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— *AP*

SHORT TAKES

IIS officer S.M. Khan passes away at 67

New Delhi: S.M. Khan, a distinguished senior Indian Information Service officer who was the press secretary to former President Dr APJ Abdul Kalam, died at a private hospital on Sunday after a brief illness, according to his family. He was 67. Khan is survived by his wife and three children. He was a prominent figure in the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI), serving as the longest-serving information officer for the agency from 1989 to 2002. Throughout his tenure, he became the face of the CBI, regularly addressing the media during high-profile cases, including the Bofors scandal, stock exchange scams and various white-collar crimes. Following his extensive service with the CBI, Khan was appointed as the press secretary to the late President Kalam, a role in which he further solidified his reputation in public communication. — PTI

Truck helper killed in road accident

New Delhi: An 18-year-old helper died after a truck rrammed into another truck on the Rajokari Flyover in southwest Delhi, the police said on Sunday. The victim was identified as Samir, a resident of Firozabad, they said. The incident occurred on Saturday. Upon reaching the spot, the police found two heavily damaged trucks, including the offending vehicle. "Preliminary inquiries revealed that the injured victim had been taken to an unknown hospital. No eyewitnesses were found at the scene," a police officer said. The police later received information from the Civil Hospital in Gurgaon where Samir was declared brought dead, he said. The police said that he had been working as a truck helper. His body was sent for a postmortem at Safdarjung Hospital before being handed over to his family.

INFANT ABDUCTED FROM HOSPITAL RESCUED FROM UP

New Delhi: In a rescue operation carried out by the Delhi police in collaboration with the government Railway police (GRP) and the Railway protection force (RPF), a one-and-half-month-old infant kidnapped from the Safdarjung Hospital in the national capital was rescued from Uttar Pradesh's Shahjahanpur railway station. The police said on Sunday that two suspects in the case have also been apprehended. Additional DCP Akanksha Yadav said, "The complainant woman was at the Safdarjung Hospital on November 15 for kidney treatment of her husband when a woman engaged her in conversation, gained her trust and eventually took the child in her arms." The woman then fled with a man in an auto-rickshaw, the officer said. The police said an FIR was filed at the Safdarjung Enclave police station and the investigation was taken up under the supervision of ACP Ranbir Singh. "Teams were formed and sent to monitor all major bus stands and railway stations in Delhi-NCR," additional DCP Yadav said. After analysing CCTV footage from the hospital, the woman was identified and tracked to the Anand Vihar railway station where the two suspects boarded the Bareilly-bound Sadbhavana Express, she said.

■ 'Modi washing machine has now become active ahead of polls'

Pressure from ED and CBI forced Gahlot to quit: AAP

AGE CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, NOV. 17

Following the resignation of senior Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) leader and Delhi minister Kailash Gahlot, the party has accused the BJP of using Central investigative agencies to coerce its leaders.

AAP Rajya Sabha MP Sanjay Singh alleged that Mr Gahlot's resignation was the result of "dirty politics" and a targeted campaign of raids and probes by the Enforcement Directorate (ED) and the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI).

Mr Gahlot quit AAP on Sunday and tendered his resignation from the Delhi Cabinet, citing recent controversies facing the party and unfulfilled promises made to people.

His decision to step down marks a significant blow to AAP, especially as he played a key role in election planning for the party in Delhi.

Mr Gahlot's exit comes just months before the Delhi Assembly elections, intensifying political tensions between AAP and the BJP.

"Pressure was created on Kailash Gahlot through ED and CBI raids, and now, he is speaking according to the BJP's script," Mr Singh said at a press briefing here.

He also claimed that the BJP's "Modi washing machine" has now become active ahead of the election.

"This is the BJP's nature. They accuse leaders of corruption, raid their homes, and conduct loud press conferences. But when those leaders join the BJP, all charges disappear," Mr



Kailash Gahlot

■ **AAP'S NATIONAL** chief spokesperson Priyanka Kakkar alleged that the ongoing investigations against Mr Gahlot and his family had left him with no choice but to join the BJP

Singh added.

AAP's national chief spokesperson Priyanka Kakkar alleged that the ongoing investigations against Mr Gahlot and his family had left him with no choice but to join the BJP.

"Many ED-CBI cases were ongoing against him. He thought joining the BJP was better than going to jail," Ms Kakkar said, accusing the BJP of resorting to conspiracies to disrupt AAP's campaign.

Ms Kakkar also highlighted the irony of Mr Gahlot's abrupt shift in allegiance.

"Just hours ago, his social media was full of posts supporting AAP. But under pressure, he has taken this step. Meanwhile, even BJP leaders are joining AAP which proves the tide is turning," she said.

AAP MLA and senior leader Durgesh Pathak accused the BJP of using

agencies like the ED, CBI, and the income tax department to win elections instead of addressing public concerns.

"Kailash Gahlot had no option left. He faced ED and IT raids every day for months. Joining the BJP was his only way out. But this shows that the BJP has lost the Delhi election," Mr Pathak said.

The AAP leader vowed to continue the party's campaign, asserting that the BJP's alleged misuse of investigative agencies will not deter them.

"We are asking for votes on the basis of development while the BJP has no issues left," Mr Pathak said.

The Delhi BJP leaders welcomed Mr Gahlot's resignation strengthening the buzz that he could join the party ahead of the assembly polls.

"He took a brave step. He has cited reasons for his resignation that were the same which were being raised by the BJP against Kejriwal and the AAP," Delhi BJP president Virendra Sachdeva said.

Mr Gahlot faced action in the past by central agencies as the income tax department raided several premises including his Vasant Kunj residence in 2018, and his name cropped up in an ED remand application over an excise pollution accused living at the official accommodation provided to the Delhi minister.

In 2022, the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) filed a case into alleged irregularities related to the procurement of 1000 low-floor buses by the DTC.

Gahlot exit may hit cash scheme for Delhi women

AGE CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, NOV. 17

The AAP on Sunday lost its popular Jat face and key minister in Delhi, Kailash Gahlot, whose resignation is likely to hit the AAP government's ambitious plan to roll out the scheme of ₹1000 monthly honorarium to women ahead of Assembly polls due in February. Mr Gahlot represented the Jat-dominated Najafgarh constituency in west Delhi since 2015. The ripples of his resignation are sure to be felt in the rural belt of outer Delhi areas that have a significant presence of the community, AAP sources said.

The 50-year-old held portfolios of transport, home, IT, administrative reforms, and women and child development in the Atishi government.

The women and child development department has been drafting 'Mukhyamantri Mahila Samman Yojna', announced by chief minister Atishi in the budget 2024-25. Its planned implementation before the polls to woo voters will now be affected as Mr Gahlot was closely associated with the drafting of the scheme.

Although his Gahlot's resignation took many by surprise, it was not altogether unexpected as he was feeling "alienated" within AAP, the sources said.



A cyclist rides through smog on a winter morning in New Delhi on Sunday. The national capital woke up to hazardous air conditions on Sunday.

— PTI

SC to hear today plea to curb Delhi air pollution

Delhi 2nd most polluted Indian city; 2,234 vehicles seized

AGE CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, NOV. 17

Amid the rising air pollution levels of the city, the Supreme Court is scheduled to hear on Monday a plea seeking enforcement of measures to curb air pollution in the national capital.

As per the cause list of November 18 uploaded on the apex court website, a bench of Justices Abhay S. Oka and Augustine George Masih is slated to hear the plea. The top court had on November 14 agreed to urgently list the plea after it was told that Delhi should not become the most polluted city in the world due to the rising pollution.

The Centre's air quality panel has announced stricter pollution control measures for the Delhi-NCR under Stage 4 of the Graded Response Action Plan (GRAP), effective from 8 am on Monday, including a ban on truck entry and a temporary halt on construction at public projects.

According to the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB), a 'severe' AQI poses risks to healthy individuals and severely impacts those with pre-existing health conditions.

Four cities in the country recorded the AQI in the 'severe' category: Bahadurgarh in Haryana topped the list with an AQI of 445, followed by



Anti-smog guns being used to curb air pollution in New Delhi on Sunday.

— PTI

Delhi (441), Bhiwani in Haryana (415), and Bikaner in Rajasthan (404), according to the CPCB's data.

Of the 40 monitoring stations in the capital, data from 34 provided by the CPCB showed that 32 stations recorded the air quality in the 'severe' category, with AQI levels of above 400.

An AQI between 0 and 50 is considered 'good,' 51 and 100 'satisfactory,' 101 and 200 'moderate,' 201 and 300 'poor,' 301 and 400 'very poor,' 401 and 450 'severe,' and above 450 'severe plus.'

As part of an ongoing drive to address the deteriorating air quality in the national capital, the transport department has impounded 2,234 overage vehicles between October 1 and November 15.

According to official data, the seized vehicles include 260 diesel four-wheelers that are over 10

years old, alongside 1,156 petrol two-wheelers and 818 petrol three and four-wheelers, all older than 15 years.

The campaign, which is set to continue until December, is part of a broader effort to enforce environmental regulations and reduce vehicular emissions. In tandem with the crackdown, the transport department has rolled out an online portal to facilitate the scrapping, retrieval, or sale of seized vehicles.

According to the Centre's decision support system for the air quality management, vehicular emissions contributed approximately 15.8 per cent to Delhi's pollution on Sunday.

The system also reported that stubble burning was the main contributor to the capital's air pollution on Saturday, accounting for 25 per cent of the total pollution.

BJP's Delhi poll manifesto likely to be out by mid-Dec

AGE CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, NOV. 17

The BJP is likely to come out with its manifesto for the Delhi Assembly polls by mid-December, party leaders said on Sunday. The manifesto committee will begin its meetings with various sections of society on Monday and aims to cover around 50 categories of people to prepare a comprehensive manifesto seeking to serve the interests of all people, its convener Ramvir Singh Bidhuri said.

The party announced an 11-member "chargesheet committee" to corner the ruling AAP by listing the alleged failures of the Delhi government.

The committee, headed by Leader of Opposition in Delhi Assembly Vijender Gupta was formed on the direction of BJP's Delhi unit president Virendra Sachdeva, according to a Delhi BJP communication.

Senior party leaders including former MP Ramesh Bidhuri, national secretary Manjinder Singh Sirsa, R.P. Singh, Arti Mehra, Harish Khurana, Kapil Mishra and Richa Pandey will be its members.

The first meetings of Delhi BJP's election coordination committee and manifesto committee



AAP national convener Arvind Kejriwal with former BJP MLA Anil Jha after the latter joined the party at the party office in New Delhi on Sunday.

— PTI

were held on Sunday at the party office.

Delhi BJP election incharge Baijayant Panda issued guidelines for the committees and directed them to speed up work for effective campaigning ahead of the polls to the 70 Assembly seats in Delhi due in February.

"Mr Panda addressed both committees, providing initial guidelines. He emphasised that the committees consist of capable leaders and workers and stated that all election arrangements must be streamlined before announcing the candidates," said a Delhi BJP statement.

The meetings were attended by election co-incharge and Ghaziabad MP Atul Garg, state gen-

eral secretary (organisation) Pawan Rana, election management committee convener Harsh Malhotra, manifesto convener Ramvir Singh Bidhuri, MP Manoj Tiwari, Arvinder Singh Lovely among others.

Mr Bidhuri said that the manifesto committee will get feedback from various sections of society including traders, small manufacturers, people living in unauthorised colonies and slums and professionals.

The party leaders said the manifesto is likely to be ready by mid-December so that enough time is available to take it to the people effectively during the campaign for the elections.

GRAP-4 curbs today, schools to shut

■ **Continued from Page 1**
NCR state governments and the Delhi-NCT government may take a decision on discontinuing physical classes for Classes 6 till 9, and Class 11, and conduct lessons in the online mode. It also allows NCR state governments and the Delhi government to take a decision on allowing public, municipal and private offices to work at 50 per cent strength and the rest to work from home.

Delhi chief minister Atishi announced in a tweet that physical classes will be discontinued for all students, except for those in Class 10 and 12, who have board examinations ahead. All schools will hold online classes till further orders, the CM said.

Meanwhile, the city's 24-hour Air Quality Index (AQI), recorded at 4 pm daily, stood at 441, in the "severe" category. On Saturday, the AQI was 417.

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'Nigeria top priority strategic partner'

■ **Continued from Page 1**
community had performed an "ajooaba" (miracle) in Abuja.

During the address, the Prime Minister also highlighted the country's achievements, which included India's plans to build a space station.

Earlier, upon landing in Abuja shortly after midnight (IST) on Sunday, the Prime Minister was warmly welcomed by Nigerian minister for federal capital territory Nyesom Ezenwo Wike, who presented Mr Modi with the "key to the city" of Abuja, which symbolises the trust and honour bestowed on the PM by the people of the west African nation.

At the state house, the Prime Minister was accorded a ceremonial welcome with a 21-gun salute. New Delhi said the PM recounted how India had successfully campaigned for the African Union's permanent

membership in the G-20 during the Indian presidency of the grouping last year.

The Prime Minister also told his Nigerian hosts that India's ties with the African continent continue to be a "top priority". He further hailed the multi-religious and multi-ethnic diversity of both nations, which he termed as their "strength".

After the bilateral talks, New Delhi said in a statement. "Mr Tinubu appreciated the development cooperation partnership offered by India and its meaningful impact in creating local capacities, skills and professional expertise. They (the two leaders) reaffirmed their commitment to jointly fighting terrorism, piracy and radicalisation..."

According to New Delhi, the two leaders had a restricted meeting that was followed by the delegation-level talks. The

Prime Minister recalled his warm meeting with the Nigerian president at the G-20 summit in New Delhi. He noted that the two countries enjoy special bonds of friendship defined by a shared past, common democratic values and strong people-to-people ties.

Mr Modi conveyed his sympathies to Mr Tinubu for the destruction caused by the recent floods in Nigeria, who thanked the PM for India's timely assistance with relief material and medicines.

The ministry of external affairs added: "The two leaders also discussed global and regional issues. The Nigerian President acknowledged India's efforts to amplify the concerns of developing countries through the Voice of the Global South Summits. The two leaders agreed to work together to meet the development aspirations of the Global South."

64-yr-old dies, man hurt after being hit by car in hit and run

AGE CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, NOV. 17

A 64-year-old woman died and a man got injured after being hit by a car in southwest Delhi's Uttam Nagar area on Sunday morning, an official said on Sunday.

The police got information about the incident at around 6 am, the official said.

Upon reaching the scene, the police discovered that the injured had already been transported to nearby hospitals, he said.

"While Kamlesh, a resident of Gupta Enclave, was admitted to Deen Dayal Upadhyay (DDU) Hospital, the unidentified injured man, in his 70s, was taken to Mata Chanan Devi Hospital," the officer said.

According to an eyewitness, the victims were crossing the road near Uttam Nagar Terminal when a vehicle, reportedly driven rashly, rrammed into them.

The vehicle, coming from the Janakpuri side, fled the scene immediately after the accident, the eyewitness said.

Kamlesh succumbed to injuries during treatment while the unidentified man remains hospitalised in critical condition.

