

Across State

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Will Accept PM Modi's Decision Eknath Shinde On Selection Of Maharashtra Chief Minister

Thane

Maharashtra Interim Chief Minister Eknath Shinde on Wednesday said that whatever decision Prime Minister Narendra Modi takes for Maharashtra as the head of Mahayuti will be final for the Shiv Sena.

Shinde said he spoke to Prime Minister Narendra Modi yesterday over the phone. "I told him that don't think that I will become an obstacle. You can take the decision and as the head of the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) or Mahayuti, it will be final for us," the Chief Minister told reporters at a press conference at his house 'Shubh Deep' here.

He also said people have shown faith in the work done by the Mahayuti government in the last 2-2.5 years and he was a satisfied man.

"I welcome all the journalists and we are meeting for the first time after the results were announced. It is a landslide victory, which was not witnessed in the last few years. People have shown faith in the work done by the Mahayuti government. This is people's victory," Shinde said.

Shinde said he was also a 'Common Man' and so when I met the common people, there was no obstacle. Shiv Sena leaders Sanjay Shirsat, Ravindra Phatak, Dadaji Bhuse, and MLA Pratap Sarnaik, who retained his Ovala-Majiwada seat, arrived at Shinde's residence.

"Because I came from a



poor family, I understood the sufferings of the common people. I am happy and satisfied. We also received support from Prime Minister Narendra Modi. I am thankful to PM and Home Minister Amit Shah for backing our schemes," Shinde, who retained his Kopri-Panchpakhadhi seat, added.

Shinde also said that he was satisfied with his tenure. "The decisions we took are historic and no government has taken such decisions," he added.

He maintained that people showered voters and that was for the work done by his government.

"This is a historic win, we worked relentlessly. We did not sit at home. Till my last breath, I will work for the people of Maharashtra. I am happy that the youth got work. Some people started small businesses. I attended people be it at my house or at Mantralayal. I did not do

work to get popularity but do see what the people can get" he added.

He also said that the leaders of the Mahayuti will meet in New Delhi and a final decision will be taken in the presence of Union Home Minister Amit Shah.

He also lashed out at the Opposition for blaming the EVMs for the defeat in the polls. It is understood that the Shinde has asked all the newly-elected Shiv Sena MLAs to go to their respective constituencies and celebrate their victory. In the recently held Maharashtra Assembly polls, the Mahayuti led by Eknath Shinde retained power in the key state. The BJP won a staggering 132 seats and emerged as the single-largest party, while the Shiv Sena won 57 seats and the Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) led by Ajit Pawar bagged 41 seats.

Meanwhile, Maharashtra BJP chief Chandrashekhar

Bawankule thanked ally Eknath Shinde for stating that the decision of the top BJP leadership on the next chief minister of the state will be acceptable to him.

Speaking to reporters in Nagpur soon after Shinde, at present a caretaker chief minister, made clear his stand, Bawankule slammed the opposition for trying to spread rumours and cast aspersions on Shinde's character.

"I want to thank Shinde. He today made clear his stand on the chief minister's post. He has taken an important stand. I am proud of him," the BJP leader said.

Bawankule also praised Shinde for his commitment to Maharashtra's progress, highlighting his role in the completion of the Nagpur-Mumbai Samruddhi Expressway. "He took a lot of efforts for the betterment of Maharashtra. He did a good job as chief minister," Bawankule added.

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Rashmi Shukla back as Maharashtra DGP



Mumbai

IPS OFFICER Rashmi Shukla who had been sent on leave by the Maharashtra government, following a directive by the Election Commission, was reappointed as Maharashtra DGP late Monday.

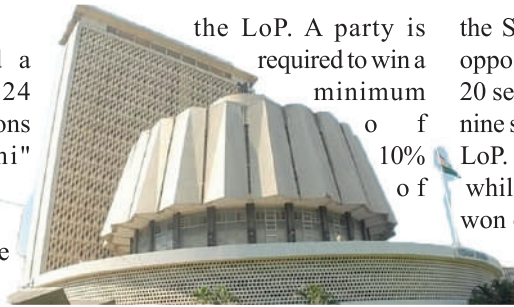
Sanjay Kumar Verma was the state DGP in the interim while Shukla was on leave. As per an order issued by the state home department, Shukla was reappointed as DGP since the election period was over. Shukla is known to enjoy a good rapport with BJP leader Devendra Fadnavis whom she met on Monday. She is likely to take charge on Tuesday and Verma will again be DG Legal and Technical, the post he held before being appointed DGP.

Mahayuti 'Tsunami': Maharashtra Assembly To Function Without LoP

Mumbai

As Mahayuti recorded a landslide victory in the 2024 Maharashtra Assembly Elections on Saturday, the "Tsunami" result, as a shocked Shiv Sena (UBT) chief Uddhav Thackeray termed it, will leave the state assembly without a leader of the opposition (LoP) for the first time in six decades.

The BJP-led Mahayuti pocketed a whopping 230 of the 288 assembly seats. No party outside the ruling alliance was able to get the mandatory minimum of 29 seats to be able to function as



the overall seats to qualify for LoP, as per the provisions of the Salaries and Allowances of Leaders of Opposition in the State Legislature Act.

According to the latest data on the Election Commission website,

the LoP. A party is required to win a minimum of 10% of

the Shiv Sena (UBT), part of the opposition MVA, won the highest 20 seats in the opposition alliance, nine short of the number needed for LoP. The Congress won 16 seats, while Sharad Pawar's NCP (SP) won only 10 seats.

The results for all 288 seats were declared late Saturday evening with the BJP winning a mammoth 132 seats of the 149 it contested. Chief Minister Eknath Shinde's Shiv Sena emerged victorious on 57 seats. The third constituent of the Mahayuti, the Ajit Pawar-led Nationalist Congress Party, won

41 seats.

A first in six decades

The Maharashtra Assembly will not have a Leader of the Opposition for the first time in 6 decades. Commenting on it, former principal secretary (legislature) Anant Kalse, in a report, said there was "no scope for Congress, Shiv Sena (UBT) and NCP (SP) to have a leader of opposition".

Kalse said that since LoP cannot be nominated by the combined strength of parties in an alliance, and a party has to have the required numbers on its own.

Uddhav Thackeray under pressure from party leaders to leave MVA

Mumbai

RUMBLINGS

have begun within the Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) after its humiliating defeat in the Maharashtra Assembly elections, with the Uddhav Thackeray-led Shiv Sena coming under increasing pressure from

its leaders to leave the alliance.

Majority of the 20 Sena (UBT) MLAs reportedly urged this at a meeting held by Thackeray on Monday, The Indian Express has learnt. Sources said the grassroots cadre of the Sena (UBT),

which was completely overshadowed by the Eknath Shinde Sena's 57-seat tally in the Assembly elections, is questioning the "effectiveness" of the MVA.

However, sources said, Thackeray as well as other senior party leaders such as Aaditya Thackeray and Rajya Sabha MP Sanjay Raut are keen on maintaining the alliance to "present a united opposition against the BJP".

"Many of our MLAs feel it is time for the

Shiv Sena (UBT) to forge an independent path, contest elections on its own, and not depend on any alliance. The Shiv Sena was never meant to chase power... It (power) will come naturally when we remain steadfast in our ideology," Ambadas Danve, the Leader of Opposition in the Maharashtra Legislative Council, told media.

The move to go independent would help the Shiv Sena (UBT) "build on its foundation", Danve

added.

Since Eknath Shinde took away most of the Sena's MLAs and MPs in the split in the party in 2022, the party leaders have accused the Sena (UBT) of "betraying" the ideology of founder Bal Thackeray and Hindutva by joining hands with the Congress. The Sena (UBT) has had a series of setbacks in the factional fight since, including the loss of the symbol and the name of the party to the Shinde side.

Maharashtra excise dept cancels liquor permit for Diljit Dosanjh's Pune concert

Mumbai

The Maharashtra excise department on Sunday cancelled the permit for serving alcohol at actor-singer Diljit Dosanjh's concert in the Kothrud area in Pune later in the evening, an official said.

The department cancelled the permit after people from different quarters, including Kothrud's newly elected BJP MLA Chandrakant Patil, objected to plans to serve liquor at the programme.

State excise commissioner C Rajput said, "The state to cancel the programme."



excise department has cancelled the permission to serve liquor during the programme."

MLA Patil raised an objection against the concert scheduled at Kakade Farm in Kothrud later in the evening.

The BJP leader, in a statement, said, "Such shows are not part of the city's culture. This will create a major disturbance for residents of the area. The event will also cause traffic jams. Hence, I have urged the city police commissioner

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Failure to settle seat disputes cost MVA many seats



Mumbai

The disagreements within the opposition Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) over the candidates and failure to rise over differences seem to have proved costly for the three opposition parties of Congress, Shiv Sena (UBT) and Nationalist Congress Party (SP).

In Solapur south Assembly seat, BJP's Subhash Deshmukh won the election by 77,127 votes against Shiv Sena (UBT) candidate Amar Patil. Despite Patil being the official opposition candidate, the Congress leadership from Solapur including Lok Sabha MP Praniti Shinde openly extended support to independent Dharmraj Kadadi, who managed to win only 18,747 votes.

While the local Shiv Sena-UBT leaders openly voiced their anger over Shinde's tactics, party's Rajya Sabha MP Priyanka Chaturvedi made it a point to express herself openly on social media platform X. "The independent candidate supported by MP Praniti Shinde over MVA candidate lost his deposit and at the same time made the official MVA Shiv Sena UBT candidate lose.

In the neighbouring Pandharpur constituency, BJP's Samashan Autade won by 8,430 votes against Bhagirath Bhalake of the Congress. Sharad Pawar led NCP (SP) had given ticket to Anil Sawant who got 10, 217 votes, resulting in Bhalake's

defeat.

In Raigad district's Uran seat, BJP's Mahesh Baldi won by 6,512 votes against Pritam Mhatre of Peasants and Workers Party (PWP), a constituent of MVA. Shiv Sena-UBT candidate Manohar Bhoir came third winning 69,893 votes. Similarly, in Panvel Assembly seat, BJP's Prashant Thakur won by 51,091 votes against PWP's Balam Patil. Failure to settle the dispute, Shiv Sena-UBT candidate Leena Garad contested the seat and won 43,989 votes.

In Nanded north, Shiv Sena's Balaji Kalyankar won the seat by a mere 3,502 votes against Congress candidate Abdul Sattar Gaffoor. MVA partner Shiv Sena-UBT's Sangita Patil garnered 22,706 votes, leading to Gaffoor's defeat.

In Amravati district's Badnera, independent Ravi Rana won by 66,974 votes against independent Priti Band who got 60,826 votes. Despite being from the Shiv Sena-UBT, Band was denied the ticket, and it was given to Sunil Kharate, who came distant third winning only 7,121 votes.

Vidarbha: Despite farm unrest, revived Congress, BJP sweeps over 40 seats

Nagpur

The BJP swept over 40 out of the 62 seats in the cotton belt of Vidarbha which was one of most closely watched regions in the Maharashtra Assembly elections as the party was engaged in a direct fight with Congress in 36 seats in the region.

This comes as boost to the BJP as it was decimated to two seats in Vidarbha in the Lok Sabha elections held this year — its ally Shiv Sena also won only one seat in the region, while NCP(SP) and an independent candidate secured one seat each.

The Congress, which was hoping to revive its electoral fortunes in the region after winning five of the ten Lok Sabha seats, faced a huge setback as it managed to win only nine Assembly seats from Vidarbha.

During the Lok Sabha election, the Congress campaign had focused on the Constitution alleging that the BJP plans to amend it if the party gets more than 400 seats.

The Congress's improved

tally in the general elections was attributed to the support it got from the Dalit, Muslim and Kunbhi communities.

However, this time, the party's attempt to reach out to these communities did not fetch them much gains.

In the 36 seats where the two national parties were in a straight fight, the BJP managed to win 27, despite the region witnessing farmer unrest.

State BJP chief Chandrashekhar Bawankule said, "The Lok Sabha poll outcome cannot be equated to Assembly polls. We took measures to address the flaws. That put us in a commanding position."

State Congress chief Nana Patole, who had won the Sakoli seat in Vidarbha, said, "The results don't match the ground realities where public anger was evident due to agrarian crisis, unemployment and inflation."

Meanwhile, farmer leader from Vidarbha Vijay Jawandia said that a victory for the ruling alliance does not imply absence of farm distress.

Maharashtra Congress to launch a statewide signature campaign for elections via ballot paper

Mumbai

The results of the Maharashtra Assembly elections have left the people wondering. There is a widespread belief that something is not adding up. While the Constitution grants everyone the right to vote, people feel their votes are being transferred to another party. To honour public sentiment, the Congress party will launch a statewide signature campaign demanding elections via ballot paper. These petitions will be sent to the President, Prime Minister, Chief Justice of India, and the Election Commission, as announced by Maharashtra Pradesh Congress Committee President Nana Patole.

A meeting of the newly elected Congress MLAs was



held at Tilak Bhavan, attended by state president Nana Patole, former Chief Minister Prithviraj Chavan, Congress Working Committee (CWC) member Balasaheb Thorat, Vijay Wadettiwar, state vice presidents and CWC members Naseem Khan, Muzaffar Hussain, Kunal Patil, Dr Nitin Raut, Amit Deshmukh, Aslam Shaikh, Amin Patel, newly elected Nanded MP Ravindra Chavan, former

MP Kumar Ketkar, state vice president (organization and administration) Nana Gawande, state general secretary Pramod More, along with other MLAs.

Speaking at a press conference after the meeting, Nana Patole stated that Congress National President Mallikarjun Kharge, during a Constitution Day event in Delhi, announced the party's decision to launch a public movement to demand

elections on the ballot paper. A signature campaign will soon be initiated in Maharashtra as part of this. Millions of signed petitions from the public will be sent to the President, Prime Minister, Chief Justice, and Election Commission. Under Rahul Gandhi's leadership, a nationwide tour for ballot paper elections will also be launched, which is expected to receive tremendous support in Maharashtra, much like the Bharat Jodo Yatra.

Patole stressed the importance of saving democracy, calling it a collective responsibility. He highlighted Congress's historical role in the freedom struggle, stating that intense public sentiment led to the end of 150 years of British rule. In

a democratic system, people are supreme, and Congress is raising the voice of the masses, he added.

Despite having a brute majority, the BJP alliance has failed to appoint a Chief Minister or form a government even four days after the results. Issues such as farmers' concerns, unemployment, inflation, and law and order persist, but the BJP alliance seems unconcerned about public welfare. According to Patole, Maharashtra's Chief Minister will only be decided after a "friend" gives the green light, as half of Mumbai and Maharashtra were sold during the last 2.5 years. He claimed that this government would continue selling Maharashtra.

BJP Drives Mahayuti Sweep With 132 Seats, Sena Gets 57, NCP 41

Mumbai

The ruling BJP-led Mahayuti alliance registered a landslide victory in Maharashtra as the Election Commission of India declared the final results Saturday evening.

Of all 288 Maharashtra assembly seats, BJP won 132 and its allies Shiv Sena and NCP bagged 57 and 41 seats respectively. The opposition Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) was handed one of the worst defeats in recent history as the three main constituents of the alliance could manage wins in just 50 seats -- Congress 16, Shiv Sena (UBT) 20, and NCP (SP) 10.

The counting of votes in the November 20 Maharashtra Assembly elections began at 8 am on Saturday and the final result was published by the ECI late evening.

The BJP was at the forefront of this spectacular performance, comprehensively managing to buck the anti-incumbency and emerge as the largest party in the state pocketing 132 of the 149 seats it contested in the politically significant western state.

BJP's success was led by its senior leader and state deputy CM Devendra Fadnavis, who is likely to become the Chief Minister now, although the saffron party or its allies have not announced any names so far.

The results come as a fillip for the BJP, which won an unprecedented hat-trick in Haryana last month, and help the party overcome some of its reverses in the general elections where it bagged just 240 seats.

