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Daily News Feed

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UN one step closer to treaty to punish crimes against humanity

Associated Press
UNITED NATIONS

A key United Nations General Assembly committee adopted a resolution on Friday paving way for negotiations on a first-ever treaty on preventing and punishing crimes against humanity after Russia dropped amendments that would have derailed the effort.

The resolution was approved by consensus by the General Assembly's legal committee, which includes all 193-member UN nations, after tense last-minute negotiations between its supporters and Russia that dragged through the day of the event.

There was a loud applause when the chairman of the committee gavelled the resolution's approval.

It is virtually certain to be adopted when the Gen-

eral Assembly puts it to a final vote on December 4.

"Today's agreement to start up negotiations on a much-needed international treaty is an historic achievement that was a long time coming," Richard Dicker, Human Rights Watch's senior legal adviser for advocacy, said.

'Crucial message'

"It sends a crucial message that impunity for the kinds of crimes inflicted on civilians in Ethiopia, Sudan, Ukraine, southern Israel, Gaza and Myanmar will not go unheeded," he said.

The resolution calls for a time-bound process with preparatory sessions in 2026 and 2027, and three-week negotiating sessions in 2028 and 2029 to finalise a treaty on crimes against humanity.

Mr. Dicker said Russia's proposed amendments left



Collateral damage: Ukrainian troops at a memorial for civilians and soldiers killed during the war in central Kyiv on Saturday. AP

in question whether treaty negotiations would have been completed. Russia's Deputy UN Ambassador Maria Zabolotskaya said Russia withdrew the amendments "in a spirit of compromise." But she said Russia "dissociates itself from consensus."

"This, of course, does not mean that we are not ready to work on this cru-

cial convention," Ms. Zabolotskaya said.

The International Criminal Court was established to punish major perpetrators of war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide and it has 124 countries that are parties to it.

The ICC says crimes against humanity are committed as part of a large-scale attack on civilians

and it lists 15 forms including murder, rape, imprisonment, enforced disappearances, sexual slavery, torture and deportation.

But the ICC does not have jurisdiction over nearly 70 other countries.

There are global treaties that cover war crimes, genocide and torture – but there has been no specific treaty addressing crimes against humanity.

And according to sponsors of the resolution, led by Mexico and Gambia and backed by 96 other countries, a new treaty will fill the gap.

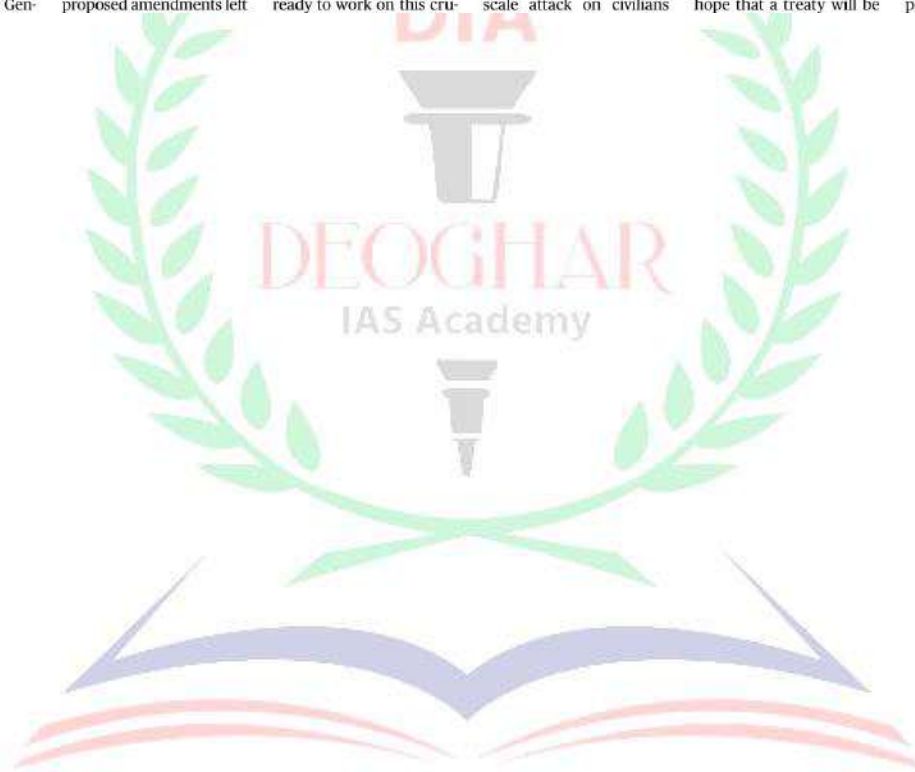
Kelly Adams, legal advisor at the Global Justice Center, also called the resolution "a historic breakthrough" after many delays. Pointing to "the proliferation of crimes against humanity around the world," she expressed hope that a treaty will be

"strong, progressive and survivor-centric."

