

Odisha bypoll: BJP registers landslide victory in Nuapada, BJD finishes third

BHUBANESWAR: BJP candidate Jay Dholakia won the Nuapada assembly bypoll in Odisha by a margin of 83,748 votes on Friday defeating his nearest Congress rival Ghasiram Majhi, election officials said. The state's main opposition, BJD, which had won the seat in the 2024 elections, was pushed to the third position. While Dholakia secured 1,23,869 votes (58.27 pc votes), his nearest rival, Congress candidate Ghasiram Majhi, managed 40,121 (18.88 pc). Snehangini Chhuria of the BJD secured 38,408 votes (18.06 pc) against the party's 33.65 per cent votes in 2024 elections. Prime Minister Narendra Modi congratulated Dholakia for winning the bypoll. "I thank the people of Nagrota in Jammu and Kashmir as well as Nuapada

in Odisha for blessing the BJP with spectacular victories in the by-polls. Congratulations to the newly elected MLAs Devyani Rana Ji and Jay Dholakia Ji. Wishing them the very best in serving the people. Compliments to the BJP Karyakartas who worked round the clock to ensure these wins. @BJP4JnK @BJP4Odisha," he posted on X. The BJD's drubbing is mostly attributed to Jay, the son of the late regional party MLA Rajendra Dholakia, whose death necessitated the bypoll, joining BJP few days before the elections. The result of the bypoll, which was the first electoral contest held in the state after last year's assembly election, has come as a major boost for the BJP. Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi, who visited Nuapada six times and extensively campaigned for BJP



candidate Jay Dholakia, said the historic victory has ushered in a new chapter in the state's political landscape. Taking to X, Majhi said: "This victory proves the complete faith and trust of the general public in our government's policies, ide-

als, and people-welfare programmes. The residents of Nuapada have completely rejected the smear campaigns and false promises of the opposition parties and, by supporting development, have given a clear mandate in favour of the BJP." While addressing party men

and women at the state BJP headquarters here, Majhi said apart from the good governance in last 17 months, the Opposition BJD's "jealousy" proved fatal for the regional outfit headed by Naveen Patnaik. "Naveen Babu uttering word like 'Beiman' (traitor) against late Rajendra Dholakia's family did not go well among the people. They have given befitting reply to the BJD in the bypoll," Majhi said. Patnaik during his campaign had accused the ruling BJP of indulging in "candidate chori". Patnaik fielded the BJD's women wing president, Snehangini Chhuria, in Nuapada. Majhi, on the other hand, had called Chhuria an "outsider", as she hails from neighbouring Bargarh district. The bypoll was widely seen as a prestige battle for Ma-

jhi and a test of Patnaik's influence in Odisha politics following the BJD's loss of power last year. The Congress finishing second is also seen as significant, with the party hoping to replace the BJD as the principal opposition in the state. For the BJD, the defeat, coming after its ouster from power, further dented its morale. Patnaik congratulated party workers for their efforts and reminded them that they followed the ideology of Biju Patnaik, "who himself was a fighter". The Nuapada bypoll registered a turnout of 83.45 per cent, the highest among the eight by-elections held nationwide. It also recorded the largest winning margin — 83,748 votes — in all the bypolls. Of the 14 candidates in the fray, 11 lost their deposits.

Mamata should be 'face' of INDIA bloc to counter BJP in country: TMC leader Kalyan Bandyopadhyay

KOLKATA: Trinamool Congress MP Kalyan Bandyopadhyay on Friday said West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee should be the "face" of the INDIA bloc to counter the BJP nationally. Asserting that the TMC under Banerjee's leadership would win the 2026 West Bengal assembly elections with an absolute majority, Bandyopadhyay dismissed suggestions that the BJP's strong performance in neighbouring Bihar could translate into gains in Bengal. "BJP has good organisational strength in Bihar and the Congress failed to match them,

which was reflected in the vote results. Mark my words, TMC will romp home with an absolute majority under the leadership of Mamata Banerjee in the 2026 polls," he told PTI. Asked if Banerjee should lead the INDIA bloc in the wake of electoral Congress' electoral reverses, Bandyopadhyay said, "Yes, Didi should be the face of the non-BJP front to fight the communal, divisive, dictatorial and undemocratic politics of the BJP. She is the one who can repulse the BJP challenge and carry on the fight successfully in the country."

