

THE ASIAN AGE

LONDON TUESDAY 5 NOVEMBER 2024



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Actress Carla Tous during the world premiere of *Paddington in Peru* in London on Sunday. — AP

Indian Army holds first patrolling in Ladakh's Depsang

New Delhi: The Indian Army on Monday carried out first successful patrol in eastern Ladakh's Depsang, days after the disengagement process with the Chinese military was completed on the Line of Actual Control. According to an official statement, following the consensus reached between the Indian and Chinese sides for disengagement and resumption of patrolling in Depsang and Demchok, the Indian Army successfully led a patrol to one of the patrolling points in Depsang. This is yet another positive step towards maintaining peace and tranquility on the LAC, said the Army. On November 2 (Saturday), the ministry of external affairs confirmed that verification patrolling has commenced on mutually agreed terms along the Indo-China border in Demchok and Depsang. Both the sides had drawn up a border patrolling pact to disengage from the two remaining friction points. **Full report on Page 4**

EC defers UP, Punjab and Kerala, bypolls to Nov. 20

New Delhi: The Election Commission on Monday rescheduled Assembly bypolls in Uttar Pradesh, Punjab and Kerala from November 13 to November 20 in view of festivals. Nine seats are going to polls in Uttar Pradesh, four in Punjab and one in Kerala. **Full report on Page 3**

Ahead of polls, EC transfers Maha DGP

New Delhi: Ahead of the Maharashtra Assembly polls, the Election Commission on Monday directed the state government to transfer DGP Rashmi Shukla with immediate effect following complaints from political parties, including the Congress, sources said. **Full report on Page 3**

COUNTERPOINT



Father crying over Sensex plunge... son over Team India's loss!



Delhi urges Ottawa's swift action to protect all places of worship Cowardly bid to intimidate diplomats won't weaken resolve: PM Modi targets Canada after attack by 'Khalistanis' on Hindu temple

SRIDHAR KUMARASWAMI with agency inputs
NEW DELHI/OTTAWA, NOV. 4

Hours after an attack by a "Khalistani" mob on a Hindu temple at Brampton in Canada, near Toronto, Prime Minister Narendra Modi condemned the "deliberate attack on a Hindu temple" and said he "expects the Canadian government to ensure justice and uphold the rule of law". Mr Modi also referred to the "appalling cowardly attempts" to intimidate Indian diplomats in Canada and said "such acts of violence will never weaken India's resolve". Taking to social media platform X in his first comment since the latest round of tensions between New Delhi and Ottawa began, Mr Modi said: "I strongly condemn the deliberate attack on a Hindu temple in Canada."



Indians at a consular camp in Brampton on Sunday. The consular camp witnessed "violent disruptions" as per Indian high commission in Canada. — PTI

India had earlier on Monday lashed out at the Canadian authorities for "allowing" the attack on a consular camp for Indian nationals that was being co-organised by the temple authorities. In the light of the reported attacks on Hindu devotees as well who were visiting the temple, New Delhi had urged Canada to ensure that all places of worship were protected from such attacks and demanded that the culprits be prosecuted. Media reports from Canada said the violent pro-Khalistan extremist mob attacked several devotees inside the temple complex with flagpoles and traffic cones.

I strongly condemn the deliberate attack on a Hindu temple in Canada

— Narendra Modi, Prime Minister

The acts of violence at the Hindu Sabha Mandir in Brampton are unacceptable

— Justin Trudeau, Canada's PM

The clashes triggered by the mob carrying "Khalistan" flags was also condemned by Canada's PM Justin Trudeau, who said every Canadian has the right to practise their faith freely and safely. On Sunday, the Peel Regional Police said that a protest occurred at the Hindu



Relief work underway after a passenger bus fell into a gorge in Almora, Uttarakhand, on Monday. — PTI

36 killed in bus mishap in U'khand

PRITHVIRAJ SINGH
DEHRADUN, NOV. 4

An overcrowded and poorly maintained bus, carrying nearly double its capacity, plunged 150 metres into a gorge near Marchula in Almora district on Monday morning, claiming the lives of 36 passengers. The tragic accident occurred around 250 km from Dehradun when the 33-seater bus, loaded with 63 passengers, broke its axle while taking a sharp turn, Kapi Band, and skidded into the gorge. Twenty eight passengers died on the spot, while eight others succumbed to their injuries later in the hospital. Of the 36 killed, 10 are women. Most of the passengers were part of a marriage party from the Naini Danda area. **More on Page 4**

Lokayukta summons K'taka CM for probe in Muda case

Sidda to be questioned by SP in Mysuru tomorrow

M.B. GIRISH
BENGALURU, NOV. 4

A notice was served on Karnataka chief minister Siddaramaiah by the Lokayukta Mysuru wing on Monday asking him to appear before the superintendent of the Mysore Lokayukta at 10.30 am on Wednesday for questioning in cases related to plot allotments to his wife B.M. Parvathi by the Mysore Urban Development Authority (Muda) in Mysuru city. Mr Siddaramaiah is native to Mysuru district and represents Varuna



Siddaramaiah

Assembly seat in the district. Earlier, the CM's wife was questioned by the Lokayukta police at its office in Mysuru city. The chief minister has been summoned by the Lokayukta on the basis of an FIR against the CM in which he has been named

Accused No. 1 in connection with 14 plot allotments to his wife B.M. Parvathi by the Mysore Urban Development Authority in lieu of his wife losing 3.16 acres in survey numbers 462 and 464 at Kesare village in Mysuru city. The FIR against the CM, his wife B.M. Parvathi (who was named Accused No. 2), his brother-in-law Mallikarjun Swamy (Accused No. 3), among others, was registered on September 27 this year. In the FIR, the Lokayukta police

J&K House ruckus as PDP man raises 370 issue

Expunge remarks: BJP Statehood soon: L-G Rather elected Speaker

YUSUF JAMEEL
SRINAGAR, NOV. 4

The Opposition BJP created a ruckus in the Jammu and Kashmir Assembly on Monday over PDP member Waheed Ur Rehman Para's reading out a personal resolution against the abrogation of Article 370. The BJP demanded that Mr Para's remarks be expunged, and the resolution disallowed as the PDP member had violated the rules of the House. As Speaker Abdur Rahim Rather sought time for examining the issue before taking a decision, the House saw heated

arguments on the controversial move with one member, Shabir Ahmad Kullay (Independent) taking to the Well of the House and locking horns with the protesting BJP members. After Mr Rather, a senior National Conference leader and former minister, was elected Speaker of the House through a voice vote, key

members of various political parties took to the floor to welcome his election and to thank him for taking up the task. However, Mr Para, after saying a few words to warmly welcome Mr Rather as the "esteemed custodian of the House", read out from a sheet of paper which, he said, was a resolution opposing the Centre's August 5, 2019 move and subsequent reorganisation of the erstwhile state of J&K. His "resolution" read: "This House opposes the revocation of special status of J&K and the



J&K chief minister Omar Abdullah (right) with others reacts in the Assembly during ruckus erupted after PDP MLA Waheed Para introduced a resolution opposing the abrogation of Article 370 in Srinagar on Monday. — PTI

Kamala, Trump in last-day blitz in key battleground states

Washington, Nov. 4: A presidential campaign that has careened through a felony trial, an incumbent President being pushed off the ticket and multiple assassination attempts comes down to a final push across a handful of states on the eve of Election Day. Vice-president Kamala Harris will spend all of Monday in Pennsylvania, whose 19 electoral votes offer the largest prize among the states expected to determine the Electoral College outcome. The vice-president and Democratic nominee will visit working-class areas including Allentown and

end with a late-night Philadelphia rally that includes Lady Gaga and Oprah Winfrey. Donald Trump plans four rallies in three states, beginning in Raleigh, North Carolina and stopping twice in Pennsylvania with events in Reading and Pittsburgh. The Republican nominee and former President ends his campaign the way he ended the first two, with a late Monday night event in Grand Rapids, Michigan. About 77 million Americans already have voted early, but Ms Harris and Mr Trump are

AMERICA VOTES TODAY



Kamala Harris



Donald Trump

pushing to turn out many millions more supporters on Tuesday. Either result on Election Day will yield a historic outcome. A Trump victory would make him the first incoming President to have been indicted and convicted of

White House terms, after Grover Cleveland in the late 19th century. Ms Harris is vying to become the first woman, first Black woman and first person of South Asian descent to reach the Oval Office, four years after she broke the same barriers in national office by becoming President Joe Biden's second in command. The vice-president ascended to the top of the Democratic ticket after Mr Biden's disastrous performance in a June debate set into motion his withdrawal from the race. That was just one of a series of convulsions that have hit

this year's campaign. Mr Trump survived by millimeters a would-be assassin's bullet at a rally in Butler, Pennsylvania. His Secret Service detail foiled a second attempt in September when a gunman had set up a rifle as Mr Trump golfed at one of his courses in Florida. Ms Harris, 60, has played down the historic nature of her candidacy, which materialised only after the 81-year-old President ended his reelection bid after his June debate against the 78-year-old Mr Trump accentuated questions about Mr Biden's age. — AP

Talking to this newspaper, SP Jharkhand unit chief Ranjan Yadav said the party has nominated candidates for 11 seats in the first phase — Girinath Singh from Garhwa, Umashankar Akela from Barhi, Raghupal Singh from Manika, Kamlesh Kumar Yadav from Hussainabad, Umendra Kumar Yadav from Bhanwathpur, Mamta Bhuiyan from Chhatarpur, Anju Singh Vishrampur, Ajit Yadav from Jamshedpur West, Rajkumar Yadav from Barkattha, Govind Bedia from Barkagaon and Suresh Kalindi from Kanke. **More on Page 3**

IAF's MiG-29 jet crashes near Agra, pilot safe



Smoke billows after an IAF plane crashed and caught fire near Uttar Pradesh's Agra on Monday. The pilot of the aircraft ejected safely and a court of inquiry has been ordered to ascertain the cause of the crash. **Report on Page 4** — PTI

Corruption, appeasement politics at peak: Modi JMM-Cong an 'alliance of infiltrators', says PM

AGE CORRESPONDENT with agency inputs
NEW DELHI/RANCHI, NOV. 4

Launching a scathing attack on the JMM-led coalition in Jharkhand, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday labelled it as a "Ghuspaithiya Bandhan" (infiltrators' alliance) and "Mafia Ka Ghulam" (mafia's slaves) for allegedly supporting Bangladeshi infiltrators. Prime Minister Modi, who addressed two election rallies in Jharkhand, also hits out at the Congress-led Opposition for "humiliating" BJP candidate Sita Soren in Jharkhand and a woman leader in Maharashtra, saying that "insulting women is their habit". Addressing the first election rally in Garhwa, the PM alleged that scams by coalition leaders in Jharkhand have become an industry and corruption has devoured the state like termites. He said: "Appeasement politics has reached its pinnacle in Jharkhand where the JMM-led coalition is busy supporting Bangladeshi infiltrators. **Turn to Page 4**



Prime Minister Narendra Modi during "Vijay Sankalp Sabha" in Chaibasa of West Singhbhum district on Monday, ahead of the Jharkhand Assembly polls. — PTI

If this continues, the state's tribal population will shrink. This is a threat to tribal society and the country. This coalition has become a 'Ghuspaithiya Bandhan' and a 'Mafia ka Ghulam'. "Termites of corruption make the country hollow. In Jharkhand, the JMM, Congress and RJD have crossed all limits as far as corruption is concerned. This has impacted the poor, dalits, tribals and the backward communities. The Jharkhand CM, MLAs and MPs of the

Soren's proposer Mandal joins BJP

Ranchi: Mandal Murmu, one of the proposers of Jharkhand CM Hemant Soren's nomination from Barhait Assembly seat, joined the BJP. Mr Murmu, a descendant of Sidokanu, who led the Santhal revolt in 1855, joined the party in Deoghar on Sunday in the presence of Union minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan and Assam CM Himanta Biswa Sarma. **Page 3**

Rift in INDIA: SP to field 21 candidates for J'khand polls

AMRESH SRIVASTAVA
NEW DELHI, NOV. 4

Fissures emerged in the INDIA bloc as the Samajwadi Party has followed the approach of "Ekla Chalo Re" (going solo) after being denied any seat by the JMM-led INDIA bloc in the coming Jharkhand Assembly polls. Left in the cold by JMM-Congress seat-sharing pact, the party has announced 21 candidates for the polls in Jharkhand. The SP had demanded 12 seats in the INDIA bloc, which was refused by the JMM-Congress-RJD alliance, so the party decided to proceed with its own candidates. Talking to this newspaper, SP Jharkhand unit chief Ranjan Yadav said the party has nominated candidates for 11 seats in the first phase — Girinath Singh from Garhwa, Umashankar Akela from Barhi, Raghupal Singh from Manika, Kamlesh Kumar Yadav from Hussainabad, Umendra Kumar Yadav from Bhanwathpur, Mamta Bhuiyan from Chhatarpur, Anju Singh Vishrampur, Ajit Yadav from Jamshedpur West, Rajkumar Yadav from Barkattha, Govind Bedia from Barkagaon and Suresh Kalindi from Kanke. **More on Page 3**

SHORT TAKES

Anganwadi workers' wages are due: Cong

New Delhi: The Delhi Congress on Monday accused the AAP government of failing to pay two months' wages to Anganwadi workers, describing it as a serious government failure. The party urged the lieutenant-governor to intervene promptly. Delhi Congress president Devender Yadav highlighted that while chief minister Atishi frequently makes pro-poor announcements, the pending wages reveal a gap between promises and actions. Yadav emphasized that the wages, already minimal, are critical for Anganwadi workers to support their families, making this delay particularly troubling. Mr Yadav urged the L-G to ensure the expedited release of pending wages, adding that the AAP government collects significant tax revenues but has allegedly failed to prioritize the basic needs of workers who provide essential services to vulnerable communities.

BJP stages protest over bus marshals

New Delhi: Scores of BJP workers were detained by the Delhi police when they were staging a demonstration near chief minister Ms Atishi's residence demanding immediate reappointment of 10,000 civil defence volunteers (CDVs) who were removed last year as bus marshals. The BJP workers including party's Delhi president Virendra Sachdeva were bundled into waiting police vehicles and taken away. "Some BJP workers were detained and were removed from the protest site to maintain law and order," a senior police officer said. Leading the protesters, Sachdeva accused Atishi of failing to do anything for reappointment of the bus marshals. The chief minister should explain why her government did not issue orders for the reappointment of bus marshals despite direction by the L-G V.K. Saxena to reinstate them from November 1, he said.

Mayor orders probe into transfer policy

New Delhi: Delhi mayor Shelly Oberoi has directed MCD commissioner Ashwani Kumar to launch an investigation into the alleged irregularities in the online teacher transfer policy in the civic body-run schools. The mayor has asked the commissioner to look into reports of unauthorised offline transfers, which she said could lead to corruption. The online teacher transfer policy, introduced by the Municipal Corporation of Delhi earlier this year, was intended to make teacher transfers transparent and limit the scope for manual interference. However, Ms Oberoi pointed out that some transfers are reportedly being done offline, going against the policy's purpose.

Asks to furnish details of steps taken to implement its order ■ 'Ban hardly implemented, this Diwali was warmer' SC pulls up govt, top cop over cracker ban

RAKESH K. SINGH
NEW DELHI, NOV. 4

Taking note of the flagrant violation of court orders relating to the firecracker ban during Diwali, the Supreme Court on Monday issued notice to the Delhi government and the police commissioner to file detailed affidavits in a week on the steps taken to implement the court ruling.

