THE PERFECT



Haryana outcome will boost BJP's morale in Maharashtra, Cong may lose bargaining edge



Spacecraft blasts off to probe previous cosmic

... pg 6



Father demands Rs 5 cr prize, flat in Pune for **Swapnil**

... pg 10



By Correspondent

New Delhi: Bucking antiincumbency, the ruling BJP pulled off a hat-trick of wins in Haryana to retain power and halt Congress' comeback attempt in the assembly elections, results of which were announced Tuesday.

While the BJP ended up with its best-ever haul of 48 seats, 11 more than the Congress, parties like the JJP and the AAP were decimated and the INLD managed to win just two seats.

Proving wrong exit polls which predicted a comfortable Congress win, the BJP will be forming government in Haryana for the third consecutive term.

The party had contested 89 of the 90 seats. It did not contest Sirsa seat, from where its ally Gopal Kanda was a sitting MLA, though Kanda lost his seat.

The Congress also contested 89 seats leaving Bhiwani constituency for the CPI (M).

Prime Minister Narendra Modi hailed the win saying

Prominent winners: Chief Minister Nayab Singh Saini (Ladwa), **Congress leader Bhupinder Singh** Hooda (Garhi Sampla-Kiloi), BJP's Anil Vij (Ambala Cantt), **Shruti Choudhry** (Tosham), INLD's **Arjun Chautala** (Rania) and Aditya Devi Lal (Dabwali), **Congress' Vinesh** Phogat (Julana),

Aditya Surjewala (Kaithal), Geeta Bhukkal (Jhajjar), BJP's Arti Singh Rao (Ateli) and Independent

Haryana: Total seats - 90 Congress **Vote share**

candidate Savitri

Jindal (Hisar).

Prominent losers: INLD's Abhay Singh Chautala (Ellenabad), JJP's Dushyant Chautala and Digvijay Chautala (Dabwali), Speaker in outgoing Assembly and BJP's Gian Chand Gupta, Congress's Brijendra Singh, Aam Aadmi Party's Anurag Dhanda (Kalayat), BJP's OP Dhankar (Badli), Capt Abhimanyu (Narnaund), Haryana Lokhit Party's Gopal Kanda (Sirsa) and Ranjit Chautala, an Independent (Rania). Haryana Congress president Udai Bhan and BJP's Bhavya Bishnoi, son of Kuldeep Bishnoi and grandson of former chief minister Bhajan Lal, also lost.

of Haryana

"It will not be business as usual in Haryana and I am sure the Congress high command would identify those who negated the efforts to bring the party to power after 10 years."

- Kumari Selja, Leader, Congress



it was due to good-governance that all communities voted for the BJP.

Our guarantee of 'vikas' prevailed over the pack of lies spread by the Congress and people wrote new history electing us for a third term, he told party cadres in

"Once the people throw out Congress, they do not let it come back. They put 'no entry' boards for Congress... it is a party that always thought power was its birthright," the prime minister

Congress chief Mallikarjun Kharge termed the Haryana results "unexpected" and said his party will assess the people's mandate.

Haryana went to polls on October 5 in a single phase.

In the outgoing assembly, the BJP had 41 MLAs (including the Adampur seat won in 2022 bypoll), the Congress 28 MLAs, the JJP (6), while the Haryana Lokhit Party and Indian National Lok Dal one member each. There were four Independents, while nine seats were vacant.

There are only three women winners -- Sakina Masood. **Shamima Firdous** (both NC) and Shagun Parihar (BJP) -- among the 90 successful candidates.

Two NC veterans --**Abdul Rahim Rather** (Chrar-e-Sharief) and Ali Mohammad Sagar (Khanyar) -- have won for the seventh term.

into the increased tally of the BJP and mainly attribute it to the recent delimitation of assembly seats in which many strongholds of the BJP were bifurcated into two like Kishtwar and Nagrota and others in Jammu district.

The NC saw a rise in its vote share as well, improving from 20.77 per cent in 2014 to 23.43 per cent this election cycle.

'e name our daughters Durga, Lakshmi and Saraswati; we worship the divine feminine power in the temples but oppress, repress and even attack the feminine power amidst us. That is the irony in the way India sees its women.

After the safety of the daylight fades, women are seen as easy prey by the predators of the night.

We mark the nine nights of Navratri, the festival of the goddess, by celebrating the dedication and valour of nine real-life women who brave the challenges of the night to pursue their dreams.

PART-7

Fearless Caregiver

THE NURSE AT JJ HOSPITAL ADVISES WOMEN TO REPORT EVEN A SMALL UNWELCOMING GESTURE OF ANYONE WHILE AT WORK IN A WRITTEN FORMAT

By Ruddhi Phadke

Round-the-clock shifts, emotional outbursts of relatives of the patients and at times, being the only woman on the floor at night in a huge hospital-Shweta Kondvilkar, 38, has had various experiences as a medical caregiver. Her motto is- "do not react and report immediately". She's experienced ward boys not wanting to take instructions from her because she is a woman, has seen "unfriendly gestures" from colleagues and faced aggression from patients' relatives in case of an unfortunate outcome of the treatment. "I report everything in the written form. For example, usually people understand a relative's misbehavior out of emotional outburst, but if a nurse reacts while on duty, no one will understand or support her. Hence, I believe in being vocal, and submit all concerns in the written format which leaves proof behind. The moment you sense even a small intimidating gesture, you must raise it by writing about it officially and not by entering into a

a staff nurse at the J J Hospital in Mumbai. The hospital has its security measures in place round-the-clock. When nurses take rounds in the night to check patients' details, a security guard accompanies them. Citing the example of the gruesome Kolkata rape and murder of a woman doctor, Kondvilkar asserts that it's important for women to be vigilant and aware of their surroundings. "What others do is beyond our control. We must learn to defend our-

verbal altercation," says

Kondvilkar, who works as

selves," she says. While performing her duties, Kondvilkar emphasizes that one should not trust anyone blindly and



SHWETA KONDVILKAR. 38, staff nurse in JJ hospital, Mumbai

always be aware. "Never trust a guard. Not even another woman. I am very saddened by the fact that from what I have read in news about the Kolkata case, the victim had dinner with a group of colleagues that included females. The ones who tied

I believe in being vocal and submitting all concerns in the written format which leaves proof behind. The moment you sense even a small intimidating gesture, you must raise it by writing about it officially and not by entering into a verbal altercation.

her hands were females. She chose to rest in a seminar room that couldn't be locked from inside is shocking. Also, reports said that the crime scene was tampered and the room was renovated. It's a racket. It's not possible to physically fight back. The victim was exhausted after three days of rigorous duty. My humble advice to all women is, sometimes reacting makes matters worse. Be aware of the people around you, and try to keep safe distance from individuals whose gestures are doubtful and immediately take official action to keep potential predators on check.

Nurses, she says, are more vulnerable than doctors because they are present with the patient round the clock attending to all the needs and also patiently handling the relatives. "Hospitals are well equipped and they usually stand by every woman who feels intimidated," she says. Kondvilkar recalls the example of Aruna Shanbaug who, while working as a junior nurse at King Edward Memorial Hospital in Mumbai, was sexually assaulted in 1973 by a hospital janitor. "She was bed ridden for years. The hospital stood by her and took very good care of her. A dedicated profession-

al, she states that she is proud to be part of a hospital that felicilated nurses for the care given during Covid. "Usually doctors are felicitated but no one appreciates a nurse," she says.

NC-Cong to rule J&K

INDIA bloc is poised to form the first elected government in Jammu and Kashmir, having secured a victory in the assembly elections by securing 49 out of 90 seats on which polls were held for the first time since the abrogation of Article 370 five years ago.

The National Conference (NC), the oldest regional party in J&K, emerged as the clear frontrunner, winning 42 seats and falling just six seats short of a majority of its own.

The elections in J&K virtually turned a nightmare for the Congress as it won only one seat from the Jammu region.

The BJP also made notable gains, winning 29 seats -- its best performance in J&K to date, up from 25



include former deputy chief minister Muzaffar Hussain Baig (Independent), Congress leader Tara Chand, PCC working president Raman Bhalla, former PCC president Vagar Rsool Wani and NC provincial president Nasir Aslam Wani.

"A lot of things can be done as a Union

Territory, clearly some things can't but we expect that J&K will not remain a UT forever."

> - Omar Abdullah, Leader, National Conference

Jammu and Kashmir Congress – 06

Vote share 23.43 per cent 25.64 per cent 8.87 per cent

seats in the 2014 elections. The BJP's vote share increased from 23 per cent in 2014 to 25.64 per cent this year. However, political analysts do not read much

Journalist arrested in GST 'scam'

Ahmedabad: The Ahmedabad Crime Branch on Tuesday arrested a senior journalist with a leading newspaper in Gujarat in an alleged Goods and Service Tax (GST) scam, officers said.

Following detailed questioning, journalist Mahesh Langa was arrested by the Crime Branch on Tuesday morning, Deputy Commissioner of Police (Crime) Ajit Rajian said. "The central GST had

found some suspicious transactions in bogus firms floated in the name of Mahesh Langa's wife and father using forged documents. Langa has been arrested for further investigation," he said.

Veteran actors Mithun Chakraborty and Sharmila Tagore during the 70th National Film Awards at Vigyan Bhawan in New Delhi on Tuesday.

50 doctors of RG Kar hospital resign healthcare system.

Kolkata: Around 50 senior doctors of the RG Kar Medical College and Hospital here on Tuesday tendered their resignations in a mark of solidarity with medics who have been on fast-unto-death demanding justice for the deceased woman doctor, sources in the health facility said. The decision to resign en

masse was taken at a meeting of the heads of various departments of the staterun hospital on Tuesday morning, they said.

"This has been decided at today's meeting of the HoDs. All 50 senior doctors of our hospital have signed their resignation letters. This is to express our solidarity towards those young doctors who are fighting for a cause," a senior doctor told PTI.

Senior doctors at NRS Medical College and Hospi-



low the footsteps of their colleagues in the RG Kar hospital, he said.

The Joint Platform of Doctors, West Bengal pledged solidarity with the junior medics who have been demanding justice for the rape and murder of the woman doctor of R G Kar hospital and an end to the "corruption-ridden'

While junior doctors have been on fast-untodeath for the last four days voicing their demands, there has been "no response from the appropriate authority to solve the issues", a statement issued by the platform said.

The doctor's platform also voiced concern over the health condition of those who are on the fastunto-death and said they are fighting for "campus democracy and patientfriendly system".

"In this situation, we will stand in solidarity," the statement added.

Meanwhile, on October 8, a Kolkata court on Monday extended the CBI custody of former House Staff of the RG Kar Medical College and Hospital Ashish Pandey for 11 days, an official said.

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NCP aspirants warn of 'explosion' in Indapur

Sharad Pawar's remarks virtually declaring new entrant Harshavardhan Patil's candidature for the upcoming Maharashtra assembly polls have irked a section of party leaders that was eyeing ticket for the Indapur seat.

Local workers of the Nationalist Congress Party (SP) have said if the decision is not reconsidered, there could be an "explosion" within the party ranks in Indapur, located in Pune district.

Patil, a bete noire of NCP leader and Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar, joined the Sharad Pawar-led NCP (SP) on Monday, days after quitting the BJP.



The former state minis ter was inducted in the NCP (SP) in the presence of Sharad Pawar.

Patil is likely to get the NCP (SP) ticket from his home ground of Indapur. The seat is currently with the ruling NCP led by Ajit

Addressing a gathering on Monday, Sharad Pawar virtually declared Patil as the party candidate for the

to be held next month.

The former Union agriculture minister's appeal to people to send Patil to the assembly was widely seen as an endorsement of his candidature, sparking discontent among party loyalists in the constituency.

Notably, no political party in Maharashtra has so far announced candidates for the polls.

Local NCP (SP) workers Pravin Mane, Appasaheb Jagdale, Bharat Shah, and three other aspirants, who were hoping for a ticket from Indapur, questioned why they were ignored despite their hard work and honesty during party MP Supriya Sule's Lok Sabha

Sule, the daughter of Sharad Pawar, was elected from Baramati in Pune district in June for the fourth time in a row.

Addressing a press conference after Patil's induction in the NCP (SP), Jagdale said they would hold a party workers' congregation on October 11 in Indapur to gauge local people's sentiments.

Without naming Patil, Jagdale demanded that his candidature be revoked.

He said if the decision was not reconsidered, there could be an "explosion" within the party ranks in Indapur, a seat represented by Patil multiple times in



Deputy Chief Minister Devendra Fadnvis takes selfie with the benificiaries of Ladki Bahin Scheme on

Pawar, Sule take stock of gang rape probe

By Correspondent

Pune: NCP (SP) chief Sharad Pawar and his MP daughter Supriya Sule on Tuesday visited the Bopdev Ghat near Pune where a 21-year-old woman was allegedly raped by three individuals on October 3.

Pawar and Sule were apprised about the status of the investigation by DCP S

Sule said despite the investigation being conducted by the Pune Police and their rural counterparts, the accused persons yet to be arrested, which is a "serious matter".

The Baramati MP suggested that criminals are emboldened by the absence

of police personnel on the ground, and accused the state government of not

recruiting.

Notably, police have formed more than 60 teams to trace the suspects in the gang rape case and declared a reward of Rs 10 lakh. More than 200 criminals on the police record have been questioned, but the accused are yet to be identified.

"Besides unemployment, inflation, and corruption, the state is faced with another challenge of financial mismanagement. Maharashtra is currently under tremendous financial strain for which the state government is responsible," Sule alleged.

Cops rescue motorist stuck on sea link

Mumbai: Two Mumbai Police personnel are being lauded for offering timely help to a motorist stuck on the Bandra-Worli Sea Link after a tyre of his car burst on Tuesday

Assistant Sub-Inspector Vilas Vatkar and head constable Uday Mayekar, posted with Bandra police station, responded immediately after the motorist rang up the Mumbai Police control room.

The motorist, who identified himself as Saurabh, appreciated Bandra Police for quick response. "Sir, I was stuck on Worli Bandra Sea Link as my car tyre had burst. I called 100 Helpline. In turn, ASI Vilas Vatkar and HC Uday Mayekar called me back in no time."

Modi to lay foundation stones of projects worth Rs 7,600 cr

By Correspondent

Mumbai: Prime Minister Narendra Modi will lay the foundation stone of various development projects worth over Rs 7,600 crore in Maharashtra on Wednesday through video-conferencing, his office said.

He will lay the foundation stone of the upgradation of Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar International Airport in Nagpur with a total estimated project cost of around Rs 7,000 crore, the prime minister's office

The airport upgradation will serve as a catalyst for growth across multiple sec-

tors, including manufacturing, aviation, tourism, logistics, and healthcare. benefitting Nagpur city and the wider Vidarbha region, it added.

The prime minister will also lay the foundation stone for a new integrated terminal building at Shirdi Airport worth over Rs 645 crore, the statement said.

This will provide worldclass facilities for the religious tourists coming to Shirdi. The construction theme of the proposed terminal is based on the spiritual neem tree of Sai Baba, it added.

In line with his commitment to ensuring affordable and accessible healthcare for all, Modi will launch the operationalisation of 10 government medical colleges in Maharashtra located at Mumbai, Nashik, Jalna, Amravati, Gadchiroli, Buldhana, Washim, Bhandara, Hingoli and Ambernath.

While enhancing the undergraduate and postgraduate seats, the colleges will also offer specialised tertiary healthcare to the people. In line with his vision to position India as the 'Skill Capital of the World', Modi will also inaugurate the Indian Institute of Skills (IIS) in Mumbai, the statement said.

The institute aims to create an industry-ready workforce with cuttingedge technology and handson training, it added. The PM will also inaugu-

rate the Vidya Samiksha Kendra (VSK) of Maharashtra, which will provide students, teachers, and administrators with access to crucial academic and administrative data through live chatbots such as Smart Upasthiti, Swadhyay among others. It will offer high-quality insights to schools to manage resources effectively, strengthen ties between parents and the state, and deliver responsive support.