"We checked the CCTV footage which led to the identification of the offending vehicle, and the police is in the process of registering a case under relevant sections," he said.

The body is being sent for post-mortem and further probe is underway, the officer said.

SHORT TAKES

5 held after former MP's rally attacked

Mumbai: A mob allegedly threw chairs and raised slogans at a rally by BJP leader and former MP Navneet Rana at Amravati in Maharashtra. The incident took place on Saturday night. Ms Rana accused the Uddhav Thackeray faction of Shiv Sena of orchestrating the chaos at her rally. The police have registered a case based on her complaint. So far five persons have been detained in this case. The alleged video clips showed Ms Rana was surrounded by her supporters as a group of people threw chairs at a public rally, which was taking place at Khallar village of Daryapur taluka in Amravati district. In one of such videos, the BJP leader was seen marching towards the mob, appearing to ask them to go away even as chairs kept on hitting the people surrounding her from behind. Ms Rana's security personnel were seen trying to shield her as the chairs targeted her.

Himanta: Infiltration threat to Jharkhand

Ranchi: Assam chief minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Sunday claimed that Bangladeshi infiltrators were posing a threat to Jharkhand's culture and society. He accused the JMM-led alliance government in Jharkhand of "patronising" infiltration. "Bangladeshi infiltrators are entering Jharkhand, marrying tribal girls and grabbing their lands. They know the art of land and love jihad. They are posing a threat to our society and culture," Me Sarma, the BJP's election co-incharge for the Jharkhand Assembly polls, said addressing a rally in Godda. claimed that there were 23 lakh Hindus and two lakh Muslims in Santhal Pargana in 1951. "The JMM-led alliance government is patronising infiltration for votebank," he alleged. — PTI

Women earning less than 6 yrs ago: Cong

New Delhi: The Congress on Sunday alleged the women workforce are earning less today than six years ago and it is the sad reality of 'Amrit Kaal'. Congress general secretary, communications, Jairam Ramesh in a statement accused the BJP government of making desperate attempts to doctor data on labour force participation rates of women. "Never has economic data been doctored as it has been during the last decade of the non-biological Prime Minister," Mr Ramesh alleged in a statement. He said the latest example is the celebration of what is being hailed as the "phenomenal story" of the "steady surge" in the women's labour force participation ratio (LFPR) from 27 per cent in 2017/18 to 41.7 per cent in 2023/24. — PTI

THAROOR FLAGS FOLLOWER COUNT ON 'X' FOR 4 YRS

New Delhi: Senior Congress leader Shashi Tharoor on Sunday raised questions over his followers on X remaining almost the same for four years and said there is clearly something wrong that the people in charge of the microblogging website in India do not care about. Mr Tharoor, who is among the most-followed politicians in India, also said he had earlier written to X owner Elon Musk flagging the issue and in turn received a reply from a lawyer "flatly denying there was a problem". Mr Tharoor's remarks came in response to a post by an X user who said, "Who can tell us, @elonmusk, why, despite being tremendously liked by people across various lines, Dr. @ShashiTharoor's @X followers remain stuck at 8.4M?" Reacting to the post, Mr Tharoor said, "Good question. This has been the case for four years! A source at the old Twitter India told me there was a problem he couldn't understand: he had reviewed my daily statistics over six months, and found a strange pattern my followers went up by over 1,000 a day, about 60-70 'unfollowed' me each day, but my overall followers total wouldn't budge above 8.495 million." — PTI



Shashi Tharoor

Take all steps to ensure peace, minister tells top officials

Shah cancels rallies in Maha to take stock of Manipur situation

BHAGWAN PARAB with agency inputs
MUMBAI/NEW DELHI, NOV. 17

Union home minister Amit Shah earlier on Sunday cancelled his scheduled election rallies in Maharashtra and returned to Delhi to assess the situation in Manipur. The home minister was set to address four public meetings in the Vidarbha region.

Mr Shah reviewed the security situation in Manipur and directed top officials to take all possible steps to ensure peace in the Northeast state, sources said.

Mr Shah is expected to hold another detailed meeting with top officers on Monday and take further steps, sources said.

The development took



People stage a protest at Jantar Mantar in New Delhi on Sunday after bodies of six people from the Meitei community were found in Manipur.

place as campaigning for the Maharashtra Assembly polls comes to an end on Monday. Mr Shah was scheduled to campaign in Katol and Saoner (Nagpur district), as well as Gadchiroli and Wardha districts.

In Mr Shah's absence, senior BJP leaders, including Union agriculture minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan and former minister Smriti Irani, took over responsibility of addressing the rallies. Prime Minister Narendra Modi has already finished

campaigning for the Maharashtra polls after holding his last rally in Mumbai on Wednesday (November 14).

The Vidarbha region is considered key to the BJP's chances of returning to power in Maharashtra. While Vidarbha was the saffron party's stronghold, it received a severe setback in the Lok Sabha polls, with the party losing a majority of seats to the Congress.

Meanwhile, the Union home minister paid homage to Shiv Sena founder Bal Thackeray on his death anniversary. "I pay my respects to the eminent leader Balasaheb Thackeray Ji on his death anniversary, who dedicated his entire life to Sanatan culture and national interests," Mr Shah wrote on X.

Majority to MVA, says Thorat, hints at CM aspirations

Shirdi, Nov. 17: Senior Congress leader and Maharashtra Assembly poll candidate Balasaheb Thorat has asserted that the Opposition Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) will win a clear majority and also indicated his chief ministerial aspirations.

In an interview to PTI ahead of the November 20 state Assembly polls, Mr Thorat, 71, said he is among the few senior leaders in the MVA after NCP(SP) head Sharad Pawar and enjoys cordial relations with leaders of the alliance.

Mr Thorat's assertion has come at a time when the ruling Mahayuti coalition has been reluctant to declare incumbent chief minister Eknath Shinde as the next CM, with BJP leader Devendra Fadnis saying a decision on it will be taken after the poll results are announced.

"I am among the senior leaders in the MVA after Sharad Pawar," Mr Thorat, an eight-term MLA from Sangamner in Ahilyanagar district, said when asked whether he saw himself as an acceptable face of the



Balasaheb Thorat

Opposition alliance.

"But, I hail from central Maharashtra," Mr Thorat quipped to a query on if he would like to see the next chief minister from western Maharashtra.

Ahilyanagar district is located on the cusp of western and north Maharashtra. Mr Thorat, who held several prominent ministerial positions in the previous Maharashtra governments since 1999, is taking on Amol Khatol of the Shiv Sena in Sangamner.

The Congress high command had despatched Mr Thorat for seat-sharing talks with allies Shiv Sena(UBT) and NCP(SP) after Maharashtra Congress chief Nana Patole ruffled feathers of the alliance partners.

— PTI

Yogi will lose chair after UP bypolls, Maha polls: Akhilesh

Ambedkar Nagar (UP), Nov. 17: Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav on Sunday said chief minister Yogi Adityanath will lose his chair after the byelection on nine Assembly seats in Uttar Pradesh and the BJP's defeat in the Maharashtra Assembly elections. The former chief minister also said Adityanath is "spreading hatred in the society".

The people of his own party are digging a 'tunnel' to his chair to remove him, he claimed.

Addressing an election rally in Katehari, Yadav appealed to people to make the Samajwadi Party (SP) and Indian National Developmental Inclusive Alliance (INDIA) alliance candidate Shobhavati Verma win with a huge margin.

"The people made BJP the number two party in Uttar Pradesh by making INDIA Alliance win with record votes in the Lok Sabha elections. Ever since the BJP lost the Lok Sabha elections, its leaders are unable to sleep," said Yadav.

"The byelections being held on nine seats in the state are very important. The BJP will not only lose the by-elections but will also lose the Maharashtra Assembly elections. The chief minister (Yogi Adityanath) will lose his chair after that," he added.

Escalating his attack, Mr Yadav said, "The chief minister is spreading hatred in the society. He is discriminating."

— PTI

Only Adani is safe in BJP's rule: Priyanka's dig at PM

‘Maha deprived of jobs as key projects shifted to Guj’

SONU SHRIVASTAVA
MUMBAI, NOV. 17

Congress general secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra on Sunday took a dig at Prime Minister Narendra Modi's slogan "Ek hain to Safe hain" stating that farmers, women, youth and labourers are not safe in the BJP's regime of the last 11 years. Ms Vadra said that if anyone is safe in Mr Modi's regime, it is industrialist Gautam Adani.

The senior Congress leader was campaigning in Gadchiroli district of Vidarbha region. She also held a road show in Nagpur.

While campaigning in Maharashtra, the BJP leaders are using slogans such "Ek hain to safe", "Batenge to Katenge" to counter the alleged "vote



Priyanka Gandhi Vadra

jihad" in favour of Congress and its alliance partners in the MVA.

Addressing a public rally, She claimed that the BJP is misleading the people by making statements on the basis of caste and religion. "The BJP did not show any accountability towards the people. They are discussing the issues to divert people's attention from the core issues. The Congress leader

said if MVA comes to power, it would give ₹7,000 per quintal MSP to farmers for soybean crop. She alleged that Maharashtra has been deprived of jobs due to the shifting of some big projects to Gujarat. She also appealed to the people to cast their vote carefully. "Choose the government which works for the people, not for the industrialists," she said.

Attacking chief minister Eknath Shinde's flagship scheme "Mukhyamantri Majhi Ladki Bahin" (CM My Beloved Sister), Ms Vadra said that the state government did not introduce the scheme for two-and-half years when they were in power, but announced it just four months before the election.

Gameplan to make us fight: NC as Opp. seeks clarification on Kharge remark

Row over J&K special status restoration resolution

YUSUF JAMEEL
SRINAGAR, NOV. 17

As the Opposition parties continue to fire salvos at the National Conference (NC) over the Congress' jettisoning of the resolution passed by an overwhelming vote in the Jammu and Kashmir Assembly earlier this month and which sought the restoration of the erstwhile state's constitutional special status revoked by the Centre in August 2019, the ruling party sees in the harangue

a deliberate attempt to drive a wedge between it and its alliance partner.

"The game plan is to cause ill feelings between the two parties to weaken their relationship," said a party leader. Ifra Jan, NC's social media and digital platforms incharge, put it more bluntly. She said that the BJP and its "allies" are desperately trying to make alliance partners fight so that the Omar Abdullah government collapses and the Centre's rule is reimposed on J&K.

THE NC said that the BJP and its 'allies' are desperately trying to make alliance partners fight so that the Omar government collapses and the Centre's rule is reimposed on J&K

In a post on 'X', she said, "INC's stand on J&K has been what it is today, for months now. But why are BJP-allies desperate to make us fight? Because if that happens, the government falls & we are back to

Kharge: BJP wants Manipur to burn; it won't forgive PM

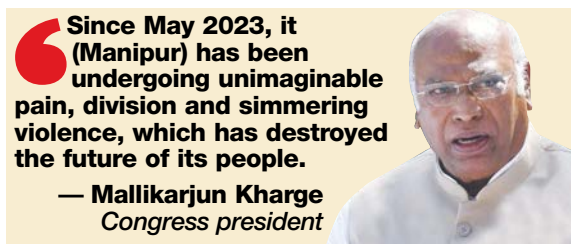
Rahul urges Modi to visit state, restore peace in region

AGE CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, NOV. 17

As fresh violence erupted in Manipur, the Congress on Sunday hit out at the Modi government, with party president Mallikarjun Kharge alleging that the BJP deliberately wants the border state to burn as "it serves their hateful, divisive politics". Lok Sabha Leader of the Opposition Rahul Gandhi also termed the recent string of violent clashes and continuing bloodshed in Manipur "deeply disturbing".

Amid the ongoing surge of violence in Manipur, Mr Gandhi urged the Prime Minister to visit the state and work towards restoring peace in the region.

"After more than a year of division and suffering, it was the hope of every



Indian that the Central and state governments would make every effort at reconciliation and find a solution," Mr Gandhi said, adding, "I urge the PM once again to visit Manipur and work towards restoring peace and healing in the region." Accusing the BJP of "deliberately letting the Manipur violence continue", Mr Kharge said the people of the state will never forgive or forget that Mr Modi left them to fend

'Visionary': PM pays tribute to Balasaheb on death anniv

AGE CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, NOV. 17

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday paid homage to Shiv Sena founder Balasaheb Thackeray on his death anniversary.

The Prime Minister said Balasaheb was a visionary who championed the cause of Maharashtra's development and empowerment of the Marathi people.

In a post on X, the Prime Minister said, "I pay homage to the great Balasaheb Thackeray Ji

on his Punya Tithi. He was a visionary who championed the cause of Maharashtra's development and the empowerment of Marathi people." "He was a firm believer in enhancing the pride of Indian culture and ethos. His bold voice and unwavering spirit continue to inspire generations," the Prime Minister added. The Shiv Sena founder Balasaheb Thackeray passed away at his residence 'Matoshree' in Mumbai on November 17, 2012, after a prolonged illness.

'Nobody should take Rahul seriously'

EC checks Sharad bags in Baramati

Pune, Nov. 17: NCP(SP) chief Sharad Pawar's bags were checked by the poll personnel at Baramati helipad in Pune district on Sunday morning, according to his associate. Mr Pawar was on way to attend a poll rally in Solapur, the associate said.

The model of code of conduct is enforced in the state for the Assembly polls scheduled on November 20. On Saturday, poll authorities checked the bag of Congress leader Rahul Gandhi in Amravati.

— PTI

Nagpur, Nov. 17: Union minister Nitin Gadkari on Sunday said that nobody should take Congress leader Rahul Gandhi seriously, and asserted that people of Maharashtra will repose trust in the BJP-led Mahayuti alliance in the November 20 elections. "The way Rahul Gandhi speaks, nobody takes him seriously. I think people should not take his remarks seriously," Mr Gadkari said. On Mr Gandhi's allegations about Mr Modi "suffering from memory loss like US President Joe Biden", he said the Congress leader

speaks irresponsibly. Asked about the challenges faced by the Mahayuti alliance after a dismal show during the Lok Sabha elections, Mr Gadkari said, voters were confused (by the Opposition) on a large scale during the LS polls.

"A narrative was created that if we win 400-plus seats, we will amend the Constitution," he said. "There is no question of changing the Constitution. We will neither do it, nor allow others to do it," Mr Gadkari said.

"Now people have realised that the campaign by the Opposition during



Nitin Gadkari

the LS polls was based on lies and they have decided to support with positivity the Mahayuti under the PM's leadership," Mr Gadkari said.

On BJP talking of development politics, but its leader raising raising slogans like "batenge toh

katenge", Mr Gadkari said, "We are contesting the polls on the plank of development. Some go to temple, some to mosque, gurdwara and church. But we are all Bharatiya and India is above everything else for us," he said. On Maharashtra deputy chief minister Ajit Pawar voicing his opposition to Uttar Pradesh CM Yogi Adityanath's "batenge toh katenge" remark, indicating a growing rift within the Mahayuti, Mr Gadkari said, "First of all, we are different parties and it is not necessary to share the same opinion." — PTI

Local level drives in MP strengthens BJP

Play vital role in party's connect to people

RABINDRA NATH CHOUDHURY
BHOPAL, NOV. 17

Two positions in the booth-level committees of the BJP, which are in the process of constitution in the ongoing organisational elections, are billed to play a vital role in connecting the party with the people at the grassroots level, a functionary of the saffron party said on Sunday.