Amnesty International's Secretary General Agnes Callamard expressed disappointment that the timeline had been extended until 2029, but said, "What's important is that this process will deliver a viable convention."

"It is long overdue and all the more welcome at a time when too many states are intent on wrecking international law and universal standards," she said.

After the resolution's adoption, Gambia's Counselor Amadou Jaiteh, who had introduced it hours earlier, called its approval "a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to make a difference," to hope for a world without crimes against humanity, "and a world where voices of victims are heard louder than their perpetrators."



New rules at COP29 allow carbon trading between nations

Agence France-Presse

BAKU

New rules allowing wealthy polluting countries to buy carbon-cutting “offsets” from developing nations were agreed at UN climate talks on Saturday, in a move already raising fears they will be used to greenwash climate targets.

This decision, taken during extra time at the COP29 conference, is a major step forward in a thorny debate that has dragged through climate talks for years, and diplomats broke into applause when the decision was gavelled.

Supporters say a UN-backed framework for carbon trading could direct investment to developing nations where many credits are generated.

Critics fear if set up poorly, these schemes could undermine the world’s efforts to curb global warming.

Carbon credits are generated by activities that reduce or avoid planet-heating greenhouse gas emissions, like planting trees, protecting existing carbon sinks or replacing polluting coal with clean-energy alternatives.

Until now, these credits have mainly been traded by companies on an unregulated market dogged by scandal.

But the 2015 Paris climate deal envisaged that countries could also take part in a cross-border trade of carbon reductions.

The broad idea is that countries – mainly wealthy polluters – can buy carbon credits from other nations that are doing better on their own emissions-cutting targets.

The initiative, known as Article 6, includes both direct country-to-country

Until now, these credits have mainly been traded by companies on an unregulated market dogged by scandal.

trading and a separate UN-backed marketplace.

It has proved popular with both developing countries looking for international financing, and wealthier nations eager to find new ways to meet steep emissions reduction targets.

The European Union and the United States pushed for an agreement at COP29 in Azerbaijan’s capital Baku, while many developing nations particularly in Asia and Africa have already signed up for projects.

But experts fear that the systems could allow countries to trade dubious emissions reductions that cover up their failure to actually reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

As of earlier this month, more than 90 deals have already been agreed between nations for over 140 pilot projects, according to the UN.

But so far only one trade has happened between countries, involving Switzerland buying credits linked to a new fleet of electric buses in Thailand’s capital Bangkok.

Switzerland has other agreements lined up with Vanuatu and Ghana, while other buyer countries include Singapore, Japan and Norway.

The Climate Action Tracker project has warned that Switzerland’s lack of transparency over its own emissions cuts risks “setting a bad precedent”.



Tests show that minke whales can hear high-frequency sounds

The Hindu Bureau

For the first time, scientists have directly measured the hearing range of minke whales, discovering that the species can detect high-frequency sounds as high as 90 kilohertz (kHz), according to a new study, demonstrating hearing sensitivity far greater than previously believed.

The findings suggest that baleen whales – the planet's largest mam-

mals – may be even more impacted by anthropogenic ocean noise than currently recognised but have been excluded from regulatory consideration due to underestimated hearing ranges. There have been concerns about the impacts of anthropogenic noise on marine mammals like high-profile whale stranding events linked to naval sonar noise activity. As a result, substantial progress has been made in de-

veloping criteria and thresholds for evaluating impacts on marine mammals exposed to anthropogenic noise.

Although researchers have suggested using behavioural changes, hearing damage, and other physical effects to measure the impact of noise on marine mammals, setting clear thresholds is challenging because different species of marine mammals respond to noise in widely va-