CR services disrupted

Mumbai: Central Railway's suburban services faced significant disruptions on Tuesday due to two separate incidents. In the afternoon, an emergency block was implemented between Matunga and Sion, affecting multiple train schedules.

Earlier in the day, overhead equipment issues near Koper caused additional delays in the early hours. Commuters experienced longer wait times and overcrowding as trains were rerouted or cancelled. Central Railway officials worked to resolve the issues promptly, urging passengers to check for updates and plan their journeys accordingly.

CRIME WATCH

Three killed as car collides with ST bus

 $\boldsymbol{Mumbai:}$ Three men travelling in a car were killed and another occupant was injured when their vehicle rammed into a 'Shivshahi' bus operated by the state transport corporation in Maharashtra's Jalgaon district on Tuesday, police said.

The accident occurred in the morning on Chopda-Dharangaon koad, around 415km from Mumbal, when the speeding car collided with the air-conditioned bus after suffering a tyre burst, an official said. Three men travelling in the car died on the spot, whereas

another passenger sustained serious injuries, he said. In another incident on the Mumbai-Nagpur Samruddhi Highway, unidentified persons pelted stones at a speeding luxury bus in Buldhana district.

Notorious goon arrested-

Mumbai: The central crime unit (CCU) attached to the Bhayandar-Vasai Virar (MBVV) police have arrested a notorious goon identified as-Salim Mohammed Haroon (25) for illegal entering into the city limits by defying externment (tadipar) orders. Haroon who has multiple offences including-robbery,

break-ins and assault registered against him at the Uttan coastal and Kashimira police station. After getting bail in the cases, he was served with a show cause notice under section 109 of the Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC) which mandates execution of a bond as a security for good behaviour.

Two dupe bank manager of Rs 26 lakh

Mumbai: Two individuals were booked for allegedly duping a woman bank manager of Rs 26 lakh on the pretext of offering lucrative returns in the stock market, a Mumbai Police official said Tuesday.

The accused duo, Imran Ahmed Munne Qureshi and Aamir Ali Merchant, are absconding. The victim—a senior manager at a private bank in Ghatkopar—had been convinced by the accused to invest in stock market schemes that promised high returns. The woman, who lives with her family in Chembur, had previously worked as a relationship manager at another bank.

MPCB aims to get rid of plastic menace



By Correspondent

Mumbai: To get rid of the oceans of plastic by intercepting plastic in rivers to cut the inflow of pollution, and cleaning up what has already accumulated in the ocean, the Maharashtra Pollution Control Board (MPCB) has signed the MOU with Ocean Cleanup, Netherlands with its partner Bharat Clean Rivers Foundation.

These two key agencies are currently undertaking planning programs for the prevention, control and abatement of water pollution. To tackle plastic pollution in Mumbai, research has been going on since the last two years. Through this MOU the three parties intend to engage in deeper

discussions on river plastic research and methods for the river. The plastic interception program will be starting with Mumbai.

The Ocean Cleanup is a

Netherlands based nonprofit orgainisation developing and scaling technologies. Bharat Clean Rivers Foundation - an initiative by West Coast Marine Yacht Services Pvt Ltd and Dial ESG. On a mission to rid India's rivers of plastic in partnership with The Ocean Cleanup. The first project has been started in Mumbai which according to The Ocean Cleanup's research is home to 47 of the 1000 most polluted rivers globally of which 13 are in and around Mumbai.

The long-term vision is

to develop and improve methods to measure and monitor plastic waste in Mumbai's waterways, research the quantity and quality of plastic waste and find hotspots appropriate for plastic waste interception. Plastic pollution is a major challenge for Mumbai. The MPCB will play a central role in helping to solve this issue with The Ocean Cleanup and the Bharat Clean Rivers Foundation. The interventions could ultimately contribute to de-clogging Mumbai's rivers and drains while alleviating its flooding

Starting with Mumbai, the aim is to take the best practices from the city project to other parts of the

Dhangar protesters jump onto safety net

Mumbai: A high drama prevailed in the Maharashtra secretariat in south Mumbai on Tuesday when Dhangar reservation supporters jumped onto the safety nets, police said.

According to the police, at least four persons jumped on the safety net placed on the second floor of the Mantralaya in the evening, an official said.

Police detained some protesters and shifted them to Marine Drive police station for further action, the

He said a group of 15 persons, including supporters of former MLA Prakash Shendge, reached the Mantralaya premises and raised slogans before some of them jumped on the safety nets.Dhangar (shepherd) community members have been demanding the reservation under the Scheduled Tribes (ST) category.

Mantralaya is emerging as the hot spot for protests as assembly elections are drwing close. On October 4, some tribal leaders, including Maharashtra assembly Deputy Speaker Narhari Zirwal, jumped onto the safety net installed there over the tribal quota issue,

Mobile legal aid clinic for prisoners Thane: A mobile legal aid and support to both clinic has been launched prisoners and their

for prisoners at the Thane relatives, it said. Central Jail to allow them to communicate with their families and legal representatives more effectively via an e-interview system, officials said on Tuesday.

The facility, to operate through a vehicle and set up by the District Legal Services Authority (DLSA) in collaboration with social organisation 'Dard Se Humdard Tak', was inaugurated on Monday.

The initiative addresses a critical need in the overcrowded prison system, where traditional interview methods often lead to significant delays for inmates seeking to connect with their families and legal counsels, the DLSA said in a release.

Despite the potential benefits of this new system, many prisoners and their families, particularly those who are illiterate or unfamiliar with technology, face challenges in accessing e-interview services, it said.

The mobile legal aid clinic aims to bridge this gap by providing guidance

Magistrate S.K. Fokmare emphasised the importance of the initiative in enhancing the rights of prisoners and ensuring that they can maintain vital connections with their families during incarceration.



Legal experts from the social organisation will be available at the clinic two days a week, from 9.30 am to 12.30 pm, offering free legal services and assistance to those in need.

Apart from him, DLSA secretary Ishwar Suryawanshi and jail superintendent Rani Bhosale were among those present at the facility's

QUOTE OF THE DAY

"Casteism lost and development won. I am confident that the people of Maharashtra will not fall into the trap of fake narrative (of the opposition) and will trust the double engine in the path of development."



Eknath Shinde, Chief Minister

Haryana poll outcome enthused Mahayuti allies; Ajit Pawar will contest from Baramati: Praful Patel

By Correspondent

Mumbai: The Ajit Pawarled NCP on Tuesday said the BJP's victory in Haryana and a good showing in Jammu & Kashmir reflected the spectacular performance of the Narendra Modi government.

Nationalist Congress Party working president Praful Patel formally announced the candidature of Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar from the lat-

ter's home bastion Baramati for the upcoming assembly elections, ending speculations that Ajit would shift to another constituency.

Speaking on the Mahayuti's seat-sharing talks for the upcoming elections, Patel said the NCP will get a respectable 60 seats to contest.

Mahayuti allies- NCP, Shiv Sena, and BJP- have arrived at a consensus on 230 constituencies and the



differences over the remaining seats will be resolved, he added. "The Haryana poll verdict will force the outgoing and incoming political leaders in Maharashtra to re-think

their political moves. The BJP's hattrick in Haryana and good showing in Jammu & Kashmir reflected the Modi government's performance over the last ten years," Patel said. He alleged the opposi-

tion parties had created a false narrative through media that BJP would lose Haryana polls on a host of issues including protests by farmers, unrest among particular castes and sports persons. "Mahayuti is enthused by results in Harvana and Jammu & Kashmir. In Lok Sabha polls, fake narratives were propagated but today's results show who gets jalebi," Patel said in an apparent jibe at Rahul Gandhi.

He claimed onion and cotton growers and milk producers benefited from the state government's policies. "The BJP's vote share and number of seats have risen since the last elections," he added.

CHANGE OF NAME I Shrenik Navinbhai Shah

Residing At 6/8, Dilip Nivas, 3rd Floor, 2nd Carpenter Lane, Gol Deval, C.P. Tank, Girgaon, Mumbai 400004, My Name Has Been Changed To Shrenik Navinchandra Shah As Per Affidavit Dated 1st October 2024.

Shrenik Navinbhai Shah (Signature By Old Name)

@perfectvoice_in

Haryana polls outcome will boost BJP's morale in Maharashtra, Cong may lose bargaining edge: Analysts

Mumbai: The Haryana victory will be a morale booster for the BJP and increase its bargaining power in the Mahayuti's seatsharing talks for the upcoming Maharashtra assembly elections, according to political analysts.

Conversely, the Congress, which had won the maximum number of constituencies during Lok Sabha polls in Maharashtra, may lose the edge in Maha Vikas Aghadi's seatsharing deliberations.

The BJP coasted towards a hat-trick win with its biggest tally in Haryana and the National Conference-Congress combine was set to form government in Jammu and Kashmir, voters in both places giving the victors a decisive edge as counting day progressed with many a surprise on Tuesday.

"During the seat-sharing talks (of the ruling Mahayuti in Maharashtra), the BJP was initially criticised for its poor performance in the Lok Sabha elections (held earlier this year)," said political analyst Abhay Deshpande.

However, the Haryana performance will send a message that the BJP has made a comeback from the reversal in the general elections, he said.

Additionally, politicians sitting on the wall will reconsider deserting the BJP-led NDA for the opposition MVA, he said.

"The Congress, on the other hand, will have to be softer while discussing



seat-sharing with its allies NCP (SP) and Shiv Sena (UBT)," he added.

Deshpande, however, added a caveat, saying Maharashtra's political landscape is different than Harvana.

"In the northern state, it was a straight fight between Congress and the BJP, but there are six parties in Maharashtra. The Maharashtra Navnirman Sena, Vanchit Bahujan Aghadi and a couple of smaller regional parties are also present in the political arena. Additionally, the voting pattern of Haryana cannot be equated with that of Maharashtra,' he added.

Deshpande pointed out that the issues of Marathas versus OBCs and Dhangars versus Scheduled Castes didn't exist in Haryana.

"These caste equations are complicated and could affect the voting pattern in the western state to an extent," he said.

Political commentator Prakash Akolkar said the MVA has to learn a lot from the Congress'

"The Congress was upbeat after its performance in the Lok Sabha polls and



No impact on Maharashtra, says Chaturvedi

The Congress' defeat in the Haryana polls will have no impact on Maharashtra, where assembly elections are due next month, Shiv Sena (UBT) MP Priyanka Chaturvedi said on Tuesday but stressed the upcoming contest won't be easy for

has been staking a claim to seats in regions like Konkan where it has little

"The Congress should understand that people's mandate can change within four months. It should not make unnecessary claims in the seat-sharing

the opposition as well as the ruling coalition. Chaturvedi said election issues in Maharashtra and Haryana were very different and noted corruption was not a major campaign theme in the northern state, where the

talks," he said.

Noting that factionalism could be a factor behind Congress's defeat in Haryana, Akolkar said the party must get its house in order in Maharashtra.

The Shiv Sena (UBT) too should try to tell people what it can offer them BJP was poised to form its government for a record third time in a row. She said industrial projects were moving out of Maharashtra which was also facing pressing issues like unemployment. "The Haryana polls will have no impact on Maharashtra," Chaturvedi

rather than repeating the "traitors" and "betrayal" themes.

told PTI. The people of

Shiv Sena MP Shrikant Shinde said voters in Maharashtra like their counterparts in Haryana will reject "divisive tactics" and choose the stability and progress offered by a Maharashtra do not like the fact that two parties (Shiv Sena and NCP) were split which has led to creation of multiple political outfits, she said.

The Shiv Sena (UBT) leader claimed Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar, who heads the NCP, doesn't seem to enjoy the BJP's confidence.

double-engine government. NCP working president Praful Patel said the Haryana verdict will make "outgoing" and "incoming" political leaders rethink their political moves.

He said the poll results have enthused the Mahayuti allies Shiv Sena, led by



CM Eknath Shinde, BJP, and the NCP headed by Deputy CM Ajit Pawar.

Congress leaders, however, rejected the notion that the Mahayuti would reap electoral success in Maharashtra elections like Haryana.

Senior leader Ramesh Chennithala said the Harvana verdict won't impact Maharashtra polls and asserted that the party cadre was not demoralised.

Elections to the 288-member Maharashtra assembly are likely to be held next month. The Congress is a constituent of the opposition Maha Vikas Aghadi in the state along with the Shiv Sena (UBT) led by Uddhav Thackeray and Sharad Pawar's NCP

"The Maharashra Vikas Aghadi (MVA) will unitedly defeat the Eknath Shinde-led government and the Congress wasn't demoralised with the Haryana assembly election trends," Chennithala, the AICC in-charge of Maharashtra, said at a press con-

Political situations in Maharashtra and Haryana are completely different, he said. Meanwhile, speaking at a press conference in said the Harvana verdict is a "clear rebuke to the Congress and opposition parties indulging in caste

"The people are seeing the positive impact of a double-engine government at the state and the national levels. I am certain that this will reflect in the upcoming Maharashtra elections," he added.

Shinde highlighted several major initiatives, including the Majhi Ladki Bahin Yojana, Lake Ladki, Youth Work Training Scheme, free electricity for farmers, and the Solar Agriculture Pump Scheme launched by the Mahayuti

"People are satisfied with the Mahayuti's work over the last two years, and the chief minister is focused on delivering positive results for the people despite opposition criticism. I am confident that the Mahayuti will win the upcoming elections with a decisive majority," said Shrikant Shinde, son of CM Eknath Shinde. The Shiv Sena legislature party leader in Parliament accused Congress and opposition leader Rahul Gandhi of fomenting divisions along caste and religion during the Lok Sabha elections.

In the 2019 assembly elections, the BJP had emerged as the single largest party in Maharashtra. bagging 105 of the 288 seats, while its then ally Shiv Sena (undivided) won 56 seats.

Will support any CM face to 'save' state: Uddhav

By Correspondent

Mumbai: Ahead of assempresident Uddhav Thackeray on Tuesday declared he will support any chief ministerial candidate announced by allies Congress or NCP (SP) to "save" Maharashtra, repeating a demand for the second time since August.

Thackeray, whose party is a constituent of the opposition Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA), made the remarks on a day when his ally Congress suffered a setback in Harvana, where the BJP appears set to form government for a record third time in row.

Addressing an event of civil society members, the former chief minister accused the Mahayuti government of setting "fake" narratives in the state through advertisements, ahead of the high-stakes assembly polls.

Taking a dig at the Mahayuti government's flagship 'Ladki Bahin Yojana', under which Rs 1,500 is given per month to underprivileged women, Thackeray claimed the ruling coalition was trying to



make people betray "Maharashtra dharma" by giving their own money (through the scheme).

It's raining assurances. but there is drought when it comes to implementation of schemes, he said, taking a jibe at the Shiv Sena-BJP-NCP government. Elections to the 288-member Maharashtra assembly are likely to be held next month.

"I had said this then and I say it now that the Congress should declare a face or NCP (SP) should do it. The Congress, NCP (SP) should speak in unison. I will support any face declared by them because my Maharashtra is dear to me. I want to see the interests of Maharashtra. My resolve is to do anything to save Maharashtra,' Thackeray asserted.

In August, the Shiv Sena (UBT) president had insisted on deciding MVA's rather than going by the logic of who wins most seats, and asserted he would back any candidate announced by the Congress and the NCP (SP) for the top post.

The Congress and the NCP (SP) had then made it clear they did not want to wade into this territory (CM face) till the assembly poll results were out.

Shiv Sena (UBT) MP Sanjay Raut had then said Thackeray showed a large heart (by extending support to anyone the MVA dims fit for the CM's post).

At the event on Tuesday, Thackeray also accused Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union Home Minister Amit Shah of building a "wall" between Gujarat and rest of the country. He said there was never a Guiarati-Marathi dispute in Maharashtra.

The former chief minister stressed that "sons of soil" (native inhabitants) should get justice but this does not mean his party was anyone's enemy.

"Our fight is against forces who are anti-India and anti-Maharashtra," Thackeray said.

