Bollywood actor Shahid Kapoor rents out Mumbai apartment at an unbelievable price

Bollywood actor Shahid Kapoor and his wife, Mira Kapoor, have leased their luxury apartment in Mumbai for more than Rs 20 lakh per month, according to real estate consultant Square Yards.

The couple had purchased the property in May 2024 for Rs 58.6 crore, and it was jointly acquired by them. The apartment is located in the prestigious 'Three Sixty West' project in Worli.

Square Yards confirmed on Tuesday that the couple recently



rented out their 5,395 square-foot apartment in the high-end residential development by

Oberoi Realty. The apartment also includes 6,175.42 square feet of built-up area and three dedicated parking spaces.

'Three Sixty West' is a luxury residential project spread across 1.58 acres, offering 4 and 5 BHK ready-to-move-in apartments.

The lease agreement, registered in November 2024, is set for 60 months, with an initial security deposit of Rs 1.23 crore. The property is expected to generate a gross rental yield of 4-5 percent.

## Mumbai police arrest songwriter for sending threat messages to Salman Khan

Mumbai Police on Tuesday arrested a songwriter for allegedly sending threatening messages to Bollywood actor Salman Khan, demanding Rs 5 crore in the name of gangster Lawrence Bishnoi, an official said. Sohail Pasha, who was apprehended in Raichur, Karnataka, is accused of using this threat as a ploy to make his song more famous. Police claim Pasha wanted his song, "Main Sikandar Hun," to gain popularity and believed that involving a high-profile figure like Salman Khan would help achieve that. The threat came to light on November 7, when the Mumbai Traffic Police's WhatsApp helpline received multiple messages from someone claiming to be a member of the Bishnoi gang. The sender warned that Salman Khan would be killed unless he paid Rs 5 crore, and also threatened to kill the

writer of the song "Main Sikandar Hun."

Following the receipt of these messages, Mumbai Police's crime branch traced the sender's mobile number to Raichur. A team was dispatched to Karnataka, where they located Vyankatesh Narayan, the person who owned the phone number. During questioning, Narayan revealed that his mobile phone did not have internet access. However, police discovered that Narayan's number had been used to install WhatsApp, as he had received an OTP (One-Time Password) for the app's installation. Narayan explained that a stranger had approached him in a marketplace on November 3, asking to borrow his phone to make a call. The stranger then used Narayan's phone to install WhatsApp and obtain the OTP, the police said.

## Priyanka Chopra shares adorable glimpses of pet dog Diana

Priyanka Chopra Jonas recently gave fans a sneak peek into her routine when she gets home from work.

Taking to her Instagram Stories, the desi girl shared a cute video of her beloved pet, Diana Chopra Jonas, playing with a stick. Alongside the clip, Priyanka wrote, "Me when I come home from work @dianaChopraJonas."

The actress frequently shares adorable photos and videos of her pets. She also added Eric Carmen's song 'Hungry Eyes' to the video.

Priyanka and her husband, Nick Jonas, are parents to three pets: Diana, Panda, and Gino.

In an interview, the



'Baywatch' actress opened up about her special bond with Diana. Although she loves all three of her pets, she admitted that Diana holds a unique place in her heart. Reflecting on their connection, Priyanka

shared that Diana was the first puppy she fully took care of. She also revealed that Diana came into her life during a tough phase—she had recently moved to the US, was grieving her father's passing and felt isolated as she adjusted to a new life. Diana is from North Shore Rescue in New York.

On the work front, Priyanka will next be seen in the upcoming comedy film 'Heads of State', alongside Idris Elba and John Cena. She's also set to take on the role of a pirate in 'The Bluff', co-starring Karl Urban. Additionally, the actress will return in the second season of her popular Prime Video series, 'Citadel'.

## Madhya Pradesh 'holds countless memories', says Pankaj Tripathi

Acclaimed actor Pankaj Tripathi, who has been appointed as the face of Madhya Pradesh Tourism, has said that he has always preferred exploring India's own treasures over traveling abroad.

"I am deeply honoured to be chosen as the face of Madhya Pradesh Tourism. Madhya Pradesh is not just a destination for me—it's a place that holds countless memories and connections, both personally and professionally," he shared.

Pankaj is now set to promote the unique beauty and heritage of Madhya Pradesh, a state close to his heart both personally and professionally. The actor has filmed some of his most popular movies, including 'Stree', 'Stree 2', 'Lukka Chuppi', 'Oh My God 2' and 'Ludo' in the state.