A bench of Justices Abhay S. Oka and Augustine George Masih referred to newspaper reports mentioning a considerable violation of court orders and sought the Delhi government's response on a "perpetual ban" on firecrackers in the national capital.

Referring to a report of the Centre for Science and Environment (CSE), the top court noted it was evident that Diwali in 2024 was warmer than in the previous couple of years.

"Some strict action is needed for those violating the firecracker ban, like sealing of their premises," said the bench, adding that it would "do something" in order to ensure court orders on the firecracker ban were not violated during Diwali 2025.

"Firecracker bursting was the major cause of pollution during Diwali and if the orders of the court are not implemented, it will be a chaotic situation," the bench told additional solicitor general Archana Pathak Dave, appearing for the Centre, and the counsel for Delhi government.

Senior advocate Aprajita Singh, the amicus curiae in the matter, said orders of the court were violated with impunity. She produced before the court a report of the CSE, which highlighted the pollution level rising by almost 30 per cent on Diwali as compared to a day earlier.



A view of Noida after a blanket of smog covers the national capital region on Monday morning. — PTI

Chhath Puja: AAP, BJP label each other anti-Purvanchali

Cong: Concerns rise over Yamuna pollution before festival

AVINASH PRABHAKAR JHA
NEW DELHI, NOV. 4

Amid the political tussle between the AAP and the BJP over the setting up of the Chhath puja ghats in the city, Delhi chief minister Atishi on Monday slammed the saffron party for "obstructing preparations" for Chhath celebrations in the national capital and labelled it "anti-Poorvanchal."

She also accused the DDA of halting Chhath preparations in a south Delhi locality. Meanwhile, northeast Delhi MP Manoj Tiwari inspected the Chhath ghat of Sonia Vihar along with the administrative officials and gave necessary instructions to the officials present for the construction of beautiful ghats.

Hitting at AAP, Mr Tiwari said around 40 lakh voters of Delhi are associated with the Chhath puja and due to AAP's ill-will



A devotee cleans her clothes in the polluted Yamuna river ahead of the Chhath Puja celebrations at ITO ghat in New Delhi on Monday. — G.N. JHA

towards their faith, there is anger against Arvind Kejriwal and the AAP-led government.

However, emphasising the importance of the festival for the national capital's Poorvanchali community, Ms Atishi said the AAP government in Delhi has been celebrating the festival in a grand manner for the past 10 years.

Delhi Congress president Devender Yadav, mean-

while, said that with the Chhath puja festival just days away, devotees are extremely worried about the toxic air and the poisonous, ammonia-polluted waters of the Yamuna, as they have raised serious health concerns for the people with the Kejriwal government making no arrangement to ensure that the Poorvanchalis hold the puja in fresh and clean waters.

Gandhi, Kharge among senior party leaders invited Cong's Nyay Yatra to begin on Nov. 8

AGE CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, NOV. 4

The Delhi Congress has invited senior party leaders, including Mallikarjun Kharge, Rahul Gandhi, and K.C. Venugopal, for the month-long 'Delhi Nyay Yatra', state unit chief Devender Yadav said on Monday.

"The yatra will start on November 8 and pass through all 70 Vidhan Sabha constituencies. With this yatra, we will bring to light the problems of the citizens of



Delhi Congress president Devender Yadav with party leaders during a meeting in New Delhi on Monday.

Delhi and will work to put pressure on the government," Mr Yadav told the media. The Delhi Congress chief further said that

during the yatra, party workers will interact with people to understand their issues and take suggestions on how they can build a better Delhi.

The entire yatra will be carried out on foot, with a target of covering 20-25 km per day. The march will begin around 8.00 am daily and there will be lunch as well as tea breaks. The day will end with a public meeting and the 200-250 permanent yatrias returning to their camps, Mr Yadav stated.

Blow to BJP after party leader Tyagi shifts to AAP

AGE CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, NOV. 4

In another setback to the BJP ahead of the Delhi Assembly polls, its leader and former municipal councillor B.B. Tyagi joined the AAP on Monday. This comes after three-time former MLA Brahm Singh Tanwar quit the party and joined the AAP last week.

Mr Tyagi, a former two-time municipal councillor and standing committee chairman of erstwhile East Delhi Municipal Corporation, also contested the Assembly polls in 2015 from Laxmi Nagar constituency on a saffron party ticket. Sources in the AAP claimed he could be fielded by the party from the Laxmi Nagar seat that is currently held by the BJP.

Mr Tyagi joined the AAP in presence of senior leader and former deputy chief minister Manish Sisodia and MLA Durgesh Pathak at the party headquarters.

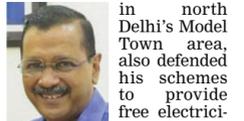
Welcoming Mr Tyagi into the AAP fold, Mr Sisodia said he knew him as a leader with strong ground connect and added this kind of work was welcome in the party

Will provide ₹1,000 to Delhi women soon, says Kejriwal

AGE CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, NOV. 4

New Delhi, Nov. 4: AAP chief Arvind Kejriwal announced on Monday that he was making arrangements to soon provide ₹1,000 as monthly honorarium to women in Delhi. In its 2024-25 budget, the Delhi government had announced the Mukhyamantri Mahila Samman Yojana for providing ₹1,000 per month to all women aged above 18.

Mr Kejriwal said, "I am doing that work very soon in which ₹1,000 will be deposited in your bank accounts." The former chief minister, who undertook a 'padyatra'



Arvind Kejriwal while accusing the BJP of "stealing" public money. "The BJP says Kejriwal is wasting money by giving free electricity, water, or ₹1,000 (to women) but at least I am spending the money on the people and not stealing it from them like you (BJP) are," he said. — PTI

Shots fired at 2 Alipur, Nangloi shops; ₹5cr ransom demanded

AGE CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, NOV. 4

Two shooting incidents occurred in Delhi on Monday, police said. There were no reports of any injuries in either case. Three motorcycle-borne men opened fire in a property dealer's shop in outer north Delhi's Alipur area, they said.

Deputy commissioner of police (Outer North) Nidhin Valsan said they received information about shots being fired in the Budhpur locality of Alipur around 3 pm. Teams were immediately sent to the spot.

It was found upon inquiry that three men entered the office of a property dealer and opened fire before fleeing. The police teams are checking CCTV camera footage to trace the accused, the officer said.

Crime and forensic teams were also called to the spot. The accused will be nabbed soon, Valsan said.

The target of the second shooting incident was a furniture shop in outer Delhi's Nangloi area.

Officers at Nangloi police station received a call about a firing incident at 1:30 pm and police teams reached the location, DCP (Outer

Sachin Sharma said. It was found that while the complainant was in his shop, three men with their faces covered entered the establishment and fired multiple rounds in the air before fleeing on a two-wheeler, the officer said.

The police said a crime team inspected the spot and a case was being registered on the basis of the complainant's statement. Efforts are underway to trace the accused.

Sources said the shooters left behind a hit with the name of gangster Ankesh Lakra scribbled on it, along with a demand for ₹5 crore.

Delhi mayoral polls to be held November 14

AGE CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, NOV. 4

The election for the mayor and deputy mayor of the Municipal Corporation of Delhi will be held November 14, the municipal secretary said on Monday.

"The postponed April (2024) session of the MCD for the election of the mayor and deputy mayor will be held on Thursday, November 14, 2024, at 2 pm in the Aruna Asaf Ali Auditorium, here at the civic centre", said the

official notification. "The regular November session of the house and the postponed sessions of January and May to September will also take place on the same day and at the same venue, from 3:00 pm to 4:30 pm," the order added.

Earlier on October 28, mayor Shelly Oberoi had adjourned the current session, announcing that the election for the mayor would be held during the next meeting of the House in the following month.

Modi targets Canada after attack by 'Khalistanis' on Hindu temple

Continued From Page 1 Sabha temple in Brampton and unverified videos circulating on the social media appeared to show demonstrators holding banners in support of "Khalistan", the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation said. The videos showed fistfights and people striking each other with poles on what appears to be the grounds surrounding the Hindu Sabha Mandir temple, the report added.

In a statement, New Delhi said: "We condemn the acts of violence perpetrated by extremists and separatists at the Hindu Sabha Temple in Brampton, Ontario, yesterday. We call on the Government of Canada to ensure that all places of worship are protected from such attacks. We also expect that those indulging in violence will be prosecuted. We remain deeply concerned about the safety and security of Indian nationals in Canada."

Taking to X, Mr Trudeau thanked the local authorities for the swift response to protect the community and probe this incident. "The acts of violence at the Hindu Sabha Mandir in Brampton today are unacceptable. Every Canadian has the right to practice their faith freely and safely. Thank you to the Peel Regional Police for swiftly responding to protect the community and investigate this incident," Mr Trudeau said in a post on X. Canada's top Opposition leader Pierre Poilievre also condemned the violence. The Indian high commission in Ottawa warned that future consular camps would only be contingent

on the Canadian authorities making the necessary security arrangements. India has been accusing the Trudeau government of deliberately turning a blind eye to pro-Khalistan elements carrying on with their violent anti-India activities.

The Indian high commission said: "As in previous years, the High Commission of India in Ottawa and Consulates-General of India in Vancouver and Toronto have organised/plan consular camps during this period for the benefit and ease of local life certificate beneficiaries (Canadian and Indian). On account of the prevailing security situation in Canada, the Canadian authorities had been requested well in advance to provide strong security measures for these events, which constitute routine consular work. We have seen violent disruption today orchestrated by anti-India elements outside the consular camp organised with the Hindu Sabha Mandir (Temple), Brampton, near Toronto. It

is deeply disappointing to see such disruptions being allowed for routine consular work being organised by our consulates with the fullest cooperation of the local co-organisers." It added: "We also remain very concerned for the safety of applicants, including Indian nationals, on whose demand such events are organised in the first place. Despite these efforts by anti-India elements, our consulate was able to issue more than a thousand life certificates to the Indian and Canadian applicants."

Juveniles held for dragging 2 traffic cops on car bonnet

AGE CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, NOV. 4

Two juveniles have been apprehended for allegedly hitting and dragging two Delhi traffic police personnel on their car's bonnet, officials said on Monday. The incident took place on Saturday evening at the Ber Sarai traffic signal near Vedant Deshika Marg. The traffic cops sustained injuries after they were dragged on the bonnet for about 20 metres "with the

intention to kill". "After the incident, different teams were formed to identify the accused. They nabbed two juveniles and launched further investigations," a police officer said. According to statements of ASI Pramod and head constable Sailesh, they were conducting routine checks for traffic violations when the latter signalled a car to stop. The driver initially complied but then attempted to flee, dragging the two policemen on the car's bonnet.

SHORT TAKES

SC verdict over UP madrasa law today

New Delhi: The Supreme Court is likely to pronounce on Tuesday the verdict on pleas challenging the Allahabad high court judgment, which declared the 2004 Uttar Pradesh law on madrasas as unconstitutional. A bench comprising Chief Justice of India D.Y. Chandrachud and Justices J.B. Pardiwala and Manoj Misra had on October 22 reserved its verdict on eight petitions against the high court judgment. On March 22, the high court had declared the law as "unconstitutional" and violative of the principle of secularism while directing the state government to accommodate madrasa students in the formal schooling system. On April 5, the CJ-led bench had granted relief to about 17 lakh madrasa students by staying the verdict of the high court scrapping the Uttar Pradesh Board of Madarsa Education Act, 2004.

SC adjourns plea on consent in DKS case

New Delhi: The Supreme Court on Monday adjourned by four weeks the hearing on a plea against the withdrawal of consent to the CBI for probing a disproportionate assets case against Karnataka deputy chief minister D.K. Shivakumar. A bench of Justices Surya Kant and Ujjal Bhuyan deferred the matter after solicitor general Tushar Mehta said the CBI had also filed an appeal against the Karnataka high court order. The apex court was hearing a plea filed by BJP MLA Basangouda Ramangouda Patil Yatnal, who had challenged the August 29 high court order rejecting his plea against the withdrawal of consent. The SG informed the bench that the CBI appeal had not been listed as yet whereas senior advocate Ranjit Kumar, representing Mr Shivakumar, sought time to file a reply in the matter.

Shah: PM enhanced importance of Hindi

New Delhi: Union home minister Amit Shah on Monday said that Prime Minister Narendra Modi has enhanced the importance of Hindi by expressing his views on every international forum in Hindi. Chairing the 32nd meeting of the "Kendriya Hindi Samiti", he said Mr Modi has undertaken several initiatives for the preservation, promotion and extensive use of Indian languages, making the period from 2014 to 2024 an era dedicated to the protection and promotion of Indian languages. He said that under the leadership of Mr Modi recently, five more Indian languages were granted classical language status. He highlighted that India is the only country in the world where 11 languages are recognised as classical languages.

CONG CONFIDENT OF WIN IN MAHA, J'KHAND: JAIRAM

New Delhi, Nov. 4: The Congress is confident of securing a decisive mandate in Jharkhand and Maharashtra but is "extra watchful" to avoid a repeat of any Haryana-like "last-minute mischief" by the BJP and the local administration, senior party leader Jairam Ramesh said on Monday. In an interview with PTI, Mr Ramesh said the decision on the chief ministerial face of the Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) in Maharashtra would be taken after the November 23 results and expressed confidence that the selection of the alliance's chief ministerial face would be a "smooth affair". As the campaign heats up for the Assembly polls in Jharkhand and Maharashtra, Mr Ramesh dismissed suggestions that the momentum had shifted away from the INDIA bloc following the Congress' defeat in Haryana and said the alliance was confident of securing a decisive mandate in the two states. "It is true that the result in Haryana was unexpected as far as the Congress is concerned. We are confident in Maharashtra where we have a very strong alliance, and we are very confident in Jharkhand where also we are fighting in an alliance," he said. — PTI



People travel in an overcrowded train to reach their hometowns in Patna on Monday, ahead of the Chhath Puja festival. — PTI

In setback to JMM, Soren's proposer Mandal joins BJP

Leader a descendant of Sidhu-Kanhu who led Santhal revolt

AMRESH SRIVASTAVA with agency inputs NEW DELHI/RANCHI, NOV. 4

Jharkhand chief minister Hemant Soren's election proposer Mandal Murmu joined the BJP party leaders said on Monday. The move is seen as a blow to the JMM weeks ahead of the Assembly polls. Mr Murmu, a descendant of Sidhu-Kanhu, who led the Santhal revolt in 1855, joined the party in Deoghar late Sunday night in the presence of Union minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan and Assam chief minister Himanta Biswa Sarma. "First of all, I bow before my ancestors... Sidhu-Kanhu and Phulo Jhano sacrificed themselves for this nation... I belong to that family. We will take the initiative regarding the demography in Santhal Pargana," Mr Murmu said. "Mandal Murmu ji, descendant of Sidhu-Kanhu and propos-



Jharkhand chief minister Hemant Soren during a campaign in Jharkhand's Palamu district. — PTI

er of Hemant Soren, became a member of the BJP family," Mr Sarma posted on X. He also emphasised that Mr Murmu's joining the BJP symbolises that the party has received blessings from historical figures Sidhu-Kanhu and Phulo Jhano. According to the sources, Mr Murmu will

campaign for the BJP in 18 seats where the BJP is putting maximum effort into breaking the JMM core votebank. However, some JMM leaders indicated that Mr Murmu has "lost his credibility" by joining the saffron party. BJP insiders also indicated that Mr Murmu may campaign for party candidate Gamlivel Hembrom in the Barhait constituency, where CM Hemant Soren is contesting. They are hopeful that his canvassing in Barhait may change the result. "Due to the wrong policies of the present Jharkhand government, the culture of the tribal society is in danger, hence every section of society is joining the BJP today," the Assam CM said. A JMM source, however, said that it had become clear that his (Murmu's) hobnobbing with BJP leaders would turn sour in the end as he has lost credibility.