Woman named in Pune land 'scam' asked to record statement before police

PUNE: Pune resident Sheetal Tejwani, an accused in the controversial Rs 300 crore land deal in the city, has been asked to appear before police to record her statement in the matter, an official said on Friday. The now scrapped deal, related to a 40-acre government plot in Pune's Mundhwa area, involves a private firm linked to Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar's son, Parth. Tejwani allegedly held the power of attorney for the land that was later sold to Parth Pawar's company, Amadea Enterprises LLP. She is on the run after her name cropped up in the deal, which is now under inves-

tigation, and notices have been served to her seeking appearance before police. The accused named in the FIR lodged by the Inspector General of Registrar's office include Digvijay Patil (co-partner in Amadea Enterprises), Tejwani and sub-registrar R B Taru, who are facing charges of misappropriation and cheating. A senior police officer said, "Notices have been served to Tejwani. A notice has been served at her office in Mumbai's Nariman Point area, while another was served at her residence in the Pimpri-Chinchwad area. She has been asked to record her statement in the case lodged against her." investigation,

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Himachal govt has requested Centre to reopen trade through Shipki La pass: CM Sukhu

SHIMLA: Himachal Pradesh Chief Minister Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu on Friday said that the state government has requested the Centre to reopen trade through the Shipki La pass, adding that discussions were underway to start the Kailash Mansarovar Yatra via Shipki La. Sukhu said that an existing road from Rampur Bushahr and Pooh up to the pass would make it easier to develop the required infrastructure for the pilgrimage. The chief minister said this while presiding over the closing ceremony of the four-day International



Lavi Fair at Rampur in the Shimla district on Friday. "I initiated border tourism from Shipki La, and as a result, more than 70,000 tourists have visited this

pass along the China border," he said. Extending his greetings for the Lavi Fair, he said that the fair is not only a symbol of our cultural

heritage but also a living example of the centuries-old trade and cultural ties between India and Tibet. He said that this centuries-old fair continues to serve as a medium for trade, cultural exchange and the preservation of folk traditions. He further said that the government has taken up the issue to rehabilitate families who lost their land due to the disaster on forest land with the Union government, as the law governing the Forest Act is dealt with by the central government. "If the central government grants permission, we are ready to provide one bigha of land

to every landless family, adding that if the state government had the power, he would have changed the forest laws in a minute," he added. The chief minister also announced that the Rampur school would adopt the CBSE curriculum from the next academic session. Earlier, Public Works Minister Vikramaditya Singh welcomed CM Sukhu to Rampur and said that the fair, which began in the 17th century, continues to reach new heights while preserving its original spirit. He stressed the need to connect the younger generation with the fair in changing times.

Haryana: 2 doctors detained from Nuh, one completed apprenticeship from Al Falah University

FARIDABAD: A police team detained two doctors from the Nuh district for questioning in connection with a white-collar terror module case, police sources said on Friday. One of the doctors completed his apprenticeship from Al Falah University on November 2 after finishing his MBBS degree. According to police sources, the other doctor, who was also detained, is a former student of the university and currently works at a private hospital in the Nuh district. Recent police operations led to the seizure of approximately 2,900 kilograms of explosives after the terror module was dismantled. This operation spanned across Jammu and Kashmir, Haryana, and Uttar Pradesh. Earlier, eight individuals, including three doctors affiliated with the Al Falah University in Faridabad, were arrested, and many others have been detained

for questioning as part of the ongoing investigation. "In view of the high alert in Haryana, the Faridabad Police has also launched a special campaign to strengthen security across the district. As part of this campaign, teams are being formed at the police station level and intensive checking is being conducted at various locations", said the spokesperson of Faridabad police. In another development, two fertiliser and seed store owners in Sohna were detained over suspicion that the suspects in the module may have procured chemicals from there. Investigators have found that the three suspects, Dr Umar Nabi, Dr Muzammil Ganaie, and Dr Shaheen Shahid, allegedly used a Switzerland-based encrypted messaging app to plan and coordinate their activities related to the terror conspiracy. The DNA test of the samples collected from the Red Fort blast site has con-

firmed that Dr Nabi was driving the car involved in the explosion that occurred on Monday, resulting in the deaths of thirteen people and injuries to many others. In a related development, a team of revenue officials from Faridabad visited Al Falah University to conduct a comprehensive land survey of the 70-acre campus. The exercise will also find out if the land is being utilised in accordance with the necessary approvals and regulations, sources said. Additionally, the Faridabad police continued their search operations following the seizure of large quantities of explosives. On Friday, police teams from NIT, Ballabgarh, and Central Zone conducted searches in markets and crowded areas. "In view of the high alert in Haryana, the Faridabad Police has also launched a special campaign to strengthen security across the district. As part of this campaign,

teams are being formed at the police station level and intensive checking is being conducted at various locations", said the spokesperson of Faridabad police. In another development, two fertiliser and seed store owners in Sohna were detained over suspicion that the suspects in the module may have procured chemicals from there. Meanwhile, in Gurugram, strict measures are being implemented regarding the distribution of fertilisers, now limited to registered farmers only. "According to the order of the Haryana Government, now fertilisers (urea, DAP, NPK, etc.) will be available only to those farmers who have registered their crops on the Meri Fasal Mera Byora portal. The portal is open from October 9, and farmers who have not registered on the Meri Fasal Mera Byora portal can register their crops on the portal", said Gurugram Deputy Commissioner Ajay Kumar.