"Having spent so much time here filming projects like 'Stree', 'Stree 2', 'Lukka Chhupi', 'Oh My God 2' and 'Ludo',



I've experienced firsthand the captivating landscapes, the warmth of the people, and the unmatched cultural richness that define Madhya Pradesh," he added.

The actor strongly believes that travel helps in getting exposure.

"As someone who genuinely

believes in the power of travel to open minds and enrich lives, I couldn't be more excited to help showcase the beauty of this state to the world. From the untouched natural wonders to majestic architectural sites and vibrant wildlife, Madhya Pradesh has something for every traveler," he said.

From the ancient temples of Khajuraho and the majestic forts of Gwalior to the lush jungles of Kanha and Bandhavgarh, Pankaj is set to invite travelers the state and hopes his role inspires people to discover the wonders of Madhya Pradesh

"I've always preferred exploring India's own treasures over traveling abroad, and Madhya Pradesh truly stands out as one of the most remarkable places to visit in the country. This role allows me to share that love with others and hopefully inspire people to discover the wonders of Madhya Pradesh," said the star.

## Ajay Devgn and Aamir Khan tease sequel of their film Ishq



Bollywood superstars Ajay Devgn and Aamir Khan have expressed their desire to collaborate again, potentially for a follow-up to their hit 1997 romantic comedy Ishq. The two actors on Saturday evening attended the mahurat of the

upcoming movie Tera Yaar Hoon Main, which marks the acting debut of filmmaker Indra Kumar's son Aman.

"I feel very happy whenever I meet Ajay. We don't meet that often but whenever we do meet, it's with a lot of warmth and

love," Aamir said. Devgn said he had a great time working with the Dangal actor in Ishq, directed by Indra Kumar, and also featured Kajol and Juhi Chawla as the female leads. "We had so much fun on the sets of Ishq, we should do another one," said Devgn, who is basking in the glory of his latest release, Singham Again. To this, Khan added, "Yes, we should."

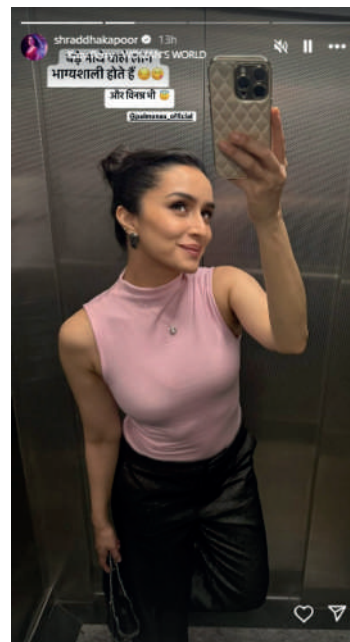
Kumar said he was now considering the possibility of a sequel with both actors.

"Now that Ajay and Aamir both have said they want to work together on Ishq 2, I'm going to speak to them again in detail about this. We should make the second part but not until we have the right script for it," the filmmaker said.

During the event, Khan recounted how Devgn, 55, saved him when a chimpanzee attacked him during the filming of Ishq.

Meanwhile, Tera Yaar Hoon Main also stars Paresh Rawal and Akanksha Sharma.

## Shraddha Kapoor reveals an interesting detail about people with big foreheads



Bollywood actress Shraddha Kapoor has revealed an interesting yet hilarious detail about people with "big foreheads."

Shraddha took to Instagram, where she shared an elevator selfie. The actress is seen wearing a baby pink hued turtle-neck

top paired with black pants. She completed her look with a neatly tied high bun and some jewellery.

For the caption, she wrote, "Bade mathe waale log bhaagyashaali hote hai aur vinamra bhi. (People with big foreheads are lucky and polite.)"

The post had laughing emojis alongside the caption.

On November 10, Shraddha shared her plans for Sunday. The actress has said that she will be spending the day chilling and scrolling through Instagram.

She took to the Stories section of her Instagram on Sunday, and shared a Reel from the Shah Rukh Khan-starrer movie 'Baazigar'.

She wrote on the video, "Please tag me in funny memes and Reels. This is what I plan to do for the whole day"

Meanwhile, Shraddha has been basking in the recent success of her movies 'Stree 2', which stars Rajkummar Rao, Pankaj Tripathi, Aparshakti Khurrana and Abhishek Bannerjee.