Functioning of JPC chairman irks Opp. MPs on Waqf panel

AGE CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, NOV. 4

MPs from the Opposition camp in the Joint Parliamentary Committee (JPC) scrutinising the Waqf (Amendment) Bill, in a letter to Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla, have expressed a desire to disassociate themselves from the panel, claiming that they have been "stonewalled" by chairman Jagdambika Pal during the committee's proceedings. The Opposition members in the panel plan to hand over the letter to Mr Birla on Tuesday against Mr Pal's alleged "unilateral" decisions and attempts to "bulldoze" proceedings. The joint letter is signed by several MPs, including AAP's Sanjay Singh, DMK's A. Raja and M.M. Abdullah, TMC's Kalyan Banerjee, Congress' Mohammad Jawed and Imran Masood, and AIMIM's Asaduddin Owaisi. The MPs have accused Mr Pal of taking "unilateral decisions" on fixing the dates of sittings, which were at times for three consecutive days, and whom to call witnesses. They said MPs can't interact with deponents without adequate preparation. "We feel the members of the JPC from the Opposition feel that the constitution of the JPC, i.e., a mini Parliament, should not be treated as a mere ventilating chamber to get the bill passed as desired by the government ignoring the parliamentary process," the MPs have said.

SP to go solo, field 21 candidates in J'khand

State unit chief says confident of win in 7-8 seats

AMRESH SRIVASTAVA NEW DELHI, NOV. 4

Fissures emerged in the INDIA bloc as the Samajwadi Party has followed the approach of "Ekla Chalo Re" (going solo) after being denied any seat by the JMM-led alliance in the upcoming Jharkhand Assembly polls. Left in the cold by the JMM-Congress seat-sharing pact, the party has announced 21 candidates for the elections in the tribal state. The SP had demanded 12 seats in the INDIA bloc, which was refused by the JMM-Congress-RJD alliance, so the party decided to proceed with its own candidates in the Assembly polls. Talking to this newspaper, SP Jharkhand unit chief Ranjan Yadav said the party has nominated candidates for 11 seats in the first phase—Girinath Singh from Garhwa, Umashankar Akela from Barhi, Raghupal Singh from Manika, Kamlesh

SAMAJWADI PARTY Jharkhand unit chief Ranjan Yadav expressed confidence that the ruling alliance will come to power again and the party will support the INDIA block

Kumar Yadav from Hussainabad, Umendra Kumar Yadav from Bhanwathpur, Mamta Bhuiyan from Chhatrapur, Anju Singh Vishrampur, Ajit Yadav from Jamshepur West, Rajkumar Yadav from Barkatgaon, Govind Bedia from Barkagaon and Suresh Kumar Kalindi from Kanke. Party candidates have also been announced for 10 seats in the second phase—Akil Akhtar from Pakur, Daud Marandi from Maheshpur, Amrendra Kumar from Jarmundi, Sahadat Hussain from Rajmahal, Mahesh Kumar Malto from Boryo, Kajal Kumar Mahto from Sarath, Devanand Hajra from Jamua, Vijay Yadav from

Nirsa, Azmul Ansari from Tundi and Suraj Mahto from the Bagmara seat. He also said that denied seat allocation from the INDIA bloc, the party has decided to field its own candidates and has a fair chance of winning at least seven to eight seats. SP's president Akhilesh Yadav is likely to hold rallies for the party's candidates soon, he added. Mr Yadav also expressed confidence that the ruling alliance will come to power again and the Samajwadi Party will support the INDIA block. The JMM is contesting in alliance with the ruling Congress, RJD and the CPI(ML). In the recently-held Haryana and Jammu and Kashmir elections, the Congress had not given a single seat to the SP. In Jammu and Kashmir, the party had fielded 20 candidates. In the Haryana Assembly polls, the Akhilesh Yadav-led party had decided not to field candidates.

Date change for seats in UP, Punjab & Kerala due to festivals

Bypolls to 14 seats deferred to Nov. 20

AGE CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, NOV. 4

The Election Commission (EC) has rescheduled the bypolls in 14 Assembly constituencies in three states from November 13 to November 20 in view of festivals. Nine seats will go to polls in Uttar Pradesh, four in Punjab and one in Kerala. In Kerala, the byelection to the Palakkad Assembly seat has been rescheduled, while that in Chelakkara Assembly and Wayanad Lok Sabha seats will be held as scheduled earlier on November 13. The EC on Monday said it had received representations from various national and state political parties, including the BJP,



Congress candidate Priyanka Gandhi Vadra at a rally in Kenichira, Wayanad, on Monday, ahead of the Wayanad seat bypoll. — PTI

Congress, BSP and the RLD, and some social organisations for a change of poll date in certain Assembly constituencies having byelections on November 13 considering large scale social, cultural and religious engagements on that day which may cause inconvenience to many people, give rise

to various logistic issues and may lead to reduced voters participation during the poll. According to the Congress, a significant portion of the electorate in the Palakkad Assembly seat in Kerala will celebrate the festival of Kalpathi Rastholsavam from November 13 to 15. In Punjab, the party said that the 555th Prakash Parv of Sri Guru Nanak Dev will be celebrated on November 15 and an "akhand path" will be organised from November 13 onwards. The BJP, BSP and the RLD said that in UP, people travel for three to four days ahead of Kartik Purnima, which will be celebrated on November 15.

Puri, OPEC chief discuss ways to ensure oil stability

AGE CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, NOV. 4

Union petroleum minister Hardeep Singh Puri on Monday said that as one of the world's fastest-growing economies, India is providing a template to the world with transformative solutions in areas of traditional and green energy. Mr Puri also met OPEC general secretary Haitham Al-Ghais at the Abu Dhabi International Petroleum Exhibition and Conference (ADIPEC), one of the world's largest platforms uniting the global energy ecosystem, event in Abu Dhabi. In a post on X, Mr Puri said, "Held a very engaging discussion with my dear friend HE Haitham Al-Ghais, Secretary General OPEC on India's partnership with OPEC at ADIPEC in Abu Dhabi today. We also took forward the enriching discussion we had during the 2nd edition of India Energy Week in Goa about ways to ensure that global oil markets remain balanced and predictable." "India, the world's 3rd largest oil importer, and OPEC, the grouping of major oil producers have a unique & symbiotic relationship. Also con-



gratulated my friend & the entire OPEC team for the recently released 18th Edition of World Oil Outlook, the findings of which reiterate the important position India will enjoy as a contributor to economic development and energy markets," he added. After inaugurating the India Pavilion, Mr Puri said, "As one of the world's fastest-growing economies, India is providing the template to the world with transformative solutions in areas of traditional and green energy. Delighted to inaugurate the India pavilion, which marks a strong presence of India's energy sector entities at the ADIPEC official. Indian energy companies present in large numbers at the conference have showcased their cutting edge technological advancements, capabilities and future opportunities of collaboration and investment."

Odisha mantri takes cue from Devgn to rally anti-graft efforts

AKSHAYA KUMAR SAHOO BHUBANESWAR, NOV. 4

In an unexpected yet powerful move, Odisha's food supplies and consumer welfare minister Krushna Chandra Patra on Monday took inspiration from Bollywood to fire up government officials on the frontlines of the fight against corruption. At a gathering of supply assistants, the minister borrowed a line from Ajay Devgn's iconic character in *Singham*, using it to rally his team against misconduct in the state's procurement centres or "mandis". "Agar police chaha to

department, keeping a close eye on misconduct. His message for the officials was clear: be as relentless in rooting out corruption as Singham was in upholding justice. But Mr Patra's speech didn't stop with Bollywood references. He also drew on the wisdom of ancient Indian epics, invoking the "Bhisma Sarasajya" episode from the Mahabharata. Mr Patra reminded the officials that even great figures like Bhisma weren't immune to suffering if they remained silent in the face of wrongdoing, referencing Bhisma's silence during Draupadi's disrobing.

Jarange withdraws from elections, MVA to benefit

AGE CORRESPONDENT MUMBAI, NOV. 4

In a major boost to the Maha Vikas Aghadi, Maratha quota activist Manoj Jarange on Monday announced that he would not back any candidates in the Assembly polls. Mr Jarange had earlier indicated that he was trying to forge an alliance with smaller allies representing Dalits and Muslims. He asked the aspirants from the Maratha community to withdraw their nominations before the Monday deadline. The move will likely benefit the MVA, as it would avoid the division of anti-BJP votes. Announcing his decision, Mr Jarange said, "We cannot contest elec-



tions relying solely on one community. We had requested candidate lists from leaders of the Muslim and Dalit communities, but no response came. Thus, we have decided not to field candidates." Interestingly, the quota activist held a press conference at 11 pm on Sunday and vowed to teach a lesson to "those who opposed Maratha reservation". Though he did not name any party, it was obvious that he was talking about the BJP as he has accused the saffron party of denying reservation to the Maratha community.

EAM opens Brisbane consulate, pays homage to Bapu

Brisbane, Nov. 4: External affairs minister S. Jaishankar on Monday inaugurated the new consulate general of India in Brisbane today. It will contribute to strengthening India's ties with Queensland state, promoting trade, fostering educational linkages and serving the diaspora. Thank H.E Dr. Jeannette Young, Governor of Queensland and Ministers @Ros_Bates_MP and @FionaSimpson_MP for joining the inauguration ceremony," Mr Jaishankar posted on X.

"Delighted to formally inaugurate the new Consulate General of India in Brisbane today. It will contribute to strengthening India's ties with Queensland state, promoting trade, fostering educational linkages and serving the diaspora. Thank H.E Dr. Jeannette Young, Governor of Queensland and Ministers @Ros_Bates_MP and @FionaSimpson_MP for joining the inauguration ceremony," Mr Jaishankar posted on X.

This is India's fourth consulate in Australia in Brisbane. The rest are in Sydney, Melbourne and Perth. The external affairs minister also paid his tributes to Mahatma Gandhi at Roma Street Parklands in Brisbane on Monday. "His message of peace and harmony resonates through the world," he said in a post on X. He also met the governor of Queensland in Brisbane on Monday. — PTI



External affairs minister S. Jaishankar visits Australia's Humanitarian Logistics Capability warehouse. — PTI

SHORT TAKES
Student stabbed for 'rejecting' proposal

Hyderabad: A 19-year-old college student was hospitalised, with injuries to her hand after a youth she had befriended her online, allegedly attacked her with a knife, in Medak district on Monday, for rejecting his romantic proposal, police said. The incident took place when the first-year college student, from an open university came to take an exam at the Government Degree College. The accused, from Bengaluru, reportedly argued with her near the college before attacking her with a knife and fleeing the scene. The student, who sustained injuries, was admitted to a hospital. She stated that the accused approached her, expressed his feelings, and, upon her rejection, "attacked" her with a knife, injuring her right hand. As per police official, the victim knew the accused through a social media platform, and they had previously met in Bengaluru. — PTI

SC eases bail terms of scribe Kappan

New Delhi: The Supreme Court on Monday relaxed the bail condition imposed on Kerala journalist Siddique Kappan in the Hathras conspiracy case under the stringent Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act saying he will not be required to report to a police station in Uttar Pradesh every week. A bench of Justices P.S. Narasimhan and Sandeep Mehta eased the condition imposed by the SC on Kappan to report to the police station in UP every Monday while granting him bail in September 2022. The top court said: "The order dated September 9, 2022, is modified and it shall not be necessary for the petitioner to report to the local police station. The other prayers made in the present application can be agitated independently."

Jabalpur SP order on gambling stirs row

Bhopal: A recent order by the police chief of a Madhya Pradesh district restraining the cops from taking action against the people indulging in gambling nearby any water body to "save their lives" has stirred a row with the Congress terming it a "Diwali offer" to the gamblers by the Mohan Yadav government. The Jabalpur district SP Sampat Upadhyay reissued the order by making some modifications when the issue threatened to snowball into a major controversy. The order issued on October 29 to the police officers concerned and in-charges of different police stations in the district said that no action should be taken against the gamblers by the cops without taking their seniors into confidence. It also said that the cops must be sure that there are no water bodies nearby when they raid the gambling dens.

SC to consider plea on Bihar bridges collapse

AGE CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, NOV. 4

The Supreme Court on Monday agreed to consider a plea listing for hearing a plea that raised concerns about the safety and longevity of bridges in Bihar after several such structures collapsed this year. In July, a bench comprising CJI D.Y. Chandrachud and Justices J.B. Pardiwala and Manoj Misra had sought responses from the Bihar government and others, including the National Highway Authorities of India on the public interest litigation. On Monday, a lawyer representing the petitioner, advocate Brajesh Singh, mentioned the plea for hearing. "I will look into this," the CJI said and

asked whether an email regarding this was sent to his office. The PIL sought directions for a structural audit and setting up of an expert panel to identify bridges that can be either strengthened or demolished based on its findings. Besides the state and the NHAI, the top court had also issued notices to the road construction department's additional chief secretary, Bihar Rajya Pul Nirman Nigam Limited chairperson and rural works department's additional chief secretary. Ten incidents of bridge collapse have been reported in Bihar's Siwan, Saran, Madhubani, Araria, East Champaran and Kishanganj districts during May, June and July this year.

CM orders ₹4L for deceased's kin, ₹1L for injured ■ PM, Prez condole deaths 36 dead in tragic U'khand bus mishap

PRITHVIRAJ SINGH DEHRADUN, NOV. 4

An overcrowded and poorly maintained bus, carrying nearly double its capacity, plunged 150 metres into a gorge near Marchula in Almora district on Monday morning, claiming the lives of 36 passengers. The tragic accident occurred around 250 km from Dehradun when the 33-seater bus, loaded with 63 passengers, broke its axle while taking a sharp turn, Kupti Baid, and skidded into the gorge. According to officials, 28 passengers died on the spot, while eight others succumbed to their injuries later in the hospital. Of the 36 killed, 10 are women. The bus was en route from Naini Danda in

Pauri to Ramnagar via Almora when the accident occurred. Almora district authorities confirmed the death toll at 36, with numbers potentially rising as 27 injured passengers are being treated in nearby Dewayal and Ramnagar government hospitals. Three critically injured passengers with severe head injuries were airlifted to AIIMS Rishikesh. Most of the passengers were part of a marriage party from the Naini Danda area. The ill-fated bus, registered as UK-12 PA0061, belonged to one of the state's oldest transport associations, Garhwal Motor Owners Union (GMOU) Ltd. Initial investigations revealed that the bus, over 15 years old, suffered a



Uttarakhand CM Pushkar Singh Dhami meets injured at the hospital after a bus fell into a gorge in Almora that killed 36 in Ramnagar on Monday.

mechanical failure when its axle snapped, causing the driver to lose control while navigating the steep turn. Chief minister Pushkar Singh Dhami has ordered a magisterial probe to investigate potential negligence in vehicle maintenance and overcrowding. He directed commissioner of Kumaon division Deepak Rawat to lead a thorough investigation into the incident and ensure that any

responsible individuals or officials are held accountable. Expressing his condolences, PM Modi said, "My thoughts are with those who lost their loved ones in this tragic road accident. I wish a speedy recovery for the injured. The local administration is making all efforts to provide relief and rescue support under the state government's supervision." "The news of the deaths of many people, including women and children, in a road accident in Almora, Uttarakhand, is heart-rending. I extend my deep condolences to the bereaved families and prayers for the speedy recovery of the injured," President Draupadi Murmu wrote on X.

