

## ASSEMBLY POLL RESULTS

# HAT-TRICK FOR BJP, CONSOLATION FOR CONG

New Delhi, Dec 03 (PTI):

The BJP swept Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Chhattisgarh on Sunday inflicting a resounding defeat on the Congress to tighten its stranglehold in the Hindi heartland, in a big boost for Prime Minister Narendra Modi and setting the tone for the 2024 Lok Sabha elections. In some consolation for the Congress in the face of the saffron wave after it lost Rajasthan and Chhattisgarh, the party ousted the Bharat Rashtra Samiti (BRS) in Telangana to make it 3-1 for the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) in the lat-

est round of Assembly elections billed as a semi-final before next year's poll showdown. Counting of votes in Mizoram will be taken up on Monday. Ruling MP for 18 years, a well entrenched BJP managed to stave off anti-incumbency in a shot in the arm for four-time chief minister Shivraj Singh Chauhan and dashing the hopes of a resurgent Congress helmed by veteran and former CM Kamal Nath. Winning 141 seats and leading in 24, the BJP got a simple majority and could get two-thirds majority in a House of 230. Congress

bagged 45 and was leading in 19. Suspense also mounted as to who will be the BJP's chief minister in any of the three Hindi heartland states. Clouds of gulf, shouts of Jai Shri Ram, joyful jigs and crackers were the sights and sounds of celebration in BJP offices with party workers and leaders unanimous in attributing the win to Modi's "guarantees". "The election results show people accept Prime Minister Narendra Modi's guarantee of delivering on guarantees," BJP leader and Union Minister Pralhad Joshi said. Modi turned on the heat

on the Congress over its poll guarantees by projecting himself as a leader who has delivered on the promises made by him to help the common man meet his aspirations. "Modi Yaani Har Guarantee Poori Hone Ki Guarantee (Modi means the guarantee to fulfill every guarantee)," he had said in an article last week. Free food grain, income assistance for farmers, housing for all, 100 per cent electrification of villages, and tap water to every home, were listed by the BJP as some of Modi's guarantees in Chhattisgarh.



BJP workers and supporters celebrate the party's lead in Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Chhattisgarh during counting of votes, at the party headquarters, in New Delhi, Sunday.

ASSEMBLY ELECTIONS 2023	
<b>Chhattisgarh</b>	
<b>TRENDS</b>	
Seats <b>90/90</b>	
Bharatiya Janata Party	<b>53</b>
Indian National Congress	<b>35</b>
Others	<b>2</b>

ASSEMBLY ELECTIONS 2023	
<b>Madhya Pradesh</b>	
<b>RESULTS &amp; TRENDS</b>	
Seats <b>230/230</b>	
Bharatiya Janata Party	<b>165</b>
Indian National Congress	<b>63</b>
Others	<b>2</b>

ASSEMBLY ELECTIONS 2023	
<b>RAJASTHAN</b>	
<b>RESULTS &amp; TRENDS</b>	
Seats <b>199/199</b>	
Bharatiya Janata Party	<b>114</b>
Indian National Congress	<b>70</b>
Independent	<b>7</b>
Others	<b>8</b>

ASSEMBLY ELECTIONS 2023	
<b>TELANGANA</b>	
<b>RESULTS &amp; TRENDS</b>	
Seats <b>118/118</b>	
Indian National Congress	<b>63</b>
Bharat Rashtra Samithi	<b>40</b>
Bharatiya Janata Party	<b>9</b>
Others	<b>6</b>

- ### STAR CANDIDATES TO WATCH
- | BJP                         | CONGRESS                     |
|-----------------------------|------------------------------|
| 1. Raman Singh (win)        | 1. Bhupesh Baghel (win)      |
| 2. Brijmohan Agrawal (win)  | 2. Kawi Lakhma (win)         |
| 3. Amar Agrawal (win)       | 3. T S Singhdev (lose)       |
| 4. Gomti Sai (win)          | 4. Amarjit Bhagat (lose)     |
| 5. O P Choushary (win)      | 5. Ravindra Choubey (lose)   |
| 6. Renuka Singh (win)       | 6. Mohammed Akbar (lose)     |
| 7. Ajay Chandrakar (win)    | 7. Mohan Markam (lose)       |
| 8. Arun Sao (win)           | 8. Jai Singh Agrawal (lose)  |
| 9. Anuj Sharma (win)        | 9. Rudra Guru (lose)         |
| 10. Dharamjit Singh (win)   | 10. Tamradhwaj Sahu (lose)   |
| 11. Ramvihar Netam (win)    | 11. Shiv Daharia (lose)      |
| 12. Vishnu Deo Sai (win)    | 12. Chaya Verma (loser)      |
| 13. Dharamlal Kaushik (win) | 13. Dhanendra Sahu (loser)   |
| 14. PP Pandey (lose)        | 14. Devendra Bahadur (loser) |

## Poll outcome win for 'Aatmanirbharta'

### PM attacks Oppn's caste census push

New Delhi, Dec 03:

PM Modi said that BJP's hat-trick of wins in assembly elections has guaranteed hat-trick of wins in Lok Sabha elections.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday said that the assembly election results are a win for 'Aatmanirbharta' and 'Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikaas'.

Addressing jubilant party workers at the BJP headquarters in the national capital, he said, "Today's victory in assembly elections is historic and unprecedented. It is the victory of 'Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas' and self-reliant India". In an apparent attack on



the caste census push by the Opposition parties, Prime Minister Modi claimed that "several at-

tempts were made to divide country on caste lines." He reiterated that women, youth, poor and farmers are the only castes in the country and their empowerment would further strengthen the country. "But, I kept on saying that for me four castes are supreme - and they are women power, youth, farmers, and the poor. The country will be strengthened if these four will be empowered," he said.

Prime Minister Modi said the incumbent parties were thrown out of power in Rajasthan, Chhattisgarh, and Telangana "because it was against the youth and had scams in its tenure." "The voter needs a well-defined roadmap to improve his lifestyle... India's voter knows that when India moves forward then the state moves forward and

the life of every family improves. So, the voter is choosing the BJP continuously," he said. Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday hailed the Bharatiya Janata Party's big win in the assembly polls as a victory for his government's agenda of self-reliant India, asserting that its hat-trick in the states is a guarantee of its hat-trick of Lok Sabha poll wins in 2024. "The results show popular support for our battle against corruption," he told a crowd of cheering supporters at the BJP headquarters in New Delhi, adding that they have served a lesson to the Congress and the opposition's INDIA bloc that mere collecting some dynasts on dais may make for a good photograph but cannot win people's confidence.

## BJP defies exit polls, secures majority in Chh'garh

### Oust Cong Govt

Raipur, Dec 03:

Chhattisgarh assembly elections saw an unprecedented turn of events after the BJP, which was trailing in initial trends, bounced back to secure a majority in the state. The BJP has either won/leading on 55 seats while the Congress is limited to 33 seats. The exit polls have predicted a clear majority for Congress, however, the results proved otherwise.

The campaigning for the 90 seats of the Chhattisgarh assembly saw both parties using their star campaigners including senior leaders like Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Amit Shah, JP Nadda and Congress MP Rahul Gandhi, Priyanka Gandhi Vadra and Mallikarjun Kharge. While the Congress ousted the BJP in 2018 after 10 years of rule, the saffron party is keen on making a return to power in the state that went to the polls in two phases. The promises made by the BJP, which it promoted as Modi ki Guarantee 2023, seemed to have worked in

its favour in the tribal-dominated state, where it is poised to win a thumping majority.

In the 2018 assembly polls, the Congress had registered a landslide victory largely because of a "strong" anti-incumbency against the then BJP dispensation and the grand old party's promise of freebies and welfare measures.

The BJP this time made populist promises in its manifesto, titled Modi ki Guarantee 2023' for Chhattisgarh. They included procurement of 21 quintals of paddy per acre at Rs 3,100 per quintal, and annual financial assistance of Rs 12,000 to married women under the Mahtari Vandan Yojana.

Expressing gratitude to the "janta janardhan" for choosing the BJP in Chhattisgarh, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said the results "indicate that the people of India are firmly with politics of good governance and development".

Union minister Amit Shah said, "Tribal, poor, farmer sisters and brothers of Chhattisgarh have expressed faith in PM Modi and blessed BJP with a huge majority."

### HEARTBREAK CMS



Combo photo of BRS leader K. Chandrashekar Rao, and Congress leaders Bhupesh Baghel and Ashok Gehlot, who lost their positions as chief ministers of Telangana, Chhattisgarh and Rajasthan respectively after the results of 2023 elections to the Legislative Assemblies of the states.

### Humbly accept mandate; battle of ideology will continue: Rahul

New Delhi, Dec 03 (PTI):

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Sunday said his party humbly accepts the mandate of Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh and Rajasthan - the battle of ideology will continue. "I am very thankful to the people of Telangana - we will definitely fulfil the promise of making 'Prajalu Telangana'. Heartfelt thanks to all the workers for their hard work and support," the former Congress chief said.

oust the BRS from Telangana on Sunday. In a post in Hindi on X, Gandhi said, "We humbly accept the mandate of Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh and Rajasthan - the battle of ideology will continue." "I am very thankful to the people of Telangana - we will definitely fulfil the promise of making 'Prajalu Telangana'. Heartfelt thanks to all the workers for their hard work and support," the former Congress chief said.

### Modi magic dashes Cong's revival in Hindi heartland

New Delhi, Dec 03:

The assembly poll results on Sunday have delivered a ringing endorsement of the Bharatiya Janata Party's strategy centred on Prime Minister Narendra Modi's appeal and governance plank, quashing the Congress' hopes of a revival in the Hindi heartland and boosting the impression that the ruling party is favourite to retain power for a third straight term in 2024. The BJP had taken the gambit of not projecting any chief ministerial face and built its campaign around grander narratives involving the Modi government's works despite misgivings in some quarters, as the five state polls came months after the Karnataka elections where a similar strategy came unstuck.

## In Chh'garh, Modi ki Guarantee' trumps Cong's promises of freebies

Raipur, Dec 03:

Ahead of the Chhattisgarh assembly elections, both the Congress and BJP tried hard to woo farmers, women and the poor with populist schemes.

It seems the promises made by the BJP, which it promoted as Modi ki Guarantee 2023', worked in its favour as it is all set to return to power in the tribal-dominated state with a thumping majority.

In the 2018 assembly polls, the Congress had registered a landslide victory largely because of a "strong" anti-incumbency against the then BJP dispensation and the grand old party's promise of freebies and welfare measures. As per the latest trends of counting of votes on



Sunday, BJP had won 25 seats and was leading in 29, while Congress had bagged 17 constituencies and was ahead in 19. As the BJP began its election campaign this time, it faced the herculean task of countering the Bhupesh Baghel government's pro-farmers, pro-tribals and pro-poor schemes, which the Congress was banking on to retain the state.