## Ali Fazal to share screen space with Phoebe Waller-Bridge in 'Rule Breakers'

Indian actor Ali Fazal will be seen starring alongside Hollywood star Phoebe Waller-Bridge in the upcoming film 'Rule Breakers'. He called the actress a powerhouse of talent and that her addition has lifted the film to greater heights.

'Rule Breakers', directed by two time Oscar winner Bill Guttentag, explores themes of resilience and defiance in Afghanistan. Known for his previous work in 'Victoria and Abdul' and 'Furious 7', Fazal's collaboration with Waller-Bridge is highly anticipated. The film is set for a release in March 2025.

"I am thrilled to be a part of Rule Breakers and to share the screen with such a talented actress as Phoebe Waller-Bridge," said Fazal.

"This project resonates with me deeply, and I believe it's crucial to tell stories that highlight the strength and resilience of individuals in challenging circumstances. I look forward to bringing this narrative to life and reaching audiences globally."

Ali feels thrilled to be able to support a film that "we think every parent should take their daughter to watch in the theatres."

"And the story being so inspiring, it was no surprise that Phoebe Waller also stepped in.. Of course she is a powerhouse of talent so her addition I am sure has lifted the film to greater heights. We play key roles at different stages in Roya Mehboob's life and journey along with the Afghani robotics team for girls".

## ICC continues discussion on Champions Trophy schedule with participating nations

The ICC continued discussions on the Champions Trophy schedule with the participating nations amid speculation that the entire tournament could be moved out of Pakistan following India's refusal to travel to the country, a source said on Tuesday.

A chatter emerged that South Africa could be a viable alternative to organise next year's Champions Trophy but PTI understands that no such discussion happened in the International Cricket Council on Tuesday.

Meanwhile, it was not a surprise that ICC has also put on hold the prestigious ODI tournament's launch event, which was scheduled to be held in Lahore on November 11.

ICC, the game's global governing body, has received a letter from the Pakistan Cricket Board, asking for a written confirmation from the BCCI for India's inability to travel to Pakistan for the tournament.

The PCB has conveyed to the ICC that security is not an issue in the country which successfully hosted England and New Zealand recently and promised the same for the Champions Trophy.

It remained steadfast on its



stand not to have the event in hybrid model, like the last year's Asia Cup when India's matches were held in Sri Lanka.

The ICC is yet to respond to the PCB and was discussing the schedule with the participating teams.

The PTI has learnt that the PCB is also not keen to host the tournament outside the country, not even in the UAE.

However, the launch event in Lahore has been pushed back.

It was being planned in Lahore as per ICC management's briefing to the ICC CEC and ICC Board on 21st October in Dubai. But this has now been put on a hold, informed an ICC insider.

Notwithstanding the reports in some sections in media that South

Africa could be an option to host the next Champions Trophy, this option was still not talked about in any serious manner within the ICC, an insider tracking the developments claimed.

The schedule is not confirmed, ICC is still in discussions and dialogue with the host and participating nations. South Africa has not been discussed as yet, the insider said.

The PCB on Sunday had confirmed that it received an email from the ICC that India declined to travel to the neighbouring country.

India have not travelled to Pakistan since the 2008 Mumbai terror strikes. The two teams compete against each other only in ICC tournaments.

## Uma Mahesh wins gold medal at FISU World University Championship

Uma Mahesh clinched a gold medal at the prestigious FISU World University Championship held at Karni Singh Stadium in New Delhi on Monday. Competing in the 10m Air Rifle men's team event, Uma and his teammates outperformed their opponents to secure the top spot.

The 20-year-old rising star, who trains at Olympic medallist



Gagan Narang's Gun for Glory Academy, added yet another title to his collection. His achievements already include two ISSF World Cup gold medals and an Asian Championship gold, among others.

Hailing from Vijayawada, Andhra Pradesh, Uma comes from a supportive family who have been instrumental in his success. His father, Maddineni Rama Krishna, a contractor,

introduced him to shooting after noticing his son's fascination with the sport, inspired by its coverage in the news. Uma's mother, Maddineni Manjula, has also been a constant pillar of support, ensuring he had access to the resources and training needed to excel.

Uma trains under the guidance of coach Neha Chavan and is part of the Gun for Glory Academy's 'Project Leap' programme. The initiative focuses on the holistic development of athletes, enhancing their technical, physical and mental skills to achieve success at both national and international levels.