■ Court frames charges against accused ■ I'm being framed: Roy Daily trial in R.G. Kar case from Nov. 11

Kolkata, Nov. 4: Eighty-seven days after the body of a woman medic was found at state-run R.G. Kar Medical College and Hospital, a Kolkata court on Monday framed charges against the prime accused, Sanjay Roy. The court announced that day-to-day trial in the case would commence from November 11. Roy has been booked under Section 64 of the Bharatiya Nyay Sanhita (rape), Section 66 (punishment for causing death or resulting in a persistent vegetative state) and 103 (punishment for murder). "I have done nothing. I have been framed in this

rape-murder case. Nobody is listening to me. The government is framing me and threatening me not to open my mouth," Roy told reporters as he was led out of the Sealdah court. Roy was arrested by the Kolkata police on August 10, a day after the on-duty woman doctor's body was found inside the seminar room of the R.G. Kar hospital. Later, the CBI took up the investigation into the case on a Calcutta high court order. Senior West Bengal Congress Adhir Chowdhury said that Roy's claims should be taken seriously and probed. "Such claims of an accused should not be

■ ROY WAS arrested by the Kolkata police on August 10, a day after the on-duty woman doctor's body was found inside the seminar room of the hospital

ignored and call for an investigation. We have been saying that such a crime is not possible by a single person. It's a collective crime. We do not know whether the CBI and the Kolkata Police are in an understanding. We are sceptical," he said. The role of the police is also required to be probed, said Chowdhury, a former state Congress president.

In its charge sheet submitted last month, the CBI identified Roy as the "sole prime accused" in the case. Meanwhile, during the hearing in the corruption case in the same hospital, the central agency told a special CBI court in Alipur here that there was a "deep conspiracy" behind the crime. The Calcutta High Court on August 23 ordered transfer of the probe into alleged financial irregularities at R.G. Kar Medical College and Hospital during the tenure of its former principal Sandip Ghosh from a state-constituted SIT to the CBI. — PTI

India carries out 1st patrol in Depsang since LAC pact

PAWAN BALI NEW DELHI, NOV. 4

The Indian Army on Monday carried out its first patrol in the Depsang plains following last week's disengagement agreement with China. The patrol, the first since tensions began in 2020, covered one of the designated patrolling points, with plans to resume patrolling to other points in the coming days. "Following the consensus reached between the Indian and Chinese sides for disengagement and resumption of patrolling in Depsang and Demchok, the Indian Army patrol to one of the patrolling points in Depsang was successfully conducted today." "This is yet another positive step towards maintaining peace and tranquillity on the LAC," tweeted Leh-based Fire and Fury Corps. Indian and Chinese

■ INDIAN AND Chinese troops completed their disengagement from the Depsang and Demchok areas in Ladakh last Wednesday, ending a four-and-a-half-year face-off that began in April-May 2020

troops completed their disengagement from the Depsang and Demchok areas in Ladakh last Wednesday, ending a four-and-a-half-year face-off that began in April-May 2020. The Indian Army on Friday started patrolling in the Demchok sector. Demchok is considered as less contentious of the two flash points where disengagement was completed on Wednesday. As per the agreement a co-ordinated patrolling would be carried out in Demchok and Depsang where both sides will know

about the schedules of the patrols to avoid any kind of face-off. The Chinese troops had been blocking Indian soldiers from patrolling to their traditional patrolling points up to India's perceived line in these two friction points since April-May 2020. The two sides had previously disengaged in other areas of Ladakh, including Galwan, Pangong Tso, and Hot Springs, where buffer zones with no-patrolling policies were established. India and China are holding talks on starting patrolling in the buffer zones too. Secretary Vikram Misri on October 21 said in Delhi that the agreement was finalised following negotiations over the past several weeks and that it would lead to a resolution of the issues that arose in 2020.

Over 4.1m hit by Cyclone Dana in Odisha

AGE CORRESPONDENT BHUBANESWAR, NOV. 4

The devastating impact of Cyclone Dana has left over 4.1 million people in Odisha reeling from the severe storm and subsequent flooding, with preliminary damage estimates standing at a staggering ₹600 crore. Revenue and disaster management minister Suresh Pujari shared these details on Monday during a press briefing in Bhubaneswar. Minister Pujari stated that district collectors and departmental teams were instructed to complete a preliminary damage assessment report by November 2. Reports have now been submitted from 14 cyclone-affected districts, offering a first look at the extent of the destruction.

IAF's MiG-29 crashes near Agra, pilot ejects to safety

AGE CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, NOV. 4

Indian Air Force's MiG-29 on Monday crashed near Agra during a routine training sortie, after encountering a system malfunction. The pilot manoeuvred the aircraft to ensure no damage to life or property on ground, before ejecting safely. "An enquiry has been ordered by the IAF to ascertain the cause of the accident," said Indian Air Force. There were no casualties in the incident, officials said. The videos on the social media showed the fuselage of the crashed jet engulfed in flames billowing a thick cloud of smoke. A large number of curious onlookers gathered near the crash site in the field.



Smoke billows out after an IAF plane crashed near Agra on Monday.

"A MiG-29 aircraft of the IAF crashed near Agra during a routine training sortie today, after encountering a system malfunction. The pilot manoeuvred the aircraft to ensure no damage to life or property on ground, before ejecting safely. An enquiry has been ordered by the IAF to ascertain the cause of the accident," the IAF posted on X. Around two months back MiG-29 fighter aircraft of the IAF had crashed in Rajasthan's Barmer on September 2 due to a "critical" technical snag. The pilot had ejected safely and no loss of life was reported. In June Indian Air Force's Sukhoi 30 MKI fighter aircraft which was with Hindustan Aeronautics Limited for overhaul, had crashed while on test sortie in Nasik, Maharashtra.

HP: Paraglider stuck after mid-air collision

Dharamshala (HP), Nov. 4:

A paraglider from Poland was stranded in Dhauladhar hills in Kangra district of Himachal Pradesh after a mid-air collision with another paraglider, officials said on Monday. Efforts to airlift the paraglider, who was identified as Andrew Babinski, failed due to tough terrain on Monday. Mr Babinski got stranded in Dhauladhar hills on Sunday after colliding with another paraglider mid-air, sub-divisional magistrate (SDM), Baijnath, D.C. Thakur said. "I have been with NC

An attempt to rescue him on Monday using a chopper failed due to tough terrain. The land search party will soon reach the spot, the officer said. Mr Babinski is in touch with paragliding organisers and the local administration, as per the officials. Meanwhile, an Australian paraglider participating in the Paragliding World Cup 2024 in Kangra's Bir Billing suffered a sprain in his leg before takeoff on Sunday. "Australian paraglider David Snowden had a sprain in his leg before takeoff and did not fly." — PTI

MP CM: Will take up jumbos issue with C'garh govt

AGE CORRESPONDENT BHOPAL, NOV. 4

Chief minister Mohan Yadav on Monday said that MP and Chhattisgarh will prepare a joint action plan to tackle elephant menace in the two states. The CM indicated that he would discuss it with his Chhattisgarh counterpart Vishnu Deo Sai during his visit to the neighbouring state on Monday. He has left for Raipur to attend the inaugural function of the three-day "Rajyotsava" to mark the 25th Chhattisgarh state foundation day.

'JMM-Cong an alliance of infiltrators'

■ Continued From Page 1 JMM-led coalition are neck-deep in corruption," the Prime Minister said, asserting that only the BJP can provide "Suvidha, Suraksha, Shhritra and Samridhdhi", which he said was "Modi's guarantee". He said the JMM, Congress and RJD were using Bangladeshi infiltrators for "vote bank politics", and facilitating their settlement in Jharkhand, which was a threat to the state's social structure. "If Saraswati Vandana is prevented in schools, you can understand the level of the threat", he said, and added that curfews during festivals like Durga Puja have become common. He criticised the JMM-led coalition for misappropriating thousands of crores allocated by the Centre for various schemes, asserting that it was time for a "double engine government" in Jharkhand to ensure development over the next 25 years. "The Centre is making all efforts to boost infrastructure in Jharkhand, while the JMM-led coalition is trying to hinder progress," he said, citing the stalled North Koel Reservoir project as a key example. The foundation of the project on

North Koel river flowing through Palamu and Garhwa districts was originally laid in 1972 but failed to take off. Mr Modi said that the Jharkhand BJP had come up with an excellent "Sankalp Patra" (manifesto), promising initiatives such as the "Gogo Didi" scheme, which would provide women with ₹2,100 per month and unemployment allowances of ₹2,000 to the youth under the "Yuva Sathi Bhatta" programme. "The JMM, Congress and RJD have made false promises and done nothing for women and the people in the past five years and are now copying the BJP," he said, and added: "The JMM-led coalition's exit is certain this election as they have betrayed the poor." The Prime Minister said 16 lakh houses were built under the PM Awas Yojana for SC, ST, and OBC communities in the state, with a promise to construct another 21 lakh houses. "The JMM-led coalition betrayed the poor in the name of Abua Awas Yojana. Scams have become an industry in Jharkhand."

"Paper leaks are common. Several youths lost their lives. The JMM, Congress and RJD believe in dynastic politics and they insulted tribal leaders like Champai Soren," Mr Modi said. Addressing the second election rally in Chaibasa in West Singhbhum district, the PM said that he worships those who have been rejected by the others and accused the Congress of making attempts to snatch reservations meant for tribals and hand them over to its "vote bank". Mr Modi said: "Babasaheb Bhimrao Ambedkar has ensured the provision of reservation to protect tribal rights but Nehru-ji had opposed it." "The Gandhi family opposed reservation till they were in control of power post-Nehru. Now once again they have openly announced that they will scrap reservations for tribals. They will snatch tribal reservations and hand it over to their vote bank." "They (Congress) have devised one more strategy. They are declaring schools, colleges and universities as minority institutions. By this, the reservation of tribals, Dalits and backward castes is being stopped. Beware of this conspiracy by the Congress," he said.

Mr Modi alleged that the JMM-led ruling coalition in the state has put tribal "identity, dignity and existence" at stake by "facilitating" Bangladeshi infiltrators to make fake documents. "Infiltrators are snatching your daughters, grabbing land and devouring your bread," he said, claiming that efforts were on to change Jharkhand's demography. He noted that if the BJP is voted to power in the state, it will bring stringent legislation to return land grabbed by the infiltrators. Mr Modi attacked the Congress-led Opposition for "humiliating" BJP candidate Sita Soren in Jharkhand and a woman leader in Maharashtra, saying "insulting women is their habit". "The Opposition used foul language against a woman leader in Maharashtra. Mothers and daughters are in shock, people will teach them a lesson," Mr Modi said, referring to Shiv Sena (UBT) MP Arvind Sawant's remark targeting Shiv Sena candidate Shaina NC. Polling for the 81-member Jharkhand Assembly will be held in two phases on November 13 and 20.

Ruckus as PDP man raises 370 issue

■ Continued From Page 1 constitutional disempowerment of J&K through the J&K Reorganisation Act 2019 and calls for its complete rescinding." It added: "The House further resolves to strive for restoration of special status and all constitutional guarantees granted to J&K in their original, pristine form." Mr Para claimed that he and two other PDP members had written to the Speaker to allow the "resolution" to be taken up for discussion. J&K People's Conference chairman and former minister Sajad Gani Lone and some independent members vociferously supported Mr Para and endorsed his "resolution", adding to the verbal spat in the House. Chief minister Omar Abdullah was soon on his feet to say that Mr Para was only playing to the gallery. "I didn't want to make any political speech in the House today. We were felicitating you (Mr Rather) on becoming the Speaker of this House and then politics crept in. Some members can't live without doing it. The people have not accepted the August 5, 2019 decisions. If they had supported these, the outcome of the Assembly elections would have been different," he said. He added that Mr Para's move was only for the cameras and that the House's discussion and reflection on the matter will not be dictated by a single member. As the protest by all 28 BJP members persisted and some

other members including a few of the NC continued to create noisy scenes, the Speaker adjourned the House on the plea that "there are only ten minutes left for the lieutenant-governor's arrival to address the House". The NC, while reacting to the PDP member's reading out the "resolution" against the abrogation of Article 370, said that it was a half attempt to circumvent the government's move to introduce a resolution against the abrogation of Article 370 in the Assembly. "It was too clever by half an attempt by a PDP MLA, clearly aimed at circumventing a government move to introduce resolution (on the subject)," the party said in a statement. It added: "We expect everyone to support the resolution rather than playing to the gallery and weakening the collective resolve of those who sincerely want reclaiming of our constitutional rights, protection of dignity and identity." However, PDP president and former CM Mehbooba Mufti appreciated Mr Para's move and said that she felt proud of him. "Proud of Waheed Para for introducing a resolution in the JK Assembly opposing the revocation of Article 370 and resolving to restore the special status. God bless you," she wrote on X. Later, Mr Rather, thanking the members for unanimously electing him as Speaker, promised to remain non-partisan while presiding over the House. "I have been with NC

for the last 50 years, but I do not represent any political party in this House. There won't be any partisan conduct. I intend to run this House with honesty and integrity," he said, adding: "I am here to serve as a custodian of the House, not as an enforcer of any particular ideology. Our responsibility is to make the administration accountable and to create a healthy, constructive atmosphere in the House." Lieutenant-governor Manoj Sinha said in his address to the House that the government will make all efforts for the restoration of statehood to J&K and that he was hopeful to work with the new government and members of the Assembly as "one team". "My government will work with you all closely. Prime Minister Narendra Modi has expressed his commitment for restoring statehood. The council of ministers have passed the resolution which has been approved by me as well. This reflects the collective will and aspiration of people of J&K. My government will make all efforts for the restoration of statehood to J&K," he said. He said that the government will work for the better future of J&K which has reached an annual growth output of 7 per cent. "We are committed to create more avenues for employment and strengthen the fiscal position of J&K. Every region of J&K will be treated equally to create a prosperous society."

Lokayukta summons K'taka CM

■ Continued From Page 1 registered cases against the accused persons under Sections 120B, 166, 403, 406, 420, 465, 468, 340, 351 and other relevant sections of the IPC, under Sections 61, 198, 314, 316, 318, 324, 336, 340 and 351 of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, the Prohibition of Benami Property Transactions Act, 1988, offences under Sections 9 and 13 of Prevention of Corruption Act and also under Sections 3 and 4 of the Karnataka Land Grabbing Prohibition Act, 2011. The FIR against chief minister Siddaramaiah and others was registered after the special court exclusively to deal with criminal cases against MPs/MLAs in Bengaluru directed the Lokayukta, Mysuru wing, to investigate the case on a complaint filed by Mysuru based social activist Snehamayi Krishna with the Loka-yukta, Mysuru wing. Besides, three private petitions by social activists-Snehamayi Krishna T.J. Abraham and Pradeep Kumar against the CM to the governor over plot allotments, and acting on the petitions, governor Thaa-ar-hand Gehlot in August accorded sanction to prosecute the chief minister in the plot allotment case.