No contempt against civic **bodies: HC**

High Court on Tuesday declined to initiate contempt proceedings against several civic bodies in Maharashtra for alleged noncompliance of 2018 orders on the issue of poor condition of roads and potholes. noting there has been bona fide efforts and marked conformity.

A division bench of Chief Justice D K Upadhyaya and Justice Amit Borkar, however, said it was reviving a 2013 public interest litigation (PIL) taken up suo motu (on its own) by the HC as the issue pertains to people's welfare.

The bench noted citizens have a fundamental right to have streets and footways in a reasonably good condition and civic authorities are obligated to ensure they are maintained in a state that allows people to use them effectively.

The petition was filed by an advocate, Ruju Thakker, seeking contempt action against municipal corporations of Mumbai, Navi Mumbai, Kalyan-Dombivli, Vasai-Virar, Thane and Mira Bhayandar.

People of Haryana defeated oppn's narratives: Fadnavis

By Correspondent

Mumbai: The BJP's victoshows the people have defeated the Opposition's narratives on various issues and exposed Congress leader Rahul Gandhi's politics of drama, Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis said on Tuesday.

He also said the BJP and the Union government have strongly responded to Pakistan's propaganda in the Jammu and Kashmir elections.

The BJP is set to return to power in Haryana for the third consecutive term with an absolute majority in the 90-member assembly. The polling was held on October 5, and results were declared on Tuesday.

The BJP has emerged as the second largest party by winning 29 constituencies in the maiden assembly polls post the abrogation of Article 370 in Jammu and Kashmir, improving its alltime high tally of 25 seats recorded in 2014 elections.

Fadnavis expressed confidence in the BJP repeating its Haryana performance in the Maharashtra



elections, likely to be held next month.

He cryptically said "those living in a fool's paradise will now come on the ground", adding the context of the BJP's debacle in Lok Sabha elections in Maharashtra

"In a first in the last 60 years, a party will come to power in Haryana for a third consecutive term. The opposition tried to push its narrative through the Agnipath scheme, and Olympic players, and even dabbled with caste politics. However, people of Haryana chose Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision for development," Fadnavis told reporters.

(Lok Sabha opposition leader) Rahul Gandhi did a lot of drama ahead of the elections, but now nobody

will fall prev to it anymore "Haryana has given him a strong message," he added.

"The BJP and the Union government have strongly responded to Pakistan's propaganda in the Jammu and Kashmir elections," he

The opposition's propaganda on potential bloodbath on streets after the abrogation of Article 370 has fallen flat in Jammu and Kashmir, the BJP leader said.

"We have shown to the world that the people of Jammu and Kashmir have participated in democratic processes. It is a strong message that the Indian government and the Election Commission of India can conduct fair elections there," he said.

Four held in Mumbai for smuggling red sand boa

Mumbai: Four individuals were arrested for allegedly trying to sell a red sand boa snake in Mumbai illegally, police said on Tuesday.

Acting on a tip-off, police held Narasimha Satyama Dhoti (40), Shiva Mallesh Adap (18), Ravi Vasant Bhoir (54), and Arvind Chaturam Gupta (26) from the Cuffe Parade area on Monday night, a police officer said.

Dhoti and Adap are from Telangana, while Bhoir and Gupta are residents of Mulund in Mumbai and Mumbra in Thane district, respectively.

"Assistant Police Inspector Amit Deokar received information through an informant that some people were visiting near Maker Chambers for the illegal sale of snakes used for medicinal purposes as well as black magic," he said.

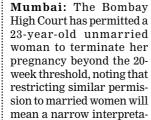
A police team intercepted an SUV and recovered a red sand boa, estimated to cost Rs 30 lakh in the grey market, placed in a bag.

The four individuals were booked under relevant sections of the Wildlife Protection Act, and the boa was handed over to the forest department, the official

QUOTE OF THE DAY

"The MVA seat sharing discussion is going on. There are 50 to 60 Assembly seats are currently under discussion. There is a consensus on the rest





tion of the law. A division bench observed that such narrow interpretation would render the legal provision discriminatory towards unmarried women and hence violative of Article 14 of the Constitution.

The court's ruling comes

after the woman, who was 21 weeks pregnant, sought to end her pregnancy due to financial and personal reasons.

The bench of Justices Sarang Kotwal and Neela Gokhale on October 7 objected to the Maharashtra government's opposition to the plea filed by the unmarried woman on the ground that she does not fall under the specified category of women who can undergo medical termination of pregnancy beyond 20

Under Rule 3-B of the



Unmarried woman allowed to terminate 21-week pregnancy

Medical Termination of Pregnancy Rules, only certain categories of womenincluding sexual assault victims, minors, widows or divorcees, women with physical or mental disabilities, and cases involving fetal abnormalities—are permitted to undergo termination up to 24 weeks.

The woman's petition stated that her pregnancy

resulted from a consensual relationship, and she lacked the financial means to support a child.

In September 2024, the woman was 21 weeks pregnant and was advised by the state-run JJ Hospital to seek the court's approval for the termination of pregnancy as it had crossed the 20-week threshold.

Under the provisions of the Medical Termination of Pregnancy Act, a pregnancy beyond the 20-week gestation period can be terminated only after the court's

woman did not fall within the legal categories outlined in the MTP Rules for termination of pregnancy up to 24 weeks. However, the bench rejected this "narrow interpretation" of the law, noting that it would perpetuate societal stereotypes and undermine the constitutional rights of un-

The state argued that the

The bench noted that if the provision of the law was to be interpreted in a manner that its benefits can be extended only to married women then it would per-

married women.

petuate the stereotype and socially-held notion. "A narrow interpreta-

tion of the law, limited only to married women, would render the provision discriminatory towards unmarried women and hence violative of Article 14 of the Constitution of India," the bench said.

The court permitted the woman to undergo a medical procedure to terminate her pregnancy. The bench also directed the Union government to consider making changes in the forms, formats and procedures.

Attempts were made to destroy NC Omar Abdullah on Tuesday said many

attempts were made to destroy his party over the last five years by creating new outfits which have

been decimated in this

"There were attempts to destroy the NC over the last five years. So many parties were created here, whose only aim was to

destroy the NC. But, God's

grace has been on us and

us, have been decimated

Abdullah said the verdict

has increased the party's

responsibilities. "It is our

duty now to come up to

the expectations of the

people through our work

endeavour would be for

and that is what our

the next five years."

in the process."

those who tried to destroy

election.

An uphill task ahead to keep PDP flag flying

Srinagar: Going by the mandate in Jammu and Kashmir, Mehbooba Mufti faces an uphill task to keep the PDP flag flying.

The PDP, which formed a government in the erstwhile state 2014 in alliance with the BJP, won just 3 seats of the total 84 it contested in the assembly elections.

Mehbooba, who was chief minister from 2016 to 2018, did not contest this time. Her daughter Iltija Mufti lost from the Srigufwara-Bijbehara seat in her first assembly polls.



Mehbooba was apparently hoping that her PDP wins enough seats to stay relevant in politics.

An indication of the low expectations of the party was expressed by Iltija before the elections when she said "PDP will be the kingmaker" as the elections will throw up a hung assembly.

A law graduate, 56-yearold Mehbooba took a plunge into mainstream politics of the state in 1996 by joining Congress, along with her father Mufti Mohammad Sayeed, at a time when militancy was at its

Let govt function without interference

Mehbooba Mufti on Tuesday said the Centre should take a lesson from the decisive verdict of the Jammu and Kashmir Assembly polls and "not meddle" in the affairs of the upcoming National Conference-Congress

She also welcomed the NC's announcement that its vice president Omar Abdullah, who contested from Budgam and Ganderbal seats and won both, would be the chief

The PDP chief said the Centre should take a lesson from the verdict and "not meddle" in the government's affairs. "If they do that, it will be disastrous and worse than what has happened to them now," she said.

"A message has gone out that the people of J-K are wise and clever and that they do not want any horse-trading by the Centre here," she added.

"She (Iltija) came forward during a difficult phase. She regenerated (reinvigorated) the party and gave it courage. That is how it should be."

peak. She was the first and the last woman chief minister of the erstwhile state of Jammu and Kashmir.

The 65-year-old PDP president campaigned actively for the candidates in the hope of reviving her party which has suffered most defections since 2018.

Mehbooba, who joined politics in 1996, along with her father Mufti Mohammad Sayeed, was instrumental in making the PDP a regional political force that not only took on the National Conference but ousted the oldest political party of the region from

power within four years of

its formation.

From winning 16 seats in 2002, the PDP grew to 21 MLAs in 2008 and 28 in 2014 assembly elections.

Mehbooba has been an

MLA four times, winning the general elections in 1996, 2002, 2008 and bypolls in 2016. She was elected to Lok Sabha in the 2004 and 2014 elections. While most people would credit the shrewd politician Mufti Mohammad Sayeed for the rise of the PDP, the inner core of the party considered Mehbooba the driving force behind the party.

A large number of midrung leaders and aspiring politicians joined the PDP even when the party was out of power between 2008 and 2014. However, the downward slide started as soon as the PDP-BJP government fell in June 2018.



Next CM Omar carries family legacy

Srinagar: A scion of the influential Abdullah clan in Jammu and Kashmir. Omar Abdullah faced a battle of prestige in the Assembly polls in the Union Territory. Securing an impressive victory in Budgam and leading in Ganderbal -- the two seats that he contested -- the third-generation politician is set to become the next Jammu and Kashmir chief minister and carry on his family's

Just a few months ago, Abdullah, despite his privileged pedigree, endured an embarrassing defeat in the Lok Sabha elections. The Assembly poll, held for the first time since the abrogation of Article 370 in 2019. is perhaps a redemption of sorts for the National Conference leader.

With NC president Fa-

rooq Abdullah easing into retirement, many were of the view that this election would define the future of Omar Abdullah's political

For the better part of the last five years, the 54-yearold former Union minister ruled out his participation in the Assembly polls in a Union territory set up. He had gone to the extent of saying that he would not humiliate himself by entering the Vidhan Sabha of a Union Territory.

However, he made a Uturn after the Election Commission announced the poll schedule for Jammu and Kashmir. He decided to contest not one but two seats -- Ganderbal, a constituency steeped in his family's political legacy, and Budgam.

After the abrogation of



Article 370 and reorganisation of the erstwhile state of Jammu and Kashmir into two Union Territories, there has been an upsurge in support for the National Conference with a large chunk of voters throwing their weight behind the oldest political party of the

While contesting the party stronghold of Ganderbal should have been a

cakewalk for Abdullah, he decided to play it safe and filed a nomination from the Budgam Assembly segment, scarred by the Lok Sabha poll defeat.

As the NC, which had a pre-poll tie-up with the Congress, has emerged as the biggest party in Jammu and Kashmir, it is the senior partner in the alliance and will be in a position to dictate terms in government formation.Moreover, Farooq Abdullah has announced that Omar would be the next chief minister of Jammu and Kashmir.

Abdullah, who has been a Lok Sabha member three times -- 1998, 1999 and 2004 -- is known to come back stronger after every electoral defeat.

He won the 2004 Lok Sabha elections after being humbled in his family bastion of Ganderbal in the 2002 Assembly elections by a little-known candidate --Qazi Mohammad Afzal.

It was Afzal, who as the forest minister, approved the transfer of forest land to Shri Amarnath Shrine Board in 2008 which sparked massive protests for and against the order in Jammu and valley respectively. Seizing the opportunity, Abdullah made a career-defining speech in the Lok Sabha when the situation in Jammu and Kashmir was being discussed.

In the elections held at the end of 2008, he wrested Ganderbal and the NC emerged as the single largest party. He became the chief minister at the age of 38 -- one of the youngest in the country -- and headed the coalition government with the Congress.



supporters after his victory from Handwara constituency in the Jammu & Kashmir Assembly elections in J&K on Tuesday.

BJP chief Ravinder Raina loses

Jammu: While the BJP on Tuesday bagged an all-time high of 29 seats in Jammu and Kashmir Assembly elections, the party's state president Ravinder Raina failed to retain his Nowshera assembly seat of Rajouri district and said he has "accepted the verdict of people". Raina, who polled 27250 votes, lost to National Conference's Surinder Choudhary by a margin of 7,819 votes, according to data on ECI.

EX DCM Tara Chand fails

Jammu: Former Deputy Chief Minister and Congress candidate Tara Chand on Tuesday lost his traditional bastion of the Chhamb seat, which was won by rebel independent candidate Satesh Sharma with a margin of 6,929

The Congress party had won the Chhamb Assembly constituency seven out of the past nine elections since 1962, when party veteran Chajju Ram secured the seat for the first time.

Sharma, aged 42, left the Congress and contested as an independent candidate from the Chhamb assembly segment of Jammu, defeating BJP candidate Rajeev Sharma with a margin of 6,929 votes.

Sharma, the son of twotime MP and former Congress Minister Madan Lal Sharma, received 33,985

Chand, who had won this seat three times earlier, finished third with

Victory in Doda: AAP enters fifth state

New Delhi: AAP supremo Arvind Kejriwal on Tuesday congratulated the party for the victory in Jammu and Kashmir's Doda Assembly seat and opening its account in a fifth state.

Aam Aadmi Party candidate Mehraj Malik, a District Development Council (DDC) member, polled 23,228 votes against BJP's Gajay Singh Rana's 18,690 votes in Doda.

In an interaction with Malik through video call, Kejriwal accepted his invitation to participate in a programme at Doda on October 10.

Malik took his election certificate from the returning officer as Kejriwal watched on his phone and congratulated the newly elected party MLA.

Malik said he was inspired by Kejriwal and the work done by him in the national capital. He said Kejriwal who brought about change in Delhi was a "ray of hope" for Jammu and Kashmir and AAP will

march forward in the state. AAP contested seven seats out of 90 in the Jammu and Kashmir Assembly

The Aam Aadmi Party, which is ruling Punjab and Delhi, also has MLAs in Guiarat and Goa

Lone BJP woman candidate **Shagun Parihar wins** By Anil Bhatt

Kishtwar: Five years after losing her father and uncle in a terror attack, the lone BJP woman candidate in Jammu and Kashmir polls, Shagun Parihar, who won the Kishtwar Assembly seat on Tuesday, vowed to fight for the security of the region.

Parihar defeated veteran National Conference (NC) leader and former minister Sajad Ahmed Kitchloo.

Parihar is one of the 27 candidates of BJP who have won the elections on Tuesday. She is also among the three women who have won elections in Jammu and Kashmir.

Parihar polled 29,053 votes, defeating Kitchloo by a narrow margin of 521 votes. She maintained a lead throughout the counting process.

Kitchloo, who previously won the seat in 2002 and 2008 and his father three times, secured 28,532 votes. PDP's Firdos Ahmed Tak received just 997 votes, forfeiting the deposit.

"I bow before the people of Kishtwar for their faith in me and my party. Their support is deeply appreciated. I am humbled by their



endorsement," Parihar told reporters upon being declared elected.

She emphasised that her victory is not just hers but it also belongs to the nationalist people of Jammu and Kashmir. "It is their blessing," she added.

Ensuring safety and security will be her top priority, given the historical challenges faced by Kishtwar, Shagun affirmed.

"My message to the people is to strive for peace, progress and prosperity in the region. I will work for safety and security of the region," she stated.

Hundreds of BJP workers gathered in Kishtwar and celebrated with traditional drum beats and party flags in honour of Parihar. They also celebrated Sunil Sharma's victory in the Paddar Nagsene constituency. They chanted 'Bharat Mata Ki Jai'

The BJP fielded 29-year-

old Parihar, five years after she lost her father and uncle in a terrorist attack Despite being involved in grassroots work as a student, she had not previously been actively involved in politics.

> Currently pursuing a Doctor of Philosophy in Electronics, Parihar stressed that this election was about all families who have sacrificed for the nation, not just her own.

"My victory honours all those who have sacrificed their lives fighting terrorism and protecting the country," she added.

Parihar, who holds a Master of Technology degree in Electronics, highlighted employment as a critical issue, emphasising the need to create job opportunities for youth.