Voters in the politically significant western state of Maharashtra, which sends 48 MPs to the Lok Sabha and gave the MVA a decisive 30 seats, clearly decided to go against the trend of that parliamentary victory just five months ago.

'Ek Hai Toh Safe Hai': Fadnavis Says No Row Over CM Post

Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis on Saturday hailed the performance of the ruling Mahayuti in the assembly polls and credited it to Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the latter's 'ek hai toh safe hai' slogan. In a post on X, he said, "Ek Hain toh Safe hain" 'Modi hain toh Mumkin hain'. The slogan was a staple of all speeches of Modi during the campaign.

Addressing a press conference, Fadnavis said there was no dispute over the chief minister's post and leaders of Mahayuti will decide on the issue together as the saffron party-led coalition is heading



for a landslide victory.

He Fadnavis said the results of the Maharashtra assembly polls show that the state supports PM Narendra Modi and also thanked women voters. "The opposition's efforts to propagate a fake narrative, and polarise voters based on religion was foiled by masses," said Fadnavis.

The deputy CM said he succeeded in breaking the 'chakravyuh' of opposition due to the support of voters, the BJP team and party leaders. With some leaders in BJP demanding that Fadnavis don the mantle of the next CM, the BJP stalwart said there was no row over the CM's post in Mahayuti- comprising BJP, Shiv Sena, and NCP.

"Leaders of Mahayuti parties will decide (on next CM)," Fadnavis told reporters in Mumbai.

CM, Deputies Register Victories

Maharashtra Chief Minister Eknath Shinde and his deputies Fadnavis and Ajit Pawar won in their respective assembly constituencies. Shinde won by a margin of 1,20,717 votes over his nearest rival Kedar Prakash Dighe of Shiv Sena (UBT) from Kopri-Pachpakhadi assembly seat.

Fadnavis registered victory by a margin of 39,710 votes from Nagpur South-West

and Pawar by 1,00,899 votes in Baramati seat, where he was locked in a tussle with his nephew Yugendra Pawar.

In a setback to Congress, Senior Congress party leaders Prithviraj Chavan and Balasaheb Thorat were defeated in the Karad (south) and Sangamner assembly constituencies respectively.

Shiv Sena (UBT) leader and sitting MLA Aaditya Thackeray won in Worli assembly seat in Mumbai by 8,801 votes, the poll officials said.

Counting for all the 288 seats in the Maharashtra Assembly began at 8 am at 288 counting centres under the supervision of as many counting observers. The final turnout in the polls, held on November 20, was 66.05 per cent, up from 61.1 per cent in 2019.

Congress wins Nanded Lok Sabha bypoll

Congress candidate Ravindra Chavan on Saturday won the Nanded Lok Sabha bypoll defeating his nearest rival Santukrao Hambarde of BJP by 1457 votes, an official said. Chavan polled 586788 votes while Hambarde garnered 585331 votes, the official said.

The bypoll was necessitated due to the death of sitting Congress MP Vasant

Chavan on August 26. Ravindra Chavan is his son.

Which Party Contested How Many Seats

In the November 20 polling, the BJP, which leads the ruling Mahayuti alliance, contested 149 assembly seats while its partners Shiv Sena contested 81 and NCP 59 seats respectively. Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Union Home Minister Amit Shah, Chief Minister Eknath Shinde and Deputy CMs Devendra Fadnavis and Ajit Pawar were among the star campaigners of Mahayuti in this election.

Among the partners of the opposition Maha Vikas Aghadi, the Congress contested 101 seats, Shiv Sena (Uddhav Balasaheb Thackeray) 95, and NCP (Sharad Pawar) 86 seats respectively.

The Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) fielded its candidates in 237 out of the total 288 seats. The AIMIM contested 17 seats. Raj Thackeray-led Maharashtra Navnirman Sena also fielded candidates at key seats in Mumbai and Pune, along with a few others in rural Maharashtra. About 2,086 out of the total 4,136 contesting candidates were independents.

Maha Kumbh 2025 to set new benchmarks in cleanliness: Adityanath

Lucknow

Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Tuesday emphasised that the upcoming Maha Kumbh 2025 in Prayagraj will not only set new benchmarks in cleanliness, but will embrace technology to present a "Digital Kumbh".

While attending a media group's 'Samvad' programme, Adityanath extended greetings on Constitution Day, emphasising that the three foundational pillars of the Indian Constitution are rooted in 'samvad' (dialogue and communication).

Giving insights into the government's preparations for the upcoming Maha Kumbh, Adityanath also elaborated on the transformative changes UP has witnessed over the past seven-and-a-half years.

He said this Maha Kumbh will not only be a clean and grand event but will also showcase a "Digital Kumbh", marking a blend of tradition and technology.

"There was a time when Kumbh was synonymous with dirt, stampedes and chaos. The management of the Kumbh

was often entrusted to individuals with little respect for faith, tradition, culture or heritage.

"However, with a sense of reverence for this heritage and the inspiration of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the arrangements for Prayagraj Kumbh in 2019 earned UNESCO recognition as an Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity," he said.

The Maha Kumbh will take place from January 13 to February 26, spanning 45 days.

The key bathing dates include Pausa Purnima (January 13), Makar Sankranti Shahi Snan (January 14), Mauni Amavasya (January 29), Basant Panchami (February 3), Magh Purnima (February 12) and Mahashivratri (February 26).

Described as one of the world's largest religious, spiritual and cultural gatherings, the Prayagraj Maha Kumbh promises to be a magnificent celebration of tradition and faith.

Highlighting the government's



extensive preparations for the event, he emphasised the collaborative efforts of the Central and state governments. He recalled that the 2019 Kumbh witnessed the participation of over 23 crore devotees and stated that this time, around 40 crore devotees are expected to visit in the course of 45 days.

He said preparations are being carried out on a war footing to enhance Prayagraj's

connectivity via air, rail and road, including the development of four and six-lane highways.

The Maha Kumbh area has been significantly expanded from 3,200 hectares in 2019 to 4,000 hectares for 2025, divided into 25 well-organised sectors.

"The government is ensuring that devotees do not have to walk more than 1.5 km to reach the Sangam. Over 1,850 hectares have been earmarked for parking on various routes, within a radius of 2-5 km from the Sangam."

"From these parking sites, around 7,000 state transport corporation buses will provide electronic transport services to the Kumbh area," he added.

"In 2019, nine road flyovers and six underpasses were constructed. This time, 14 road overbridges are being built. While there were four concrete bathing ghats last time, nine concrete ghats are being constructed for Maha Kumbh 2025. All these works will be completed by November 30," he said.

Centre okays PAN 2.0 project; here are the details

New Delhi

The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA), chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, has given its approval for the PAN 2.0 project of the Income Tax Department. The financial implications for the PAN 2.0 Project will be Rs 1,435 crore. The project aims to streamline and modernise the process of issuing and managing PAN and TAN, making it more user-friendly and efficient. With existing PAN database of 78 crore Permanent Account Number (PAN) and 73.28 lakh Tax Deduction and Collection Account Number (TAN), the project addresses the requirements of taxpayers, focusing on consolidation of multiple platforms, portals and efficient services to PAN and TAN holders. Currently, PAN-related services are spread across three different platforms: the eFiling Portal, UTIITS Portal, and Protean e-Gov Portal. The new project will be an upgrade of the current PAN and TAN 1.0 eco-system. With the implementation of PAN 2.0, all these services will be integrated into a single, unified portal. This one-stop

platform will handle comprehensively issues and matters related to PAN and TAN, including application, updates, corrections, Aadhaar-PAN linking, re-issuance requests, and even online PAN validation.

The project will enable upgradation of the 10-digit alphanumeric PAN with a QR Code incorporated in all new and old cards. It will also feature enhanced cybersecurity to protect user data.

By doing so, the Income Tax Department aims to simplify processes, eliminate delays, and improve grievance redressal mechanisms.

Key features of PAN 2.0

A single portal for all PAN/TAN-related services to simplify access for users

Eco-friendly paperless processes to reduce paperwork

PAN will be issued free of cost, with quicker processing times

Personal and demographic data will be protected through enhanced security measures, including a PAN Data Vault

A dedicated call center and helpdesk to address user queries and issues

Royal family fights on street, Rajasthan government seizes disputed site

Jaipur

A few hours after the coronation ceremony of Nathdwara MLA Vishvaraj Singh, who is the scion of the erstwhile Mewar dynasty, the Rajasthan government on Tuesday, seized a part of the City Palace, which remains disputed among Mewar family members.

The officials had to act tough after the dispute between the erstwhile royals of the Mewar family turned ugly leaving many injured in stone pelting on Monday night. Eventually, Vishvaraj returned to his palace without performing some rituals at the palace which he wanted to do and asked his followers to return home.

Stone pelting started at this site on Monday night when two parties, one representing Vishvaraj camp and another from his uncle Arvind Singh Mewar came face-to-face.

Vishvaraj, after being anointed as the 'king', was to follow a ritual of visiting Udaipur City Palace for 'Dhuni Darshan' as per the tradition of the Mewar family. However, this place was owned by his uncle who got the doors of the palace shut before his arrival.

This left the latter's followers infuriated. They gathered in large numbers outside Udaipur City Palace.

It was the first time on Monday that such a fight was witnessed among the

descendants of Maharana Pratap. At the same time, around 1.30 am on Tuesday, the administration seized the disputed place and appointed a receiver. This entire dispute arose following the coronation of Vishvaraj post the death of Mahendra Singh Mewar, a member of the Udaipur royal family. Vishvaraj wanted to visit the Dhuni inside the City Palace after the coronation, however his uncle's family living there did not allow him to do so. This is where the entire dispute started. After the death of a former member of the royal family of Daiyapur and former MP Mahendra Singh Mewar, the tradition of anointing his elder son Vishvaraj Singh Mewar on the throne was performed. Even though the monarchy ended after the advent of democracy, however, this ritual is still being performed symbolically in different erstwhile royal families. On Monday, the ritual of the coronation of Vishvaraj was performed during the Dastur (Rasm) programme at Fateh Prakash Palace of Chittorgarh Fort.

After the coronation ritual in Chittorgarh, Vishvaraj reached Udaipur City Palace for Dhuni Darshan as per the Mewar tradition, however the gates to enter the City Palace (entering from Rangnivas and Jagdish Chowk) were closed. However, six vehicles of Vishvaraj Singh Mewar's convoy reached Jagdish Chowk. Here the supporters tried to remove the barricading.

Soren meets PM, other leaders, invites them for his swearing-in ceremony

New Delhi

Acting Jharkhand Chief Minister Hemant Soren met Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday, in his first visit to the national capital after leading his ruling alliance to an unprecedented second straight term in the state.

The Prime Minister's Office posted pictures of the meeting. Soren was accompanied by his wife Kalpana, who has also been elected as an MLA in the recent elections.

The Jharkhand Mukti Morcha leader led the combine, which includes the Congress, the RJD and the Left, to a comprehensive win over the BJP-led alliance.

In a post on X, Soren said he has invited Modi to his oath-taking ceremony in Ranchi on Thursday.

"Met Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri @narendramodi ji in Delhi



today and invited him to attend the swearing-in ceremony of 'Abua sarkar' (our government) on 28th November," Soren said on X in Hindi.

He also met Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge as well as former party chief Rahul Gandhi, besides AAP leader Arvind Kejriwal and his

wife, in New Delhi and invited them for his oath-taking.

"Today in Delhi, I met the Congress president respected Mallikarjun Kharge ji, Leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi ji and senior Congress leader Priyanka Gandhi Vadra ji and invited them to attend the swearing-in ceremony of 'Abua'

(our) government on November 28," Soren said in another post on X.

Soren's JMM-led alliance on Saturday stormed to power in Jharkhand for a second consecutive term, winning 56 seats in the 81-member Assembly, despite an all-out campaign blitz by the BJP-led NDA, which managed only 24 seats. He also retained the Barhait seat by defeating BJP's Gamliyel Hembrom by a margin of 39,791 votes.

Senior leaders of the INDIA bloc, including RJD's Tejashwi Yadav, may attend the swearing-in ceremony on Thursday.

"All top leaders of the bloc are being invited to attend the swearing-in ceremony at Morabadi Ground here on November 28. Leader of the Opposition in Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi, Trinamool Congress supremo Mamata Banerjee and

RJD leader Tejashwi Yadav are likely to attend the event," a Congress leader had earlier said.

As far as ministerial berths are concerned, in all likelihood, there may be four ministers from the grand old party.

The JMM had contested 43 seats and won 34, the highest-ever tally of the party in its history. The Congress got 16 seats, RJD four and the CPI (ML)L secured two seats in the INDIA bloc. As per the arrangement, RJD may get one ministerial berth.

Meanwhile, preparations are underway for the oath-taking ceremony.

Soren had on Sunday met Jharkhand Governor Santosh Kumar Gangwar and staked claim to form government, soon after leaders of the INDIA bloc in the state unanimously elected him as the legislature party leader.

NIA launches probe into Manipur violence cases

Imphal

The National Investigation Agency (NIA) has officially launched investigations into three major cases related to the recent spate of violence in Manipur, including the immolation of a tribal woman, the November 11 encounter between CRPF and suspected militants as well as the kidnapping and murder of six members of a Meitei family.

The anti-terror agency re-registered the three cases on November 13 after the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) decided to hand over these to it considering the gravity of the offences, amid escalating violence in the strife-torn state and with a view to unearthing the larger conspiracy behind the brutal attacks.

In the first case on November 11, several houses were burnt and two civilians were killed in Manipur's Borobekra in Jiribam. Later, unknown militants abducted and murdered six members of a family, including three women and three children,



whose bodies were subsequently found floating in a river along the Manipur-Assam border.

The incident took place when some armed militants fired at Borobekra police station as well as some houses and shops at Jakuradhor Karong. The police and CRPF personnel at Borobekra police station retaliated, leading to a heavy exchange of fire. Subsequent search operations led

to the recovery of two dead bodies inside burnt houses at Jakuradhor Karong.

The second case in which NIA has initiated a probe is linked to the November 11 attack on a CRPF post at Jakuradhor Karong and Borobekra police stations, Jiribam, by armed militants. In an ensuing encounter, 10 suspected militants were killed. Tribal outfits in the state have alleged that they were village volunteers.

The third case relates to the murder of a woman at Jiribam by armed militants. The incident took place on November 7 when a 31-year-old tribal woman and a mother of three was raped and burnt alive at her residence by militants. The militants had attacked her village and burnt down several houses.

NIA teams had visited the spots on November 21 and 22 and started the probe. The process of handing over case documents from the local police to the NIA was currently underway, sources said.

BJP accuses Rahul of disrespecting Murmu, not greeting her at Constitution Day event

New Delhi

The BJP on Tuesday slammed Leader of the Opposition in Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi, alleging that he did not greet President Droupadi Murmu at an event held to mark Samvidhan Diwas in Parliament.

Posting two video clips purportedly of the event on X, the BJP said, "Rahul Gandhi is so arrogant that he did not even greet the President." It added, "Just because she comes from the tribal community, is a woman and Rahul Gandhi is the scion of Congress? What kind of a cheap mentality is this?"

In one of the videos posted by the BJP on X, Gandhi was seen taking his seat on the dais at the event even before the President sat down. Congress president and Leader of the Opposition in Rajya Sabha Mallikarjun Kharge, who was standing next to Gandhi, was seen prompting him to get up.



In another video clip posted by the BJP, Vice President Jagdeep Dhankhar, Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Kharge were seen standing and greeting the President but Gandhi did not appear to be greeting the President.

"Congress always disrespect President Droupadi Murmu ji. President kept standing, Shehzada (scion) sat down. Didn't greet the President," read the captions in the video clips posted by the BJP.

India playing role of Vishwa Bandhu, says Prez Murmu

New Delhi

On the 75th anniversary of the adoption of the Indian Constitution, President Droupadi Murmu reminded citizens of fundamental duties, while Vice-President Jagdeep Dhankhar flagged the dangers of placing creed above country.

