

## A decade of transformation, outpacing India's major cities in growth, says Knight Frank report

Hyderabad: Hyderabad has emerged as one of India's fastest-growing cities, outpacing other major urban centers over the past decade. Under the BRS government led by K. Chandrashekar Rao and K.T. Rama Rao, the city has achieved significant strides across multiple sectors, becoming a key player in the nation's urban transformation.

According to a latest report by Knight Frank India, Hyderabad's real estate market has been a standout performer, with a 10 per cent Compound Annual Growth Rate (CAGR 2013-2023) in residential launches over the last decade—the highest among the six cities analyzed. In 2023, residential prices rose by 11 per cent. Not only is Hyderabad thriving in real estate, but it is also making waves in socio-economic growth. The city ranks second in socio-economic parameters, fueled by a growing population of High Net-Worth Individuals (HNWIs) and Ultra High Net-Worth Individuals (UHNWIs). When it comes to physical infrastructure, Hyderabad secured second place in rankings, following Delhi-NCR. The report attributes this growth to city's robust and well-

planned network of roads, flyovers, underpasses, and wide ring roads. "The government has also invested strategically in key infrastructure projects, such as Hyderabad Metro Rail, ring roads etc," it added. These infrastructure upgrades have not only bolstered real estate but also strengthened Hyderabad's position as a competitive economic hub.

The city also shines in governance, ranking second alongside Ahmedabad. In a comparative analysis with other major cities like Bengaluru, Delhi-NCR, and Mumbai, Hyderabad stands out. While Bengaluru excels in talent and its start-up ecosystem, and Delhi-NCR leads in physical infrastructure and governance, Hyderabad has maintained consistent leadership in real estate growth and balanced progress across all other parameters. This positions the city as a model of sustainable urban development in India. Ranking based on Socio-Economics (Source: Knight Frank India): 1. Bengaluru 2. Hyderabad 3. Mumbai MMR 4. Chennai 5. Delhi-NCR 6. Ahmedabad. Ranking based on Real Estate (Source: Knight Frank India): 1.



Hyderabad 2. Bengaluru 3. Mumbai MMR 4. Delhi-NCR 5. Ahmedabad 6. Chennai. Ranking based on Physical Infrastructure (Source: Knight Frank India): 1. Delhi-NCR 2. Hyderabad 3. Mumbai MMR

4. Bengaluru 5. Ahmedabad 6. Chennai. Ranking based on Governance (Source: Knight Frank India): 1. Delhi-NCR 2. Hyderabad 3. Ahmedabad 4. Mumbai MMR 5. Bengaluru 6. Chennai

## Tensions escalate again over Nagarjuna Sagar Project control and surveillance



Hyderabad: It has been nearly one year since the confrontation between Andhra Pradesh and Telangana over the operational control of the Nagarjuna Sagar Project, which was statutorily assigned to Telangana under the State Reorganisation Act. Telangana tourism Despite efforts to defuse the situation, tensions continue to escalate. Adding a fresh flare-up to the situation, efforts made for restoration of the CCTV camera network on the 13 gates of the AP stretch of the Nagarjuna Sagar Dam were thwarted. The cameras were allegedly smashed by the

security personnel engaged by AP causing a setback for surveillance and water management. The damage to the CCTV equipment, valued at Rs 40 lakh, raised serious concerns about the dam's security and the monitoring of water resources. Even the weekly appraisal of water drawl made by the two States from the project conducted by the officials from both States, had become increasingly contentious. Telangana engineers, who travel to the AP end of the dam to take water readings, are reportedly being obstructed, adding to the tensions in executing

this routine exercise. Telangana tourism These issues have been taken up with the Krishna River Management Board (KRMB), which oversees the management and distribution of water resources in the Krishna basin. With AP has reverted to its earlier tactics of disrupting cooperative project management, friction is being built up once again between the two States. The efforts being made to restore the surveillance cameras are being thwarted. Despite these challenges being taken up with the KRMB, a concrete action plan has yet to be formulated. The project needs to be entirely under the operational control of Telangana, demand irrigation officials from the State. On November 29, 2023, AP police descended on the

dam site, causing considerable damage to the infrastructure and blocking the passage from the Telangana end to the AP stretch. They occupied 13 of the gates on its side calling for the intervention of the Union Home Secretary who called for the status quo to be restored. As per his directions the project's operational control should be handed over to Telangana. However, this has not yet happened. Telangana tourism The Telangana government plans to make a strong case for regaining control of the project at the upcoming Krishna River Management Board meeting, originally scheduled for November 21, but postponed at the request of the AP government.

## Hyderabad Metro receives IGBC Green Existing MRTS Platinum Certification for all 57 metro stations

Hyderabad: L&T Metro Rail Hyderabad (L&TMRHL) on Tuesday announced that it has achieved the prestigious IGBC Green Existing MRTS Platinum Certification for all 57 metro stations across its entire network i.e. Red Line, Blue Line, and Green Line corridors. "It is an honour to receive the prestigious recognition and is a testament to our team's dedication to sustainability and their relentless efforts to create a greener future for Hyderabad. This achievement reinforces

our commitment to providing eco-friendly, efficient, and reliable public transportation to the city," CEO and MD, L&T MRHL, KVB Reddy, in a press release said. The IGBC Platinum Certification is the highest level of recognition in sustainable construction and operations. L&TMRHL's achievement signifies its commitment to energy efficiency, eco-friendly design and resource conservation.

# Companies' appetite for cheap carbon offsets stokes fears of greenwashing

Carbon offsets have become big business as more companies make promises to protect the climate but can't meet the goals on their own. When a company buys carbon offsets, it pays a project elsewhere to reduce greenhouse gas emissions on its behalf – by planting trees, for example, or generating renewable energy. The idea is that reducing greenhouse gas emissions anywhere pays off for the global climate. But not all offsets have the same value. There is growing skepticism about many of the offsets sold on voluntary carbon markets. In contrast to compliance markets, where companies buy and sell a limited number of allowances that are issued by regulators, these voluntary carbon markets have few rules that can be enforced consistently. Investigations have found that many voluntary offset projects, forest management projects in particular, have done little to benefit the climate despite their claims. I specialize in sustainable finance and corporate governance. My colleagues and I recently conducted the first systematic, evidence-based look at the global landscape of voluntary carbon offsets used by hundreds of large, publicly listed firms around the world. The results raise questions about how some companies use these offsets and cast doubt on how effective voluntary carbon markets – at least in their current state – are in assisting a global transition to net-zero emissions.