Among other women candidates, former National Conference (NC) minister Sakeena Masood won D H Pura assembly segment in Kulgam district, while NC's Shamima Firdous won from Habbakadal constituency of Srinagar.

However, Iltija Mufti, daughter of former chief minister Mehbooba Mufti lost her elections from Surgufwara-Bijbehara.

emerge victorious Jammu: Seven independ-

Seven independents

ent candidates have emerged victorious in the Jammu and Kashmir Assembly polls, marking an increase from the 2014 elections when three such candidates had won.

Satesh Sharma, who left the Congress and contested as an independent from the Chhamb seat of Jammu region, won the election by defeating BJP candidate Rajeev Sharma with a margin of 6,929 votes.

In Inderwal, independent candidate Payare Lal Sharma defeated veteran leader Gulam Mohammad Saroori by a narrow margin of 643 votes.

In Bani, independent candidate Dr Rameshwar Singh defeated BJP nominee and former MLA Jewan Lal by 2,048 votes.

In Surankote segment, Choudhary Mohammad Akram defeated Congress' Mohammad Shahnawaz by a margin of 8,851 votes.

Muzaffar Iqbal Khan won the Thanamandi seat with a margin of 6,179 votes against BJP's Mohmmad Iqbal Malik. Khursheed Ahmed Sheikh won Langate seat. Shabir Ahmed Kullay defeated National Conference candidate Sheikh Mohmmad Rafi in the Shopian seat.

Separatists' parties fail to make any impact

By Sumir Kaul

Srinagar: The results of assembly elections in the Kashmir Valley have culminated in a significant rejection of separatist candidates, including those from Engineer Rashid-led Awami Ittehad Party and Jamaat-e-Islami, who failed to make a meaningful impact in the

The standout performance came from Sayar Ahmed Reshi, a proxy candidate for Jamaat-e-Islami from Kulgam, and Khurs-

heed Ahmad Sheikh, brother of the Sheikh Abdul Rashid alias Engineer Rashid, who contested from Langate

Despite their efforts, the majority of candidates associated with these groups lost their deposits, indicating a clear disapproval from the electorate.

Notably, Aizaj Ahmed Guru, brother of Afzal Guru, suffered a crushing defeat in the Sopore assembly seat, receiving only 129 votes — significantly fewer than the 341 votes cast for



the 'None of the Above' (NOTA) option.

The Awami Ittehad Party (AIP) of Engineer Rashid had fielded 44 candidates. However, prominent figures, including his brother and spokesperson Firdous

Baba, found themselves unsuccessful, with many losing their deposits.

Jamaat-e-Islami had put forward four candidates and supported an additional four, but other than Reshi, all were unsuccessful in securing even minimal support.

Despite the disheartening results, Reshi maintained a hopeful outlook, stating, "This is the start of the process. We had limited time for campaigning, but I believe we can make a difference in the future.

Similarly, Talat Majid, another Jamaat candidate from Pulwama, attributed his loss to a lack of support from the Jamaat cadre, suggesting that the notion of their association with the BJP may have harmed their prospects.

Sheikh Ashiq Hussain, a prominent businessman and close associate of Engineer Rashid, only managed to garner 963 votes, falling short of the NOTA option, which received 1,713 votes.

Acknowledging the overwhelming support for the National Conference, he remarked, "It's not just a wave, people have voted decisively for the National Conference. Now we await to see what they deliver in return for their mandate."

Another notable figure, Sarjan Ahmad Wagay, known as 'Azadi Chacha and currently jailed under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, also faced a significant defeat against National Conference candidate Omar Abdullah, barely managing to save his deposit in Beerwah.

QUOTE OF THE DAY

PM Modi had promised peaceful elections in J&K, which witnessed transparent polls for first time since advent of terrorism.



Amit Shah, Union Home Minister

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Saini: BJP's surprise CM pick packs a punch

Chandigarh: Months before the Haryana Assembly polls, the BJP replaced its strongman Manohar Lal Khattar as chief minister with low-profile OBC leader Nayab Singh Saini, a decision that surprised many.

On Tuesday, the BJP's gamble paid off with Saini leading the party to victory in the Haryana Assembly polls after a dismal showing in the Lok Sabha elections in the state and defying exit poll predictions of a clean sweep for the Congress.

Saini's elevation from the Haryana BJP president to Chief Minister in March came at a time when the party was facing anti-incumbency following Khattar's tenure of nine-and-a-half years and attacks from a buoyant opposition on farmers' issues, unemployment, Agnipath scheme, inflation,

and law and order.

Barely days after Saini, 54, was brought in by the BJP, the Model Code of Conduct came into effect with the announcement of the Lok Sabha elections and later ahead of the assembly elections, effectively giving him only two months to shift the public perception.

Saini quickly got to work, with his cabinet taking some important decisions.

Prominent among these

were approving the Haryana Agniveer Policy, 2024, to provide employment and entrepreneurship opportunities to Agniveers after the completion of their service in the armed forces and giving the goahead to a proposal to buy 10 more crops at minimum support price, making Haryana the only state to purchase 24 crops at MSP. The BJP also promised



to provide cooking gas cylinders at Rs 500 under the 'Har Ghar Grahani Yojana'. The party's poll manifesto made more promises -- monthly financial assistance of Rs 2,100 for women, two lakh government jobs for youths and guar-

for Agniveers from Harvana

The ruling party's poll campaign focused on alleged corruption, favouritism and scams during the Congress rule with Saini crisscrossing the state to tell people about the BJP government's achievements

The BJP also told voters about the Congress' "failure" to fulfil poll promises in states like Himachal Pradesh, Karnataka and Telangana.

Notwithstanding the exit poll predictions, Saini had claimed the BJP

would return to power in Haryana for a third consecutive term.

"Aath tareekh ko janta degi jawab, aur yeh (Congress) kahenge EVM hai kharab (The people will respond on October 8 and the Congress will blame EVMs for its defeat)," Saini had said on October

As counting progressed on Tuesday, it became clear by late afternoon that the BJP was headed for a third term.

According to the Election Commission website, the BJP was leading in 49 of the 90 assembly seats, halting a Congress comeback in the state after a decade.

Saini won Ladwa assembly seat by a margin of 16.054 votes against his nearest Congress rival Mewa Singh, according to

the Election Commission. The BJP had said ahead of the polls that Saini would continue to be the Chief Minister if the party returned to power, even though senior leader Anil Vij also threw his hat in the ring.

After Khattar resigned as chief minister in March, his Karnal assembly seat was vacated. Saini won the seat in a bypoll held simultaneously with the Lok Sabha elections in May, defeating Congress nominee Tarlochan Singh.

Born in Ambala's Mirzapur Majra village on January 25, 1970, Saini served as minister in the Khattar cabinet between 2014 and 2019.

During the past three decades, Saini rose through the ranks in the state BJP. He held positions of district president and general secretary of Haryana BJP Kisan Morcha. He was the state BJP youth wing's Ambala district general secretary in 2002 and became the district president three years

He was elected to the Haryana Assembly from Naraingarh constituency in 2014 and to the Lok Sabha from Kurukshetra seat

Saini was appointed as the Haryana BJP chief in October 2023 in an effort by the party to strengthen its hold over the OBC community and non-Jats.

His elevation to the Chief Minister's post was similar to that of Khattar.

After the BJP came to power on its own in 2014, it picked Khattar, then a first-time MLA from Karnal, for the chief minister's post over many senior party leaders like Ram Bilas Sharma, Anil Vij, Capt Abhimanyu and O.P. Dhankar. Khattar is a Union minister now.

Why the BJP could register a hat-trick

anteed government jobs

 Galvanisation of non-Jat votes The BIP has taken a different approach since 2014 when it first came into power jumping from four members in the Assembly to 47. Contrary to

The BJP focused on OBC vote, which makes up about 40 per cent of the population, he party elevated Nayab Singh Saini, an OBC, as state party chief and later as Khattar's replacement in March this year.

conventional expectations, it appointed Manohar Lal

Khattar, a Punjabi Khatri, as Chief Minister.

As CM Saini ensured the party garnered OBC support in a state where the Chief Minister has often been from the upper-caste Jat community, which forms 25 per cent of the population. The BJP cemented its win by wooing the 75 per cent non-Jat voters.

The BJP also targeted Scheduled Caste (SC) voters, particularly through women's self-help groups in villages. The Lakhpati Drone Didis, often from Dalit families, became symbols of this outreach.

 Candidate selection While Congress leaders like Bhupinder Hooda pushed

for their own candidates, the BJP adopted a different approach, choosing 60 fresh faces to combat anti-incumbency. In contrast, Congress re-nominated 17 candidates who had lost earlier, including its state

The BJP also attacked the Congress by claiming that it would again anoint Hooda as Chief Minister, a move that may have alienated non-Jat voters by reinforcing the perception that jobs and opportunities would concentrate in Hooda's stronghold of Rohtak.

 3D- Development, DBTs, and Discipline The BJP started its campaign much before the Congress could get its act together. It ramped up its campaign as early as January with its "Modi ki Guarantee" vans touring villages. These vans highlighted government schemes and allowed villagers to rectify issues in their Parivar Pehchan Patras. The party also emphasised its success with Direct Benefit Transfers (DBTs), claiming to be number one in the country in ensuring that benefits went directly into beneficiaries' accounts.

Then followed a slew of welfare announcements that

stopped only when the poll code was enforced.

Development in the GT Road constituencies, which stretch from Ambala to Delhi, was another focal point, with six districts and 25 seats experiencing significant progress. Voters appear to have rewarded this work at the ballot box. The BJP also stressed its efforts to reduce crime, contrasting its discipline with the chaos it warned a Congress-led government would bring.

Fragmented Opposition

Unlike in the Lok Sabha elections, Congress and AAP fought separately in this contest. The battlefield was further crowded by the Indian National Lok Dal, which allied with the Bahujan Samaj Party, and the JJP, which teamed up with the Azad Samaj Party. This split the anti-BJP vote, contributing to Congress's defeat in several constituencies

150 - No of rallies addressed by PM Narendra Modi and Union Home Minister Amit Shah

70 – No of rallies held by Congress



BJP workers celebrate the party's victory in the Haryana Assembly elections in Dehradun on Tuesday.

Satrap, veteran Cong man who

Allegations of slowdown 'ill-founded': EC

New Delhi: The Election Commission on Tuesday told Congress leader Jairam Ramesh that there was nothing on record to substantiate his "ill-founded allegation" of a slowdown in updating of Haryana poll results.

The poll panel also dubbed his allegations as an attempt to "surreptitiously give credence to irresponsible, unfounded and uncorroborated mala fide narratives".

Earlier in the day, the Congress had raised with the Election Commission the issue of an "unexplained slowdown" in updating of results of Haryana elections on the poll watchdog's website and urged it to direct officials to update accurate figures so that "false news and malicious narratives" can countered immediately.

In a letter to the Chief **Election Commissioner** and Election Commissioners, Congress general secretary in-charge communications Ramesh said that between 9 and 11 am, there has been an "unexplained slowdown" in updating results on the ECI's



In another post on X, Ramesh said, "In Adampur Vidhan Sabha (Haryana), @INCIndia candidate Chander Prakash has reportedly won by 1,426 votes - but the ECI has not issued an election certificate yet and the website is not showing the results of the last three rounds."

What explains this delay Election Commission, he

In its response, the poll authority said counting of votes is being carried out according to Rule 60 of Conduct of Election Rules at the designated counting centres and by the designated authorities following statutory and regulatory regime.

The EC said the entire counting process in Haryana and Jammu and Kashmir is unfolding in the presence of candidates. observers and micro-observers as per rules.

"There is nothing on record to substantiate your ill-founded allegation of slowdown in updating of results. Your memorandum also does not bring out any contrary facts as to the delay at any of the constituencies in Haryana or J-K." it told Ramesh.

The EC underlined that approximately 25 rounds across all the constituencies are being updated every five minutes, which testifies dissemination of the counting process in a speedy manner.

Vinesh wins, calls it victory of 'struggle'

Chandigarh: Congress candidate and wrestler Vinesh Phogat on Tuesday called her maiden electoral win from the Julana assembly seat in Haryana as "victory of struggle" and "victory of truth".

Phogat defeated her nearest rival and BJP nominee Yogesh Kumar by a



margin of 6.015 votes, according to the Election Commission.

Phogat polled 65,080 votes while BJP's Kumar secured 59,065 votes.

Speaking to reporters after the poll outcome, 30-year-old Phogat said, "It is a victory of 'sangharh' (struggle) and victory of

I will always keep the trust and love of the people, she further said.

could have been CM again Chandigarh: A four-time MP, six-time MLA and the three-time chief minister of a state that has been the

arbiter of his political destiny. The calculations went awry though and Haryana didn't vote the way Congress veteran Bhupinder Singh Hooda had anticipated. The doughty politician, who fought the opposition and some say even forces

within the party to stake claim to primacy in the Congress, turned 77 last month. But there seems to be enough fight still left. With trends showing the

BJP set to return to power for a third consecutive term in his home state with its largest ever tally and the Congress settling at the 37 mark (winning or leading) in the 90-member assembly, defeat was writ

Not for Hooda though. The man who was handpicked by the Congress in 2005 to be chief minister, edging out party veteran Bhajan Lal, is quite the never say die man. In an election where sev-

Hooda held firmly on to power in his constituency Garhi-Samla Kiloi by bagging it again with a massive margin of 71,465 votes. That win is his and so

eral of his party colleagues

lost or were trailing -- with

even star wrestler turned

politician Vinesh Phogat

winning her seat Julana by

a little over 6,000 votes --

perhaps is his party's debacle. Although the Congress

had earlier made it clear its MLAs and the high command will decide who will be the chief minister if the party wins the elections, the Jat stalwart was virtually the face of the Congress in the assembly polls. The Congress contested

89 of the 90 Assembly seats — except Bhiwani which it left for the CPI(M) — and Hooda loyalists or those considered close to him. Besides, the party re-fielded all 28 sitting MLAs, most of whom owe allegiance to Hooda.

Senior Congress leader Kumari Selja did not contest the elections but her aspiration to be at the helm of the state was no secret.

In the Lok Sahha nolls too, his choice prevailed in eight of the nine seats the Congress fought -- barring the Sirsa seat contested and won by Selja. It won five seats while its INDIA bloc ally AAP unsuccessfully fought the Kurukshetra seat.

In the assembly polls, the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) fought solo after talks with the Congress to stitch an alliance did not materialise. It was believed that Hooda was opposed to any tie-up with the Arvind Kejriwal-led party for the assembly polls.

The two-time former chief minister and is now a six-time MLA now has also been four-time MP from Rohtak. He defeated former deputy prime minister Devi Lal from the parlia-

the tickets for most went to mentary seat in the 1990s. Hooda, who started his political career at Youth Congress, was born in village Sanghi on September 15, 1947 in Rohtak district.

Hooda studied both in Panjab University, Chandigarh and Delhi University. He is a law graduate. In 2010, then prime minister Manmohan Singh constituted the Working Group on Agriculture Production under his chairmanship to recommend strategies and

His father late Chaudhary Ranbir Singh Hooda was a renowned freedom

Bhupinder Hooda married Asha Dahiya in 1976 and has two children Deepender and Aniali

After the Congress party lost power in Haryana in the 2014 polls, nothing went right for the satrap.

The ruling BJP at the Centre made allegations of irregularities in land deals, a major poll issue last time. Cases were slapped against the Congress veteran. The BJP has alleged that Hooda reduced the Harvana Congress to a "bapu-beta"

QUOTE OF THE DAY

"If she (Vinesh) wins by using my name, it means I am a great man. At least my name has enough power

to help her sail through. These wrestlers are not heroes but villains for Haryana."

Brijbhushan Sharan Singh, Former MP, BJP

Kingmaker in 2019 reduced to zero

Chandigarh: From emerging as a kingmaker in the 2019 Harvana Assembly polls to facing a potential wipeout five years later, the Jannayak Janta Partv has witnessed a dramatic fall in its electoral fortune after its alliance with the BJP ended in March.