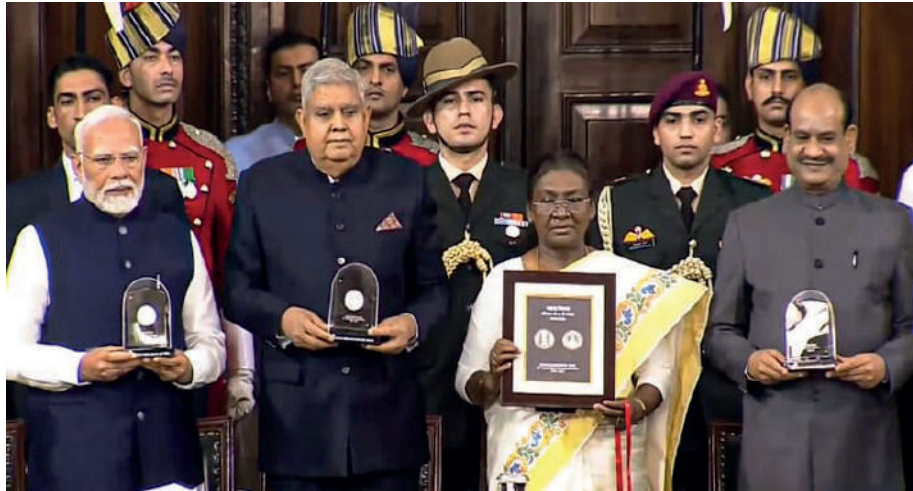
The Vice-President borrowed from BR Ambedkar, chairman of the Constitution Drafting Committee, to say “internal conflicts, more than external threats, endanger democracy”.

Leading the commemoration event in the Central Hall of Parliament where the Constituent Assembly on November 26, 1949, adopted the Constitution, President Murmu said India was now playing the role of Vishwa Bandhu as the Constitution makers envisaged.

“Our Constitution makers had given a directive for India to play an important role in promotion of international peace and security. Today, besides being a leading economy, our country is playing this role very well as the Vishwa Bandhu,” Murmu said before leading the reading of the Preamble at the joint sitting of Parliament attended by all MPs.

On the dais, besides Murmu and Dhankhar, were Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla, Parliamentary Affairs Minister Kiren Rijiju, leader of Rajya Sabha JP Nadda and leaders of opposition in Rajya Sabha and Lok Sabha Mallikarjun Kharge and Rahul Gandhi.

The President described the Constitution as a “living, progressive document with a system of adopting new ideas according to the changing times.”



“We have achieved many ambitious goals related to social justice and inclusive development through the Constitution. With a new approach, we are earning for India a new identity in the comity of nations,” she said, adding that in accordance with the Constitution, it was the responsibility of the Executive, Legislature and Judiciary to work together to ease the lives of common people and mentioning the Women’s Reservation Act and the Goods and Services Tax as major constitutional reforms.

With today's event, the President also launched Centre’s yearlong celebrations of the anniversary event.

Vice-President Dhankhar used his address on the day to flag the threats to democracy.

He invoked the last speech of Ambedkar to the Constituent Assembly where the latter had said, “What perturbs me greatly is the fact that not only India has once before lost her independence, but she lost

it by the infidelity and treachery of some of her own people. Will history repeat itself? It is this thought that fills me with anxiety. This anxiety is deepened by the realisation of the fact that in addition to our old enemies in the form of castes and creeds, we are going to have many political parties with diverse and opposing political creeds. Will Indians place the country above their creed or will they place the creed above the country? I do not know. But this much is certain that if the parties place creed above country, our independence will be put in jeopardy a second time and probably be lost forever.”

Dhankhar also appealed to MPs for productive discourse in Parliament and said these days “decorum and discipline were cliff hanging in parliamentary discourse.”

“On this day, we need to resolve by reiterating the pristine glory of our Constituent Assembly embellished functioning...Disturbance as a strategy

threatens democratic institutions. Time has come to restore the sanctity of democratic temples through constructive dialogue,” said the VP, who chairs the Rajya Sabha.

The VP was speaking just a day after both Houses of Parliament were washed out due to disruptions over opposition’s demands to discuss a US court indictment of industrialist Gautam Adani in bribery allegations. Another point Dhankhar stressed was separation of powers.

“The Indian Constitution ingeniously established democracy’s three pillars — the Legislature, the Executive and the Judiciary — each with a defined role. Democracy is best nurtured with its constitutional institutions adhering to their jurisdictional area,” he said.

Speaking before the VP and President, Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla urged MPs to adopt the highest traditions of meaningful, constructive dialogue in both Houses of Parliament. The Speaker also appealed to MPs to celebrate the 75th anniversary year of the adoption of the Constitution in their respective Lok Sabha segments.

Prez releases publications, unveils book

On the occasion, President Droupadi Murmu released the following publications - copies of the Constitution in Sanskrit and Maithili; “Bharat ke Samvidhan ka nirman, ek jhalak” and “Bharat ke Samvidhan ka nirman aur iski gauravshali gatha”. The latter two are available in Hindi and English. Murmu also unveiled a book dedicated to art and calligraphy of the Constitution.

Constitution 'guiding light', spirit of 'nation first' will keep it alive for centuries: PM Modi

New Delhi

Prime Minister Narendra Modi hailed the Constitution on Tuesday as a “guiding light” at a time of transformation for India, asserting that his government has strengthened constitutional values by taking a host of welfare measures to bring social and financial equality.

Addressing an event at the Supreme Court to mark Constitution Day, Modi described the Constitution as a “living stream” that has lived up to the needs and expectations of the country, including the challenge of

Emergency, and said it will continue to guide the nation through the changing times.

He also paid homage to the victims of the Mumbai terror attack, which occurred on this day in 2008, and said it is the country's resolve that all terror groups challenging its security will be given a befitting reply.

Recalling the words of Rajendra Prasad in his concluding address to the Constituent Assembly on November 26, 1949, Modi said he had stated that India does not need anything more than a group of honest

people who will keep the country's interests above their own.

This sentiment of 'nation first' will keep alive the Constitution for centuries to come,” he said.

Modi said the Constitution has now been fully implemented in Jammu and Kashmir and Constitution Day was celebrated there for the first time.

“Our Constitution makers knew that India's aspirations, India's dreams will reach new heights with time. They knew that the needs of independent India and its citizens

will change, challenges will change. That is why they did not leave our Constitution as just a mere book of laws. Rather, they made it a living, continuously flowing stream,” Modi said.

“Today every citizen of the country has only one goal –to build a developed India,” he said at the event.

India is going through a period of transformation and at such an important time, it is the Constitution of India that is “showing us the way and is a guiding light for us”, Modi said.

SC bins plea on junking EVMs for ballots



New Delhi

The Supreme Court on Tuesday dismissed a plea seeking the reintroduction of ballot paper in place of electronic voting machines (EVMs), saying allegations of tampering with electronic voting machine (EVM) are raked up only when people lose elections.

A Bench of Justices Vikram Nath and Punjab Varale dismissed a plea filed by petitioner-in-person KA Paul to return to the ballot system due to the alleged manipulability of EVMs.

"When you lose, EVMs are tampered with; when you win, EVMs are fine," remarked the apex court when the petitioner referred to the statements made by Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu and his predecessor Jagan Mohan Reddy on EVMs.

It said, "When Chandrababu Naidu or Jagan Reddy lost, they said EVMs could be tampered with; when they win, they don't say anything. We are dismissing this. This is not the place where you argue all of this."

In March, the Supreme Court had refused to entertain a similar PIL, seeking directions to conduct the Lok Sabha elections through ballot paper. "How many petitions shall we entertain? We cannot go by assumptions. Every method has its plus and minus points. We cannot entertain this," it had told the petitioner, the general secretary of the Congress' Mathura District Committee. The petitioner-in-person Nandini Sharma had said "concerns of the opposition parties about the EVMs must be first addressed by holding elections via ballot paper".

Each government branch must honour its constitutionally assigned role: CJI

New Delhi

Each government branch must honour its constitutionally assigned role: CJI

"Each branch of the government is not a satellite in an independent orbit but rather a related actor which works in a degree of separateness"

Chief Justice of India Sanjiv Khanna on Tuesday said each branch of the government must honour its constitutionally-assigned role by nurturing inter-institutional equilibrium.

Speaking on the 75th Constitution Day celebrations held in the national capital, the CJI said each branch of the government was not a satellite in an independent orbit but a related actor.

"The Constitution by design insulates judiciary from the ebbs and lows of electoral process. This ensures the decisions are unbiased and free from ill-will and guided solely by the Constitution and laws. At the same time, each branch of the government is not a satellite in an independent orbit but rather a related actor which works in a degree of separateness. Each branch must honour its constitutionally assigned



distinct role by nurturing inter institutional equilibrium. Judicial independence does not serve as a high wall but as a catalyst," the CJI said.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Union Law Minister Arjun Meghwal, SC's Justices B R Gavai and Surya Kant, Attorney General R Venkataramani, Supreme Court Bar Association president and senior advocate Kapil Sibal also shared their thoughts.

Since 2015, November 26 is observed as Constitution Day to commemorate the adoption of the Constitution of India by the Constituent Assembly in 1949. The day was earlier observed as Law Day.

Khanna said the scale of cases flowing in Indian courts

was "staggering" and during the year alone the judicial system received over 2.8 thousand crore cases in the district courts and about 16.6 lakh cases in high courts and 54,000 cases in the Supreme Court.

"Therefore it is not surprising that there are more than 4.54 crore cases pending in district courts and 61 lakh cases in high court. These numbers reflect the challenge and represent the deep trust citizens place on our courts. Our district courts have showed remarkable improvement and efficiency particularly in civil matters. Last year alone, our district courts resolved over 20 lakh criminal cases and over 8 lakh civil cases. The case clearance rate in Supreme Court has increased from 95 to 97 percent," the CJI revealed.

He thanked the Centre for approving Rs 7,200 crore for Phase III of the e-Courts project and ensuring the judiciary was equipped to perform its functions.

CJI Khanna said realtime transcriptions and speech-to-text tools by the Supreme Court attempted to address the issue of trust deficit.

Parliament winter session: Both Houses adjourned amid Opposition protests over Adani, Sambhal violence

New Delhi

Lok Sabha proceedings were adjourned till 12 noon on Wednesday amid protests by Opposition members over the Adani controversy, recent violence in Sambhal in Uttar Pradesh and other issues.

As soon as the House met for the day, many Opposition members, including from Congress, were on their feet as they sought to raise various issues.

Some members from the Congress and Samajwadi Party were in the Well while other Opposition members stood in the aisle and shouted slogans.

Speaker Om Birla asked the Opposition members to allow the Question Hour and said



they can take up their issues later.

Amid the din, one question was taken up. However, the protests continued and the proceedings, which went on for about six minutes, were

adjourned till noon.

The Opposition members wanted to discuss the Adani controversy and the recent violence in Uttar Pradesh's Sambhal.

Meanwhile, Rajya Sabha

proceedings were adjourned for the day amid opposition protests over various issues.

Soon after listed papers were tabled in the House, Chairman Jagdeep Dhankhar said he has received 18 notices

under Rule 267 for suspension of the scheduled business and to take up issues related to the Adani Group, violence in Uttar Pradesh's Sambhal and rising incidents of crime in Delhi. He, however did not accept the notices.

This led to protest by opposition members, including from those belonging to the Congress.

The Adani Group said on Wednesday that Gautam Adani, and his nephew Sagar have not been charged with any violation of the US Foreign Corrupt Practices Act (FCPA) in the indictment that authorities filed in the New York court in an alleged bribery case.

UN Resolution 1701 Is At The Heart Of The Israel-Hezbollah Ceasefire. What Is It?

Beirut

In 2006, after a bruising monthlong war between Israel and Lebanon's Hezbollah militant group, the United Nations Security Council unanimously voted for a resolution to end the conflict and pave the way for lasting security along the border. However, while relative calm stood for nearly two decades, Resolution 1701's terms were never fully enforced.

Now, figuring out how to finally enforce it is key to a U.S.-brokered deal that brought a ceasefire Wednesday. In late September, after nearly a year of low-level clashes, the conflict between Israel and Hezbollah spiralled into an all-out war and an Israeli ground invasion. As Israeli jets pound deep inside Lebanon and Hezbollah fires rockets deeper into northern Israel, U.N. and diplomatic officials again turned to the 2006 resolution in a bid to end the conflict.

Years of deeply divided politics and regionwide geopolitical hostilities have halted substantial progress on its implementation. Yet, the international community believes Resolution 1701 is still the brightest prospect for long-term



stability between Israel and Lebanon.

Almost two decades after the last war between Israel and Hezbollah, the United States led shuttle diplomacy efforts between Lebanon and Israel to agree on a ceasefire proposal that renewed commitment to the resolution, this time with an implementation plan to try to reinvigorate the document.

What is UNSC Resolution 1701?

In 2000, Israel withdrew its forces from most of southern Lebanon along a U.N.-demarcated "Blue Line" that separated the two countries and the Israeli-annexed Golan Heights, which most of the world considers occupied

Syrian territory. U.N. peacekeeping forces in Lebanon, known as UNIFIL, increased their presence along the withdrawal line.

Resolution 1701 was supposed to complete Israel's withdrawal from southern Lebanon and ensure Hezbollah would move north of the Litani River, keeping the area exclusively under the Lebanese military and U.N. peacekeepers. Up to 15,000 U.N. peacekeepers would help to maintain calm, return displaced Lebanese and secure the area alongside the Lebanese military.

The goal was long-term security, with land borders eventually demarcated to resolve territorial disputes. The resolution also reaffirmed previous ones that called for the disarmament of all armed groups in Lebanon — Hezbollah among them. "It was made for a certain situation and context," Elias Hanna, a retired Lebanese army general, told The Associated Press. "But as time goes on, the essence of the resolution begins to hollow."

Has Resolution 1701 been implemented?

For years, Lebanon and Israel blamed each other for countless violations along the tense frontier. Israel said Hezbollah's elite Radwan Force and growing arsenal remained and accused the group of using a local environmental organization to spy on troops. Lebanon complained about Israeli military jets and naval ships entering Lebanese territory even when there was no active conflict.

"You had a role of the UNIFIL that slowly eroded like any other peacekeeping with time that has no clear mandate," said Joseph Bahout, the director of the Issam Fares Institute for Public Policy at the American University of Beirut. "They don't have permission to inspect the area without coordinating with the Lebanese army."

UNIFIL for years has urged Israel to withdraw from some territory north of the frontier, but to no avail. In the ongoing war, the peacekeeping mission has accused Israel, as well as Hezbollah, of obstructing and harming its forces and infrastructure. Hezbollah's power, meanwhile, has grown, both in its arsenal and as a political influence in the Lebanese state.

Bangladesh Govt Says MEA Statement On Hindu Leader's Arrest 'Unfounded', Contrary To Their Friendship

Dhaka

Bangladesh on Tuesday reacted sharply to the Ministry of External Affairs statement on the arrest of Hindu leader Chinmoy Krishna Das Brahmachari, saying it was "unfounded" and stood contrary to the spirit of friendship between the two countries.

In its statement, Dhaka said it does not interfere with the country's judiciary, which is fully independent.

Bangladesh police on Monday arrested Das, the leader of the Hindu group, Sammilita Sanatani Jote, from the Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport area in Dhaka.

Bangladesh said that "such unfounded statements not only misrepresent facts but also stand contrary to the spirit of friendship and understanding between the two neighbouring countries".

Hours earlier, the MEA had said it has noted with "deep concern the arrest and denial of bail" to Das who is also the spokesperson of the Bangladesh Sammilita Sanatan Jagran Jote.



"This incident follows the multiple attacks on Hindus and other minorities by extremist elements in Bangladesh," it said.