Which companies use low-quality offsets might surprise you. Our analysis shows that the global carbon-offset market has grown to comprise a rich variety of offset projects. Some generate renewable energy, contribute to energy-efficient housing and appliances, or capture and store carbon. Others preserve forests and grassland. The majority are based in Asia, Africa and the Americas, but they exist in other regions too. Companies use these projects to boost their environmental claims in order to help attract investors, customers and support from various groups. That practice has skyrocketed, from virtually nothing in 2005 to roughly 30 million metric tons of carbon offset per year in 2022. Investment banking firm Morgan Stanley in 2023 forecast that the voluntary offset market would grow to about US\$100 billion by 2030 and to around \$250 billion by 2050. For our analysis, we examined 866 publicly traded companies that used offsets between 2005 and 2021.

We found that large firms with a high percentage of big institutional investors and commitments to reach net-zero emissions are particularly active in voluntary carbon markets. Our results also reveal a peculiar pattern: Industries with relatively low emissions, such as services and financial industries, are much more intensive in their use of offsets. Some used offsets for almost all of the emissions cuts they claimed. In contrast, high-emissions industries, such as oil and gas, utilities or transportation, used negligible amounts of offsets compared to their heavy carbon footprints. These facts cast a cloud of doubt on how effective voluntary carbon markets could really be at cutting global greenhouse gas emissions. They also raise questions about companies' motives for using offsets. Why companies rely on offsets: 2 explanations

One explanation for these patterns is that offsetting is a means to "outsource" ef-

forts to transition away from greenhouse gas emissions. Companies with smaller carbon footprints find it cheaper to buy offsets than to make expensive investments in reducing their own emissions. At the same time, we found that emissions-heavy companies were more likely to reduce their own emissions in-house, because offsetting massive amounts of emissions every year for an indefinite future would be more costly. A more pernicious explanation for the growth in voluntary offsets is that offsets enable "greenwashing." In this view, companies use offsets to cheaply refurbish their image to naive stakeholders who are not well informed about the quality of offsets. Agencies rate offset projects on how likely they are to meet their climate claims, among other indicators of the trustworthiness of offsets. Our reviews of pricing data and ratings found that projects rated as low quality have substantially lower prices. We found that relatively few of the 1,413 offset projects used by companies in our sample had been verified as high quality by an external carbon rating agency. Most offset credits used by companies were strikingly cheap. More than 70% of retired offsets were priced below \$4 per ton. These explanations are not mutually exclusive. We found that low-emissions companies could easily alter their peer rankings for ESG performance – how well they do on environmental, social and governance issues – by offsetting a small quantity of emissions. Fixing the voluntary market for the future. Our findings have important implications as policymakers and



regulators debate rules for the voluntary carbon markets. The data suggests that voluntary carbon markets are currently flooded with cheap, low-quality offsets, likely due to a lack of integrity guidelines and regulations for voluntary carbon markets to ensure the transparency and authenticity of offset projects. This lack of guidelines may also encourage the use of low-quality offsets. Ever since Article 6 of the Paris climate agreement created principles for carbon markets and ways countries could cooperate to reach climate targets, agreeing on how to implement those principles has been a challenge. For the principles to be successful, negotiators must agree on project eligibility and informa-

tion disclosure standards, among other issues. In April 2024, SBTi, the world's leading science-based arbiter of corporate climate targets, added urgency to that process when it announced that it would allow companies to meet their carbon goals with carbon offsets to cover emissions in their supply chains. The following month, the U.S. Treasury, Energy and Agriculture departments jointly released a policy statement laying out their own template for rules to govern voluntary carbon markets. "Voluntary carbon markets can help unlock the power of private markets to reduce emissions, but that can only happen if we address significant existing challenges," U.S. Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen said at the time.

## Will financial roadblocks continue to hinder conservation efforts? | Explained

The 16th meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP16) to the U.N. Convention on Biological Diversity recently concluded in Cali, Colombia. Representatives from U.N. countries tried to negotiate measures to halt and reverse biodiversity loss by 2030, which threatens both human well-being and the stability of human societies. A key sticking point was who'd pay for implementing these measures and how much. A highlight of COP16 was the engagement of Indigenous people and local communities — but otherwise it raised a big red flag: it revealed countries are not on track to meet the '30x30' target, which calls for the world to protect 30% of the world's land and oceans by 2030.

How much of a setback is this?

Inclusive decision-making: Negotiators reached a landmark agreement to establish a permanent body made up of Indigenous people and members of local communities and agreed this body's inputs would have to be included in decisions about biodiversity conservation. The move is intended to protect traditional knowledge systems and strengthen their representation and participation in policymaking. At COP16, negotiators also recognised the role of people of African descent in conserving nature and made sure to include them in biodiversity initiatives and help integrate their traditional knowledge and conservation practices into global

efforts. Biodiversity funding: COP16 established a framework called the "Cali Fund". It obligates major corporations — particularly in the pharmaceutical and biotechnology sectors — to share the financial benefits they derive from using genetic resources with the communities that nurture those resources. Companies have to contribute 0.1% of their revenue or 1% of their profits from products developed using genetic information to the fund. This figure could potentially exceed \$1 billion a year and should help support biodiversity conservation projects and benefit local communities. Half of the money from this fund will be allocated to Indigenous communities, to help conservation efforts and to acknowledge their contributions to biodiversity. Contributions to the fund are voluntary but it is a critical step towards more equitable benefit-sharing in the realm of biodiversity, especially considering the challenges surrounding global financing for biodiversity initiatives.

Biodiversity defence: COP16 also proposed guidelines to manage invasive alien species, a direct driver of biodiversity loss, by developing new databases, improving cross-border trade regulations, and enhancing coordination with e-commerce platforms. This decision emphasises the need for technical support, capacity building, and international cooperation across developing

countries. Momentum for blue: Negotiators also agreed to a new and upgraded process to identify 'Ecologically or Biologically Significant Marine Areas' (EBSAs), which are critical and vulnerable parts of the ocean. This process has faced various political and legal hurdles since its inception in 2008; COP16 revived it by agreeing on mechanisms to update existing ESBAs and identify new ones. 'One Health': The Global Action Plan on Biodiversity and Health established at COP16 underscores the need for a holistic 'One Health' approach, which calls for a collective focus on ecosystem, animal, and human health. By addressing the common drivers of biodiversity loss and poor health, such as deforestation and climate change, the plan aims to prevent zoonotic diseases, reduce non-communicable diseases, and promote sustainable ecosystems. It also encourages partnerships among health professionals, conservationists, and policymakers to develop tools and measures to track the progress of biodiversity plus health initiatives. Innovating with caution: Redesigning organisms or creating new biological systems (synthetic biology) was an important topic of discussion at COP16. Applications — including bioengineered species for ecosystem restoration or sustainable materials to reduce resource strain — are promising because they can address environmental challenges.