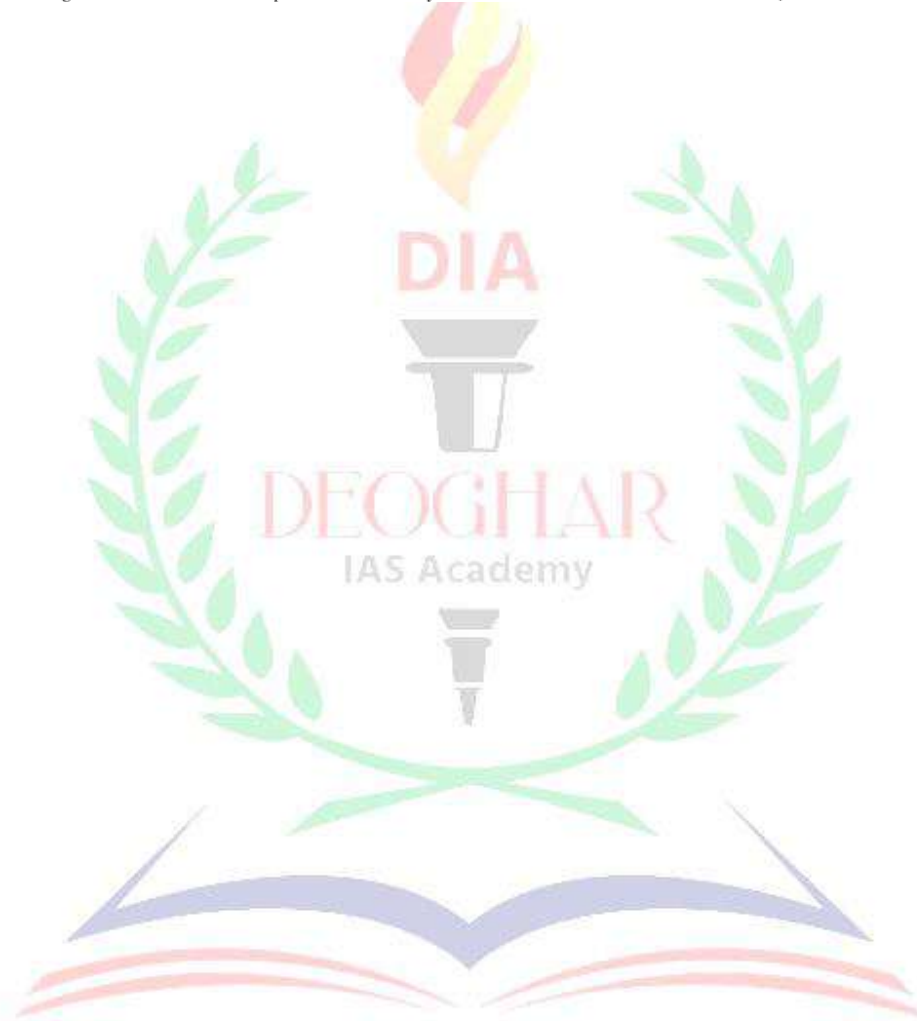
riety and poorly understood ways. Audiograms – graphs illustrating an animal's hearing sensitivity – are essential for identifying the sound frequencies that affect marine mammals.

However, while audiograms are available for at least one representative species in most major marine mammal groups, none exist for baleen whales. To better understand how ocean noise im-

pacts baleen whales, researchers developed a novel catch-and-release method to temporarily hold adolescent minke whales (*Balaenoptera acutorostrata*) for auditory evoked potential (AEP) tests, which estimate hearing sensitivity by measuring electrical signals produced in the brain in response to sound. Leveraging a natural channel between two islands in Norway, and a system of net barriers, the research-

ers contained two adolescent minke whales making their northward migration.

While it has been assumed that baleen whales are exclusively low-frequency hearing specialists, the authors discovered that minke whales can detect frequencies as high as 45 to 90 kHz – a range much higher than previously believed based upon their ear anatomy and the frequencies at which they vocalise.



Why is there a row over climate finance?

What are the prickly issues of the 29th edition of the Conference of Parties on global warming? Why is there bickering over a collective step towards ending the reign of fossil fuels and addressing rising carbon emissions? What are the concerns raised by developing nations?

Jacob Koshy

The story so far:

The 29th edition of the Conference of Parties (COP), arguably the most important of the UN's climate conferences, was scheduled to end on November 22, after 11 days of negotiations, and take a collective step forward in addressing rising carbon emissions. However, deliberations are expected to carry on beyond the deadline with several sticking points outstanding.

What is the significance of COP29?

Going into the talks, developing countries had stated that at least a trillion dollars per year from 2025-35 would be necessary to meet emission targets. This was seen to be the New Collective Quantified Goal (NCQG) on climate finance which refers to money that will be given to developing countries by developed countries to help the former meet their goals to transition away from the continued use of fossil fuels and curb greenhouse gas emissions. Developing countries have been repeatedly saying that the figure should be "trillions of dollars." To this end, developed countries have mobilised and transferred \$115 billion in 2021-22 – a controversial clause that has yet to be resolved

Developed countries, led by the European Union, say the demands of the developing world are unreasonably high

in the universal agreement – but per the Paris Agreement, a new target higher than \$100 billion must be agreed upon by 2025. The talks in Baku were expected to conclusively agree upon a number but there continues to be a sharp split between developed and developing countries on the quantum and other basic aspects of what this NCQG should look like.

What do developing countries want?

This block of countries include China, India and the Group of 77 countries. There are also other coalitions such as the Like Minded Developing Countries (LMDC), Least Developing Countries (LDC), Small Island Developing Countries (SIDS) etc. Nearly all developing countries fall into one or multiple groupings and while they have differences, they are largely agreed on the point that it is the developed countries that should pay the bulk of climate finance.