Bangladesh's Ministry of Foreign Affairs said the MEA statement does not reflect the harmony that exists among the peoples of all faiths in the country.

Dhaka said the MEA statement

"completely disregards that the Bangladesh government is determined to end the culture of impunity to the perpetrators of gross human rights violations against the people of the country.

"Bangladesh reaffirms in the strongest terms that every Bangladeshi, regardless of his or her religious identity, has the

right to establish, maintain or perform respective religious rituals and practices or express views without hindrance.

"Ensuring safety and security of all citizens, particularly the members of religious minorities remains a duty of the Government of Bangladesh," it said.

Bangladesh is also committed to upholding communal harmony in the country, it said.

The statement also added that the Bangladesh government is deeply concerned over the brutal killing of advocate Saiful Islam Alif this afternoon in Chattogram.

Authorities have stepped up security in the port city to ensure that religious harmony is maintained at any cost, it added.

Assistant public prosecutor Saiful Islam was killed on Tuesday during clashes between security personnel and followers of the Hindu community leader, who was denied bail and sent to jail by a court in the port city of Chattogram.

Maha triumph

THE pro-incumbency factor proved decisive as the BJP-led Mahayuti recorded a thumping victory in Maharashtra and the JMM-helmed alliance retained power in Jharkhand. INDIA, the Opposition bloc, managed to withstand the saffron onslaught in Jharkhand, but the stunning debacle in Maharashtra — a politically far more important state than the other one — must have hurt badly. For the BJP, which has developed a knack for winning elections against heavy odds, it was a dream outcome in one state and a disappointing one in the other.

Perhaps even die-hard supporters of the BJP would not have anticipated the magnitude of the triumph in Maharashtra. Less than six months ago, the Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) — comprising the Congress, the Nationalist Congress Party (NCP-Sharadchandra Pawar) and the Shiv Sena (Uddhav Balasaheb Thackeray) — had outclassed the BJP and its allies in the Lok

Sabha elections in the state. That impressive performance had raised the MVA's hopes that it could pull off a similar feat in the



Assembly polls. The alliance was undone by overconfidence and disunity, with the Congress failing to learn any lesson from the Haryana shocker. In contrast, Mahayuti went all out to woo voters; welfare schemes such as the women-centric Ladki Bahin

Yojana worked wonders. Moreover, the split in the Shiv Sena and the NCP paid the BJP rich dividends. It's now up to the victorious alliance to ensure that government formation takes place smoothly, unlike the chaos and uncertainty witnessed after the BJP-Shiv Sena combine won the 2019 elections.

The Jharkhand verdict is an endorsement of CM Hemant Soren's tribal-friendly policies. The corruption charges levelled by the Enforcement Directorate against him cut no ice with voters, who resisted the lure of electing a 'double-engine' government. The Congress has done enough to stay in power as a junior ally of the JMM, but the rout in Maharashtra has undermined its position as INDIA's pre-eminent party.

// satyasya paramam nidanam //

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"Life is what happens
when you're busy making
other plans."
-John Lennon

Sambhal mayhem

THE clash between protesters and cops during a court-ordered survey of a Mughal-era mosque in Sambhal district has added another tragic chapter to the annals of communal violence in Uttar Pradesh. The flare-up, which claimed four lives, came two days...

THE clash between protesters and cops during a court-ordered survey of a Mughal-era mosque in Sambhal district has added another tragic chapter to the annals of communal violence in Uttar Pradesh. The flare-up, which claimed four lives, came two days after Friday prayers were held peacefully at the Shahi Jama Masjid amid tight security. A survey had also been conducted there on November 19, with police officials and members of the mosque's management committee overseeing the process. So, why did the situation spin out of control on Sunday despite heavy police deployment?

According to the Moradabad Divisional Commissioner, some people started hurling stones at the



survey team when it was leaving the premises. If this was indeed the case, was the attack premeditated, and who planned it? And

was the response of the police proportionate to the provocation? A fair and transparent probe is needed to answer these questions.

The registration of a case against a Samajwadi Party (SP) MP and an SP legislator's son on the charge of inciting violence has triggered a political slugfest. The SP and its ally in UP, the Congress, have blamed the BJP government for the alleged use of excessive force by the police, while the ruling party has accused local politicians of orchestrating riots and obstructing officials from doing their duty. Considering the sensitivity of the case, political and religious leaders

must exercise restraint in their speeches and actions. Troublemakers and rabble-rousers who are opposing a survey duly ordered by the court should be brought to book. It's the job of the Archaeological Survey of India to scientifically ascertain whether a Hindu temple existed at the site where the mosque is located. At every step, the due process of law has to be followed. The Supreme Court's recent guidelines aimed at curbing 'bulldozer justice' should deter the authorities from resorting to overreach not only during demolition drives but also during surveys and inspections.

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Female vote bank

TWELVE women have been elected to the 81-member Jharkhand Assembly this time, the highest number since the formation of the state in 2000. The talking point though is how women voters, who outnumbered men by nearly six lakh in the turnout, played a key role in propelling

voter group is changing the electoral dynamics, but larger questions remain.

A social security net for those who need it the most is essential, whatever the cost involved and irrespective of the misgivings regarding subsidies. The caveat is to not reduce welfare schemes tailored



the Hemant Soren-led government to its second consecutive term. The clincher, by all accounts, was the Maiya Samman Yojana, providing a monthly assistance of Rs 1,000 to underprivileged women. Months ahead of the polls, a hike to Rs 2,500 was approved from December. If the BJP gained because of its popular Ladli Behna scheme in Madhya Pradesh, in Maharashtra, the Mahayuti coalition's Ladki Bahin Yojana played a pivotal role in its electoral success. It offers Rs 1,500 as monthly direct cash transfer to women heads of households. A pre-election promise was to increase the amount to Rs 2,100. The focus on women as a target

to address women's needs as mere tools of political outreach. An audit of such policy interventions is a must to gauge the impact the schemes are having in lending women agency — financially, in the social realm and in political engagement.

A noticeable change of late has been the bridging of the gender gap in voter turnouts. That said, the arrival of a distinctive women's constituency in Indian politics is still in the works. The passage of the Women's Reservation Bill after a prolonged delay offers hope, but any meaningful outcome requires a sustained commitment to the avowed goals.

DISCIPLINE in India is undergoing a transformative shift. In Faridkot, Punjab, a group of rowdy students, who allegedly endangered police officers during a clash recently, were met with an unusual punishment: a week of assisting the traffic police for two hours daily after school. This innovative disciplinary approach aims to teach civic responsibility while deterring future misconduct. In Srinagar, a tragic car accident involving underage drivers in mid-November led to a crackdown on violations. The authorities seized vehicles and implemented stricter licensing policies while counselling parents and students to address the root causes of rash behaviour. This holistic tactic underscores the

Guiding the way



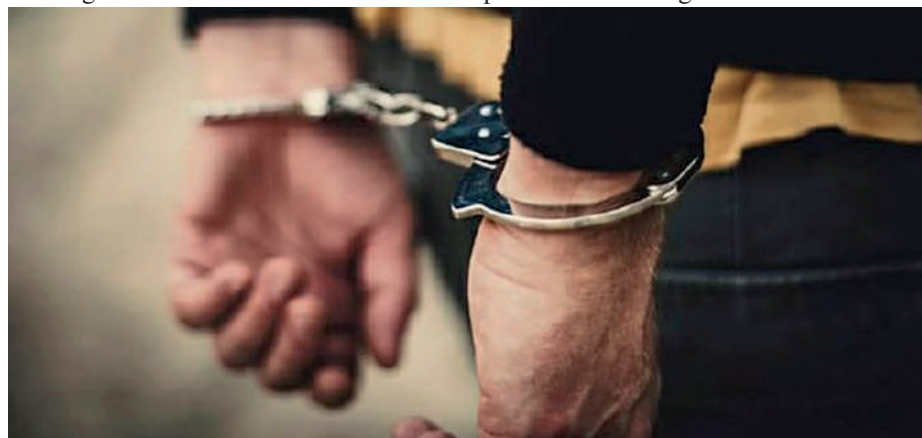
need for behavioural reform rather than mere retribution. In schools, innovative methods are gaining ground. For example, rowdy students in UP schools are assigned such tasks as organising

Minority persecution

THE arrest of Hindu leader Chinmoy Krishna Das in Bangladesh on Tuesday has once again spotlighted the challenges faced by minorities in the country. Das, ISKCON leader and advocate for minority rights, was arrested on charges of sedition after allegedly disrespecting the Bangladeshi flag — a claim his supporters contest. The arrest, coupled with the denial of bail, has sparked widespread protests, both in Bangladesh and across the border in

experienced by minorities in a state where Islam is the official religion.

India's official response to the incident — urging the interim government led by Muhammad Yunus to ensure minority safety and uphold freedom of expression and assembly — reflects its concerns for the region's stability. However, Bangladesh must recognise that addressing these issues is not merely about appeasing international pressure. The long-term solution lies in



India. The context of this unrest lies in a troubling pattern of minority persecution. Despite constitutional assurances of equality, Bangladeshi Hindus, who constitute around nine per cent of the population, frequently endure violence, vandalism and social exclusion. Reports of mob attacks on Hindu homes and temples are alarmingly common, especially during political transitions — as has been seen since Sheikh Hasina's ouster — or communal tensions. While the current unrest ostensibly revolves around Das' arrest, it underscores the broader insecurity

fostering inclusivity, ensuring swift justice for victims of communal violence and protecting the fundamental rights of its citizens, irrespective of faith.

The onus is on Dhaka to restore trust by heeding the calls of groups like the Sammilit Sanatan Jagran Jote, which advocate for special tribunals to expedite justice for victims of persecution. Failing this, the cycle of unrest threatens to escalate, undermining Bangladesh's image as a progressive democracy. Peace and security for all minorities must be a lived reality.

educators must adopt empathetic approaches and parents must support these efforts. Experts from NIMHANS (National Institute of Mental Health and Neurosciences) have stressed the importance of balancing love and limits at home to complement school-based initiatives.

Constructive discipline reflects the society's recognition that youth's missteps often stem from immaturity, not malice. By transforming mistakes into learning experiences, we not only shape better individuals but also foster a more compassionate community. It's time to make responsibility the cornerstone of discipline, steering youth away from chaos and towards civic-mindedness.

books or assisting peers. Meanwhile, creative punishments like rewriting lessons or engaging in debates channel energy constructively and emphasise growth over reprimand.

Discipline should not be about just imposing consequences but also guiding young minds toward self-awareness and societal contribution. Restorative justice, community service and counselling are replacing outdated corporal punishment, which often leaves emotional scars. Nevertheless, these reforms require collective commitment. Policymakers must institutionalise such practices,

NCR's choking reality

THE National Capital Region (NCR) continues to grapple with alarmingly hazardous air quality, a grim reminder of policy failures and recurring complacency. Despite dire warnings and sustained public health impacts, measures remain reactive rather than preventive, exposing millions to toxic air year after year. Recent days have seen the air quality index (AQI) teeter in the "severe" to "severe plus" categories, with readings peaking at 500 — one of the worst levels since 2015. Schools have been shut, work-from-home directives issued and staggered office timings implemented under stage IV of the Graded Response Action Plan (GRAP). However, these are temporary patches on a deeply entrenched problem. The Supreme Court's intervention, calling for stricter implementation of anti-pollution measures, underscores the urgency of action. Yet, questions persist: Why are such measures



not proactive? Why has NCR's air pollution become an annual inevitability rather than an anomaly? Contributors to the crisis are well-documented. Stubble burning, vehicular emissions, dust from construction and industrial pollutants

have aggravated the situation. Adverse weather conditions, including stagnant winds, exacerbate the smog's persistence.

Despite these known factors, long-term solutions remain elusive. Technological interventions, like air

purifiers in schools and homes, or a temporary ban on certain vehicles, only address the symptoms, not the causes. The absence of robust, permanent measures — be it stricter stubble burning regulations, expansion of clean energy use in industries or investment in public transportation — reflects policy inertia. Such piecemeal solutions are no substitute for visionary policymaking.

The Centre and state governments must act collectively, prioritising stricter pollution controls, incentivising clean practices in agriculture and industry and investing in sustainable urban infrastructure. Without such long-term initiatives, the people of NCR will remain condemned to breathing toxic fumes every winter. The time for half-hearted measures is over — what NCR needs is bold, uncompromising action. The turnaround by Mexico City in this matter holds vital lessons for us.

Adani in trouble

THE Adani Group's credibility has come under a cloud for the second time in as many years. While the conglomerate managed to weather the Hindenburg storm to a great extent, it is facing far stronger headwinds this time. The indictment of Gautam Adani, one of the world's richest people, by US prosecutors has made the shares and bonds of the group's firms take a tumble. The group has rejected the allegations of bribery and fraud as 'baseless', but it has to brace itself for what could be a prolonged legal battle.

The development has given the Opposition fresh fodder to target the Narendra Modi government over crony capitalism, while the BJP has trained its guns on parties that were in power in states where government officials allegedly received bribes. A Supreme Court-monitored probe is needed to get to the bottom of this murky matter. It would require close cooperation not only between the Centre and states but also between the Indian and US authorities.

The indictment has also turned the spotlight on the ongoing probe by the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) into US short-seller Hindenburg Research's allegations of "brazen stock manipulation and accounting fraud" by the Adani Group. Ironically, SEBI's



own credibility has taken a hit after its chairperson Madhabi Buch and her husband were accused by Hindenburg of having stakes in obscure offshore entities that were allegedly used in the Adani 'money siphoning scandal'. Can a fair and transparent probe be expected when the investigator itself is under scrutiny? Buch continues to be at the helm of India's market regulator, even as she skipped a crucial meeting of Parliament's Public Accounts Committee last month. There are too many questions awaiting answers, and the Indian government should spare no effort to finally clear the air.

Jokes that hurt

Humour has long served as a means to connect people, break barriers and lighten the burdens of daily life. However, when humour perpetuates stereotypes, particularly about communities, it crosses the line into insensitivity. The ongoing plea in the SC to ban jokes targeting the Sikh community highlights the need to reassess this boundary. For decades, 'Sardar jokes' have been a staple of Indian humour, often portraying Sikhs as intellectually inferior. While such jokes might seem harmless banter to many, their societal impact is far from trivial. The normalisation of these jokes has contributed to bullying in schools and professional spaces, pushing individuals — especially children — to question their identity and heritage. The tragic account of a Sikh boy who took his life after relentless racist bullying in the UK underscores the real-world consequences on mental health of what some dismiss as humour.

The Sikh community, renowned for its resilience and contributions to India's development, finds itself unfairly stereotyped. Many

Sikhs wear their cultural and religious identity with pride, yet they often face ridicule for doing so. This situation reveals a societal paradox where diversity is celebrated superficially but ridiculed in practice. The petitioner, Harvinder Chowdhury, has rightly called attention to the fundamental right to dignity enshrined in the Constitution. The SC's emphasis on sensitising children and encouraging steps to curb such stereotyping reflects an essential shift in addressing societal issues through education. However, the problem extends beyond classrooms. Social media, rife with unchecked content, demands stronger regulation and accountability from various platforms.

Humour must reflect a society that values respect alongside free speech. Creative expression does not necessitate the demeaning of a community. Sensitisation campaigns, digital content filters and penalties for offensive material could pave the way for a more inclusive environment.

No bribery charges against Gautam Adani, nephew: Adani Group on US indictment

New Delhi

Billionaire Gautam Adani and his nephew Sagar Adani have not been charged with any violations of the US Foreign Corrupt Practices Act (FCPA) in the indictment filed by US authorities in a court in a bribery case, the Adani Group said on Wednesday.

Gautam Adani, founder chairman of the ports-to-energy conglomerate, Sagar Adani and another key executive, Vneet Jaain, have been charged by the US Department of Justice with being part of an alleged scheme to pay USD 265 million in bribes to Indian officials to win contracts for supply of solar electricity that would yield USD 2 billion profit over a 20-year period.