Party leader and former

deputy chief minister Du-

shyant Chautala is set to

face a humiliating defeat in

the polls as he trails in the

fifth spot in the Uchana Ka-

lan Assembly segment -- a

In 2019, the JJP won 10 of the 90 assembly seats, but it emerged as a kingmaker and forged a post-poll alliance with the BJP, which had fallen six short of a simple majority after winning 40 seats.

seat that he won in 2019.

The Ajay Singh Chautala-led party, which was born after a vertical split in the parent outfit Indian National Lok Dal (INLD) in December 2018 owing to a family feud, saw a sudden

rise in its graph and abrupt

decline once its alliance with the BJP ended in March this year.

The alliance fell apart after the BJP effected a change in its leadership, replacing Manohar Lal Khattar as chief minister with Nayab Singh Saini.

In the 2024 Lok Sabha polls, the JJP fielded candidates on all 10 seats but could not win even one. The JJP candidates faced severe drubbing, losing their security deposits.

After its state unit chief

Nishan Singh quit the party, seven of its 10 legislators switched over to either the Congress or the BJP.

Even a pre-poll alliance with the Azad Samaj Party (Kanshi Ram) to target Dalit voters in Haryana seems to not have reaped dividends for the JJP.

After its tie-up with the BJP in 2019. Chautala had to do the balancing act to ensure the smooth running of the government as his support base was against the saffron party.

Chautala, 36, the greatgrandson of former deputy prime minister Devi Lal. had last month predicted that no single party would be able to cross the 40-seat mark in the assembly elections.

"No single party can form a government on its own. There are chances that nobody crosses the 40seat mark. So, there will be parties with numbers and some Independents too who will win," former deputy chief minister Chauta-



the country's youngest MP then, Chautala had attracted eveballs when he reached Parliament to attend the winter session riding a green-coloured tractor to protest tweaking of certain rules relating to the Motor Vehicles Act which. he had claimed, would add to farmers' woes.

Spacecraft blasts off to probe previous cosmic crash

Cape Canaveral (US): A spacecraft blasted off Monday to investigate the scene of a cosmic crash.

The European Space Agency's Hera spacecraft rocketed away on a twoyear journey to the small, harmless asteroid rammed by NASA two years ago in a dress rehearsal for the day a killer space rock threatens Earth. Launched by SpaceX from Cape Canaveral, it's the second part of a planetary defense test that could one day help save the planet.

Scientists are eager to examine the impact's aftermath up close to know exactly how effective Dart was and what changes might be needed to safeguard Earth in the

"The more detail we can glean the better as it may be important for planning a future deflection mission should one be needed," University of Maryland astronomer Derek Richardson said before launch.

Researchers want to know whether Dart short for Double Asteroid Redirection Test — left a crater or perhaps reshaped the 500-foot (150-meter) asteroid more dramatically. It looked something like a flying saucer before Dart's blow and may now resemble a kidney bean, said Richardson, who took part in the Dart mission and is helping with Hera

Dart's wallop sent rubble and even boulders flying off Dimorphos, providing an extra kick to the impact's momentum. The debris trail extended thou-



The 2022 crash by NASA's Dart spacecraft shortened Dimorphos' orbit around its bigger companion, demonstrating that if a dangerous rock was headed our way, there's a chance it could be knocked off course with enough advance notice.

before arriving at Dimor-

phos by the end of 2026.

It's a moonlet of Didymos,

Greek for twin, a fast-spin-

ning asteroid that's five

times bigger. At that time,

the asteroids will be 120

million miles (195 million

team in Darmstadt, Ger-

many. Hera will attempt to

go into orbit around the

rocky pair, with the flyby

distances gradually drop-

ping from 18 miles (30 kilo-

meters) all the way down

to a half-mile (1

The spacecraft will sur-

vev the moonlet for at

least six months to ascer-

tain its mass, shape and

composition, as well as its

morphos circled its larger

companion from three-

quarters of a mile (1,189

meters) out. Scientists be-

lieve the orbit is now tight-

Before the impact, Di-

orbit around Didymos.

kilometer).

Controlled by a flight

kilometers) from Earth.

sands of miles (more than 10,000 kilometers) into space for months.

Some boulders and other debris could still be hanging around the asteroid, posing a potential threat to Hera, said flight director Ignacio Tanco.

"We don't really know very well the environment in which we are going to operate," said Tanco. "But that's the whole point of the mission is to go there and find out."

European officials describe the \$400 million (363 million euro) mission as a "crash scene investigation." Hera "is going back to the crime site and getting all the scientific and technical information," said project manager Ian

Carrying a dozen science instruments, the small car-sized Hera will need to swing past Mars in 2025 for a gravity boost, er and oval-shaped, and that the moonlet may even

Two shoebox-sized Cubesats will pop off Hera for even closer drone-like inspections, with one of them using radar to peer beneath the moonlet's boulder-strewn surface. Scientists suspect Dimorphos was formed from material shed from Didymos. The radar observations should help confirm whether Didymos is indeed the little moon's parent.

The Cubesats will attempt to land on the moonlet once their survey is complete. If the moonlet is tumbling, that will complicate the endeavor. Hera may also end its mission with a precarious touchdown, but on the larger Didymos.

Neither asteroid poses any threat to Earth - before or after Dart showed up. That's why NASA picked the pair for humanity's first asteroid-deflecting demo.

Leftovers from the solar system's formation 4.6 billion years ago, asteroids primarily orbit the sun between Mars and Jupiter in what's known as the main asteroid belt, where millions of them reside. They become near-Earth objects when they're knocked out of the belt and into our neck of the woods.

NASA's near-Earth object count currently tops 36,000, almost all asteroids but also some comets. More than 2,400 of them are considered potentially hazardous to Earth.



The carcass of an elephant found in a paddy field, on the outskirts of Siliguri in the Jalpaiguri district.

Big boost to plantation drive

New Delhi: Coal India-arm SECL is set to spend Rs 169 crore over the next five years on extensive plantation drives in Chhattisgarh and Madhya Pradesh, an official statement said on

In partnership with the Rajya Van Vikas Nigam, the South Eastern Coalfields Ltd (SECL) aims to plant over 26 lakh saplings in Chhattisgarh and 12 lakh in Madhya Pradesh between 2023-24 and 2027-28.

The initiative also includes a four-year maintenance period for each year of plantation to ensure proper growth and survival of saplings, the coal ministry said in a statement.

In alignment with the Prime Minister Narendra Modi's 'Ek Ped Maa Ke Naam' campaign, SECL has planted 1,46,675 saplings across its operational areas in Chhattisgarh and Madhya Pradesh.

India's clean energy tech capacity to rise significantly by 2030: Report

New Delhi :India's clean energy technology capacity is projected to rise significantly by 2030, but the country is likely to miss its green energy target due to challenges like availability of technological innovation and skilled labour, a report said on Monday.

The Centre has set a target for establishing 50 per cent cumulative electric power installed capacity from non-fossil fuel-based energy resources by 2030.

According to S&P Global Commodity Insights, with government's supportive strategies, India's clean energy technology capacity is projected to rise significantly by 2030, aiming for full self-sufficiency in solar PV and wind by 2030.

"However, challenges such as technological innovation gaps, skilled labour shortages, inadequate infrastructure, and inconsistent policy en-



forcement may hinder progress toward these clean energy goals by 2030," it said.

In support of local manufacturing, various policy measures have been introduced, including tariffs on imported goods like basic customs duties (BCD) and goods and services tax (GST), along with approved manufacturer and model lists Approved List of Models and Manufacturers (ALMM) (ALMM) and Revised List of Models & Manufacturers (RLMM).

Other measures include direct incentives, such as the PLI scheme, further promote domestic production and innovation within

the sector. These favourable policies are expected to drive substantial growth in India's clean energy capacity by 2030, it said.

"Projections indicate that India will reach 107 GW in PV modules, 20 GW in wind nacelles, 69 GWh in battery cells, and 8 gigawatts equivalent (GWe) in electrolyzers. This growth will enable India to achieve full self-sufficiency in solar PV and wind, and over 90 per cent in battery cells," said Indra Mukherjee of S&P Global Commodity Insights.

While the manufacturing capacity is growing, India still faces obstacles in achieving its ambitious renewable energy installation targets. In the solar PV sector, India struggles to meet its polysilicon and wafer production goals, which hampers its competitiveness.

-PTI



A Durga puja pandal made up of earthen pots and bamboos, in Guwahati.

Sonam Wangchuk continues fast

New Delhi: Climate activist Sonam Wangchuk on Tuesday continued his indefinite hunger strike at Delhi's Ladakh Bhawan along with his supporters.

Wangchuk, who is spearheading an agitation for Ladakh's Sixth Schedule status, had started his

fast on Sunday afternoon. According to the protesters, they have not been approached by any government representative so far. Mehdi, one of the activists who is sitting on fast with Wangchuk, said

that a medical test of the

protesters was done on Tuesday morning and many had low blood pressure. "We are sitting here in 40 degrees (Celsius)... It is the third day, we have been sleeping here in the

> open," Mehdi told PTI. "There are old people sitting here as well, some

have diabetes, blood pressure issues. But we are not going to leave until our demand is met "he said

Liyaqat, who is also participating in the hunger strike, said the people from Ladakh are not being allowed inside to meet

says Amitabh Kant New Delhi: India should

aim for 750 gigawatts of renewable energy capacity and become a clean energy exporter by 2030, former NITI Aayog CEO Amitabh Kant said on Mondav. At a roundtable discus-

sion here, Kant said that there is no shortage of global funds for clean energy, but India needs to establish strong financial systems, such as escrow accounts, to attract private investments for renewable projects.

He emphasized that it is 'very important that India is able to drive its own agenda" amid multiple global crises, including the Russia-Ukraine war. West Asia conflicts, and trade barriers from countries like the US and Europe, which are affecting free trade and renewable energy prices.

"And the Indian agenda must be very clear -- we are an importer of fossil fuels worth USD 180 billion, and our goal must be to become an exporter of clean ener-



"There may be a lack of projects, but there is no shortage of funds in the world, irrespective of what is being said. USD 150 trillion is available with sovereign wealth funds and pension

funds. Our push must be for international financial institutions, like the ADB and World Bank, to use guarantees and blended finance to enable higher levels of private funds to flow into countries in the Global South, particularly India."

India must export clean energy,

gy... Our objective must be to surpass 500 gigawatts and reach 750 gigawatts of renewable energy," Kant

India has committed to achieving 500 GW of nonfossil fuel-based electricity installed capacity by 2030. At present, the country has 424 GW of power generation capacity which includes around 180 GW from non-fossil energy sources.

To achieve its renewable energy goals, India will need finances to flow in from external sources, not

just from internal markets, he said.

To facilitate this, Kant said India must establish robust financial systems, such as escrow accounts, to guarantee payments to investors, preventing situations where private companies have to resort to legal action to receive payments from discoms.

He stressed the need for India to focus on producing green hydrogen and decarbonizing hard-to-abate sectors like steel, cement, and transport. This requires

mandates for discoms to purchase renewable energy and for the private sector to move to green hydrogen. Kant called for improve-

ments in India's energy infrastructure, including smart grids, smart meters, and green energy corridors, to support its renewable energy ambitions. He said that both pump

and battery storage are critical for the future of renewable energy, especially for electric mobility and long-distance transport powered by green hvdrogen.

According to the Central Electricity Authority, India will need 27 GW of battery storage capacity by 2030 to meet its renewable energy targets.

Kant also said India laid the roadmap for tripling renewable energy and doubling energy efficiency during its G20 leadership, else "COP would have found it very difficult" to achieve consensus on this.

Tiger safari in Nahargarh inaugurated

Jaipur: Rajasthan Chief Minister Bhajanlal Sharma on Monday inaugurated a Tiger Safari in Nahargarh Biological Park here, officials said.

During the ceremony Sharma also named two tiger cubs, christening the female cub as 'Skandi' and the male as 'Bheem', they

According to officials, the safari, developed across 30 hectares at a cost of Rs 453 lakh, includes a 7 km track and offers tourists a chance to observe tigers in their natural habitat.

This initiative also aims to raise awareness about tiger conservation, they

Nahargarh Wildlife Sanctuary spans 5,240 hectares, in which Nahargarh Biological Park has been developed in 720 hectares and it already houses a Lion Safari.

Addressing the public during the event, the chief minister highlighted that 'Wildlife Week', celebrated from October 2 to 8 underscores the importance of protecting wildlife and preserving nature, an official statement said.

He also announced free entry to the Biological Park for students during the wildlife week, it said.

The Tiger Safari has been developed and will

function with joint efforts by the Forest Department and Jaipur Development Authority (JDA), he said.

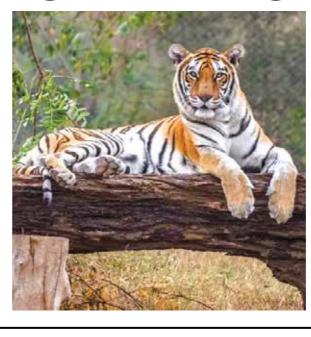
Sharma emphasised that Rajasthan is focusing on wildlife conservation with three national parks, 26 sanctuaries, 36 conservation reserves, and four biological parks in the

He stated that the tiger numbers have been steadily increasing in the state due to continuous efforts by the state government with about 130 tigers currently residing in Rajasthan.

He said that JDA has developed two new parks in Jaipur district, including Nagar Van in Zerota and Biodiversity Park near Nevta. This will benefit the population of 5 lakhs in the surrounding

The chief minister further elaborated on the efforts to promote afforestation, including the planting of seven crore saplings under the 'Ek Ped Maa Ke Naam' campaign and 'Mukhyamantri Vriksharopan Maha Abhiyan'.

The state government is continuously planting trees under the 'Harivalo Mission' under which 10 crore saplings will be planted every year in the next five years, he added.



Displacement of tribals from tiger reserves

Raipur: Padma Shri Jageshwar Yadav has urged the government to consider the challenges tribal people will face if their villages are relocated from the core areas of tiger reserves.

Speaking to PTI on the sidelines of the Chhattisgarh Green Summit, Yaday, who has been working for the welfare of the Birhor tribal community since 1980, said that while tribals "welcome development", it should not forests they have lived in for generations. Asked about the Cen-

come at the cost of the

tre's recent directive to expedite the relocation of villages from core areas in tiger reserves, he said, "The government should carefully consider the challenges the tribals will face after displacement from these reserves. Any decision should be made after thorough consideration."

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total is now around 43,000.

1,400

No of people including

Hezbollah fighters and civilians killed in Lebanon

since Israel expanded its

strikes

No of projectiles launched

from Lebanon toward

northern Israel on Tuesday

180

No of ballistic missiles

launched by Iran at Israel

USD 4.86 billion

Money spent US in the

region since the October 7,

2023

The U.S. had 34,000 forces in the Middle East the day that Hamas broke through Israeli barricades around Gaza to attack. That number rose to about 50,000 in August when two aircraft carriers were in the region, aiming to discourage retaliation after a strike attributed to Israel

killed Hamas political leader Ismail Haniyeh in Iran. The

Hezbollah says more Israelis will be displaced

Beirut: Hezbollah's acting leader said Tuesday that even more Israelis will be displaced as the militant group extends its rocket fire deeper into Israel, in a defiant televised statement marking the anniversary of fighting that escalated into war last month.

Sheikh Naim Kassem, the acting leader of Hezbollah, said its military capabilities are still intact and that it has replaced all of its senior commanders after weeks of heavy Israeli airstrikes across large parts of Lebanon, including targeted strikes that killed much of its top command in a matter of

He also said Israeli forces have not been able to advance after launching a ground incursion into Lebanon last week. The Israeli military said a fourth division is now taking part in the incursion, which has expanded to the west, but operations still appear to be confined to a narrow strip along the border.

The Israeli military says it has dismantled militant infrastructure along the border and killed hundreds of Hezbollah fighters. On Tuesday, it said a strike in Beirut had killed Suhail Husseini, who it described as a senior commander responsible overseeing logistics, budget and management of the militant group.