More importantly, they specified that this money had to be provided not only to help countries meet their Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC) but also buffer against existing threats of climate change, and make good for climate damage already wrought. The NDCs are targeted, voluntary plans by all countries to reduce carbon emissions by certain quantities until 2030. The NCQG, the developing countries say, should also reflect contributions by developed countries on the basis of their historical contribution to existing carbon concentrations in the atmosphere as well as their per capita GDP. To put this in perspective, it is important to note that even if all countries fulfilled their stated voluntary commitments, it would as of now only translate to a 2% cut, and this year – the latest scientific assessments suggest – carbon emissions will likely increase 0.8% over 2023.

What does the developed world say?

However developed countries, led by the European Union, say these demands are unreasonably high. They aver that "all actors" (read countries) should collectively work to hike up climate finance to \$1.3 trillion per year by 2035. While agreeing that they must "take the lead" they have only a set a goal of \$250-300

billion by 2035 per year. Moreover this would consist of a "variety of sources," including "public and private, bilateral and multilateral, and alternative sources."

This suggests that another major demand of the developing world, of ensuring most of the money is in the form of grants or low-cost loans, remains unmet.

Have any concrete agreements been made?

A week before the conference began, China had petitioned the Presidency of COP29 to discuss "climate-change related unilateral restrictive trade measures" at the conference. This is an unusual request as trade issues are discussed on forums such as the World Trade Organization. China proposed this as part of a grouping of countries called BASIC (Brazil, South Africa, India, China).

The petition is primarily directed at a European Union proposal called the Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM), which imposes a tax on products imported into the EU that don't conform to carbon-emission norms required by the Union. The CBAM is currently operating in a "transitional phase" but will come into full effect from January 1, 2026.

The first day of the conference saw an agreement on carbon markets to be supervised by the UN. Such a market would allow countries to trade carbon credits – certified reductions of carbon emissions – among themselves and whose prices are determined as a consequence of emission caps imposed by countries.

The market itself follows from a section in the Paris Agreement, called Article 6. Sub-sections within the Article spell out how countries can bilaterally trade carbon among themselves (Art 6.2) and participate in a global carbon market (6.4). Though most of the necessary nuts and bolts to make operational such a carbon market, supervised by a United Nations body, were in place since 2022, there were several niggles, particularly on ensuring that the carbon credits generated are genuine and its antecedents are transparent.

While there is criticism among environmentalist groups that enough discussions on this didn't take place, this is supposed to be a mechanism to facilitate climate finance. India has been discussing bilateral deals to trade carbon with several countries. An agreement such as the one in Baku could be a catalyst, and activate India's own carbon-trading market.



No agreement yet: Activists participate in a demonstration at the COP29 UN Climate Summit, in Baku, Azerbaijan on November 23. AP



What can CAQM do to improve Delhi air?

Why did the Supreme Court pull up the Commission for Air Quality Management?

Nikhil M. Babu

The story so far:

Air pollution in Delhi has been in the 'severe' and 'severe plus' category for the most part of the last 10 days. This week, the Supreme Court pulled up the Commission for Air Quality Management (CAQM), the government's monitoring agency, on its inadequate pollution control response.

What is the CAQM?

The CAQM in the National Capital Region (NCR) and adjoining areas came into existence through an ordinance in 2020, which was later replaced by an Act of Parliament in 2021. The CAQM was set up for better coordination, research, identification and resolution of problems surrounding air quality and connected issues. It initially had 15 members, comprising officials, past and present, of the environment ministry and other departments of the Union government, as well as officials of various State governments, and representatives from NGOs and other agencies. The CAQM is now headed by Rajesh Verma and there are 27 members.

The CAQM replaced the EPCA (Environmental Pollution Prevention and Control) Authority, which was formed in 1998 by the Supreme Court. However, the EPCA was not backed by a statute and experts had raised the issue that it lacked the teeth to act against authorities which did not follow its orders. Despite that makes plans and coordinates with different agencies, it is the agencies that have to implement them on the ground. The CAQM started, including the Graded Response Action Plan or GRAP, a list of temporary emergency measures to control air pollution.

What are the powers of CAQM?

Under the Commission for Air Quality Management in National Capital Region and Adjoining Areas Act, 2021, the CAQM was given the power to take all measures, issue directions and entertain complaints, as it deems necessary, for the purpose of protecting and improving the quality of air in the NCR and adjoining areas. Under Section 14 of the Act, the CAQM can initiate stringent actions against officers for not following its orders.

Why did the SC pull up the CAQM?