In a stock exchange filing, Adani Green Energy Ltd, which

is at the centre of the bribery allegations, said reports claiming that the three have been charged with FCPA violations "are incorrect".

They have been charged with offences that are punishable with a monetary fine or penalty.

"Gautam Adani, Sagar Adani and Vneet Jaain have not been charged with any violation of the FCPA in the counts set forth in the indictment of the US DOJ or civil complaint of the US SEC.

"These directors have been charged on three counts in the criminal indictment, namely (i) alleged securities fraud conspiracy, (ii) alleged wire fraud conspiracy, and (iii) alleged securities fraud," the filing said.

The Adani Group has denied all allegations and said it will take all possible legal recourse

to defend itself.

A criminal indictment has been filed before the United States District Court Eastern District of New York by the Department of Justice in the case of USA against Gautam Adani, Sagar Adani and Vneet Jaain.

"The indictment does not specify any quantum of any fine/penalty," the company said.

The civil complaint alleges that the executives violated certain sections of the Securities Act of 1933 and the Securities Act of 1934, and aided and abetted Adani Green Energy Limited's violation of the Acts, it said.

"Although the complaint prays for an order directing the defendants to pay civil monetary penalties, it does not quantify the amount of penalty," it said.

Vedanta to invest \$2 bn in Saudi copper projects

New Delhi

Vedanta Ltd on Tuesday said it aims to invest \$2 billion in significant copper projects in Saudi Arabia.

A pact was signed by Vedanta Copper International, a wholly-owned arm of Vedanta Ltd, with the Ministry of Investment and Ministry of Industries & Mineral Resources of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to set up a 400 kilo tonne per annum (KTPA) greenfield copper smelter and refinery and a 300 kilo tonne per annum (KTPA) copper rod project.

"This collaboration aims to invest \$2 billion in significant copper projects within the Kingdom, in alignment with Vision 2030," Vedanta said in a statement.

These initiatives support Saudi Arabia's ambitious Vision 2030, which endeavours to unlock an estimated \$1.3 trillion in mineral resources and elevate the minerals sector's GDP contribution from \$17 billion to \$64 billion by 2030, the company said in a statement.

S&P cuts India's growth forecast to 6.7% for FY26

New Delhi

S&P Global Ratings on Monday revised down its estimate for India's economic growth in the next two financial years as high interest rates and lower fiscal impulse temper urban demand.

In an update to its economic forecast for Asia-Pacific economies after US election results, the rating agency projected a 6.7 per cent GDP growth rate in 2025-26 financial year (April 2025 to March 2026) and 6.8 per cent in the following fiscal year, down from 6.9 per cent and 7 per cent, respectively in previous projections.

Finmin: Outlook for coming months cautiously optimistic

New Delhi

India's economic outlook for the coming months is cautiously optimistic, the Ministry of Finance said in its Monthly Economic Review (MER) for October. According to the report, upward pressure is likely to continue on the trade deficit, driven by a faster pace of import growth.

The goods trade deficit — the difference between exports and imports — stood at \$27.14 billion in October, up from \$20.78 billion in September.

According to the report, rising commodity prices, particularly for industrial inputs and metals, are expected to contribute to imported inflation and increase the imports bill. Exports face greater uncertainties influenced by geopolitical risks and the modest monetary policy responses of major global central banks, said the report.

The report also states that, on the external front, India's export recovery may encounter

challenges due to softening demand in developed markets. However, trade in the services sector is sustaining momentum. Recent developments in the ongoing conflict between Russia and Ukraine have also caused some concern in financial markets with safe-haven assets such as US Treasuries and gold finding a bid, the report says.

However, it states that agriculture is likely to benefit from favourable monsoon conditions, increased minimum support prices and adequate supply of inputs. The report also states that bright agricultural production prospects make the inflation outlook benign, despite existing price pressures in select food items. India's retail inflation surged to a 14-month high in October, driven by high vegetable prices. Early November trends signalled moderation in key food prices, though geopolitical factors may continue to impact domestic inflation.

Andhra mulls suspension of Adani power purchase deal

Hydrabad

Andhra Pradesh is likely to suspend a power purchase deal linked to Adani Group due to the US indictment of the group's billionaire founder Gautam Adani over an alleged bribery scheme, two state government sources said.

The southern state will ask the federal government and the Solar Energy Corporation of India (SECI), which awards power supply contracts to companies like Adani, to investigate the charges, the sources said.

The suspension, likely to be announced soon, would be the first such action by a state government

after the US prosecutors charged Gautam Adani and seven others with agreeing to pay bribes of \$265 million to unidentified government officials to obtain solar power-supply contracts.

Most of the alleged bribes - \$228 million - were paid to a government official to get Andhra Pradesh's state electricity distribution companies to agree to purchase power, the US indictment said. Adani has said the allegations are baseless.

The power supply to Andhra Pradesh under the SECI agreement was scheduled to start from next year, according to one of the sources.

"The decision will be taken very soon," another source said about the planned suspension. Adani Group and the Andhra Pradesh Government did not immediately reply to requests for comment.

Reuters reported earlier on Tuesday that Andhra Pradesh was exploring the possibility of cancelling a power supply contract linked to Adani Group.

Andhra Pradesh's previous ruling party - YSR Congress Party - under whose administration the alleged misconduct took place, last week denied any wrongdoing.

UPI fraud cases surge by 85% in current fiscal

Pocket-friendly internet tariff and increased financial inclusion have contributed to the widespread popularity of digital payments across the country. However, this growth has attracted the attention of fraudsters, who are increasingly targeting vulnerable users. According to the data, the UPI(Unified Payments Interface), fraud cases surged by 85 per cent in FY24 compared to FY23. The number of cases rose from 7.25 lakh in FY23

to 13.42 lakh in FY24. Also, the amount involved in fraud increased by 90 per cent. These cases involved a total value of Rs 1,087 crore in FY24, compared to Rs 573 crore the previous year, the data states. In the current fiscal year, there has been 6.32 lakh UPI fraud incidents recorded involving a total value of Rs 485 crore across the country till September. The data was shared by Minister of State for Finance, Pankaj Chaudhary in the Lok Sabha today.

Commercial messages to be traceable from December 1, 2024



New Delhi

Starting December 1, 2024, commercial messages sent by telemarketers or businesses that are not traceable, or do not comply with the new traceability mandate, will be rejected by the telecom system and will not be delivered to subscribers. This directive, issued by the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI), is aimed at improving transparency and security in the telecom ecosystem.

Why was this regulation introduced?

The primary goal of the new regulation is to curb spam and phishing threats, especially those involving the misuse of one-time passwords (OTPs). With fraudulent messages and cyber threats becoming a growing concern, TRAI has mandated all commercial messages sent by businesses or principal entities (PEs), including banks, e-commerce platforms and financial institutions, must be traceable. This means the system should be able to track a message from its sender to the recipient.

Initially, the rules were set to take effect on October 1; however, after requests from telecom operators, the deadline was extended first to November

1 and then again to November 30, providing more time to adjust to the new regulations. Operators such as Airtel, Vodafone-Idea and Reliance Jio raised concerns about the challenges posed by these new rules, particularly regarding the transition of messages from banks, telemarketers and businesses that may not have been fully prepared. TRAI's decision to extend the deadline aimed to strike a balance between regulatory requirements and the operational challenges faced by telecom companies.

What does this mean for telecom subscribers?

For telecom subscribers, this measure is primarily intended to protect against fraudulent messages and phishing attempts. Any commercial message that cannot be verified as traceable will be blocked from reaching users. Given the growing prevalence of spam and fraudulent communications, particularly those attempting to defraud unsuspecting individuals, these regulations will enhance user security and reduce the risk of scams within the telecom industry.

Progress on implementation

As of now, over 13,000 principal entities (PEs) —

including banks, e-commerce platforms and financial institutions — have already registered their message chains with telecom providers. Additional registrations are being processed at an accelerated pace. TRAI has confirmed all access providers have successfully implemented the necessary technical solutions for traceability. To further raise awareness and ensure compliance, TRAI has organized webinars with key stakeholders, including representatives from Centre and state government departments, RBI, SEBI and the Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority. Another awareness webinar is scheduled for November 25 in association with Tata Teleservices Ltd (TTL).

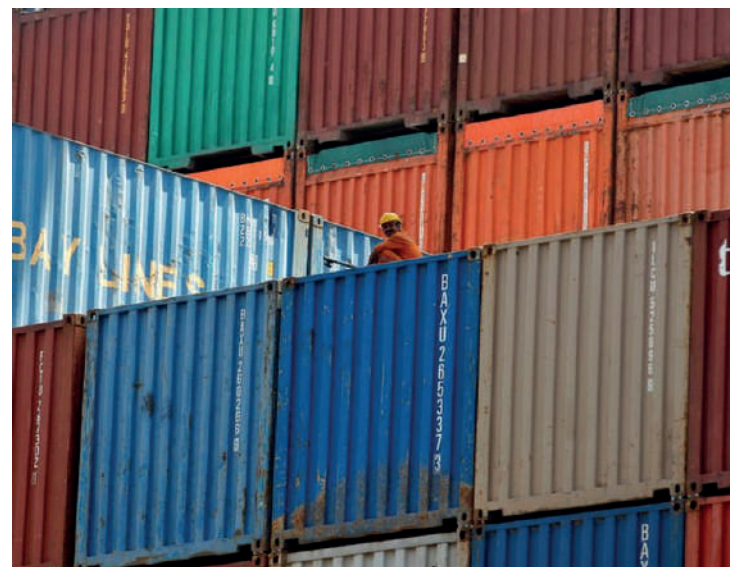
Fast-tracking the registration process

As the December 1 deadline approaches, telecom operators are intensifying efforts to comply with TRAI's mandates. This includes optimising internal processes and ensuring their messaging systems are fully aligned with the new requirements. With the deadline fast approaching, stakeholders in the telecom industry are preparing for a significant transformation in how commercial messages are managed and delivered, with a strong focus on improving consumer protection in an increasingly digital world. Telecom operators have also issued numerous warning notices to Principal Entities (PEs) and Registered Telemarketers (RTMs) who have yet to implement the necessary changes. TRAI has emphasized that any message not adhering to the defined telemarketer chain will be rejected.

Consequences for Non-Compliance

TRAI has made it clear that non-compliance with the new regulations will lead to strict penalties. These could include blacklisting offenders, disconnecting mobile numbers and using a blockchain-based platform for monitoring telemarketing calls. Telecom operators have been warned that they must ensure all PEs and RTMs meet the new standards to avoid disruptions in service.

India's seafood, wine industry grows substantially as exports surge: Centre



New Delhi

India's premium seafood and vibrant wine industry has grown substantially, with seafood exports alone reaching \$7.3 billion in value and 17.81 lakh metric tonnes in volume, the government said on Saturday.

At an event hosted by the Embassy of India in Brussels, India's finest culinary offerings in wine and seafood were showcased to business leaders, trade bodies, marine foods importers, government trade agencies and members of the diplomatic community.

It was organised in collaboration with the Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority (APEDA), and the Marine Products Export Development Authority (MPEDA), according to the Ministry of Commerce and Industry. Saurabh Kumar, Ambassador of India to Belgium, Luxembourg and European Union (EU) highlighted the event's significance in fostering cultural and trade ties. Sunil Barthwal, Secretary, Department of Commerce, spoke about India's dynamic trade landscape and its growing partnership with the European Union, particularly in the seafood and wine sectors.

At the event, the attendees indulged in a carefully-curated menu featuring five premium Indian seafood varieties:

Vannamei shrimp, Black Tiger shrimp, Kingfish (Surmai), Tilapia, and Squid.

These delicacies were expertly paired with wines from Indian vineyards, whose bold reds, crisp whites, and refreshing roses demonstrated the global recognition of India's wine craftsmanship.

The Indian wine industry has grown substantially, with over 24 prominent brands combining global expertise with indigenous traditions.

Reds such as Cabernet Sauvignon, Shiraz, Merlot, and Sangiovese, along with whites like Chenin Blanc, Sauvignon Blanc, and Viognier, were highlighted.

India's total exports reached \$433.09 billion in 2023-2024, with agricultural commodities contributing \$33.24 billion (8 per cent of total exports) and marine exports accounting for \$7.36 billion (22 per cent of agricultural exports) across 132 countries.

With 500 EU-approved firms, India's seafood processing capacity continues to expand, making the EU, India's second-largest seafood market, with annual purchases of \$0.95 billion.

Additionally, India is the EU's second-largest supplier of shrimp, holding an 8 per cent market share, and contributes 12 per cent of the EU's squid imports, according to the ministry.

RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das may secure third term

Mumbai

Reserve Bank of India Governor Shaktikanta Das may continue in his current position once his tenure ends in December.

According to highly placed people aware of the matter, Das is seen as a strong candidate who has handled a sensitive position well.

What is unclear at this juncture is whether he would get a full three-year term. "It is anticipated that he would continue office for two more years after his current term ends on December 12," said a person with knowledge of the matter.

Another person said details of a potential third term for Das are under consideration and may



be announced soon.

"A recommendation from the Ministry of Finance for the reappointment of Das as RBI Governor has been furnished to the Appointments Committee of Cabinet (ACC). The final

decision on this matter is expected soon," said another person aware of the matter.

The people cited say that as the code of conduct was in place until recently for the state elections in Maharashtra and

Jharkhand, it may have delayed the process of reappointing Das as RBI Governor.

With the results of both state elections announced on November 23, a final call on appointing the governor of RBI is anticipated in a week or so.

Spokespersons for the finance ministry and RBI did not respond to queries sent by mail. This story will be updated once they respond.

Reuters was the first to report on November 18 that Das was likely to continue as governor.

The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet (ACC) is part of the Prime Minister's Office, which

handles the appointment of the RBI Governor.

If reappointed, Das would be the second RBI governor whose term has been extended twice. If he gets an extension beyond a year, that will make him one of the longest-serving RBI chiefs.

Das succeeded Urjit Patel as governor and assumed office on December 12, 2018. He was reappointed for a second term after he completed three years as governor in December 2021. For the second year in a row, Das was awarded the top central banker by Global Finance in 2024 and was rated A+ for his leadership in steering the RBI through challenging economic situations.

Insurance Bill allowing 100% FDI, other changes awaits cabinet nod: Report

New Delhi

The Insurance Amendment Bill, which seeks to raise the foreign direct investment (FDI) limit in the sector to 100 percent, is expected to be introduced in Parliament soon, pending approval at the highest levels, The Economic Times has reported.

The proposed amendments aim to raise the FDI cap in the insurance sector from 74 to 100 percent and relax capital requirements for insurers. A key provision of the bill is the introduction of a composite

In addition to the FDI changes, the bill proposes removing the Rs 100-crore minimum paid-up equity capital requirement for life, general and health insurance businesses. This is intended to make it easier for new players to enter the market and increase competition, thereby improving the financial security of policyholders and enhancing the overall efficiency of the industry.

The report added that the amendments also aim to expand the range of insurers



licence, allowing companies to offer life, non-life, and health insurance products under a single licence, the report said.

A government official told ET that the draft of the bill is ready and once final approvals are obtained, it will be presented to the cabinet before being listed in Parliament. The Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDAI) has long advocated for 100 percent FDI in the sector, citing the need for significant capital to meet the government's goal of "insurance for all" by 2047.

eligible for registration, with minimum capital requirements to be set by IRDAI based on different classes of insurers. These changes are designed to encourage more players in the market, boosting economic growth and employment opportunities.

The bill has been in the works since 2022 when the government sought public feedback on proposed changes to the Insurance Act, 1938, and the IRDAI Act, 1999. If the Cabinet clears the bill, it is expected to be introduced in the current session of Parliament.

11 large states see a drop in people employed in manufacturing sector

New Delhi

Half of India's 22 large states have seen a drop in the share of population employed in the manufacturing sector in urban areas from the previous year, a Moneycontrol analysis of the government data released the previous week shows.

