

# NATIONAL/INTERNATIONAL

## Nitish convenes NDA meeting to ensure better coordination for Bihar assembly polls

**PATNA, OCT 28:** Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar on Monday convened a meeting of the ruling NDA in the state to ensure better coordination among alliance partners in the run-up to assembly polls due next year.

Leaders of JD(U), BJP and smaller partners Lok Janshakti Party (Ram Vilas), Rashtriya Lok Morcha and Hindustani Awam Morcha thronged the chief minister's 1, Anne Marg residence for the meeting.

"Our party leader has been asserting that the NDA will win 200 plus seats of the 243-strong House. For that perfect synergy among constituents is a must. Today's meeting has been called for that purpose," Ashok Choud-



hary, state minister and JD(U) national general secretary, said.

State BJP president Dilip Jaiswal concurred, "A fine coordination saw us through

the Lok Sabha polls this year. Carrying it forward will help us secure a two-thirds majority in the assembly elections."

Lok Janshakti Party (Ram Vilas) state president Raju

Tiwari said that "2020 is a thing of the past", when asked about the revolt of its leader, and now a Union minister, Chirag Paswan which had badly hit the JD(U), causing the NDA to barely scrape through.

"The meeting, called at a time when elections are several months away, will send across a positive message to cadres who will get battle-ready," he added.

Similar sentiments were expressed by former Rajya Sabha MP Upendra Kushwaha, who heads Rashtriya Lok Morcha, and state minister Santosh Suman, the national president of Hindustani Awam Morcha founded by his father and Union minister Jitan Ram Manjhi.

## Bihar MP writes to Shah, claims to have been threatened by Bishnoi gang

**NEW DELHI, OCT 28:** Bihar MP Rajesh Ranjan alias Pappu Yadav has shot off a letter to Union Home Minister Amit Shah, seeking enhanced security in view of a "threatening call from the Lawrence Bishnoi gang".

The Purnea MP shared with the media his two-page letter to Shah, copies of which have been marked to the chief minister of Bihar and other top officials in the state.

The letter, dated October 21, was made public on Monday when a section of the media also played an audio clip of the call from a purported aide of Bishnoi "made from a Dubai number".

Besides seeking upgradation of his 'Y' security cover



to "Z", Yadav also demanded "police escort" at all functions he attends across Bihar, warning "if I get murdered, the blame shall fall upon the Centre as well as the state government".

Meanwhile, Purnea SP

Kartikeya Sharma said, "We have come to know about the MP's charge through the media. We are looking into it, and also ensuring that arrangements are made for his safety in accordance with his 'Y plus' security cover".

Yadav, a gangster-turned-politician, claimed that the caller was upset over his social media outbursts against Bishnoi, who is lodged in a Gujarat jail.

After the assassination of NCP leader Baba Siddiqui in Mumbai, Yadav had declared on X that "if permitted by law", he would "finish off within 24 hours the entire network" of Bishnoi, who is alleged to have been behind the killing.

A few days later, he twisted the knife by expressing solidarity with Bollywood actor Salman Khan, who is in the cross hairs of Bishnoi over killing of blackbucks, which are held sacred by the community to which the jailed gangster belongs.

## Pehowa-Yamunanagar road to be made four-lane: CM Saini

**NEW DELHI, OCT 28:** Haryana Chief Minister Nayab Singh Saini on Monday said that the road from Pehowa in Kurukshetra district to Yamunanagar will be made four-lane.

It will fulfil the people's demand and also facilitate their travel to Haridwar, he said while addressing a gathering organised by BJP workers in this district.

Along with this, bypasses will be constructed in Kurukshetra and Ladwa, relieving commuters from traffic jams, said Saini, who represents Ladwa in the state assembly.

The chief minister expressed his gratitude to the people for voting the BJP back to power and also acknowledged the hard work put in by party workers in the recent assembly polls.



Soon, steps will be taken to speed up many road projects in the state, he further said.

Saini said instructions have been given to the officials that repair of roads in Ladwa constituency be completed as soon as possible.

He said solving the problem of every citizen is the top

priority of the government "and our doors will remain open 24 hours for them".

Saini said as soon as he gets time, he will go to every ward, village and locality of Ladwa and thank the people for making the BJP win again.

Meanwhile, Saini also ad-

ressed another event at Kurukshetra University here.

Saini said that Ratnavali Mahotsav -- the annual cultural festival of Kurukshetra University -- serves as a remarkable platform to connect the younger generation with music, art, and culture of the state.

He highlighted that Haryana has long been a significant hub of eternal knowledge, with evidence of its cultural richness tracing back to the Vedic period.

