WEDNESDAY
September 24, 2025

INTERNATIONAL EDITION
18 Pages

THE HINDU

www.thehindu.com

INDIA'S NATIONAL NEWSPAPER SINCE 1878

FOLLOW US
https://newsth.live/fb
https://newsth.live/whatsapp
https://newsth.live/x
https://newsth.live/ig

Vol. 3 • No. 227

Chennai » Coimbatore » Bengaluru » Hyderabad » Madurai » Noida » Visakhapatnam » Thiruvananthapuram » Kochi » Vijayawada » Mangaluru » Tiruchirapalli » Kolkata » Hubballi » Mohali » Malappuram » Mumbai » Lucknow » Cuttack » Patna



AIRSPACE INCURSION

NATO asks Russia to stop violations

NEWS » PAGE 14



NATIONAL FILM AWARDS

Cinema is heartbeat of my soul: Mohanlal

NEWS » PAGE 6



'COME CLEAN'

SC seeks Himachal's disaster control plan

NEWS » PAGE 4

DATA POINT

Share of U-rated movies highest in Malayalam

Bhojpuri ranks lowest in the list, show records

OPINION » PAGE 9



LEGEND DEPARTS

Famed umpire Dickie Bird passes away

SPORT » PAGE 16

INSIDE



Modi to transfer ₹10,000 each to 75 lakh women

PATNA
Prime Minister Narendra Modi will transfer ₹10,000 each as the first instalment to 75 lakh women under the Mukhya Mantri Mahila Rozgar Yojana in Bihar on Friday to help them start businesses of their choice. A statement on Tuesday said he would make the transfer at a function here. » PAGE 5

Criminal history alone not ground to refuse bail: SC

NEW DELHI
Criminal antecedents alone cannot be a ground to deny bail, especially in cases in which the accused have suffered long incarceration as undertrials, the Supreme Court has held in a verdict restoring the bail of five alleged RSS workers involved in the murder of Social Democratic Party of India leader K.S. Shan in Kerala. » PAGE 3

India to conduct 'Cold Start' drone drill next month

NEW DELHI
The Army, Navy, and Air Force will conduct a joint exercise in the first week of October to test drones and counter-drone systems. Named "Cold Start", the exercise is likely to be held in Madhya Pradesh. Officials described it as the biggest such drill to be conducted since Operation Sindoor, aimed at assessing the current air defence capabilities. » PAGE 4

GST cut, festival offers push auto sales, says SIAM

MUMBAI
In an encouraging start to the festival season and thereafter, auto makers have reported robust business backed by the cut in GST beginning Monday. The start to this festive season has been encouraging, said Shailesh Chandra, President, SIAM and MD, Tata Motors Passenger Vehicles Ltd and Tata Passenger Electric Mobility Ltd. » PAGE 12

No prohibition on 'sale of meat, fish, eggs in Bhopal'

BHOPAL
No prohibition on the sale of meat, fish or eggs has been imposed in Madhya Pradesh's capital of Bhopal during the nine-day Navratri festival or on Dasara, officials clarified on Tuesday, dismissing media reports about a purported ban from September 22 to October 2. Bhopal Collector Kaushalendra Vikram Singh said no such order had been issued. » PAGE 2

Nine electrocuted as torrential rain pounds Kolkata, suburbs

City receives 247.5 mm rainfall over 24 hours; Metro, train and hospital services affected; people killed as they come into contact with live wires on flooded streets; Mamata slams power utility; at least 30 flights at Kolkata airport were cancelled

Shrabana Chatterjee
Shiv Sahay Singh
KOLKATA



Water woes: A bus loaded with passengers struggles through a heavily inundated street in Kolkata. DEBASISH BHADURI

At least nine people were killed in Kolkata and its suburbs after heavy rain lashed the city on Monday night and the early hours of Tuesday due to a low-pressure area over the northwest Bay of Bengal.

The city received about 247.5 mm rainfall in 24 hours till 6.30 a.m. on Tuesday, leading to waterlogging in several neighbourhoods. Suburban railway and Metro services were disrupted as normal life came to a standstill in the city, just days before Durga Puja festivities are set to begin.

The India Meteorological Department (IMD), however, said that the rainfall in the city could not be classified as a cloudburst.

"Maximum highest hourly rainfall observed as 98 mm between 03.00 to 04.00 hours IST of 23 September, 2025. As it is less than 100 mm, it does not satisfy the cloudburst criteria," the IMD said, adding that it had issued an orange alert for rainfall over Gangetic West Bengal.

'Discom responsible'

Noting that nine people had died when they came into contact with live wires in waterlogged streets, West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee blamed the Calcutta Electric Supply Corporation (CESC) for the tragedy.

She told CESC chairman Sanjiv Goenka that his company was responsible for wires lying unattended.

"The (State) government will come to the aid of families who have died and will ensure that they get jobs. But the Power Department and particularly CESC cannot evade their responsibility. They must pay a minimum compensation of ₹5 lakh to the families of the deceased," the Chief Minister told presspersons.

This is not the first instance of widespread electrocution in Kolkata. In May 2020, when Supercyclone Ampham ravaged the city, most of the deaths were due to electrocution.

The deaths were reported in Kolkata's Ekbalpore, Gariahat, Haridevpur, Behala, Netaji Nagar, Garfa, and Shakespeare Saranai police station areas in the south, and in the Beniapukur police station area in north Kolkata.

Essential services hit

Kolkata Municipal Corporation Mayor Firhad Hakim said that the city had witnessed abnormal rainfall overnight, resulting in extensive waterlogging"All KMC emergency services are on high alert, with quick response teams working relentlessly to clear waterlogging and restore normalcy," the KMC said in a social media post.

Suburban railway and Kolkata Metro services were severely affected by the deluge.

Water entered the tunnels of the North-South Blue Line Metro and services were suspended. Eastern Railway had to reschedule several trains because of water logging, while at least 30 flights at the Kolkata Airport were cancelled and 31 others were delayed.

Water entered many houses and residential complexes in Kolkata, and both government and private hospitals were inundated. Calcutta University and Jadavpur University suspended academic activities and cancelled examinations scheduled on Tuesday. The Chief Minister urged schools in the State to prepone the Puja vacation for students.

BJP blames Mamata

Leader of Opposition Suvendu Adhikari blamed the people's plight on the "disastrous misgovernance of Mamata Banerjee". The CM calling this rainfall "sudden" is an admission of her failure, he said.

"This is not an act of God, it's a failure of leadership. The IMD's warning was public knowledge, yet Mamata Banerjee did nothing to prepare. No preemptive or proactive measures. Instead, she shifts blame to CESC, and absurdly states that the water is from Bihar, Jharkhand, and Uttar Pradesh," the BJP leader said.

With Durga Puja festivities only a few days away, many puja pandals have submerged under water. Community puja organisers said that art installations at several pandals suffered major damage and it would be almost impossible to restore them before the festivities begin.

The IMD has predicted another low pressure area likely to form over the east-central Bay of Bengal around September 25, which may result in widespread light to moderate rainfall in Kolkata and adjoining areas from September 26.

PANDALS DAMAGED
» PAGE 5

India, China are the 'primary funders' of Russian war: Trump

Suhasini Haidar
NEW DELHI



Donald Trump

Taking his oft-repeated allegations against India to the floor of the UN General Assembly, U.S. President Donald Trump on Tuesday accused India and China of being "primary funders" of the Russian war in Ukraine. He claimed again that he stopped the India-Pakistan conflict in May.

Despite accusations against multiple countries and the fact that China imports more Russian energy than India, the U.S. has singled out India by imposing "penalty tariffs" of 25%, effectively doubling the tariffs on Indian goods.

"China and India are primary funders of war by continuing to purchase Russian oil," Mr. Trump said in an hour-long speech at the start of the high-level week at the UN. "[It is] inexcusable that even NATO countries have not cut off much Russian energy and Russian energy products," he added.

It was his first address to the UNGA in his second term in office.