# Education New Zealand's Sustainability Carnival: Honoring Innovations and Impact in Sustainable ??????

Education New Zealand Manapou ki te Ao (ENZ) hosted a vibrant Sustainability Carnival at the New Zealand High Commission in New Delhi, sparking dialogue on fostering sustainable practices. The event marked the grand finale of ENZ's #SustainableTomorrow campaign, an initiative designed to create impactful opportunities for individuals to contribute to building a more sustainable future through education. As part of the #SustainableTomorrow campaign, ENZ launched a digital poster design competition for Indian high school students. Centred around the theme Innovating for a Sustainable Future, the competition aimed to raise awareness of key Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs): Goal 7 (Affordable and Clean Energy), Goal 9 (Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure), Goal 12 (Responsible Consumption and Production), and Goal 13 (Climate Action). The winning posters were unveiled at the Sustainability Carnival earlier today.

HE Patrick Rata, New Zealand High Commissioner to India, stated, "Through the Sustainable Tomorrow campaign, ENZ sought to encourage meaningful conversations and deepen awareness among students of the vital role each individual plays in building a sustainable future. It is aligned with the vision of ENZ and New Zealand universities to champion global understanding and action on sustainable practices." The winners of the digital poster design competition are: Winner: Myra Jain, GD Goenka Public School, Vasant Kunj, New Delhi 1st Runner Up: Nayna Mitra, The British School, New Delhi 2nd Runner Up: Oishani Gupta, Heritage International Xperiential School, Gurugram. Winners of the digital poster design competition in People's Choice Award are Yuvaditya Jain, Delhi Public School RKP, New Delhi



Annya Shukla, Sunbeam Suncity School, Varanasi. Prominent Indian institutions, including Ashoka University, the World University of Design, Tagore International School, The Sriram Universal School, Heritage International, Lancers International, Bal Bharati Public School, The Sriram School, DPS RK Puram, and KR Mangalam World

School, participated with dynamic interactive stalls. The event highlighted how sustainability is being seamlessly integrated into education, with a focus on innovative initiatives such as sustainable fashion, paper recycling, and responsible consumerism. Education New Zealand's #SustainableTomorrow Campaign was

launched as a comprehensive digital campaign to spotlight sustainability within the educational landscape. Through diverse activities, and partnerships, the campaign highlighted New Zealand's commitment to embedding sustainable practices in education. It encouraged schools and universities to integrate sustainability in curricula, campus initiatives, and daily operations.

## OPPO and MediaTek Join Forces: Revolutionising Smartphones with the Find X8 Series

At the MediaTek Technology Diaries event on Friday, November 15, OPPO and MediaTek showcased their shared commitment to pushing the boundaries of smartphone technology. The event teased the launch of the OPPO Find X8 Series, the first devices in India to feature MediaTek's groundbreaking Dimensity 9400 chipset. This collaboration sets a new benchmark in performance, efficiency, and AI-driven innovation. Together, OPPO and MediaTek have collaborated on a device that is a testament to what a deep partnership between two industry innovators can achieve. A Collaborative Vision for Excellence Speaking at the event, Peter Dohyung Lee, Head of Product Strategy at OPPO, emphasised the significance of this partnership.

OPPO has been bringing the latest technologies to India for the past 10 years, and the upcoming launch of the Find X8 Series marks a significant milestone in our India commitment story," he said. "The Find X8 redefines performance, camera, gaming, productivity, connectivity, and multimedia experience on smartphones. It combines

OPPO's innovations with MediaTek's powerful Dimensity 9400 processor, and we are thrilled that Find X8 Pro and Find X8 are the first set of devices to be launched in India with this revolutionary chipset," he added.

Dr. Yenchi Lee, General Manager of the Wireless Communications Business Unit, MediaTek, "For many years, OPPO and MediaTek have worked together with the same mission: to continuously explore and lead the development of new technologies. The Dimensity 9400 is a game-changing chipset, with its second-generation All Big Core design delivering class-leading power and incredible performance. We can't wait for more people to experience it in OPPO Find X8 and Find X8 Pro.

"The Dimensity 9400: A Revolutionary Processor The MediaTek Dimensity 9400, built on TSMC's second-generation 3nm process, introduces a host of innovations. Its second-generation All Big Core design features one Arm Cortex-X925 core clocked at 3.62GHz, paired with 3 Cortex-X4 cores and 4 Cortex-A720 cores. This setup delivers



35% faster single-core performance, 28% faster multi-core performance and 40% more power efficiency than the previous generation MediaTek Dimensity 9300i. These ad-

vancements translate to smoother multitasking, faster app launches, and seamless performance, whether editing 4K videos or switching between multiple apps.

# Suchitra Academy Celebrates 13th Founder's Day

Inauguration of the "Suchitra Innovation Center" Highlights Commitment to Creativity and Innovation

Suchitra Academy celebrated its 13th Founder's Day with a spectacular "Itihasam: The Echo of Telangana's Heritage" theme, blending tradition and innovation in a captivating evening. The day began with the inauguration of the "Suchitra Innovation Center", a milestone for the school's commitment to fostering creativity and innovation among students. The event continued with a mesmerizing Burra Katha performance by the renowned Bramham Gaari Burra Katha Brundham, showcasing the vibrant folk traditions of Telangana.

A warm welcome was extended to Chief Guest Bala Venkatesh Varma, Former Ambassador of India to the Russian Federation and other dignitaries. The celebration also included lighting the ceremonial lamp and a special birthday tribute to Founder Chairman, Sri Krishnam Raju, accompanied by a heartfelt rendition of the birthday song. Key highlights included inspiring speeches by the Chief Guest, the Founder Director Praveen Raju and the Principal Ms Deepa Kapoor. The unveiling of a Rubric installation showcasing Suchitra's No. 9 All India Ranking was the highlight. Engaging activities like TARGO's first-anniversary contest and parent engagement showcased community spirit.

The evening culminated in a grand cultural showcase, "Itihasam," where students brought Telangana's rich heritage to life through performances. The event concluded with the school song, and heartfelt applause for the efforts of students and staff.



## A sign of policy paralysis in Maharashtra

Politics in Maharashtra is at a crossroads where the reformist agenda of electoral politics has been taken over by monetary manipulations through the state apparatus. Though monetary considerations for votes are not new in politics, they were not structurally embedded in the state policy. Distribution of cash was a purely political phenomenon. The freebie culture routed through the state has diluted the policy process. In earlier decades, when caste issues predominantly dominated electoral politics, certain political parties even criticised reservations — a policy of affirmative action — as a freebie. Distribution of freebies was considered as an important strategy of the underdeveloped States in the country. Colour TV sets, laptops, mixers, etc. were distributed in exchange for the allegiance of voters towards a political party. Maharashtra, on the other hand, pioneered schemes such as the Employment Guarantee Scheme in 1972, which offered wages for work; this was subsequently adopted by the Central government as the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme. However, since then, there has been a change, which is a sign of limited understanding of economic issues and is usually observed in a state of policy paralysis. This change could be attributed to

the inability of rational policy design by the political class.