The 'Labharthi Pramukh', one of the 12 members of the booth level committee of the BJP, is considered a crucial grassroots level party leader who tapes the beneficiaries of various government welfare schemes to either join the party or be a sympathiser, he said. "The 'Labharthi Pramukh' is exclusively assigned with the task of connecting 'each and

every' beneficiary of different government welfare schemes in his or her booth to woo them either to join the party or support it", state Bharatiya Janata Party secretary Rajneesh Agrawal told this newspaper.

According to the latest Election Commission data, there are 5,18,67,474 voters in Madhya Pradesh out of whom total 2,48,34,753 are women.

An estimated three crore people in Madhya Pradesh are beneficiaries of different Central and state welfare schemes, official sources said.

In fact, the 'Ladli Behna Yojana', which proved to be a game changer in the 2023 Assembly elections, alone has around 1.20 crore female beneficiaries. The scheme provides a monthly incentive of ₹1,250 to each beneficiary.

Cong moves EC over BJP's 'communal' J'khand drive

New Delhi, Nov. 17: The Congress on Sunday lodged a complaint with the Election Commission (EC) seeking stern action against the BJP for allegedly continuing its "communal and divisive" campaign in Jharkhand, days before the second and final phase of Assembly elections scheduled in the state on November 20.

In the complaint registered with the poll panel, the second in a week, Congress general secretary (communications) Jairam Ramesh accused Jharkhand BJP of spreading "false and misleading" information on social media.

He also alleged that the Bharatiya Janata Party was indulging in such a divisive campaign despite the registration of a criminal case in this regard.

Sharing the complaint in a post on X, Mr Ramesh said it was the party's second complaint to the EC against "BJP's false, misleading, and communal" social media posts uploaded on the party's official Facebook and X handles.

"Despite the registration of a criminal case, the BJP has not taken down its earlier social media posts. They are clearly continuing with their communal and divisive campaign in Jharkhand with impunity," the Congress leader alleged. — PTI

SHORT TAKES

MBBS student dies after ragging in Guj

Patan, Gujarat: An 18-year-old MBBS student of a medical college in Gujarat's Patan district died after allegedly after being made to stand for three hours during ragging by his seniors, an official said Sunday. The college has started a probe into the incident which took place on Saturday. The deceased, who apparently fell unconscious after being made to stand for a long time, was a first year MBBS student at the college. The victim, Anil Methaniya, fell unconscious and died allegedly after being made to stand for three hours during ragging by his seniors at a hostel of the GMERS Medical College and Hospital at Dharpur in Patan on Saturday night, the college dean, Dr Hardik Shah, said. "The student was rushed to the hospital after he collapsed, and attempts to revive him failed and he was declared dead. His classmates said Methaniya died after being made to stand for three hours," Dr Shah said. — *PTI*

'Shunned' by tiger, cub dies of hunger

Bhopal: A tiger cub, "abandoned by its mother for being weak", died of hunger in the Pench National Park in Madhya Pradesh, officials said on Sunday. The four-month-old cub was found dead in Khedighat under Magor Katha forest range in the PTR by a patrolling party at around 9.45 am on Sunday, deputy director of PTR Rajneesh Singh said. The cub was literally reduced to bones and it appeared to have not taken any food for some days, a forest officer of the reserve said. Carcass of a cow was spotted lying barely around 15 ft from the body of the cub, which indicates that it had hardly the strength to move that far to feed on it, the forest officer, unwilling to be quoted, said. Camera trap footage has clearly shown that the tigress along with her other cub was feeding on the carcass of the cow while the "sick" cub was lying at a distance.

3 killed, 13 injured in Odisha accidents

Bhubaneswar: Three people lost their lives and more than 13 sustained severe injuries in separate road accidents across Odisha on Sunday, raising concerns over the rising number of road mishap fatalities in the state. In the first incident, Mahendra Jena, a fish vendor, was tragically killed when a speeding truck ran over him in Paradip's Atharbanki. Jena was riding his bicycle to sell fish on the occasion of "Chhadakhai" when the accident occurred. Outraged by the incident, locals staged a road blockade demanding restrictions on heavy vehicle entry and adequate compensation for Jena's family. In another accident, Kanhu Pradhan, a youth from Balasore, was fatally struck by an unidentified vehicle at Indira Square in Basta while returning home from work.

■ It is capable of making manoeuvres even at high speed

Hypersonic missile flight-test a success; 'historic', says Rajnath

PAWAN BALI
NEW DELHI, NOV. 17

In a major achievement, India has successfully conducted first trial of long-range hypersonic missile, which can bypass traditional ballistic missile defence systems and enhance country's deterrence capabilities.

Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) conducted the test late on Saturday from Dr A.P.J. Abdul Kalam Island off the coast of Odisha, putting India in the club of select countries with such a capability. The hypersonic missile by DRDO is designed to carry various payloads for ranges greater than 1,500 kms for the Indian armed forces defence minister Rajnath Singh described the missile test on Saturday under the



This significant achievement has put our country in the group of select nations having capabilities of such critical and advanced military technologies.

— **Rajnath Singh, Defence minister**

country's first long-range hypersonic mission as a "stupendous" achievement and a "historic moment."

Hypersonic weapons, fly at speeds of at least Mach 5 (five times the speed of sound) and have capability to make manoeuvres (both vertical and horizontal) while travelling at high speed inside the earth's atmosphere.

"India has achieved a major milestone by successfully conducting flight

trial of long range hypersonic missile from Dr A.P.J. Abdul Kalam Island, off-the-coast of Odisha," Mr Singh said on X. "This is a historic moment and this significant achievement has put our country in the group of select nations having capabilities of such critical and advanced military technologies," he said.

The missile was tracked by various range systems, deployed in multiple domains, said defence min-

istry on Sunday. The flight data obtained from down range ship stations confirmed the successful terminal manoeuvres and impact with high degree of accuracy, it said.

This missile has been indigenously developed by the laboratories of Dr A.P.J. Abdul Kalam Missile complex, Hyderabad along with various other DRDO laboratories and Industry Partners. The flight-trial was carried out in the presence of senior scientists of DRDO and officers of the armed forces. Hypersonic weapons, which can carry conventional and nuclear weapons could challenge detection due to their speed, manoeuvrability, and low altitude of flight. Ballistic missile, which also travel at high speed have less manoeuvrable capability.



The police personnel lathicharge fans to control the crowd during the launch of the trailer of the film "*Pushpa 2*" in Patna on Sunday. A stampede-like situation erupted at the venue before the trailer launch began following which police resorted to a mild lathicharge to control the crowd.

Iffi set to enthrall audiences with red carpet events, gala premieres

SHASHI BHUSHAN
NEW DELHI, NOV. 17

In a dazzling celebration of cinematic artistry, global talent, and exceptional storytelling, Iffi-2024 "gala premieres" and "red carpet" line-up to offer a cinematic feast. The 2024 "gala premieres" will span various genres, languages, and cultures, featuring nine world premieres, four Asia premieres, one India premiere, and one exclusive showcase.

Eminent personalities including Rana Daggubati, Vidhu Vinod Chopra, Sanya Malhotra, Vikrant Massey, R. Madhavan, A.R. Rahman, and Saurabh Shukla will walk the red carpet, joining film industry insiders and media to celebrate the magic of cinema.

The ministry of information and broadcasting said that the 55th edition

THE MINISTRY claimed that this year's gala premiere line-up promises to be a cinematic feast, offering a captivating selection of films, web series, and documentaries

of the Iffi is all set to captivate audiences with its highly anticipated gala premieres and red carpet events, a dazzling celebration of cinematic artistry, global talent, and exceptional storytelling.

"With the third edition of this glamorous segment, Iffi 2024 continues to set the stage for a unforgettable experience that bridges the world of films with its passionate audiences," it said.

The ministry claimed that this year's gala premiere line-up promises to be a cinematic feast, offering a captivating selection of films, web series, and

documentaries.

The 2024 gala premieres line up span from gripping crime thrillers to heart-warming family dramas and thought-provoking social narratives to captivate every cinephile.

"The featured works will be presented in a rich diversity of languages, including Hindi, English, Marathi, Malayalam, and Telugu, cementing Iffi 2024 as a truly inclusive celebration of global and regional cinema," the ministry said.

This year notable titles include *The Piano Lesson*, *Zero Se Restart*, *Saali Mohabbat*, *Snowflower*, *Pune Highway*, *Hazzar Vala Sholay*, *Pahllila Manus*, *The Mehta Boys*, *Jab Khuli Kitaab*, *Hisaab Barabar*, *Mrs. Pharma*, *V i k k a t a k a v i*, *Headhunting* to *Beatboxing*, *Moana 2*, and *The Rana Daggubati Show*.

Pannun plot accused cites threat to life in Delhi court

Vikash Yadav gets exemption from personal appearance

AGE CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, NOV. 17

A Delhi court has granted exemption from personal appearance to Vikash Yadav, accused of attempting to kill alleged Khalistani terrorist Gurpatwant Singh Pannun in the US, in a case of kidnapping and extortion lodged against him after he claimed threat to life.

Special judge Sumit Dass granted the exemption to Mr Yadav for November 16 on an application moved by his lawyer, claiming that his personal details have been made public, putting his life at risk. The judge directed him to appear before the court on February 3, the next date of hearing.

Mr Yadav was arrested by the special cell of the



Vikash Yadav

Delhi police in December last year following a complaint by a Delhi-based businessman, accusing him of extortion and kidnapping.

A chargesheet was filed in March and Mr Yadav was granted bail in April. Mr Yadav, said to be a former RAW official, was named by the US in connection with the failed assassination attempt on Pannun.

The application before the court stated that "false and frivolous allegations

have been levelled against the applicant (Mr Yadav) and the particulars of the applicant such as his residence, his background along with his photographs have been published all over the world, exposing the applicant to serious threat to his life from nefarious elements."

"The applicant is being hounded by continuous surveillance by inimical elements who are trying to trace the applicant at all possible places leaving no option for the applicant but to ensure his safety in confines. Threat to the life of the applicant is clear; present, grave, imminent and potential and physical appearance of the applicant before the court is likely to lend an opportunity to annihilate the applicant," the application claimed.

After elephant deaths, 'wild trap' drive in MP

Campaign to tighten animals' security

RABINDRA NATH CHOUDHURY
BHOPAL, NOV. 17

The Madhya Pradesh forest department is going to launch a two-month campaign, christened as 'wild trap', to strengthen security of wild animals in the tiger reserves and national parks in the wake of the recent death of ten elephants in a reserve in the state.

The campaign would kickstart on December one this year and is scheduled to end on January 31, 2025.

The state forest department has directed the field directors of various tiger reserves and directors of the national parks in the state to make tours to their areas to find out the flaws in the conservation of the wild animals and take corrective measures and sub-

mit their reports to the headquarters of the department every 15 days.

Besides, they should take action against poachers and rescue the wild animals trapped in the traps laid by the poachers. The teams would carry metal detectors and dog squads to detect and remove the traps laid by the poachers. "Poaching is the key reason for the shrinking of wildlife resources", a forest officer said.

In the last ten years, a total 885 cases were registered for poaching of tigers, leopards, wild boars, spotted deer, blue bull and peacocks in the state.

While 36 cases were registered in incidents of poaching of tigers, 91 cases were registered in leopard poaching incidents in the state during the period.

'Global Tourism Village' tag for Bastar village by UN org

AGE CORRESPONDENT
RAIPUR, NOV. 17

Dhudmaras, a hamlet located in the famous Kanger Valley National Park in Bastar district of Chhattisgarh, has been selected for the best tourism village upgradation programme by the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO).

Dhudmaras is among 20 villages chosen from 60 countries worldwide for the prestigious programme by the UN body, highlighting its potential for sustainable tourism

development, a spokesman of the Chhattisgarh government said here on Sunday.

The village is renowned for its natural beauty, tribal culture, and biodiversity, attracting visitors with its unique blend of traditional lifestyle, local cuisine, and scenic landscapes. As part of the UNWTO's upgradation programme, Dhudmaras will receive support to enhance tourism infrastructure, promote its cultural heritage, and improve the quality of life of the villagers, according to the spokesman.

Chennai, Nov. 17: Actress Kasthuri, who made a remark on the Telugu-speaking people of TN that stoked a controversy, was produced before a court on Sunday, which remanded her to judicial custody. She was arrested from Hyderabad on November 16 by a Chennai police team after the Madurai bench of the Madras high court days ago rejected her anticipatory bail petition. While the actress, soon after the row, withdrew her remarks and also apologised, complaints were filed against her with the police.

A Chennai police team traced her to a film producer's house in Hyderabad and effected the arrest. She was brought to Chennai and produced before a magistrate court, which remanded her to judicial custody till November 29. Later, she was lodged in the Puzhal central prison. Naam Tamizhar Katchi chief Seeman wondered the necessity to arrest and imprison her even after she apologised. The crux of her recent allegation that triggered a row was that some Telugu speaking people, who had come to the state centuries ago to serve the then rulers, were now claiming to be Tamils. As per her, such people, who subscribe to a particular political ideology, though claim themselves to be Tamils despite their Telugu origin, do not consider Tamil Brahmins as Tamils. — *PTI*

BJP claims edge in Jharkhand

■ Continued from Page 1

turnout. Increased voter turnout is against the incumbent Hemant Soren government. The ground report received from across the states says the BJP-led NDA government will comfortably form the next Jharkhand government," the saffron party leader said, asserting that more people will come out in the second phase of polling to throw out the incumbent JMM-led state government.

A BJP insider said that the mati, beti, roti slogan has resonated well with the electorate and has emerged to be one of the biggest issues in the ongoing Assembly polls.

Top BJP leaders, including Mr Modi, have repeatedly pointed out that changing demographics of Jharkhand because of unchecked illegal infiltrations jeopardize the state's and the nation's security and have attributed it to the JMM and the Congress alliance's hunger for power.

In the run-up to the Jharkhand elections, Mr Modi has held over half-a-dozen rallies in the state and has repeated the BJP's call that it is time to "throw out the incumbent government" to protect mati, beti, roti.

Other BJP leaders have also harped on the illegal infiltration issue. A case in point, the Union home minister had said that the BJP will bring in a law to take back land from infiltrators in Jharkhand and identify and deport the illegal immigrants. He claimed that mati, beti, roti are under threat from the illegal

immigrants and the BJP will provide security to the indigenous people.

"Electorate believes that our mati, beti, roti are under threat due to unchecked infiltration under the JMM-led coalition. People further believe that only the BJP can protect mati, beti, roti under the strong leadership of Mr Modi," Mr Shah has often reiterated at his rallies in Jharkhand.