'Powerful tariffs'

He said that if Russia was not ready to make a ceasefire deal, then the U.S. "is fully prepared to impose a very strong round of powerful tariffs which would stop the bloodshed... but for those tariffs to be effective, European nations would have to join the U.S. in adopting the exact same measures".

The European Union, which announced its 19th round of sanctions last week, has not imposed tariffs on India as the U.S. has for Russian oil purchases, but has sanctioned a number of Indian entities, including the Rosneft-controlled Nayara energy, which refines a large proportion of the Russian oil imported.

Mr. Trump also repeated the claim that he intervened to ensure a ceasefire between India and Pakistan during Operation Sindoor in May. India has consistently denied the claim.

'Ended seven wars'

Mr. Trump counted the India-Pakistan conflict among the "seven wars" he ended, claiming that "in all cases they were raging with countless, thousands of people being killed".

"No President or Prime Minister, and for that matter, no other country has done anything close to that and I did it in just seven months," Mr. Trump said, enumerating the conflicts between "Cambodia and Thailand, Kosovo and Serbia, Congo and Rwanda... Pakistan and India, Israel and Iran, Egypt and Ethiopia, and Armenia and Azerbaijan".

The government did not respond immediately to Mr. Trump's speech.In August, the External Affairs Ministry had issued a statement refuting the U.S.'s characterisation of India's Russian oil purchases, pointing out that other countries also bought the oil, and that the U.S. continued trade in other items, including critical minerals, with Russia.

TRUMP SLAMS UN
» PAGE 14

India may increase energy efficiency target for COP30

Jacob Koshy
NEW DELHI



Clean energy: India has committed to source half of its electric power capacity from non-fossil fuel sources by 2030. REUTERS

India will submit its updated Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) around the commencement of the UN Climate Change Conference COP30 in Brazil on November 10, likely with an increased target for energy efficiency improvement, sources in the Environment Ministry indicated to *The Hindu*.

The NDCs are renewable-energy adoption goals set by a country as part of being a signatory to the Paris Agreement - under which countries must regulate their fossil fuel consumption to keep the globe from heating 2 degrees Celsius , and as far as possible, 1.5 degrees Celsius above that in pre-industrial times.

As part of this, countries are required to update their NDCs every five years. India last updated its NDCs in 2022, when it committed to reduce the emissions intensity of its GDP by 45% of 2005 levels; source half of its electric power capacity from non-fossil fuel sources; and create a carbon sink of at least two billion tonnes by 2030.

Emissions intensity of the GDP refers to the amount of carbon emitted per unit of GDP and does not mean a reduction in net emissions. As of December 2023, India reported to the United Nations climate-governing body that the emissions intensity of its GDP had been reduced by 33% between 2005 and 2019. This June, India reported installing at least 50% of its power capacity from non-fossil fuel sources.

Planet getting warmer

The NDCs are of particular significance this year because Brazil, which assumes the COP presidency in Belém, has stressed that a major effort this year will be to assess what hindered countries from achieving their stated NDCs.

All commitments by countries, even if achieved perfectly, cannot stop the globe from heating to an average of 3 degrees Celsius by the century - well short of the Paris Agreement goals.

Overall, the ambition to undertake significant emission cuts seems muted.

EU climate target looms

The European Union has yet to announce a 2035 target, though it has a long-term goal to be "net zero" by 2050.

The EU commission this July had proposed an amendment to the EU climate law enabling a 90% cut in emissions compared to 1990 by 2040.

Though they were to vote on a target for 2035 last week, France and Germany weighed in to postpone a vote on the matter.

The EU is expected to submit its NDCs ahead of COP30 with an indicative 2035 target in a range from 66.25% to 72.5%, compared with the 1990 levels. Australia this month updated its NDCs to say that it "aimed" to cut emissions to 62%-70% of 2005 levels by 2035.

The United States has exited the Paris Agreement and it remains to be seen if China will announce ambitious NDCs ahead of COP30.

Major reductions, sources in the Environment Ministry suggest, would likely result from bilateral agreements between countries where developed and developing countries jointly invested in clean energy projects and shared the resulting cut in emissions, as computed by an approved methodology, as carbon credits.

Indian initiatives

India has recently signed such an agreement called a JCM (Joint Crediting Mechanism) with Japan and is in talks with other countries. However it will be a few years before such projects practically kick in.

"Developed countries are not willing to part with the necessary finance to make good on ambitious goals and developing countries require fossil fuels for their development," an Environment Ministry official added.

India is also expected to operationalise the India Carbon Market by 2026 – under which 13 major sectors will be given mandatory emission-intensity targets – and can trade their resulting savings, if any, via emission reduction certificates.

Azam Khan, SP leader, out of jail after 23 months

Mayank Kumar
LUCKNOW

Samajwadi Party leader and former Uttar Pradesh Cabinet Minister Mohammad Azam Khan was released from the Sitapur jail on Tuesday after spending 23 months behind bars in connection with multiple criminal cases.

Hundreds of supporters waited outside the jail to welcome Mr. Khan. He was granted bail on September 18 by the Allahabad High Court in the last remaining case in which he was yet to get relief. Over the past seven years, dozens of first information reports have been filed against him, covering a wide range of criminal cases.

FULL REPORT ON
» PAGE 5

INBRIEF



ED attaches assets worth over ₹7 cr. in case against AAP's Jain

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) on Tuesday said it has attached fresh assets worth ₹7.44 crore of companies "beneficially owned and controlled" by AAP leader and former Delhi Minister Satyendar Jain as part of an alleged "benami" assets-linked money-laundering case. The action came after the Delhi High Court ruled in an Income Tax Department case recently that the AAP leader's close associates – Ankush Jain and Vaibhav Jain – were his "benami holders" and deposited ₹7.44 crore "in cash" at the Bank of Baroda's Bhogal branch as advance tax under the Income Disclosure Scheme of 2016, the ED said in a statement. "The Hon'ble SC dismissed their [the accused] SLPs and review petitions, rendering the finding [of the HC] final," it said. PTI

Kolkata students don black band seeking V-C's ouster

Students of West Bengal National University of Juridical Sciences (WBNUJS), Kolkata, on Tuesday sported black bands on their arms during classes as a mark of protest to demand the resignation of Vice-Chancellor Prof. Nirmal Kanti Chakrabarti, who was accused of sexual harassment. The move followed the students' protests for over 20 hours since Saturday to press for the same demand and for a search committee be formed to appoint a new V-C by October 31. The students threatened to intensify the stir if the demands are not met by the end of October. PTI

10 killed in 4 days as rain batters Marathwada; govt. announces ₹2,215 cr. aid

Dharashiv, Beed, Solapur, and Ahilyanagar districts are worst-hit; 18 NDRF teams deployed across the region; Opposition demands Maharashtra govt. declare a wet drought, increase compensation

The Hindu Bureau
MUMBAI

Heavy rain continued to batter the Marathwada and Western Maharashtra regions on Tuesday, leaving dozens stranded in floodwaters. At least 10 people have lost their lives over the past four days while over 150 villages have been affected. The Maharashtra Cabinet in a review meeting took stock of the situation and approved financial aid of ₹2,215 crore to an estimated 31.64 lakh farmers. "Of this amount, ₹1,829 crore has already been disbursed, and the rest will be transferred to farmers within the next 10 days," said Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis.

Dharashiv, Beed, Solapur, and Ahilyanagar districts have been worst hit by the rain so far. Beed has received 65 mm of rainfall, Dharashiv 51.7 mm and Ahilyanagar 44.6 mm over a period of 24 hours. The situation could get worse in the coming days as the India Meteorological Department has forecast a fresh spell of heavy to very heavy rainfall for the next 48 hours.



In tatters: Water from the Sina river inundates roads and homes after heavy rain in Solapur on Tuesday. PTI

Around 18 National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) teams have been deployed across the region while the Army has been pressed into service in Solapur and Dharashiv districts for search and rescue operations. "Around 320 people have been rescued since last night. We are also trying to move domestic animals to safer locations," NDRF inspector Pankaj Chaudhary told *The Hindu* on Tuesday.