There was no immediate comment from Hezbollah, and no way to confirm battlefield claims made by either side.

"We are firing hundreds of rockets and dozens of drones. A large number of settlements and cities are under the fire of the resistance," Kassem said in a video address, speaking from an undisclosed location. "Our capabilities are fine and our fighters are deployed along the frontlines.

He said Hezbollah's top leadership was directing the war and that the commanders killed by Israel have been replaced. "We have no vacant posts," he He said that Hezbollah

will name a new leader to succeed Hassan Nasrallah, who was killed in an Israeli airstrike in a bunker in Beirut last month, "but the circumstances are difficult because of the war."

Israel's aerial defence intercepted most of the rockets, the military said. A 70-year-old woman was moderately wounded by shrapnel and Israeli media



People hold up candles during the UJA Federation memorial marking the one-year anniversary of the Hamas attack on Israel

aired footage of what appeared to be minor damage to buildings near the coastal city of Haifa.

The military also said that it struck Hezbollah targets in the southern Beirut suburbs, known as the Dahiyeh, where the militant group is headquartered.

Hezbollah began firing rockets into northern Israel on October 8, 2023, the day after Hamas' surprise attack into Israel ignited the war in Gaza. Hezbollah and Hamas are both allied with Iran, and Hezbollah says its attacks are aimed at aiding the Palestinians. Israel began carrying out airstrikes in response and the conflict steadily escalated, erupting into a fullfledged war last month.

The Lebanese militant group has said it will stop the attacks if there is a cease-fire in Gaza, but months of diplomatic efforts on that front have repeatedly stalled.

Israel has inflicted a punishing wave of blows against Hezbollah in recent weeks and says it will keep fighting until tens of thousands of displaced Israeli citizens can return to their homes in the north.

More than 1,300 people have been killed in Lebanon and over a million displaced since the fighting escalated mid-September.

Since then, Hezbollah has extended its rocket fire into central Israel, setting off air raid sirens in the country's commercial hub of Tel Aviv. Iran-backed Houthi rebels in Yemen have also launched missiles that reached central Israel. Most of the projectiles have been intercepted or fallen in open areas, disrupting life in Israel but causing few casualties and little property damage.

Last, week Iran launched its own barrage of some 180 ballistic missiles at Israel.

US spends USD 17.9 bn on aid to Israel

Washington: The United States has spent a record of at least USD 17.9 billion on military aid to Israel since the war in Gaza began and led to escalating conflict around the Middle East, according to a report for Brown University's Costs of War project, released on the anniversary of Hamas' attacks on

An additional USD 4.86 billion has gone into stepped-up U.S. military operations in the region since the Oct 7, 2023, attacks, researchers said in findings first provided to The Associated Press.

That includes the costs of a Navy-led campaign to quell strikes on commercial shipping by Yemen's Houthis, who are carrying them out in solidarity with the fellow Iranianbacked group Hamas.

The report — completed before Israel opened a second front, this one against Iranian-backed Hezbollah militants in Lebanon, in late September — is one of the first tallies of estimated U.S. costs as the Biden administration backs Israel in its conflicts in Gaza and Lebanon and seeks to contain hostilities by Iranallied armed groups in the

The financial costs were calculated by Linda J. Bilmes, a professor at Harvard's John F. Kennedy School of Government, who has assessed the full costs of U.S. wars since the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks, and fellow researchers William D. Hartung and Stephen Semler.

Record military aid to Israel

Israel — a protege of the United States since its 1948 founding — is the biggest recipient of U.S. military aid in history, getting USD 251.2 billion in inflationadjusted dollars since 1959, the report says.

Even so, the USD 17.9 billion spent since Oct. 7, 2023, in inflation-adjusted dollars, is by far the most military aid sent to Israel in one year.

The US committed to providing billions in military assistance to Israel and Egypt each year when they signed their 1979 USbrokered peace treaty, and an agreement since the Obama administration set the annual amount for Israel at USD 3.8 billion through 2028.

Much of the US weapons delivered in the year were munitions, from artillery shells to 2,000-pound bunker-busters and precision-guided bombs.

Expenditures range from USD 4 billion to replenish Israel's Iron Dome and David's Sling missile defense systems to cash for rifles and jet fuel, the study says.

Unlike the United States' publicly documented military aid to Ukraine, it was impossible to get the full details of what the US has shipped Israel since last Oct. 7, so the USD 17.9 billion for the year is a partial figure, the re-

searchers said. Funding for the key US ally during a war that has exacted a heavy toll on civilians has divided Americans during the presidential campaign.

But support for Israel has long carried weight in U.S. politics, and Biden said Friday that "no administration has helped Israel more than I have.'

Haiti survivors face uncertain future

Pont-Sonde: Under the cover of night, dozens of gang members crept toward the small town of Pont-Sonde in central Haiti armed with knives and assault rifles as families

The gang had travelled from nearby Savien in vehicles they ditched halfway through the trip, climbing into canoes for the last stretch for a quiet approach.

Gunfire and screams woke the town. Those not shot dead were stabbed. Fires consumed homes.

The Gran Grif gang killed babies and young mothers, older people and entire families, angry that a self-defence group had tried to limit gang activity in Pont-Sonde and prevent

HUNGRY, THIRSTY AND HOMELESS

Thousands walked west to the coastal city of Saint-Marc. Days after the massacre, a crowd of men, women and children gathered around a Good Samaritan standing atop his car distributing food and drink.

The newly homeless crowded into a church, a school and a public plaza shaded by trees. Those lucky enough to receive food sat on a dusty curb and ate. At night, they curled up on concrete floors and tried to sleep.

it from making money off a makeshift toll it had recently established on a nearby road.

The gang escaped by foot through nearby rice fields after Thursday's attack, leaving more than 70 hodies strewn through the

It was the biggest massacre that Haiti's once peaceful central region had seen in recent history. Thousands now face an uncertain future, stripped of their jobs, homes and families

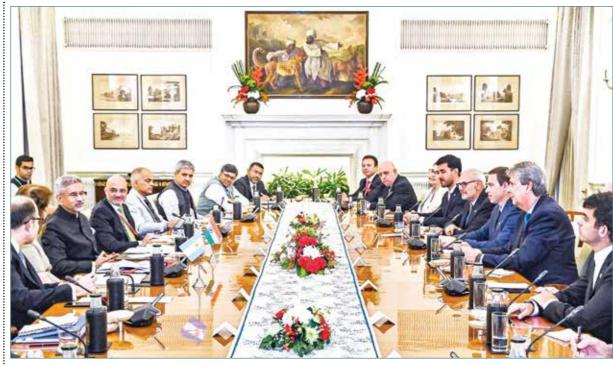
Jameson Fermilus, who had crouched in a corridor next to his house as smoke and gunfire filled the air, later joined more than 6,000 other survivors who walked for hours, seeking

PM Modi to visit Laos

New Delhi: Prime Minister Narendra Modi will be on a two-day visit to Laos on October 10 and 11 during which he will attend the 21st ASEAN-India Summit and the 19th East Asia Summit, the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said on Tuesday.

Laos is the current chair of ASEAN. On the invitation of his Laos counterpart Sonexay Siphandone, Prime Minister Modi will visit Vientiane on October 10-11, the MEA said in a statement.

Modi will attend the 21st ASEAN-India Summit and the 19th East Asia Summit being hosted by Laos as the current chair of ASEAN.



External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar during a meeting with Minister of Foreign Affairs of Argentina Diana Mondino.

France tightens steps to prevent Bin Laden's son

Paris: France's interior minister said Tuesday he has taken additional steps against any effort by one of the sons of al-Qaida leader Osama bin Laden to return to France.

Omar bin Laden had been living in France's Normandy region but left the country in October 2023 after French authorities withdrew his residency papers and ordered him out, the Interior Ministry said. At the time, authorities also barred him from returning to France for two years. French daily Le Parisien reported that Omar bin Laden now lives

Kim threatens to use nuclear weapons

Seoul: North Korean leader Kim Jong Un warned again that he could use nuclear weapons in potential conflicts with South Korea and the United States, as he accused them of provoking North Korea and raising animosities on the Korean Peninsula, state media reported on Tuesday.

Islamabad: Former prime minister Imran Khan and his party's Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur were on Tuesday booked in a new case of 'attempt to murder' linked to the death of a policeman during

"The case has been reg-

over the weekend.

their party's protest here

istered on the state's behalf at federal capital's Noon police station under the sections of attempted murder, arson, attack on the state and violence against police personnel as well as anti-terrorism act (ATA) on Tuesday," The News International newspaper

Pakistan government

charged incarcerated Khan, the founder of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI), and Gandapur with attempt to murder of Islamabad Capital Territory Police's constable Abdul Hameed, who was allegedly attacked by miscreants

during PTI's D-Chowk pro-

test on Friday night and

died during treatment two

'Attempt to murder' case against Imran Khan

days later.

Khan has been incarcerated at Rawalpindi's Adiala Jail for more than a year. Upon his call for the rally, the PTI planned the rally at D-Chowk here demanding Khan's release, independence of the judiciary, and protesting rising inflation.

D-Chowk here is the

same venue where the PTI had organised a sit-in for 126 days in 2014.

When the government tried to prevent the rally on Friday, there were clashes between security personnel and the party supporters, resulting in Hameed's death and left several others injured.

QUOTE OF THE DAY

"Democrats in tight races, for the most part, are calculating that the risk of embracing Biden far exceeds any reward that his efforts would bring



Christopher Borick, Director, Muhlenberg College Institute of Public Opinion, Pennsylvania.

Physics Nobel to two scientists for AI discoveries

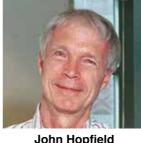
HINTON IS KNOWN THE GODFATHER OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE. HOPFIELD IS AN AMERICAN WORKING AT PRINCETON

Stockholm: Two pioneers of artificial intelligence -John Hopfield and Geoffrey Hinton - won the Nobel Prize in physics Tuesday for helping create the building blocks of machine learning that is revolutionising the way we work and live but also creates new threats to humanity, one of the winners

Hinton, who is known as the Godfather of artificial intelligence, is a citizen of Canada and Britain who works at the University of Toronto and Hopfield is an American working at Princeton.

"This year's two Nobel Laureates in physics have used tools from physics to develop methods that are the foundation of today's powerful machine learning," the Nobel committee said in a press release.

Ellen Moons, a member of the Nobel committee at the Royal Swedish Acade-



John Hopfield

my of Sciences, said the two laureates "used fundamental concepts from statistical physics to design



memories and find patterns in large data sets.'

works have been used to advance research in physics and "have also become part of our daily lives, for instance in facial recognition and language translation. While the committee

She said that such net-

honoured the science behind machine learning and AI, Moons also mentioned its flipside, saying that "while machine learning has enormous benefits, its rapid development has our future. Collectively, humans carry the responsibility for using this new technology in a safe and ethical way for the greatest benefit of humankind." Hinton shares those con-

also raised concerns about

Google so he could more freely speak about the dangers of the technology he helped create.

cerns. He quit a role at

On Tuesday, he said he was shocked at the

EDITORIAL

BJP Boost

s the dust settles over the recent Assembly elections, the BJP, defying anti-incumbency prediction of political Cassandras and exit polls, is set for a historic third term in Haryana. This will buoy the party after its underwhelming performance in the Lok Sabha polls. The Haryana outcome not only reinforces the BJP's foothold in national politics but also presents a counter-narrative to the INDIA bloc's post-election fervour.

Despite the bogey stoked by lingering farmer protests and discontent surrounding the controversial Agniveer scheme, the BJP strategically diversified its approach, relying not solely on Prime Minister Narendra Modi's star power—evidenced by his reduced number of rallies—but also on a ground-level consolidation of anti-Jat votes. The Congress's over-reliance on the Jat community backfired, rallying other groups against it. Interestingly, the Dalit vote, which the Congress anticipated would tilt in its favour, has not completely abandoned the BJP.

At the forefront of the BJP's campaign was Chief Minister Nayab Singh Saini, whose relatively short tenure allowed him to distance himself from the decade-long rule of the previous administration. By introducing measures to benefit the backward classes, including a significant income limit increase for OBC employment from Rs. 6 lakh to Rs. 8 lakh, the BJP effectively shifted the narrative in its favour. Their mantra of 'bina parchi, bina kharchi Naukri (promising jobs without bribes) resonated with voters.

The BJP's rejuvenated team, led by key figures such as Union Minister Dharmendra Pradhan and state leaders, has seemingly addressed concerns that arose following its poor showing in the Lok Sabha elections. The incorporation of new candidates in place of established leaders provided a fresh face that contrasted sharply with the Congress's decision to recycle incumbents.

In contrast, in Jammu and Kashmir, the National Conference, in alliance with the Congress, having crossed the majority threshold, reclaimed its historic dominance and is set to form the government. Here, the BJP's performance in the first Assembly election held after the abrogation of Article 370, fell short despite its strenuous attempt to position itself as a proponent of development.

The electorate's apparent rejection of hardline factions like the PDP reflects a nuanced response and win for democracy. Notably, the results have shown a significant rejection of separatist candidates, including those from Engineer Rashid-led Awami Ittehad Party and Jamaat-e-Islami, who failed to make a meaningful impact in the polls.

The BJP's emphatic victory in Haryana redeems its Lok Sabha misstep but also signals a broader political resurgence, giving the party renewed vigour to march into future contests like the crucial Maharashtra Assembly election.

PUBLIC INTEREST

Towards Future-Ready Urbanscapes



Abhijit Mulye

he term 'NITI' in NITI Aayog stands for the 'National Institute for Transforming India.' Through its Growth Hub or G-Hub mission, NITI Aayog has developed comprehensive plans for cities like Mumbai, Surat, Visakhapatnam, and Varanasi. These plans adopt a fresh, innovative approach, inspiring hope for the future of India's rapidly urbanising landscape.

Urbanisation in India has grown rapidly over the past few decades. In 2001, 28.61 crore people lived in cities (27.82% of the total population), and by 2011, this number had risen to 37.71 crore (31.15%). By 2020, it was estimated to reach 48.3 crore (34.9%).

During this period, the count of urban households living in slums increased from 1.01 crore to 1.37 crore. However, urban households living in slums decreased from 23.5% in 2001 to 17% in 2011. Urban poverty also dropped significantly, from 25.7% in 2004-05 to 13.7% in 2011-12. Cities played a vital role in the economy,

The Mumbai Metropolitan Region (MMR) is poised to evolve into a \$300 billion economy, driven by NITI Aayog's Growth Hub (G-Hub) mission.

contributing 60% of India's GDP in 2011. The demand for urban infrastructure and urban services is continuously increasing, and it is being compounded by other related trends a large share of the young population, the increasing population numbers of urban poor, and their low-income levels. As per the high-powered expert committee report of 2011, the urban infrastructure investment deficit is estimated at Rs 39.2 lakh crore at 2009-2010 prices for the period 2012–2031. While the government of India is working towards addressing this investment requirement, it is also designing schemes to make Indian cities more liveable. The five flagship centrally sponsored schemes in the urban sector are working towards these objectives.

In a review of the schemes for urban transformation, it came to the fore that the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of several major city regions worldwide appears to match the GDP of entire countries. This reflects urban centres' growing economic prominence and vitality, highlighting their pivotal role in shaping the country's economic development and that the Indian cities hold the potential to propel unparalleled economic growth, which needs to be realised. This led to the initiative focused on developing city regions as Growth Hubs, which plan for leveraging urbanisation for economic growth in line with NITI Aayog's mandate of fostering cooperative

The study revealed that although Indian cities occupy just 3% of the country's land, they contribute a significant 65% of the GDP. Projections suggest that this urban area is expected to expand to 50% by 2047, up from the current 36%.