As Jharkhand prepares for the second phase of polling on November 20, the BJP chief, addressing election rallies at Gomia in Bokaro district on Sunday, pushed ahead with a similar narrative. Mr Nadda claimed that according to an "intelligence report", the JMM-led coalition government in Jharkhand gave shelter to Bangladeshi infiltrators in madrasas and ensured that they got land and government documents like Aadhaar cards.

Mr Nadda also hit out at Congress leader Rahul Gandhi, saying that he talks about the Other Backward Classes during the elections but has not done anything for their welfare. He questioned how many OBC members were in the Rajiv Gandhi Foundation, a social service organisation headed by senior Congress leader Sonia Gandhi, and the National Advisory Committee of the erstwhile UPA regime.

"I say with pride that there are 27 OBC ministers in Mr Modi's Cabinet," he said, claiming that the NDA government is bringing OBCs, tribals and SCs to the main-

stream.

The BJP chief attacked Congress and the JMM, the two main constituents of the ruling coalition of Jharkhand, during his addresses at three election rallies during the day.

"The BJP-led government at the Centre spent ₹19-lakh crores to augment infrastructure and will spend ₹10-lakh crores more on it," he added.

"I have received an intelligence report just now. It says that Bangladeshi infiltrators are given shelter in madrasas here. Their Aadhaar, voter ID, gas connection and ration cards are facilitated, and then the Hemant Soren government ensures land for them," he said.

Waiving a paper claiming to be the intelligence report, Mr Nadda said, "Mr Soren looted jal, jungle, jameen" (water, forest, land) of Jharkhand. Infiltration is rampant here. Infiltrators are marrying tribal women and grabbing their land. We will bring a law to ensure that their offspring are debarred from getting the land. Only the PM Modi-led BJP government can check infiltration."

Charging the Hemant Soren government with promoting infiltration, Mr Nadda said that if the BJP is voted to power, a law will be enacted to check the transfer of land to the offspring of infiltrators who marry tribal women.

Mr Nadda also termed the JMM-RJD-Congress alliance as a family of corrupt people, claiming that INDIA bloc leaders were either in jail or out on bail.

Kailash resigns from AAP

■ Continued from Page 1

share with you that today the Aam Aadmi Party faces grave challenges."

Listing out these challenges, Mr Gahlot wrote: "Political ambitions have overtaken our commitment towards the people, leaving many promises unfulfilled. Take for example the Yamuna, which we had promised to transform into a clean river, but never got around to doing it. Now the Yamuna River is perhaps even more polluted than ever before."

Speaking about the renovation of the CM's house in Civil Lines, Mr Gahlot said: "Apart from this, now there are many embarrassing and awkward controversies like the 'sheeshmahal', which are now making everyone doubt whether we still believe in being the Aam Aadmi." His reference to the "sheeshmahal" controversy comes against the backdrop of BJP leaders' accusations that Mr Kejriwal has spent crores of rupees on lavish items and modern facilities at his former official residence at 6 Flagstaff Road. The BJP dubbed Mr Kejriwal's earlier residence as "sheeshmahal".

Meanwhile, Mr Jha joined the AAP, citing disillusionment with the BJP's leadership and policies. Known for his strong grassroots presence, his move is seen as a potential boost for AAP in an area long considered a BJP stronghold.

Welcoming Mr Jha to the AAP at the party headquarters, Mr Kejriwal dubbed him as one of the "biggest" Purvanchali leaders in Delhi politics. The AAP supremo said he will boost the AAP not only in Kirari but all over the city. He, however, refused to comment on Mr Gahlot's resignation from the AAP. Mr Jha, who may replace the sitting AAP MLA from Kirari in the Delhi Assembly polls, lauded Mr

Kejriwal saying he was influenced by his personality and the work done by the AAP government to improve the lives of Purvanchali people living in unauthorised colonies of the city.

Mr Kejriwal alleged that while the AAP government built 10,000 km of roads and streets, laid 6,800 km of sewer lines and provided piped water in 1,650 unauthorised colonies, "the BJP did nothing". "I want to ask the BJP and its leader Amit Shah why should Purvanchali people vote for the party. I challenge them to tell one thing they did for the Purvanchali people in Delhi. They promised the registry of properties in these colonies but not a single one could be done in five years," he said.

Reacting to Mr Gahlot's resignation, AAP MLA Durgesh Pathak said: "Since the past few months, all of us knew that Gahlot ji was facing income-tax raids. He was left with no option but to join the BJP. This is what the BJP does - they used the ED and CBI to win elections." In March, Mr Gahlot was summoned by the ED in the Delhi excise policy case. This was, however, before all AAP leaders and the accused in the case were granted bail. In 2018, several locations linked to Mr Gahlot and his family members were raided by the income-tax department, alleging tax evasion worth several crores of rupees.

Welcoming Mr Gahlot's move, Delhi BJP chief Virendra Sachdeva said he has taken a brave step by resigning from the AAP. "Mr Gahlot stepped down and raised the same issues for which the BJP was protesting and fighting against Mr Kejriwal proves that even the AAP leaders do not consider their party chief as an honest politician," he added.

Manipur violence escalates

■ Continued from Page 1

Assembly, is headed by Meghalaya chief minister Conrad Sangma.

The mob also vandalised the ancestral house of BJP MLA Kongkham Robindro in Manipur's Imphal West district. Offices of the Congress and the saffron party were ransacked in the hill district of Jiribam where an unidentified body was found earlier in the day, officials said. In the last few days, the situation in Manipur further deteriorated and many more innocent lives have been lost and people in the state are "going through immense suffering", the NPP claimed in a letter to BJP president J.P. Nadda. "We strongly feel that the Manipur government under the leadership of Shri Biren Singh has completely failed to resolve the crisis and restore normalcy. The NPP has decided to withdraw its support to the Biren Singh government in Manipur with immediate effect," the letter said.

In Manipur, meanwhile, the legislators and their family members were not at home when the angry mobs stormed their residential compounds, vandalised properties and set the houses on fire, the police said, adding the houses were partially burnt in the incidents.

On Saturday night, protesters also advanced towards N. Biren Singh's ancestral residence at Luwangshangbam in Imphal East but were stopped short of 100-200 metres by the security forces. The security personnel, including Assam Rifles, BSF and state forces, fired several rounds of teargas shells, rubber bullets to disperse the protesters and foiled the attempt to damage Mr Singh's house, officials said. Later, the protesters burnt tyres on the main road leading to Biren Singh's residence and piled iron roads to prevent vehicular movement.

On Sunday morning, the situation remained calm but tense in all five districts of Imphal Valley, where an indefinite curfew has been imposed and Internet services suspended following violent protests after the discovery of the bodies of six persons, three women and children each, allegedly abducted and killed by militants in Jiribam.

Piles of burnt debris remained on the roads of state capital Imphal, a day after the violent protests. — *PTI*

THE ASIAN AGE

18 NOVEMBER 2024

Lankans vote for change under Anura; Tamils too

The Sri Lankan people wanted change. They had grown tired of traditional political parties that had wooed them for votes but did very little for them. Popular politicians had fleeced a country already suffering the aftereffects of the Covid pandemic so dry that the island nation's biggest economic crisis had come to spur a citizens' uprising that shook Colombo two years ago.

The definitive desire for change was reflected in the mandate when Anura Kumara Disnayake, presidential candidate of the Janata Vimukthi Peramuna-led coalition National People's Power (NPP), swept the election while sidelining the older generation of leaders who had led Sri Lanka into an economic wilderness. The voters doubled down on change in exercising their franchise in record numbers in the parliamentary elections to give the NPP a clear two-thirds majority and the authority to steer Sri Lanka into a new era.

NPP's victory in the snap parliamentary polls was no surprise but what was amazing about the results was that the coalition also swept the Tamil areas of Jaffna and Vanni besides doing very well in the east dominated by Tamil and Muslim voters and in the central hilly region around Kandy where plantation Tamils dominate the landscape.

Mr Disnayake will be appointing a new PM and a bigger Cabinet and getting on with governance for the people while striving to sustain the economic revival that came about with help from India, China and the IMF

The Tamils, long disadvantaged economically in the absence of opportunities in the less developed north and east as opposed to the centre and the south and alienated during and after the ethnic war that raged from the early 1980s to 2009, have decided to throw in their lot with a national cause now. That they did so despite their internal divisions is a remarkable aspect of the unifying message the left-leaning President brought to the country that was on crutches when the people overran the President's residence and ransacked it in 2022.

Mr Disnayake will be appointing a new Prime Minister and a bigger Cabinet on Monday and getting on with governance for the people while striving to sustain the economic revival that came about with substantial help from India, China and the IMF. His reform agenda is to begin with downsizing government as one way of telling the people that they matter more than profligacy in the name of administering.

The armed uprisings that the revolutionary JVP were involved in is history now and in any case the party has been in electoral politics for more than 50 years. It might seem incongruous that a leader from a party with such a background should now be the unifier that Sri Lanka needed when the star representatives of legacy political parties were too busy feathering their own nests but the need for change was so compelling.

The President's early task of balancing ties between China and India have been successful enough for the Indian envoy to have greeted him at every stage as he grew from candidate to the highest executive office. As tourism picks up along with tea export, the signs are sanguine for the island nation that seems willing to leave history behind and carve a pragmatic path that will benefit the people rather than the rulers.

Baby deaths: Hold safety audits

The death of 10 infants in the neonatal unit of the Maharani Laxmi Bai Medical College, Jhansi, in Uttar Pradesh, last week points to the series of irregularities and lapses that still plague our healthcare, especially critical care, infrastructure.

Reports suggest that the by the time the staff in the NICU got hold of the fire extinguisher, the blaze was out of control and all it took was 20 minutes for it to snuff out the lives of 10 newborns. There was absolute chaos in the hospital with no one knowing what to do in the critical moments, adding to the number of casualties. The medical and security staff had no clue as to what was happening and hence acted at cross purposes. There were little in the form of laid-out procedures even for rescue. That the parents who waited outside the neonatal unit were instrumental in saving many lives only goes to highlight the inefficiency of the management of the hospital.

As per preliminary reports, a short circuit in the electric switchboard sparked the fire, which spread in no time. What caused the short circuit is yet to be ascertained although excessive load on the switchboard is suspected.

The takeaway from the emerging reports is that there is an immediate and urgent need for training the handlers of critical and sensitive installations in emergency response in facilities such as hospitals that are frequented by people. Every second is precious immediately after an accident occurs as it is crucial to saving lives.

There are procedures for security audits in hospitals and other such structures but they are observed more in breach than in observance. Those who are in charge often look the other way. There must be legislative measures to hold those who are in charge accountable for lapses. That is the minimum that we owe the infants.

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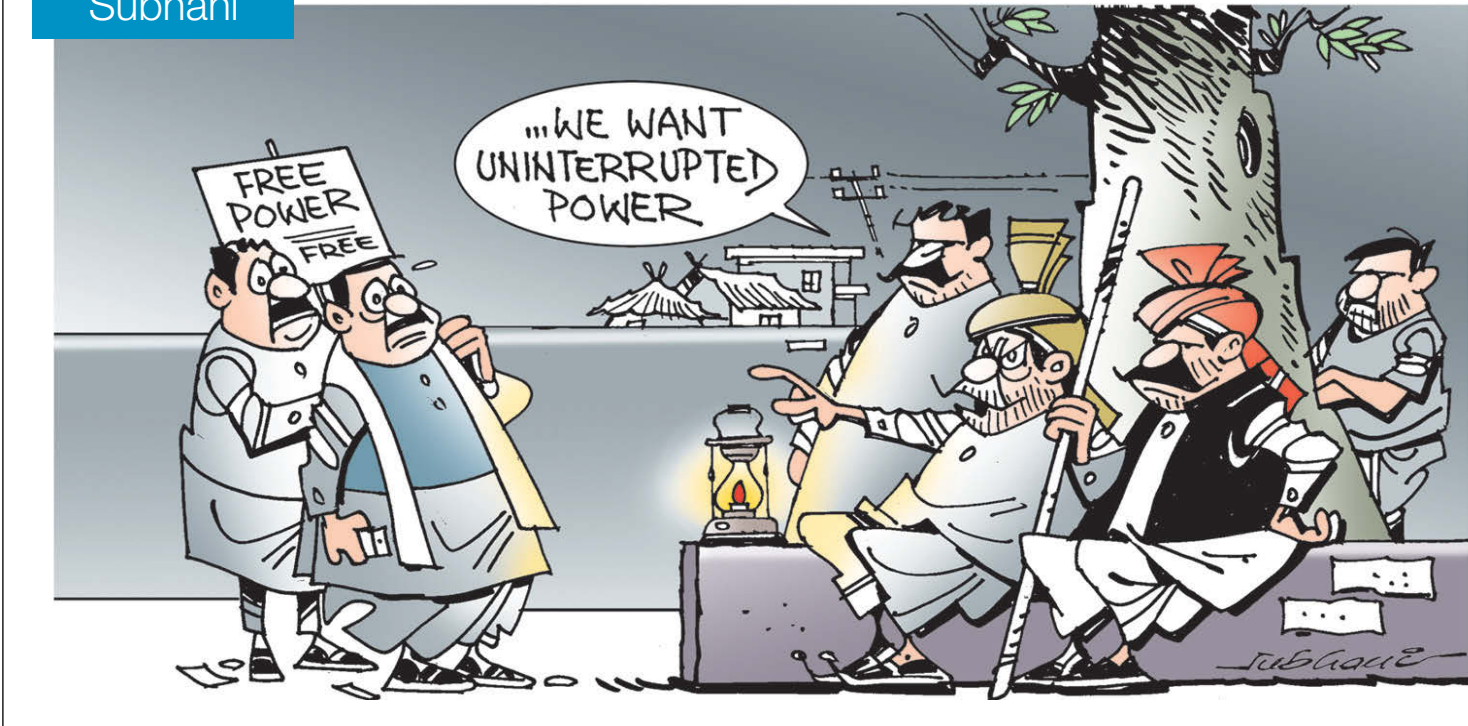
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Subhani



With India's lead, Brics can be a voice for Global South



Debotri Dhar

Animal Instincts

The 16th Brics summit, held in Kazan, Russia, on October 22-24, is the talk of the town. Brics (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa) is an inter-governmental body for the promotion of multilateralism, peace, security and economic development. Its first summit in 2009 included founding members Brazil, Russia, India and China, with South Africa joining a year later. Brics expanded this year to include four new members, and 30 more nations have applied for membership. Talks were held this year for an alternative financial model to challenge the West-led Bretton Woods global monetary system, comprising the IMF and World Bank, as well as a united front to advocate for UNSC reforms.

So, is Brics poised to become the cool new Global South club — or is it a harbinger of a stridently anti-Western world order?