THE ASIAN AGE

5 NOVEMBER 2024

UCC with exemptions shows it's unsuited in diverse India

Introduction of a Uniform Civil Code across the country has been in the election manifestos of the BJP for quite some time and the party was quite vocal about it during the campaign for the 2024 Lok Sabha elections. The drubbing the party received at the hustings slowed it down on the topic but the unexpected victory in Haryana has emboldened it to take up the topic again.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi would call it a 'secular civil code' instead of Uniform Civil Code, which he insists the government will try to introduce in the immediate future. Now the party has promised in its manifesto for the Jharkhand Assembly elections that it will indeed implement it in the state if elected to power. Home minister Amit Shah, who released the manifesto, however, hastened to add that the members of the tribal communities in the state will be kept out of its ambit.

This is not the first time the BJP is using the idea of UCC as a poll promise; this is not the first time the BJP talks of exempting communities from its ambit, either. Mr Shah himself is reported to have promised exemption to the tribal Christian community in the northeastern states earlier.

The makers of the Constitution were mindful of the pitfalls of introducing a uniform code for all communities in India given the diversity of its communities and the cultural, historical, political and geographical backgrounds they live in. It will be a Herculean and time-consuming task for all the communities to integrate themselves to a common identity so that they will feel the need for a common civil code. That is the reason why the Constitution placed the idea of a UCC in the Directive Principles of State Policy as a non-enforceable idea.

At the same time, there are specific immediate requirements for legislative intervention in various aspects of personal laws to keep pace with the time. For example, the Hindu Code ensured that women get an equal share in the ancestral property while the intervention of the Supreme Court ensured that Christian women are not denied their equal rights in inheritance. The Islamic personal law in India, however, discriminates against women when it comes to inheritance. A law which was progressive at one point in time has been made obsolete by the passage of time and social changes. It may be updated without waiting for the introduction of a uniform personal law.

The approach of the BJP to the UCC as evidenced in the manifesto for Jharkhand Assembly elections does not reflect a genuine and felt need for change; it rather betrays a hurry to muddy the waters and exploit the situation. The saffron party would see that the state government there led by the JMM is "patronising Bangladeshi infiltrators for votebank politics". Instead of blaming the state government, the party, which runs the Union government, should ask itself what made infiltration, if it has happened at all, possible. A party with a huge stake in the future of the country should identify measures that can united communities; it is sad if divisive elements alone attract its attention.

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Team India bites home dust

A bunch of enthusiastic overachievers from New Zealand made the reputed Team India bite the dust on their own turf, which they had been doctoring for long to build a record of invincibility in Test match cricket. This was indeed a remarkable performance by the visiting Kiwis who showed what patience, application and grit can do to tackle different playing conditions.

Conversely, the much-vaunted gladiators of Team India showed no appetite for the longest format and buckled in not only on two spin pitches but also in the opener that was played in conditions more akin to New Zealand with swing and seam movement dominating.

Indian cricketers have been overindulged by the BCCI in allowing them to opt to play when and where they wish. So much have they been spoiled by the glamour, glitz and money of the popular white ball formats that they may have forgotten what it is like to put your shoulder to the wheel and grind it out over five days to win a Test match.

Their defensive technique thoroughly exposed by the New Zealand quicks in Bengaluru, the Indians were undone by unglamorous Kiwi spinners sticking to the basics and allowing turning tracks to play tricks on the minds of the Indians to complete an unprecedented whitewash of the home team in a 3-Test series.

How much regard they have for Test cricket was made apparent when the underperforming seniors, including captain Rohit Sharma and Virat Kohli, declined to play first class cricket ahead of the Test season and they may have overestimated their strengths after beating Bangladesh 2-0 before they met the New Zealanders.

To put everyone on notice, including the super senior demigods of Indian batsmanship, on the tour of Australia and plan a full rebuilding of the team even as they try to improve their now slimmer chances of qualifying for the World Test Championship final should be the way forward. Those who don't have the appetite for the grind of Test cricket, which is still the preferred format of the cricket cognoscenti and a preparing ground for ODIs and T20, should be sent packing.

Team India will not know how to play to win if the policy of preparing dusty turners to avowedly suit the home team spinners is not given up. To achieve its true potential in the longer format as much as it has in being T20 champion and ODI World Cup runner-up, Team India must learn to play on normal pitches at home and try to excel in all conditions, not doctor them.

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Subhani



Census, caste & citizenship: Spin to win in endless cycle



Shikha Mukerjee

The obviously leaked stories about the launch in 2025 of the long-delayed Census and the move to keep everyone guessing on whether the exercise will include a caste-based enumeration are guaranteed to rekindle the public's interest and rebuild the BJP's and its helmsman Narendra Modi's political capital. The calculation seems to be that if the Census were to include an update on the National Register of Citizens, there would be even higher yields on the capital, all to the advantage of the ruling BJP.

The timing of the leaks suggests that the politically astute Mr Modi and his BJP team probably sense an urgent necessity to strengthen the appeal of the over-used and now possibly marginally declining appeal to over-exposed voters of the decades-old slogan, newly paraphrased by Yogi Adityanath as "Batanga to Katanga", that is, divided we fail, as it would invite new confrontations about identities, citizenship, infiltrators and terrorists, targeting the Muslim community and so infusing fresh significance to the slogan. A Census with a new, updated version of the National Register of Citizens would give fresh meaning to the Hindu majority in danger of being overwhelmed by the rapidly increasing Muslim minority population, as the BJP and Mr Modi have belatedly realised the potential of the hoary tag: statistics are damn lies.

Much thought has gone into marketing the Census exercise; there are political benefits to be earned by marketing it as Mr Modi's magnanimity. One obvious constituency of potential voters that the BJP and Mr Modi can

hope to capture through the Census exercise will be women, who have been guaranteed 33 per cent reserved constituencies in state legislatures and in the Lok Sabha. By holding out the promise of more power to women through the representation route, Mr Modi is targeting women as voters and as party loyalists who can be mobilised to bring in more women into the very patriarchal BJP. Offering a share in power is going one step further than doling out cash to women through the once derided now embraced variations on the "Ladki Bahin Samman Yojana".

The value of women's votes was measured by the BJP in the Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh elections. It was confirmed in Haryana. With the crucial Maharashtra elections coming up, where the BJP's ruthless tactics of buying out the Opposition by splitting and appropriating regional parties will be tested, the women's vote matters even more.

After resisting the idea of a head count, the renewal of speculation stoked by leaked information suggests that the Modi government appears to have overcome its distrust of numbers and data generated through surveys and research, the probability that a caste enumeration would be part of the Census exercise implies that the ruling side has found political value in getting it done. It could be that the build-up of pressure from the Congress and its INDIA group partners on one hand and from within the NDA, especially Nitish Kumar in Bihar and N. Chandrababu Naidu in Andhra Pradesh, have forced Mr Modi and his team to rethink the politically sensitive issue. By kicking off a caste and religion-sect based

Much thought has gone into marketing the Census exercise; there are political benefits to be earned by marketing it as Mr Modi's magnanimity.

Census as part of the decadal head count exercise, the Modi government can take credit then it will serve to deflate the Congress, which has made the issue part of its core agenda and when the INDIA group comes to power at the Centre. For a leader who campaigned at one point during the Lok Sabha elections that the Congress and its regional party allies were intent on dividing the "nation" and destroying the Constitution by trying to amend the provisions on reservation for Scheduled Castes, the volte face on the caste census is significant.

Either the BJP and Mr Modi by himself, or the RSS, BJP and Mr Modi may have collectively come to the realisation that the caste census issue and its data can be used to serve the Hindutva agenda of a uniform, universal, homogenised and hegemonist Hindu identity.

Critics of reservation and the politics of quotas and reservation and the tug of war over expansion of quotas and additions to the list of caste-based reservations have argued, convincingly, that the more the quotas and the additions to the "list" of castes, the greater the control dominant caste elites gain by seeding internecine and inter caste competition. The rush to raise the cut-off to Rs 15 lakhs a year for the "creamy layer" within the Other Backward Classes by the Eknath Shinde government in Maharashtra is a case in point. The Chhattisgarh government decision to create 50 per cent OBC reservation for councillors and panchayat representatives in municipalities and panchayats is a pointer that the BJP is testing how the caste census can be utilised for political gains.

The imperative to rein-

vent itself is understandable; neither Mr Modi as the helmsman nor his team masterminded by Amit Shah succeeded in giving the BJP a clear majority in the 2024 Lok Sabha election. The BJP won in Haryana, but it did so because the Congress failed to convert its advantage into wins and ended up snatching defeat from the predicted victory. The BJP must be under stress because it is certainly aware, probably acutely so, that the theory of marginal returns does set in once the peak is over.

Between now, that is in every state and Union territory election, in municipal and panchayat elections, and the next Lok Sabha election in 2029, the BJP will have to face the prospect that every election could be the one where the margin has been crossed and the decline has begun. In this extremely uncertain time, the BJP and Mr Modi have no choice except to overhaul the narrative of Hindutva by creating a diversion.

As Prime Minister Modi tours the country from election meetings in Jharkhand and Maharashtra to his annual face-to-face with Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel in Kevadia, where his repaired statue, twice the size of the Statue of Liberty, was unveiled in 2018, the public patiently waits for him to get to the crux of matter; how much money will he spend; not on alleviating the distress caused by chronic and incurable poverty but something much less, a tiny direct transfer into individual bank accounts. The bitter pill, therefore, needs sugar coating.

After 10 years in power and elected for another five years, the going is getting tough even for the tireless helmsman and his BJP, aided by the RSS. Spinning the bits in the kaleidoscope in what appears to be an endless series of bewitching patterns can change soon enough into a dull and dreary distraction.

Shikha Mukerjee is a senior journalist based in Kolkata

LETTERS

CORPORATE CRICKET

It's a sad moment indeed with India losing the Test series 3-0 against the Kiwis in a most humiliating fashion. It made me recall the words of George Bernard Shaw which must ring into the ears of Jay Shah, BCCI secretary, who is instrumental in appointing Gautam Gambhir as head coach. To quote Shaw: "Cricket is a game played by 11 fools and watched by 11,000." This may not have been the case earlier, but today cricket isn't a revered game any longer. It's filled with power play, politics, money and greed. With a surfeit of matches, star players like Rohit Sharma and Virat Kohli have taken the role of corporate employees rather than sportsmen. They no longer look or behave like professional players.

A.P. Thiruvadi
Chennai

IMRAN'S ORDEAL

ON AUGUST 5, 2023, a local Islamabad court found Pakistan's former PM Imran Khan guilty in the Toshakhana case and arrested him from his residence, sending him to prison. Once the undisputed king of the cricket world and later PM, Imran faces numerous difficulties in prison. The current government is ensuring he remains being bars as long as possible. Despite being acquitted of three charges, he is repeatedly entangled in various minor cases, as his release could pose a challenge to the government. Imran gained public sympathy, and if released, might demand mid-term elections. Despite his Tehreek-e-Insaf party winning 92 seats, they were kept out of power. Imran, who is 6 foot, 2 inches tall, is confined to a 7x8-foot cell, with barely room to move.

Dattaprasad Shirodkar
Mumbai

TAXPAYERS, UNITE

THE BJP accusing the Congress of making unrealistic promises is like the pot calling the kettle black because all political parties promise the moon before elections and soon forget about it, once the results are out. The "achche din" is nowhere in sight: the rupee is now over 84 to the dollar and "menh gai ki maar" has made life miserable for people. All the promised goodies will come from the pockets of the middle class, which now needs to finally wake up to their exploitation and put an end to it. Trying to make political capital out of unkept promises is not going to work.

Anthony Henriques
Mumbai

Every Monday the best letter of the week wins ₹500. Email: asianage.letters@gmail.com.



Aakar Patel

India, as a UNSC aspirant, should not ignore UN on human rights

The United Nations Security Council has 15 members — five permanent and 10 elected. India has been a non-permanent member of the UNSC eight times, its last term being in 2021-2022. It has now bid for the 2028-2029 term.

As the world's largest nation and a democracy, we are entitled to having our voice heard in the global body.

In 2021, the then UN high commissioner for human rights, Michelle Bachelet, said "although it is the primary responsibility of the UN Human Rights Council, promoting and protecting human rights is one of the best ways for the UN Security Council to achieve its mandate of maintaining international peace and security". With that in mind, let's take a look at India's engagement with the UN human rights system in the past few years. The fact is that India hasn't been a strong leader at the UNHRC, willing to take difficult and principled stands with consistent application of human rights values; nor has it engaged particularly constructively with UNHRC mechanisms. India has been a member of the UN Human Rights Council for 16 of the council's 18 years — most recently from 2019 to 2024. Resolution 60/251 that created the UNHRC states "members elected to the council shall uphold the highest standards in the promotion and protection of human rights, shall fully cooperate with the council, and be reviewed under the universal periodic review mechanism during their term of membership". India has been the

subject of 25 critical statements from UN human rights experts and UHCHR since 2019 — during its last two terms of membership — expressing concerns about its domestic human rights issues and lack of compliance with its international human rights obligations.

Between January 24, 2011 and September 24, 2024, the Indian government received over 200 communications from UN Special Procedures, a collection of independent experts created by the HRC and mandated to monitor and report on human rights across the globe. The Indian government only responded to less than a third of the communications it received. After 2014, India has facilitated the completion of only two visits by a UN special procedure mandate to the country. It currently has 19 pending visit requests. Some have gone unanswered since 1999 (for example, from the Special Rapporteur on Torture). In its last Universal Periodic Review, a mechanism by which every state's human rights record is examined and recommendations for improvements made, 21 countries urged India to improve its protection of freedom of religion and rights of religious minorities, with several raising concerns over increasing violence and hate speech and the government's adoption of discriminatory policies such as "anti-conversion" laws. In addition, 19 countries said India should ratify the UN Convention against Torture, a treaty we signed in 1997 but never ratified. India said in both the 2012 and 2017 UPR cycles that it remained committed to ratifying the treaty.

However, it hasn't taken steps to fulfil its commitment even as torture and other ill-treatment continue to be used routinely by the police and other security forces to gather information or coerce "confessions". India is party to only six of the nine core human rights treaties. India's reports under the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the Convention on the Rights of the Child are also overdue. India has been the subject of two reports, in 2018 and 2019, from the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights on the human rights situation in Kashmir. Both reports called on the Indian authorities to respect international human rights obligations in the region, repeal or amend repressive laws such as the Armed Forces (Jammu and Kashmir) Special Powers Act, and restrictions on journalists and investigate all blanket bans or restrictions. Instead of engaging with the OHCHR, India called the reports "false, with a motivated narrative", and accused the human rights body of "legitimising terrorism".