Ratnavali Mahotsav plays a crucial role in preserving the culture and traditions rooted in this ancient era, he said.

This festival has been hosted at the university for the past 37 years, he said.

Saini said that the Kurukshetra University is among the leading universities in the country.

## Jharkhand polls:

## BJP releases 2nd list, fields Gamliyel Hembrom from Barhait against Hemant Soren

**RANCHI, OCT 28:** The BJP on Monday released its second list for the Jharkhand assembly polls, announcing Gamliyel Hembrom as its nominee from Barhait seat against Chief Minister Hemant Soren.

Hembrom had contested from Barhait in the 2019 assembly elections on an AJSU Party ticket and polled 2,573 votes, occupying the fourth position.

BJP also announced the candidature of Vikash Mahto from Tundi seat.

Hemant Soren is the sitting MLA of Barhait (ST) constituency in Sahibganj district. He had won the seat, considered a JMM bastion, by a margin of 25,740 votes over his nearest rival Simon Malto of the BJP in 2019.

Soren won both Dumka and Barahit in the December 2019 assembly elections and chose to retain the latter.



The BJP on October 19 released its first list of 66 candidates for the assembly elections. The party is contesting 68 of the 81 assembly seats in the state, leaving the rest for its allies. The JMM has announced candidates for 43 of the 81 seats. Of the 43 seats the JMM had contested in

the 2019 elections, it won 30 and came second in five constituencies.

Elections to the 81-member House will take place in two phases on November 13 and 20. Counting is scheduled on November 23.

INDIA bloc partners will contest the upcoming as-

sembly polls together, with the Congress and JMM competing for 70 of the 81 seats, while the remaining 11 will be contested by the RJD and Left parties.

In the opposition camp, the BJP will contest 68 seats, the AJSU Party 10, the JD(U) two, and the LJP (Ram Vilas) one.

In 2019, the JMM-led alliance won 47 seats, wresting power from the BJP. The saffron party had secured 25 seats, JVM-P three, AJSU Party two, and the CPI (ML) and NCP one each, besides two Independents emerging victorious.

Altogether 2.60 crore electors, including 11.84 lakh first-time voters and 1.13 lakh persons with disabilities (PwD), third gender and senior citizens over 85 years of age, are eligible to exercise their franchise in the upcoming elections.

## Consensus in MVA over 90 to 95 pc seats: Sharad Pawar

**MUMBAI, OCT 28:** A day before the deadline for filing of nominations, NCP (SP) head Sharad Pawar on Monday said the opposition Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) has reached a consensus over 90 to 95 per cent of the total 288 seats in the state.

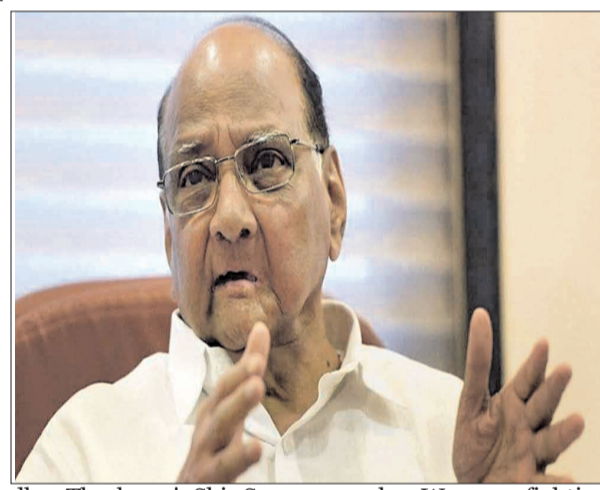
Speaking to reporters, Pawar, in a veiled attack on the BJP, said their fight was against those who engineered splits in rival political parties and those who compromised with their ideology.

Those who are in power did not solve problems of the people, he claimed.

The Maharashtra assembly elections are scheduled on November 20 and votes will be counted on November 23.

The last date for filing of nomination papers is October 29.

The MVA comprises the NCP (SP), Congress and Ud-



dhav Thackeray's Shiv Sena (UBT).

The Shiv Sena split in June 2022, causing the collapse of Thackeray's MVA government, while the Sharad Pawar-founded NCP broke into two factions after his nephew Ajit Pawar joined the ruling alliance in July 2023.

"Those who are in power did not solve problems of the

people. We are fighting against those who engineered splits in political parties, made unnecessary compromises with their ideology and did things they were not supposed to do," Sharad Pawar said.

In March this year, Deputy Chief Minister and BJP leader Devendra Fadnavis countered the jibes he was subjected to over his "I

will be back" assembly poll campaign line in 2019 by claiming he did return to power (in June 2022 following the rebellion by Eknath Shinde) and that too "after splitting two parties".