MP CM Yadav credits Bihar win to Modi, mocks Rahul over 'jungle safari'

BARWANI: Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Mohan Yadav on Friday credited Prime Minister Narendra Modi's stellar leadership for the National Democratic Alliance's (NDA) sweeping win in the Bihar Assembly polls and said the opposition camp stood wiped out. Yadav made the remarks at an event in Barwani district on the eve of the 150th birth anniversary of tribal icon Birsa Munda. "Today the lotus has bloomed in Bihar. The NDA marched ahead and the opposition bloc was wiped out," he said. The Chief Minister said tribal revolutionaries such as Birsa Munda, Khajya Nayak, Bhima Nayak and Tantiya Bhil shook the foundations of British rule during the freedom struggle but the Congress, which ruled India for a long period



after Independence, did not do anything for their legacy. He said the BJP government in Madhya Pradesh has included stories of tribal heroes in school and college curricula. Yadav also accused the Congress of doing injustice to the national song 'Vande Mataram' and said the country's Partition happened because of the party. "Since the Partition, whenever any crisis befalls India, its roots are found in Pakistan. The

mindset of creating a divide between Hindus and Muslims is also a Congress legacy," he claimed. Yadav, speaking to reporters in Indore said, "The Bihar Assembly poll results show the strength of Prime Minister Modi's leadership. After Haryana, Maharashtra and Delhi, the NDA has won again in Bihar. This is the wonder of Modi's leadership." The Chief Minister said he had sensed during the Bihar Assembly election campaign that the polit-

ical atmosphere across the state was favourable for the NDA, which has now been reflected in the results. As always, the Congress is scratching the pole like a frustrated cat after seeing the results, Yadav said. "While the assembly elections were underway in Bihar, the Congress' 'prince' (Rahul Gandhi) was vacationing in Madhya Pradesh. The Congress has no right to say anything about the (poll) outcome," he said. On November 9, Gandhi had visited Pachmarhi in MP to address a training camp of district Congress presidents and had also gone on a jungle safari that day. "The band, the horseman and the wedding party were all ready, but the groom ran away. Why did he (Gandhi) leave the ongoing Bihar election and come to Madhya Pradesh," asked Yadav.

Pune: Meeting held to identify measures for curbing accidents on Navale Bridge stretch

PUNE: A day after a horrific accident on Navale Bridge on the Mumbai-Bengaluru highway claimed eight lives in the city, the Pune Municipal Corporation on Friday held a meeting to identify immediate and long-term preventive measures. The steep descent, lane violation, overspeeding and the high volume of heavy vehicle traffic contribute to frequent accidents on this nearly 10-km stretch between Jambhulwadi and Warje, officials said in the meeting. Eight persons were killed and 14 others injured after a car got crushed between two large container trucks on Navale Bridge -- which is infamous for fatal accidents -- on Thursday evening. Representatives of various agencies including the National Highways Authority of India, Regional Transport Office, city police and the Pune Metropolitan Region Development Authority (PMRDA) attended the meeting which was chaired by municipal commissioner

Naval Kishore Ram. Additional police commissioner Manoj Patil, additional municipal commissioner Om Prakash Dive, NHAI executive director Sanjay Kadam and Regional Transport Officer Archana Gaikwad were present, among others. "As part of short-term measures, the authorities decided to set up check-posts with multilingual signage to alert drivers, install large LED warning boards at regular intervals, create separate lanes for heavy vehicles, enforce speed limits between 40 and 60 km per hour and deploy additional speed guns. RTO teams will check overloaded trucks and take action against drivers found to be under the influence of alcohol," commissioner Ram told PTI. It was also decided to deploy high-quality rumble stripes and cat-eye road studs on the stretch, he added. A detailed plan to improve service roads will be prepared within seven days, Ram said, adding that the

police were asked to take strict action against rickshaws, private travel vehicles and trucks that halt on both sides of service roads. As mid-term measures, service roads on both sides of the highway will be made operational within six months after land acquisition, he said. The new bridge over the Mutha river at Warje is planned to be opened for traffic by March 2026. Also, a permanent accident response facility will be set up near Navale Bridge, the commissioner said. In the long term, the NHAI will explore construction of another tunnel near the Bhumkar underpass and develop a 16.4-km elevated corridor between Jambhulwadi and Sutarwadi-Pashan to ease traffic flow, said Aniruddha Pawaskar, head of the road department, PMC. The commissioner instructed all departments to adhere to deadlines and ensure on-ground improvement to prevent further loss of lives on the high-risk corridor.