# CENTRAL Chronicle

Raipur, Monday, December 04, 2023 | Pages 12 | Price ₹ 3.00 | City Edition | Fastest growing English Daily of Chhattisgarh



### Brijmohan wins from South for 8th time, Munat from West

Raipur, Dec 03: BJP has won all seven Vidhan Sabha seats in Raipur district of Chhattisgarh. In Raipur South Assembly seat, BJP candidate Brijmohan Agrawal defeated Mahant Ramsundar Das of Congress. In the West Assembly constituency, former BJP minister Rajesh Munat defeated Vikas Upadhyay of Congress whereas in Dharsiwan seat, BJP candidate Chhattisgarhi hero Anuj Sharma became MLA for the first time as he defeated Congress candidate Chhaya Verma. Indrakumar Sahu of BJP won Abhanpur seat by 15,554 votes. In Raipur South BJP candidate and former minister Brijmohan Agrawal won for the eight

time, defeating Congress candidate Mahant Ramsundar Das. BJP made a clear sweep in all seven Vidhan Sabha seats of Raipur district, including four that of Raipur region. BJP's stalwart Brijmohan Agrawal won with record 67,851 votes against his arch rival Dr Mahant Ramsundar Das of INC getting just 41412 votes from Raipur (South) VS seat. Similarly the BJP's former Minister Rajesh Munat of Raipur (West) getting 98938 votes won with 41229 votes against his rival Vikas Upadhyay getting 57709 votes. Purandhar Mishra of BJP from Raipur (North) getting 54,279, a fresh face from BJP, won with 23,054 votes against his rival Kuldeep Singh Juneja getting 31,225 votes. The independent candidate Ajit Kukreja, dissident from Congress acted as spoiler for INC candidate Juneja, as he got 22939 votes and lost the elec-

## Lotus blooms on all seven seats in Raipur district



From Raipur (rural), the BJP candidate Motilal Sahu got total 1103032 votes and won with 35750 votes against his rival Pankaj Sharma of INC getting 77282 votes. From here Dharendra Sahu of Johar Chhattisgarh Party (JCP) was third in the list with 5485 votes losing with 107547 votes. BJP's bet on a new face in Dharsiwan has proved correct and BJP candidate Anuj Sharma became MLA for the first time as he defeated Congress candidate Chhaya Verma. From Dharshiwa Vidhan Sabha seat, BJP candidate and Chollywood cine actor Anuj Sharma getting record 107283 votes won with thumping 44,343 votes against INC's Chhaya Verma receiving 62940 votes. The BJP candidate from Abhanpur VS seat Indra Kumar Sahu getting 93,295 votes won with 15,554 votes against Dhanendra Sahu getting 7742 votes. Guru Khushwant Saheb of BJP won from Arang VS seat with 16538 votes and getting 94039 votes against Dr Shiv Kumar Daharia of INC getting 77501 votes.

## BJP's got mileage from tribal belt in its victory

### From 12 VS seats of Bastar and 14 of Surguja district Majority of Baghel's Ministers lost election

Raipur, Dec 03: Congress got a major blow in Chhattisgarh Vidhan Sabha 2023 election, despite project the CM's face and BJP got the mileage projecting 'Lotus' and PM Narendra Modi as its face before the electorate. Set aside this it was victory in majority of the tribal

seats of Bastar and Surguja Vidhan Sabha, area that led BJP to forming its government in the state. Majority of the CM Baghel's cabinet Ministers also lost in this election and this speaks of people's response to their mal-governance and mismanagement in the departments under their leadership. It is notable here that in Chhattisgarh it is known fact that any party leading in 12 VS seats of Bastar district and 14 that of Surguja, the tribal belt of the region, always forms the government in the

state. This time also BJP got majority of VS seats of Bastar and Surguja and gain mileage over Congress, which in the last 2018 election had won due to gaining majority in these seats to form its government. The BJP got 54 out of total 90 VS seat and Congress has to settle for 35 VS seat and GGP getting one seat. Majority of the 14 cabinet Ministers of the Baghel's government has also lost in this year's elections. The Ministers of Baghel government who lost their seats included Baghel's favourite

Mohammed Akbar from Kawardha, Ravindra Choubey from Saja, Tamradhwaj Sahu from Durg (Rural), Jaisingh Agrawal from Korba, TS Singh Deo from Ambikapur, Shiv Kumar Daharia from Abhanpur, Mohan Markam, Amarjeet Bhagat from Seetapur, Rudrakumar Guru from Navagarh. The three ministers from Baghel's government who won included Umesh Patel from Kharsia, Anila Bhedia from Doundilohara and Kawasi Lakhma from Bastar region.

## We accept people's mandate: Selja



Raipur, Dec 03: Chhattisgarh Congress in-charge Kumari Selja said that the mandate of the people of Chhattisgarh is acceptable. The Congress government worked for the development of every section. Addressing a

press conference held at the official residence of Minister Shiv Dahria regarding assembly election result she said that Congress will continue to fight the battle of the poor and deprived classes. 'We hope that the BJP government lives up to the expectations of the people', she said. She also said that Congress will work as a strong opposition and support the good works of the government. Regarding the election results, Selja said that Congress will review what was missing and after that it will start preparing for the Lok Sabha elections.

## Lab incharge of Shri Nakoda Ispat arrested on fraud charges

Raipur, Dec 03: Mahendra Kumar Nirmalkar, lab incharge of Shri Nakoda Ispat Limited Company, has been arrested by Pandari police station in connection with fraud of Rs 33 lakh 61 thousand 871. Other accused involved in the case are being traced. Company director Ajay Kumar Dubey lodged a report on the matter. According to him, SMS Laboratory in-charge Mahendra Kumar Nirmalkar along with representatives of M/s Satya Power and Hospital Limited office VR Plaza 1st floor Link Road Bilaspur, M/s Prime Metal Industries office J-567 Janta Colony Gudhiyari and other vendor organizations committed irregularities in lab report

by taking money. By colluding with both the buying companies, they falsified the lab reports and took crores of rupees by declaring the poor and non-standard goods as good and standard in the report. It has been confirmed that the bribe amount of Rs 33 lakh 61 thousand 871 has been received in the bank account of Mahendra Kumar Nirmalkar and his wife Usha Nirmalkar. After the report, the police started investigating the case. During investigation, information was received regarding Mahendra's presence in Raipur, on which he was arrested. Two mobile phones and a bike related to the incident have been seized from the possession of the accused.

## BJP workers reach BJP office riding on bulldozers to celebrate victory

Raipur, Dec 03: Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) supporters engaged in celebration as results of the assembly elections show party victory in Chhattisgarh. BJP workers were seen bursting fire-crackers, exchanging sweets and playing instruments in front of the party office. According to party's senior leaders victory is a result of "people's trust in Prime Minister Narendra



Modi's development guarantee". Enthusiasm was writ large on faces of the BJP workers as they reached party office to celebrate victory in assembly election. A large number of BJP workers reached the party office riding on bulldozers. Amid bursting of fire crackers and distribution of sweets BJP workers raised slogans in praise of Prime Minister Narendra Modi regarding victory.

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# CENTRAL Chronicle

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## Decisive Triumph

### BJP's Dominance in Hindi Heartland

The assembly elections in Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, and Chhattisgarh have reshaped India's political landscape, firmly establishing the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) as the dominant force in the Hindi heartland. In the high-stakes semifinal showdown preceding the Lok Sabha elections, political fortunes took an unexpected twist, leaving the Congress Party in shock and the nation at large in awe. What was anticipated to be a closely contested battle turned out to be a resounding victory for the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP). With a convincing display of leadership and a strategic electoral sweep in Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan, the BJP emerged as the clear frontrunner. The enthusiasm surrounding the elections also saw Chhattisgarh firmly embracing the BJP, further solidifying their dominance. Yet, amidst the sea of saffron, the Congress managed to find solace in the southern state of Telangana. The electoral verdict is a resounding endorsement of the BJP's charismatic leader, Prime Minister Narendra Modi, and a testament to their effective communication strategies. At the same time, the Congress Party's struggle for relevance is evident, with only a glimmer of hope in Telangana. In Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan's victory is a testament to his leadership and the success of his government's welfare schemes, such as Ladli Lakshmi and Ladli Behna, aimed at supporting women and youth, along with initiatives for farmers and the impoverished. In Rajasthan, the BJP is set to return to power, continuing the state's tradition of alternating between the two major parties. The Congress's internal rift between Ashok Gehlot, the incumbent chief minister, and Sachin Pilot, his deputy, weakened the party's performance. While the BJP's choice for the next chief minister is pending, the transition is expected to be smooth. Chhattisgarh, on the other hand, delivered a surprise as the BJP secured victory over the Congress, challenging the latter's hopes for another term. This outcome reflects the public's faith in Prime Minister Modi's work and commitments, highlighting the shortcomings of Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel's promises. Telangana offered some solace for the Congress, with the party set to seize power from the Bharat Rashtra Samithi (BRS). The results underscore the intricacies of regional politics in Telangana and may see Congress's Revanth Reddy emerge as the next chief minister. The BJP's election campaign, centered on "Modi's Guarantees," struck a chord with voters, and the results validate the public's trust in Modi's commitment to delivering on these promises. In contrast, the Congress's strategies and campaign promises have come under scrutiny, necessitating a profound reassessment as they prepare for the upcoming Lok Sabha elections. The BJP's electoral success serves as a compelling example of the power of promises and effective communication. The stage is now set for the main event, the Lok Sabha elections, where the BJP's impressive showing in the semi-finals has undoubtedly shifted the political landscape. With their newfound momentum, the BJP has signaled its intent to maintain its grip on power, while the Congress faces an uphill battle to regroup and recover lost ground.