Calling the situation "grim", State Disaster Management Minister Girish Mahajan said the region has never recorded such rainfall in the last 50-70 years. "The government has made arrangements, including food and shelter for rescued citizens," he said.

The Chief Minister said the Marathwada region, comprising eight districts, has received 975 mm of rainfall in the last four-five days, which was 102% of the average rainfall. Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Eknath Shinde said damage assessment in Marathwada will be done on a war footing.

Some farmers from Marathwada said the government's financial aid was not adequate. "On average, a farmer will get ₹8,500 per hectare. My cost of sowing soyabean is ₹1.5 lakh per hectare. To clean my damaged land alone will cost me ₹6,000 per day in labour costs," said Ashok Pawar, a farmer from Dharashiv.

'Speed up relief'

Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) leaders Uddhav Thackeray and Sharad Pawar asked the government to accelerate relief to farmers. Mr. Thackeray, the Shiv Sena (UBT) chief, demanded that the Centre announce an assistance package of ₹10,000 crore for Marathwada.

The Congress, another MVA constituent, demanded that the Maharashtra government declare a wet drought in view of heavy rains and compensate affected farmers with ₹50,000 per hectare.

Stalin criticises PM's statement on savings from GST reforms

The Hindu Bureau
CHENNAI



Tamil Nadu CM M.K. Stalin

Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M.K. Stalin on Tuesday criticised Prime Minister Narendra Modi over his statement that Indians would be able to save ₹2.5 lakh crore through the GST reforms and Income Tax relief.

"This is what the Opposition had been demanding from the very beginning. Had these measures been taken eight years ago, families across the country would have saved many lakh crores more," he said.

'Borne by States'

Mr. Stalin said it was his duty to point out that 50% of the cost of providing the relief had actually been borne by the States, a fact that the Union government had "failed to acknowledge and appreciate".

"On the contrary, the BJP government [at the Centre] is denying the States funds that rightfully belong to them. Tamil Nadu is being denied #SamagraShiksha funds only because we refuse to accept #HindiImposition. When will this injustice end?" he said in a social media post.

Mr. Stalin urged DMK MPs to work for the victory of candidates to be fielded by the party and its allies.

"The MLAs ensured victory in all 40 Lok Sabha constituencies [in 2024]. Now, it is your turn to work for the victory of the MLAs," he said, while addressing a meeting of DMK MPs in Chennai.

Mr. Stalin said the MPs should stay in their constituencies for at least four days a week when Parliament was not in session, and address local issues. "You should work in coordination with Ministers, MLAs, and party secretaries and observers," he said.

He also asked the MPs to send him a report once every 15 days on their work and their speeches in Parliament highlighting the problems of the people.

"You should also create awareness on the anti-people policies of the Union government," he said.

Telangana BJP against Almatti dam height increase, questions 'silence' of CM Revanth Reddy

The Hindu Bureau
HYDERABAD



Water gushes out of the Lal Bahadur Shashtri Dam in Almatti after the shutters were opened. FILE PHOTO

Telangana BJP president N. Ramchander Rao on Tuesday asserted that his party will strongly oppose any attempt to raise the height of Almatti Dam and questioned Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy's silence on the issue. He pointed out that the Karnataka government is reportedly planning to increase the dam's height from 519 metres to 524 metres, a move he claimed would be detrimental to farmers in Telangana.

"Mahabubnagar, the Chief Minister's native district, along with Nalgonda and Ranga Reddy, will face acute water shortages if Karnataka is allowed to proceed. These regions could turn into a desert," Mr. Rao warned.

He accused the Congress government of failing to take proactive steps to safeguard Telangana's rights over Krishna river water, and urged immediate negotiations with Karnataka to prevent harm to the State's farmers.

'Contracts, commission'

"The current government is more focused on contracts and commissions than on protecting Telangana's rightful share of Krishna water," he alleged, adding that the Congress was 'compromising the State's interests' by remaining silent on the Almatti issue.

Mr. Rao also questioned why the Chief Minister, who frequently visits Delhi to meet Sonia Gandhi, Priyanka Gandhi Vadra and Rahul Gandhi, has never raised the matter with the Central leadership, especially since both Telangana and Karnataka are ruled by the Congress.

No prohibition on sale of meat, fish, eggs during Navratri, clarify Bhopal officials

Mehul Malpani
BHOPAL

No prohibition on the sale of meat, fish or eggs has been imposed in Madhya Pradesh's capital of Bhopal during the nine-day Navratri festival or on Dasara, officials clarified on Tuesday, dismissing media reports about a purported ban on these products from September 22 to October 2.

Speaking to *The Hindu*, Bhopal Collector Kaushalendra Vikram Singh said, "No such order has been issued by the district administration placing a blanket ban like this."

On Monday, several media outlets had reported on the "prohibition", citing a report by a news agency, which quoted a Sub-Divisional Magistrate (SDM).

However, the news agency, which had shared a purported video statement by the SDM on X regarding the ban, deleted the post on Tuesday. The post drew widespread criticism from social media users and Opposition party leaders.



A Durga Puja pandal in Bhopal on Tuesday. Civic officials say they never impose such blanket restrictions in the city. A.M. FARUQUI

Many slammed the move and termed it "majoritarian and divisive".

In a post on X, Trinamool Congress Lok Sabha member Mahua Moitra remarked: "How can the entire multi-faith city of Bhopal be forced to give up fish, meat and eggs simply because some people decide to turn vegetarian for a finite period of time to balance out their sins for the remainder of the year?"

In a fresh post on Tuesday, the news agency issued a correction, highlighting that the official quoted is the SDM from Maihar in north M.P.

"A Navratri *mela* (fair) is starting from September 22 in the holy town of Maa Sharda. In view of this, the sale of meat, fish, and eggs has been banned in the city from September 22 to October 2," Divya Patel, SDM, Maihar, is quoted as saying.

Maihar Collector Rani Batad told *The Hindu* that the prohibition is imposed in parts of the town near the famous Sharda Mata temple during both Navratris every year.

'Annual phenomenon'

"Such orders are issued each year during the Navratri festivities at the temple. There's a complete ban on the sale of raw and cooked meat," she added.

Prem Shankar Shukla, Bhopal Municipal Corporation's public relations officer, said that such prolonged dietary restrictions have never been imposed in the city.

"Each year a calendar is issued after consultation with various departments and the BMC Commissioner, in which specific instructions are issued. But we've never had imposed restrictions for eight-nine days at a time," he said.

Batchmates strip and thrash teen at Madurai hostel

The Hindu Bureau
MADURAI

In a shocking incident of ragging, a 14-year-old student of a government industrial training institute was stripped and mercilessly beaten up by three of his batch-mates at their hostel at Chekkanoorani near Usilampatti in Madurai district. The torture was filmed by a student. While the crime took place on September 18, a video clip of it was shared widely on Tuesday.

On a complaint from the boy's father, the Madurai District Police have registered a case. The police said the accused students were aged 15 and 17. The police have picked up the accused for an inquiry. Cases have been booked under the T.N. Prohibition of Ragging Act, 1997, and for assault and criminal intimidation, the police said.

Experts call for resilient infrastructure upgrades as erratic monsoon aggravates flood risks in Rajasthan

The Hindu Bureau
JAIPUR



Harrowing time: Pedestrians crossing a waterlogged road after heavy rainfall at Manbagh in Jaipur. FILE PHOTO

Nearly 77% of Rajasthan's tehsils witnessed an increased rainfall during June-September this year, often exceeding 30% from the climate baseline of 1982-2011. The State also saw one of the sharpest increases in heavy rainfall days, leading to repeated floods and urban waterlogging, which underscored the urgent need for preparedness.

Highlighting these aspects after this year's monsoon, experts and researchers of the Council on Energy, Environment and Water (CEEW) said here on Tuesday that the shifting rainfall patterns were aggravating risks of floods and waterlogging in several cities. The changing monsoon patterns need to be analysed for building a climate-resilient future, according to experts.