Over the years, the Supreme Court which has been hearing an ongoing case on air pollution, has pulled up different governments and agencies for their laxity. On September 27, Justice A.S. Oka and Justice Augustine George Masih orally observed about CAQM: "Like pollution, your directions are in the air." The court was referring to various stakeholders not following the CAQM's orders despite specific provisions under the 2021 Act. "There has been total non-compliance of the Act. Please show us a single direction issued to any stakeholder under the Act... We are of the view that though the Commission has taken steps, it needs to be more active. The Commission must ensure that its efforts and directions issued actually translate into reducing the problem of pollution," the Bench observed. On November 18, the Supreme Court slammed the CAQM for delayed action while directing stringent curbs under Stage IV of the GRAP and noted that rather than taking pre-emptive action to contain air pollution, it waited in vain for the air to improve. Stage IV is the highest level of restrictions under GRAP, and according to the CAQM's rules, it is supposed to be implemented when the air quality category is likely to fall to 'severe plus', and is likely to remain in that level for three or more days. The court pulled up the CAQM for delaying implementation of curbs though the AQI had slipped to the 'severe plus' category.

Is the CAQM to blame for Delhi's pollution?

Though the CAQM makes plans and coordinates with different agencies, it is the agencies that have to implement them on the ground.

An official of the CAQM said the commission has improved coordination and planning. "For example, though the paddy stubble burning, which is a source of severe pollution, happens in October-November, we start meeting State officials from February and continue talks till the season is over," the member said. The CAQM had also coordinated with Punjab and Haryana to prepare action plans for controlling stubble burning in 2022 and it is updated every year.

About challenges that the commission faces, the official said, "Over the years, though we were looking at different sources of pollution and trying to control them, our main focus was on controlling stubble burning. But from now onwards, we will try to focus on multiple areas. We will be putting more energy and time on controlling dust and vehicular pollution too."

Anumita Roychowdhury, executive director, Centre for Science and Environment, said that the decision to impose GRAP should be taken proactively by the CAQM. Pollution forecasting methods have to be more accurate, she added.





Soul song: A devotee is overcome with emotion as he sings Tamil Tirumural hymns during a procession.



Holy parade: Devotees witness a procession of the deity Peruvudaiyarc, to the accompaniment of music from ancient instruments.



Hub of culture: People gather to watch the cultural programmes performed during the Sadhaya Vizha celebration in honour of Chola emperor Raja Raja Cholan I in the iconic Brihadeeswarar Temple.

A mighty king remembered

The birth anniversary of the legendary Chola emperor Raja Raja Chola I is celebrated every year during the *Sadhaya Vizha* in Thanjavur of Tamil Nadu



B. Velankanni Raj
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The birth anniversary of the legendary Chola emperor Raja Raja Chola I is celebrated with unparalleled fervour and devotion every year during the *Sadhaya Vizha* in Thanjavur of Tamil Nadu. Born as Analmudi Varman in 947 CE, he rose to become one of history's most illustrious and visionary rulers. Revered as Raja Raja the Great, he inherited the legacy of his ancestors and crafted an empire that flourished both militarily and culturally. His life is famously depicted in Kalki Krishnamurthy's 1955 Tamil novel *Ponniyin Selvan*, which was later adapted to a motion picture series under the same title.

Raja Raja's reign, from 985 to 1014 CE, was marked by military prowess and profound administrative vision.

The *Sadhaya Vizha*, which takes place in the Tamil month of Aippasi (mid-October to mid-November), honours the legacy of a ruler whose influence stretched to Sri Lanka and the Maldives. The heart of the celebration is at the iconic Brihadeeswarar Temple (also known as the Big Temple). While the Tamil Nadu government has made several attempts to have a statue of Raja Raja Chola installed inside the temple, it remains outside the temple compound because the Central government says nothing should be done

to disturb the original nature of the temple. The temple itself, a masterpiece of Chola architecture, is a tribute to Raja Raja's devotion to Lord Shiva, revered here as Peruvudaiyarc.

The event begins with religious ceremonies, including the sacred *abhishekam* (holy bath) to Lord Peruvudaiyarc, followed by the mesmerising *perandepu vazhipadu*, where lamps are waved in reverence, and the *swami purappadu*, a procession that carries the deity through the temple. Devotees from all over the region gather to partake in the two-day festivities, which feature cultural performances such as classical dance and hymn singing by *odharars*. Beyond Thanjavur, the celebrations stretch to Udaiyalar near Kumbakonam, where Raja Raja Chola's mortal remains are believed to be interred.

Brihadeeswarar Temple is also a trove of Tamil inscriptions, skillfully engraved on stone. The inscriptions detail the temple's construction, daily rituals, offerings, and special worship ceremonies. This inscription, running to 107 paragraphs, is said to describe how Raja Raja Chola personally oversaw the temple's planning and construction, recorded the gifts offered by him, his sister Kundavai, his queens, and others, and outlined the rituals to be performed. (Text by: Geetha Srinathi)



Glimpses of the past: Tamil inscriptions seen on the temple wall, giving details of the temple's construction, daily rituals, offerings, and special ceremonies.