## Defence Empowerment

### Strategic Investments Propel India's Military Might

The green light from the Defence Acquisition Council (DAC) for acquisition projects totaling Rs 2.23 lakh crore marks a pivotal moment in India's pursuit of military preparedness. Among the sanctioned projects are the procurement of 97 Tejas light combat aircraft and 156 Prachand helicopters, representing a significant stride towards reinforcing the combat capabilities of the Indian armed forces. In the face of escalating tensions with China, both along the Line of Actual Control and in the Indian Ocean Region, the need for a robust and technologically advanced defence infrastructure cannot be overstated. The Tejas aircraft, lauded by Air Chief Marshal VR Chaudhari as "very capable and potent," assumes a critical role in replacing the aging MiG-series fighter jets. Prime Minister Narendra Modi's recent sortie in Bengaluru served as a powerful testament to the prowess of the Tejas, showcasing its capabilities in real-time. The DAC's approval also encompasses the crucial decision to upgrade 84 Sukhoi 30 fighter jets, further fortifying India's airpower. The strategic move aligns with the broader vision of modernizing the armed forces and ensuring their preparedness for evolving geopolitical challenges. It's worth recalling that in February 2021, the Ministry of Defence finalized a monumental Rs 48,000-crore deal with Hindustan Aeronautics Ltd (HAL) for the procurement of 83 Tejas jets for the Indian Air Force (IAF). The delivery timeline, set to commence in February 2024, underscores the urgency for HAL to adhere to the agreed-upon schedules. Any delays in this critical process could potentially compromise the operational readiness of our forces, a risk that cannot be taken lightly. A noteworthy aspect of this procurement is the government's commitment to bolstering the indigenous defence industry. A staggering 98 per cent of the sanctioned acquisitions will be sourced domestically, a testament to India's resolve to achieve self-reliance in the defence sector. The decision to allocate capital acquisition funds in a ratio of 75:25 for the ongoing financial year, favoring domestic procurement (75 per cent) over purchases from foreign sources (25 per cent), is a commendable strategy. This deliberate distribution aims to catalyze the indigenous defence industry, urging it to play a more substantial role in the nation's defence modernization efforts. The responsibility now rests on domestic manufacturers to ensure two critical factors: stringent quality control measures and efficient delivery timelines. The success of this ambitious agenda hinges on the industry's ability to rise to the occasion and consistently meet the highest standards. In fostering self-reliance, India not only fortifies its security apparatus but also propels its position on the global stage as a key player in the defence manufacturing sector. This strategic push for indigenous production aligns with the broader vision of 'Make in India' and underscores the government's commitment to nurturing a resilient and self-sufficient defence ecosystem.

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## CYCLONE MICHAUNG



Commuters during heavy rain owing to Cyclone Michaung, in Chennai, Sunday, Dec. 3.

## China's Role in Emerging Diseases: Origins and Implications

**DR. MANMOHAN PRAKASH SHRIVASTAVA**

In the last few decades, some new diseases have emerged in China which have spread to other countries of the world and become a threat to human life. In 1996, a disease called 'Hainan Avian Flu' originated in Hainan province of China. This disease is also called H7, H9, H10, N8, N1 and is spread by influenza-A virus in birds. There is also a belief that its infection in humans has come from a bird called 'Brahminy Duck'. This disease caused great harm to Humans and Avians life. Then in 2002-2003, a new disease called SARS (Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome) was caused by a virus called SARC-CoV and emerged in 'Guangdong Province' of China. It caused complex respiratory problems in infected people and hundreds of people died. The World Health Organization had declared this disease a "worldwide health threat". The third disease was Covid-19 caused by the virus SARC-CoV-2. This disease came in the news in 2019 and again 'Wuhan' city of China was the center point of origin. The World Health Organization declared this disease a 'worldwide pandemic'. This disease killed millions of people around the world, created an economic crisis and slowed down the pace of development. But Vaccine development against this disease, its medical trial, its manufacturing and vaccination in

large scale that too in record short time not only saved the human life worldwide but also get rid human society from lockdown. In the running centuries first time human being closely observed the power of science and technology which helped a lot in controlling and preventing the Corona epidemic and in making life normal. Secondly international cooperation between developed, developing and underdeveloped countries was also very useful in getting rid of the Corona epidemic. The whole world including China could not even take a sigh of relief from Corona when a new mysterious disease emerged and spread rapidly in China and started scaring the world once again. This time also it has emerged in China. Medical Scientists are considering it as a type of pneumonia which is increasingly affecting children. According to the doctors of China, the main symptoms of this disease are swelling in the throat and lungs, difficulty in breathing, soreness, fatigue, high fever, long lasting cough. If this disease becomes complicated, nodules (lumps) can also develop in the lungs. In the month of October 2023, the first time news about this disease came in front of the world's people that a huge crowd of children gathered in the children hospital of Beijing and Liaoning province due to unknown disease. The National Health

Commission of China informed the world about this disease through a press conference on 13 November 2023 that a type of disease causing difficulty in breathing among children is spreading rapidly in China. Chinese doctors are of the opinion that the sudden increase in known pathogens like influenza, mycoplasma pneumonia, SARC-CoV-2 due to some unknown reasons may be the cause of this disease. Chinese officials and health experts are blaming the outbreak of the unknown disease on the lifting of Covid-19 restrictions to get its citizens out of lockdown. Scientists also believe that due to the prolonged lockdown, the immunity of children has reduced, perhaps the result of this disease. It is very difficult to judge how much of this information is right and how much it is wrong as track records of Chinese about the correct information sharing is not good. A question repeatedly comes to the mind of the medical scientists of the world why does every new infectious disease originate from China? This disease cannot be called the results of population explosion because India is also bearing the brunt of population explosion, yet it is not a new disease emerging center. China cannot be described as a weak nation from the point of view of medical facilities because there are a large number of world level medical facilities and centers in China, the health care system is strong, the latest technical resources and expert doctors are also available in quite good numbers. The economic crisis also cannot be the reason for this disease because China's economy is strong and the nation is also developed. Despite all this, new diseases are being born and accurate information and data are not being shared with other nations on time. Is this

indication of special purpose biological research going on in a Chinese research lab? Is it not the result of a mistake made while preparing micro-organisms for biological warfare? The scientific community believes that if the microorganisms used in biological weapons are not controlled safely, then they may give rise to the birth of new disease-causing bacteria and viruses which may be harmful to the living world (including human society). India is feeling threatened by this respiratory disease but does not seem to be too worried because it believes that if it is 'Mycoplasma Pneumonia' then it has enough stock of the antibiotic Azithromycin to treat. Indian medical personnel are advised to think over all the possible root causes and treatment of this disease. Although the Central Government has issued advisory to all the states and union territories to be cautious and asked to keep all the necessary facilities ready in the hospitals. The World Health Organization also advises all the countries that remain alert and take precautions (masks, frequent hand washing, social distancing can provide protection) against this children respiratory disease. This indicates that this so-called new respiratory disease is not an ordinary one. Therefore everyone needs to be alert and causes. I believe that India should take special protective measures and keep vigilance regarding goods and persons coming from China. To make the world worry-free, China should also share correct and accurate information regarding this disease with all nations for the sake of human society. If China does this, it may be successful to some extent in regaining the trust that it had lost by not sharing COVID-19 information for a long time.

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### Animal Safeguard

Canada takes a humane stance by partially prohibiting animal testing in cosmetics, aligning with global trends. Following South Korea, Britain, and the EU, Canada's move emphasizes animal safety and rights. Advocates urge extending the ban to pesticides and toxicity tests. Outdated animal testing can be replaced by bio-engineering and lab-grown human organs. Worldwide research explores AI, in-vitro methods, and technology to eliminate animal testing. Governments must rigorously monitor industries, ensuring compliance, and collaborate with international organizations for alternative test methods. A comprehensive approach is crucial for successful implementation, safeguarding animals and promoting ethical practices in research and production.

Arka Goswami, Durgapur

### Respect Beyond

The eminent vocalist T.M. Krishna has rightly stated that a driver, civic worker, nurse or waiter can never be truly respected in our society. I just wonder what would have happened to the class-conscious privileged "educated" souls if there hadn't existed the people/profession of such "low" vintages including cleaners scavengers masons domestic servants plumbers electricians or sewer workers to mention a few. Only a heartless insensitive vulgar immoral society can afford to denigrate God's children just on the basis of their class profession or money.

Kajal Chatterjee

### The GDP growth surprise

The GDP data for the July-September quarter showed a healthy surprise on the upside. India's economy grew by 7.6 per cent in the quarter (Q2FY24) compared with the RBI's forecast of 6.5 per cent and most analysts' predictions of 6.8-7 per cent. The healthy GDP print, which ensured that India retained its spot as the world's fastest growing major economy, came on the back of a strong showing in manufacturing and construction activity. It is expected that as welfare outlays from the Centre and States increase in this key election cycle, rural demand will bounce back and consumption will pick up. After all, there are limits to how much of the weight of the economic boom can be carried by the top 10 per cent of the population, or be stoked by public sector expenditure.

Tauqueer Rahmani, Mumbai

### Take strict action

A 15-year-old girl was allegedly raped by her neighbour after holding her hostage in his house in Pataudi area with the help of his mother on November 29 but came to light on Friday when the victim's mother lodged a complaint at women police station, Manesar. This sort of accident occurs from time to time somewhere. Therefore, the police must strictly look into this kind of accident and punish such exemplary punishment so other people can get lesson.

Jahangir Shaikh, Mumbai

## Deepfake Dilemma: Urgent Need for AI Legislation



Yash Pal Ralhan

The advent of deepfake technology has thrown our society into a whirlwind of uncertainty and fear. From political leaders to celebrities, nobody is immune to the potential threats posed by deepfake AI. It's high time we address this issue with comprehensive AI legislation, as the implications of inaction are dire.

### Threats to Democracy and Privacy

Recent events have demonstrated just how vulnerable our society is to deepfake technology. When even the Prime Minister of our country can be targeted, it raises concerns about the safety of every individual. Deepfake, a term used to describe videos or audio recordings that convincingly replace a person's face or voice with that of someone else through artificial intelligence algorithms, poses a significant threat to our democracy.

### Rising Cases of Misuse

Notably, actors like Rashmika Mandanna, Katrina Kaif and Alia Bhatt have fallen victim to this technological menace. The misuse of deepfake technology can have devastating consequences, not only for the privacy of public figures but also for national security. It can be

wielded to spread disinformation, fake news, and sow discord among the masses.

### Immediate Actions Needed

India, with its vast population of internet users, is particularly susceptible to the misuse of deepfakes, especially during crucial events like elections. To deter wrongdoers, we must impose hefty penalties on both creators and platforms hosting deepfakes. The government and the tech industry must collaborate to develop responsible AI that benefits society and prevents anti-social elements from exploiting this technology.

### Public Awareness and Responsibility

While regulations and penalties are crucial, public awareness is equally important. People must be educated about the perils of mindlessly sharing content on social media. We must foster a culture of responsibility and dis-

cernment in content consumption, given the prevalence of deepfake technology.

### Legal Framework and Education

India urgently requires a comprehensive legal framework to address the deepfake menace. Our best AI and legal minds must collaborate to create a forward-looking law that safeguards our society. Additionally, social education programs targeting all age groups are necessary to ensure that our citizens are equipped to navigate the digital landscape safely.