The CEEW - one of Asia's leading climate think tanks - organised a dialogue on "Erratic monsoon and urban flooding: Challenges and the way forward", while presenting evidence of statistically significant rise in the monsoon rainfall observed in traditionally dry regions such as Rajasthan, Gujarat, central Maharashtra, and parts of Tamil Nadu.

A 2024 study of CEEW quantified changes in rainfall patterns during the decade of 2012-2022, using statistical indices endorsed by the World Meteorological Organisation (WMO) and the India Meteorological Department (IMD). It made a pan-India, sub-district-level assessment of changing monsoon patterns during the south-west monsoon of June-September and the north-east monsoon of October-December.

Key findings

One of the key findings was that 55% of all tehsils in the country saw an increase of more than 10% in south-west monsoon rainfall in the past decade, while 11% saw a decline compared to the climatic baseline of 1982-2011. Notably, 48% of tehsils across the country recorded more than 10% higher rainfall, linked to delayed withdrawal of the south-west monsoon.

CEEW fellow Vishwas Chitale said Rajasthan's experience had shown how climate change was rewriting the story of the monsoon. Mr. Chitale said Rajasthan must invest in granular climate observation networks, modernise early warning systems, and formulate local-level climate action plans that aim at building climate resilience at the local scale in order to prepare for this "new normal".

As rainfall intensity rises, drainage systems, which are already inadequate, are increasingly overwhelmed, heightening risks of waterlogging, infrastructure damage, and loss of livelihoods.

Assam singer Zubeen Garg cremated with State honours

The Hindu Bureau
GUWAHATI



The crowd during the funeral of singer Zubeen Garg on the outskirts of Guwahati on Tuesday. PTI

Assam's iconic singer-composer Zubeen Garg was cremated with State honours at Kamarkuchi village in Sonapur, about 30 km east of Guwahati, on Tuesday.

Tens of thousands of fans followed the ambulance and many more lined the highway between Guwahati and Sonapur to catch a glimpse of the singer for the last time.

Garg's body was kept at the Arjun Bhogeswar Baruah Sports Complex for more than 48 hours after it arrived from Singapore via New Delhi on Sunday morning.

At Kamarkuchi, chants of "*Joi* Zubeen *da*" rent the air, and fans sang one of his most popular songs, *Mayabini*, in unison as Garg's sister Palme Borthakur and music composer Rahul Gautam Sarma, his protégé, lit the pyre amid gun salutes. Garg had often asked his fans to play this song when he died.

Earlier in the day, a second autopsy was conducted on Garg's body at the Guwahati Medical College and Hospital in the presence of doctors from the All India Institute of Medical Sciences. The first non-invasive post-mortem was conducted in Singapore on September 19, the day he died. The certificate issued by the Singapore authorities mentioned drowning as the cause of death.

The Chief Minister said the State government had decided on the second autopsy following a demand from fans, who suspect Garg, battling ill-health, was made to go swimming despite instructions from his doctors to keep him away from water and fire.

Published by Nirmala Lakshman at Kasturi Buildings, 859-860, Anna Salai, Chennai 600002 on behalf of THG PUBLISHING PVT.LTD. Editor: Suresh Nambath (Responsible for selection of news under the PRP Act).

ISSN 0971 - 751X

36 'smuggled' vehicles in Kerala seized by Customs

The Hindu Bureau
KOCHI

In simultaneous day-long raids across more than 30 locations in Kerala, including the residences of film actors, the Customs (Preventive) Commissionerate, Kochi, seized 36 "high-value second-hand cars" suspected to have been smuggled in from Bhutan over the past few years.

The operation, codenamed "Numkhor" (meaning vehicle in Bhutanese language), saw Customs teams fan out across the State based on a list of 150 to 200 vehicles flagged for irregularities in the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways database and suspected to have been smuggled into Kerala through a Coimbatore-based smuggling network.

The Motor Vehicles department, Anti-Terrorist Squad, and Kerala Police extended support. Multiple vehicles belonging to actors Dulquer Salman and Amit Chakkalackal were among those seized.

"These cars were likely smuggled through three methods – either in a completely knocked-down condition, concealed in containers, or driven across the Indo-Bhutan border using permits issued to tourists travelling to India," T. Tiju, Commissioner, Customs (Preventive) Commissionerate, Kochi, told a press conference here.

The names, seals, and insignia of government institutions were forged to fabricate documents for registering vehicles here.



Mangrove plantation and restoration is an important element of TN-SHORE. In all, 1,000 hectares of mangroves would be restored.

World Bank to fund T.N. village councils for mangrove plantation

The Hindu Bureau
CHENNAI

As part of the Tamil Nadu Coastal Restoration Mission (TN-SHORE), the World Bank will directly fund village mangrove councils in the State to facilitate bioshield enhancement through mangrove plantation.

Approved in September 2025, TN-SHORE is a ₹1,675-crore World Bank-funded project to strengthen Tamil Nadu's coastal resilience and economy. Of the total investment, around ₹1,000 crore will come from the World Bank, and the State government will contribute the remaining amount. The initiative is aimed at restoring 30,000 hectares of seascapes, safeguarding endangered species such as turtles and dugongs, and supporting sustainable practices, including eco-tourism and plastic waste management.

An important element of TN-SHORE is mangrove plantation and restoration. To simplify the flow of funds and enable local communities to take financial decisions, World Bank funds will be channelled directly into the village mangrove councils. These councils comprise local residents, with a community member serving as the president, and the Forest Range Officer as the member-secretary.

TN-SHORE Mission Director Deepak Bilgi said a community procurement plan had been drawn up and submitted to the World Bank. This would allow for smaller allocations, of up to ₹8 lakh, without the need for quotations or tenders. In all, 1,000 hectares of mangroves would be restored – 300 hectares of new plantations and 700 hectares of degraded areas, he added. An initial corpus of ₹38 crore has been demarcated for this purpose.

Tamil Nadu has 41.9 sq. km of mangrove cover, including 1.19 sq. km of very dense patches, 25.07 sq. km of moderately dense areas, and 15.65 sq. km of open mangroves.

Criminal past alone cannot be a ground to deny bail: SC

A Bench headed by Justice Dipankar Datta sets aside a 2024 Kerala High Court decision, overturning the bail granted to the five 'RSS workers' in the murder of SDPI leader K.S. Shan

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Criminal antecedents alone cannot be a ground to deny bail, especially in cases in which the accused have suffered long incarceration as undertrials, the Supreme Court held in a judgment restoring the bail of five alleged Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) workers involved in the murder of Social Democratic Party of India (SDPI) leader K.S. Shan in Kerala in 2021.

A Bench headed by Justice Dipankar Datta, in a recent judgment, set aside a Kerala High Court decision in 2024, overturning the bail granted to the five men of a total 10 accused persons in the case.

The High Court had set aside the bail granted by a Sessions Court in 2022. The trial judge had reasoned that the accused had been incarcerated for over a year and the Public Prosecutor did not object to a grant of bail.

The High Court, in December 2024, found the Sessions judge had acted in a mechanical manner. The judge, the High Court had noted, did not take into consideration apprehensions that the accused would influence witnesses and tamper with the case evidence.

Rather than sending the case back to the trial judge for a fresh consideration of the question of bail, the High Court cancelled the bail for the five men while also taking into account their criminal antecedents.

Murder and trial

A timeline of the Shan murder case and the trial



SDPI supporters march to the Secretariat in Thiruvananthapuram in 2021, seeking a proper probe into the Shan murder case. S. MAHINSHA

DEC. 18, 2021: SDPI leader K.S. Shan was murdered. According to the prosecution, the accused persons collided their vehicle with the victim's scooter, and then brutally attacked him

DEC. 19, 2021: FIR registered against unknown persons; the accused were arrested later

MARCH 15, 2022: Chargesheet filed against the accused, who were described as activists of a particular political organisation

DEC. 2022: Trial court grants bail to the accused persons through multiple orders

DEC. 11, 2024: Kerala High Court sets aside the bail of five out of the 10 accused, who were directly involved in the murder

Violated bail conditions

The Supreme Court, interestingly, ruled in favour of bail despite allegations made by the State that two of the five accused had violated the conditions of their interim bail by entering Alappuzha district to threaten a person.