In Q2FY25, the manufacturing or secondary sector accounted for 32.31 percent of the total employment across industries, lower than the 32.41 percent a year earlier.

The decline has come from industrialised states such as Tamil Nadu, Telangana, Karnataka, Gujarat and Rajasthan.

The sharpest drop, however, is in Jharkhand, where the share of the population engaged in the secondary sector was down 5 percentage points from the previous year.

Almost 90 percent of the people in Jharkhand shifted to the services sector. In Tamil Nadu, the shift was from manufacturing and primary activities to a services economy.

In contrast, Andhra Pradesh saw a move towards manufacturing, with the share of people employed in the sector rising from 26.7 percent to 32.2 percent.

Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal witnessed a 2.1 percentage point jump in manufacturing employment.

Gujarat had the highest proportion of urban population employed in manufacturing at 42.7 percent, while



Assam and Telangana had the highest share of services sector workers.

Some states saw gains in primary sector employment.

Nearly 40 percent of the states saw a rise in share of population employed in the primary sector activities such as agriculture and fishing in urban areas compared with the previous year.

While Himachal Pradesh, Assam and Jammu and Kashmir were the biggest gainers with the share of people employed in the primary sector rising by at least 1.5 percent during the quarter, Odisha, Kerala, Punjab and West Bengal also witnessed gains in people employed in primary sector work in urban areas.

For most other states, the move was away from agriculture and towards higher remunerative jobs in the manufacturing and services economy.

For instance, in Bihar and Chhattisgarh, the nearly 3 percent decline in jobs in the primary sector was subsumed mainly by the services or the tertiary sector.

What lies ahead: Understanding Trump's return to power

Donald Trump's victory will lead to major changes in almost all policy areas in the United States (US), from tariffs and immigration to the Ukraine war. How they will be prioritised is another matter. Characteristically, Trump also appears to grapple with personal challenges, including a strong inclination to address perceived or actual slights and instances of perceived persecution. The coming Trump era could well be the most unpredictable and disruptive in our times. His appointments indicate that he intends to fulfil his election pledges, especially on immigration.

Beyond policy and personal foibles, the US elections hold immense significance. Till now, the first Trump presidency has often been viewed as an aberration and the Biden term as the norm. Now, however, it is the latter which seems to be a discontinuity. The second Trump term, which has been an all-round victory for the "Make America Great Again" (MAGA) forces, will now be the norm for the US in the near future.

The coming Trump era could well be the most unpredictable and disruptive in our times.

The Trump win was not a defeat of liberalism, with its emphasis on individual rights, the rule of law, and constitutional checks on the state. It was one for neo-liberalism, which pushed globalism, abandoned the working class, and emphasised money-making over everything else. The American working class was wiped out as manufacturing relocated to Asia. Instead of their plight, neoliberal Democrats focused on narrower strands of the deprived—racial minorities, the LGBTQ community, immigrants, and so on. As deprived people, they were often given a leg up, even as the original working class sank and became increasingly susceptible to the appeal of MAGA politics. While this originally attracted the white working class, Trump succeeded in getting the support of the Black and Latino working class as well.

Many people think that Trumpism will be a self-limiting disease. That the impossibility of achieving the contradictory set of objectives it has set for itself will temper Trump's impact.

For instance, take the issue of tariffs. Trump said last month, "tariff is the most beautiful word in the dictionary." Most economists agreed that 10-20 percent tariffs on all imports and 60 percent on Chinese imports will raise prices in the US. There is a school of thought which believes that enacting tariffs will be a negotiating tactic, and nothing more. If this is so, there are two possible outcomes—other countries will lower their trade barriers, or, the more likely outcome, retaliate with their own tariffs. This will lead to an inflationary situation, something that Trump should know proved to be poison for the Democrats in this election.

The big target is Mexico. Trump has declared that he will raise tariffs 200 or 500 percent: "I don't care. I'll put a number where they can't sell one car" (in the US). Currently, Mexico is the US' biggest trade partner and has sold 2.55 million cars in the US in 2023. Tariffs would hit companies like Honda, Toyota, and Volkswagen, but it would also affect American companies like Ford, General Motors (GM), and Stellantis, whose supply chains extend to Mexico, while also using the country as a manufacturing base. For Mexico, it will be a double whammy, since the largest number of undocumented migrants to be deported are from the same country.

Tariffs would hit companies like Honda, Toyota, and Volkswagen, but it would also affect American companies like Ford, General Motors (GM), and Stellantis, whose supply chains extend to Mexico, while also using the country as a manufacturing base.



With regards to immigration, Trump wants to close the border and begin the process of deporting up to 11 million undocumented migrants. He has appointed hard-liners Stephen Miller and Thomas Homan to undertake this task, signalling his intention of fulfilling his campaign promises.

This is no ordinary task as this community is now woven into the US' social and economic fabric. Vice President J. D. Vance has said that the target is to deport some 1 million illegal immigrants per year. Prising them out, setting up detention centres, overcoming legal challenges and encouraging them to return to their homelands could take years. It will also affect the economy since migrants are the backbone of agriculture and construction industries, and their presence has helped keep wages in check. A deportation process is likely to lead to inflation.

In many of these areas, the real question is what Trump will decide to focus on. Apparently, there are no less than 40 agendas he has promised to begin pursuing from his first day in office. Definitely, avenging himself against those he says have persecuted him in the Biden administration will be a priority. Among the targeted persons could be Jack Smith, former Attorney General Merrick Garland, as well as Trump's friends-turned-enemies such as John Kelly, former Joint Chief of Staff, Chairman General Mark Milley, and Liz Cheney. Another strand of his policy will be a change in the rules to allow the firing of any federal official. There could be large-scale firings, accompanied by the appointment of MAGA supporters in their positions.

Foreign policy is an area that will experience a big change. The likely appointment of Senator Marco Rubio as Secretary of State signals a hardline approach. Rubio is known for his hawkish positions on Iran, China, and Venezuela, as well as his support for Israel's campaign in Gaza.

Both the US and European Union (EU)

short-changed the Ukrainians in the last two years through their niggling weapons supply policies.

Ukraine is likely to be a big loser, though the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) could also find itself in crosshairs. Both the US and European Union (EU) short-changed the Ukrainians in the last two years through their niggling weapons supply policies. Now Ukraine may be forced to cede territory to achieve peace, even while NATO's status hangs in the air. JD Vance has suggested that the aim would be to have Russia and Ukraine ceasefire along the current frontlines, which means a loss of around 18 percent of Ukrainian territory that Russia has occupied since 2022. The Vance plan would also guarantee Ukrainian neutrality towards Russia.

As for Israel, Trump will be more supportive of Israeli military activities and would not, like the Biden Administration, use US military assistance as leverage to push Israeli policy in any specific direction. According to the Times of Israel, Trump has told Netanyahu that he wants an end to the Gaza war by the time he takes office on 20 January 2025.

But there are other issues where the US position will benefit Israel as well—particularly, destroying Hezbollah in Lebanon and dealing with Iran. Trump had walked away from the nuclear deal with Tehran and begun a campaign of "maximum pressure," with harsh sanctions to push Iran to end its nuclear programme and its policy of arming regional proxies like Hezbollah and Hamas. There is a lot of talk about Trump's hardline views on China. But people often forget that in January 2020, he willingly signed a trade deal with China. There is no reason to believe that another such deal could not take place and also include the status of Taiwan also in it. America is in trouble. Its polarisation has deepened with this election and Trump's attacks on the government have weakened the important infrastructure of American power.

As for the World Trade Organization (WTO), Trump has ensured that its appellate function was torpedoed in 2016, and now, with a tariff war around the corner, there is little chance that it will be able to do anything about that.

There is little doubt that the West-led multilateral world order that was put in place after World War II is headed for a change. It has been showing strain for some time now, but the MAGA victory could have sounded the death knell.

The UN Security Council (SC) is more or less frozen with the divisions between Russia, China, and the West. As for the World Trade Organization (WTO), Trump has ensured that its appellate function was torpedoed in 2016, and now, with a tariff war around the corner, there is little chance that it will be able to do anything about that.

The Biden administration had strongly backed NATO and America's East Asian allies—Japan, South Korea, Philippines and Australia. In the case of NATO, Trump has questioned whether the US would honour the alliance's mutual defence clause and has actually suggested that he would encourage Russia to "to do whatever the hell they want" to any NATO country that doesn't pay enough.

All this is not necessarily bad. Countries of the Global South could benefit from the US' retreat from its dominant role in world affairs. The new multilateralism fostered by organisations like BRICS could reshape the world to better serve Indian interests. But this is no ordinary task, this new multilateralism will have to go beyond its penchant for declarations and deliver results on the ground.



Election on Paper

In our country, paper voting, i.e., voting through ballot papers, was discontinued nearly twenty years ago. Currently, elections are conducted using Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs). However, opposition parties claim that these machines can be tampered with. Whether this is true or false remains uncertain, and that is the crux of the issue.

In most advanced countries worldwide, voting is still conducted using paper ballots. In India, the government insists that there is no question of tampering with EVMs, while the opposition argues that these machines are riddled with

flaws. Ruling parties claim that when the opposition loses, they cry foul, but when they win, they celebrate their victory as legitimate.

In response, the opposition had approached the Supreme Court, which promptly dismissed their petition. This doesn't mean the opposition's concerns are baseless. It is essential to seriously consider whether a country like India can return to paper ballot voting. Discrepancies between the number of votes cast and counted have been observed on multiple occasions. Yet, no political party, whether ruling or opposition, is openly willing to

address this issue today.

Earlier, the Supreme Court completely rejected the petitioner's plea without showing any consideration. Some lawyers in the Supreme Court are highly aggressive, but the Election Commission appears unwilling to listen to any arguments. Meanwhile, prominent Maharashtra leader Sharad Pawar and other opposition leaders are reportedly assembling a strong team of lawyers. There are even plans for a public movement to raise awareness about the disadvantages and potential fraud associated with EVMs.

The results of Maharashtra's

recent elections have left the opposition parties almost entirely sidelined. Even a nationwide party like the Congress could not win more than 29 out of 288 assembly seats. What does this signify?

To qualify for the status of Leader of the Opposition, a party needs at least 10% of the total members in the legislature. In the 2014 and 2019 general elections, Congress failed to secure even 10% of the seats, which is why it did not get the Leader of the Opposition position in Parliament. However, with around 100 MPs now elected, Congress has become the opposition party in the Lok Sabha by default.

Yet, in the recently held state assembly elections, Congress or any other opposition party failed to elect even 10% of the legislators. This is the reality. Despite any uproar after the results, it seems unlikely to yield any benefit. For the next five years, political parties will have to operate within the current scenario. Complaining after the damage is done serves no purpose—like closing the barn door after the horse has bolted.

Overall, this is a critical issue, presenting significant challenges for both the ruling and opposition parties. What happens next? Only time will tell.

MNS, Vanchit, Chhatrapati, and Kadu

The commotion that had been ongoing for the past month has now subsided. However, Maharashtra has delivered a verdict that has sidelined several major political parties, leaving them bitter. This has stirred unease within us. Let us review the situation one by one.

First on the list is the Maharashtra Navnirman Sena (MNS)*. Known for his aggressive style and deep connection with the public, Raj Thackeray, along with Eknath Shinde, who broke away from Shiv Sena two and a half years ago, managed to sideline Uddhav Thackeray. Despite this, all the aspiring candidates from Raj Thackeray's party reportedly ended up in tears.

Raj Thackeray had severed ties with the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and fielded several strong candidates, including his own son, in the elections. His campaign speeches criticized every other party in the state as incompetent. Once, MNS had won 13 MLAs and taken control of Nashik Municipal Corporation. Nostalgic about these achievements, Raj dreamt of conquering Maharashtra. Unfortunately, these grand ambitions failed



to resonate with the people. This is indeed unfortunate for both him and Maharashtra. Although MNS didn't win any seats, Raj Thackeray remains a formidable figure with unmatched oratory skills, reminiscent of Acharya Atre or Atal Bihari Vajpayee. While success eluded him this time, the people of Maharashtra should recognize his potential. Surely, his moment will come.

The second party is the Vanchit Bahujan Aghadi (VBA), led by Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's grandson, Prakash Ambedkar. His stance has often been one of "neither

you nor me," and he has roped in many followers in Maharashtra into his electoral strategies. During the Lok Sabha elections, he demanded 12 seats but failed to secure even one, including his own. Previously, at a Congress rally in Mumbai, he vacillated before finally delivering a speech.

His refusal to compromise for a few seats persisted in the assembly elections. If his party had refrained from contesting, Congress might have won a few more seats and even secured the Leader of the Opposition position. But

due to VBA's involvement, Congress and others remained deprived of that chance.

The third in line are the Chhatrapati family's heirs and Bacchu Kadu. Despite their efforts to leave a mark in the assembly elections, their performance was lackluster. After aligning with Guwahati's group, Kadu Saheb was granted a ministerial position. However, despite all his maneuvers, he couldn't secure any significant gains. Similarly, Sambhaji Raje from the Chhatrapati lineage also failed to make an impact.

Apart from these three, Manoj Jarange-Patil, who had initially created a stir with his fiery rhetoric, also failed to deliver the anticipated blow to major political leaders. It now seems he, too, has lost momentum.

The current state and direction of Maharashtra's politics are perplexing even to those who have been in the game for years. Beyond these prominent names, smaller coalitions, such as one in Palghar and others across districts, also tried their luck. However, these minor alliances disappeared without a trace in the face of larger coalitions.

Meanwhile, BJP's youth wing triumphed, tied closely to the ruling coalition. The so-called "big parties" were swept away by the whirlwind of the alliance. Many had no choice but to retreat to their corners. Now, Maharashtra's grand alliance seems poised to accelerate its agenda, with significant plans and funds expected to reach the people.

With this, we bid a respectful farewell to all political parties, hoping that they will continue to strive for Maharashtra's progress.

India-China border agreement: A case for military buildup



With India and China reaching a limited agreement on the disengagement from and patrolling of the Depsang Bulge and Demchok areas in eastern Ladakh, there is widespread jubilation in some quarters. The celebration of this breakthrough announced on 21 October 2024, should be tempered by the reality that there is still a significant amount of disengagement, de-escalation, and de-induction of forces to be completed by New Delhi and Beijing. Pending further negotiations, under the latest agreement, the following friction points were left out—Galwan Valley (PP 14), Pangong Tso (North and South Banks), Gogra (PP 17A) and Hotsprings (PP 15). These four areas are currently under buffer zones that prohibit patrolling, meaning the status quo ante, has not been restored completely. Meanwhile, with Depsang and Demchok, India and China have agreed to “coordinated patrolling,” which one analyst described as an “innovation.” This is misleading and deceptive because it is not an innovation, but a restriction on patrolling. There are three patrolling restrictions under the latest agreement.

Firstly, each patrol team cannot exceed 14 troops. Secondly, the other side must be notified before embarking on a patrol.

Thirdly, the number of patrols that Indian and Chinese forces can conduct cannot exceed two or three every month, to all the points they deem part of their territory in Depsang and Demchok. Indeed, though India can patrol areas in Demchok, it is not permitted to patrol Charding La—a key pass. In addition, there is a quid pro quo. Just as India has gained patrolling access to Demchok and Depsang up to Patrolling Points (PP) 10, 11, 11A, 12, and 13, which it last secured access to in January 2020, China has gained a reciprocal concession by way of an “escorted patrol” in the Yangste area of Arunachal Pradesh, as well as another location. These patrolling restrictions did not apply under the terms of the 1993 and 1996 agreements. Further, these “innovations” are ultimately a concession to the Chinese because most of the territory that the Chinese occupied in April-May 2020 was primarily India-dominated, if not India-controlled, territory.

Beijing has numerous opportunities to rake up trouble along the entire stretch of the 3,500 kilometres of contested boundary between India and China.