BJP's 95 pc strike rate propels NDA tsunami in Bihar; decimates Mahagathbandhan

PATNA: The NDA was set to sweep the Bihar assembly polls, surging ahead in over 200 of 243 seats on Friday with the BJP emerging as single largest party with about 90 per cent strike rate, reaffirming the popularity and campaign clout of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who was the face of the ruling alliance through the poll battle in the highly sensitive political state. The Mahagathbandhan, which includes the RJD, the Congress and three Left parties, seemed to be poised for a crushing defeat, notwithstanding surveys and opinion polls showing its chief ministerial candidate Tejashwi Yadav as the most preferred leader for the top post. The Opposition alliance was barely poised to cross the 35-seat mark. BJP's victory in 35 seats and lead in another 55, out of 101 it contested, a performance that would further cement its position as the numero uno political force in the country, will also offset whatever setback that might have been caused by last year's Lok Sabha polls when the party had to rely on allies to remain in power in the Centre. A high turnout of women, who outnumbered male voters by nearly 10 percentage points, seems to have

clinched the deal in favour of the BJP-led coalition, as various studies have suggested that females, especially in Bihar, are more inclined towards the NDA. The NDA's tally in Bihar comes in the backdrop of the BJP's back-to-back stupendous performances in Delhi, Maharashtra and Haryana. Firm backing to Chief Minister Nitish Kumar by Modi and his ministers also appeared to have paid rich dividends for the JD(U), which seems poised to drastically improve its tally since 2020, when it had won only 43 seats, but has now already won 24 and was leading another 64 with nearly 19 per cent vote share. The LJP(RV), headed by Union minister Chirag Paswan, the self-declared "Hanuman" of the PM, which was left with only 28 candidates in the fray, with nomination papers of one of its nominees getting rejected during scrutiny, has also won two seats and was leading in 17 constituencies. A simple majority to form the government in Bihar is 122. Among the issues that are understood to have struck a chord with the people are promises of "double engine growth", with NDA in power both in the state as well as the Cen-

tre, 125 units of free power every month, hiked social security pensions and Rs 10,000 given to over 1 crore women. The opposition was also unable to counter the BJP's claim that under Tejashwi Yadav's leadership, the RJD was still "jungle raj wearing new clothes". The victory in the Bihar polls, which were held in two phases amid alleged irregularities in the revision of electoral rolls by the Election Commission, is also significant as many see it as a prelude to assembly elections in West Bengal and Assam, scheduled to be held in the next six months. "NDA heading towards a landslide victory in Bihar," BJP MP and chief spokesperson Anil Baluni said on X in Hindi. Celebrations erupted at the offices of the BJP and JD(U) here, situated across the street from each other, with workers playing drums, bursting firecrackers and chanting slogans in praise of their respective leaders. In front of the residence of the CM, the JD(U)'s 75-year-old national president, party workers posed for photographs holding aloft posters with the caption "Tiger Abhi Zinda Hai". State BJP president Dilip Jaiswal

remarked, good humouredly, "Of course, the stature of Nitish Kumar is higher than that of a tiger. And we are confident that these trends will be converted into results." Prominent winners from the BJP included Deputy CM Samrat Choudhary (Tarapur), ministers Prem Kumar (Gaya Town), Sanjay Saraogi and Raju Kumar Singh (Sahebganj). Notable JD(U) winners include minister Maheshwar Hazari (Kalyanpur) and jailed former MLA Anant Kumar Singh (Mokama). The party has polled close to 21 per cent of the votes counted in 101 seats it contested. The RJD, which has been proudly flaunting its status as the "single largest party despite being in opposition", was heading for a humiliating show, with its candidates having won six seats and leading in another 20, as per the latest EC figures. Tejashwi Yadav, who, according to PM Modi, was declared as a chief ministerial candidate after the RJD put a "katta" on the head of its alliance partners, was precariously placed in Raghopur, the RJD stronghold, and was trailing initially, only to gain ground in the later rounds.