India has consistently been included in the UN Secretary-General's report on reprisals, which sets out cases of alleged reprisals — against individuals and organisations — for cooperation with the UN in the field of human rights. In the 2020 report, the Secretary-General concluded that "ongoing intimidation and reprisals have reportedly deterred some civil society representatives from cooperating with the United Nations

for fear of further retribution" in the country. So why is credible engagement with UNHRC critical in the context of India's UNSC bid? Discussions about reforming the UNSC should not be done in isolation of candidates' performance and behaviour at other UN bodies, most importantly human rights ones. Membership of any of the UN organs should be used to shine a spotlight on, and protect human rights, not to shield members or their allies from scrutiny of their human rights record. This should be the case for all nations and the fact that others are as bad or worse on this issue should not matter. It is abundantly clear that India is falling short of its domestic and international human rights obligations and its commitments as a member and in its interactions with different UN bodies and mechanisms. The discussion on reform of the Security Council may not end soon, but if India is serious about its intention to be a UNSC permanent member, it must demonstrate that it can engage responsibly with UN human rights entities, including UNHRC. It must comply with UNHRC's membership criteria in a consistent and principled manner. It must commit to upholding the highest standards in the promotion and protection of human rights to fully cooperate with the UN human rights mechanisms. We harm our chances when we choose deliberately to not do the right thing.

The writer is the chair of Amnesty International India. Twitter: @aakar_patel

SHORT TAKES

MOLDOVA'S PRO-WEST PREZ WINS 2ND TERM

Chisinau, Nov. 4: Moldova's pro-Western President Maia Sandu has won a second term in a pivotal presidential runoff against a Russia-friendly opponent, in a race that was overshadowed by claims of Russian interference, voter fraud, and intimidation in the European Union candidate country.

With nearly 98% of votes counted in the second round of the presidential election held Sunday, Sandu had 54% of the vote, according to the Central Electoral Commission, or CEC, compared to 46% for Alexandr Stoianoglo.

INDONESIAN, RUSSIAN NAVIES HOLD EXERCISES

Surabaya, Nov. 4: Naval forces of Indonesia and Russia began their first joint military training drills in the Java Sea on Monday, the Indonesian navy said, something analysts said showed the Southeast Asian country's willingness to befriend any country.

The joint exercise comes as Indonesia's newly inaugurated President Prabowo Subianto has pledged closer ties with Russia on defence, in his bid to forge links with any country as part of his nation's long-held non-alignment foreign policy.

The drills will take place in the Java Sea.

ALBANIA AIMS TO JOIN EU BY 2030, SAYS PM RAMA

Thessaloniki, Nov. 4: Albania hopes to join the European Union by 2030, Prime Minister Edi Rama told a crowd of some 2,000 supporters at a hotel in the northern Greek city of Thessaloniki on Sunday.

Rama also promised that the numerous Albanian expatriates will be able for the first time to mail in their ballots in the next general election, set to take place in Spring 2025.

Rama chose to downplay recent disputes with neighbouring Greece, including the imprisonment for electoral corruption of mayoral candidate Fredis Beleris.

JAPAN LAUNCHES INFO-GATHERING DEF. SATELLITE

Tokyo, Nov. 4: Japan launched a defence satellite designed for information-gathering and military operations on a new flagship H3 rocket on Monday, as the country seeks to build up its military capability amid growing tension in the region.

The H3 No. 4 rocket lifted off from the Tanegashima Space Center on a southwestern Japanese island. Everything went as planned and the satellite placed at the top of the rocket was successfully separated about half an hour after liftoff, the Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency, or JAXA, said in a livestream.

2 SATELLITES OF IRAN TO BE LAUNCHED TODAY

Tehran, Nov. 4: Russia will launch two Iranian satellites into orbit using a Soyuz launcher on Tuesday, Iran's ambassador to Moscow said on Monday, as the two US-sanctioned countries deepen their scientific relationship.

"In continuation of the development of Iran-Russia scientific and technological cooperation, two Iranian satellites named Kowsar and Hodhod, will be launched to a 500 km orbit of earth on Tuesday, November 5, by a Soyuz launch vehicle," Iranian Ambassador to Russia Kazem Jalali said in a post on X.

THREE CHINESE ASTRONAUTS RETURN SAFELY

Beijing, Nov. 4: Three Chinese astronauts who spent six months developing China's low orbit space station returned to Earth safely early on Monday, the China Manned Space Agency (CMSA) said.

The capsule of the spaceship Shenzhou-18 carrying astronauts Ye Guangfu, Li Cong and Li Guangsu, touched down at the Dongfeng landing site in north China's Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region at 1:24 am (Beijing Time).

The three astronauts, after staying in orbit for 192 days, were all in good health.



People inspect burnt cars and a building after a reported attack by Israeli settlers on the outskirts of Ramallah city in the occupied West Bank, on Monday. — AFP

Israel terminates pact with UN body aiding Gaza

Jerusalem, Al Bireh, Jerusalem, Nov. 4: Israel said on Monday it had terminated the agreement facilitating the work of the UN agency for Palestinian refugees, the main aid provider in Gaza, in what appeared to be a step to implement legislation passed last month that would sever ties with the agency and prevent it from operating in Israel.

Israel says the agency, known as UNRWA, has been infiltrated by Hamas. UNRWA denies the allegations and says it takes measures to ensure its neutrality.

Israeli settlers torched nearly 20 cars early on Monday in the occupied West Bank city of Al-Bireh near Ramallah, according to the Palestinian civil defence and an Israeli security source.

The Israeli military said on Monday it had killed a top Hezbollah commander it accused of overseeing rocket and anti-tank missile attacks against Israeli forces in southern Lebanon. On Sunday, Israel said its troops had carried out a ground raid

IRAN SLAMS U.S. DEPLOYMENT OF B-52 BOMBERS

Tehran, Nov. 4: Iran's foreign ministry spokesman Esmail Baghaei on Monday criticised what he called the US' "destabilising presence" after the deployment of B-52 bombers in the region.

"We have always believed that the presence of America in the region is a destabilising presence," Baghaei told a news conference in response to a question about the deployment, adding that it "will not deter (Iran's) resolve to defend itself".

The US military announced on Saturday the deployment of B-52 bombers to the Middle East as a warning to Iran. — AFP

into Syria to seize a Syrian it accuses of working with Iran. It was the first time in the current war that Israel announced its troops operated in Syrian territory. — Agencies

Pak ministers blame India for worsening smog

Lahore, Nov. 4: Ministers in Pakistan's Punjab province on Monday blamed winds from India for worsening smog here, urging the Indian authorities to take up the matter seriously, after the air quality index in the capital city hit a record high over the weekend.

Toxic grey smog has sickened tens of thousands of people, mainly children and elderly people, since last month when the air quality started worsening in Lahore, the city bordering India.

The concentration of PM 2.5, or tiny particulate matter, in the air, approached 450, considered hazardous, the Punjab environment protection department said.

"The wind direction brings air from India into Pakistan, yet India does not seem to be taking this problem as seriously as it should," Punjab information minister Azma Bokhari told the media here.

She urged the Indian side of Punjab state to take this matter seriously. "Delhi ranks first in smog levels today, with Lahore following closely

in second place. Delhi's air quality index is around 393, while Lahore's is close to 280," she said, adding that China has been battling smog for the past 26 years.

Earlier, Punjab senior minister Marriyum Aurangzeb said the province was going to request the Pakistan Foreign Office to take up the issue of cross-border pollution with India. "The easterly winds from Amritsar and Chandigarh are spiking the air quality index in Lahore to over 1,000 for the past two days," she said.

The wind from India towards Lahore taking the smog to dangerous levels and the wind is likely to sustain its direction for at least next week. The people should take care of themselves by avoiding unnecessarily coming out of their houses. The elderly and children should be particularly careful," Aurangzeb said.

Punjab CM Maryam Nawaz called for climate diplomacy with India and said she would write to the CM of India's Punjab to jointly address the smog issue. — PTI

7 swing states in deadlock to decide who'll be next US Prez

Harris, Trump embark on final frenzied campaign blitz for Pennsylvania

Scranton, Lititz, Nov. 4: Bitter rivals Kamala Harris and Donald Trump embark on a final frenzied campaign blitz on Monday with both hitting must-win Pennsylvania on the last day of the tightest and most volatile US presidential election in memory.

Donald Trump gave a profane and conspiracy-laden speech two days before the presidential election, talking about reporters being shot.

The GOP nominee for the White House noted the ballistic glass placed in front of him at events after a gunman's assassination attempt in July at a rally in Butler, Pennsylvania, and Trump talked about open places where he saw openings in that protection.

"I have this piece of glass here," he said. "But all we have really over here is the fake news. And to get me, somebody would have to shoot through the fake news. And I don't mind that so much."

Republican Trump has promised a "landslide" as he seeks a sensational return to the White House, while Democrat Harris said the "momentum" was on the side of her bid to be first woman President.

But the polls suggest a different story on the eve of Election Day — total deadlock in surveys nationwide and in the seven swing states where the result is expected to be decided.

Now a race of dramatic twists, including two bids to kill Trump and Harris's shock late entrance, is coming down to the most viciously fought-over battleground. Harris will spend the whole day campaigning in the rust-belt state of Pennsylvania, culminating in a huge rally in its biggest city Philadelphia featuring singer Lady Gaga. Trump will travel to North Carolina, Pennsylvania and then Michigan.

In a sign of how crucial Pennsylvania is to their chances of occupying the Oval Office, Trump and Harris will even hold dueling rallies in the industrial city of Pittsburgh.

Pennsylvania is the single biggest swing state prize under the US Electoral College system, which awards influence in line with population. Both sides say they are encouraged by huge early turnout numbers, with over 78 million people having voted already, around half of the total number of ballots cast in 2020. — Agencies



Republican presidential nominee Donald Trump speaks at a campaign rally at Kinston Jet Centre. — AP



Democratic presidential nominee Kamala Harris speaks during a rally at Michigan State University. — AP

CAMPAIGN 2024 BY THE LETTER

A **ABORTION.** A hot button issue that Democrats hope will be Trump's Achilles heel, given his role as president in ending the federal right to the procedure.

B **BORDER.** A weakness for Harris, through her association with President Joe Biden, amid charges that under their watch the frontier with Mexico was crossed by millions.

C **CALIFORNIA.** The liberal home state of Harris, a circumstance that has prompted her to try to look more centrist and moderate as she woo independent and Republican voters.

D **DEBATE.** A catastrophic performance by Biden in June led to him abandoning his campaign.

E **ELON,** as in Musk. The tech mogul that has put his mouth, money and media platform at the service of Trump.

F **FUNDRAISING.** After replacing Biden, Harris stunned America by attracting vast sums in donations from suddenly jubilant supporters.

G **GENITALIA.** The anatomical feature of the late golf great Arnold Palmer that Trump saw fit to address at a campaign rally.

H **HAITIAN.** The nationality of some immigrants living in Ohio that Trump, his running mate JD Vance and other Republicans have alleged, falsely, are eating people's dogs and cats.

I **INFORMATION** (see dis- and mis-). Bogus claims like the pet-eating Haitians and Republican lawmaker Marjorie Taylor Greene's gem: The Biden administration is controlling the weather.

J **JANUARY 6.** The date of the 2021 Capitol insurrection by violent Trump supporters.

K **KAMALA.** If elected, she would be America's first female President and the first one of South Asian heritage.

L **LADIES,** ones with cats but no kids. A demographic defined by Vance years ago which came back to haunt him.

M **MEDIA.** Harris was accused of avoiding one-on-one interviews. However, she has recently grown into the task, including facing a hostile sit-down with Fox News.

N **NATIONAL SECURITY.** Trump says he will bolster it while Harris says he is a threat to it.

O **OLD.** Biden, 81, bowed out because of the impression he was too worn out for another term. Trump at 78, is now the oldest US candidate ever. At 60, Harris by comparison comes across as young.

P **PROJECT 2025.** A prominent think tank's blueprint for far-right rule under Trump.

Q **QUIT,** for Biden's departure from the race.

R **REFUSAL.** Trump refuses to promise he will accept a loss in November, raising the specter of another January 6 type insurrection.

S **SWING STATES.** The seven states that can go either way.

T **TARIFFS.** The levies Trump says he will slap on all imports into the US.

U **"UNFIT" and "unstable."** How Harris describes Trump.

V **VAGUE.** Harris has faced charges of leaving her policy positions intentionally ambiguous so as not to alienate potential voters. Trump has also made huge promises without providing details of how to make them come true.

W **WEIRD.** Harris's running mate Tim Walz coined this way of describing Trump, Vance and others in their orbit.

X **(E)XHAUSTED.** A term that a Trump aide has been quoted as using to describe the Republican.

Y **YES MEN.** The people, it is feared, that Trump would surround himself with in a second term.

Z **ZELENSKY,** Volodymyr. The Ukrainian president who is surely fretting over Trump's affinity for Putin.

ARSON ATTACKS ON BALLOT BOXES SPARK CONCERNS

New York, Nov. 4: Last week, two ballot drop boxes in the Pacific Northwest were damaged in a suspected arson attack destroying hundreds of ballots at one location. In neighbouring Portland, Oregon a fire suppression system contained a similar blaze, limiting damage.

These attacks involving ballot collection boxes have raised concerns about the security of the US presidential polls ahead of the main Election Day. In New York, the officials of the Board of Elections say a "stolen election" isn't possible. — PTI

Shouldn't have left WH, says Trump

Washington, Nov. 4: As the countdown for the election day began, Trump raked up the bitter memories of the 2020 election and said he "shouldn't have left" the White House, triggering apprehensions that he may not accept the outcome of the November 5 voting if he loses the race to Harris.

Trump on Sunday expressed frustration over the current voting pattern as he urged his fellow countrymen to vote for him in this final battle and called for a mandatory voter ID. The Democrats are opposing voter ID so

that they can cheat, he alleged. "I don't know why the hell we can't have a voter ID."

Questioning the counting process in the 2020 presidential election, Trump said at a rally in Pennsylvania on Sunday that he shouldn't have "left" the White House.

Following the election that brought Joe Biden to power, Trump alleged fraud in the voting process and challenged the outcome in courts which rejected his claims.

In his address, Trump also questioned the immigration policy. — PTI

Bengali, only Indian language on ballots

New York, Nov. 4: More than 200 languages are spoken in New York, according to the department of city planning, backing the claim of it being the melting pot of America.

However, the ballot papers in the US presidential elections will have only four other languages apart from English. And guess what? Bengali represents the Indian languages in this list. The US will on Tuesday vote to elect its 47th President. "We are required to service four other languages besides English. It is Chinese, Spanish, Korean and Bengali

as the Asian languages," says Micheal J. Ryan, executive director, Board of Elections, NYC.

Subhshesh, who works as a sales agent in a store in Times Square, has Bengali roots. He is happy that his father living in the Queens area will get linguistic assistance when he goes to cast his vote.

"People like me know English but there are many in the community who are comfortable in the native language. I am sure that my father will like the idea of seeing a Bengali language ballot paper," he says. — PTI

NATURE'S FURY Volcanic eruption in Dec. killed 24 climbers

Indonesia volcano eruption kills 10, sets houses aflame

East Flores, Nov. 4: A volcano in eastern Indonesia erupted overnight, killing at least 10 people as it spewed fireballs and ash on surrounding villages, officials said on Monday as they raised the alert to its highest level.

Mount Lewotobi Laki-Laki, a 1,703-metre (5,587-foot) twin volcano located on the popular tourist island of Flores, erupted shortly before midnight, forcing authorities to evacuate several villages.