### AI Regulation and Safeguards

The regulation of deepfake technology should not be limited to just penalties. We need to consider the interplay between platform and AI regulation while incorporating safeguards for emerging technologies. Watermarking AI-generated videos can help with de-

tection and attribution.

### Ethical Use of Technology

While deepfake technology has its legitimate uses, we must encourage ethical and responsible usage. Codes of conduct and standards for creators and users should be established and enforced. These measures should not only deter unethical actions but also promote positive and beneficial applications of the technology.

In conclusion, the rise of deepfake technology presents a clear and present danger to our society, democracy, and privacy. It's imperative that we act swiftly and decisively by enacting AI legislation, fostering public awareness, and promoting ethical usage. Failure to do so may lead us down a perilous path where truth and trust become scarce commodities in our digital world.



## BRIEF

### Practro

**New Delhi:** Tencet-backed healthcare and diagnostics app Practro is aiming to turn profitable in next fiscal and is looking at a stock exchange listing with an initial public offering (IPO) soon, its co-founder and CEO Shashank ND said. Practro is looking to enhance presence in smaller cities and towns and leverage AI to analyse data and provide much better analysis and outcomes in healthcare.

### NSDC

**Bhubaneswar:** The National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC) has inked three MoUs in expediting job creation and empowering the Indian workforce, officials said. The NSDC signed MoUs with Blinkit, Apna and Ques Corp here on Saturday in the presence of Union Minister for Skill Development and Entrepreneurship Dharmendra Pradhan.

### Godrej Properties

**New Delhi:** Realty firm Godrej Properties net debt rose 17 per cent in the July-September quarter to Rs 6,174 crore mainly due to fund acquisition of land parcels. According to its investors presentation, the net debt of Mumbai-based Godrej Properties stood at Rs 6,174 crore as on September 30, 2023. Its net debt was Rs 5,298 crore as on June 30, 2023 and Rs 3,649 crore at the end of the last fiscal.

### HFCL

**New Delhi:** Telecom gear maker HFCL on Saturday said it has bagged an order of around Rs 67 crore to supply optical fibre cables to a domestic telecom operator. The company has to execute the order by April 2024, HFCL said in a regulatory filing. "We are pleased to inform all the stakeholders that the company, along with its material subsidiary HTL Limited, has received the purchase orders, aggregating to around Rs 67 crore for the supply of optical fibre cables to one of the domestic telecom service providers of the country," the filing said.

### Air India

**New Delhi:** Air India on Saturday said it has adopted an automated aircraft exterior washing and cleaning system that can save up to 75,000 litres of water per wide-body aircraft in a year. The device 'Aerowash' is equipped with multiple modern features like a robotic micro-fibre brush drum for cleaning.

### Comviva

**New Delhi:** IT company Tech Mahindra Group firm Comviva has been penalised Rs 1 lakh for the delay in transferring unspent corporate social responsibility obligation to the Prime Minister's National Relief Fund, as per a regulatory filing. The Ministry of Corporate Affairs' Regional Director for the Northern Region has ruled against an appeal filed by Comviva against the order of the Registrar of Companies, which imposed a penalty of Rs 1 lakh on the company for the delay.

# In a first, NSE listed companies' market capitalisation surpass \$4 trillion mark

New Delhi, Dec 03 (PTI):

The market capitalisation of listed companies on the NSE has surpassed the USD 4 trillion (Rs 334.72 trillion) mark for the first time ever, with the benchmark Nifty hitting its all-time high of 20,291.55 last Friday.

The benchmark Nifty climbed 134.75 points or 0.67 per cent to settle at an all-time high of 20,267.90 on Friday. During the day, the benchmark reached its intra-day record high of 20,291.55.

The Nifty-500 index also touched an all-time high of 18,141.65 on the same day, indicating that the equity market rally is not re-

stricted to only the large-cap stocks.

"The achievement of this milestone is a testament of the vision outlined for the Amrit Kaal which includes a technology-driven and knowledge-based economy with strong public finances, and a robust financial sector," NSE said in a statement on Sunday.

The journey of market capitalisation of listed companies rising from USD 2 trillion (in July 2017) to USD 3 trillion (in May 2021) took about 46 months, whereas the last USD 1 trillion i.e., from USD 3 trillion to USD 4 trillion took only about 30 months, it said. "NSE list-

ed companies' market capitalisation surpassing the USD 4 trillion mark is an important milestone in the country's journey towards the USD 5 trillion economy. The positive sentiment in the economy has provided a thrust to the capital markets," Sriram Krishnan, Chief Business Development Officer, NSE, said. The combined market valuation of all listed companies on the BSE also reached the USD 4 trillion-milestone for the first time ever on Wednesday (November 29).

The market cap of listed companies increased at a compounded annual growth rate (CAGR) of 17.5 per cent in the last 10

years, the exchange said.

The top three companies by market valuation - Reliance Industries Limited, Tata Consultancy Services and HDFC Bank - retained their positions when NSE's valuation hit the USD 2 trillion, USD 3 trillion, and USD 4 trillion mark, it added.

"While India ranks amongst the top five nations based on market capitalisation, the market cap of listed companies on the NSE to India's GDP stood at 1.18 or 118 per cent, which is lower as compared to developed markets such as the United States of America or Japan," NSE said in the statement.

## Mcap of nine of top-10 most valued firms up Rs 1.30 lakh cr

New Delhi, Dec 03 (PTI):

The combined market valuation of nine of the top-10 most valued firms climbed Rs 1,30,391.96 crore last week, with Bharti Airtel and Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) emerging as the biggest gainers, amid an overall optimistic trend in equities.

Last week, the BSE benchmark jumped 1,511.15 points or 2.29 per cent.

Barring Reliance Industries, nine other companies including HDFC Bank, ICICI Bank, Infosys and Hindustan Unilever witnessed addition in their market valuation. Bharti Airtel's valuation rallied Rs 23,746.04 crore to Rs 5,70,466.88 crore. The market capitalisation (mcap) of TCS jumped by Rs 19,027.07 crore to reach Rs

12,84,180.67 crore. HDFC Bank added Rs 17,881.88 crore, taking its market valuation to Rs 11,80,588.59 crore. ITC's mcap climbed Rs 15,159.02 crore to Rs 5,61,159.09 crore and that of Bajaj Finance soared Rs 14,480.29 crore to Rs 4,48,446.82 crore.

The valuation of ICICI Bank surged Rs 12,085.42 crore to Rs 6,63,370.71 crore and that of Hindustan Unilever advanced Rs 11,348.53 crore to Rs 6,02,258.98 crore.

The mcap of State Bank of India went up by Rs 10,307.92 crore to Rs 5,10,353.93 crore and that of Infosys climbed Rs 6,355.79 crore to Rs 6,02,747.01 crore.

However, the market valuation of Reliance Industries declined by Rs 574.95 crore to Rs 16,19,332.44 crore.

## Otis India offers online order-booking

Mumbai, Dec 03:

Building owners and facility managers in India can now purchase a digitally connected Gen3 Nova elevator online through Otis India's e-commerce portal. Otis India is a subsidiary of Otis Worldwide Corporation (NYSE: OTIS), the world's leading company for elevator and escalator manufacturing, installation and service.

The portal, located at //online-booking.otis.com, was initially launched in 2021 with the Gen2 Prime range of elevators and has rapidly gained adoption by customers for its convenience and transparency. Now, the Gen3 Nova range is available on the portal for direct sales.

"We are excited to add the Gen3 Nova range to our e-commerce portal for the direct sale of elevators" said Sebi Joseph, President of Otis India.

## IIFL Samasta to raise up to Rs. 1,000 cr via bonds

Mumbai, Dec 03:

IIFL Samasta Finance, which is one of India's largest non-banking microfinance companies (NBFC-MFI), will raise up to Rs 1,000 crores through its maiden public issue of secured bonds, for the purpose of business growth and capital augmentation. The bonds offer up to 10.50% and high degree of safety. The issue opens on Monday, December 4, 2023 and closes on Friday, December 15, 2023. IIFL Samasta is a part of IIFL Finance, which is one of India's largest retail-focused NBFCs with loan assets under management of Rs 73,066 crore.

IIFL Samasta Finance will issue bonds, aggregat-

## Honda Cars to hike prices of its entire model range from January

New Delhi, Dec 03 (PTI):

Honda Cars India plans to increase prices of its vehicles from January in order to partially offset the impact of rising input costs, according to a senior company official.

The Japanese carmaker sells three models -- Elevate, City and Amaze -- in the Indian market.

In an interaction with PTI, Honda Cars India Vice President (Marketing and Sales) Kunal Behl said the company will increase the prices of its models from next month due to pressure on input costs.

"The model-wise amount of increase will be finalised by the end of this month. Our new model Elevate which was



launched at an introductory price has been well received by the market with very high customer consideration. The introductory price will be valid till December 23 and price will be revised from January 2024," he noted.

Maruti Suzuki, Mahindra & Mahindra and Audi India have also

announced plans to hike prices of their passenger vehicles in January 2024 citing reasons, including cost pressure driven by overall inflation and increased commodity rates. Besides, Tata Motors and Mercedes-Benz India are mulling increasing the prices of their models from January.

## Axis Bank and AI enter partnership

New Delhi, Dec 03:

Axis Bank, one of the largest private sector banks in India and Air India, India's leading global airline, have entered a partnership that enables Axis Bank credit card customers to transfer their Axis EDGE REWARD points or EDGE miles to Air India Flying Returns points.

Axis EDGE REWARD points or EDGE miles converted to Air India Flying Returns points can be redeemed for cabin upgrades or award flights on Air India's growing route network spanning five continents. Customers can also redeem award flights on Air India as well as on Flying Returns' 25 other partner airlines.

## FASHION SHOW



Models present poncho and trench-style raincoats, sporting names of celebrated Paris cafes "Procope", "Deux Magots" and "La Coupole" by designer Jean-Charles de Castelbajac, for the Spring/Summer 90 ready-to-wear collection in Paris.

## Rooftop solar installations rise 34.7 pc to 431 MW in Jul-Sep: Mercom

New Delhi, Dec 03 (PTI):

The rooftop solar installations in India registered a 34.7 per cent year-on-year jump to 431 MW during July-September 2023, aided by a fall in module prices, Mercom India said.

The rooftop solar installations were at 320 megawatt (MW) during the three-month period of 2022, the research firm said in a report.