For Russian President Vladimir Putin, the Brics summit was an obvious opportunity to push back against Western sanctions over Russia's invasion of Ukraine, including Washington's efforts to choke off financial supplies to Moscow, and to lobby for support from the Global South. Pertinently, the "Global South" is not just a geographical but a geopolitical and socio-economic grouping. Many Global South nations are in the Southern Hemisphere, in Asia, Africa and Latin America, often sharing colonised histories that led to economic exploitation for centuries. That many of these emerging economies did not blacklist Russia has been misinterpreted by some Western analysts as the Global South's backing for Moscow's Ukraine policy. Instead, it more accurately reflects a growing disenchantment with the West, a tacit critique of what many erstwhile colonised nations see as Western double stan-

dards on wars and imperialism, and the selective (mis)use of human rights for other agendas, therefore pursuing their own politico-economic interests as non-aligned nations.

Or multi-aligned, when it comes to India's international relations. Fellow Indians of varying political beliefs hold diverse opinions on Nato, but I have not met anyone who approves of Russia's invasion. Rather, there is a sense of a historical friendship with Russia among many, that Moscow has not harmed India's interests, and a refusal to bear costs of a war created by others. From a geo-strategic viewpoint, given the strengthening Russia-China partnership, a continued relationship with Moscow is useful for India to counter-balance Chinese expansionism in the Indo-Pacific. Following the recent breakthrough border agreement between India and China ahead of the Brics summit, there is speculation in some quarters that Moscow may have lent a helping hand to defuse hostilities between the two Asian giants. Under this Sino-Indian agreement, outstanding issues simmering since the 2020 Galwan Valley clashes are being resolved, with both sides agreeing to a patrolling arrangement allowing for the return of Indian troops to what became friction points on the Line of Actual Control. In what is a major diplomatic win for India, tensions in Demchok and Depsang in eastern Ladakh have been addressed with military de-escalation in these areas.

With this well-timed beginning to the summit, followed by a meeting of prominent leaders from the Global South, the worldwide interest generated by Brics is unsurprising.

Some critiques have also been directed at how Brics is a very loose formation of nations with vastly diverging interests. While Beijing and Moscow see Brics as a platform to challenge the

A democratic India can potentially unite Brics to reflect non-Western development aspirations and draw upon strategic relationships with the Western and Russia-China blocs to provide humanitarian support to end wars

Western-led world order in general, and the dominance of the American dollar in particular, this is not the case with India, which is not anti-West and sees Brics as an alternative outfit to better support and negotiate for the concerns of the Global South, as compared to elite clubs such as the G-7 which were not designed to advocate for emerging economy perspectives.

While Brics membership is less homogenous than the G-7, whose members all meet common developmental criteria, even the G-7 is not unmarked by internal disagreements. Examples are some of France's foreign policy positions independent of the United States, as on the Israel-Palestine war, or Italy's policy disagreements with France, as on not sending domestic troops to fight in the Russia-Ukraine war. Yet the G-7 has, despite such internal dissent, been able to focus on a larger vision, consolidating the group's economic and geopolitical power over time. This is the bigger challenge ahead for Brics. That there is a tremendous need to advocate for emerging economy perspectives so that powerful blocs do not unilaterally dictate terms to the Global South is apparent from the sheer number of countries applying for Brics membership. Now the group will need a clearer vision. Will there be any economic requirements (such as GDP levels) for entry into Brics? Will smaller member-nations that are attacked be diplomatically supported in peace efforts and provided humanitarian aid?

Countries in the Global South have historically been criticised for having weak democratic institutions, but the truth is that democracy in the West also needs strengthening.

Brics as a non-Western body can shape a more rep-

resentative global order, with the caveat that a just, democratic world is challenging to build with authoritarian states or those which promote terrorism. Peace and security are objectives of Brics, yet some members have long been under strife, with vulnerable populations being greatly impacted. My public commentaries and lectures have, for years, analysed gender violence in war, such as the decades-long US-Russia war over Afghanistan, with the Soviet invasion of 1979 followed by American Cold War era foreign policies on arming religious extremists, resulting in the rise of the Taliban, with disastrous consequences for socio-economic development and women's rights in Afghanistan. Another example is how the real threat of wartime rape in some Global South nations like Syria results in families marrying off girls aged ten or twelve, compounding high regional maternal and infant mortality rates. As Brics is being celebrated by the developing world, the Women, Peace and Security Agenda to mainstream gender into peace and security multilateral architecture has also recently celebrated its 24th anniversary. The point is that the economic and social indicators of development often work better together. India-US collaboration to counter Chinese military aggression in the Indo-Pacific will continue under Donald Trump, whose recent victory in the US presidential election will have other far-reaching policy consequences, including US involvement in the two global wars. A democratic India that can unite Brics to reflect non-Western development aspirations and draw upon strategic relationships with the Western and Russia-China blocs to provide diplomatic, humanitarian support to end wars justly will be very well-positioned to play a leading role for Brics, the Global South, and the world.

Dr Debotri Dhar is an author, educator, academic, consultant, and founder of the Hummingbird Global Leaders Forum. She is a women's studies and global studies expert with a focus on South Asia and the Indo-Pacific.

LETTERS

BULL'S EYE!

Bulls are having a pretty bad time at present. whether in the stock markets, bulldozers or the China shop. Sensex has tanked by 7,000 points, bulldozers sent back by the SC and China is desperately trying to revive the one in their shop. Only the "bull"ion is bucking the trend. Illegal migrants in America will have to bite the "bull"et, thanks to Trump acting like a big "bull"y. China has taken the bull by the horns with a series of measures to get its economy moving. This is no cock and bull story. Hopefully this "bull"etin would not have its readers saying, "What a load of bull!"

Anthony Henriques
Mumbai

MAHA QUESTIONS

CASTE DYNAMICS are deeply interconnected, as the upcoming elections in Maharashtra will show. How will voting turnout be impacted by the Mahayuti coalition's focus on policies that support the poor and the Maha Vikas Aghadi's outreach to dalits and OBCs? Will there be unanticipated results from the collapse of the Maratha community? Likewise, can the MVA effectively refute the BJP's story of progress in the face of growing discontent among farmers? It's critical to understand these aspects as November 20 draws near.

Anshu Bharti
Begusarai

BIG BLOW TO AAP

IN A MAJOR setback for the Aam Aadmi Party ahead of the Delhi Assembly elections, home and transport minister Kailash Gahlot resigned on Sunday saying that the party has moved from fighting for people's rights to fighting for its own political agenda. Gahlot, 50, is a Jat leader who is one of the rare AAP politicians, born and brought up in Delhi. He joined the AAP before the 2015 Assembly election and became MLA in 2015 and 2020.

Sankar Paul
Chakdaha, West Bengal

₹500 for the best letter of the week goes to Arun Gupta (Nov. 16). Email: asianage.letters@gmail.com.

Bhopinder Singh



How Army chiefs in Pakistan run 'Deep State': Don't need coups any longer..

In 1947, the newly-formed militaries of independent India and Pakistan owed their common structures, rules and procedures almost entirely to the former British Indian Army. Yet over the next 77 years, both armies appear to have taken a starkly different trajectory in national imagination and functioning. The waywardness in the Pakistani narrative started as early as 1951 with the failed coup attempt (Rawalpindi Conspiracy) by Maj. Gen. Akbar Khan. By 1958, Gen. Ayub Khan had overthrown and exiled Pakistan's President Iskander Ali Mirza in a dynamic that would later get institutionalised and continue to manifest, overtly or covertly. In India, on the other hand, the military has remained checked and confined to "forward areas" or to the proverbial "barracks", thus honouring the democratic traditions of civilian control over the military.

This extra-constitutionality and assertion of the military in Pakistan is personified by the tenures of their Chiefs of Army Staff, when compared to India. Given that the service and organisational structures are almost the same, the number of "chiefs" in India or Pakistan ought to be more or less the same. But it isn't. Since Independence, India has had 32 individuals as Army chiefs (with evolving designations from Commander-in-Chief to Chief of the Army Staff) — whereas Pakistan has had only 17 chiefs (with similar changes in nomenclatures). This essentially shows that many of Pakistan's Army chiefs unilater-

ally extended their stay (usually under some dodgy and implausible pretexts). Only two Chiefs of Staff in India had a four-year term — Gen. (later Field Marshal) K.M. Cariappa and Gen. K.S. Thimayya — whereas in Pakistan both Gen. Ayub Khan and Gen. Musa had over seven-year tenures. Gen. Pervez Musharraf over nine years, and Gen. Zia-ul Haq for over 12 years! Seemingly, in India the "State" had an Army, whereas, in Pakistan, the Army had a complaint "State". The military in Pakistan defined the rules for itself.

As Pakistan has increasingly boxed itself into a hopeless situation of acute socio-economic distress, the nation's permanent "Establishment" (meaning its military) has learnt the value of backroom manipulation as opposed to becoming the "face" of governance. It makes a lot of sense to allow any beholden or controlled civilian government to take the unpopular decisions (such as a steep hike on energy costs, raising of taxes, etc.) and take the flak themselves. It also increases the "intervention powers" of Pakistan's Army chief, who is looked upon as the sole power that can reverse an executive decision, thereby raising the public esteem of the institution even further.

Since the last formal coup in 1999 by the overambitious Gen. Pervez Musharraf, who ruled till 2008, subsequent Army chiefs like Pervez Kayani, Raheel Sharif, Qamar Bajwa (and the current Asim Munir),

have preferred to pull the strings from the back. This arrangement worked well as the chiefs could make or break civilian governments to have one of their choices, as also safeguard their personal interests. Both Gen. Pervez Kayani and Gen. Qamar Bajwa extended their own tenures and ruled for six years each. Gen. Raheel Sharif, on the other hand, served his regular three-year tenure, but then subsequently "managed" his appointment as the commander of the Islamic Military Counter-Terrorism Coalition Force, based in Riyadh, for over seven years now.

The Pakistan "Establishment", admittedly, has not always had it easy, and each chief had to fight his way to secure the arrangement. Gen. Qamar Bajwa, for example, first "selected" (as opposed to "elected") Imran Khan as Prime Minister, and then had to have him removed when he got too big for his boots. Today, Gen. Bajwa's chosen successor, current Army chief Gen. Asim Munir, seems to have further learnt the lessons and has constitutionally formalised the option to get a second term without any fuss. In a continuing mockery of participative democracy, a hurriedly introduced and passed bill in the National Assembly and the Senate allows the Army chief to have a tenure for five years, with the possibility of another five-year term. The constitutional legitimisation of a possible 10-year tenure for the current Army chief, Gen. Munir, took 24 minutes in the National Assembly and 16 minutes in the Senate.

The indebted parliamentarians of the ruling coalition from both Nawaz Sharif's PML-N and Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari's PPP (who have both had earlier governments summarily dismissed by the "Establishment") were obliged to pass this without a murmur or any discussion. Vague and unconvincing policy continuity claims in order to avoid "palace intrigues" in the appointment of the Army chief were posited subsequently, but not on the floor of the Assembly or Senate. A hapless nation watched as a reticent Gen. Asim Munir wrangled unprecedented entitlements for himself and the "Establishment" without resorting to spats, protests or having to pass sham clearances, as done by his predecessors.

With the Opposition political parties like Imran Khan's PTI or Maulana Rehman's J-MUI discredited, Gen. Asim Munir managed to have his way, sneakingly and effectively. Ironically, PTI officials who managed to raise some feeble protests were promptly shut down and asked why they had extended the tenure of the previous Army chief, Gen. Qamar Bajwa, when they were in power? The truth is, over the years, the Pakistani "Establishment" has refined its surreptitious stranglehold over power, and they don't need ugly and indefensible coups any longer.

The writer is a retired lieutenant-general and a former lieutenant-governor of the Andaman and Nicobar Islands and Puducherry

SHORT TAKES

ROADSIDE BOMB
KILLS 3 SOLDIERS
IN NORTH IRAQ

Baghdad, Nov. 17: A roadside bomb targeting an Iraqi army vehicle killed three soldiers in northern Iraq on Sunday, police and hospital sources said.

The attack near the town of Tuz Khurmatu, about 175 km (110 miles) north of the capital Baghdad, critically wounded two others. There was no immediate claim of responsibility for the attack, but Islamic State militants are active in the area.

Despite the group's defeat in 2017, remnants continue to conduct hit-and-run attacks against government forces.

MAN THREATENS
COPS, KILLED
OUTSIDE PARIS

Paris, Nov. 17: A drunk man on Sunday was killed by French police outside Paris after threatening officers and shouting "Allahu akbar", an Arabic expression often shouted by Islamist attackers, police sources told *AFP*.

According to preliminary information, the man brandished a dummy gun, a source close to the case told *AFP*. He was "very drunk", the source said.

At around 6 am (5 GMT), police were called to an incident which saw an armed man bang on a door in Villeneuve-Saint-Georges in the southeastern suburbs of Paris.

1ST CASE OF NEW
FORM OF MPOX IN
TRAVELLER: U.S.

New York, Nov. 17: Health officials said that they have confirmed the first US case of a new form of mpox that was first seen in eastern Congo.

The person had travelled to eastern Africa and was treated in Northern California upon return, according to the California department of public health. Symptoms are improving and the risk to the public is low. The individual was isolating at home and health workers are reaching out to close contacts as a precaution, the state health department said. Mpox is a rare disease caused by infection with a virus.

YOUNG WOMAN
FOUND MURDERED
IN UK CAR BOOT

London, Nov. 17: A 24-year-old woman believed to be of South Asian origin has been found murdered in a car boot in east London after a missing person inquiry was launched for her in the East Midlands region.

Northamptonshire Police named the victim as Harshita Brelia on Saturday night as the force launched a murder inquiry and appealed for information in the case. Police said it had received a call on Wednesday regarding concerns for Harshita's welfare and officers were deployed to her home address at Skegness Walk in Corby, Northamptonshire.

BOEING'S LAYOFF
NOTICES TO OVER
400 WORKERS

Seattle, Nov. 17: Boeing has delivered layoff notices to more than 400 members of its professional aerospace labour union, part of thousands of cuts planned as the company struggles to recover from financial and regulatory trouble as well as an eight-week strike by its Machinists union.

The pink slips went out last week to members of the Society of Professional Engineering Employees in Aerospace. The workers will remain on the payroll through mid-January. Boeing announced in October that it planned to cut 10 per cent of its workforce.

TITANIC GOLD
WATCH SELLS FOR
RECORD PRICE

London, Nov. 17: A gold pocket watch given to the ship captain who rescued 700 survivors from the *Titanic* sold at auction for nearly \$2 million, setting a record for memorabilia from the shipwreck.

The 18-carat Tiffany & Co. watch was given by three women survivors to Capt. Arthur Rostron for diverting his passenger ship, the *RMS Carpathia*, to save them and others after the *Titanic* struck an iceberg and sank in the north Atlantic on its maiden voyage in 1912. The price includes taxes and fees paid by the buyer.

Let public decide head
of treasury, says Musk

Fossil fuel executive Chris Wright named energy secretary

Palm Beach, Nov 17: As President-elect Donald Trump makes a flurry of choices to fill out his incoming administration's Cabinet, the lobbying for key positions has been fierce behind closed doors — and sometimes publicly.