Residents described their horror when the crater



The sky glows from the eruption of Mount Lewotobi Laki-Laki in East Flores, Indonesia, on Monday. — AP

started shooting flaming rocks at their homes. "I was asleep when suddenly the bed shook twice, as if someone had slammed it. Then I realised the

volcano had erupted, so I ran outside," said 32-year-old hairdresser Hermanus Mite. "I saw flames coming out and immediately fled. There were ashes and

stones everywhere. My salon also caught fire and everything inside was lost." Abdul Muhari, spokesman of the country's disaster mitigation agency (BNPB), confirmed the death toll at a press conference, adding that 10,295 people had been affected by the eruptions.

He said the number of evacuees was still being calculated but said no one had been reported missing. An AFP journalist who was near the volcano said five villages were evacuated. — AFP

Sweden blocks 13 offshore wind farms over def. issues

Stockholm, Nov. 4: Sweden's government said on Monday it had blocked the construction of 13 offshore wind farms in the Baltic Sea, after the country's military said they could impair defence capabilities.

Climate minister Romaina Pourmokhtari told a press meet that construction permits for the planned wind farms were denied because they "would have an unacceptable impact on defence interests".

All 13 projects were planned in areas off Nato's newest member's southeastern Baltic Sea coast — directly opposite the Russian exclave of Kaliningrad. The decision follows a st-

udy by the Swedish Armed Forces, published by public broadcaster SVT last week, which showed that the projects could significantly disrupt sensors used by the military.

The towers and rotating blades of the wind turbines emit radar echoes and generate other forms of interference.

"In this serious security situation that Sweden is now in, the interests of defence need to carry extra weight," defence minister Pal Jonson told reporters.

Jonson said offshore wind farms in the area could disrupt military radars and delay the detection of incoming cruise missiles, cutting the wa-

ring time from two minutes to 60 seconds.

"One of the experiences from Ukraine is that Russia uses many long-range systems, both cruise missiles and ballistic missiles," Jonson said.

The Industry Association for Wind Power in Sweden said the decision was "surprising".

"It is problematic that the government categorically closes an entire area to potential electricity production without a proper overall assessment," it said in a statement. Jonson said areas off Sweden's southwestern and northeastern coasts were better suited for offshore wind projects. — AFP

quick
BITES

| INDICATORS | % |
|------------------------|------------------|
| Sensex | 78,782.24 -1.18 |
| Nifty 50 | 23,995.35 -1.27 |
| S&P 500* | 5,729.95 0.02 |
| Dollar (₹) | 84.11 0.02 |
| Pound Sterling (₹) | 109.11 0.51 |
| Euro (₹) | 91.65 0.29 |
| Gold (10gm)* (₹) | 78,545*322 -0.41 |
| Brent crude (\$/bbl)* | 74.91 2.48 |
| IN 10-Yr bond yield | 6.797 -0.043 |
| US 10-Yr T-bill yield* | 4.285 -0.078 |

* As of 8:30 PM IST

NTPC, ONGC to tap opportunities in renewables

NTPC and oil major ONGC on Monday announced that they have joined hands to explore opportunities in the area of new and renewable energy. The two entities will form a joint venture through their respective subsidiaries, NTPC said. "NTPC and ONGC have collaborated to form a joint venture company through their green energy subsidiaries to further promote their interest in renewable and new energy arena," it said.



Niva Bupa Health fixes price band at ₹70-74 a share

Niva Bupa Health Insurance Company announced ₹2,200 crore initial public offering (IPO) in a price band of ₹70 to ₹74 per equity share of ₹10 face value. The Niva Bupa IPO opens on Nov. 7 and closes on Nov. 11. Acme Solar Holdings also announced ₹2,900 crore IPO in the price band of ₹275 to ₹289 per equity share of ₹2 face value. The public issue of Acme Solar opens on Nov. 6 and closes on Nov. 8.

Crystal acquires I&B Seeds to augment supply

Agrochemical firm Crystal Crop Protection on Monday said it has acquired Bengaluru-based I&B Seeds as it seeks to strengthen its position in India's vegetable and flower-seed segment. "The deal has been fully executed with shares purchased from two major shareholders. The share transfer was completed last week on the day of Diwali," Crystal Crop Protection managing director Ankur Agarwal said.



SAR Televentre to acquire Tikona for ₹669 crore

Network infrastructure company SAR Televentre on Monday announced that it will acquire internet service provider Tikona Infinet for ₹669 crore in a cash and stock deal. The two parties have entered into an agreement under which SAR will acquire a 91 per cent stake in Tikona for ₹669.04 crore in cash and stock deal, a statement said. Tikona Infinet will become a significant subsidiary of SAR Televentre.

Sensex falls 941 points, investors lose ₹5.9 L-cr

Spike in crude oil price, lower domestic earnings key triggers

RAVI RANJAN PRASAD
MUMBAI, NOV. 4

Prevailing uncertainty of the US Presidential election outcome, US Fed decision on further interest rate cut on November 7, spike in crude oil futures price and domestic earnings disappointments triggered fresh selling in the Indian market.

The Sensex fell 941.88 points or 1.18 per cent to close at three-month low of 78,782.24 while the Nifty-50 fell 309 points or 1.27 per cent to close below 24,000 level at 23,995.35.

The Sensex fell 1,491.52 points intraday to 78,232.60 before over 500 points recovery from day's low. Nifty-50 also touched a low of 23,816 down by over 488 points.

The broader market fall was even higher with BSE mid-cap index down by 1.31 per cent and BSE small-cap index down by 1.65 per cent.

Investors' market wealth shrank by over ₹5.99 lakh crore due to across the board selling as BSE's market capitalisation fell to over ₹442.11 lakh crore.

"The sell-off was majorly driven by nervousness around the US Presidential election outcome as it can result in major global policy shifts. Further the US Fed is largely expected to cut interest rate by 25 bps this time, after the earlier 50bps cut announced in September. There has been sustained selling by FPIs and earnings of the 34 Nifty companies that have declared results so far have been flat year on year," said Siddhartha Khemka, head - Research, Motilal Oswal Financial Services.

"The earnings growth of 166 companies under our coverage which announced their second quarter FY25 results until 31st Oct'24, declined by 8 per cent y-o-y and were lowest in 17 quarters," added Khemka.

All sectoral indices closed in red with maximum damages to realty (-3.00 per cent), oil & gas (-2.54 per cent), metal (-1.58 per cent), FMCG (-1.25 per cent), and capital goods (-1.51 per cent), while the IT (-0.12 per cent) and healthcare (-0.55 per cent) suffered lesser losses.

Foreign portfolio investors (FPIs) were net sellers of equities worth ₹4,329.79 crore while domestic institutions were net buyers by ₹2,936.08 crore.

"We expect markets to remain subdued on the back of several global events, consistent FPI selling and tepid earnings by domestic companies so far. This week will be crucial as lot of index heavy weights will announce results and could lead to stock specific action," Khemka said.

Afcons Infrastructure made a tepid debut on the bourses amid bearish market sentiments as the stock opened 8 per cent lower at ₹426 on NSE and ₹430.05 on BSE as against the public issue price of ₹463 per equity share.

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MONEY MARKET

NIFTY-50 FELL 309 POINTS TO CLOSE AT 23,995.3

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THIS WEEK will be crucial as lot of index heavy weights will announce results and could lead to stock specific action.

— SIDDHARTHA KHEMKA, Head - research, Motilal Oswal Financial Services

SEBI cautions investors to not trade via unregistered intermediaries or apps.

SENSEX FELL 1.18% TO CLOSE AT 3-MONTH LOW OF 78,782.24

SENSEX fell 1,491.5 points intraday to 78,232.60 before over 500 points recovery from day's low.

EARNINGS growth of 166 companies which announced their Q2 results till Oct. 31 declined 8% y-o-y and were lowest in 17 quarters.

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SEBI ALLOWS MFs TO INVEST IN OVERSEAS FUNDS

New Delhi, Nov. 4: Markets regulator Sebi on Monday allowed mutual funds (MFs) to invest in overseas mutual funds or unit trusts (UTs) that invest a specific portion of their assets in Indian securities. This is subject to total exposure to Indian securities by such overseas funds not exceeding 25 per cent net assets.

The move is aimed at facilitating ease of investment in overseas MF or UTs, bringing transparency in the manner of investment, and enabling MFs to diversify their overseas investments, Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi) said.

Also, mutual funds schemes are required to ensure that all investors' contributions to an overseas MF/UT are combined into a single investment vehicle without any side vehicles. — PTI

Sebi red flags trading via gaming platforms

New Delhi, Nov. 4: Markets regulator Sebi on Monday cautioned investors against undertaking trading activities through virtual trading or gaming platforms and asked them to deal only through registered intermediaries. The advisory statement came after the Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi) noticed that some apps or web applications or platforms are offering virtual trading services or paper trading or fantasy games to the public based on stock price data of listed companies. Such activities are in violation of Securities Contract (Regulation) Act, 1956 and Sebi Act, 1992 which are laws designed to protect investors, it said.

Sebi reiterated that the public can invest and undertake trading activities in the securities markets only through or with registered intermediaries. "Participation in unauthorised schemes, including sharing of confidential and personal trading data, is at the investors' own risk, cost and consequences, as such schemes or platforms are not registered with Sebi," it added.

Cautioning investors, Sebi asked them not to engage with or undertake investment or trading activities through unregistered intermediaries or apps or platforms. — PTI

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E-comm cos see festive sales cross ₹1 lakh crore

SANGEETHA G.
CHENNAI, NOV. 4

E-commerce sales during the one-month festive month crossed ₹1 lakh crore or \$11.9 billion, growing 23 per cent over last year.

The one month-long festive season saw e-commerce sales growing to over ₹1 lakh crore against ₹81,000 crore last year, as per the data of Datum Intelligence. According to Datum, the sales which stood at ₹1,218 cr in 2014, has grown multi-fold to over ₹1 lakh cr in 10 years.

The first week of the festive month itself saw sales crossing ₹54,500 crore, which is nearly 55 per cent of total sales. Flipkart's Big Billion Days and Amazon's Great Indian Festival were launched in last week of September. Mobile phones, electronics and consumer durables as well as home and general merchandise accounted for 75 per cent of the sales during this period. Tier 2 and 3 cities accounted for more than 70 per cent of smartphone



RESERVE BANK BEGINS SEARCH FOR NEW DY GOV

Mumbai, Nov. 4: India has invited applications for the post of deputy governor in the Reserve Bank of India (RBI), indicating it is looking for candidates to replace Michael Patra whose term gets over in January.

The move shows that the government is moving toward filling up vacancies to avoid any last-minute delays that may make the central bank watchers anxious. Last month, the government appointed three new members to the RBI's monetary policy committee - the panel that decides on interest rates.

Patra first took over as deputy governor in January 2020, and received a one-year extension in January last year after this initial three-year term ended. Governor Shaktikanta Das' contract also comes to an end on Dec. 9.

He is the only member of the MPC who has been on the rate-setting panel since its inception in 2016.

The central bank kept interest rates unchanged but tweaked its policy stance to neutral, setting stage for easing in coming months. — Bloomberg

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CONVENIENCE AT HAND

First week of festive month saw sales crossing **₹54,500 cr** which is nearly 55% of total sales.

Mobiles, electronics and consumer durables, home and general merchandise accounted for **75%** of sales.

CAIT claims offline traders garnered an estimated **₹4.25 lakh crore** revenue in festival sales.

QUICK commerce estimated to have accounted for **8%** or **\$1 billion** of the sales.

and TV sales. Fashion, grocery and beauty and personal care sales also saw a jump of 2-4 times. Among different products, smart TVs, air fryers, luggage, CCTVs, mattresses, water purifiers, laptops, ACs, washing machines, ghee and dry fruits are the other categories which saw high interest from customers. Categories like toys, books, and kitchen essentials also saw a 2-5 times jump in number of orders during the first week. More than 50 per cent of buyers bought TV, washing machine, laptops and refrigerators using the EMI option. Quick commerce is estimated to have accounted for 8 per cent or \$1 billion of the sales. Meanwhile, Confederation of All India Traders (CAIT) claimed that the offline traders garnered an estimated ₹4.25 lakh crore in the festival sales revenue.

Mfg. regains steam on orders, int'l sales

New Delhi, Nov. 4: India's manufacturing sector growth recovered from September's eight-month low to 57.5 in October fuelled by faster increases in total new orders and international sales, a monthly survey said on Monday.

The seasonally adjusted HSBC India manufacturing purchasing managers' index (PMI) rose from Sept.'s eight-month low of 56.5 to 57.5 in Oct., indicating a substantial and accelerated improvement in operating conditions.

In PMI parlance, a print above 50 means expansion, while a score below 50 denotes contraction.

"India's headline manufacturing PMI picked up substantially in October as the economy's operating conditions continue to broadly improve. Rapidly expanding new orders and international sales reflect strong demand growth for India's manufacturing sector," Pranjud Bhandari, chief India economist at HSBC, said.

The upturn in performance was boosted by stronger demand for Indian goods. Moreover, the introduction of new products and successful marketing initiatives helped enhance sales performance.

New export orders also exhibited stronger growth, following the weakest uptick in a year-and-a-half during September. Panel members reported gains in new contracts from Asia, Europe, Latin America and the US.

On the prices front, the October data signalled stronger inflationary pressures across India's manufacturing sector.

Goods producers were also more willing to take on additional staff, which coupled with rising material costs, added to business expenses. Both input prices and selling charges increased at stronger rates. "Input and output prices are both increasing as a result of persistent inflationary pressures in materials, labour and transportation costs," Bhandari added.

On employment front, not only did manufacturers hire extra staff at the start of Q3 FY25, but also to a greater degree than in September. — PTI

Hyundai, Citroen bring upgraded car variants

Two car manufacturers Hyundai and Citroen have introduced updated versions of Verna, a midsize sedan, and Aircross SUV priced at ₹11 lakh and ₹8.49 lakh respectively to woo potential buyers during this festive season.

Hyundai has introduced a sporty rear spoiler on the Verna, as well as a new exterior colour option called 'Amazon Grey'.

The Hyundai Verna is available in four variants: EX, S, SX, and SX(O), with prices ranging from ₹11 lakh for base EX Petrol to ₹17.48 lakh for the top-end turbo petrol dual tone variant. It is available with either a 6-speed manual or a 7-speed DCT.

French automaker Citroen has launched a limited-edition variant of the Aircross SUV called the Explorer Edition.

It is sold in two trims: Plus and Max. The updated Aircross is powered by a 1.2-litre turbo-petrol engine that makes 108 BHP and 205 Nm, and a 1.2-litre naturally aspirated petrol unit.

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NEW OFFERS Tamil Nadu, Telangana, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh and Kerala lead recruitment

Job listings rise in oil and gas, pharma, FMCG, IT

Mumbai, Nov. 4: White collar hiring activity witnessed a growth of 10 per cent year-on-year in October mainly driven by a rise in recruitment in sectors, including oil and gas, pharmaceuticals, FMCG, and IT, a report said on Monday.

The Naukri JobSpeak Index, India's leading indicator of white-collar hiring activity, demonstrated robust growth in October, reaching 2,733 points compared to 2,484 in the same

month of 2023, marking a significant 10 per cent year-on-year increase. Key sectors, including oil & gas (18 per cent), pharma/biotech (12 per cent), FMCG (8 per cent), and IT (6 per cent) emerged as primary drivers of this positive trend, with AI/ML roles showing exceptional growth at 39 per cent year-on-year, the report stated.