The rooftop solar capacity addition was also higher at 1.3 gigawatt (GW) in the first nine months of 2023, compared to 1.2 GW in January-September 2022. India's cumulative rooftop solar capacity reached 10.1 gigawatts (GW) at the end of September 30, 2023, the 'Q3 2023 Mercom India Rooftop Solar Report' said. "We are starting to see a



surge in momentum in rooftop installations. The significant drop in module prices has reached a turning point, sparking increased procurement activities that offer attractive returns for rooftop solar investments. We foresee two very robust quarters coming up," said Raj Prabhoo, CEO of Mercom Capital Group.

The majority of installations were in the residential segment, followed by

the commercial and industrial (C&I) market segments. During the quarter, average rooftop solar system cost fell 13.4 per cent year-on-year (YoY) and around 5 per cent on a quarter-on-quarter basis.

Gujarat continued to lead in rooftop solar installations, contributing to 26.7 per cent of the cumulative installations, followed by Maharashtra (13.5 per cent) and Rajasthan (8.3 per cent).

## FPIs infuse Rs 9,000 cr in equities in Nov

New Delhi, Dec 03 (PTI):

After turning net sellers in the past two months, FPIs again made a comeback in the Indian stock markets in November and pumped in Rs 9,000 crore amid fall in US treasury bond yields and the resilience of the domestic market.

Additionally, Foreign Portfolio Investors (FPIs) made a net investment of Rs 14,860 crore in the debt market last month, making it the highest level in six years, data with the depositaries showed. Going forward, FPI response will be crucially determined by the market trend, which, in turn, will be influenced by the state election results, VK Vijayakumar, Chief Investment Strategist at Geojit Financial Services, said.

## Govt to approve setting up of 10-11 testing labs for cotton, textiles by Dec 16: Goyal

Mumbai, Dec 03 (PTI):

The government is planning to approve setting up of 10-11 testing laboratories across the country to ensure high quality of cotton and textiles for both the domestic consumers as well as for the export markets, Union Minister Piyush Goyal said on Saturday.

"I have discussed with the Textile Ministry, the Consumer Affairs Department, who will work together with the Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) for setting up high quality cotton and textile testing laboratories," Goyal, the Union Minister for Textiles, Commerce and Industry, Consumer Affairs and Food and Public Distribution, said. "In the next 15 days, by



December 16, we will approve a series of laboratories across the country with an investment of about USD 6-7 million," he said. Addressing the four-day 81st Plenary Meeting of the International Cotton Advisory Committee (ICAC) that started on Saturday, the minister said, "We want the most modern and high-quality testing laboratories to come up in different parts of the country, so that we can ensure that right from the farm till

it reaches the consumers, we will make sure that very high quality textiles are available and are produced in India and are exported from India."

The government will initially roll out 10-11 laboratories in different parts of the country, seven of which will be hosted in the seven textile research associations and in another 3-4 locations that will cover the entire country wherever cotton is grown, Goyal said.

"These laboratories will be 100 per cent funded by the central government to support the private sector, particularly the farmers, so that gradually they have the recognition for producing better quality cotton and they start getting a good value for their," the minister added.

# Khairagarh witnesses surge in migration for better opportunities

■ **MGNREGA earnings comparatively higher in other states**  
 ■ **Significant migration trend has resurfaced after conclusion of elections and Diwali festivities**

Khairagarh, Dec 03:

Khairagarh district has witnessed a significant surge in migration, marking a departure from conventional narratives post-elections and Diwali festivities. This unique trend, driven by aspirations for improved livelihoods, reflects a positive aspect to the ongoing migration phenomenon.

The migration wave is notably concentrated in the Salhewara and Jangal Gatapur areas, where families are choosing to explore opportunities beyond the district borders for a brighter future. Contrary to initial apprehensions, this migration surge is a testament to the optimism and determination of rural youth actively seeking avenues for enhanced economic stability.

However, amidst this surge in migration, a regrettable aspect has come to light – the absence of comprehensive records within Janpad Panchayats,



District Panchayat, and the District Administration regarding the extent of migration, even a year after the district's creation.

The primary drivers behind this migration wave are the higher earning prospects available in other states compared to the wages provided under the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA). The wages under MGNREGA fall significantly short of the earnings in major cities of other states, prompting a substantial number of villagers to seek opportunities elsewhere. As the farming season in Khairagarh region experienced delays due to late rains this year, families intending to earn additional income found themselves

departing later than usual. Most migrating families are comprised of agricultural laborers who, being landless, work on others' fields. Following the conclusion of the farming season, they venture to other states in search of employment opportunities.

Despite government schemes and administrative efforts, the surge in migration remains unabated. The implementation of the RIPA scheme, which raised expectations for curbing migration, has proven unsatisfactory in the newly created district. Even more surprising is the lack of accurate information about migration within Janpad and district panchayats. The distressing reality is further underscored by the current state of MGNREGA in Khairagarh district. Of

the 73,515 active cards, 154,140 laborers are currently engaged in MGNREGA work. Shockingly, work under MGNREGA is entirely stalled in 221 Panchayats of KCG districts, with the available opportunities significantly lagging behind the number of laborers seeking employment.

Gulapchand, a resident of Temri village, waiting for a bus to Hyderabad, highlights the stark contrast in earnings between MGNREGA and opportunities in cities. He receives a salary of Rs 221 under MGNREGA, while he could potentially earn Rs 600 in Hyderabad.

### What official says...

Migration is not happening; we have no records of migration. We have not received any information in this regard from the Sarpanch-Secretary of the Panchayat."

**Shishir Sharma, CEO of District Panchayat Khairagarh**

The migration register is maintained by the Panchayat, accurate information will be available only from the Panchayat, being a new district we do not have any separate record in this regard.

**Jitendra Sahu, Project Director District Panchayat KCG**

We do not have any record in this regard, the Panchayat will have the records.

**JS Rajput, CEO Janpad Panchayat Chhuikhadan**

lagers from Khairagarh district are heading towards Gujarat, Maharashtra, Telangana, and Orissa. Cities such as Surat, Mumbai, Hyderabad, Pune, Nagpur, Ahmedabad, and Puri are the primary destinations for those seeking better employment prospects.

# 'Aao Kavita Likho' group inspires young minds to express through poetry



**Kareli Badi, Dec 03:** The library room of Government Higher Secondary School in Kareli Badi became a haven for budding poets as the "Aao Kavita Likho" group orchestrated a captivating monthly poetry seminar. The event unfolded with Chief Guest Brijesh Kumar Dewangan, Lecturer Commerce, Principal Kishore Kumar Jangde, and special guest Awadh Ram Sahu, founder of the poetry group, along with poet Jitendra Sukumar Sahu, initiating the program with a heartfelt worship of Mother Sharda, the bestower of knowledge.

In an inspiring address to the young poets, Chief Guest Brijesh Kumar Dewangan emphasized the profound impact of creating literature, noting that at this age, students have the unique opportunity to guide others on the right path through the medium of poetry. He commended the participants for their literary endeavors and extended his congratulations and best wishes. Principal Kishore Kumar Jangde expressed his delight at the remarkable improvement in the students' speaking styles due to continuous participation in such seminars. He acknowl-

edged the transformation of hesitant individuals into confident voices, actively expressing their thoughts through the art of poetry. Special guest Awadh Ram Sahu shared his deep appreciation for poetry, expressing his inability to resist attending such seminars. He encouraged the young poets, conveying his presence as a form of support and encouragement. Poet Jitendra Sukumar Sahu, founder of the Aao Kavita Lekhen group, highlighted the divine blessing inherent in the ability to write poetry. He underscored the rarity of those blessed by Mother Saraswati, emphasizing that a literary revolution in society is achievable only through literature. As the stage came alive with poetic expressions, child poet Bhavana Sahu set the tone by inviting Viram Nishad as the first poet. Viram's verses captured the mischief of the winds, evoking emotions with lines like, "Daravaaja baar baar khul raha hai, tumhaare aane se, baar-baar ulajhan ho rahee hai kisee ko na paane se." The emotional resonance continued as Parmeshwari Sahu's poem on the significance of a father

stirred hearts, "Betee kee vidaae mein kabhee aansoo nahin dikhaata kabhee kuchh na kah kar ek kone mein ro padata hai vah pita hai," while Hina Sahu shed light on the struggles of the young generation grappling with alcohol addiction. Damini Nishad emphasized environmental protection, urging, "Har ped ko murajhaane se pahale paanee pilaaye, bachchon ka alag sangathan banaen, sookhe pattiyon se khaad banaen, har ek gaanv ko vrksh se sajaaye." Preeti Sahu's impactful poems on resilience and Gitanjali Sahu's gratitude towards life drew applause, setting the stage for Kashish Pal's description of nature's beauty. Neelam Baghel's poignant lines on relationships resonated deeply, "Rishto kee neevn dhah rahee hai sahaara chaahie, main doob raha hon cheekhane vaalon ko kinaara chaahie", earning her well-deserved applause. Vandana Sen beautifully portrayed a mother's love, Bhavana Sahu delved into the biography of Saint Guru Ghasidas, and Janaki Nishad expressed heartfelt gratitude, creating a symphony of emotions through verse.

# 'Akshat Kalash' from Ayodhya receives grand welcome in Rajim

■ **Gariaband district prepares for Ayodhya Temple inauguration with enthusiastic participation**

**Rajim, Dec 03:** The city of Rajim resonated with joy as the auspicious Akshat Kalash, sent from Ayodhya, received a magnificent welcome at the Rajim Bus Stand amidst musical melodies and vibrant fireworks. The journey continued as the Kalash was ceremoniously placed at the revered temple of Lord Rajivlochan, where heartfelt prayers and worship ceremonies took place.

Shishupal, the district coordinator of the program, shared the uplifting news that Gariaband district played a crucial role in contributing towards the construction of the grand temple in Ayodhya during the year 2020-2021. An impressive amount exceeding ninety-four lakh rupees poured in from



every nook and corner of Gariaband, demonstrating unwavering support for the noble cause championed by Shri Ram Janmabhoomi Teerth Kshetra. With the temple nearing completion, invitation cards have reached Gariaband district from Shri Ram Janmabhoomi Teerth Kshetra Ayodhya. Ram devotees and organizational workers in the district are gearing up to personally deliver these invitation cards to every household. While not

everyone can physically attend the inauguration on January 22, 2024, the collective spirit aims to transform homes, cities, localities, and villages into symbolic representations of Ayodhya. The call to action urges residents to gather on the auspicious day of Pran Pratishtha (between 11:00 AM to 01:00 PM) at local temples, installing televisions or projectors to conduct bhajan kirtan. Devotees are encouraged to collectively chant the powerful Shri Ram Jai Ram Jai Jai Ram Vijay Mahamantra 108 times, recite Hanuman Chalisa, Sunderkand, Ramraksha Stotra, and partake in the joyous celebration of Deepotsav by lighting lamps in front of their homes after sunset.