In the backdrop of the Assembly elections in Maharashtra, the ruling Mahayuti coalition announced the Majhi Ladki Bahin Yojana. Women who are residents of Maharashtra, aged 21 to 65 years, and have an annual family income of less than ₹2.5 lakh are eligible for this scheme. The Opposition, Maha Vikas Aghadi, could not counter it, so they announced a similar scheme in their manifesto. If politicians are unable to generate employment, it is essentially a matter of economic policy. Bank transfers before elections are nothing but the distribution of cash for votes. This is not a policy solution to the problems of unemployment and poverty, nor is it compensation.

Traditionally, politicians would build a constituency by continuously engaging with the people. Most issues, including civic issues, were resolved with the intervention of people's representatives. This is no longer the case. Today, larger constituencies are built using social media and post-truth narratives. In modern-day politics, a constituency is not confined to a geographical space with a proportional population; it is a demographic imagination of an entire subset of a population, such as the youth or women. While earlier studies show that women were



the last to be considered as independent potential voters and it was assumed that most women would vote according to the choice of the family (essentially the male head of the family), this is not the case any longer. Women are important voters and are being wooed everywhere. However, these imagined constituencies will be short-lived in the absence of solid rational policies.

Under the changing socio-economic conditions, political parties function as agencies for the 'consolidation of demographics' across the population. This is different from

'demographic imagination', for 'demographic imagination' would mean a process of negotiation with potential groups who could vote for a political party. The process of 'demographic imagination' is a highly complex one and could also include changing voters' preferences and orientations. It is a long-term process to build a clientele base of a political party. On the other hand, 'consolidation of demographics' would mean the manifestation of that imagination through interventions such as direct cash transfers or other freebies.

# What will be the fate of regional parties NCP and Shiv Sena?

Story so far: The stage for Maharashtra elections is set with the six-way fight between the Mahayuti and Maha Vikas Aghadi on November 20. In an unprecedented move, the Shiv Sena and Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) will face their own party factions in the poll fray. The fragmentation of these regional political forces with respect to seats and vote share is an inevitable outcome of these polls. However, what would their fate be post-polls is a debate raging among political analysts in the State. Dr. Deepak Pawar on the fate of regional parties in Maharashtra post-polls. Armed with the iconic 'bow and arrow' symbol and the party name 'Shiv Sena', Eknath Shinde's faction won seven of the 15 seats it contested and polled 12.95% of the votes. In all of its winning seats – Buldhana, Aurangabad, Kalyan, Thane, Mumbai North-West, Maval and Hatkanangale, it was in a direct fight with its rival faction, Sena (UBT), led by Uddhav Thackeray. In comparison, Sena (UBT) won nine seats of the 22 seats it contested – scoring a lower strike rate of 40.91% compared to Sena's 46.67%. Of the nine seats it won, six were against Shiv Sena - Mumbai South Central, Mumbai South, Yavatmal-Washim, Shirdi, Nashik and Hingoli. Sena (UBT) polled 16.72% of the total votes. As a result, the two Senas combinedly won 16 seats and polled 29.67% of the votes. In 2019, the undivided Shiv Sena won 18 seats and polled 23.5% of the votes. These figures show that while Shinde's Sena faction has outperformed the Thackeray faction in a direct face-off, and shown a better strike-rate, the voteshare of the two Senas has improved. The undivided Sena's chief – Uddhav Thackeray – who campaigned for the Congress, has found support among minorities and anti-BJP voters apart from Thackeray family loyalists, which has increased his faction's voteshare.

"In the past two years, Sena (UBT) has moved from the so-called fanatic Hindutva of Balasaheb Thackeray to a more non-Brahminical Hindutva of Prabodhankar Thackeray (Bal Thackeray's father). Sena (UBT) is trying to expand its voterbase. Because there is better understanding between the Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) parties, if Uddhav Thackeray, his son and cadre put across their agenda better, rather than just lamenting that they (Shinde and his MLAs) took away his party, then Sena (UBT) electoral support base will have new clientele," opines Dr. Deepak Pawar, Head of the Civics and Politics department at Mumbai University. Talking about Mr. Thackeray's new-found supporters, he says, "His Hindutwawadi supporters might have diminished, but because of his COVID-19 interactions and his interaction with the INDIA bloc, he is more popular among minorities than the NCP-Congress guys." Dr. Pawar also says that in spite of enormous funds pumped in by Mr. Shinde's electoral campaign, without him proving what he has to offer to the people of Maharashtra, it would be difficult for his party to gain traction. Currently, Shiv Sena is contesting on 83 seats in the upcoming State polls while Shiv Sena (UBT) is contesting on 93 seats. The two factions are fighting head-on in 49 seats, of which 19 are in and around Mumbai – Shiv Sena's core bastion



## The State polls will see a legacy battle for Shiv Sena and the Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) as the parties' factions clash

Allowed to use the 'clock' symbol and the party's name – Nationalist Congress Party (NCP), Ajit Pawar's faction won only one of the four seats it contested and polled 3.6% of the votes. Mr. Pawar's only victory was in Raigad, while he managed to lose both sugar-belt seats Baramati and Shirur to the other NCP faction. Mr. Pawar's wife lost to his cousin Supriya Sule in Baramati – a poll fight Ajit Pawar has since then regretted picking. In comparison, the NCP founder Sharad Pawar's faction – NCP(SP) - won eight of the ten seats it contested, polling 10.27% of the votes. In total, the two factions have won nine seats and 13.87%. In 2019, the undivided NCP won four seats and a 15.68% voteshare.