The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) maintains that “...verification patrolling has commenced on mutually agreed terms

in Demchok and Depsang.” Nevertheless, restrictive conditions have been built into this agreement, in a quest to avoid clashes between Chinese and Indian forces. Only time will tell whether this arrangement will deliver the stabilising impact that the Modi government claims it is intended to achieve. Theoretically, clashes could still occur even under the new patrolling arrangement. Beijing has numerous opportunities to rake up trouble along the entire stretch of the 3,500 kilometres of contested boundary between India and China. India has had to accept these restrictive conditions as the price for resuming a limited patrolling agreement at Demchok and the Depsang Plains. The Chinese have compelled India to accept a shift in the terms of prior patrolling arrangements, and India’s consent implies a tacit acceptance of China’s case that earlier patrolling arrangements—as a result of agreements in 1993, 1996, 2005, and 2012—were unworkable or ineffective. Where does that leave India’s quest to restore the status ante of April 2020? Despite the Modi government’s impressive infrastructure build-up along the Sino-Indian boundary, which was one of the key reasons for the Chinese precipitating the ongoing boundary crisis, has New Delhi conceded to

Beijing’s demands that it will limit further infrastructure development, especially the Darbuk-Shyok-Daulat Beg Oldie (DBO) road? The government will have to come clean and clarify these matters. To its credit, the Modi government has invested heavily in border infrastructure and introduced vital changes in the military command structure. Under the interim budget in February 2024, the government has allocated more capital to the Border Roads Organisation (BRO) to beef up infrastructure in critical parts along the Sino-Indian border, such as the Nyoma Airfield in Ladakh, Shinku La Tunnel in Himachal Pradesh, the Nechiphu Tunnel in Arunachal Pradesh and several others. Supplementing this infrastructure build-up, visible change is underway in the Indian Army’s conversion of its Headquarters Uttar Bharat (HQ-UB) into a new comprehensively operational Corp. This change is geared toward shifting the focus from the peacetime duties of the HQ-UB, which is now a Corps, to a Line of Actual Control (LaC) in the Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand sectors. These are very indispensable and laudable measures. Although the government is performing commendably on these two metrics, it is insufficient.

Engagement with Beijing without militarily equipping the Indian armed forces with additional capabilities conveys weakness.

Although the Modi government’s work on India’s border infrastructure paved the way for India’s military mobilisation against China’s annexation of Indian territory in April-May 2020, it has to do more to accumulate military strength through additional capital expenditure. Since 2017, well before the eruption of the current boundary crisis between India and China, there has not been significant growth in the defence budget, especially in capital acquisitions. Growth has been primarily in revenue expenditure which covers pensions, allowances, salaries and so on. This high growth of revenue spending is also driven by “One Rank, One Pension” (OROP). Even with the introduction of the Agnipath recruitment scheme, cost savings that are intended to help pay for capital acquisitions in the armed services, will not reap benefits until many years later. Engagement with Beijing without militarily equipping the Indian armed forces with additional capabilities conveys weakness. It will run the risk of inviting more crises and possibly a serious military conflagration with the People’s Republic of China (PRC).

The escalation matrix in Ukraine

With the Biden administration giving the green light for Ukraine to strike targets deep inside Russian territory, the war between Russia and Ukraine is poised to intensify. Washington has permitted Kyiv to use the Army Tactical Missile System (ATACMS) missiles which have a range of 300 kilometres (km). Paired to this approval is another shift in Washington's decision to supply anti-personnel mines as part of new military assistance worth nearly \$300 million. Several western embassies have been shut as a significant escalation is expected in the coming days with Russia stockpiling missiles and carrying out its biggest aerial attack on Ukraine in the past three months. Russia has published a decree, lowering the threshold for the use of nuclear weapons, in a clear warning to Europe and America not to allow longer-range missile strikes on Russian territory. It is hard not to conclude that the outgoing Biden administration's decision to loosen Ukraine's use of US and allied supplied missile and weapons are intended to bolster Kyiv's position on the battlefield before President Biden leaves office. Further, after dithering for several months due to fears of escalation, Washington's approval of Ukraine's use of key American-supplied weapons also comes against the backdrop of Donald Trump's re-election earlier this month as the soon to be 47th President of the US. To some extent, trepidation about the incoming President undercutting and abandoning Ukraine explains Washington's decision to extend greater military support to Ukraine that the latter had been persistently demanding for nearly three years.

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On the other hand, Washington's consent to supply these capabilities to Kyiv immediately after a bitterly fought presidential election has resulted in some pushback with Donald Trump Jr — the President-elect's son — stating that the outgoing President is bent on starting World War III before giving his father a "... chance to create peace and save lives". Biden's decision to revise the policy on weapon supplies and use also comes a little late for Kyiv to make concrete military



and battlefield gains, which Biden's Republican critics have highlighted. The problem is not the supply of these capabilities, but the timing which has evoked criticism from Biden's domestic critics for both political as well as military reasons. Nevertheless, the ATACMS supplied by the US and now being used by Ukraine are a longer-range variant of the missile that America supplied in 2023. Accompanying ATACMS is also the supply of British Storm Shadow and French Scalp air-launched subsonic missiles with a range of roughly 250 km to strike deep Russian static targets. Supplementing these missile capabilities is another change in Biden's policy clearance for the supply and permission for Ukraine's use of anti-personnel mines. These missile systems, coupled with the anti-personnel mines, are a shot in the arm for Kyiv. But the key challenge for the Ukrainians following fetters being lifted on the new long-range weapons that they have received is to hold on to their gains in Kursk which they occupied after a surprise attack inside Russia in August. In addition, their task is to prevent the loss of additional territory inside Ukraine. As the Biden administration ceases to be in control of the White House after January 20, 2025, the Ukrainians are compelled to consolidate

existing battlefield gains or even recapture lost territory and stall Russian advances westward, which have acquired some momentum and intensity. Although the Russians have made territorial gains in Ukraine over the last few months, they have been mostly limited and incremental, demonstrating that in the ongoing war battle lines have not been easy to shift.

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The Ukrainian incursion and occupation of Kursk has compelled Russia to turn to North Korea for troops who have been deployed and are now fighting alongside Russian forces to retake the region. The Russians, for their part, have made it clear that Kyiv's Western allies' assent to strike deep inside their territory is a red rag, and Russia will be compelled to consider the use of nuclear weapons. Moscow is seeking to deter Kyiv and its Western allies, warning for months that strikes deep inside Russian territory enabled by the US, France, and the UK will make them parties to the war. One consequence of this threat is that

Western governments including the US have shut down their diplomatic missions in Ukraine following the latter's employment of ATACMS. The Russians may extend, albeit remotely, the threat to territory in Poland or Moldova through which Ukraine-bound Western weapon supplies transit. More prominently and menacingly, the Russians have lowered the threshold for nuclear use in response to a conventional attack following Kremlin's issuance of a decree in the last few days. It marks a shift from the 2020 doctrine that stated that Moscow would only use atomic weapons if it were struck by nuclear weapons or the Russian state's existence was threatened by a conventional attack. The deterrence balance has not shifted at the nuclear level, notwithstanding Moscow's latest decree and the US declaring that it has not changed its nuclear posture because of Moscow's decree. Moscow's nuclear threat is intended to limit Kyiv's conventional offensive and dilute allied military support for Ukraine. However, the intensity of the conventional war will acquire greater strength and the burden of escalating will be on Moscow as all sides prepare to maximise their gains ahead of Trump taking office.

'And it's a wrap': Kajol celebrates completion of new project



Bollywood actress Kajol has penned a heartwarming note for the team of her upcoming project after wrapping it up. Kajol took to Instagram, where she shared a string of pictures cutting a cake with the entire cast and crew of the yet-untitled project.

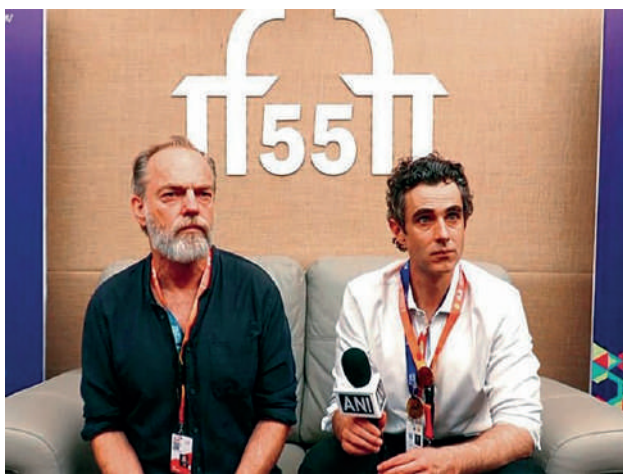
Alongside the project, she wrote: "Aaaaaaaaand it's a wrap. Another project done.. another family disbanded.. another marathon finished.. so grateful to all these people for this awesome, amazing experience! @senguptajishu Aseem Hatangdi @ashesinwind And Bina aunty you missed the cake and the picture but we will miss u more. See u all soon." The actress did not share what she shot for.

On the work front, Kajol recently appeared in the film 'Do Patti', where she played the role of a police officer. The thriller also starred Kriti Sanon and Shaheer Sheikh.

Hugo Weaving on how Satyajit Ray introduced him to Indian cinema

Actor Hugo Weaving, renowned for his portrayal of the iconic villain Agent Smith in the Matrix franchise, spoke about his latest film The Rooster and shared how legendary filmmaker Satyajit Ray introduced him to Indian cinema. The film is directed by Mark Leonard Winter.

In a conversation, Weaving revealed why he chose to work on the film. "I loved the script. Mark and I have worked together numerous times and got on very well. We've



had many wonderful discussions about films, filmmaking, acting, and character, and we just enjoyed each other's company. Mark drew me to the film, and then Mark's words drew me to the character," he said during the 55th International Film Festival of India (IFFI) in Goa.

The Matrix star also shared how Satyajit Ray influenced his appreciation for Indian cinema. "I actually remember watching his films when I was 16. I absolutely loved them."

When Amitabh Bachchan was mistaken for tennis legend Vijay Amritraj



In the upcoming episode of 'Kaun Banega Crorepati 16', Amitabh Bachchan recalls a humorous incident when he was mistaken for tennis legend Vijay Amritraj. During a conversation with contestant Premswaroop Singh Negi, a retired General Officer from Delhi, Bachchan shared how two American women mistook him for the former tennis star during a trip to New York.

The conversation began when Premswaroop, an avid tennis fan and player, expressed his love for the sport and mentioned that he had attended a tennis tournament. In response, Amitabh smiled and said, "Novak Djokovic is my favorite. He plays with such elegance and even has a knack for mimicking other players."

As the discussion continued, Bachchan fondly recalled the amusing incident from his visit to New York to watch a tennis match. He said, "I was sitting there with some fellow Indians,

and they recognized me and asked for an autograph. But what happened next was rather amusing. Two American women, sitting nearby, looked at me a few times and then said, 'It's a pleasure to meet you, Vijay Amritraj'."

He continued, "They assumed I was Vijay Amritraj, a former Indian tennis player, probably because I was Indian; our height is kind of similar and they figured if I was surrounded by people asking for autographs, I must be a famous tennis player too. I simply smiled and said, 'I'm not a tennis player. I'm just here to watch the match.' I didn't go any further and didn't tell them who I really was."

Last week, Abhishek Bachchan appeared on the show to promote his film 'I Want To Talk'. In a light-hearted moment, the actor revealed his father Amitabh's tendency to "borrow" items from his wardrobe.

Anushka Sharma's bag is full of surprises



Actress Anushka Sharma recently gave her fans a delightful and quirky peek into her life by sharing a video of what's inside her bag. The actress posted the video on her Instagram handle and wrote, "Don't pack light. Things are about to get wild. #UnleashYourWildSide."

In the clip, the 'PK' actress starts by pulling out a funky black face mask. Next, Anushka

pulls out a blueprint, making fans wonder whether it's a top-secret project or just something she's carrying for fun. She then surprises by pulling out a wig. The fun continues when she reveals carrying a moustache.

The video ends with Anushka saying, "Can't have enough of those..." The 'Sultan' actress looks uber cool in a loose fitted blue and white checkered t-shirt with

comfy yellow trousers and blue sneakers.

On the professional front, Anushka is all set to return to acting with the upcoming biopic 'Chakda Xpress' where she plays the role of Indian cricketer Jhulan Goswami. The upcoming movie is backed by her brother Karnesh Sharma and directed by Prosit Roy.

Priyanka Chopra Jonas braves London rain for 'Citadel 2' Shoot



Actress Priyanka Chopra Jonas shared a glimpse of a “chilling” picture of herself all soaked up as she shot for a rain scene in London in November.

Priyanka took to her Instagram stories, where she shared several pictures and clips. The first was a hallway covered with blood and she asked “What do you think is happening in this episode of Citadel 2?”

She also shared a picture of herself covered with jackets and hot water bottle to keep herself warm after shooting for a rain scene. The actress looks visibly cold as she smiled at the camera. For the caption, she wrote: “When it's a rain scene in November in London.”

A few days ago, Priyanka took to Instagram, where she shared a

gamut of images, where she had the sun rays fall on her perfect skin.

In the last two pictures, the actress, who is seen in a burgundy outfit standing and striking a pose for the camera as the sun added the perfect natural lighting to the photographs. It was the same outfit she shared her latest pictures as she shot for a rain sequence. “Playing with the sun...,” she wrote as the caption.

On the professional front, Priyanka, who was last seen in Sam Heughan and Celine Dion-starrer ‘Love Again’, is all set to be seen in the series ‘Citadel 2’. In the actioner, Priyanka will reprise her role as the fiery Nadia. Actor Richard Madden will also return. Other details about the second installment are still under wraps.

Ranbir Kapoor announces Raj Kapoor Film Festival at IFFI 2024

Bollywood star Ranbir Kapoor on Sunday announced that a film festival showcasing restored movies of his grandfather, veteran filmmaker Raj Kapoor, will be held across the country to celebrate his birth centenary in December. Ranbir was in conversation with filmmaker Rahul Rawail at the 55th International Film Festival of India (IFFI) in Goa to honour Raj Kapoor, ahead of his 100th birth anniversary on December 14.

The National Film Development Corporation of India (NFDC), National Film Archives of India (NFAI), and Film Heritage Foundation (FHF) and his uncle Kunal Kapoor have started restoring 10 films of Raj Kapoor, the actor said.

“We are going to organise the Raj Kapoor Film Festival from December 13 to 15 all over India. We will show the restored version of his 10 films,” Ranbir said to a jam-packed auditorium at the Kala Academy in Panaji.

Neena Gupta enjoys butter-laced parantha for breakfast

Veteran actress Neena Gupta recently gave her fans a sneak peek into her breakfast indulgence. Sharing a photo on her Instagram handle, the actress revealed her love for a classic Indian favorite—parantha generously topped with butter.

She dropped an image of plate loaded with a paratha and butter. For the caption, she wrote, “A very very good morning.”

Known for her love for traditional Indian food, the ‘Badhaai Ho’ actress often highlights the joy of homemade delicacies through her posts.

Previously, Gupta posted a video of her profound words of wisdom with her daughter, designer Masaba Gupta, reflecting on motherhood, resilience, and the remarkable inner strength of women. In the video, Masaba could be heard asking her mother, “Mom, what is that one line you keep telling me every time I cry for no reason?”

Neena replied with a touching story from her own experience as a new mother. The actress



stated, “I remember when you were born, and I was in so much pain. I was all alone, and I had this terrible headache. But I had to feed you, so I breastfed you while tears streamed down my face from the pain.”

Neena also quoted a famous line from Hindi poetry. “Nari teri yahi kahani, aanchal mein hai doodh aur aankhon mein

paani.” The 65-year-old actress delved into the profound meaning behind the quote, highlighting the unparalleled strength of women.

She said, “It signifies that, no matter how challenging the circumstances, a woman possesses an extraordinary capacity to care for and nurture others. A woman is a fighter, capable of overcoming any obstacle.”

