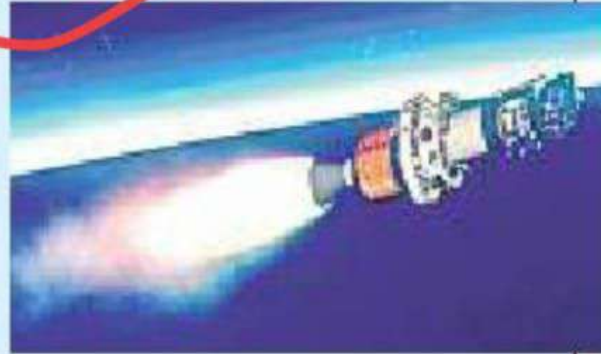


## **ISRO's PSLV places TWO SATELLITES of European Space Agency INTO ORBIT**



Proba-3 mission consists of twin satellites in which two spacecraft (placed inside the satellites) would fly together as one, maintaining a precise formation down to a single milli-metre to study the Sun's outer atmosphere.

SRIHARIKOTA, Dec 4 (PTI)

**ISRO** on Thursday successfully launched the Proba-3 mission onboard a PSLV-C59 rocket, a solar experiment undertaken by the European Space Agency.

Around 18 minutes after lift-off, the two satellites were placed into the 'right orbit', said ISRO Chairman S Somanath.

The Proba-3 (Project for Onboard Autonomy) mission consists of twin satellites in which two spacecraft (placed inside the satellites) would fly together

*(Contd on page 5)*

# FM to begin pre-Budget consultation from today

NEW DELHI, Dec 5 (PTI)

FINANCE Minister Nirmala Sitharaman will start pre-Budget consultations with various stakeholders beginning Friday as part of Budget making exercise.

The first meeting as part of this series will be held with eminent economists on December 6. Sitharaman, who will chair these meetings, will seek their inputs regarding upcoming Budget amid seven-quarter low GDP print of 5.4 per cent in second quarter of the current financial year. It will be followed by a meeting with farmer associations and

agriculture economists and stakeholders in MSME sector on December 7, sources said. Union Budget 2025-26 is likely to be tabled in Parliament on February 1. This would be the eighth straight Budget of Sitharaman and second full Budget of the Modi 3.0 Government, which will give policy direction for achieving goal of Viksit Bharat (developed India) by 2047.

The pre-Budget consultations will end on December 30 with consultations with captains of Indian industry and players in the social sector, especially education and health.

# FADNAVIS TAKES OATH AS MAH CM FOR THIRD TIME

## Shinde, Ajit Pawar also take oath as Dy CMs

MUMBAI, Dec 5 (PTI)

DEVENDRA Fadnavis on Thursday evening took oath as Maharashtra Chief Minister, while leaders of the BJP-led MahaYuti alliance, Eknath Shinde and Ajit Pawar, were sworn in as Deputy Chief Ministers at a grand ceremony in south Mumbai's sprawling Azad Maidan.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi, several Union Ministers and Chief Ministers of various States besides thousands of supporters of the MahaYuti alliance were present at the ceremony, which took place almost a fortnight after results of the Assembly elections were declared on November 23. No other ministers were sworn in. The Ministry will be expanded next week, ahead of the Winter Session of State legislature in Nagpur, sources said.

Those present included Union Ministers Amit

Shah, J P Nadda, Rajnath Singh, Nitin Gadkari and Shivraj Singh Chouhan. Chief Ministers of various NDA-ruled States were also present, including Yogi Adityanath, Nithin Kamath, Himanta Biswa Sarma, Mohan Yadav and Pramod Sawant.

Leading lights from Bollywood and India Inc, including Shah Rukh Khan and Mukesh Ambani, were among those present at the ceremony. Fadnavis, 54, elected from Nagpur South West constituency, was administered the oath of office and secrecy by Governor C P Radhakrishnan, who also swore in Shinde (60) and Pawar (65).