The heartening ceremony witnessed the presence of esteemed guests, including representatives from Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh, Vishwa Hindu Parishad, and numerous residents of the city.

# Students shine in a two-day extravaganza of athletic prowess

■ **Triumph of talent at annual sports festival at DAV Public School**

**Gaurela Pendra Marwahi, Dec 03:** The grounds of DAV Public School, Kudkai Pendra, echoed with cheers and applause as the two-day annual sports festival unfolded under the enthusiastic guidance of Principal Rashmi Mishra, sports in-charge Kanhaiya Tiwari, and leader Deepak Kushwaha.

The festivities commenced with the lighting of the lamp and the hoisting of the school flag by Principal Rashmi Mishra, teachers, and referees. Eight different DAV Schools participated in various competitions, with a spectacular march past showcasing the participants' dedication and sportsmanship.

Over the course of the two-day event, DAV School Kudkai hosted an array of competitions, including



Kho Kho, Kabaddi, Badminton, Taekwondo, Skating, Chess, Long Jump, and Running in both Under 14 and Under 17 categories for boys and girls. A total of 300 participants showcased their athletic prowess, with outstanding performances and exemplary teamwork.

In Kho Kho, DAV Sakri secured the first position in the Under 14 boys category, while DAV Kudkai clinched the second spot. Sarbahara claimed the top spot in the Kho Kho girls category, with DAV School Sakri securing the second position. In the Under 17

Kho Kho boys category, DAV Sakri emerged victorious, followed by DAV Marwahi in the second position. DAV Sarbahara secured the first place in the Kho Kho girls category, with DAV Bilha securing the second spot.

The Kabaddi competitions witnessed spirited performances, with DAV School Baloda Bazar securing the first position in the Under 17 boys category and Devrikhurd claiming the second spot in the Under 14 boys category. In the Under 17 girls category, Kabaddi saw a walkover victory for Pamgarh.

The Badminton competition witnessed Unnati Kesharwani of DAV School Kudkai declared the winner by walkover. Meanwhile, students from DAV School Kudkai displayed their prowess in Bilha and Deori, hoisting the flag high. Individual achievements were celebrated as well, with students excelling in various categories. Vaishnavi, a Class VII student, secured the first position in the 100 meters race, while Deepali Yadav clinched the top spot in the 400 meters race. Srinivas and Yogendra Chaturvedi demonstrated

their chess mastery, securing the first position in Under 17 and Under 14 categories, respectively.

The closing ceremony featured an entertaining aerobics performance by Ritika, energizing participants and alleviating the fatigue of the competition. The vibrant commentary by teachers Pradeep Kumar Nirmalkar and Shailendra Sahu added enthusiasm to the day.

In her address, Principal Rashmi Mishra emphasized the importance of encouraging children to participate in sports, fostering not only entertainment but also valuable life lessons. She highlighted the role of sports in mental and physical development, character building, and the promotion of positive energy.

The program concluded with appreciation for the tireless efforts of teachers and the school council body, underscoring the significance of teamwork and cooperation in creating a successful sports event.

# Irregularities plague paddy procurement in Marwahi

**Gaurela Pendra Marwahi, Dec 03:** Paddy procurement centers in Marwahi block experienced significant irregularities, prompting villagers to allege extortion by the employees. In the village of Gram Daani Kundi, farmer Ajay Rai has come forward, asserting that jute bags purchased by farmers at the procurement center are being resold in the open market under the label of "old bags." The matter has escalated further, with these bags allegedly being repurchased under the pretext of producing new sacks, causing distress among the local farming community. A noteworthy concern highlighted by farmers is the token verification process, which involves farmers approaching the Patwari for verification after obtaining their token. The verification process has been characterized by delays and irregularities, leading to dissatisfaction among farmers. Such practices violate the paddy procure-



ment policy and rules set by the government, prompting a call for an immediate ban on token verification at the centers. Social media has been abuzz with discussions on an alleged case of illegal recovery from farmers at the Nimdha paddy procurement center. Farmers claim that Agriculture Department employee Sheikh Irfan collected substantial sums from them for passing their paddy through the grading process. Exploited farmers admitted to the media that the grader had extort-

ed money from them for passing the paddy. Rs. 6000 was collected from some farmers and Rs. 1500 from some others because if they did not give the money, their paddy would be taken away. The accused grader reportedly asserted that payments had to be made to higher officials, including the Collector and SDM, creating a web of financial exploitation. Farmers, who invest considerable effort and resources into cultivating and harvesting their crops, have been adversely affected by these

unethical practices. The fear of rejection during the procurement process due to non-payment has left them in a vulnerable position. The situation has prompted District Collector Priyanka Mahobia to take swift action, ordering an investigation into the alleged extortion and illegal recovery practices by graders.

District Collector Priyanka Mahobia has assigned the Agriculture Department's Assistant Director, Satyajit Kanwar, to conduct a thorough investigation into the matter.

# Forest ranger suspended

**Dongargaon, Dec 03:** In a commendable move towards maintaining transparency and accountability, the forest department has taken swift action by suspending Khujji forest ranger Makhanlal Banjare over serious irregularities in the Tendupatta warehouse. The forest ranger's suspension comes in the wake of a complaint regarding the manipulation of Tendupatta stock in the Gurukripa godown, Rajnandgaon. It was reported that during the Tendupatta collection year 2022 by District Union Rajnandgaon, the stored tendu leaves, overseen by Banjare, were illicitly replaced with non-standard and substandard alternatives, resulting in significant financial losses for the government. The complaint, submitted through official channels, triggered a prompt investigation. A three-member committee, appointed by the Managing Director of District Forest Produce Cooperative Union Limited, Rajnandgaon, substantiated the allegations of tendu leaf substitution in the warehouse. The verification process confirmed the validity of the complaint, leading to the immediate suspension of Makhanlal Banjare on November 30. The forest ranger's disciplinary action underscores the commitment to accountability and safeguarding public funds.

# Gondbahal student soldiers celebrate 75th NCC Day

Pithora, Dec 03:

In a spirited celebration guided by the directives of Chhattisgarh NCC Battalion Commanding Officer Colonel Saurabh Kumar and Adm Officer Lieutenant Colonel Pradeep Kumar, the Government Higher Secondary School in Gondbahal recently commemorated the 75th NCC Day. This annual event, observed nationwide on the last Sunday of November, resonated with fervour in the school as student soldiers actively participated in the festivities.

Under the leadership of Company Commander Chetan Yadav, the student soldiers initiated the celebration with a patriotic flag salute, followed by captivating displays of Saxon Formation, Camouflage Consignment, and other military activities within the school premises. The Junior Division Girl Student



Soldiers added a cultural touch by presenting a play that portrayed the valor and sacrifices of soldiers, earning them resounding applause from the audience.

Naib Subedar Keshav Dutt of 27 CG Battalion NCC Raipur graced the occasion as the chief guest, sharing poignant memories from his 27 years of combat experience. He recounted moments of adversity during the Jammu and Kashmir conflict, emphasizing the unpredictable nature of life and the importance of resilience. Dutt's inspiring words resonated deeply with the students, who lis-

tened attentively to his journey and received words of encouragement to fuel their own aspirations.

Addressing the gathering, School Principal Dr. Mukesh Dadsena urged students to maintain discipline and embrace a life of preparedness for challenges. Senior lecturer NP Tiwari also addressed the program, instilling the values of discipline and perseverance. NCC officer Vivek Verma, overseeing the event, imparted guidance to the students, fostering a sense of responsibility and commitment among the budding student soldiers.

## Issy Wong shines as England Women's A beat India by two wickets to take T20 series 2-1

Mumbai, Dec 03 (PTI):

All-round performance from Issy Wong played a decisive role as England Women's A defeated India Women's A by two wickets to clinch the three-match T20 series 2-1 here on Sunday.

In a low-scoring thriller, India Women's A fought hard until the end but paid the price for poor batting, as they were shot out for 101 in 19.2 overs after electing to bat on a slow turner at the Wankhede Stadium. In reply, England finished at 104/8 in 19.1 overs.

Minnu Mani's side fought back hard but could not stop Issy (28 not out) from hitting the winning runs, having returned 2.20-18-2 earlier.

Issy had won England the second game single-handedly when she struck a 15-ball unbeaten 35 to help the visitors level the series after India had won the first game.

Grace Scrivens (10) was dropped at eight by Arushi Goel off Mani in the third over at mid-on but two balls



later, a leading edge ended her stay with India getting their second breakthrough.

Mannat Kashyap then had Freya Kemp (0) caught at short third for India's third success, with England slipping to 28/3 in four overs. Mani (2/24) gave England another jolt when she cleaned up Mady Villiers (1) for the fourth

wicket and soon after, Hollie Armitage survived a close leg-before appeal from Shreyanka Patil. Armitage was run out with a brilliant direct hit from Mannat which ended her vigil for a 28-ball 27 (3x4s) and Anusha Baredy had Seren Smale (18) caught behind to leave England reeling at 63/6. Issy joined forces with

Rhianna Southby (3) to take England ahead but Shreyanka brought India back firmly with two wickets in the 16th over.

Southby chopped one on to her wickets while Lauren Filer (0) was cleaned up.

Earlier, it was a forgettable outing for the Indian batters in the series decider: They struggled collectively

with England bowlers exploiting the conditions better.

While Vrinda Dinesh (9 off 16 balls) was cleaned up on a slower delivery from Mahika Gaur, looking to scoop it on the leg side, No. 3 G Trisha was caught at midwicket off Issy for a 10-ball 7. Mani hit two fours to begin with but mis-timed

### Brief scores

India Women's A 101 in 19.2 overs (Uma Chetry 21, Disha Kasat 20; Issy Wong 2/18, Kirstie Gordon 2/17, Mady Villiers 2/19, Lauren Filer 2/15) lost to England Women's A 104/8 in 19.1 overs (Hollie Armitage 27, Issy Wong 28 not out; Shreyanka Patil 2/13, Minnu Mani 2/24) by two wickets.

one off Kirstie Gordon to be caught at long on.

Uma Chetry, given a lifeline on 14, could only make 21 off 16 balls with three fours before being trapped leg-before off Mady Villiers.

Goel (5) got a top edge while looking to sweep Mady and was caught by Seren Smale to be reduced to 65/5 in the 14th over.

Kanika Ahuja (3) perished without troubling the scorers much and Disha Kasat (20 off 25 balls, 1x6s) once again fell in her 20s when she looked to attack.

Monica Patel (11) hit two fours which were crucial to push India towards the triple-figure mark.