These figures show that the senior Pawar won the battle of factions, clocking a 80% strike rate compared to NCP's 25%. Moreover, since the split, it is his faction that has mainly benefitted from the overall increase in NCP seats and votes. The 83-year-old veteran politician, who spearheads the Maha Vikas Aghadi's strategy and negotiations, and balances Sena and Congress' opposing ideologies, has rejuvenated his party, fielding more new faces – a move which has resonated with voters. "Ajit Pawar's party has a very uncertain political future. In rural Maharashtra, people did not like the way Ajit Pawar left Sharad Pawar, they did not like the split up of the party and family. Secondly, Ajit Pawar's political influence has been confined to Baramati and I say this because he was groomed under the shadow of Sharad Pawar and he never had political clout in Vidharbha, South and Central Maharashtra. Thirdly, what is his capability of getting MLAs elected in constituencies across Maharashtra?," says Prof. Surendra Jondhale, a political analyst, commenting on the Ajit Pawar-led NCP's

future. He also noted what a tough fight Ajit Pawar is facing from his nephew Yugendra Pawar for his own re-election from Baramati. "Even BJP and RSS followers are unhappy about Ajit Pawar joining the Mahayuti due to his tainted image," says Mr. Jondhale, adding that Mr. Shinde is uncomfortable about two Marathas in the coalition's leadership. Sharad Pawar, who is known for switching sides according to where the political wind blows, will be the kingmaker after these elections, says Mr. Jondhale. "Sharad Pawar has very strategically fielded his candidates. He had done this in 1999 when he cast Dilip Walse-Patil and Dhananjay Munde as fresh faces. In Ambegaon, his candidate (Devdatta Jayvantrao Nikam) was an ally to Dilip Walse-Patil. Knowing this, Sharad Pawar has fielded Mr. Nikam as he knows he will win. Sharad Pawar will be kingmaker and it is highly unlikely that he will reconcile with the deserters. Most of Ajit Pawar's MLAs will lose." Currently, NCP is contesting on 52 seats and NCP(SP) is fighting on 86 seats in these assembly elections. Of these, the two factions will clash on 38 seats directly, with 20 seats spanning across Western Maharashtra – NCP's sugar bastion. Moreover, NCP is also embroiled in two 'friendly fights' with its Mahayuti ally BJP in Ashti and Morshi and two with its other ally Shiv Sena in Anushaktinagar and Mankhurd Shivajinagar.

In the immediate future, Maharashtra's government formations seems murky. "The biggest question in these polls is which political party (of the six contesting) will get the highest number of seats. The number of independents or rebels elected in these elections - individual characters having political clout, like Nilesh Rane who is contesting on a Shiv Sena ticket, will decide the next coalition's formation," says Mr.

Jondhale. Fragmentation of Maharashtra-based parties has seeped deep into the State's polity. Reconciliation between the two Shiv Senas or the two NCPs does not seem on the cards, adds Mr. Jondhale. He also does not see the BJP allying with either Mr. Thackeray or the senior Pawar, confirming that the current six-party fight is here to stay for a while. Mumbai, Nov 05 (ANI): NCP-SCP chief Sharad Pawar with Shiv Sena (Uddhav Balasaheb Thackeray) chief Uddhav Thackeray during a joint press conference ahead of the Maharashtra Assembly election, at Silver Oak in Mumbai on Monday

Mumbai, Nov 05 (ANI): NCP-SCP chief Sharad Pawar with Shiv Sena (Uddhav Balasaheb Thackeray) chief Uddhav Thackeray during a joint press conference ahead of the Maharashtra Assembly election, at Silver Oak in Mumbai on Monday

However, what will happen to these fragmented parties in the long run? "Both Shiv Senas and NCPs should realise that their domain of influence is only in Maharashtra," says Mr. Pawar. Likening this to how State-centric the politics in Tamil Nadu is, he says, "If they (NCP, Shiv Sena factions) are willing to talk about Maharashtrians, Maharashtra's culture, Marathi language, Marathi-speaking culture, they will follow parties in West Bengal, Punjab, where regional parties have come to power in their own.

Maybe this kind of metamorphosis of support base will lead to a Maharashtrian-based, genuinely federal political narrative." He concludes that this may not happen in 2024, but indicates the results of these polls will pave the way for such kind of politics in the future. Maharashtra's 288-seat Assembly will go to polls in a single phase on November 20 and results will be announced on November 23.

# How do lightning rods prevent lightning strikes from reaching people?

Climate change is making lightning strikes around the world more common and deadlier. Every year, around 24,000 people around the world are killed by such strikes; in India, lightning strikes killed 2,887 people in 2022. There have been petitions to declare this phenomenon a natural disaster in India so that its survivors can access institutional mechanisms for protection and rehabilitation. Against this backdrop, lightning rods are important for their ability to keep lightning away from people.

What is lightning?

Lightning is an electrical discharge between charged particles in a cloud and the ground. Objects can be classified as electrical conductors or insulators, but this depends on the electrical energy acting on the object. For example, the air around us is an electrical insulator: it doesn't transport electric charges. But if it is subjected to a high voltage of around 3 million V/m, its insulating properties break down and it can transport a current. Lightning strikes are possible because electrical charges can build up in a cloud beyond the ability of air to keep resisting their movement.

What is a lightning rod?

While a lightning strike occurs between a cloud and an object on or near the ground, it takes the path of least resistance, which means it moves towards the closest object with the highest electric potential. "The reason lightning strikes the rod has to do with its shape. Lightning rods are pointy and pointed things create stronger electric fields near them," IIT Kanpur assistant professor of physics Adhip Agarwala said. "It's like saying the flow of water speeds up near a nozzle. The electric field is the force that acts on molecules of air, so it becomes strongest near the lightning rod. This force ionises the air near the rod first and provides a route for the current to flow." Think of a lightning strike as the extended hand of someone who wants to be pulled out of a pool. If there are many hands offering to help, the lightning's hand will reach for the strongest one. A lightning rod is an electrical conductor that takes advantage of this fact with one addition: engineers install it on building-tops in a way that it's the first hand the lightning encounters on its way down. This is also why it's risky to stand under trees in an otherwise open field, like a farm.

Where does the current in a lightning rod go?

Heat energy always flows from a warmer object to a cooler object. Liquid water flows from a place with a higher gravitational potential to a lower one. Similarly, an electric current flows from a place with higher electric potential to a place with lower electric potential. Fortunately, we have an abundant source of lower electric potential: the earth. The lightning rod is connected to a wire that drops through the length of the building into the ground, where it dissipates its electric charges into its surroundings. The idea here is that electrifying the earth will need virtually infinite amount of charges, so it's treated as a bucket that will never fill up. However, some parts of the bucket may still be better at receiving the charges than others. If a strike induces a large current in a

grid-connected electrical system, engineers connect the wire to a line that allows only high currents, thus diverting them away from devices that can handle only low currents. Such setups are called lightning arresters.

Can lightning evade a lightning rod?

A lightning strike may evade a lightning rod if the rod is installed at the wrong height or angle or too close to another structure, isn't properly grounded, if there are multiple thunderstorms in an area, if it has a flawed design, or if it has become misshapen and/or corroded due to lack of maintenance. It can also fail if an electrical discharge ascends from the ground to meet a descending strike, risking bypassing the rod, or if a strike is more attracted to the side of a tall building than to the top. Over the years engineers have devised new incentives for lightning to prefer a lightning rod over other structures nearby. Among others, they make sure a lightning rod is available for lightning to strike within the minimum distance the strike travels in each step it takes towards the ground.