Fadnavis emerged as the frontrunner for the top post as he was the face of the BJP's campaign and

led the party to victory in 132 seats in the 288-member House. The BJP-Shiv Sena-NCP 'Mahayuti' coalition has a commanding majority of 230 seats. A delegation of the ruling MahaYuti alliance met the Governor at Raj Bhawan on Wednesday, soon after Fadnavis was unanimously elected State BJP legislature party leader. At a press conference at Raj Bhawan immediately after the meeting, Shinde said, "I am happy that at this place around two and a half years ago, Fadnavis had recommended that I should become the CM. Now, we have given a letter of recommendation from Shiv Sena for Fadnavis to become CM. This Government is being formed in a healthy atmosphere." Fadnavis, who has served as Chief Minister twice, led the BJP-Shiv Sena Government from 2014 to 2019. After the 2019 elections, when the then Uddhav Thackeray-led Shiv Sena broke ties with the BJP over the CM post, Fadnavis was sworn in again with Ajit Pawar as his deputy. However, that Government lasted only 72 hours due to Pawar's failure to secure sufficient support from NCP MLAs. Following a



Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Maharashtra Governor CP Radhakrishnan with the newly-sworn Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis and Deputy Chief Ministers Eknath Shinde and Ajit Pawar during the swearing-in ceremony, in Mumbai on Thursday. (PTI)

split in the Shiv Sena in 2022, Fadnavis became Deputy Chief Minister in the MahaYuti Government led by Shinde.

Police made special arrangements to accommodate the more than 40,000 party supporters who attended the oath taking ceremony on Thursday, and a separate seating arrangement was made for the around 2,000 VVIPs, an official said. More than 4,000 police personnel were deployed for security during the swearing-in ceremony, the official said.

At least 3,500 police personnel and 520 offi-

cers were deployed for security arrangements, he added. Meanwhile, as Fadnavis took oath as CM for the third time, his banker and singer wife Amruta called it a "beautiful day." "This is a happy occasion and the sense of responsibility is greater," she said.

Born on July 22, 1970, in a middle-class family from Maharashtra's second capital Nagpur, he got lessons in politics from his father and former legislator Gangadharao Fadnavis who was an active Jan Sangh activist. His mother Sarita played a crucial role in his upbringing.

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**FRESH INNINGS**  
on page 8

### 3-day special session from December 7, election of new Speaker on 9th: Fadnavis

MUMBAI, Dec 5 (PTI)

MAHARASHTRA Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis on Thursday said he will provide a stable Government over the next five years and the State under his leadership will see politics of change and not revenge.

Addressing his first press conference after taking over as Chief Minister, he informed that election of a new Assembly Speaker will take place on December 9 during a three-day special session of the house beginning from December 7. Fadnavis said the mandate of people in the 2024 Assembly elections reflected their expectations and love, and he is feeling the pressure of their hope.

# India, China agree to maintain peace along LAC in diplomatic talks

NEW DELHI, Dec 5 (PTI)

IN THEIR first diplomatic talks under a key dialogue mechanism since withdrawing troops from two face-off points, India and China on Thursday reflected on the lessons learnt from the eastern Ladakh border row in order to prevent such face-offs in future.

At the meeting of the Working Mechanism for Consultation and Coordination (WMCC) on India-China border affairs in New Delhi, the two sides agreed to maintain peace and tranquillity in border areas in line with bilateral pacts and protocols. The two sides also prepared for the next meeting of the Special Representatives on the boundary question. "The two sides positively affirmed the implementation of the most recent disengagement agreement which completed the resolution of the issues that emerged in 2020," the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said.

The eastern Ladakh military standoff between India and China began in May 2020 and a deadly clash at the Galwan Valley in June that year resulted in a severe strain in ties between the two neighbours.

The face-off effectively ended following completion of the disengagement process from the last two friction points of Demchok and Depsang under an agreement finalised on October 21.

Two days after the pact was firmed up, Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Chinese President Xi Jinping held talks on the sidelines of the Brics Summit in the Russian city of Kazan. In the meeting, the two sides agreed to revive several dialogue mechanisms including the Special Representatives dialogue on boundary questions.

# OPEC+ oil producers' alliance postpones production increases as crude prices stagnate

FRANKFURT, Dec 5 (AP)

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EIGHT members of the OPEC+ alliance of oil exporting countries decided on Thursday to put off increasing oil production as they face weaker than expected demand and competing production from non-allied countries — factors that could keep oil prices stagnant into next year.

The OPEC+ members decided at an online meeting to postpone by three months production increases that had been scheduled to take effect January 1. The plan had been to start gradually restoring 2.2 million barrels per day over the course of 2025. That process will now be pushed back until October 2026.

OPEC+, which includes Saudi Arabia as the dominant member of the OPEC producers' cartel, and Russia as the leading non-OPEC member in the 23-country alliance, have imposed several sets of cuts to agreed output to support prices. Oil prices have been slack due to weaker than expected demand from China as well as increased production from countries like Brazil and Argentina that aren't in OPEC+.