Speaking about his journey, Uma expressed gratitude to his coach, saying, "Neha Chavan has been with me every step of the way, not only as a coach but also as a guardian. 'Project Leap' has played a crucial role in refining my skills and improving my shooting. I am thankful to Gagan sir and Gun for Glory Academy for this incredible opportunity, which has had a major positive impact on my performance over the years."

## Pakistan steal Australia's thunder Down Under

The turnaround is unbelievable. Pakistan fast bowlers proved too hot to handle as they scripted a come-from-behind ODI series victory over World Champions Australia on Sunday. Bowling in tandem, Pakistan seamers never allowed any respite to rival batsmen, handing Australia perhaps the most embarrassing defeat. Mohammad Rizwan made a dream debut as the white-ball captain of Pakistan as the team secured their first ODI series win over Australia since 2002. "Special moment for me, the nation will be very happy, we didn't perform as per expectations in the last couple of years," said a jubilant Rizwan in the post-match presentation. The reversal of fortunes of the Pakistan team started in the previous home series in which their spinners toyed with the formidable England

batting line-up. Off-spinner Sajid Khan and left-arm spinner Noman Ali ran through the English batting line as Pakistan fans celebrated an unexpected 2-1 victory. The result is sure to serve as a rude awakening for Australia, who looked, instead, more focused on the Test series against India beginning in Perth on November 22. With an eye on the India series, Australia chose to rest key red-ball players like captain Pat Cummins, Steven Smith, Josh Hazlewood and Mitchell Starc and were punished badly. It was young pacer Naseem Shah who started the rout in the Perth match. He plotted a perfect fast bowler's dismissal, firing a delivery that swung in, hit the deck and curled out after pitching to find the outside edge of opener Jack Fraser McGurk's blade to be caught behind.

## Mohammed Shami set to comeback after missing out on cricket for almost a year

Star India pacer Mohammed Shami is set to return to action as the Bengal Ranji Team prepares to lock horns with Madhya Pradesh in the Ranji Trophy Elite Group C match in Indore starting on Wednesday.

Following the end of the ODI World Cup 2023, the India pacer suffered an ankle injury, which forced him to stay away from the field since November last year. The right-arm seamer was also not considered for the first Test in Perth of the Border-Gavaskar Trophy 2024-25 in Australia.

The Cricket Association of Bengal (CAB) secretary, Naresh Ojha on Tuesday announced the fast bowler's return.

"In a major boost to Indian cricket and the Bengal Ranji Trophy team, star pacer Mohammad Shami will make a comeback into competitive cricket for Bengal against Madhya Pradesh in the Ranji Trophy Elite Group C match in Indore starting



on Wednesday," Naresh Ojha said in an official statement.

"Shami, who has been out of competitive action since India's ODI World Cup final in Ahmedabad last November, will spearhead the Bengal pace bowling attack against Madhya Pradesh. Shami's inclusion in the Bengal team will not just be a big boost but also lift the morale of the entire team, which aims to make it to the next round of the Ranji Trophy," the statement added.

Bengal are currently in the fifth spot in the points table with 8 points from 4 games. They have bagged three crucial points from their last match against Karnataka.

With his return to domestic cricket, Shami will be eyeing a comeback to the Indian Cricket Team ahead of the ICC Champions Trophy and also in franchise cricket, Indian Premier League in 2025.

# ATP Finals: Alcaraz stunned by Ruud in straight sets



Carlos Alcaraz looked little like the player who won two Grand Slams this year in a 6-1, 7-5 loss to Casper Ruud at the ATP Finals on Monday.

It marked Ruud's first victory over Alcaraz in five career meetings and the result could make it difficult for Alcaraz to advance from the round-robin stage at the season-ending event for the year's top eight players. Alcaraz won the

French Open and Wimbledon this year to boost his career total to four Grand Slam titles. But he also struggled at the Paris Masters recently and dropped behind Alexander Zverev to No. 3 in the rankings this week.

Ruud reached the semifinals and final in his first two appearances at the season-ending tournament in 2021 and 2022, respectively.

Alcaraz was broken when he served for the second set at 5-4.

Later in Alcaraz's and Ruud's group, Zverev plays Andrey Rublev. The top two finishers from each group advance to the semifinals.