What dangers does a lightning rod pose?

The lightning rod and the components connected to it are designed to carry a lightning strike into the ground. This means catching the strike and safely transporting it. If the



wire bends in a U shape at any point, the two arms of the U should be far apart to prevent the current from arcing across and shorting the conductor. The charges should also not be able to arc through any other objects nearby. Engineers also bury the grounding wire in a part of the crust with higher electrical conductivity so that the wire dissipates charges faster. In the 1960s, a U.S. engineer named Herbert Ufer developed a system later called a concrete en-

cased electrode: it has the properties of a good grounding material, including better electrical conductivity than soil. The International Electrotechnical Commission publishes standards that specify the design limits and points of failure engineers can consider when installing lightning rods, and the priorities that planners and policymakers should adopt — informed by technical considerations — when estimating risk and liability.

## Mpox clade Ia has evolved to jump from humans to humans: new study

Since the world eradicated smallpox in 1980, scientists have known that the battle against poxviruses was far from over. Of the multiple types that exist, scientists have been wary of one in particular: mpox. In fact, one of the points in the World Health Assembly's post-eradication policies was the "continuation of monkeypox surveillance in West and Central Africa, at least until 1985". In the 2022-2023, the World Health Organisation (WHO) declared the then global outbreak of mpox a 'public health emergency of international concern'. In August this year, the WHO declared mpox to be a public health emergency for the second time in two years. (Note: In 2022, the WHO designated "mpox" as a preferred synonym for "monkeypox" disease. The virus is still called "monkeypox" according to the International Committee on the Taxonomy of Viruses. For uniformity's sake, this article will use "mpox" to refer to both the disease and the virus clades.) New cause for worry

The declaration ensured multiple countries would pledge vaccines to the 15 African nations affected by the outbreak, six of which had never reported a single case of mpox before. But the paucity of doses has forced countries to prioritise their campaigns. Barely two months since these countries started their targeted vaccinations, scientists have a new cause for worry. A preprint paper uploaded on Virologica, a scientists' discussion forum online, on October 24 reported evidence that yet another strain of the mpox virus appeared to have achieved human-to-human transmission. There are two clades

of mpox: I and II. Clade I viruses have been shown to cause more severe disease in the mouse model, but that doesn't mean the same may be true for humans. Both clades are classified into two subclades, making a total of four known variants: Ia, Ib, IIa, and IIb. Of these, clade IIb was responsible for the 2022 outbreak, which is still continuing in certain parts of Africa. Clade Ib, discovered towards the end of 2023, is the primary cause of infection in central Africa. Researchers believed these two clades to be the primary contributors of the present mpox problem. They know very little about clade IIa except that it causes infections in western Africa.

When viruses make 'mistakes'

Clade Ia, on the other hand, is the oldest known variant of the mpox virus. It has been known to cause sporadic infections in humans, mostly children, since 1970. But these infections were always limited to a few families or communities and the transmission was always from animals to humans. There was no proof of sustained human to human transmission — until recently. The preprint posted on Virologica reported evidence that the DNA of clade Ia viruses sequenced from the present outbreak bears clear signs of human-to-human transmission. Viruses evolve by introducing changes to their genetic material. Each time a virus infects a new host, an enzyme known as a polymerase makes multiple copies of the virus's genetic material (DNA or RNA), which is then packed into new viruses. But sometimes the polymerases make a

mistake. These mistakes, called mutations, could have a positive, negative or no impact on the virus, meaning the virus can get better or worse or be the same at its job. The rate at which the polymerases make mutations is different for different viruses. Generally, viruses that have RNA as their genetic material, such as the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) and influenza, make mistakes much more frequently than those that have DNA, like the human papillomavirus (HPV) and adenoviruses. This error rate is even lower in some DNA viruses, like the members of the pox family, which also have an error-correction mechanism built into them. This mechanism, called proof-reading, ensures few mistakes are made: around one mistake every three years in a circulating viral strain.

The APOBEC family However, viral polymerases are not the only source of mistakes in a virus's genetic material. The immune system also has a mechanism to introduce random changes in foreign DNA. A family of proteins called APOBEC — short for 'apolipoprotein B mRNA editing enzyme, catalytic polypeptide-like' — can introduce changes to the viral DNA while it is being copied in the cells. By doing so, APOBEC proteins force mistakes, some of which can be lethal to the virus. Importantly, of the four bases that DNA is made of, namely adenine, guanine, cytosine, and thymine, viral DNA polymerases can make a mistake anywhere, but APOBEC's activity is usually limited to changing a cytosine to a thymine. In a 2023 paper that appeared in Science.

# The Supreme Court verdict on private property rights and its implications | Explained

In an 8:1 majority ruling, a nine-judge Constitution Bench of the Supreme Court on November 5, 2024 held that not all private property can be deemed “material resource of the community” under Article 39(b) of the Constitution for acquisition and redistribution by the government. Chief Justice of India (CJI) D.Y. Chandrachud authored the lead majority opinion for himself, and Justices Hrishikesh Roy, J.B. Pardiwala, Manoj Misra, Rajesh Bindal, Satish Chandra Sharma and Augustine George Masih. Justice B.V. Nagarathna partially concurred with it while Justice Sudhanshu Dhulia dissented.

What does Article 39(b) entail?

Part IV of the Constitution, which outlines the “Directive Principles of State Policy” (DPSP), includes Article 39(b), which mandates the State to adopt policies ensuring that “the ownership and control of the material resources of the community are so distributed as best to subserve the common good.” The court was tasked with interpreting the scope of “material resources” under Article 39(b). Another crucial issue before the court was whether laws enacted to further the objectives of Article 39(b) could be shielded from constitutional challenges based on fundamental rights, such as the right to equality and freedom of expression. Fundamental rights, enshrined in Part III of the Constitution, and DPSPs have long been in conflict. While the Constitution expressly makes fundamental rights enforceable, DPSPs serve as guiding principles, outlining objectives the state is expected to strive towards.

Why was Article 31C introduced?

In 1971, in a bid to insulate Emergency-era economic policies from judicial review, the Parliament introduced a new provision — Article 31C through the 25th Amendment. The provision outlined that any law giving effect to clauses (b) and (c) of Article 39 — which respectively urged the state to frame laws to secure the material resources of the community and to establish an economic system that prevents the concentration of wealth — could not be deemed void on grounds that they contravened Articles 14 (right to equality) and 19 (freedom of speech and expression). Additionally, it barred courts from assessing whether a law genuinely advanced the objectives outlined in Articles 39(b) and (c). This amendment was subsequently challenged in the seminal *Kesavananda Bharati* case (1973) in which a narrow 7-6 majority found that an amendment which offended the Constitution’s basic structure would be void. Justice Khanna found that the amendment partially offended this doctrine. He held that, insofar as it barred any scrutiny of whether a law was enacted to further the objectives of Articles 39(b) and (c), it violated the principle of judicial review. However, he upheld the amendment to the extent that it shielded such laws from challenges based on Articles 14 and 19.