## Abhinav Choudhary is men's rapid-fire national champion



Bhopal, Dec 03 (PTI):

Rajasthan's Abhinav Choudhary clinched the men's 25m rapid-fire pistol title at the National Shooting Championship here on Sunday.

Abhinav shot a score of 30 in the final to outgun Uttar Pradesh's Ankur Goel, who finished with 26 hits to his name. Delhi's Arpit Goel was third with 21 at the MP State Shooting Academy range.

Abhinav had earlier qualified for the top-six final round with a score of 584 in qualification, which was also the leading score.

In the junior men's rapid-fire pistol, Vijayveer Sidhu struck gold with 28 hits in the final, getting the better of Haryana's Paris Olympic quota winner Anish Bhanwala, who had 25. Punjab won gold and bronze in the event, when Rajkanwar Singh Sandhu shot 20 to finish third on the podium. However, Anish (578) did win the team event in men's RFP event, combining with Sameer (578) and Adarsh Singh (571) for a combined effort of 1727. Vijayveer along with Rajkanwar and twin brother Udhayveer won the junior team gold.

## Rinku is contender for T20 World Cup spot, but it's too early: Ashish Nehra



New Delhi, Dec 03 (PTI):

Explosive left-hander Rinku Singh has emerged as a "contender" for the finisher's spot in India's T20 World Cup squad, according to Ashish Nehra, but the former India pacer also believes that the batter will face stiff challenge for the position from fellow cricketers.

The T20 World Cup will be played in the West Indies and the USA in June next year. Rinku has been in blazing form in the ongoing five-match T20I series

against Australia, and, in the fourth match in Raipur on Friday, his 46 off 29 balls was vital in India's 3-1 series-clinching 20-run win. "There is no doubt that Rinku Singh is a contender for inclusion in India's T20 World Cup squad," the former left-arm pacer told JioCinema. "But the World Cup is still far away and the spot he's fighting for has many challengers." Rinku has played some defining knocks in the ongoing series. His 31 not out from nine balls played a big role in India's 44-run win in the second T20I at Thiruvananthapuram.

With no clarity on whether Rohit Sharma and Virat Kohli will be in India's scheme of things for the global showpiece, there could be major changes in the T20 squad for the World Cup and Rinku could emerge as a leading contender for the slog overs. "You can look at Jitesh Sharma (wicketkeeper-batter) and Tilak Varma. We'll have to discuss the positions where Shreyas Iyer, Suryakumar Yadav and Hardik Pandya will play," the cricketer-turned-commentator said.

"So, we have to see how many spots are available in the 15-member squad. But one thing is sure, he (Rinku) has opened everyone's eyes and put everyone under pressure. But there's still a lot of time to go. The trip to South Africa is coming up followed by the IPL," averred Nehra.

Nehra defended the young Indian pace attack, which has been criticised in some quarters for leaking 200-plus totals in the first three T20Is against Australia.

The squad for the five-match series is without stalwarts Mohammed Shami, Jasprit Bumrah and Mohammed Siraj, who have been rested.

## India set to bid for 2029 World Athletics Championships

Amritsar, Dec 03 (PTI):

India is set to bid for the 2029 World Athletics Championships after dropping its earlier intention to host the 2027 edition of the prestigious tournament, a top official of the national federation said on Sunday.

The Athletics Federation of India (AFI) was earlier considering to bid for the hosting rights of the 2027 World Athletics Championships but it is now learnt that it has dropped the plan and is instead looking to host the 2029 edition.

"Yes, we are interested in bidding for the 2029 World Athletics Championships," AFI senior Vice President Anju Bobby George told PTI, on the sidelines of the sidelines of the AFI Annual General Body meeting. "India has expressed interest to host the 2036 Olympics and 2030 Youth Olympics. So, it will be very good if we can host the 2029 World Athletics Championships," said the legendary long jumper.

The time period for the formal bidding for the 2029 World Athletics

Championships is not known yet. The World Athletics has published the bidding timeline for the 2027 World Athletics Championships -- which began early this year -- but not for the 2029 edition.

The last edition of the World Athletics Championships was held in Budapest, Hungary in August and the next one will be held in 2025 in Tokyo.

### Strategic plan up to 2036

The AFI has also decided to prepare a strategic plan till 2036 with a target of 5-6 medals from athletics in the Olympics that year. India has already expressed its interest to bid for the 2036 Olympics. "We want to achieve high performance, produce world beaters and win 5-6 medals in the 2036 Olympics," AFI Planning Commission chairman Lalit Bhanot said during the AGM. Bhanot has been given charge of preparing the strategic plan. Three committees have been formed to give inputs on different aspects to prepare the strategic plan.

## Ramkumar clinches ITF Kalaburagi Open title



Kalaburagi, Dec 03 (PTI):

India's Ramkumar Ramanathan thrashed Austrian David Pichler in straight sets in a lop-sided men's singles final to secure his third ITF title by winning the Kalaburagi Open here on Sunday.

Ramkumar, who won the ITF Mumbai Open last week, took just 64 minutes to quell Pichler's challenge 6-2, 6-1 at the Chandrashekhara Patil Stadium to claim his third ITF title in a span of 57 days. Ramkumar, a member of the Indian Davis Cup team, pocketed the win-

ner's cheque of USD 3200 and 25 precious ATP points, while the visitor was richer by USD 2120 besides gaining 16 ATP points.

"It feels great to win back-to-back titles. My game is coming along good. I did play some of my best tennis in these last two weeks," said Ramkumar after the victory. "The courts here didn't suit my game initially, but I adapted to them very quickly." Playing in front of home crowd, Ramkumar was already morally boosted even before he hit his first serve.

After both the players held their serve for the first

five games, Ramkumar made the first dent by breaking David's serve in the sixth game and never looked back, dishing out some superb winners to capture the rest of the games to win the set 6-2.

The second set promised a fightback from David when he held his serve losing just a point, but Ramkumar had different plans. Moving with great tenacity, he forced David to commit mistakes and himself came up with a couple of cross court winners which drew cheers from the crowd that could be heard a mile away.

## Rodman's goal caps 3-0 victory for the US women over China



Fort Lauderdale, Dec 03 (AP):

Trinity Rodman had a goal and two assists to help the United States beat China 3-0 in an exhibition match on Saturday.

Sophia Smith and Lindsey Horan also scored in the first of two exhibition games against China.

The second is set for Tuesday in Frisco, Texas, outside of Dallas.

The matches close a difficult year for the United States after the four-time champions were eliminated from the Women's World Cup this summer in the round of 16, the team's earliest exit ever.

Smith scored in the eighth minute, beating China goalkeeper Xu Huan off a pass from Rodman. It was Smith's 15th goal in 37 national team appearances.

Horan made it 2-0 in the 52nd minute, striking the ball from distance before it bounced past Xu. It was her 30th goal.

Rodman capped the scoring in the 77th with an assist from Jaedyn Shaw. Rodman celebrated with a cheeky dance in front of the goal.

"She's just being really intentional, we see that in training, we see that in games. And she's starting to play more and more with the players around her as well," interim U.S. coach Twila Kilgore said about Rodman. "She's obviously a very gifted individual player and she's looking to play more with her teammates."

Veterans Alex Morgan, Becky Sauerbrunn, Alyssa Naeyer and Crystal Dunn were given some time off as Kilgore focused on youth for her roster.

Warner named in Australia squad for 1st Pakistan test; hopes for SCG farewell



Sydney, Dec 03 (AP):

David Warner has been handed the chance of a hoped-for Sydney Cricket Ground farewell after being named in Australia's squad for the first of three home tests against Pakistan. The squad named Sunday, which includes the 37-year-old opener, is only for the first test at Perth from Dec. 14-19. If he holds his place for the second test at the Melbourne Cricket Ground starting on Boxing Day, Warner will be in line for his dream farewell on his home ground in Sydney from Jan. 3 to 7.

## Annu's brace went in vain as India lose 2-3 against Belgium

### Junior Women's World Cup

Santiago (Chile), Dec 03 (PTI):

Annu's brace went in vain as India lost 2-3 to Belgium in a closely-contested Pool C match to slump to their second consecutive defeat in the FIH Junior World Cup here on Saturday.

Annu (47th, 51st minutes) struck twice in a span of four minutes from a penalty corner and a penalty stroke to draw level after Belgium raced to a 2-0 lead through goals from Noa Schreurs (fifth) and France de Mot (42nd).

But it was not India's day as Astrid Bonami scored the winner from a penalty stroke in the 52nd minute. It was another heartbreaking loss for the Indians after they squandered a two-goal advantage to go down 3-4 to last edition's runners-up Germany on Thursday night. The Indians had,



however, started their campaign on a resounding note, registering a 12-0 win over Canada.

India are currently placed second in Pool C with three points from three games. Belgium are atop the pool with an all-win record from three matches.

Germany will play Canada in the last match of the pool later in the day.

India applied a pressing game from the onset and secured an early penalty corner, but couldn't convert the chances into goals.

Belgium, however, not only defended solidly to deny India an early advantage but also initiated counter-attacks. This strategy paid off when Schreurs scored a remarkable field goal, granting

Belgium an early lead.

With the score in their favour, Belgium intensified the attack by frequently penetrating the circle, restricting India's chances of equalising in the opening quarter, which concluded with Belgium leading 1-0.

Determined to turn the tide, India adopted an aggressive approach in the second quarter.

## Cong to form govt in T'gana

● Revanth Reddy could be state's second CM

Hyderabad, Dec 03 (PTI)

The Congress was on its way to achieve the magic mark of 60 seats on Sunday to form the first non-BRS government in Telangana, with the southern solace coming in the midst of a saffron sweep of the Hindi heartland where BJP wrested two states from its rival and retained one.

Telangana becomes the second southern state in Congress' kitty in 2023, after it emerged triumphant in Karnataka in May.

Having registered a virtually unassailable lead against the ruling BRS, the Mallikarjun Kharge-led party won 47 seats and was ahead in another 17, according to latest Election Commission figures.



Revanth Reddy

The BRS, which has 101 members in the outgoing Assembly, emerged victorious in 22 and was leading in 17 others.

Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao submitted his resignation with the Governor following his party's poor performance.

Anumula Revanth Reddy, who led the Congress' charge, finds himself on the brink of a potential chief ministership. The 56 year-old leader met top police officials of the state and discussed the security

arrangements for the swearing-in ceremony, likely on December 4 or 9.

He welcomed the people's mandate in favour of the national party while BRS expressed disappointment over its failure to ensure a hat-trick.

The KCR-led Bharat Rashtra Samiti (BRS) formed the maiden government of the newly carved out Telangana in 2014 and emerged victorious in 2018 as well.