In Supreme Court spotlight, CAQM shows four-year statistics to argue dip in farm fires

Krishnadas Rajagopal
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court has put the Centre for Air Quality Management (CAQM) in the dock to respond, on November 25, to allegations that it hid information that stubble-burning farmers knew about the timings of satellites tasked to spot fires, but the statutory body argues that its interventions reduced crop burning in Punjab by 71% and 44% in Haryana over the past four years.

The CAQM has strongly objected to petitioners' push in court to have a body of retired judges supervise the drive against crop burning. In its latest affidavit in the top court, the CAQM said at the time of its inception in 2021 through the Commission for Air



Stubble trouble: Farmers burn stubble on a rice field amid the ongoing air pollution at Mansa in Punjab. REUTERS

Quality Management in National Capital Region (NCR) and Adjoining Areas Act, the incidents of stubble burning in Punjab numbered 70,856 and 6,464 in Haryana, respectively.

There has been a steady decline in the following years. In 2022, 2023 and till November 19, 2024, the stubble burning incidents in Punjab were 49,283, 35,093 and 10,104, respec-

tively. Similarly, it was 3,491, 2,123 and 1,183 in Haryana from 2022 to 2024.

Facing criticism in court that it had gone soft on violators, CAQM said it has inspected 9,304 fields in Punjab and 1,153 in Haryana as on November 19.

It said the cumulative number of cases in which environmental compensation has been imposed were 4,915 and 545 in Pun-

jab and Haryana, respectively. The CAQM affidavit informed that ₹1,13,67,500 and ₹12,52,500 was realised as environmental compensation from the two respective States till November 19.

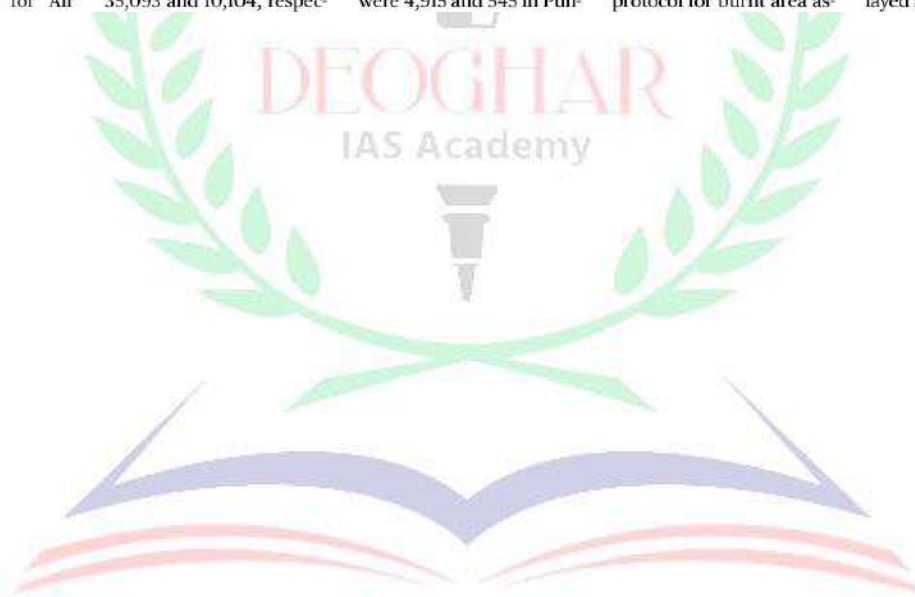
The statutory body said it was not enforcing a "toothless" law, and had registered 5,038 FIRs in Punjab and 574 FIRs in Haryana under Section 223 (disobeying the order of a public servant) of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS). Further, 111 officials in both Punjab and Haryana have been prosecuted under Section 14 of the 2021 Act for acting in contravention of its provisions.

Additional Solicitor-General Aishwarya Bhati, appearing for CAQM, said it was "trying to develop a protocol for burnt area as-

essment" to capture the exact number of farm fires from the blackened fields.

"CAQM has written to the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) to develop a burnt area protocol... In fact, it has been developed and is under test," Ms. Bhati had informed the top court on November 22.

'Unforeseen situations' Interestingly, while the CAQM agreed with the court that Graded Response Action Plan-3 and -4 restrictions ought to be put in place in advance well before the air quality gets worse, it argued that the court must also take into consideration certain "unforeseen" situations because of which the enforcement of these "disruptive" restrictions may get delayed a bit.



MAHARASHTRA

Vinaya Deshpande Pandit
MUMBAI

In an unprecedented electoral sweep which Maharashtra has not seen since the 1980s, the ruling Mahayuti won 234 of the 288 seats in the Assembly election, with the BJP emerging as the single largest party, winning 132 seats on its own.