What was the amendment that followed?

Despite this, in 1976, Parliament introduced even more sweeping changes to Article 31C through the 42nd Amendment. They stipulated that a law made in furtherance of any DPSP — and not limited to those under Articles 39(b) and (c) — would enjoy immunity against a constitutional challenge.

In 1980, the Supreme Court, in *Minerva Mills v. Union of India*, struck down the amendment, reinforcing the primacy of fundamental rights over DPSPs. The then-Chief Justice Y.V. Chandrachud famously noted that the amendment had “removed two sides of the golden triangle” formed by Articles 14, 19, and 21. However, this ruling birthed a conundrum: Does Article 31C now exist in its entirety, as outlined in the 25th Amendment, or did the Supreme Court restore the post-*Kesavananda Bharati* position, wherein only Articles 39(b) and (c) remain protected?

How did the matter reach the top court?

The petitions before the top court concerned the constitutional validity of Chapter-VIIIA, introduced in 1986 as an amendment to the Maharashtra Housing and Area Development Act (MHADA) of 1976. It allowed the Mumbai Building Repair and Reconstruction Board (MBRRB) to acquire cessed properties with the consent of 70% of the residents for restoration purposes. Additionally, Section 1A was inserted into MHADA, invoking Article 39(b), enabling the MBRRB to acquire lands and buildings and transfer them to “needy persons” and the “occupiers of such lands or buildings.” Aggrieved by this, the Property Owners’ Association, a body representing over 20,000 landowners in Mumbai, filed a lawsuit before the Bombay High Court, which dismissed the challenge. The court ruled that Article 31C of the Constitution bars any challenge on the grounds of Articles 14 or 19 if the statute has been enacted in furtherance of Article 39(b). The matter was appealed and initially heard by a three-judge bench of the Supreme Court. In 1996, it was referred to a five-judge bench, which then referred it to a seven-judge bench in 2001. Eventually, in 2002, the matter was put before a nine-judge bench.

What does the majority verdict stipulate?

The majority opinion underscored that not all private property would fall within the ambit of Article 39(b) for government acquisition to serve the “common good”. The Chief Justice reasoned that such an interpretation would echo a redundant “rigid economic dogma” that advocates for greater state control over private resources. He further noted that, due to a range of market reforms over the years, the Indian economy had transitioned from being predominantly public investment-driven to a model in which both public and private investments coexist. Notably, the majority rejected Justice V.R. Krishna Iyer’s interpretation in *State of Karnataka v. Shri Ranganatha Reddy* (1977), which held that “material resources of the community” under Article 39(b) encompassed both public and private resources. Justice Iyer’s view shaped subsequent Constitution Bench decisions, including *Sanjeev Coke Manufacturing* (1982) and *Mafatlal Industries* (1997). The judges asserted that these rulings reflected a “particular economic ideology” premised on the notion that prioritising state acquisition of private property would best serve the nation’s interests. The Chief Justice further clarified that assessment of whether a privately owned resource holds communal significance must be done on a “case-by-case basis.” He identified several “non-exhaustive



## A nine-judge Constitution Bench has finally put a quietus to an issue pending in the courts for over three decades, striking a balance between public welfare and private property rights.

factors” for consideration, including the resource’s inherent qualities, its impact on public welfare, its limited availability, and the potential consequences of its ownership being concentrated among a small group of private entities. Addressing the question of whether laws enacted to implement Article 39(b) are shielded by Article 31C from constitutional challenges, the judges affirmed that such immunity does exist. They further clarified that the unamended Article 31C, to the extent held valid in *Kesavananda Bharati*, remains operative. However, the Chief Justice cautioned that any acquisition of private property for public use must adhere to constitutional guarantees, including Articles 14 and 300A (right to property).

What did Justices Nagarathna and Dhulia opine?

Justice Nagarathna offered a partial concurrence, recognising that certain private resources, particularly those essential to public welfare, could “theoretically” fall within the scope of Article 39(b). However, she clarified that personal effects and everyday possessions should be exempt from this categorisation. However, both she and Justice Dhulia took strong exception to the observations made by the Chief Justice in a “proposed judgment” regarding the doctrine espoused by Justice Iyer. According to the judges, the proposed opinion stipulated that the “Krishna Iyer doctrine does a disservice to the broad and flexible spirit of the Constitution”. This critique, however, does not appear in the published majority judgment authored by the Chief Justice. It is unusual for judges to quote from “proposed” judgments as draft opinions are typically circulated internally among members of a Bench. Castigating the practice of decrying former judges, Justice Nagarathna underscored that one must not lose sight of the times in which judges like Justice Iyer dis-

charged their duties including the socio-economic policies that the state pursued at that time. Echoing similar sentiments, Justice Dhulia termed the criticism in the proposed judgment as “harsh”. In his lone dissent, Justice Dhulia observed that excluding privately-owned properties from the ambit of Article 39(b) fails to account for the reality that certain private resources, if equitably distributed, could benefit the public. He further cautioned that such a blanket exclusion risks undermining the broader objectives of the DPSPs, especially during times when the “growing gap between the rich and the poor is still enormous”.

What are the potential implications?

The majority ruling stands as a judicial acknowledgement of the evolution of the country’s economic policy over the years — from extensive state control over most resources to a more liberalised economy that fosters private wealth generation. By acknowledging the state’s role in promoting social welfare while respecting individual property rights, the apex court has carved a balanced approach that aligns with India’s broader economic growth aspirations. It however remains to be seen which economic policies on the acquisition of private resources pass judicial muster, particularly given the court’s stance that such determinations will be carried out on a case-to-case basis. The verdict also assumes significance in light of the political rhetoric leading up to the Lok Sabha elections, where Congress leader Rahul Gandhi reportedly advocated for a comprehensive census followed by wealth redistribution among various socio-economic groups. In response, Prime Minister Narendra Modi sounded alarm bells over what he characterised as the Congress’s dubious attempt to confiscate private wealth and redistribute it among Muslims.

# What happens to Indian firms on U.S. blacklist?

The story so far: The government is still gauging the impact of a decision by the U.S. Treasury department to impose sanctions on 19 Indian entities among nearly 400 companies, mainly for supplying “dual-use” technologies to Russia. In addition, the Bureau of Industry and Security run by the U.S. Commerce Department added 40 companies including five from India for re-exporting goods and parts to Russia that were imported from the U.S.

Why are recent U.S. sanctions significant?