Top-ranked Jannik Sinner and US Open finalist Taylor Fritz beat Alex de Minaur and Daniil Medvedev, respectively, in the other group on Sunday.

## Last 3 yrs changed everything about my bowling: Varun



Mystery spinner Varun Chakaravathy has described the three-year gap from international cricket as "tough," saying he had to completely overhaul his bowling after finding that his orthodox side-spin wasn't working at higher levels.

The 33-year-old recorded his career-best figures of 5 for 17 in Sunday's second T20I against South Africa, though his efforts could not prevent India from losing by three wickets.

"I had to go to the drawing board and check out all my videos. I figured out that I was bowling side spin and it was not working out in the higher levels," he said.

"I had to change everything about my bowling. It took me two years and I started bowling in the local leagues and IPL also. It worked there and I have started bowling it in the international

stage and it's working out for me." While side spin creates enough revolutions to make the ball drift sideways, over-spin generates a sharp bounce and turn.

Talking about what worked for him as he added a fifer on Sunday to the three wickets he scalped in the first T20I in Durban, Chakaravathy said: "It is a combination of both my consistency and overspin.

"The overspin I bowl has more bite from the pitch and hopefully I can keep doing that and hopefully I can keep contributing for the country." Chakaravathy was axed from the Indian team after going wicketless during the 2021 World Cup but he earned his place back after his exploits in the last two editions of the IPL. He snapped 20 wickets in IPL 2023 before finishing as the second highest wicket-taker this year.

"Definitely, the last three

years were a little tough," Chakaravathy said.

"The only thing I could do was play lots of cricket. And I started playing a lot of the domestic league (TNPL) in India. And that definitely helped me understand my game better. And that's what helped me." Chakaravathy was part of the Kolkata Knight Riders' IPL-winning team this year under Gambhir, who recently took over as the coach of the Indian team and he credited the role clarity provided by the coach for helping him to regain his lost form.

"Yes, we played the Bangladesh tour and he was coaching the team. And definitely we spoke a lot and he gave me a lot of role clarity.

"He told me, even if you go for 30-40 runs, it doesn't matter. All you have to look is to pick wickets. So that's your role in the team. The clarity which they gave definitely helped me."

## Border-Gavaskar Trophy: Bumrah to lead if Rohit doesn't make it says Gambhir

Head coach Gautam Gambhir on Monday said Jasprit Bumrah, as designated vice-captain, will lead India in the opening Test against Australia in Perth if regular skipper Rohit Sharma is unavailable for the game due to personal reasons.

The straight-talking former opener also indicated that KL Rahul could be asked to open the innings in place of Rohit.

The second batch of the Indian players is leaving for Perth, but Rohit has stayed back. Uncertainty remains if Rohit will compete in the series-opener.

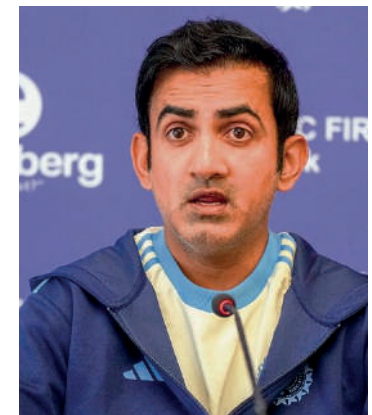
"At the moment, there is no confirmation. We will let you know exactly what the situation will be. Hopefully, he is going to be available, but everything you want to know, you will get to know before the start of the series," Gambhir said.

"Bumrah is the vice-captain, so obviously If Rohit is not available, he is going to lead in Perth," the coach added.

Rohit's possible absence also leaves a spot vacant at the top of the batting order and Gambhir said one among the uncapped Abhimanyu Easwaran and KL Rahul, who both played in the unofficial Tests against Australia A for India A, will be picked.

"Obviously, there is Easwaran, there is KL there. We will take a call closer to the first Test match if Rohit is not available.

"There are options. There are quite a lot of options in this spot. Once it gets closer to the first Test match, we will try and play the best playing XI who is going



to do the job for us," he added.

However he gave enough indications that Rahul's experience might prevail over rookie Easwaran's current form. "There are times when you go with the experienced players as well and that is the quality of the man. He (Rahul) can actually bat at the top of the order, he can bat at number 3 and at number 6 as well," said the former southpaw.

"So I feel that if needed be, I think he (Rahul) can do the job for us, especially if Rohit is not available for the first Test match," Gambhir said.