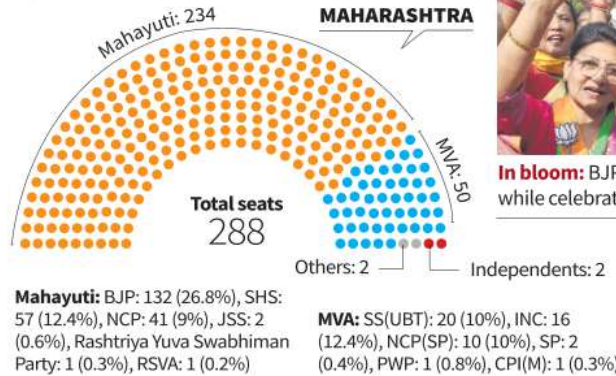
The Mahayuti is slated to form the government within the next three days, with the MLAs-elect being asked to gather in Mumbai immediately.

Senior BJP leader and Union Minister Rajnath Singh is likely to be in Mumbai on Sunday as the central observer of the party, a role he had played after the 2014 State election as well.

The Opposition Maha Vikas Aghadi was routed and won just 50 seats. The Maharashtra Assembly is not likely to have a Leader of the Opposition this time, as none of the three MVA parties have been able to win even 10% of the total seats. The Shiv Sena (Uddhav Balasaheb Thackeray) won the highest number of seats (20), followed by the Congress with 16, and the Nationalist Congress Party (Sharad Pawar) with 10 seats, all below the 29 seats mandated for the LoP position, as per legislative rules.

Huge win in a big State

The Mahayuti alliance has secured a majority by winning 234 out of 288 seats, while the Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) won 50 seats



In bloom: BJP women workers hold lotuses while celebrating NDA's win in Nagpur. PTI

The current Assembly's term ends on November 26. Outgoing Chief Minister Eknath Shinde's Shiv Sena MLAs held a preliminary meeting in Mumbai on Saturday evening, giving their chief the right to take all decisions on government formation on the party's behalf. Their final legislative meeting will be held on Sunday after all their MLAs-elect reach Mumbai.

No decision on CM yet

"The leaders of all the three [Mahayuti] parties will take a call on the Chief Minister's position. No decision has been taken as yet," a senior BJP leader said. However, BJP sources indicated that the party will not easily give up its stake for the CM position this time.

Several Congress stalwarts including former

Chief Minister Prithviraj Chavan, eight-term MLA Balasaheb Thorat, and Yashomati Thakur were defeated in this election.

The Pawar family battle for the Baramati seat was decisively won by Nationalist Congress Party chief Ajit Pawar with a lead of over one lakh votes against his nephew Yugendra Pawar.

The Opposition has raised questions about the results, with Mr. Uddhav, Ramesh Chennithala and Sanjay Raut terming the results 'unbelievable'.

While the MVA's dismal performance shocked its supporters, Congress State president Nana Patole won by a narrow margin, the Congress claimed, although the Election Commission website has not yet been updated about this. NCP SP leader and Sharad Pawar's

grandnephew Rohit Pawar won his seat, while Shiv Sena UBT leader Aaditya Thackeray successfully retained the Worli constituency in Mumbai, though with a narrower margin, as compared to 2019.

Mahayuti leaders credited their success to the Majhi Ladki Bahin Yojana, outreach efforts towards smaller communities, internal coordination, higher women voters' percentage, and the RSS factor.

The BJP's strike rate is unprecedented in Maharashtra since the 1980s. It contested 148 seats and won 132 of them, thereby giving it a strike rate of 89%. Among its alliance partners, the Shiv Sena won 56 seats, while the NCP won 41 seats.

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Data as of 12.15 a.m.

JHARKHAND

Amit Bhelari

RANCHI

The Jharkhand Mukti Morcha-led INDIA bloc on Saturday returned to power in Jharkhand for the second consecutive time, winning 56 of the 81 Assembly seats in the State.

JMM leader and Chief Minister Hemant Soren thanked people for the spectacular performance of the ruling coalition. “I assure the people of Jharkhand that in the coming days, I will not let your trust down. The people of Jharkhand have proved the very essence of democracy is unity in diversity, brotherhood and harmony,” he said.

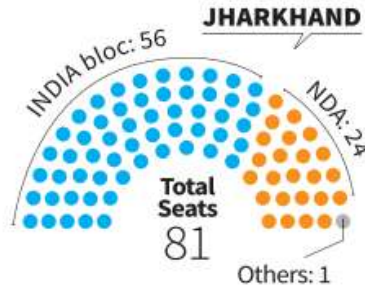
The JMM won 34 seats, the Congress 16, the RJD four, and the CPI(ML) Liberation two seats. This is also the JMM’s best electoral performance in the State.

In the NDA, the BJP won 21 seats, and its alliance partners, the All Jharkhand Students Union, the Lok Janshakti Party (Ram Vilas), and the Janata Dal(U) bagged one seat each.