The defence lawyers had brushed it off, saying he had only come to attend the trial and the person claimed to have been threatened had denied the allegation.

Shan was murdered in 2021 while returning home on his motorcycle. The attack was said to be a retaliatory act following the killing of an RSS worker, allegedly by SDPI activists.

Justice Datta, who authored the judgment, pointed out that the High Court ought to have considered the fact that the accused had spent over a year behind bars before they were granted bail by the Sessions Court in 2022.

Since then, they have already been on bail for nearly two years until the High Court revoked their bail in 2024.

'Bail is the rule'

"Cancellation/revocation of bail, no doubt, seeks to uphold trial integrity. The dominant purpose thereof is to ensure a fair trial and protect societal interests by preventing persons accused of a heinous or grave crime and having tendencies to influence or intimidate witnesses or to tamper evidence from being released," the court stated.

Justice Datta, said if the accused interfered with witnesses or tampered with the evidence, the courts would be justified in ordering them to be taken back into custody. However, the apex court said it would lean in favour of the "golden rule of bail jurisprudence propounded by Justice V.R. Krishna Iyer of 'bail being the rule and jail an exception'".

Issuing a series of directions to ensure non-interference of the accused in the expeditious disposal of the case, Justice Datta set aside the High Court decision.

"Taking back the appellants in custody for no better reason than that the Sessions Court should not have been swayed by omission of the public prosecutor to raise any objection to grant of bail should not operate to the appellants' prejudice, more so when two years have passed in the interregnum," the Court reasoned.

Karnataka HC stays rule that capped film ticket price

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

The High Court of Karnataka stayed the new rule capping movie ticket price at ₹200 (excluding GST) in all theatres and multiplexes across the State.

On Tuesday, Justice Ravi V. Hosmani passed an interim order on the petitions filed by the Multiplex Association of India, film production houses Hombale Films, Keystone Entertainment, and VK Films.

'Beyond State's ambit'

The petitioners contended that the State government had no power under the Karnataka Cinema (Regulation) Act, 1964, and the rules framed under this law, to restrict or prescribe the price for tickets for cinema exhibition.

They said the Act was mainly for controlling the licencing of cinema theatres, and not for controlling the prices of tickets.

The petitioners questioned the legality of the amendment made to the Karnataka Cinema (Regulation) Rules with effect from September 12, capping the prices of the tickets at ₹200, except in multiplex-screen cinemas, with premium facilities of 75 seats or less.

The petitioners pointed out that a similar attempt to cap the ticket prices was made in 2017 by issuing a Government Order, but it was withdrawn after cinema houses and others questioned the legality of the order.

INBRIEF



T.N.- based VCK to contest in Kerala local body elections

The Tamil-Nadu based Viduthalai Chiruthaigal Katchi (VCK), led by Ambedkarite leader Thol. Thirumavalavan, is expanding its presence among tea plantation workers in Idukki, Kerala, majority of whom have Tamil origin. The party has announced its plans to field candidates in the upcoming local body elections in the Peerumade Assembly segment. Navas N., Kerala general secretary of the VCK, said on Tuesday that the party would contest the polls in nine panchayats. "Mr. Thirumavalavan and rapper Vedan will campaign in the panchayats," said Mr. Navas.

Man accused of robberies in 5 States escapes police custody

A habitual offender, Battula Prabhakar, 35, who is allegedly involved in a series of robberies escaped from police custody when he was being taken back to prison after a court hearing in Vijayawada in Andhra Pradesh. Prabhakar is wanted in 80 robberies reported from A.P., Telangana, Tamil Nadu, Kerala and Karnataka, the police said. "He requested the escort police to allow him to attend nature's call... Prabhakar jumped into the fields and escaped," a police officer said. Two AR head constables who escorted Prabhakar, were suspended on charges of negligence.

Mob sets fire to truck 'transporting beef' in Belagavi

Police have arrested nine people in connection with a mob setting fire to a truck allegedly transporting beef in Belagavi district of Karnataka on Monday night. Members of right-wing organisations waylaid the truck near Sri Siddeshwar Temple. They allegedly found several tonnes of beef being transported from Kudachi to Hyderabad and assaulted the driver. Three were arrested under the anti-cow slaughter Act and six were arrested under BNS provisions of arson, robbery and SC/ST Act.

Jumbo operation



An elephant from Gudalur, Tamil Nadu, believed to have been involved in several negative human-elephant interactions, was tranquillised and captured by the Forest Department on Tuesday. The elephant will be taken to an elephant shelter before release. M. SATHYAMOORTHY

Andhra Pradesh Assembly passes SC sub-classification Bill

The Hindu Bureau
VIJAYAWADA

The Andhra Pradesh Assembly has passed a Bill to implement sub-classification among the State's 59 Scheduled Castes (SCs), aiming to ensure a fairer distribution of reservation benefits in education and public employment.

Tabling the Bill on Tuesday, Dola Sree Bala Veeranjaneya Swamy, Minister for Social Welfare, Disabled, and Senior Citizen Welfare, said the measure seeks to promote fairness and equitable access to opportunities for all SCs in the State.

Currently, SCs are entitled to a 15% reservation in public sector jobs and educational institutions.

Under the proposed classification, Group I - Most Backward (12 castes) will receive 6.5%, Group II - Backward (18 castes) will receive 7.5%, and Group III (29 castes) will receive 1%.

The newly introduced Bill seeks to replace the Andhra Pradesh Scheduled Castes (Sub-classification) Ordinance, 2025 and formalise these provisions through legislative approval.

This move follows the 2024 Supreme Court judgment that upheld the constitutionality of sub-classification within SCs. In response, the State had appointed a one-man commission, led by retired IAS officer Rajiv Ranjan Mishra to recommend sub-classifications among the SCs.

Three arrested for gang rape, murder of woman in Telangana

The Hindu Bureau
HYDERABAD

Three persons were arrested by the Rajendranagar police for allegedly kidnapping, gang-raping and murdering a 32-year-old woman, whose body was found under a Musi river bridge at Kismatpur village in Telangana on September 14.

The accused were identified as Gulam Dastagir Khan, alias Rehan, alias Five Star, 26; Mohd. Imran, alias Danram, 25; and Meka Durga Reddy, alias David, 33, all drivers by profession, and with criminal antecedents.

Investigations revealed that the victim, who had been missing for three days, was first approached by David. He then gave her alcohol before sexually assaulting her near a function hall.

Later that night, Rehan and Imran are said to have forced her into their rented auto driven her to the Kismathpur bridge, where they gang-raped her. Later, Rehan allegedly beat her to death with sticks and the trio abandoned her body in the nearby bushes.

Further investigation is under way.

Rare benign tumour in rock python treated successfully in Bengaluru

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

In the first reported case of its kind in Karnataka, a captive rock python at Chitradurga's Aadumalleshwara Zoo, suffering from a benign tumour, underwent successful surgery at the Wildlife Rescue and Conservation Centre in Bengaluru.

Veterinarians and officials from the Karnataka Forest Department told *The Hindu* that benign tumours are extremely rare in pythons in Karnataka, with no previously recorded cases, particularly in rock pythons, which are listed as 'near threatened' on the International Union for Conservation of Nature's Red List. However, last year a similar case was reported in Mumbai, where the snake was reportedly successfully treated.

On July 3, Aadumalleshwara Zoo authorities, managed by the State Forest Department, sent the rock python with a tumour in its mouth to Bengaluru's People for Animals (PFA) hospital for surgery and rehabilitation. After two months of intensive care, the python, earlier unable to eat, regained its hunting ability and was later returned to the zoo.



A rock python. PHOTO FOR REPRESENT- ATIVE PURPOSE

A source at Aadumalleshwara Zoo confirmed to *The Hindu* that the snake has fully recovered and is now living normally.

Dr. Navaz Shariff, chief wildlife veterinarian at PFA explained that the location of the tumour is a critical factor in determining its impact. "In this case, the tumour was confined to the lower jaw, making it difficult for the snake to open its mouth for hunting. Without intervention, the reptile would have died of starvation," he said.