Now billionaire and key Trump ally Elon Musk is calling for more direct public input into the decision-making process for at least one top post — the head of the treasury department.

Trump has selected Chris Wright, a campaign donor and fossil fuel executive, to serve as energy secretary in a second Trump administration. Wright, CEO of Denver-based Liberty Energy, is a vocal advocate of oil and gas development, including fracking, a key pillar of Trump's quest to achieve US "energy dominance" in the global market. Wright has won support from influential conservatives, including oil and gas tycoon Harold Hamm.

"Would be interesting to hear more people weigh in on this for @realDonaldTrump to consider feedback," Musk, who Trump has already tapped to co-lead a commission tasked with increasing government spending efficiency, posted on X.

Musk then used the rest of his post to become the first participant in the public poll he was proposing. He endorsed Howard Lutnick, the CEO of financial services firm Cantor Fitzgerald and co-chair of Trump's transition team ahead of Inauguration Day on January 20, over hedge fund manager Scott Bessent. Musk said in his post that "Bessent is a business-as-usual choice, whereas @howardlutnick will actually enact change." — *AP*

PAK RELIGIOUS
BODY SLAMMED
OVER DECREE

Islamabad, Nov. 17: Pakistan's leading constitutional religious body came under severe criticism after it issued an edict terming the use of Virtual Private Networks (VPNs) to access blocked content on the internet as 'un-Islamic'.

The unprecedented proclamation by the Council of Islamic Ideology (CII), which advises Parliament on aligning legislation with Islamic teachings, enraged digital rights activists and some religious scholars.

According to the *Dawn* newspaper, the CII chief Raghib Naemi said that using VPNs to access immoral or illegal content was against Sharia. In a social media statement on Saturday, Maulana Tariq Jameel, a prominent religious scholar, said if watching adult content or blasphemous material was an issue then mobile phones should be declared un-Islamic before labelling VPNs as such.

Senator Allama Nasir Abbas, the chief of Shia organisation Majlis Wahdat Muslimeen (MWM), said the country was being ruled by an incompetent and corrupt elite. — *PTI*

Saudi executes 101
foreigners in 2024

Dubai, Nov. 17: Saudi Arabia has executed more than 100 foreigners this year, according to an *AFP* tally indicating a sharp increase which one rights group said was unprecedented.

The latest execution, on Saturday in the southwestern region of Najran, was of a Yemeni national convicted of smuggling drugs into the Gulf kingdom, the official *Saudi Press Agency* reported.

That brought to 101 the number of foreigners executed so far in 2024, according to the tally which is compiled from state media reports.



President-elect Donald Trump, Kid Rock, Donald Trump Jr, Dana White and Elon Musk attends UFC 309 at Madison Square Garden in New York on Saturday. — *AP*

Xi vows to work with Trump

Lima, Nov. 17: Chinese President Xi Jinping vowed on Saturday to work with the incoming US administration of Donald Trump as he held his final talks with outgoing President Joe Biden on conflicts from cyber crime to trade, Taiwan, the South China Sea and Russia.

Biden met Xi for about two hours at a hotel where the Chinese leader was staying, on the sidelines of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation forum in Lima, Peru, for their first talks in seven months.

"China's goal of a stable, healthy and sustainable China-US relationship remains unchanged" after Trump's election, Xi said as he met Biden, acknowledging "ups and downs" between the countries.

"China is ready to work with the new US administration to maintain com-

munication, expand cooperation and manage differences." Biden told Xi that the two leaders have not always agreed but their discussions have been "frank" and "candid."

Two months before Trump returns to the White House, United States officials see magnified risks of conflict during the transition. Biden told Xi that maintaining leader-to-leader talks would be vital even after he left office, said Biden national security adviser Jake Sullivan.

Trump has vowed to adopt blanket 60% tariffs on US imports of Chinese goods as part of a package of "America First" trade measures.

Beijing opposes those steps. The Republican also plans to hire several hawkish voices on China in senior roles, including

US Senator Marco Rubio as secretary of state and Representative Mike Waltz as national security adviser.

Biden has aimed to lower tensions with China, and there were few signs of a breakthrough on the major issues.

But Biden and Xi did agree that human beings, not artificial intelligence, should make decisions over the use of nuclear weapons, according to the White House, the first time they are known to have raised the issue.

The United States and Chinese presidents also talked about North Korea, an ally of China whose deepening ties with Russia and deployment of troops in Moscow's war with Ukraine have raised concerns in Washington, Beijing and European capitals. — *Reuters*

Israeli air strike in Gaza
kills 26 with 59 missing

Gaza City, Nov. 17: Gaza's civil defence said 26 people were killed on Sunday, including children, and at least 59 were missing after an Israeli air strike hit a building located in the Palestinian territory's north.

An Israeli strike on a building in central Beirut on Sunday killed Hezbollah's media relations chief Mohammad Afif, two Lebanese security sources said, though there was no immediate confirmation from Hezbollah.

Following the strike on Sunday, 26 bodies were pulled from the rubble of the five-storey residential building in Beit Lahia, "including children and women", civil defence spokesman Mahmud Bassal told *AFP*.

He added that at least 59 people were still trapped under the debris.

AFP images showed men covered in dust scrambling to reach people under the rubble, while some of the bodies were taken away on a donkey-pulled cart. Other *AFP* images showed the flattened building with broken concrete and twisted metal sticking out from the ruins. — *Agencies*



Residents and rescuers gather at the site of an Israeli airstrike that hit a building in Beirut's Ras el-Nabaa neighbourhood, of Lebanon, on Sunday. — *AP*

POPE CALLS FOR
'GENOCIDE'
PROBE IN GAZA

Vatican City, Nov. 17: Pope Francis for the first time tackled claims of Israel's ongoing "genocide" of Palestinians in Gaza in a forthcoming book, urging further probe into whether Israel's actions meet the definition.

Titled "Hope Never Disappoints. Pilgrims Towards a Better World", the book includes his latest and most forthright intervention. — *AFP*

FLARES NEAR
BIBI'S HOME,
THREE ARRESTED

Jerusalem, Nov. 17: Three suspects were arrested, Israeli police said on Sunday morning, after two flares landed near Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's residence in the central town of Caesarea. "Three suspects were arrested overnight for their involvement in the incident" that took place Saturday evening, the police said in a statement. — *AFP*

Deaths from dengue
in B'desh cross 400

Dhaka, Nov. 17: Bangladesh is battling its worst outbreak of dengue in years, with more than 400 deaths as rising temperatures and a longer monsoon season drive a surge in infections, leaving hospitals struggling to cope, particularly in urban areas.

At least 407 people have died from related complications in 2024, with 78,595 patients admitted to hospitals nationwide, the latest official figures show.

By mid-November, 4,173 patients were being treated, with 1,835 of them in Dhaka, the capital, and 2,338 elsewhere.

"We're witnessing monsoon-like rainfall even in October, which is unusual," said Kabirul Bashar, a zoology professor at Jahangirnagar University.

"Shifting weather patterns caused by climate change provided optimal conditions for the Aedes aegypti mosquito, the primary carrier of the disease," he added.

"These changes in the season are fostering ideal conditions for the mosquitoes to breed."

Dense populations in cities exacerbate the spread of the disease, usually more common in the monsoon season from June to September though it has spilled beyond that window this year.

A rise in temperatures and longer monsoons, both linked to climate change, have caused a spike in mosquito breeding, driving the rapid spread of the virus.

Bashar called for year-round vector surveillance in Bangladesh to monitor



Latest official figures show that 78,595 patients have been admitted to hospitals nationwide. — *AP*

PAKISTAN-B'DESH
SHIPPING ROUTE
REBUILDING TIES

Dhaka, Nov. 17: The first cargo ship in decades to sail directly from Pakistan to Bangladesh successfully unloaded its containers, port officials said on Sunday, as both sides seek to rebuild ties after decades of frosty ties.

The two countries, once one nation, split in 1971 after a brutal war, with Bangladesh then drawing closer to Pakistan's rival India. But its ties with New Delhi have frayed after a student-led revolution in August toppled autocratic leader Sheikh Hasina. — *AFP*

B'DESH EXTENDS
ARMED FORCES
JUDICIAL POWERS

Dhaka, Nov. 17: Bangladesh's interim government has extended the judicial powers of the armed forces granted after the August revolution that toppled Sheikh Hasina.

The government order, issued November 15, extends for two more months the powers of the armed forces to engage in day-to-day enforcement activities like making arrests.

"The armed forces will carry out the orders assigned by the government," army spokesman Sami-Ud-Daula Chowdhury said on Sunday. — *AFP*

and rein in the disease.

If detected early and treated properly, deaths from dengue can be reduced to less than 1%, said a renowned physician, Dr ABM Abdullah, adding, "Early diagnosis

and prevention are key to controlling dengue."

Last year was the deadliest on record in the current crisis, with 1,705 deaths and more than 3,21,000 infections reported. — *Reuters*



Methane cuts beyond 30 per cent pledge may be needed to meet climate goals, scientists warn. — *AP*

Climate action
cash goal elusive

Baku, Nov. 17: Distractions were bigger than deals in the first week of United Nations climate talks, leaving a lot to be done, especially on the main issue of money.

In week one, not a lot of progress was made on the issue of how much money rich countries should pay to developed ones move away from dirty fuels, cope with rising seas and temperatures and pay for damage already caused by climate-driven extreme weather.

But more is expected when government ministers fly in for week two to handle the hard political deal-making at the negotiations — known as COP29 — in Baku, Azerbaijan.

Countries remain about a trillion dollars a year apart in the big number to be settled.

"All the developing countries look very united behind \$1.3 trillion. That's not a ceiling.

That's what they want. That's what they think they need," said Debbie Hillier, policy lead at Mercy Corps.

"The US and Canada are constantly talking about a floor of \$100 billion.... So you've got \$100 billion at one end and \$1.3 trillion" on the other end.

While poor countries have come up with a number for the total final package, the rich donor nations have assiduously avoided giving a total, choosing to pick a figure late in the bargaining game, Hillier said.

"The intention of developed countries to really come clean and show commitment is missing," said Harjeet Singh, global engagement director for the Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty Initiative. "They have not uttered a single word on what the (final total) is going to be which is very disturbing." — *AP*

POWER CUTS AS
KYIV'S ENERGY
GRID POUNDED

Kyiv, Berlin, Nov. 17: Russia unleashed its largest air strike on Ukraine in almost three months on Sunday, launching 120 missiles and 90 drones that killed at least seven people and caused severe damage to the power system, officials said.

Prominent Russian opposition figures led a march of at least 1,000 people in central Berlin Sunday, criticising Russian President Vladimir Putin and his war in Ukraine and calling for democracy in Russia.

Behind a banner that read "No Putin. No War," the protesters were led by Yulia Navalnaya, the widow of top Putin critic Alexei Navalny, as well as Ilya Yashin and Vladimir Kara-Murza, who were freed from Russian detention in a prisoner exchange this summer.

Ukrainians had been bracing for weeks for a renewed Russian attack on an already hobbled energy system, fearing long winter blackouts and mounting psychological pressure almost 1,000 days after Russia launched its full-scale invasion.

The Russian strikes, which caused numerous power cuts, came at a time when the impending United States presidency of Donald Trump, who has pledged to end the war without saying how, has raised the prospect of a push for negotiations. — *Agencies*

MUSIC | FEST

Pop sensation Dua Lipa, indie-rockers Coldplay stars of '24

Glastonbury '25 tickets sold in 35 mins

London, Nov. 17: Tickets for next year's Glastonbury Festival sold out within 35 minutes on Sunday, with more than 2,00,000 people expected to attend the world-renowned musical celebration in rural southwest England.

Sales opened at 9 am (0900 GMT) and event organisers posted on the social media platform X at 9.35 am that "Tickets for Glastonbury 2025 have now sold out."

"Thanks to everyone who bought one and sorry to those who missed out, on a morning when demand was much higher than supply. There will be a

resale of any cancelled or returned tickets in spring 2025," they added.

British-Albanian pop sensation Dua Lipa and indie-rockers Coldplay were among the headliners in 2024, and talks are reportedly already under way to secure acts for next year's festival, which will run from June 25 to 29.

The sight of thousands of tents dotting the fields at Worthy Farm in the village of Pilton has become one of the symbols of British summer.

The festival was first held in 1970.

Alongside around 3,000 performances set to take



Talks are already under way to secure acts for next year's festival, to run from June 25 to 29. — *AFP*

place across some 80 stages, the festival also features night-long parties, art

installations and lively parades. The standard ticket for

next year's event was priced at \$73.50 (\$471.50).

Glasto, as the festival is popularly known, was inspired by Britain's 1960s counter culture and hippie movements, with its first iteration as the Pilton Festival in 1970.

Glam rockers T.Rex were the first headliners. Since then, it has attracted cult status and big names from David Bowie and Paul McCartney to Stormzy and Elton John, who last year played his final UK gig. Organiser Emily Eavis has said the event is set to take a break in 2026 to "give the land a rest". — *AFP*

quick BITES

INDICATORS		%
Sensex	77,580.31	-0.14
Nifty 50	23,532.70	-0.11
S&P 500*	5,870.62	-1.32
Dollar (₹)	84.40	-0.01
Pound Sterling (₹)	107.01	-0.17
Euro (₹)	88.80	0.00
Gold (10gm)* (₹)	74,072.84	-0.11
Brent crude (\$/bbl)*	71.05	0.01
IN 10-Yr bond yield	6.827	0.023
US 10-Yr T-bill yield*	4.445	0.025

* As of 8:30 PM IST

NCL to relocate MP township to mine 600 MT coal

Coal India arm NCL is planning a huge rehabilitation and resettlement (R&R) project and is working on relocating the residents from the township in Madhya Pradesh's Singrauli, which has 600 million tonnes of mineable coal underneath, company's CMD B Sairam said. Talking to reporters here, Sairam said Morwa township in Singrauli, Madhya Pradesh, is spread across 927 hectares.

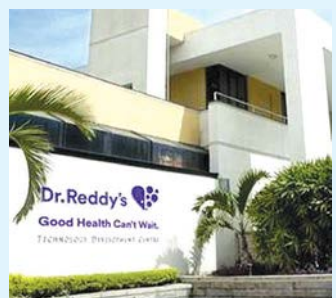


ACME Sun Power secures ₹3,753-cr term loan

ACME Sun Power, a wholly-owned subsidiary of ACME Solar Holdings, has secured a ₹3,753-crore term loan from state-owned REC Ltd. The loan has been secured for the development and construction of a 320-MW firm and dispatchable renewable energy (FDRE) project in collaboration with SJVN. Wholly-owned subsidiary ACME Sun Power Secures Rs 3,753 crore loan from REC for FDRE projects in Rajasthan and Gujarat, ACME Solar Holdings said in a statement on Sunday.

Hyundai Motor India bets on CNG vehicles

Hyundai Motor India Ltd is betting big on CNG fuel option with sales of models equipped with the technology witnessing increasing demand across rural and urban markets in the country. The company, which currently offers CNG option in its three models — Grand i10 NIOS, AURA and EXTER — has seen an increase in contribution of the CNG models to its domestic sales to 11.4 per cent in FY24.