Rana was not sent with the India A squad for the unofficial 'Tests' in Australia to be ready for the BGT series but Gambhir said the management did not want to add to his workload by getting him to play First-Class games.

"He had played a first-class game against Assam and he did reasonably well (took five-for and scored half-century). We all thought that he has had enough bowling under his belt rather than just sending and playing him another first-class game," Gambhir said.

# Coco Gauff rides highs and lows to win first WTA Finals trophy

American Coco Gauff had a bitterly disappointing summer but the youngster was able to celebrate lifting her first WTA Finals trophy, regaining her confidence after a string of frustrating defeats to end her year on a high note. The 20-year-old showed her mettle against China's Olympics champion Zheng Qinwen in the finale, coming back from a set down and holding her nerve through a gritty three-hour and four-



minute affair to win 3-6 6-4 7-6(2).

The first WTA Finals title for Gauff was made sweeter after a mid-year derailment when attempts to rebuild her serve led to repeated frustrations on the tour and a coaching shake-up. "It's been a long season," Gauff said.

Gauff's season began to crumble with a fourth-round defeat at Wimbledon and third-round exit at the Paris Games.

She was unable to reset for her US Open title defence and left New York after a dreadful fourth-round defeat by Emma Navarro. Gauff split from coach Brad Gilbert and flipped the script weeks later. "I know (I) tend to focus on 'doubters/haters' but this one is really for all of my supporters!" Gauff wrote in a post. "I know some of you are a little bit petty like me so it does feel nice to silence them for a bit."

# Liverpool go 5 clear as Manchester City lose again



Liverpool opened a five-point lead at the top of the Premier League with a 2-0 home defeat of Aston Villa after Manchester City slumped to a fourth successive defeat as Brighton & Hove Albion hit back to beat champions 2-1 at home on Saturday.

Arne Slot's side made it nine wins from their opening 11 league games with a Darwin Nunez and Mohamed Salah scoring the goals in a deadly demonstration of counterattacking.

City took the lead with Erling Haaland scoring his 12th league goal of the campaign but late goals by Joao Pedro and Matt O'Riley stunned Pep Guardiola's side who enter the international break with much to ponder.

Liverpool head into the international break with 28 points from 11 games with City on 23 while Brighton and Hove Albion are in fourth place on 19 points.

Dutchman Slot has enjoyed a remarkable start at Liverpool with 15 wins from his first 17 in charge since replacing the seemingly irreplaceable Juergen Klopp.

"In general we had control over the game and scored from two counterattacks which is maybe not what we would expect," Slot said.

Manchester City midfielder Bernardo Silva said after the 4-1 thrashing away to Sporting in the Champions League in midweek that the team were in a dark place.

And despite Haaland's early goal at Brighton, the gloom deepened as they lost their grip on the game with Joao Pedro and O'Riley capping memorable night for the Seagulls. "I will reflect in these 10 days. Clear our heads, players come back fit, this is the target," Guardiola, whose only similar run in all competitions was at Bayern in 2015

# Border Gavaskar Trophy: Ponting Calls Gambhir 'Prickly Character' Amid Slugfest On Kohli



The former Australian batter Ricky Ponting has got back at the India head coach Gautam Gambhir after the latter reacted on comments regarding Virat Kohli's form. He also said that it was not surprising to listen to such comments from someone like Gautam Gambhir.

Ponting found himself in the midst of the controversy recently after he remarked on Virat Kohli's form. He had stated that someone with just two centuries in five years wouldn't be a top-order batter in international cricket. The comments from the right-handed batter received criticism from the head coach Gautam Gambhir.

Speaking about the response he got from Gambhir, Ponting opined that Gambhir is a 'prickly' character and him giving such remarks was not a surprising thing.

"I was surprised to read the

reaction but knowing the coach, Gautam Gambhir ... he's quite a prickly character, so I'm not surprised it was him who said something back," Ponting told 7NEWS.

Ponting further clarified that his comment about Kohli's form was not a dig but was just a concern for his form.

"I said I would be concerned (about his form). But I think if you ask Virat, I'm sure Virat would be a little bit concerned that he hasn't been able to make the same amount of hundreds as he has in previous years," he added.

"In no way was it a dig at him. I actually followed it up by saying he's played well in Australia and he'll be keen to bounce back over here. So, it's amazing how little things can get cut up, but he's a class player and he's played well in Australia in the past."