Since the python was unable to feed, doctors had to use assisted feeding methods. A CO2 laser, was employed to remove the affected tissues surgically.

The snake was then kept under observation and it made full recovery within a month.

Chhattisgarh Waqf chief urges Muslims to skip Garba

Shubhomoy Sikdar
RAIPUR

Chhattisgarh Waqf Board Chairman Salim Raj on Tuesday appealed to Muslim youth to stay away from Garba functions during the Navratri festival. While right-wing leaders have been making such appeals in recent years, this is a rare instance of the head of a Waqf Board doing so.

In a statement posted on the Board's official WhatsApp group, Salim Raj wrote that entering Garba venues with "malicious intent" hurt the sentiments of Hindus, potentially disrupting social harmony.

In the statement, Mr. Raj said if any Muslim individual wished to participate respecting the attire and tradition and obtaining permission from the Garba committees, there would be no objection.

Speaking to *The Hindu*, Mr. Raj said he had issued the statement in official capacity and that it was an appeal and not an order. "It's a question of faith after all, Garba is not simply a dance floor," he said.

Don't let boundary dispute define ties: Chinese envoy

At National Day Function, Ambassador Xu Feihong says trade between the two nations is up 10% and 2.65 lakh visas were issued to Indians this year; his first remarks since Modi's visit to China

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI


An Indian Army jawan looking at the India-China border through his telescope near Tawang in Arunachal Pradesh. FILE PHOTO

India-China ties reached a "new level of improvement" after the recent meeting between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and President Xi Jinping in Tianjin, Chinese Ambassador to India Xu Feihong said here on Tuesday. He said the two countries should not let the boundary dispute define ties between them.

Speaking at a function to celebrate China's National Day, Mr. Xu, who was joined by Arun Kumar Chatterjee, Secretary, Ministry of External Affairs (MEA), said this year marks 76 years of the Communist Party government and 75 years since the establishment of India-China diplomatic relations, which has seen a major improvement in high-level engagements and people-to-people ties.

Mr. Modi and Mr. Xi have met twice in the past year, and both sides have agreed to restore flights, visas, and other bilateral mechanisms after the four-year-freeze on bilateral relations due to the military stand-off at the Line of Actual Control (LAC).

'Ups and downs'

"Bridging differences through dialogue has always been the important key to advancing China-India relations," Mr. Xu said, adding that the two countries "should not allow the boundary question that was left over from the past to define the current China-India relations, nor let specific differences affect comprehensive bilateral cooperation". During the LAC stand-off, New Delhi had maintained that normal bilateral relations were not possible without normalcy at the boundary.

"Over the past 75 years, despite the ups and downs, the relationship is overwhelmingly defined by friendly cooperation," Mr. Xu told a gathering of diplomats and Indian invitees. He said the Chinese Embassy has issued 2.65 lakh visas to Indian citizens in 2025 and resumed the facilitation of pilgrims to Kailash-Mansarovar, following which 700 official pilgrims and 20,000 private pilgrims undertook the yatra this year. Mr. Xu said that between January and August, bilateral trade in goods grew 10.4% year-on-year to $102 billion.

These were Mr. Xu's first public comments since Mr. Modi's visit to China on August 30, seven years after his last visit amid a thaw in relations. Last month, the envoy had criticised the U.S. for "bullying" India by imposing 50% tariffs and expressed China's support to India to shore up the international trading order.

India and the U.S. have since resumed trade negotiations, though the U.S. tariffs have not been rolled back. Referring to the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) summit that Mr. Modi attended, Mr. Xu said Mr. Xi had proposed a "Global Governance Initiative", calling for "adherence to sovereign equality, abiding by international rule of law, practicing multilateralism, advocating the people-centred approach".

India to hold mega drone drill 'Cold Start' in Oct. to test air defence capabilities

Saurabh Trivedi
NEW DELHI


On alert: An Army jawan operating a drone in J&K. PTI

The Army, Navy, and Air Force will conduct a joint exercise in the first week of October to test drones and counter-drone systems.

Named "Cold Start", the exercise is likely to be held in Madhya Pradesh. Officials described it as the biggest such drill to be conducted since Operation Sindoor, aimed at assessing the effectiveness and shortcomings of the current air defence capabilities.

Confirming the development, a senior official said the exercise would focus on evaluating operational readiness against evolving aerial threats.

Industry partners, research and development agencies, academia, and other stakeholders too will participate in the exercise.

Speaking at a conference on "Counter UAVs & air defence systems - the future of modern warfare" organised by the PHD Chamber of Commerce and Industry (PHDCCI) in New Delhi, the Chief of Integrated Defence Staff, Air Marshal Ashutosh Dixit, who was the chief guest at the event, made a pointed reference to Pakistan.

Integrated system

"They too are working to become like India, so we must always stay a step ahead. Our counter-drone and GPS jamming systems performed effectively during Operation Sindoor, ensuring no damage from adversary drones. But the adversary has also learned our capabilities. Next time, we have to be ahead and much better," he said.

He said the vision for the future involves an integrated defence system, inspired by the Sudarshan Chakra concept, to counter drones, UAVs, hypersonic weapons, and other threats.

The Deputy Chief of the Integrated Defence Staff (Operations), Rakesh Sinha, who was guest of honour at the event, said: "The future of warfare will be shaped by the ongoing race between drones and defensive measures. Nations investing in counter-drone systems will gain a strategic edge. Counter-drone technologies must evolve continuously to address drone capabilities."

SC directs Himachal to be clear on its disaster management measures

Krishnadas Rajagopal
NEW DELHI


Course correction: The portion of a road getting washed away as Beas river flows in spate in Kullu, Himachal Pradesh recently. ANI

The Supreme Court on Tuesday asked the Himachal Pradesh government to come completely clean on its plans for disaster management, its climate change and tourism policies, constructions and industrialisation, details of mega hydroelectric projects, four-lane highways and even the number of trees felled and prosecutions pending district-wise over the years.

A Bench led by Justice Vikram Nath, in a *suo motu* case, quoted the Supreme Court's observation that "humans, not nature, are responsible for the phenomenon such as continuous landslides, collapsing of houses and buildings, subsidence of roads, etc," against the backdrop of landslides and flash floods which have wrecked the State during the monsoon season.

The court has recorded a series of questions prepared for the State government by its *amicus curiae*, senior advocate K. Parameshwar, including "whether zoning (if any) is done on the basis of seismic activity/landslides/green cover/eco-sensitivity".

Ecological sites

The court has sought if the State has any ecological sites which prohibit industrialisation/bringing up of mega projects.

The Bench has sought details of designated protected areas/reserved forests/wildlife sanctuaries/national parks and eco-sensitive sites in the State and whether the eco-sensitive zones have been notified across the protected areas.

'Change in green cover'

It has sought details of the total designated forest area in Himachal Pradesh and how much of the forest area has been diverted for non-forest use in the last two decades.

"What percentage of tree cover and forest cover have changed across the State over the last two decades? The district-wise details over the last 10 years are to be placed on record. Has the State conducted any tree survey and/or forest surveys and/or any other study to analyse the changes, if any, in the green cover in the State?" the order has queried.

"Details of disaster management plans prepared by the State and steps that have been taken for implementation thereof... details of funds allocated for disaster management in the State for the last 20 years and the details of utilisation thereof, to be placed on record. Details of projects, if any, with the stage thereof undertaken by the State Disaster Mitigation Fund. Details of State Highways and National Highways in the State of Himachal Pradesh with specific details on the number of highways which are four-lane. Details of upcoming/proposed highways (State/National) and their stages of completion," the order has asked.

The court has sought the details to be placed on record before the next hearing on October 28.

Centre to issue new norms to curb highway collapse in disaster-prone areas

Jagriti Chandra
NEW DELHI


Damage to National Highways was mostly observed in sections constructed along riverbanks, says Transport Ministry official. PTI

The Union government is "cognisant" of concerns after sections of highways were washed away following cloudbursts and floods in parts of Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand, and will frame new guidelines to focus on "slope stabilisation" to curb road collapse during natural disasters, a senior official of the Road Transport and Highways Ministry said.