Dr Reddy's, FDC recall products from US market

Dr Reddy's Laboratories and FDC Ltd are recalling generic medications in the US market due to manufacturing issues, according to the US health regulator. As per the Enforcement Report by Food and Drug Administration (USFDA), the US-based subsidiary of Dr Reddy's Laboratories is recalling multiple strengths of Morphine Sulfate extended-release tablets in the United States.

India seeks adherence to climate finance, goals

Asks developed countries to facilitate \$1.3 trillion every year till 2030

MADHUSUDAN SAHOO NEW DELHI, NOV. 17

India on Sunday expressed serious concern about the progress by the developed countries to engage in a climate finance and mitigation work programme at CoP29 in Baku, Azerbaijan. India asserted that those with the highest capacity to take climate action have continuously shifted goalposts, delayed climate action, and consumed a highly disproportionate share of the global carbon budget.

"We have seen no progress in matters that are critical for developing countries. Our part of the world is facing some of the worst impacts of climate change, with far lower capacity to recover from those impacts or to adapt to the changes to the climatic system for which we are not responsible," a government statement said after India delivered it in the closing plenary of the subsidiary bodies on the 'Agenda on Sharm el-Sheikh Mitigation Ambition and Implementation Work Programme (MWP)' on Saturday. India has been continuously vocal about climate finance arrangements, primarily from the developed countries that are huge carbon emitters. India has asked developed

IN FOCUS

THE ANNUAL CLIMATE CHANGE CONFERENCE (COP) IS A SUMMIT UNDER THE UNITED NATIONS' FRAMEWORK. THIS YEAR, COP29 IS BEING HELD IN BAKU, AZERBAIJAN, WITH OVER 50,000 DELEGATES, INCLUDING 80 HEADS OF STATES.

A final joint statement is hard to find this year. Most Western governments are reluctant with the provisions formalised in COP 21 (Paris Agreement, 2015), which makes them pay billions to developing and poor countries for transitioning to new climate-friendly measures.

EFFECTS OF GLOBAL WARMING



GLOBAL MEAN temperature increased by 0.6°C in the 20th Century. If unchecked, this will lead to increased melting of snow and rising sea levels. Several islands and coastal cities could be submerged.

This list of benefic countries include (Some experts say countries need tril dollars annually fo transition.

ALSO IN COP29, 'National Contributions' are to be su are the exact details on the emission of greenhouse ga ber country.

Exposure to increased heat is behind 2.4 million premature deaths each year, according to the UN.

52 million tonnes (33 billion in cost) of food crops are lost every year due to extreme weather.

countries to commit to provide and mobilise at least \$1.3 trillion every year till 2030 through grants, concessional finance and non-debt-inducing support, without subjecting developing nations to 'growth-inhibiting conditionalities in the provision of finance'. It also emphasised that the support must cater to the 'evolving needs and prior-

ities of developing countries'. Expressing frustration on the unwillingness to engage on this issue the statement read, "If there are no means of implementation, there can be no climate action. How can we discuss climate action, when it is being made impossible for us to act, even as our challenges in dealing with the impacts

of climate change are increasing?"

"We notice a tendency to ignore the decisions taken in the past — related to the mitigation ambition and implementation at CoP27 and the context of the Global Stock take in the Paris Agreement, where it informs the parties for undertaking climate actions," the statement said.

NEGOTIATIONS ON FREE TRADE PACTS ON SCHEDULE: GOVT

FC CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, NOV. 17

Negotiations for all the proposed free trade agreements or FTA, including those with the United Kingdom and European Union (EU), are progressing as per the schedule. There is an impression that FTAs are paused, which is not correct, according to a top government official.

In the coming weeks, a bilateral meeting is scheduled between the commerce secretary and the director general of the European Union to take stock of the negotiations for the proposed trade agreement with the European Union. They are also expected to meet as part of the Trade and Technology Council (TTC).

Tata seals deal with Pegatron for iPhone plant in Tamil Nadu

New Delhi, Nov. 17: India's Tata Electronics has agreed to buy a majority stake in Taiwanese contract manufacturer Pegatron's only iPhone plant in India, forming a new joint venture that strengthens Tata's position as an Apple supplier, two sources told Reuters.

Under the deal announced internally last week, Tata will hold 60% and run daily operations under the joint venture, while Pegatron will hold the rest and provide technical support, said the two sources, who declined to be named as the details are not yet public.

The sources did not elaborate on the financials of the deal. Tata declined to comment, while Apple and Pegatron did not respond to Reuters queries on Sunday.



It was earlier reported in April that Pegatron had the backing of Apple and was holding advanced talks to sell its only iPhone plant in India to Tata, marking the Taiwanese firm's latest scale back of its Apple partnership.

Apple is increasingly looking to diversify its supply chain beyond China amid geopolitical tensions between Beijing and Washington. For Tata, the plant will

bolster its iPhone manufacturing plans. Tata is one of the largest conglomerates in India and has been fast expanding into iPhone manufacturing, rivaling the only other iPhone contract manufacturer operating in India, Foxconn. The deal closure was made internally at the iPhone plant on Friday, said the first source. The second source said the two firms plan to file for an approval of the Competition Commission of India soon. Analysts estimate India will contribute 20-25 per cent of total iPhone shipments this year, from 12-14 per cent last year. The new plant, which has around 10,000 employees and makes 50 l lakh iPhones annually, will be Tata's third iPhone factory in India. — Reuters

CNG cos seek higher price, govt asks to justify hike

FC CORRESPONDENT WITH AGENCY INPUTS NEW DELHI, NOV. 17

City gas companies like Indraprastha Gas (IGL) and Adani Total Gas are mulling an increase in CNG prices after supplies of cheaper input gas was cut for the second time in a month. The government officials say the retailers must give a cost breakup to justify the hike.

The government, with effect from November 16, cut supplies of low-priced

natural gas coming from old fields to city gas retailers by up to 20 per cent. This reduction came on the back of a 21 per cent reduction on October 16.

City gas retailers IGL, which retails CNG in national capital and adjoining cities, Mahanagar Gas that does the same in Mumbai, and Adani Total Gas which operates in Gujarat and elsewhere, in regulatory filings flagged prof-

itability concerns due to supply cut and hinted at price hike.

Officials in the ministry of petroleum and natural gas however are unimpressed as they feel the retailers operate on "hefty" margins and can easily absorb the additional cost they may have to incur on replacing the lost volumes with slighted higher priced gas from new wells or imported LNG.



Officials said the government is not against companies earning profits but if they want low-priced input (gas from old fields) then they should also declare the cost breakup of the final product (CNG).

"There cannot be a situation where you insist on getting low cost input but will not reveal the build-up to CNG," another official said. "The profitability numbers show they have been operating at huge margins." — PTI

Govt seeks details of foreign assets, income

FC CORRESPONDENT WITH AGENCY INPUTS NEW DELHI, NOV. 17

The Income-Tax dept on Sunday cautioned taxpayers that failure to disclose assets held abroad or income earned in foreign shores in the IT returns can attract a penalty of ₹10 lakh under the anti-black money law.

The department issued a public advisory as part a campaign launched by it to ensure that such info is reported by the assessee in their Income Tax

Return (ITR) for assessment year (AY) 2024-25. The advisory specified that foreign asset, for a tax resident of India in the previous year, includes bank accounts, cash value insurance contract or annuity contract, financial interest in any entity or business, immovable property, custodial account, equity and debt interest, trusts in which a person is a trustee, beneficiary of settlor, accounts with signing authority, any capital asset etc., held abroad.

FC CORRESPONDENT with bureau inputs HYDERABAD, NOV. 17

Dubai-based Jainam and Jivika, aged 13 and 10 years respectively, have decided to handover rights of their jiohotstar.com domain to Reliance "free of cost".

The website ID was registered by a Delhi-based application developer last year amid talks of a potential merger between Reliance Jio and Disney Hotstar.

In October, the developer said on social media that

he wanted funding for his higher studies at Cambridge University of he were to give the domain's ownership to Reliance Jio.

In their last post on the domain, Jainam and Jivika wrote: "Reliance IP legal team has approached us, and we will be transferring this domain to them, free of cost. There have been some rumours online suggesting that there is a payment or deal involved, but we

Expanding insurance cover to spur economic growth: Report

FALAKNAAZ SYED MUMBAI NOV. 17

India could potentially save about \$10 billion annually by expanding insurance penetration to the uninsured population, these saved funds could then be redirected to stimulate economic growth, said a report by consultancy firm McKinsey titled 'Steering Indian Insurance from growth to value in the upcoming techade'.

The report said that India's insurance sector has recorded a gross written premium (GWP) exceeding \$130 billion and 11 per cent CAGR in premiums during FY 2020-23. Premiums growth outpaced Asian peers such as Thailand and China where growth rates stayed below 5 per cent CAGR over the same period. Despite the high growth, the industry's penetration rate slipped from 4.2 per cent in 2022 to 4 per cent in 2023, indicating that progress has not been at par with India's economic growth.

"Operational inefficiencies, profitability issues,

KEY TAKEAWAYS INDIAN INSURANCE SECTOR RECORDED A GROSS WRITTEN PREMIUM EXCEEDING \$130 billion (11 PER CENT CAGR) IN FY 2020-23.



Premiums growth outpaced Asian peers such as Thailand and China.

Despite the high growth, the industry's penetration rate slipped from 4.2 percent in 2022 to 4 percent in 2023.

gaps in coverage, limited regulatory support that stifles innovation, and rapidly evolving risks are all significant challenges that hinder the industry's performance. Additionally, limited financial literacy and suboptimal advisory services have exacerbated concerns about mis-selling in the market," said the report.

The report showcases findings from a survey conducted in August 2024, with responses from 5,000 insurance customers and 500 agents across life, health, and motor insur-

ance, across Tier 1/2/3 cities in India. It noted that listed life insurers have been unable to generate sufficient returns to cover their cost of equity in the past two to three years raising questions about the long-term viability of their business model. Despite achieving a compound annual growth rate of more than 17 per cent in new business premiums, the top five private life insurance companies in India have experienced tepid net profit growth of under 2 per cent over five years.

BEAR MARKET

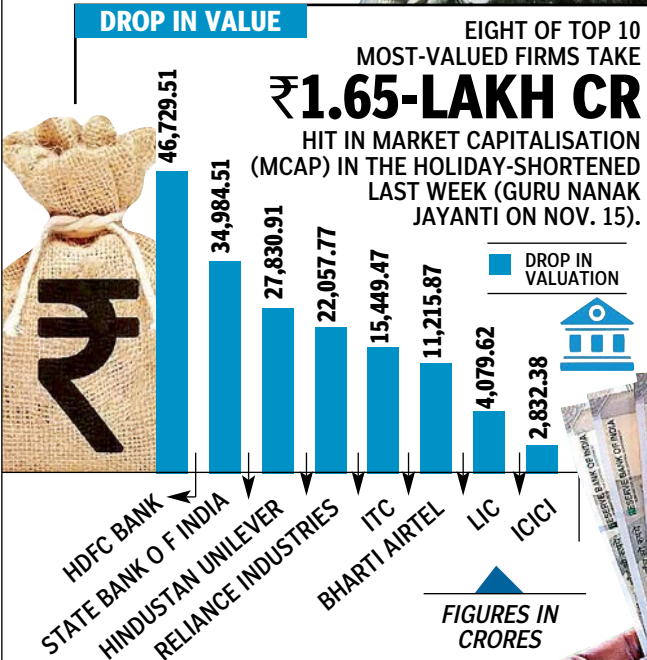
FOREIGN INVESTORS PULLED OUT ₹22,420 CRORE FROM THE INDIAN EQUITY MARKET IN NOVEMBER SO FAR. REASONS BEING:

- High domestic stock valuations
- Increasing allocations to China
- Rise in US dollar's value.
- US president-elect Donald Trump intends to raise tariffs on Indian imports, which could have influenced investors.



THIS COMES following a net withdrawal of ₹94,017 cr in October, which was the worst monthly outflow.

In September 2024, foreign investors made a nine-month high investment of ₹57,724 cr



FII trading activity, global cues to drive equity mkts

New Delhi, Nov. 17 Trading activity of foreign investors and global trends will be the driving factors for the equity markets in a holiday-shortened week ahead, according to analysts.

Leading stock exchanges BSE and NSE have declared a trading holiday on Nov. 20 for assembly elections in Maharashtra. The election results, along with key global economic indicators, including US bond yields, dollar index performance, US unemployment claims, flash manufacturing and

services PMI data, and Japan's inflation data, will be pivotal in shaping market direction.

"High US bond yields and a strengthening dollar post-election have impacted emerging markets like India, and activity of foreign institutional investors (FIIs) remains a key factor, influencing Indian equities in the near term," said Praveesh Gour, sr technical analyst, Swastika Investment,

"With the earnings season largely concluded, attention will shift back to FII flows. FIIs have been

on a selling spree for more than a month. Traders will keep a close watch on global market trends," said Ajit Mishra SVP, research, Religare Broking.

Last week, the BSE benchmark gauge Sensex fell 1,906.01 points. It fell 8,397.94 points or 9.76 per cent from its all-time high, and the Nifty has also lost 2,744.65 points (10.4 per cent) from the peak. Sensex hit its peak of 85,978.25 on Sept. 27 this year, and the Nifty also hit a record 26,277.35 on the same day. — PTI

LOGIN | ISSUES No pressure from anyone and there is no deal of any kind, the duo said

Siblings to transfer jiohotstar.com to RIL

FC CORRESPONDENT with bureau inputs HYDERABAD, NOV. 17

Dubai-based Jainam and Jivika, aged 13 and 10 years respectively, have decided to handover rights of their jiohotstar.com domain to Reliance "free of cost".

The website ID was registered by a Delhi-based application developer last year amid talks of a potential merger between Reliance Jio and Disney Hotstar.

In October, the developer said on social media that

he wanted funding for his higher studies at Cambridge University of he were to give the domain's ownership to Reliance Jio.

In their last post on the domain, Jainam and Jivika wrote: "Reliance IP legal team has approached us, and we will be transferring this domain to them, free of cost. There have been some rumours online suggesting that there is a payment or deal involved, but we

want to make it clear—this is not true. Just as we said in our last video, there is no pressure from anyone, and there is no deal of any kind."

They ended their note with words on 'Seva' (service) and

kindness. The Dubai-based siblings had bought the jiohotstar.com domain after Reliance had declined the application developer's offer.

In a video, the siblings said there is "no pressure from anyone" and there was no "deal of any kind". "This is purely a transfer of the domain from our side because we believe it could be useful for them. Whether or not they choose to use it is up to them," the message added. In their previous message,

the siblings said they had received numerous offers, including some genuine ones offering significant amounts. However, they had said that the domain was not for sale. While announcing the "journey with jiohotstar.com is coming to an end, the duo said they are waiting for a draft from the Reliance legal team for the transfer. Reliance last week merged its media assets with the India business of global media giant The Walt Disney, forming a joint venture worth ₹70,352 crore (\$8.5 billion).