A prime example of this economic concentration is the Mumbai Metropolitan Region (MMR), which plays a vital role in India's economy. MMR accounts for:

- 4% of the national GDP
- 24% of the country's income tax collection



- 36% of corporate tax collection
- 25% of India's industrial output
- 40% of foreign trade
- · 70% of maritime trade

In Maharashtra, MMR holds 20% of the population but only 2.8% of the land area. It contributes 31.2% of the state's GDP and 18.1% of its jobs. The region's per capita income is 1.5 times higher than Maharashtra's and nearly double that of India's national average.

The G-Hub mission aims to take a proactive approach by focusing on economic strategy before land use planning. It will identify job growth drivers, define city resources, support global trends, and assess resource needs. The mission will also boost the business environment, propose new ideas and interventions, and prioritise major projects. Apart from building and boosting economic activity, it also focuses on improving quality of life and inclusivity while promoting sustainability.

NITI Aayog has identified seven key growth drivers, covering 30 projects, eight sector policies, and nine institutional changes to establish the Mumbai Metropolitan Region (MMR) as a financial hub. The goal is to attract Rs 10-11 lakh crore in private investment and

speed up ongoing projects worth \$65 billion. The vision includes transforming Mumbai into a global fintech capital, contributing Rs 1 trillion to India's GDP. It also meticulously addresses various factors affecting citizens' lives. This includes developing 3 million affordable housing units by 2030, developing MMR as a global service hub built on seven champion services, creating 3 million affordable homes by 2030, making MMR a global hub for tourism and urban recreation hub and port-proximate manufacturing and logistics hub having world-class urban infrastructure and transport, and becoming an inclusivity and sustainability leader of India with planned urbanisation.

The G-Hub mission by NITI Aayog represents a forward-looking approach to leveraging India's rapid urbanisation for economic growth by transforming urban spaces into thriving economic hubs while promoting sustainability and inclusivity. With ambitious projects, targeted investments, and a clear vision for the future. These growth drivers are expected to shape MMR as a \$300 billion economy and play a key role in India's journey towards becoming a \$5 trillion economy.

Israel's Long War in Lebanon: From Sharon's 'Mailed Fist' to Precision Strikes against Hezbollah



Shoumojit Banerjee

Israel's tangled tryst with Lebanon has been one long, dark waltz in the violent ballroom of the Middle East. Once known as the 'Paris of the Middle East' before being consumed by the flames of a horrific civil war, Lebanon, for much of the mid-20th century, coexisted with Israel in a state of relative calm.

Unlike other Arab countries, cosmopolitan Lebanon had refrained from participating in the major wars against Israel that defined the 1940s, 50s, and 60s. Despite the broader Arab-Israeli animosity, Lebanon - a mosaic of Christians, Sunni and Shia Muslims, and Druze - kept its distance from open conflict with its southern Jewish neighbour.

However, by the 1970s, that fragile calm began to unravel, leading both nations into a tangled web of violence and proxy battles that persist to this day with Israel locked in mortal combat with Hezbollah, the Iran-backed Shia militant group.

Lebanon's delicate political system, carefully crafted to balance its reli-

The Jewish State's heavy-handed intervention in 1982 to today's targeted strikes on Hezbollah, Israel's enduring conflict in Lebanon has ravaged a country that was once at peace with it.



gious sects, had kept the country relatively stable during Israel's early wars with its Arab neighbours. While Lebanon did not officially make peace with Israel, there was no active conflict between the two. Lebanese Christians from Maronite factions, had a pragmatic relationship with Israel, viewing it as a buffer against hostile forces like Syria and Palestinian militants.

By the 1960s, Lebanon's internal balance shifted dramatically with the influx of Palestinian refugees following the Six-Day War of 1967, during which Israel decisively defeated the Arab states. The Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO), led by Yasser Arafat, established bases in southern Lebanon - having previously set up strongholds there after being expelled from Jordan in 1970 and began launching cross-border raids into Israel, which in turn provoked Israeli retaliation.

In his monumental and judicious 1,300-page masterwork 'A History of Israel', historian Howard Morley Sachar observes how the frustrated Palestinian refugees became "fair game for the PLO," already entrenched in Lebanon. Arafat and his colleagues, says Sachar, had at their disposal some \$400 million in annual subsidies from Saudi Arabia and Gulf

Oil states, with which they organized labour welfare and generated employment for their kinsmen, becoming a semi-autonomous government in Lebanon.

In 1975, Lebanon's social fabric rup-

tured into a brutal civil war. What began as sectarian clashes between the Maronite Christians and Muslim factions, snowballed into a full-blown proxy war, involving regional and

full-blown proxy war, involving regional and global powers. Amid the chaos, the PLO gained strength, making southern Lebanon a launching pad for attacks into northern Israel.

In response, Israel cultivated relationships with Lebanese Christian militias, particularly the Maronites, who were fighting the PLO and its Muslim allies. One of the key figures in this alliance was Bashir Gemayel, a charismatic Maronite leader and head of the Lebanese Forces, the main Christian militia.

By the early 1980s, Israel had had enough. The situation in Lebanon, particularly the constant threat of PLO attacks, had become untenable. Ariel Sharon, Israel's hawkish defence minister at the time, saw an opportunity to kill two birds with one stone: oust the PLO from Lebanon





and install a friendly Christian government under Bashir Gemayel, creating a pro-Israel buffer state to the

What was Sharon's Gamble?

In June 1982, Israel launched 'Operation Peace for Galilee,' sending its troops deep into Lebanon. The stated

objective was to push the PLO back from Israel's northern border, but Sharon's ambitions went far beyond that. The Israel Defense Forces (IDF) reached Beirut within days, laying siege to

days, laying siege to the capital city and bombarding Palestinian positions, prompting Arafat to flee Lebanon.

Yet this invasion would become one of the most controversial chapters in Israeli military history. It was during this period that Israel's Christian allies, under the leadership of Bashir Gemayel, found themselves in the international spotlight for all the wrong reasons.

In September 1982, Gemayel was assassinated in a massive bomb attack just days after being elected president of Lebanon. His death, a devastating blow to Israel's plans, triggered a horrific massacre at the

Palestinian refugee camps of Sabra and Shatila. In retaliation for Gemayel's death, members of the Lebanese Christian Phalangist militia (They drew inspiration from the Nazi and Italian Fascist movements, while also embracing the Catholic nationalism and imperialist nostalgia of the Spanish Falange), with the tacit approval of the Israeli military, stormed the camps, killing between 700 and 3,500 Palestinian civilians.

The world was outraged, and Israel's moral standing suffered greatly. (The Kahan Commission, an Israeli government inquiry, found Sharon personally responsible for allowing the massacre, leading to his resignation as Defence Minister)

The operation saw Israeli forces occupy the southern half of Lebanon and eventually reach Beirut, where, in a controversial move, they laid siege to the city. While Israel succeeded in driving the PLO out of Lebanon, the occupation sowed the seeds of a far more dangerous foe: Hezbollah.

Initially founded as a small resistance movement to fight Israel's occupation, Hezbollah would grow into a formidable paramilitary force. Bolstered by funding and arms from Iran, and taking advantage of Lebanon's weak central government, Hezbollah emerged as both a military and political player. For Israel, the group's emergence was a bitter unintended consequence of its military intervention. By the time Israeli troops withdrew from southern Lebanon in 2000 after an 18-year occupation, Hezbollah had established itself as a potent guerrilla force and the dominant power in southern Lebanon.

The 2006 war, a 34-day conflict sparked by Hezbollah's abduction of Israeli soldiers, revealed Hezbollah's ability to strike deep into Israeli territory using rockets revealing the extent of its military capabilities. Though Israel claimed to have damaged Hezbollah's infrastructure, the group emerged as the epitome of 'resistance' against Israel in the Arab world.

Since then, the two adversaries have engaged in sporadic but lethal confrontations that has now metasta-

sized into an Armageddon following Israel's pounding of Gaza in retaliation to the October 7 attacks launched by Hamas and other Palestinian terror outfits.

As Israel today launches strike after strike to decapitate Hamas leadership, killing the once-elusive Hassan Nasrallah and his potential 'heir apparent' - senior Hezbollah leader Hashem Safieddine - the Lebanese government is nonplussed at the mounting casualties of its civilians.

While Sharon's 'mailed fist' of the 1980s was all about overwhelming force against the PLO in Lebanon, Israel's military claims that today its military operations are surgical, aimed at eliminating key Hezbollah figures and neutralizing the group's rocket and missile stockpiles in the benighted country.

Today, it seems endgame for Hezbollah. But as Gaza and Hamas — once the focal points of conflict since October 7 last year — give way to Iran, Hezbollah's primary backer, the question remains whether the IDF can eliminate the hydra-headed Lebanese militant outfit.

In a visceral scene in German filmmaker Volker Schlöndorff's haunting Circle of Deceit (1981), the finest film on the Lebanese Civil War, a journalist, portrayed by Bruno Ganz, frantically runs toward the camera, chased by a carload of militiamen from one faction, only to stumble upon the lifeless bodies of another. Overwhelmed, he clutches his head in a moment of paralyzing despair. As the IDF continues to maul Lebanon, the scene serves as a chilling shorthand for the relentless cycles of bloodshed that continue to define the country today.

(Tomorrow, we explore the 'special relationship' between Israel and the United States. As the Left across the globe censures Israel and students in

American campuses stridently condemn it, we look at the so-called 'Jewish Lobby', the forgotten history of left-wing support for Zionism and the future of the Israeli-American relationship in the context of the ongoing war in Gaza)

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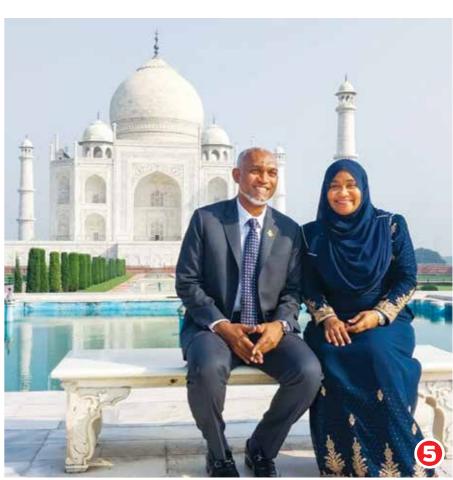






- 1. Devotees take part in a religious procession during the Navratri festival and the 'Langoor Mela' celebrations at Durgiana temple in Amritsar on Tuesday,
- 2. Veteran actress Shobana performs
 Bharathanatyam at the Soorya Dance
 Festival in Thiruvananthapuram on
 Monday.
- 3. Indian Air Force (IAF) personnel during the 92nd Annual Day celebrations of IAF, at Air Force Station in Tambaram in Chennai on Tuesday.
- 4. Sex workers during the inauguration of Durga 'puja pandal' on the 'Maha Chaturthi' of Goddess Durga Puja festival, at Sonagachhi in Kolkata on Monday.
- Maldives President Mohamed Muizzu with wife Sajidha Mohamed during a visit to Taj Mahal in Agra on Tuesday.

All Pictures PTI, AF



READERS' CHOICE

Domestic Turbulence: A Direct Impact on National Security



Madhura Kulkarni

The strength of our armed forces depends on personnel's mental well-being, supported by healthy family relationships. Weak familial ties can jeopardise operational effectiveness and national security.

Lieutenant Commander Mohan (all names changed to protect identities) faced marital problems and a separation that left him in emotional and mental distress. This turmoil led to his being declared unfit for a sea exercise—a role he had trained for his entire life. The decision, tied to his personal struggles, deepened his descent into clinical depression. Though the matter is still in court, the slow judicial process has offered no quick resolution, leaving him contemplating resignation from the service.

Mohan's situation reflects a troubling trend within the armed forces. Major Rohit is also experiencing marital turbulence, which has intensified his stress, especially with no one to care for his 2-year-old daughter. This strain has significantly impacted his ability to serve, prompting him to consider quitting as well. Conversely, Commander Arvind has displayed abusive behaviour toward his wife and child before deserting them. His case, too, remains under court review, with no signs of resolution.

These personal struggles are not isolated incidents; they highlight a growing concern within the armed forces. Marital and family issues increasingly compromise the emotional stability of military personnel, ultimately affecting their ability to serve. These cases reflect a broader trend that poses significant challenges to the operational readiness of our defence forces.

defence forces.

Multiple instances of defence fami-



lies facing severe difficulties are emerging, often resulting in broken homes. Many of these cases are either in court or undergoing consultation and counselling, with attempts at reconciliation. Regardless of the outcome, the personnel involved often find themselves emotionally and mentally unfit for duty.

This issue is particularly concerning when trained individuals are unable to perform at their best in critical operations. In Cdr. Arvind's case, whose violent behaviour is unbecoming of an officer, raises questions about the reliability of such personnel within the national security establishment.

A larger question arises: if these officers are relieved of their duties, how will it impact the efficiency and workload of their respective units? Would this create a vacuum that would be difficult to fill, especially in critical roles? Given the overall demographics and the number of personnel facing domestic issues, the challenge of managing unstable individuals could escalate into a significant human resources problem within the defence ecosystem. As adversaries outnumber our forces, losing personnel due to non-performance or failure to complete their service would amount to a substantial strategic setback for national security.

The personnel tasked with safeguarding our nation must maintain optimal emotional and mental wellbeing, supported uniquely by their families. A strong family backing fosters personal peace, enabling individuals to perform at their best.

The character of our unique social fabric is a direct reflection of the strength of our family units. Indian traditional family units have been the source of strength of our cultural construct, which is thus the basis of

every problem and solution that we refer to as 'Uniquely Indian'. The family is an important institution that plays a central role in the lives of us Indians. As a collectivistic society, Indians often emphasise lovalty and interdependence. The interests of the family usually take priority over those of the individual, and the decisions affecting one's personal life, such as marriage and career paths, are generally made in consultation with one's family. People tend to act in the best interest of their family's reputation, as the act of an individual may impact the perception of the entire family by their community.

Social constructs, values, and the concept of family have evolved, and Indian society is undergoing a significant transformation. The traditional structure is shifting towards a more westernised, global working culture with smaller, nuclear family units. Divorce, once considered taboo, is now more accepted, but it brings financial, emotional, and societal challenges. As dysfunctional marriages rise, the pressure on both the family system and society grows.

Research should be conducted to identify the specific challenges faced by serving individuals, their counterparts, extended families, and their respective service institutions. The goal of this study is to develop realistic and implementable recommendations for all stakeholders involved.

Ultimately, the national security apparatus comprises the men and women serving; its strength is determined by its weakest element. Unfortunately, the human element is both the strongest and weakest part of this apparatus, necessitating urgent measures to insulate serving personnel from changing family dynamics.

(The Writer is a lawyer based in Pune. Views personal.)

EXPLAINER

GMRT Uncovers the Longest-Ever Black Hole Jets in a Distant Galaxy

team of international astronomers has utilized the Giant Metrewave Radio Telescope (GMRT) to identify the largest pair of plasma jets ever recorded, emanating from a supermassive black hole in a remote galaxy located 7.5 billion light-years away. Spanning an astonishing 23 million light-years from end to end, these jets exceed the size of the Milky Way by more than a factor of one hundred.

"This pair is not just the size of a solar system or a galaxy; we are talking about 140 Milky Way diameters!" asserts Martijn Oei, a postdoctoral scholar at the California Institute of Technology (Caltech) and lead author of a recent paper published in

Dubbed Porphyrion after a Greek giant, this jet megastructure emerged when the universe was just 6.3 billion years old. These powerful outflows, with a combined power output of trillions of Suns, symmetrically emanate from either side of a supermassive black hole at the galaxy's center. "Every major galaxy harbors a significant black hole, ranging from one million to one billion solar masses," explains Oei. "It consumes nearby stars, dust, and plasma, with a small fraction being expelled as jets."

The discovery of this colossal jet system is part of a larger survey that identified thousands of faint megastructures initially detected using Europe's LOFAR (LOw Frequency ARray) radio telescope. "While the existence of these giants was known prior to our campaign, we had no idea that there would be so many," remarks Martin Hardcastle, a professor of astrophysics at the University of Hertfordshire and co-author of the study.