Asked about possible challenges before the opposition in the polls due to the government's welfare schemes like the Ladki Bahin scheme, Sharad Pawar said those who are in power for so long did not design any such scheme.

The Ladki Bahin scheme was launched only after a major setback (to the ruling Mahayuti) in the Lok Sabha elections held earlier this year, the former CM claimed.

The MVA won 31 out of the total 48 Lok Sabha seats in the state.

Under the Ladki Bahin scheme, eligible women get Rs 1,500 per month from the state government.

## ED conducts fresh searches in Karnataka MUDA case

**BENGALURU, OCT 28:** The Enforcement Directorate on Monday undertook fresh searches in connection with the Mysuru Urban Development Authority (MUDA) linked money laundering case in which it has booked Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah, official sources said.

About seven-eight

premises in Bengaluru and Mysuru are being covered, the sources said.

The federal agency had conducted the first round of raids in this case on October 18 when it searched the MUDA office in Mysuru and some other locations.

It also questioned some lower-rank officials of the MUDA at its Bengaluru zonal office last week.

The ED has filed a enforcement case information report (ECIR) under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) to book the CM and others taking cognisance of a Lokayukta FIR.

Siddaramaiah is facing Lokayukta and ED probes into alleged irregularities in the allotment of 14 sites to his wife by the MUDA.

Siddaramaiah's wife Parvathi B M, brother-in-law Mallikarjuna Swamy, Devaraju -- from whom Mallikarjuna Swamy purchased land and gifted it to Parvathi -- and others are named as other accused in the case by the two probe agencies.

Parvathi was recently questioned by the Lokayukta.

## Delhi's air quality 'very poor', minimum temperature 20.4 degrees C

**NEW DELHI, OCT 28:** The national capital woke up to a "very poor" air quality on Monday although the AQI improved marginally from a day earlier.

While the minimum temperature was recorded at 20.4 degrees Celsius, four notches above the season's average, the Air Quality Index (AQI) at 9 am was 327.

On Sunday, the AQI was 359, according to data from the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB).

An AQI between zero and 50 is considered 'good', 51 and 100 'satisfactory', 101 and 200 'moderate', 201 and 300 'poor', 301 and 400 'very poor', and 401 and 500 'severe'.

The IMD reported a hu-



midity level of 88 per cent in the morning.

The weather department

has forecast predominantly clear skies throughout the day, with the maximum

temperature expected to reach around 34.2 degrees Celsius.

## Trajectory of Ukraine war hangs on outcome of US election

**KYIV, OCT 28:** There is no doubt that the US election will determine the trajectory of the war in Ukraine.

The status of military aid from Kyiv's chief international backer is dependent on who becomes president, as is any prospect for a cease-fire that could benefit Ukraine.

Some in Kyiv say the country's very existence hinges on who wins the White House.

As Americans vote, exhausted and outmanned Ukrainian soldiers are holding defensive lines under constant Russian fire, knowing the results will dictate their future.

The war in Ukraine is one of the most divisive issues of the November 5 election: Former President Donald Trump, the Republican nominee, and Vice President Kamala Harris, the Democratic nominee, advocate very different views on how much support the US should continue to give Ukraine.

After a whirlwind Western tour,

Kyiv's leaders have tried to promote their version of what President Volodymyr Zelenskyy calls his "victory plan." They hope key decisions will be made -- including Ukraine's bid for NATO membership -- by the new administration. For now, they have no choice but to wait.

"We believe that regardless of the last name of the future president of the US, the country of the United States will not give up global dominance, global leadership as such. And this is possible only through the support of Ukraine and through the defeat of the Russian Federation," said Mykhailo Podolyak, an adviser to Zelenskyy.

Harris would likely continue Biden's policies: Harris, who has decried President Vladimir Putin's "brutality," would likely carry on President Joe Biden's policy of support, albeit within the strict limits on Ukraine's ability to strike deep inside Russian territory that have frustrated Kyiv's leaders.

"President Biden has made it clear from the beginning of this conflict that his top priority has been to avoid an all-out war with Russia. I think that remains the top American priority," said Malcom Chalmers, deputy director general at the Royal United Services Institute in London.

The US has provided Ukraine more than USD 59.5 billion in military weapons and assistance since Russia invaded in February 2022. But throughout, Kyiv has been captive to fraught American politics that often undermined its battlefield potential.

Ukraine lost territory and manpower as weapons stocks dwindled during the six months it took the US Congress to pass an aid package. Even promised military assistance has failed to arrive on time or in sufficient quantities.

Ukraine is still hoping for Western approval of strikes inside Russian territory with longer-range weapons supplied by its allies.