SHORT TAKES

Shaw included in Mumbai squad

Mumbai: Shreyas Iyer was on Sunday named captain of the 17-member Mumbai squad which also features Prithvi Shaw for the Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy to be played from November 23 to December 15. The squad also features Ajinkya Rahane who has been captaining Mumbai in the Ranji Trophy with the first half of the competition ending recently, and the comeback batter Siddhesh Lad, who has also been among runs. Iyer has been in red-hot form this Ranji Trophy season as he looks to make his way back into the Indian side, scoring 452 runs at 90.40 with two centuries.

Each of the tons that Iyer has made this year have been big hundreds, as the right-hander smashed a quickfire 233 (228 balls, 24x4s, 9x6s) against Odisha before making 142 (190 balls, 12x4s, 4x6s) against Maharashtra to set up Mumbai's two consecutive wins. — *PTI*
Mumbai squad: Shreyas Iyer (c), Prithvi Shaw, Angkrish Raghuvanshi, Jay Bista, Ajinkya Rahane, Siddhesh Lad, Suryansh Shedge, Sairaj Patil, Hardik Tamore (wk), Aakash Anand (wk), Shams Mulani, Himanshu Singh, Tanus Kotian, Shardul Thakur, Mohit Avasthi, Royston Dias, Juned Khan.

Carlsen clinches double in style

Kolkata: World No. 1 Magnus Carlsen completed a remarkable double at the Tata Steel Chess India tournament, clinching the blitz title with a round to spare here on Sunday. Just days after securing the rapid title, the 33-year-old Norwegian maestro produced a scintillating performance, including a dramatic turnaround against Indian prodigy Arjun Erigaisi in the penultimate round, to reach an unassailable 12 points. Carlsen capped off the tournament in style, defeating Vidit Gujrathi in the final round to finish with three consecutive wins and a total of 13 points to claim the blitz crown. This marks his second double victory in Kolkata, replicating his triumph from 2019. Filipino-American Grandmaster Wesley So staged a phenomenal comeback, winning six straight games and seven of his last eight, to secure second place with 11.5 points. The Indian contingent performed admirably, with Erigaisi (10.5 points) claiming third place, followed by R Praggnanandhaa (9.5) in fourth, and Vidit Gujrathi (9) in fifth. — *PTI*

India face familiar rivals Malaysia

Hyderabad: Still looking for the first win of the year as well as under head coach Manolo Marquez, India face familiar rivals Malaysia in an international friendly football match here on Monday. India will be bolstered by the return of senior player and central defender Sandesh Jhingan almost 10 months after last playing for the national team at the AFC Asian Cup in January. He has recovered from his anterior cruciate ligament injury. The Indian team has played 10 matches so far in the year, losing six of them and drawing four. They have so far played three games under Manolo, who was appointed head coach in July in place of Igor Stimac, and lost once while drawing twice. India drew against Mauritius and lost 0-3 to Syria in the Intercontinental Cup in September at the Gachibowli Stadium, the venue of Monday's match. — *PTI*

Tijl wins LGB F4 overall title

Coimbatore: Dark Don Racing's Tijl Rao capped a brilliant run to his season as he sealed the drivers' championship in the LGB Formula 4 category in the 27th edition of the JK Tyre FMSCI National Racing Championship here on Sunday. On a sunny day at the Kari Motor Speedway, the 22-year Tijl was all smiles as he had opened a massive lead even before the last round was held on the outskirts of Coimbatore. Even though seasoned racer Saran Vikram surprised one and all by winning the first and second races, Tijl did not mind it. He had realised there was no point in attempting anything too hard as he was assured of the overall trophy. "This has been a brilliant season for me and I am happy with the way it went about. I wish to thank my team and also JK Tyre for putting up such a great show," said Tijl, who comes from Bengaluru. As runner-up in the 2023 season, Tijl had gone back home and worked hard and to a plan.

BOOM TIME!

Bumrah handed captaincy, KL set to open in Perth

Perth, Nov. 17: KL Rahul allayed concerns surrounding his fitness with an extended net session here on Sunday, indicating his readiness to open in the first Test against Australia as skipper Rohit Sharma will join the team only in Adelaide after spending time with his newborn baby. Pace spearhead Jasprit Bumrah will lead the team in Rohit's absence. Rahul had left the field for medical attention on Friday after sustaining a blow on his elbow by pacer Prasidh Krishna while batting in an intra-squad practice match at the WACA ground.

The first of the five Tests in the Border-Gavaskar Trophy will begin at the Optus Stadium from November 22, while the second Test at Adelaide starts from December 6.

In all likelihood, the team management will pair Rahul with Yashasvi Jaiswal, and the 32-year-old's recovery has come as a massive relief after Shubman Gill was ruled out of the first Test with a fractured thumb.

Rahul batted without any major discomfort for a considerable time and participated in all the drills during the three-hour net session on this day.

"I had got a bad hit on Day 1 of the game. I am feeling good today, getting ready for the first game."

"Happy that I could come here early and get used to the conditions," Rahul said in a video shared by BCCI on X.

"Yeah, I got a lot of time to prepare for this series and I am excited and looking forward to it," he added.

In fact, head coach Gautam Gambhir too had indicated a promotion up the order for Rahul during the pre-departure press meet in Mumbai in the event of Rohit missing the opening Test.

Team Physio Kamlesh Jain said Rahul has responded well to the treatment.

"The key for us was to ensure that there is no fracture there. It's 48 hours since the impact and he has responded well to treatments. He should be ready to go," said Jain in the video.

Yogesh Parmar, the support physio, said the treatment was based on "controlling the pain."

"I took him for X-ray and scan and based upon the report I was more confident that he should be fine."

"It was a matter of controlling the pain and giving him some confidence. From a medical point of view, he is absolutely fine," said Parmar.

The Indian team, meanwhile, finished its block of training at the WACA ground and the visitors will now move to the Optus Stadium for match drills from Tuesday, after a scheduled rest day on Monday. — *PTI*



Jasprit Bumrah

Harshit, Prasidh vie for 3rd pacer's slot in Perth

New Delhi, Nov. 17: Delhi speedster Harshit Rana could pose a strong challenge to senior teammate Prasidh Krishna as they battle it out for the third pacer's slot in the India playing XI for the opening Test against Australia in Perth, starting on November 22.

Harshit, who is only 10 first-class matches old, has reportedly been brilliant with his consistent pace over 140 clicks and his ability to extract good bounce has also impressed the bigwigs.

During the India nets at the WACA ground in Perth, Harshit hurried the batters with his raw pace on a number of occasions.

On the other hand, India's bowling coach Morne Morkel spent considerable time with the Karnataka man, who was impressive during the

● Mohammed Shami's international comeback might take place in the Border-Gavaskar Trophy but it could happen during the second half of the series.

recent A series against Australia at Mackay and Melbourne.

Prasidh has experience of playing two Tests and can also hit the top of off-stump.

SHAMI NOT TO BE RUSHED TO AUSTRALIA

Mohammed Shami's international comeback might take place in the Border-Gavaskar Trophy but it could happen during the second half of the series.

Those privy to developments said BCCI medical team and national selec-

tors want Shami to play a few more competitive games in Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy to check if his body is holding up after multiple games even if it's a white ball format tournament.

"Bengal team for Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy will be selected tomorrow. If Shami is not going for Border Gavaskar Trophy, I believe he will be available for Bengal," head coach Laxmi Ratan Shukla said.

It is understood that the selection committee doesn't want to take chances by fast-tracking Shami after just one Ranji Trophy match having completed an extensive rehabilitation programme.

However, Shami, who appeared in a competitive match after a year, was impressive in his outing for Bengal. — *PTI*

SMITH REVEALS HIS PLANS TO TACKLE ASHWIN

Melbourne, Nov. 17: Australian batting talisman Steve Smith wants to adopt a proactive approach against Ravichandran Ashwin in the upcoming Border-Gavaskar Trophy to avoid his struggles against the Indian spinner during the 2020-21 series.

Ashwin had nicked off Smith thrice during that rubber, and later in 2023 the Indian off-spinner dismissed the Aussie twice as he could only make 22 runs against his old foe.

"I don't like getting out to off-spin in Australia. But he's also a very good bowler and he came in with some decent plans. There were a couple of occasions where he got on top of me," Smith told the *Sydney Morning Herald*.

"But then I got on top of him at the SCG when I was a bit more proactive (Smith made 131 and 81 at Sydney). So, that's the key for me. Just be proactive against him and not let him settle and bowl the way he wants to," he added.

Ashwin's Test bowling average stands at a modest 42.15 in Australia compared to his home average of 21.57.

Smith hoped to land the first blow on the 38-year-old to gain an early upper hand in the five-match series. — *PTI*

MCGRATH URGES AUSSIES TO 'GO HARD' ON KOHLI

Melbourne, Nov. 17: Pace legend Glenn McGrath feels Australia have the "ammunition" to target an "emotional" Virat Kohli, who will be under pressure if he gets off to a poor start at the five-match Test series for the Border-Gavaskar Trophy, starting in Perth from November 22.

India have won the last four Test series against Australia, including two Down Under. However, they head into the much-anticipated five-Test assignment on the back of a 0-3 series whitewash at the hands of New Zealand at home.

"Without a doubt, especially after coming off a 3-0 loss against New Zealand, you've got plenty of ammunition to back yourself up," *Fox Cricket* quoted McGrath as saying on *CODE Sports*.

"So put the pressure on them and see if they're up for it," he added.

Kohli, who has been India's batting mainstay for over a decade, has struggled with form in Test cricket recently. In the six matches he's played this year, he has averaged just a mere 22.72. — *PTI*

ASIAN CHAMPIONS | TROPHY HOCKEY

Deepika stars as India enter semis

Rajgir (Bihar), Nov. 17: Defending champions India stormed into the semifinals of the Women's Asian Champions Trophy with an unbeaten record, defeating Japan 3-0 here on Sunday.

Continuing her stellar form, star striker Deepika netted a quickfire brace from penalty corners in the final quarter to seal the victory, following vice-captain Navneet Kaur's opener in the 37th minute.

With this win, India topped the league stage with maximum 15 points from five matches, ahead of Olympic silver medalists China (12 points).

India will take on fourth-placed Japan in the semifinal on Tuesday, while China will play third-placed Malaysia in the other last-four game.

Deepika, the tournament's leading scorer, now boasts 10 goals, including four field goals, five penalty corners, and one penalty stroke, underscoring her dominance.

In the day's other matches, Malaysia beat Thailand 2-0, while China defeated South Korea by an identical margin.

The Indians secured their first scoring chance in the form of back-to-back penalty corners in the eighth minute but Deepika's flick from the second effort was brilliantly saved by Japanese goalkeeper Yu Kudo.

India earned another penalty corner in the 13th

● India will take on fourth-placed Japan in the semifinal on Tuesday, while China will play third-placed Malaysia in the other last-four game.

● Continuing her stellar form, star striker Deepika netted a quickfire brace from penalty corners in the final quarter to seal the victory, following vice-captain Navneet Kaur's opener in the 37th minute.

minute but yet again wasted the chance.

The Indians continued to dominate and secured their fourth penalty corner in the 25th minute but once again Kudo rose to the occasion and made three brilliant saves to deny the hosts.

A minute after the change of ends, Kudo again came to Japan's rescue to deny Deepika.

India eventually broke the deadlock in the 37th minute through Navneet's brilliant reverse hit to the second post.

The Indians continued their domination and earned three back-to-back penalty corners in the 47th minute and star dragflicker Deepika finally found the back of the net with a powerful low dragflick to open her account.

— *PTI*

India's Deepika (right) celebrates after scoring against Japan during their Women's Asian Champions Trophy match in Rajgir, Bihar, on Sunday.

NATIONS | LEAGUE FOOTBALL

DUTCH IN QUARTERS AS GERMANY HIT RECORD 7

Paris, Nov. 17: Netherlands outclassed Hungary with a 4-0 victory in their winner-takes-all Nations League encounter on Saturday while record-setting Germany hammered Bosnia and Herzegovina 7-0.

Netherlands and Hungary went into the match tied on five points each and with the winner set to join Germany in ensuring their progress from Group A3 to the quarter-finals.

First-half penalties by Wout Weghorst and Cody Gakpo sent the *Oranje* on their way, before Denzel Dumfries and Teun Koopmeiners made the game safe in the second period. "There are always things we can improve upon," Dutch captain Virgil van Dijk told SBS6.

"But in the end, we deserved to win."

The match at the Johan Cruyff Arena was briefly interrupted in the seventh minute following a medical emergency on the Hungarian bench.

The referee stopped play for some 10 minutes while Hungary's assistant coach Adam Szalai received treatment, shielded from view by

huddled players and staff members, as well as a large white sheet.

Szalai, 36, was stretched off to applause from spectators and players alike, the Hungarian FA later released a statement saying he was "conscious" and in a "stable condition" at an Amsterdam hospital.

"It was a scare of course," Gakpo told NOS. "Fortunately, I just heard he regained consciousness on the pitch. Things like this are more important than football."

'GOOD FUN'

Germany cemented their spot at the top of the group with a 7-0 win over Bosnia — the heaviest in the six-year history of the Nations League.

"It was good fun tonight. After a couple of goals we did the work defensively and then everything came together offensively. The more that happens, the more fun we have on the pitch," German attacker Jamal Musiala told UEFA's website.

Musiala opened the floodgates after two minutes with a header from Joshua Kimmich's cross. — *AFP*

Nadal aims for winning Davis Cup farewell

Malaga (Spain), Nov. 17: Spanish superstar Rafael Nadal is aiming to cap his emotional farewell from tennis with another Davis Cup triumph in Malaga next week.

Nadal, 38, has battled injuries over the past few years and the extent to which he can compete for his country is unknown, but all eyes will be on the 22-time Grand Slam winner.

The veteran led Spain to victory in Madrid five years ago — the last time they won the trophy and Nadal's fourth.

However, he admitted Saturday that his role in Malaga may be limited to doubles rather than singles.

"First off, we'll have to see how I feel in training



Spain's Rafael Nadal during a training session in Malaga, Spain, on Saturday. — *AP*

and, if I really don't feel I have a chance to win the singles, I'll be the first to not want to play," Nadal said in comments to the

Spanish Federation (RFET). "If I don't feel ready, I'll be the first to speak to the captain (David Ferrer).

I've already told him on a few occasions not to make any decisions based on the fact that it's my last week as a professional tennis

player." French Open and Wimbledon champion Carlos Alcaraz will be Spain's leading player and his presence offers Nadal a real chance of retiring on a high note.

"Probably one of the most special tournaments that I'm going to play. Last tournament of Rafa, I'll be able to be next to him in the last moments on a tennis court for him," said Alcaraz who played alongside Nadal in doubles at the Olympics in Paris this year.

"I think it's most important for Rafa, for his last tournament. I really want him to retire with a title. It's going to be really, really emotional and a really special tournament for me." — *AFP*