"It is a people's mandate. We need not (do) a post-mortem. Everything goes well, then only you will get that magic number. The simple point is that they (people) wanted to change. They wanted to defeat KCR (CM Rao). They have defeated KCR. That's all," Reddy told reporters.

Reddy said the people have decided the role of the opposition, and Congress expects the BRS's cooperation in order to fulfil the people's

aspirations. "To revive democratic values, we are expecting that the BRS will come forward," he said.

It is the party's responsibility to fulfil Telangana people's aspirations after forming the government in the state, he added.

BRS working president and KCR's son K T Rama Rao said the assembly poll results were "disappointing" though he was not "saddened".

"Grateful to the people of Telangana for giving @BRSparty two consecutive terms of Government. Not saddened over the result today, but surely disappointed as it was not in expected lines for us. But we will take this in our stride as a learning and will bounce back," he said.

"Congratulations to Congress party on winning the mandate. Wishing you Good Luck," the BRS leader further said.

## CELEBRATING VICTORY



MP CM Shivraj Singh Chouhan with Union Ministers Jyotiraditya Scindia, Ashwini Vaishnav and Narendra Singh Tomar and BJP State President VD Sharma celebrate the party's lead during counting of votes for MP Assembly elections, in Bhopal, Sunday.

## Poll results 'unexpected for everyone': Gehlot

Jaipur, Dec 03 (PTI)

As the Congress faced defeat in Rajasthan, outgoing Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot on Sunday said the poll results were "unexpected for everyone" but rejected suggestions that bringing forward "new faces" would have helped the party retain power.

He lashed out at Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Home Minister Amit Shah, alleging they incited people in the name of religion during the election campaign. The Congress leader said that he had expected that the people of the state would take "revenge" on the BJP leaders but it did not happen.

In a post on X, Gehlot said, "We humbly accept the mandate given by the people of Rajasthan. This is an unexpected result for everyone. This defeat shows that we were not completely successful in taking our plans, laws and innovations to the public."

Later, talking to reporters, Gehlot said that they would go into the reasons behind the adverse

election results in Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh

Replying to a question on whether a change of face in the elections might have brought a positive result, Gehlot said that it would be wrong to say that bringing new faces might have made the party win the elections.

"There was talk of bringing new faces, and new faces should come, but this demand was not there in MP and Chhattisgarh and still we lost the election. It would be wrong to say that we would have won the election if new faces were brought."

Gehlot and former deputy chief minister Sachin Pilot, who was battling for handing over the reins to the next generation leaders, were engaged in a power tussle since the Congress formed government in the state in 2018.

In 2020, Pilot led a revolt against the Gehlot Government after which he was removed from the posts of the party's state unit president and deputy



chief minister.

Last year, an attempt by the high command to effect a leadership change in Rajasthan had failed after Gehlot loyalists dug their heels in and did not allow a legislature party meeting to take place.

Asked if the defeat might affect the 2024 Lok Sabha polls, Gehlot replied, "All these things affect. In the elections, Kharge ji, Rahul Gandhi ji and Priyanka Gandhi...everyone did campaigning massively. Our schemes were exemplary. "We were expecting to win on the basis of our schemes, laws and promises. But, the government

## Gehlot submits resignation to Guv

Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot submitted his resignation to Governor Kalraj Mishra Sunday evening after his Congress party was defeated in the assembly polls.

Gehlot reached the Raj Bhavan here and handed over the resignation letter to the governor. The BJP crossed the halfway mark in Rajasthan, winning 106 seats out of the 199 where assembly elections took place.

According to the latest assembly poll results and

trends available on the Election Commission website, the BJP won 106 seats and was ahead in nine.

The Congress, which was hoping to buck the trend of the incumbent being voted out in the state every five years, bagged 60 seats and was ahead in nine.

Polling in 199 of the state's 200 seats were held on November 25. The election in Sriganganagar's Karanpur seat was postponed due to the death of the Congress candidate.

could not be formed."

Gehlot said that he would continue to work for the people whether he remains in any position or not. He said that he would continue to work for the people of the state till his last breath.

He said party president Mallikarjun Kharge has asked everyone to now prepare for the Parliament election. "I wish the new government all the best. My advice to them is that

despite working hard, we were not successful, it does not mean that they should not work after forming the government," he said.

He said all the schemes introduced by the Congress government in the past five years, including the old pension scheme and the Chiranjeevi health insurance scheme, should be taken forward by the next government.

## Only PM Modi in people's hearts: Shah

New Delhi, Dec 03 (PTI)

BJP leaders on Sunday credited Prime Minister Narendra Modi's "charismatic" leadership and development agenda for the party's success in three states, with Home Minister Amit Shah asserting that people have put their stamp of approval on PM Modi's "good governance".

While party president J P Nadda said the victory in Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh and Rajasthan is a stamp of people's faith in Modi's leadership, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh asserted the prime minister has made the BJP a "lok laadli" (people's favourite) party.

"It's only and only Modi ji in the hearts of the people. Today's election results have proved that days of appeasement and caste politics are over. New India votes on politics of performance," Shah said in a post on X.

"I salute the people of Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh and Rajasthan for this im-



mense support," the home minister said, adding "many congratulations to prime minister Shri Narendra Modi on this grand victory of BJP".

In a post on X, Defence Minister Singh said the "landslide" victory of the BJP in the assembly polls in Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Chhattisgarh is a victory of the "charismatic" leadership of Prime Minister Modi and the strong public trust towards the party.

"The way Modi ji has developed an authentic, emotional and intimate relationship with the people of the country and the commitment that the BJP has shown towards public welfare, development and

good governance, it has established the BJP as a lok laadli' party among the people," he said.

Singh termed the BJP's victory in three states as "historic" and also gave its credit to Nadda's "organisational skills" as well as collective efforts and hard work of the party workers.

"I congratulate Prime Minister Modi ji, party president Nadda ji and all the workers for this spectacular victory and express my gratitude to the people of the three states for this mandate and congratulate them," the defence minister said.

BJP chief Nadda hailed the party's victory and said its a stamp of people's faith in Prime Minister Modi's leadership.

Meanwhile, party leaders accepted the people's mandate in Telangana where Congress looks to form its government.

"Gratitude to people of Telangana for encouraging support. Under PM Narendra Modi Ji's leadership the BJP will continue to work towards the development of Telangana," Shah said in a post on X.

## BJP's win in three states mandate for 'Modi guarantee': Jitendra Singh

New Delhi, Dec 03 (PTI)

Union Minister Jitendra Singh on Sunday said BJP's victory in three states is a mandate for "Modi guarantee" and that the party has succeeded in enlarging its ideological base in spite of all the contradictions.

"People have authenticated their trust in what Prime Minister Narendra Modi says because it has been proven time and again with evidence that Modi has the capacity to walk the talk," he told reporters here.

As for the "double engine government" is concerned, Singh said that during the election campaign, many critics took

this impression with a pinch of salt but he had repeatedly reiterated even at that time that the common man understands the essence of this impression.

He said, for example, in Rajasthan, the common man did not say this in mincing words but in heart of hearts he could sense that he was not getting the benefits of Modi's welfare schemes to the same extent as was being received by the people in the neighbouring states like Gujarat and Uttar Pradesh.

"Misuse of funds and lack of accountability to the Centre has taken their toll in both Rajasthan and Chhattisgarh and particu-

larly the young voters could realise this," said Singh, the Minister of State for Personnel.

Results of Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Chhattisgarh showed that the BJP will form the government. While in Madhya Pradesh, the party retained power, in Rajasthan and Chhattisgarh, it overthrew the Congress.

In Telangana, the Congress is set to form the government defeating the Bharat Rashtra Samithi (BRS). About Telangana, the minister said, that Congress' victory is by default because it has benefited by the negative vote against BRS. However, for BJP, Singh said, it is a

qualitative vote because BJP has succeeded in enlarging its ideological base in spite of all the contradictions. He said another important factor emerging from the election results one after the other is that Modi has sought to introduce a new political culture in this country which, unlike in the past, is above caste, creed and vote bank consideration.

About who would be the chief minister in the three States won by BJP, Singh said, this question is asked because the mindset is conditioned by half a century of Congress rule where the preferences are dynasty-driven and decisions are taken at the dining table.

## BJP's resounding win boosts Chouhan as leadership

New Delhi, Dec 03 (PTI)

All the talk about the BJP looking at an alternative leadership in Madhya Pradesh receded into the background on a day Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan made a strong statement about his popular acceptability as the party appeared set to retain power with a stunning two-thirds majority.

The BJP had chosen to head into the assembly polls without naming a chief ministerial face in any of the states and its leaders asserted that the results underscore the wider support for Prime Minister Narendra Modi's agenda.

"The mandate gives the party leadership a free hand in deciding on chief ministers on all three states," a senior leader said, without going into names.

While Chouhan has emerged as a favourite to

remain at the helm in MP despite the presence of some challengers, the leadership race is wide open in Chhattisgarh and Rajasthan, two states where

the BJP has snatched power from the Congress. Many possible contenders for the top job across the three Hindi-speaking states have not contested the assembly

polls but this may not be a factor as the party has in the past placed its trust in leaders who were not a member of state assemblies, such as Yogi Adityanath in 2017.

## Less than 1% voters opted for NOTA in MP, Raj, Telangana

● 1.29% in Chhattisgarh

New Delhi, Dec 03 (PTI)

The counting of votes in three out of four states on Sunday showed that less than one per cent of the voters exercised the 'none of the above' (NOTA) option in the just-concluded assembly polls, according to the election commission.

Assembly polls were conducted in five states and while the counting of

votes in Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Chhattisgarh and Telangana was held on Sunday, votes will be counted in Mizoram on Monday.

In Madhya Pradesh, 0.99 per cent of the voters went for the NOTA option out of total voter turnout of 77.15 per cent. In neighbouring Chhattisgarh, 1.29 per cent of the voters pressed the NOTA button. Here, the voter turnout was 76.3 per

cent. In Telangana, 0.74 per cent of the electors opted for NOTA. The state registered 71.14 per cent of voter turnout.

Similarly, in Rajasthan 0.96 per cent of the voters exercised the NOTA option. It had recorded 74.62 per cent turnout.

Talking to PTI on the NOTA option, Pradeep Gupta of Axis My India said NOTA has been used from .01 per cent to a maximum of two per cent. If anything new is introduced, its effective-

ness depends on its result or performance.

"I had written to the government that if NOTA's effectiveness has to be made in the real sense, then NOTA should be declared as the winner if the maximum number of people use this option," he said.

Gupta was referring to the 'first-past-the-post' principle followed in India where a candidate who gets the maximum number of votes is declared the winner.

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