Mr. Soren won the Barhait Assembly seat by defeating the BJP’s Gamilyel Hembrom. His wife, Kalpana Soren, won the Gandey seat by defeating the BJP’s Muniya Devi. The prominent faces who won include

INDIA emerges as victor

The JMM-led INDIA bloc has bagged wins in 56 out of 81 constituencies, with the NDA securing 24 seats



Poll power: Congress supporters in Ranchi celebrate INDIA bloc’s win in the Assembly election ANI

VOTE SHARE (%)



INDIA bloc: JMM: 34 (23.4%), INC: 16 (15.6%), RJD: 4 (3.4%), CPI(ML)(L): 2 (1.9%)
NDA: BJP: 21 (33.2%), AJSUP: 1 (3.5%), JD(U): 1 (0.8%), LJP(RV): 1 (0.6%)

Data as of 12.15 a.m.

Nishat Alam, wife of jailed Congress leader Alamgir Alam, from Pakur; Mr. Soren’s younger brother Basant Soren, from Dumka; BJP State president Babulal Marandi, from Dhanwar; Jharkhand Assembly Speaker Rabindra Nath Mahto, from Nala; Champai Soren, from Saraikela; and Babulal Marandi, from Dhanwar.

A new political party, the Jharkhand Loktantrik Krantikari Morcha, led by Jairam Tiger Mahto, won one seat.

The rhetoric of “infiltration by Bangladeshis”, corruption, and demographic changes in the Santal Pargana region appears to have backfired for the BJP, with none of these issues bringing it favour. The result is a humiliating defeat for the BJP as its top leaders, including Prime Minister Narendra Modi, campaigned

in the State.

Mr. Soren’s impactful Maiya Samman Yojana, a cash transfer scheme of ₹1,000 per month, four instalments of which were provided before the election, drew women voters to the INDIA bloc. Before the election, Mr. Soren was arrested by the Enforcement Directorate in an alleged money laundering case.

Tribals and Muslims, considered the JMM’s biggest vote banks, supported the INDIA bloc, leading to the JMM’s highest vote share of nearly 24%.

Throughout the election campaign, the BJP focused on “Bangladeshi infiltration” and land-grabbing after marriage to tribal girls. On the other hand, the JMM constantly maintained the BJP was dividing people on the lines of religion.

Finance deadlock pushes COP29 to the brink

Jacob Koshy
NEW DELHI

Despite running into overtime, very little headway had been achieved at the UN climate summit in Baku late on Saturday in terms of bringing developed and developing countries any closer to agreeing to a new global financial target, called the New Collective Quantitative Goal (NCQG), for a moonshot at preventing a runaway rise in global temperatures. The COP29 conference was scheduled to end on Friday.

Negotiators who had been up since Friday were expecting another sleepless night on Saturday, one of them told *The Hindu*, after the latest attempt by hosts Azerbaijan failed to bridge the gap between blocs of developing and developed countries. In fact, matters were so fractious that members of the Least Developed Countries

(LDC) bloc and the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS) said they would walk out of negotiations.

"We have temporarily walked out but remain interested in the talks until we get a fair deal," said Evan Njewa of Malawi, the LDC chair, in a post on X.

'Nickels and dimes'

The newest version of a draft text that is being deliberated upon raised the NCQG goal to \$300 billion a year, to be given to developing countries by 2035. This was a hike from the \$250 billion promised as on Friday night, after a massive outcry by most of the countries and civil society groups on the ground. These numbers are still substantially lower, they say, than the \$1.3 trillion expected from developed countries.

"This is going the wrong way. Collecting nickels and dimes. They [developed



Stuck in limbo: Activists protesting a draft of a proposed deal for curbing climate change at the COP29 on Friday. AP

countries] should have first raised \$1 trillion in additional resources at the G-20, come prepared and then funded climate cleanly. Now, there is no chance. Better to call it off," Dipak Dasgupta, a Distinguished Fellow at The Energy Resources Institute (Teri), said in a statement.

Some analysts, however, suggest that there has been some progress over the last 24 hours, with a stated commitment to "tri-

ple finance flows" through specialised funds called the Adaptation Fund, the Special Climate Fund, and the LDC fund. "On the whole, a positive step forward for international climate finance – but the key lies in implementation of the stated intentions," said Dhruva Purkayastha, director of the Council on Energy, Environment and Water.

He added that, while still not explicit, the plan

seems to be that the developed world would use bilateral and multilateral institutions to channel \$300 billion and use that to mobilise the required \$1.3 trillion. Other glimmers of optimism appear in paragraphs that aim to increase 'grant financing' and periodic reviews of whether those eligible for finance have the required access.

The negotiator referred to earlier said that counting money from multi-lateral financing institutions was a deal breaker as that did not reflect funds over and above what was anyway going to be provisioned for climate-based adaptation.

"It is an attempt at headline management, rather than a desire to effect meaningful change," the negotiator said.

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