On the professional front, Neena Gupta has an exciting lineup of projects ahead. She is set to feature in ‘Metro... In Dino’, ‘Pachhattar Ka Chhora’, and ‘Hindi Vindi’.

Neena recently made her Malayalam OTT series debut with ‘1000 Babies’, which was released on October 18. She played the role of Sara Ousep, a former nurse with a dark past in the show.

Ayushmann credits Arijit Singh for launching his live singing journey

Actor Ayushmann Khurrana has talked about how singer Arijit Singh was the reason behind him doing his first ever live singing performance, that too in the US with the venue having over 50,000 people.

Ayushmann said: “I always used to think I am good as an actor, I can sing as part of films – but doing an onstage performance in front of thousands of people was never a thought. I always thought I am more of an actor than a singer.

He credited Arijit for his first music performance.

“Dallas has a Diwali Mela that they host every year and after the success of Vicky Donor and winning the Filmfare for Best Singer – Arijit called me in 2013. He had a performance at the Mela but due to an emergency he couldn't make it, but his band had



reached Dallas and he requested me to go perform there.”

Ayushmann said: “I explained that I never had thought of this and I always sang to myself, or for my friends at a party. He really requested and since I have also always been a fan of him, so

I eventually gave in and agreed.”

Talking about his experience for his first ever live singing performance, Ayushmann said, “I went for the concert and the stadium was full, with almost fifty thousand people! I was taken aback, from a drawing room performance to this, it was a major shift.”

“There were some 10 songs along with Arijit's band that was great and everyone loved the performance, the response was great! After this, I just enjoyed this so much that I knew I had to make my own band and do live singing, so the credit goes to Arijit Singh for this!”

Ayushmann's next projects include “Thama”, from Maddock's horror-comedy universe which was recently announced and an untitled project with Dharma and Sikhya Productions.

Athiya Shetty lauds husband KL Rahul: The one who never gives up



Mumbai

After Team India openers Yashasvi Jaiswal and KL Rahul broke records with an unbeaten opening partnership of 201 runs during the first Test of the 2024 against Australia, the latter's wife and actress Athiya Shetty heaped praise on her husband.

Athiya took to her Instagram stories, where she shared a picture of Rahul from the cricket ground in Perth. Jaiswal and Rahul's partnership turned out to be the highest-ever opening stand for India in Australia, crossing the previous record of 191 runs set by Sunil Gavaskar and Kris Srikkanth at Sydney in 1986.

"The one who never gives up, never backs down," she wrote for Rahul, whom she married in 2023.

According to reports, Yashasvi Jaiswal and KL Rahul now rank sixth among overall Indian partnerships in Australia, topped by the iconic VVS Laxman and Sachin Tendulkar.

Earlier this month, the couple took to their respective Instagram handles and announced that they are set to welcome their first child in

2025.

They shared a note that read, "Our beautiful blessing is coming soon. 2025." The announcement post was accompanied by the visuals of little feet and an evil eye emoji.

In April this year, rumours swirled about Athiya expecting her first child after her father, Suniel Shetty, made a "nana" comment on a popular dance reality show. His remarks sparked widespread speculation that Athiya and KL Rahul might soon welcome a baby.

Although neither the couple addressed the pregnancy rumours publicly, a source clarified that the news was untrue and that Athiya was not expecting at the time.

For the uninitiated, Athiya and Rahul first met in 2019 through a mutual friend, and two instantly clicked. Their connection deepened over the years, and after dating for several years, they tied the knot in 2023. The intimate wedding ceremony was held at Suniel Shetty's farmhouse in Khandala, and it was attended by close family and friends.

India's Perth triumph: Bumrah's blitz leaves Aussies clueless



Perth

India's ambush of Australia at Perth Test is going to stay in memory for long. The hosts would never have imagined that they would be treated so shabbily by an opposition in their own den deemed hitherto almost impregnable. More so by India, who were yet to recover from the 3-0 ignominy they suffered in the recent home series against New Zealand.

Like a bolt from the blue, Australia crashed to 295-run defeat in less than four days in the series opening Test of the Border-Gavaskar Trophy at Perth on Monday.

Though there were certain sterling performances like by opener Yashasvi Jaiswal (161) and K L Rahul (77), and equally valuable contributions from debutants Nitish Reddy and Harshit Rana, it was the stand-in skipper Jasprit Bumrah who bowled impeccable bowling spells and made the victory truly remarkable.

As he has been doing over the years, Bumrah, saddled with the additional responsibility of leading the team in the absence of regular skipper Rohit Sharma, dished out another dream performance as Australia crashed to their second biggest defeat at this venue in terms of runs in the last 40 years. That the victory has come at Perth, the venue tailored to suit Australian fast bowlers more, makes it sweeter.

The sight of Bumrah, coming charging in and hurling thunderbolts to rival batsmen forcing them to make one error after the other, was too gratifying. The domination enjoyed by Bumrah with the ball was so complete that rival batsmen looked not tentative but timid while facing him.

First destroying Australia with five-wicket haul in the first innings giving away virtually nothing, Bumrah returned to jolt the hosts batting line-up again in the second innings just before stumps on the third day of the play, sending back debutant opener N McSweeney and M Labuschagne in a jiffy.

With 12 runs on the board and three down (Pat Cummins was scalped by Mohammad Siraj), the Australians found themselves thrust into a hole as the Indians were assured of victory at stumps on the third day itself. Man-of-the-match Jasprit Bumrah

took eight wickets as Australia were skittled for 104 and 238 in both the innings.

Accolades started pouring in for the premier fast bowler in the world. Also to join the chorus of praise for the India bowling spearhead was rival skipper Pat Cummins, who stated, "He's one of the best in the world. He's always going to be a challenge, so we got to come up with ways to combat that. I thought particularly that Day 1, his spell, the spell from the Indian guys, made it tricky for our team to navigate through. He bowled well through the game, like he does most games."

The two debutant Nitish Reddy and Harshit Rana, whose selection to the squad had raised eyebrows, also came good and justified their selection. While Reddy came up with gutsy knocks in both the innings, lanky pacers Rana supported Bumrah and Siraj admirably well, scalping four wickets in the match. They showed that given longer run, they have it in them to serve the nation.

Displaying maturity beyond his years, Jaiswal played an innings worth remembering for long and joined the select band of cricketers scoring a century in his first Test in Australia. Rahul himself batted admirably and notched up a resolute 77 during a 201-run opening stand in the second innings. But it was batting maestro Virat Kohli (100 not out), whose timely return to form put the issue beyond the Australians.

With their ego pricked at Perth, the mighty Australians are sure to come hard at Indians. They are an opposition known to thrive while facing challenges.

On their part, India will be bolstered by the return of regular skipper Rohit Sharma and the likely return of Shubman Gill. India have a tour game in between to get ready for the task at hand. Rohit has already joined the Indian squad and will be too keen to open the team for the second Test. An engrossing contest is on the cards as the two rivals square off in the day/night second Test starting from December 6 at Adelaide.

National Anti-Doping Agency suspends Bajrang Punia for 4 years

New Delhi

The National Anti-Doping Agency on Tuesday suspended Bajrang Punia for four years for his refusal to provide his sample for dope test on March 10 during selection trials for the national team.

NADA had first suspended the Tokyo Games bronze medallist wrestler on April 23 for the offence following which the world governing body UWW had also suspended him.

Bajrang had appealed against the provisional suspension and NADA's Anti-Disciplinary Doping Panel had revoked it on May 31. NADA, on June 23, served the notice to the wrestler.

Bajrang, who joined Congress along with fellow wrestler Vinesh Phogat and was given charge of All India Kisan Congress, had challenged the charge on July 11 in a written submission following



which hearings were held on September 20 and October 4.

The suspension means that Bajrang will not be able to return to competitive wrestling and apply for a coaching job abroad, if he aspires to.

Bajrang has maintained since the beginning that he was given extremely prejudicial and unfair treatment with respect

to doping control because of his involvement in the protest against former WFI president Brij Bhushan Sharan Singh.

Bajrang also maintained that he never refused to give sample but only demanded to know NADA's response to his email where he sought answer why expired kits were sent to take his samples in December 2023.

World Athletics boss meets sports minister for 2036 Olympics talks



New Delhi

World Athletics President Sebastian Coe met Sports Minister Mansukh Mandaviya here on Monday and discussed India's intent to host the 2036 Olympics along with development of athletics in the country.

Coe later also had an "informal" meeting with PM Narendra Modi but the details of their interaction are not known,

a top Athletics Federation of India source said. He left for Mumbai late in the evening flight.

The British great is currently in the race to become the next President of the IOC and the visit, it is believed, is part of his campaign to drum up support for that.

"Dr Mandaviya spoke about India's resolve to host a sustainable, inclusive, and inspiring Games, and added that our ambition to host Olympics 2036 reflects the widespread support at every level — government, industry, and society — for showcasing India's cultural heritage and sporting capabilities at the world stage," a press release from the sports ministry stated.

Gambhir flies back home for "personal emergency", to rejoin in Adelaide

Perth

India head coach Gautam Gambhir has flown back home with his family due to a "personal emergency" and is unlikely to rejoin the squad before the second Test against Australia, beginning December 6 in Adelaide.

Gambhir will skip India's two-day pink ball warm-up game against Prime Minister's XI in Canberra starting November 30.

"He left with his family on early Tuesday morning for India. It is an unavoidable personal emergency. He will be back in Adelaide before the start of the second Test match," a BCCI official said on conditions of anonymity.

The Indian team will leave for Canberra on Wednesday, where it is expected to attend an official reception by Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese.

The two-day match will be crucial preparation for the side as the second Test is going to be a day-night game. The pink



Kookaburra ball will be used during the clash.

Prime Minister's XI will be led by all-rounder Jack Edwards and it is a squad full of youngsters, along with a few Test-capped internationals like Scott Boland and Matthew Renshaw.

The rules of the game will be decided by the two teams and it is expected that everyone will bat and bowl as it does not have an official status.

Goodbyes are never easy: Rishabh Pant pens emotional farewell note to Delhi Capitals

New Delhi

After joining Lucknow Super Giants (LSG) at the Indian Premier League (IPL) 2025 mega-auction, Rishabh Pant penned an emotional farewell note for his former team Delhi Capitals.

Pant became the most expensive player in the history of the Indian Premier League (IPL), being bought by the Lucknow-based franchise for a massive Rs 27 crores during the ongoing Indian Premier League (IPL) mega auction.

In 111 matches for DC, Pant scored 3,284 runs at an average of 148.93, with a century and 17 fifties to his name. His best score is 128. He is the franchise's leading run-getter.

Under his captaincy, DC reached playoffs in 2021, but could not progress beyond league stages in 2022 and 2024.

Pant took to his official social media handle to post "goodbyes are never easy." "Goodbyes are never easy. The journey with Delhi Capitals has been nothing short of amazing. From the thrills on the field to the moments off it, I've grown in ways I never imagined. I came here as a teenager and grew together over the last nine years," Pant wrote.

He added that the fans have made his journey with Delhi Capitals all worthwhile.

"What made this journey all worthwhile is you, The fans. You've embraced me, cheered for me and stood by me in one of the toughest phased of my life," he added.

The wicketkeeper-batter added that he will look forward to entertaining the fans whenever he takes the field.

"As I move on, I carry your love and support in my heart. I'll look forward to entertain you whenever I take the field. Thank you for being my family and making this journey so special," he further added.

The India wicketkeeper-batter beat compatriot Shreyas Iyer, who had just become the most expensive player in the league's history, going to Punjab Kings (PBKS) for Rs 26.75 crores a few minutes back. He had beaten Australia's Mitchell Starc, who marked his return to



IPL after years with a record-breaking bid of Rs 24.75 crores.

Initially, there was a bidding war between LSG and Royal Challengers Bengaluru (RCB), with the latter giving up. Sunrisers Hyderabad (SRH) entered the bidding war, trying to bolster their explosive batting attack and Delhi Capitals (DC) tried to use the 'Right To Match' card, but they could not match the value LSG put for Pant, breaking the bank for him and going beyond Iyer's value.

At 13 years, Vaibhav Suryavanshi becomes IPL's youngest player



Jeddah

Bihar's Vaibhav Suryavanshi became the youngest-ever player to be signed by an IPL franchise at 13 years as Rajasthan Royals (RR) bought the prodigy for Rs 1.10 crore in the mega auction on Monday.

Suryavanshi made headlines recently when he became the

youngest batter to score an international century, achieving the feat in a Youth Test for India Under-19 against Australia U-19 in Chennai.

His base price was Rs 30 lakh and Delhi Capitals (DC) made the opening bid. RR entered the fray at Rs 35 lakh and eventually got the better of DC to get the player on board.

38th Pune International Marathon On December 1

Pune

The 38th Pune International Marathon 2024 will be held on December 1.

With one or two exceptions like the COVID-19 period, since 1983, this race has been organised by the Pune International Marathon Trust every year on the first Sunday of December. The International Marathon (AIIMS) committee has permanently included its marathon in its annual calendar and has earned the distinction of being the oldest 'flagship' marathon in India, a media statement said on Tuesday. The full marathon of 42.195 km will start from Sanas Maidan near Sarasbaug

at 3 am, followed by the half marathon of 21.0975 km at 6.30 am. The start will be from the inner track at Sans Maidan, turn right via Sarasbagh, Mahalakshmi Chowk, straight through Dandekar Bridge Chowk, Sinhgad Road, Ganesh Mala, Vitthalwadi, Anand Hall, Nanded City Chowk, turn right and go inside Nanded City for 2 km, will complete one lap at Sanas Maidan and take another lap (for full marathon) back through the same route. Other races will be held on the same route, with different turning points from where the runners will return to the Sanas Ground to finish the race.

Rohit Sharma arrives in Perth, to play 2-day game in Canberra

Canberra

India captain Rohit Sharma was quick to hit the nets following his arrival in Perth as the team, led by his deputy Jasprit Bumrah, slowly but surely inched towards a dominant victory over Australia in the opening Test.

Rohit, who was on a paternity break following the birth of his son, arrived in Perth on Sunday evening. He was seen batting in the nets during the lunch session on Monday as he faced reserve pacers Navdeep Saini, Yash Dayal and Mukesh Kumar.

The Indian contingent will travel to Canberra on Wednesday for two-day tour game starting November 30. That practice game doesn't have first-class status.

However, the match will have



some amount of significance as it is a 'Pink Ball' Day/Night game which will serve as preparation for the second Test in Adelaide starting December 6.

Rohit is expected to play the game in Canberra as the pink

Kookaburra in Adelaide offers a different kind of challenge for the batters especially in the famous twilight hour when the ball is known to jag around more than usual.

Jannik Sinner leads Italy for its 2nd consecutive Davis Cup title



Malaga (Spain)

Italy went nearly a quarter-century without winning the Davis Cup. Then along came Jannik Sinner, and now the country is celebrating its second consecutive title.

The No. 1-ranked Sinner clinched the championship in the annual team event and capped his breakthrough season by beating Tallon Griekspoor 7-6 (2), 6-2 on Sunday for a 2-0 win over the Netherlands in the final of the Davis Cup.

"Coming back as defending champions and winning again — it's one of the best feelings I think for all of us," Sinner said. "We are very happy to lift this trophy and, of course, also to go into the preseason with a bunch of confidence boosts."

Matteo Berrettini put Italy ahead with a 6-4, 6-2 victory over Botić van de Zandschulp — the last man to beat Rafael Nadal — in the opening singles match on an indoor hard court at the Palacio de Deportes Jose Maria Martin

Carpina in southern Spain.

The Italians, backed by a loud contingent of singing fans playing drums and armed with megaphones in the crowd of 9,200, became the first team to win the Davis Cup twice in a row since the Czech Republic in 2012 and 2013.

Italy's women won the Billie Jean King Cup by defeating Slovakia on Wednesday.

"They make us even more proud," Davis Cup captain Filippo Volandri said.