Hiring in the IT sector showed positive growth in four out of the seven

months this financial year, auguring well for balance of year trends, added the report. The report further revealed that overall, global capability centres (GCCs) demonstrated consistent growth with a 17 per cent year-on-year (yoy) increase in October.

GCCs showed significant traction in emerging hubs like Kolkata (68.46 per cent) and Ahmedabad (47.68 per cent) indicating a growing preference among international companies to expand beyond traditional tech centres for their India operations, the report added.

The festive period also witnessed a significant growth in data-focused positions - data/big data testing engineer (64 per cent), full stack data scientist (46 per cent), data platform engineer (26 per cent) and data scientist (23 per cent), it said.

It also found that after a sluggish performance throughout 2024, hiring for freshers showed encouraging signs with 6 per cent yoy growth in October. Tamil Nadu emerged as

the strongest performer with a 24 per cent year-on-year growth, followed by Telangana (16 per cent), Karnataka (12 per cent), Andhra Pradesh (9 per cent) and Kerala (7 per cent), it stated.

"The accelerating pace of fresher hiring is a strong indicator of business confidence and presents exciting opportunities for upcoming graduates," Naukri chief business officer Pawan Goyal said. — PTI

SHORT TAKES

Shami's return to action delayed

Bengaluru: Mohammed Shami's return to competitive cricket has been further pushed back after the veteran pacer was not named in the Bengal squad for the next two rounds of the Ranji Trophy against Karnataka and Madhya Pradesh. Bengal will take on Karnataka at the M. Chinnaswamy Stadium here from Wednesday, before travelling to Indore to take on MP from November 13. Shami was expected to play the fixture against Karnataka to test his fitness in a real-match situation as he bowled at full tilt at nets after India's recent Test match against New Zealand here, though with bandage on his operated leg. On that occasion, he was also monitored by India's bowling coach Morne Morkel. Later Shami said during a promotional event that he was feeling '100%' at nets. "I had been bowling with half a run-up on and off since I can't put too much stress on my body. So, we decided that I would bowl properly, and I gave my 100%." "It felt great, and the results are good. Hopefully, I'll be back on track soon," he had said. India skipper Rohit Sharma had also opined against taking an undercooked Shami to Australia. — PTI

Saha to retire after Ranji season

New Delhi: Spectacular with the big gloves, quietly assured with the willow and yet happy to be in the shadows, Wriddhiman Saha, in his 40 Test matches for India, has certainly been more than the sum total of all his parts. But having been out of India reckoning for over three years now, the 40-year-old has decided to call it quits from the game at the end of his team Bengal's ongoing Ranji Trophy campaign. The announcement was made on his social media page late Sunday night. "After a cherished journey in cricket, this season will be my last. I am honoured to represent Bengal one final time, playing only in the Ranji Trophy before I retire," Saha said. "Let's make this season one to remember," he added in a post that went up late on Sunday night, typically unambiguous from the unassuming player. — PTI

India to host Eng, Oz women

Dubai: India will host Australia and England in high-profile home series as the International Cricket Council (ICC) on Monday gave significance to Test matches and bilateral rubbers while announcing women's cricket Future Tours Programme (FTP) for the 2025-29 cycle. Apart from the storied rivals, India will also face Bangladesh and Zimbabwe, who was unveiled as the 11th member of the FTP, at home during the four-year period. The Women in Blue will also travel to New Zealand, West Indies, Ireland and South Africa in this phase as each member nations are scheduled to play four series at home and abroad. Apart from this, India will also feature in a tri-series in England ahead of the 2026 ICC Women's T20 World Cup, the third team being reigning champions New Zealand. England will host the 2026 Women's T20 World Cup. "Members have also penciled in more Test matches this time, with Australia, England, India, South Africa and the West Indies all agreeing to play multi-format series that include ODIs and T20Is," said Wasim Khan, ICC General Manager of Cricket. — PTI

Bridge Olympiad silver for seniors

Buenos Aires: India Seniors signed off with a silver medal as they went down 165-258 to USA in the final of the 16th World Bridge Olympiad here. The Indian team comprised Kamal Mukherjee, Vibhas Todi, Badal Das, Pranab Bardhan, Arun Bapat, Ravi Goenka and Girish Bijoer, who is the non-playing captain. In the 96 board final, which took place over two days and six segments, the competition was neck and neck after the first two segments. However, the USA won the third segment decisively, with a score of 53-7 IMPs, and from there, they never looked back, despite the Indian team's determined efforts. Meanwhile, in two pairs events held alongside the final, the young Indian duo of Sanjit Dey and Binod Shaw excelled, finishing as the top performers in both events and ending their maiden international competition on a high note. — PTI

DOWN THUNDER

Legends feel series loss against NZ will impact India's show in Oz

Sydney, Nov. 4: Australian legends Adam Gilchrist and David Warner have little doubt that Indian players' psyche would have been scarred after the recent whitewash at home by New Zealand, but they said it will be naive to consider Rohit Sharma's side "easy beats" in the five-Test Border-Gavaskar Trophy, beginning at Perth on November 22. Kiwis blanked India 3-0, marking one of the lowest points in their Test history, also denting the chances of qualifying for the World Test Championship (WTC) final next year. "It does (series defeat has an impact), more for the Indian players and the Indian team internally. They have to be asking themselves pretty hard questions," former wicketkeeper batter Gilchrist told Fox Sports. "But I'm not expecting them to come out and be easy beats, but I do think on the back of that loss and the fact that it was a clean sweep — I cannot remember when that's happened to them, just losing a series, let alone a clean sweep — I think that will raise some questions internally." "The pressure and the expectation and the desire from a passionate cricketing nation to see that change around, that'll ride heavily on those shoulders of all those players," he said. Gilchrist said India has the wherewithal to regroup after the heavy setback. "There are a few ageing players (with the Indian team) who may start to even second guess themselves a little bit. There're some high-class cricketers in that Indian squad. It's going to be fascinating to see how they rebound from that challenge," he added.

COUNTERING SIRAJ, BUMRAH WILL BE KEY
Former opener Warner said the series defeat against the Black Caps will certainly be playing in Indian cricketers' minds. "It (the series defeat) helps the Australian guys. They're coming here after being beaten at home 3-0 for five Tests against the Australian boys, (who have) three world class quicks and a world class spin bowler, and I'd be nervous if I'm in their batting order. I would be nervous," said Warner. The left-hander felt that countering pacers Jasprit Bumrah and Mohammed Siraj would be key to Australia's success in the upcoming series. "The Australian top order needs to make runs against Bumrah and Siraj who are their spearheads. I think if Australia can get through those two gentlemen, there could be some big runs put on the board." "But we're going to have to come out with our chest out against India. We have lost our last two series here against India (and) they have got a lot to play for," he added. Warner also did not read too much into the modest form of Indian veterans like Rohit Sharma and Virat Kohli. — PTI



The five-Test series for the Border-Gavaskar Trophy, beginning at Perth on November 22, could be a litmus test for India head coach Gautam Gambhir (right) and captain Rohit Sharma. — DEBASHISH DEY

WE ARE JUST A BUNCH OF KIWIS TAKING ON THE WORLD: DARYL

Mumbai, Nov. 4: New Zealand batsman Daryl Mitchell hailed his side as "a bunch of Kiwis taking on the world" after their historic 3-0 Test series triumph in India. The tourists won the third match by 25 runs on Sunday inside three days in Mumbai to hand a stunned India only their second Test whitewash at home. With 1.4 billion people — many of them mad about cricket — India were humbled by a nation with a population 270 times smaller. "We are a bunch of Kiwis taking on the world and representing the country," Mitchell said, adding that he was "mighty proud of the group". "We know how good India are," he said. New Zealand repeatedly upset the odds and defied history in India. Victory in the second Test sealed a first-ever Test series win in the country for the New Zealanders, who did it without prolific batsman Kane Williamson. He missed all three Tests for treatment on his groin. Will Young took Williamson's batting spot at number three and played a key part, hitting 71 and 51 in the final Test. Young called the victory "massive", saying he would never forget the "memories with the boys that we have just created". — AFP



Chelsea's Moises Caicedo (second from left) celebrates after scoring against Manchester United during their English Premier League match at Old Trafford in Manchester, England, on Sunday. — AP

Red Devils off to worst start

THE RESULT

| | |
|--------------------------------------|---|
| Manchester United (Fernandes 70-pen) | 1 |
| Chelsea (Caicedo 74) | 1 |

● A point leaves United still down in 13th, six points off the top four. The Red Devils' return of just 12 points from 10 games is United's worst start to a league campaign since 1986-87. Interim boss Ruud van Nistelrooy, who will be replaced by Ruben Amorim later this month, sprinted down the touchline in celebration after Bruno Fernandes put United in front from the penalty spot 20 minutes from time. Caicedo quickly replied for the Blues, who edge above Arsenal on goal difference into fourth place in the table. A point leaves United still down in 13th, six points off the top four. The Red Devils' return of just 12 points from 10 games is United's worst start to a league campaign since 1986-87. Amorim was not in attendance as he prepares to take charge of Sporting Lisbon for the one of the final times against Manchester City in the Champions League on Tuesday. United were far more competitive than in 3-0 demolitions by Liverpool and Tottenham at home. Still a hero among the United fans from his days as a prolific striker, the Dutchman's name was chanted in a buoyant pre-match atmosphere. However, a Chelsea side that have lost once in nine Premier League games, provided a much stiffer test for a United side still short on confidence. — AFP

Cummins to rescue as Oz pip Pak

Melbourne, Nov. 4: Skipper Pat Cummins kept his cool under pressure with a gritty unbeaten 32 to steer Australia to a nervy two wicket defeat of Pakistan in the first of three One-Day Internationals on Monday. Chasing 204, they reached the target with 99 balls to spare at the Melbourne Cricket Ground, surviving a huge scare when they lost three wickets in five balls. "Wonderful match but it got a little tighter than I would have liked it there," said Cummins. With Mitchell Marsh and Travis Head on paternity leave, the world champions had a new-look opening partnership in Jake Fraser-McGurk and Matt Short. But Short lasted just four balls before top-edging to Saim Ayub off Shaheen Shah Afridi while Fraser-McGurk's luck ran out on 16, slapping Naseem Shah to Irfan Khan at mid-on. The experienced Steve Smith steadied the ship alongside Josh Inglis. They put on 85 for the third wicket before Smith was undone by Haris Rauf on 44, well caught by Ayub at backward point. Inglis followed for 49 soon after going for a big hit off Afridi, taken by Khan on his knees. And when Rauf removed Marnus Labuschagne (16) three balls later, then Glenn Maxwell for a gold-



Australia captain Pat Cummins (right) and Mitchell Starc are all smiles as they walk off the ground after defeating Pakistan in the first One-Day International in Melbourne on Monday. Australia won by two wickets. — AP

en duck, Australia were suddenly 139/6 and it was game on. Mohammad Hasnain bowled Aaron Hardie (10) and Sean Abbott (13) was guilty of a lazy run out, leaving the hosts needing 19 runs and two wickets left, with Cummins and Mitchell Starc (two) seeing them home. "Really happy with how the guys bowled, everyone played their roles beautifully. Obviously we need to try and find some partnerships (in the batting)," Cummins added. Earlier, Starc took 3/33 Pakistan were dismissed for 203. Newly appointed skipper Mohammad Rizwan top-scored with 44 but they struggled against some precision bowling, all out in the 47th over after Australia won the toss and sent them in. In Pakistan's first 50-over game since last year's World Cup, Starc broke through in the third over with Ayub chopping onto his stumps. That brought Babar Azam to the crease, unburdened by the captaincy after quitting last month. He upped the tempo before Starc struck again, with Abdullah Shafique caught behind for a tame 12. — AFP

BRIEF SCORES
Pakistan 203 (Mohammad Rizwan 44, Naseem Shah 40, Mitchell Starc 3/33, Pat Cummins 2/39) lost to Australia 204/8 (Josh Inglis 49, Steven Smith 44, Pat Cummins 32 not out, Haris Rauf 3/67).

BRAZILIAN GRAND PRIX

Max lands title blow with win

Sao Paulo (Brazil), Nov. 4: Three-time world champion Max Verstappen produced a virtuoso drive in often atrocious conditions to regain control of this year's world championship on Sunday when he charged from 17th on the grid to win the Brazilian Grand Prix. Without a win in 10 races since the Spanish Grand Prix in May, Red Bull's series leader made light of the chaotic, rain-swept conditions to register a 62nd career triumph and fastest lap while nearest title rival Lando Norris of McLaren went from pole position to sixth. The Dutchman's triumph lifted him to 393 points, increasing his advantage over Norris, on 331, to 62 with just three Grands Prix and one sprint race remaining. Verstappen finished 19.477 seconds ahead of Alpine's French duo of Esteban Ocon and Pierre Gasly with Mercedes' George Russell fourth and Charles Leclerc fifth for Ferrari in a tumultuous contest of accidents, two red-flag stoppages, penalties and planned post-race investigations. For Alpine, the reward was a leap from ninth to sixth in the constructors championship, reportedly valued at an estimated \$50 million. Norris, who struggled to find his usual pace, came home sixth ahead of McLaren teammate Oscar Piastri, RB's Yuki Tsunoda and Liam Lawson and seventh-time champion Lewis Hamilton in the second Mercedes. — AFP



Red Bull driver Max Verstappen celebrates after winning the Formula One Brazilian Grand Prix at the Interlagos race track in Sao Paulo on Sunday. — AP

RR coach Dravid says Sanju integral in retention process

New Delhi, Nov. 4: Continuity, stability, unflinching faith in their players and tips from skipper Sanju Samson influenced former IPL champions Rajasthan Royals' decision to opt for the maximum six retentions, head coach Rahul Dravid said on Monday. The deadline for teams to submit their list of retained players was October 31. "We have decided that we will do six out of six

retentions. We will retain Sanju Samson, Yashasvi Jaiswal, Dhruv Jurel, Riyan Parag, Shimron Hetmyer, and Sandeep Sharma. We came to this decision because we trust our talent. We also trust that we want to maintain and build with that core," Dravid told JioCinema. On retaining Samson as the No. 1 pick, Dravid explained: "Sanju Samson is our batsman, wicket-keeper and captain. So, it

was a no-brainer for us to retain him as he will be our captain in the future too." On Samson's role in the retention decisions, Dravid shared: "Sanju played a big role in the retention, and it was difficult for him as well. As a captain, he has built a lot of relationships with the players. He has taken the trouble to understand the dynamics of it, the pros and cons of this." — PTI

IPL AUCTION SET TO BE HELD IN RIYADH AT MONTH END

New Delhi, Nov. 4: The Indian Premier League's high-profile auction will be held in the Saudi Arabian capital city of Riyadh in the last week of this month, sources in the BCCI confirmed on Monday. "The IPL auctions will be held in Riyadh and it has been notified to the franchisees. The likely dates are November 24 and 25," a BCCI source said on conditions of anonymity. This year's auction is a

mega one with high profile India stars like Rishabh Pant, K. L. Rahul, Shreyas Iyer and Arshdeep Singh are going to go under the hammer. The 10 franchisees will collectively have around ₹641.5 crore to spend for 204 slots that are available. Out of those 204 slots, 70 are earmarked for overseas players. As of now, 46 players have been retained by the 10 franchisees with cumulative expenditure of ₹558.5 crore. — PTI