"We will be issuing new guidelines mandating slope stabilisation prior to road construction, rather than as a post-construction measure, in hilly regions. Additionally, we will revise concessionaire agreements to incorporate these requirements for all future projects," V. Umashankar, Secretary, Road Transport and Highways Ministry, told *The Hindu*.

The official said that following the recent incidents of road collapses, including the 15 damaged sites along National Highway-21 (Kiratpur-Manali Highway), it was observed that the locations which underwent slope stabilisation measures withstood the impact of cloudbursts and floods. Slope stabilisation is an engineering process of strengthening an unstable slope to prevent landslides and erosion. It involves techniques that increase a slope's safety by controlling soil or rock movement, managing water drainage, and reinforcing the ground. Common methods include building retaining walls, soil nails, anchors, shotcrete, drainage systems, vegetation planting, and adjusting slope shape to improve stability.

The official said damage to National Highways was mostly observed in sections constructed along riverbanks, exacerbated by rising river levels. The damage was observed on the "valley side", or the side of the road that slopes down towards the river flowing through the valley below, he added.

Navy chief calls on Sri Lankan PM in Colombo

Saurabh Trivedi
NEW DELHI

Admiral Dinesh K. Tripathi, Chief of the Naval Staff, on Tuesday called on Sri Lankan Prime Minister Harini Amarasuriya in Colombo. Their discussion focused on advancing bilateral defence cooperation, particularly maritime security, and continued engagement in Indian-hosted initiatives, including the Admiral's Cup, international fleet reviews, and the biennial MILAN naval interaction.

Admiral Tripathi is on a four-day official visit to Sri Lanka to deepen bilateral naval ties.

On the second day of his trip, the Navy chief interacted with several senior Sri Lankan dignitaries, including the Deputy Defence Minister, Air Vice Marshal, Defence Secretary. The engagements underscored a shared resolve to enhance interoperability, strengthen naval collaboration, and explore avenues for joint training.

SC links sense of 'stagnation' in lower judiciary to long litigation

Krishnadas Rajagopal
NEW DELHI

A Constitution Bench of the Supreme Court headed by Chief Justice of India B.R. Gavai on Tuesday linked the sense of "stagnation" in subordinate judicial services to prolonged litigation and pendency in Indian courts.

The Bench said a weary feeling of inertness was creeping into the ranks of the district judiciary, especially among young minds who spend years in subordinate judicial services with little or no prospect of professional recognition or career advancement. The pendency in district courts is 4.69 crore cases according to the National Judicial Data Grid, of which 3.69 crore are criminal cases and 1.09 crore are civil cases. Justice M.M. Sundresh said a vibrant district judiciary represented a healthy institution and was part of the basic structure of the Constitution. He spoke of a bright law clerk whom he had persuaded to join the judicial service. "I met her recently and she was worried where her career would end up," the senior judge said.

"The idea is for the public to get qualitative services from judicial officers. But when the system does not facilitate these judicial officers, it is acting contrary to the Constitution," Justice Sundresh pointed out.

Justice Sundresh, referring indirectly to the increased flurry of cases coming all the way to the Supreme Court and long pendency or indecision even over bail petitions, said: "The base [district judiciary] must be very strong. If it is weak, litigation would multiply". At one point, Justice Sundresh said what judges do in a year on the Bench, lawyers do in five in the Bar.

Chief Justice Gavai agreed with his companion judge's remarks, adding that "the reason why we are not getting talented people as civil judges is the feeling that they would stagnate. Many of the brilliant people who join the judicial service do not make principal district judge even in 15 or 16 years". The Bench is hearing a reference on whether judicial officers with seven years' legal experience can avail Bar quota for District Judge appointment.

The hearing will continue on Wednesday.

Khalistani leader arrested in Canada for firearms offences

Press Trust of India
TORONTO

Two other individuals, Arman Singh and Jagdeep Singh, also appeared before the court

The Canadian police have arrested a Khalistani leader, Inderjeet Singh Gosal, in Ontario, over a dozen firearms-related offences.

Ontario Provincial Police officers arrested Mr. Gosal on September 19 for careless use of a handgun and other related offences, *Global News* reported on Monday.

Mr. Gosal, 36, appeared in court in Oshawa on Monday and was charged along with two other individuals Arman Singh, 23, of Toronto, and Jagdeep Singh, 41, a resident of New York, the report stated.

Mr. Gosal runs a referendum campaign on Khalistan, a post he took over after previous co-ordinator, Hardeep Singh Nijjar, was killed in Surrey, it added. Mr. Gosal did not respond to a call or text on Monday, the report said.

Member of SFJ

Inderjeet Singh Gosal is also a member of Sikhs for Justice (SFJ), *CBC* reported on Monday. SFJ aims to promote the idea of a separate Sikh state, and its leader, Gurpatwant Singh Pannun, has been declared a terrorist by the Indian Government.

Oxford Big Read competition invites entries from schools

The Hindu Bureau
CHENNAI

The Oxford Big Read competition organised by Oxford University Press is inviting entries from students of Classes 1-9 for the event that celebrates reading. The deadline for schools to send entries is October 30, 2025.

The global competition is tailored to different age groups: Level 1 (Classes 1-3), Level 2 (Classes 4-6) and Level 3 (Classes 7-9) with varying degrees of challenges such as designing a book jacket or writing a critical review or comparison of two books.

Participating schools receive complimentary access to the Oxford Reading Buddy platform, with 100 students per school granted a one-month digital subscription. The entries will be judged globally on originality, imagination, clarity, and expression. Additionally, national winners have the opportunity to compete against peers from over 15 countries.

The national-level winners will be announced on November 30, the global winners will be announced on December 30. So far, 1,600 schools have registered for this competition.

The school-level challenges have already begun. No fee is charged. To participate in Oxford Big Read, schools can register at india.oup.com/oxfordbigread. Participation is via schools, and no individual entries are permitted.

Participants will receive exciting prizes from Oxford University Press, along with additional gift hampers and vouchers from Faber-Castell and Amazon. Rewards will range from medals and certificates at the school-level to gift hampers, tablets, iPads, and a special internship opportunity for the Level 3 global winner with the Oxford University Press team.

Additionally, all school-level qualifiers will be entitled to a complimentary three-month digital subscription from Young World Club. For details, schools can write to Priyadarshini Bhattacharyya at priyadarshini.bhattacharya@oup.com

CPI expresses concern over GST reforms, Punjab floods

The Hindu Bureau
CHANDIGARH

The Communist Party of India (CPI) on Tuesday said it stood with Palestine, and pledged to intensify solidarity until its people achieved their legitimate rights, including the right to return, the right to sovereignty, and the right to live in peace and dignity in their homeland.

A resolution to this effect was passed during the party's 25th Congress here. The party urged the Government of India to vote consistently in support of Palestine at the United Nations and to extend humanitarian assistance to Palestinians.

CPI Rajya Sabha member P. Sandosh Kumar said the party also passed a resolution on Cuba, condemning the six-decade-long U.S. economic blockade.

He added that the CPI expressed concerns regarding the recently announced Goods and Services Tax (GST) 2.0 reforms, dismissing the government's claims as "hollow". It demanded that Puducherry be included in the 16th Finance Commission. It criticised both the Union and Punjab governments for negligence in maintaining irrigation and drainage systems, which aggravated the floods.

Incessant rain in Kolkata leaves Durga Puja pandals damaged

Several pandals were washed away and many others submerged with south Kolkata being the worst affected; artworks set up for puja destroyed, organisers face paucity of funds; Chief Minister cancels inauguration events, asks people to stay alert

Shrabana Chatterjee
KOLKATA

With only days left for Durga Puja festivities, unprecedented rain and waterlogging in Kolkata on Tuesday has left artists and puja organisers grappling with damaged pandals and ruined plans.

Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee cancelled her Durga Puja pandal inauguration programmes for the day, and asked people to remain alert.