Determining the jets' length required a powerful radio telescope to trace their galactic origin, which the GMRT provided. Oei's team used high-resolution GMRT observations to identify the host galaxy and then employed the Keck I optical telescope in Hawaii to measure the distance. Porphyrion is located 7.5 billion light-years from Earth, when the universe was less than half its



current age of 13.8 billion years.
Without GMRT's precise positi

Without GMRT's precise positioning, identifying the optical host galaxy and gauging the scale of the radio megastructure would have been impossible. "Until now, these giant jet systems appeared to be a recent universe phenomenon," Oei observes.

The influence of Porphyrion's black hole reaches a third of a cosmic void, the vast empty spaces between filaments. "If jets can reach such scales, no corner of the universe is safe from black hole activity," Oei warns.

ty," Oel warns.

The extensive reach of these jets implies they may also exert a broader influence on nearby galaxies. "We believe that galaxies and their central supermassive black holes coevolve, and a key aspect of this interaction involves the immense energy output of jets that can affect the growth of both their host galaxies and neighboring ones," explains coauthor George Djorgovski, a professor of astronomy and data science at Caltech.

Oei suggests that humanity may only be observing "the tip of the iceberg." "Our LOFAR survey has only covered 15 percent of the sky. Many of these giant jets are likely difficult to detect, leading us to believe that numerous similar behemoths remain undiscovered." The collabora-

tion among LOFAR, GMRT, and Keck could yield the identification of many more giants like Porphyrion in the coming years.

The mechanics behind the jets' extensive reach without destabilizing remain a mystery. "Martijn's research has shown that there's nothing particularly unique about the environments surrounding these giant sources that allows them to achieve such sizes," states Hardcastle, an expert in black hole jet physics. "The increasing number of giants suggests that this phenomenon is relatively common."

Oei's next step is to investigate how these megastructures influence their surroundings, particularly the role of giant jets in spreading magnetism. He explains, "Magnetism is essential for life, so we want to trace its origins." While it's known that magnetism starts in the cosmic web and permeates galaxies, stars, and planets, the researchers aim to determine its initial source and whether these giant jets contribute to its dissemination across the cosmos.

The study of supermassive black hole jets in radio galaxies has been a vibrant research area, with the GMRT making significant contributions over the past two decades. The discovery of Porphyrion marks another milestone for the GMRT in astrophysical research.

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Father demands Rs 5 cr prize, flat in Pune for Swapnil

By Correspondent

Mumbai: The father of Paris Olympics shooting bronze medallist Swapnil Kusale has expressed disappointment over the Maharashtra government paving Rs 2 crore prize money to his son, saying Haryana doles out much higher amount for its athletes

Swapnil Kusale (29), who hails from Kolhapur, won a bronze medal in 50 m rifle 3 positions event at the Paris Olympics in August.

His father Suresh Kusale on Monday said his son should get Rs 5 crore prize money and a flat near the Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Sports Complex in Balewadi,

Speaking to reporters in Kolhapur, Suresh Kusale claimed, "The Haryana government gives Rs 5 crore to its each (Olympics medal winning) player (Haryana gives Rs 6 crore to a gold medallist, Rs 4 crore to silver medallist, Rs 2.5 crore to bronze winner)."

"As per a new policy announced by the Maharashtra government, an Olympic bronze medal winner will get Rs 2 crore. Why does the state form such criteria when Swapnil was only the second individual Olympic



medal winner from Maharashtra (after wrestler K D Jadhav in 1952) in 72 years?" he asked.

Five individuals won medals in the Paris Olympics for India, of whom four were from Haryana and one, Swapnil Kusale, from Maharashtra. Haryana is a much smaller state compared to Maharashtra, but it gives higher prize money to its medal winning athletes, he

"However, our government has announced Rs 5 crore for a gold medal winner, Rs 3 crore for a silver medallist and Rs 2 crore for a bronze medallist. Why have such a criteria when

only two players from Maharashtra have won individual Olympic medals in so many years?" Suresh Kusale

"Had I known such an outcome, I would have persuaded him to explore a career in some other sports. Is the amount kept low because Swapnil is from a humble background? Would the reward amount have remained the same if he had been the son of an MLA or a minister?" he wondered.

Suresh Kusale also said the 50-meter-three-position rifle shooting arena at the sports complex (in Pune) should be named after his

"Swapnil should get Rs 5 crore as an award, a flat near Balewadi Sports Stadium so that he could easily commute for practice. Swapnil's name should be given to the 50-meter-three-position rifle shooting arena," he said when asked about his demands. After his Paris feat, the ace marksman was promoted by his employer Central Railway and appointed an officer on special duty.

The Maharashtra government recently announced doubling the prize money for players winning medals at major sports events, including Olympics, World Championships and Asian Games, among others.

India's T20 marauders eye another win

New Delhi: An India so dominant that Bangladesh is admittedly clueless about how to match the "skills and mentality" of Suryakumar Yadav's men.

The script is not expected to deviate much when the two sides clash in the second T20 International here on Wednesday with the home team's young mavericks proving more than a handful for the fullstrength visitors.

Bangladesh have hardly looked like the plucky opponents that they are hyped to be but India have looked every bit the marauding force that loves to intimidate on home turf.

So, even with key players such as Rishabh Pant, Axar Patel, and Jasprit Bumrah rested, India's remarkable depth in whiteball cricket shone through in a comfortable sevenwicket victory in the opening game in Gwalior.

One man who made a strong statement of intent in that game on Sunday was Sanju Samson.

Confirmed by Suryakumar as an opener for the series, Samson has been in and out of the national set up since his debut in 2015 and his lack of consistency has been a major contributing factor.

In the series-opener in Gwalior, the keeper-batter, who usually comes in the middle order, revelled in his new role as opener and played some delightful strokes in his 19-ball 29, showcasing his ability to play freely in the powerplay. However, he couldn't convert his promising start, much like his opening partner Abhishek Sharma, who showcased sheer power before running himself out.



Brian Lara and Sachin Tendulkar during the launch of International Masters League, in Mumbai on Tuesday.

Usha rejects Yadav's claims of faulty agreement with RIL

New Delhi: Indian Olympic Association President PT Usha on Tuesday refuted treasurer Sahdev Yadav's claims in a CAG report that a faulty sponsorship agreement with Reliance India Limited (RIL) led to a loss of Rs 24 crore to the IOA.

In a statement, Usha said it was a ploy to tarnish her reputation and threatened legal action against anyone who will indulge in giving "misleading information".

"Dr. Usha strongly refuted the claims made by Mr. Sahdev Yadav in the CAG report, alleging that she acted without the knowledge of the IOA Executive Council. These claims, according to her, are part of a deliberate attempt to tarnish her reputation and discredit the IOA," a press release from the IOA stated.

"In reality the negotiation proposal was circulated to all Executive Council



members on 9 September, 2023 and later forwarded by the Acting CEO in a letter dater 5 October, 2023. Mr. Rohit Rajpal, representing the Sponsorship Committee, was present at the meetings where the negotiation was discussed.'

According to the terms of the sponsorship agreement dated August 1, 2022, RIL was permitted to associate with IOA as Official Principal Partner of the Asian Games (2022, 2026), Commonwealth Games (2022, 2026), 2024 Paris Olympics

The agreement also gave RIL the authority to build the 'India House' during these Games.

But the CAG report said on December 5, 2023, additional rights of Winter Olympic Games (2026, 2030) and Youth Olympic Games (2026, 2030) were also granted to RIL through an amended agreement. This was due to International Olympic Committee's refusal to allow naming rights of the NOC House to any sponsor.

Usha said due process was followed while redrafting the deal with RIL.

"The Addendum to the agreement was drafted under the guidance of one of India's leading sports lawyer, Mr. Nandan Kamath of NK Law, Bangalore. The Acting CEO was kept in the loop, copied on all relevant

WCG Annual Football Tournament

Alister strikes 4 in St. Blaise big win

By correspondent

Mumbai: Joshua D'Souza's twin strikes were the highlight of Our Lady Of Victories, Mahim 2-0 win against St. Joseph's 'B', Mira Road in a men's open first-round match of the 44th Willingdon Catholic Gymkhana Annual Rink Football Tournament 2024, played under floodlights at the WCG courts

Earlier, in an absorbing contest. St. Joseph's 'C'. Juhu snatched a hardfought 4-3 win against St. Francis Xavier's 'A'. Vile Parle. St. Joseph's striker Ajay Mangela scored two goals while teammates Sahil Verma and Sandeep Jagade struck one each to secure the win. St. Francis Xavier's scored through a brace of goals from Tanmay Gadekar and Denston Chettair chipping in with

encounter, Our Lady of Assumption, Kandivali got the better of Holy Cross 'C' Juhu 1-0 Striker Bazil D'Cunha scored the lone

Results - Men's Open: Our Lady of Victories, Mahim 2 (Joshua D'Souza 2) beat St. Joseph's 'B', Mira Road 0; St. Joseph's C', Juhu 4 (Ajay Mangela 2, Sahil Verma, Sandeep Jagade) beat St. Francis Xavier's 'A', Vile Parle 3 (Tanmay Gadekar 2, Denston Chettair); Our Lady of Gloria 'A', Byculla 2 (Nigel Marshall, Joshua Jadhav) beat St. Francis Xavier, Vasai 0; Our Lady of Assumption, Kandivali 1 (Bazil D'Cunha) beat Holy Cross 'C', Juhu 0; St. Paul's 'A', Dadar 5 (Yash Solanki 2, Lance Fernandes, Merwyn Steven, Francisco Salin) beat St. Joseph's 'D', Mira Road 0.



Novak Djokovic waves to spectators after defeating Flavio Cobolli of Italy in the men's singles third round match of the Shanghai Masters tennis tournament on

Title holders India to open against Malaysia

Kuala Lumpur: Two-time champions India will open their title defence against Malaysia in the Women's Asian Champions Trophy hockey tournament beginning in Bihar on November

The tournament will feature six teams -- hosts and defending champions India, China, three-time winners Korea, two-time champions Japan, Malaysia and Thailand

According to the official schedule announced by the Asian Hockey Federation (AHF) on Tuesday, the tournament, to be played in Rajgir, will conclude on No-

India won the tournament in 2016 in Singapore before reclaiming the title in Ranchi last year.

After Malaysia, the Indian women will take on Korea on November 12, followed by matches against Thailand (November 14), China (November 16) and Japan (November 17).

Sarfaraz to miss Ranji opener

Mumbai: Prolific batter Sarfaraz Khan will miss Mumbai's Ranji Trophy opener against Baroda from October 11.

The Mumbai batter, who played a match-winning 222 not out in their Irani Cup triumph last week, will be at the National Cricket Academy, according to

Defending champions Mumbai face Baroda in an away fixture from October 11. while they face Maharashtra at home from October 18, which will coincide with the India-New Zealand first Test in Bengaluru from October 16.

Squad: Ajinkya Rahane (c), Prithvi Shaw, Ayush Mhatre, Angkrish Raghuvanshi, Shrevas Iver, Siddhessh Lad, Suryansh Shedge, Hardik Tamore (WK), Sidhaant Addhatrao (WK), Shams Mulani, Tanush Kotian, Himanshu Singh, Shardul Thakur, Mohit Avasthi, Mohd. Juned Khan, Royston Dias.

MFA Super Division League

CFCI brush aside India Rush 8-0

By correspondent

Mumbai: CFCI (Community Football Club of India) Under-19 showed good understanding and combined well as a team and defeated India Rush SC by a convincing 8-0 margin in a Mumbai Super Division match of MFA League 2024-2025 played at the Neville D'Souza ground, Bandra.

Striker Tanishq Panicker struck a brace of goals while teammates Atharva Bhandar, Rohan Jadhay, Vedant Manohar, Paul Shaju, Praneet Irde and Dhruy Sancheti all contributed one each to complete the margin of victory.

In another match Waves FC had an easy outing against Rudra FC and charged to a fluent 6-0 victory. Sunny Koli and Mohit Koli struck two goals each and Shubham Narvekar and Aryan Bhandari added one each to seal the win.



Results - Super League: Waves FC 6 (Sunny Koli 2, Mohit Koli 2, Shubham Narvekar, Aryan Bhandari) beat Rudra FC 0; CFCI Under-19 8 (Tanisha Panicker 2, Atharva Bhandar, Rohan Jadhav, Vedant Manohar, Paul Shaju, Praneet Irde, Dhruv Sancheti) beat India Rush SC 0.

Tsitsipas sets up Medvedev clash in Shanghai Masters

Shanghai: Stefanos Tsitsipas' rivalry with Daniil Medvedev will add another chapter after the Greek player beat Alexandre Muller 6-37-5 at the Shanghai Masters here on Tuesday.

The 12th-ranked Tsitsipas and the Russian former US Open champion will meet for a 14th time, and first in nearly a year. The fifthranked Medvedev has a commanding 9-4 lead in the head-to-head series, which has spilled over into a war of words off the court in the past.

"I consider him someone that I respect on the tour, much more than I did before," Tsitsipas said.

"We've had some heated things on the court in the past, but I think those things have resolved themselves over time, and we also had the time to speak about those things and have a common understanding of why these things happen.

"What is missing is trying to get a good win under my belt, and that will redeem my efforts for so far of trying to get better. My whole goal is to get out there, play the best tennis that I can."

Tsitsipas had to wait out a twoday rain delay to play his thirdround match against Muller, but looked in complete control until losing his serve at 5-3 in the second set. Unperturbed, the Greek broke back to love to clinch the match and renew his six-year rivalry with Medvedev.

No. 16-ranked Ben Shelton put away Roberto Carballes Baena 6-3 6-4, firing eight aces and 24 winners to line up top seed Jannik Sinner in the fourth round.

Seventh-ranked Taylor Fritz also advanced with ease, beating Japan's Yosuke Watanuki 6-3 6-4, while Grig-

or Dimitrov, playing in his 100th Masters event, beat Alexei Popyrin

Gael Monfils upset 15th-ranked Ugo Humbert 7-6(7) 2-6 6-1 in an all-French match-up.

The 38-year-old Monfils, ranked 46th, is the second oldest player to reach the Shanghai fourth round in Shanghai, behind only Roger Federer (also 38) in 2019.

"It's never easy to play Ugo, he's really aggressive, playing fast off both wings and takes a lot of time from you," said Monfils, who plays second-ranked Carlos Alcaraz next.

"Carlos is in a confident mood (having) just won a tournament (China Open), so that's going to be a tough one for sure."

Also, Tomas Machac, who made the semifinals in Tokyo, eased past Australian Alexander Vukic 6-4 6-2 and next faces No. 13-ranked Tommy Paul in the third round.

Later on Tuesday, four-time champion Novak Djokovic plays his third-round match against Flavio Cobolli, bidding to capture his 100th tour-level title. Third-ranked Alexander Zverev faces Tallon Griekspoor of the Netherlands in a night

Wuhan Open

Katerina Siniakova had a comfortable 6-3 6-1 victory over Alexandra Eala of the Philippines to set up a second-round match against defending champion Aryna Sabalenka.

Second-ranked Sabalenka, who won the title the last time it was played in 2019, needs only to make the quarterfinals at Wuhan to regain top spot in the rankings from Iga Swiatek, who withdrew from the women's Asian swing citing fatigue and personal reasons. Swiatek recently split with coach Tomasz Wiktorowski.

Magda Linette of Poland routed No. 23-ranked Liudmila Samsonova 6-2 6-2, and Ekaterina Alexandrova beat former Australian Open champion Sofia Kenin of the US 6-1 4-6 6-4. Other winners included Britain's

Katie Boulter, American Amanda Anisimova, Bulgaria's Viktoriya Tomova and Romania's Jaqueline Cristian, who has Paris Olympics gold medalist Zheng Qinwen next.

After snapping a 24-match losing streak at the China Open last week, Zhang Shuai's change of fortune turned in Wuhan as she lost to Yulia Putintseva of Kazakhstan 6-4 6-4 in the first round.

The top eight seeds, including Sabalenka and China Open champion Coco Gauff, received a first-round