Since April 2021, when U.S. President Joe Biden passed an executive order (E.O. 14024) on “Blocking Property With Respect To Specified Harmful Foreign Activities of the Government of the Russian Federation”, the U.S. has sanctioned hundreds of companies from more than 20 countries worldwide for supplies and sales to Russia, including some from India. But on October 30, the U.S. Department of Treasury invoked the E.O. to sanction 19 Indian entities, including companies and individuals for providing “dual-use” technologies to Russia and other deals with Russian companies calling them “Third-Country Sanctions Evaders”. The companies, mostly based in Delhi, Uttar Pradesh, Bengaluru and Hyderabad, are reputable, well-established companies dealing in technological manufacturing, with some even holding government contracts. These companies will now be on a U.S. “blacklist”, have assets or funds in the U.S. frozen, and face travel bans.

How has the Indian government responded?

The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) has been fairly muted on the action by the U.S., which is likely to cost Indian companies millions of dollars in contracts and legal appeals. When asked during a briefing, Ministry of External Affairs spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said that the MEA had “seen reports of U.S. sanctions”, but declined to comment on whether this was discussed between U.S. National Security Adviser Jake Sullivan and NSA Ajit Doval, who spoke a day later. The MEA said the companies were “not in violation of Indian laws”, and pointed out that the government was trying to “clarify issues”. “India has a robust legal and regulatory framework on strategic trade and non-proliferation controls,” Mr. Jaiswal said, referring to India’s membership of key non-proliferation export control regimes such as the Wassenaar Arrangement, Australia Group and the Missile Technology Control Regime.

What else can India do?

India does not recognise unilateral sanctions by the U.S. or any other country, following only those sanctions imposed by the UN. However, as India-U.S. high-tech trade increases, the U.S.’s strictures will have an increasing impact on both Indian companies and the government’s moves. According to the MEA, Indian agencies are already “sensitising” Indian companies on the new measures being implemented by the U.S. that could impact them. The government could also increase measures to sanction-proof those Indian companies doing business with Russia, by building more struc-

tural banking mechanisms, and facilitating payments in national currencies, as have been explored for refineries procuring Russian oil, diamond processing units and other sectors where the U.S. and EU sanctions have been the most stringent. Eventually, rejecting any U.S. decision will come at the cost of bilateral ties, and the government will have to evaluate the cost-benefit calculus on whether to accept U.S.’s moves, or to react more strongly to sanctions.

Will the Trump victory make a difference?

While a new U.S. administration after Donald Trump’s electoral win is expected to pursue a softer line on Russia, it is unlikely that these sanctions will be removed anytime soon, say analysts. During his campaign, Mr. Trump has consistently sidestepped any criticism of Russia’s war in Ukraine, saying that once he comes to power, he would “end the war within 24 hours”. This has been seen as an indication that the Trump administration would not impose further sanctions on Russia. However, the U.S. Congress has frequently taken very



tough positions on Russia, and in 2017, virtually forced Mr. Trump’s hand during his first tenure into signing the CAATSA law (Countering America’s Adversaries Through Sanctions Act) that threatened sanctions against countries for procuring major Russian mili-

tary hardware, including the S-400 missile defence systems that India has signed a deal for. While Mr. Trump has led the Republican party to a majority in the Senate, it is unlikely that he will reverse any of the sanctions already imposed on Russia.

## Lotus set to bloom in Maharashtra and Jharkhand: Haryana C M

Chandigarh (JAG MOHAN THAKEN), November 19: Haryana Chief Minister Nayab Singh Saini claimed that the lotus is sure shot to bloom in Maharashtra and Jharkhand. He said that it is the first government under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi which is genuinely benefiting people at the grassroots level. Under his leadership, poor individuals have been connected to various government schemes. Over the past 10 years, the government has worked to simplify and strengthen the lives of ordinary citizens, resulting in widespread public support for Narendra Modi. He shared that during his recent campaign in Maharashtra, he received a positive response from the people, who expressed their expectation for a second double-engine government under Modi’s leadership with a strong mandate. In addition, he said that in Jharkhand, the people are weary of the Congress coalition government and are eager to escape the burdens of corruption. Consequently, a Bharatiya Janata Party government is being formed in Jharkhand too.

The Chief Minister made these remarks while interacting with media persons in the Vidhan Sabha premises following the conclusion of the winter session of the Haryana Vidhan Sabha. He said that the Sankalp Patra of the State government serves as a commitment letter for us, and we will fulfil every promise outlined in it. We have also fulfilled the promise made in the Sankalp Patras of 2014 and 2019. We are dedicated to supporting Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s vision for Viksit Bharat by 2047, and alongside a Viksit Bharat, Haryana will also progress at an accelerated pace.

Targeting the opposition, the Chief Min-

ister said that the opposition parties tend to forget their manifesto just two years after forming their government, while our government consistently delivers on the promises outlined in the Sankalp Patra. In this context, the government has fulfilled two more commitments from its Sankalp Patra. It has granted ownership rights of land to lessees who were in place prior to the formation of Haryana. Along with this, on the lines of service security of contractual employees of HKRN and Outsource Part-1 and 2, a law has been enacted to secure the services of contractual employees of remaining categories like Extension Lecturers, Guest Faculty of Engineering Colleges and Polytechnics etc.

The Chief Minister, in response to a question about the construction of Haryana’s new assembly in Chandigarh, stated that Haryana has a rightful claim over Chandigarh, and leaders from all parties in the state are united on this issue. He said that following the new delimitation, Punjab will also require a larger assembly building, and they can acquire land to construct their own facility. However, he criticized Punjab leaders for their disrespectful attitude towards the construction of Haryana’s new assembly. We all should sit in this holy temple and make decisions that benefit humanity. Saini urged Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann to focus on the welfare of the people of Punjab and provide the Minimum Support Price (MSP) to farmers, similar to the benefits being given in Haryana. He pointed out that the Supreme Court has also admonished Punjab regarding stubble management, urging Mann to prioritize these pressing issues for the state. The Chief Minister said that a total of four sittings have taken place during the win-



ter session of the Vidhan Sabha, which has been ongoing since 13th November. These sittings included approximately 27 hours of constructive discussions. A resolution was passed in honour of the 555th Prakash Parv of First Patshahi Shri Guru Nanak Dev Ji. In addition, calling attention notices submitted by various MLAs were clubbed by subject matter, resulting in four proposals being discussed.

The Chief Minister expressed his gratitude to the people of the state for enabling the Non-Stop Government in Haryana for a third consecutive term. He described this as a golden chapter in Haryana’s history, adding that such a phenomenon has never occurred before in the past. He said that this historic mandate reflects the dynamic leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, as well as a commitment to development, good governance, the welfare of the poor, and a spirit of patriotism.