The pandals in south Kolkata were the worst hit as it rained more heavily in these parts of the city. Several pandals were washed away, and many others were submerged after incessant rain.



In deep water: Labourers wading through water to deliver Durga idols to their designated pandals in Kolkata after unprecedented rain brought the city to a standstill on Tuesday. DEBASISH BHADURI

Blow to organisers

With grand preparations under way for Durga Puja, which is just three days away, organisers have taken a major hit with artworks destroyed and finances strained.

"Water gushed in from all sides. Now that the rain has stopped, we are trying our best to do some repairs as soon as possible. But we realised one thing – no one can fight nature," Saswata Basu, secretary of the Hatibagan Sarbojanin Durgotsav Committee told *The Hindu* on Tuesday. This year, the Hatibagan committee collaborated with French and Bengali artists to create the puja pandal that has been damaged heavily by the rain.

The sculptors of Kumartuli at Bagh Bazaar have also been gravely affected. "Rainwater flowed here like a flood. We looked at it helplessly throughout the night. Over 60 shops of artists have been affected. We are removing water with buckets. We have no other help," Bankim Paul, a veteran sculptor of Durga idols, said.

The old quarters of Kumartuli, in Sobhabajar, did not suffer major damage as it is on higher ground. However, with only two-three days left to deliver the idols, labourers are struggling to carry hundreds of kilograms of weight on their backs, and wade through knee-deep water across the city.

"Many have fallen ill. We also have to do all the decorations after we take the idols to the pandal. How will we do that in this rain?" Mr. Paul said.

Virtual inauguration

Ms. Banerjee has been inaugurating Durga Puja pandals since September 20, but she suspended her programme due to waterlogging. "I will inaugurate pujas in the district virtually. Everyone needs to be careful for the next few days," Ms. Banerjee said in a statement on Tuesday afternoon.

The BJP sharply criticised the Chief Minister on the social media platform X. "Durga Pujo celebrations are starting this week. Yet, due to Kolkata's extremely poor drainage system, Puja pandals are submerged under water. Years of anarchy under the CPI(M) and nearly 15 years of corruption in the Kolkata Municipal Corporation under TMC [the Trinamool Congress] have forced Bengalis to suffer even during their biggest festival, Durga Puja," the BJP said.

Heavy rain likely in Andaman and Nicobar, says IMD

PORT BLAIR

The IMD has issued a 'Cyclone alert' in Andaman and Nicobar due to a cyclonic circulation over the Bay of Bengal, which is likely to intensify from Wednesday, the officials said on Tuesday. Local port warnings have been issued in the wake of the weather system, which is likely to cause heavy rainfall till Thursday, the officials said. Fishermen have been advised not to venture into the sea along and off the Andaman Sea and Andaman and Nicobar coast till September 25. PTI

Azam Khan, SP leader, out of jail after 23 months

Mayank Kumar
LUCKNOW



Azam Khan

Samajwadi Party (SP) leader and former Uttar Pradesh Cabinet Minister Mohammad Azam Khan was released from the Sitapur jail on Tuesday after spending 23 months behind bars in connection with multiple criminal cases.

Hundreds of party workers and supporters waited outside the jail to welcome Mr. Khan, 77, whose release was delayed by at least two hours due to pending formalities in some of his old cases with the bond fine still unpaid in at least two cases.

Ahead of the SP leader's release, the Sitapur administration imposed prohibitory orders under Section 163 of the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS) in the areas around the jail to prevent any untoward incidents. Announcements made through loudspeakers warned people against assembling near the jail premises.

Mr. Khan was granted bail on September 18 by the Allahabad High Court in the last remaining case in which the leader was yet to get relief. Over the past seven years, dozens of first information reports have been filed against him, covering a wide range of criminal cases.

Welcoming Mr. Khan's release, Samajwadi Party (SP) president Akhilesh Yadav said that cases against the leader would be withdrawn when the party came to power. "The release of Azam Khan *saheb* is a matter of relief and joy for him, the family, and all of us who believe in justice. Today, even those filing false cases have learned that every lie has a statute of limitations, as does every conspiracy," Mr. Yadav said.

Amid buzz about Mr. Khan joining the Bahujan Samaj Party, Mr. Yadav described the former Minister as the main face of the SP in the fight against the BJP.

Asked about any future tie-up with the BSP, Mr. Khan told presspersons: "I will get treatment, I want to live, I was not in touch with anyone in jail."

Bihar Assembly polls: INDIA bloc to release manifesto for Extremely Backward Class

Sobhana K. Nair
Sandeep Phukan
NEW DELHI



Getting ready: Preparations under way in Patna on the eve of the Congress Working Committee (CWC) meeting on Wednesday. PTI

Kicking off the campaign for the Bihar Assembly election, the INDIA bloc is scheduled to release a manifesto for the Extremely Backward Class (EBC), a politically crucial segment. The manifesto will be released during the Congress Working Committee meeting in Patna on Wednesday.

Sources said the manifesto would include a promise to bring a law for the EBC similar to the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act. This idea has been in the works now for several months and was first mooted by the Communist Party of India (Marxist-Leninist) Liberation.

The INDIA bloc's campaign against the special intensive revision (SIR) of electoral rolls has delayed the release of the manifesto. All INDIA bloc leaders will be present during the release.

By the figures of the caste-based survey released by the Bihar government in October 2023, 36% of the State's total population belongs to the EBC, comprising 112 castes.

The Congress's Bihar incharge, Krishna Allavaru, told *The Hindu*, "We will have manifestos for each segment of society. This is the first in that series."

In 1951, the Bihar government took the first step to classify its population based on social and economic backwardness. It composed two lists of Backward Classes comprising Hindu and Muslim caste groups that were not Scheduled Castes or Adivasis but were economically and socially backward. The two lists came to be known as Annexure I and Annexure II, which could be seen categorised as the Extremely Backward Class (EBC) and the Other Backward Class, respectively.

As Chief Minister, socialist leader Karpoori Thakur was the first to extend 12% reservation for the EBCs. Current Chief Minister Nitish Kumar introduced several social welfare schemes for this segment.

The Congress, too, has been making an effort to reach out to this segment. In May, the Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha, Rahul Gandhi, visited Darbhanga to attend the *Shiksha aur Nyay Samvad* (Education and Justice Dialogue). There, he addressed the Backward Class, EBC, Dalits-Mahadalits, and the minority communities, advocating for reservation in private institutions. The RJD, which is part of the INDIA bloc, is planning to field several EBC candidates in the upcoming election.

The CWC is expected to send a strong message against the alleged "vote theft" and against the SIR.

Ahead of its meeting in Patna, the Congress announced the names of CWC members and senior leaders who would address press conferences on its vote theft allegations and *Har Ghar Adhikar* (rights for every household) campaign in as many as 20 districts of Bihar.

In a post on X, Mr. Gandhi linked unemployment to "vote theft". "The biggest problem for youth in India is unemployment – and it is directly linked to vote theft. When any government comes to power by winning the trust of the people, its first duty is to provide employment and opportunities to the youth. But the BJP does not win elections honestly – they stay in power by stealing votes and holding institutions captive," he said.

Modi to transfer ₹10,000 each to 75 lakh women in Bihar under job scheme

Amit Bhelari
PATNA



Narendra Modi

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will transfer ₹7,500 crore as the first instalment to 75 lakh women under the Mukhya Mantri Mahila Rozgar Yojana in Bihar on Friday to help them start businesses of their choice.

An official statement from the Bihar Chief Minister's Office on Tuesday said the Prime Minister would transfer ₹10,000 each to 75 lakh women through direct benefits transfer at a function here. He will participate in the event through video conference.

1.11 crore applications

The Rural Development Department, the nodal agency for the scheme, has so far received over 1.11 crore applications from women, while the Urban Development Department will oversee implementation in urban areas.

The scheme aims to create employment opportunities, particularly for rural women, thereby ensuring economic empowerment and strengthening Bihar's economy.

Rural Development Secretary Lokesh Kumar Singh has written to all District Magistrates to organise similar programmes at the district, block, cluster-level federation, and village organisation levels, ensuring participation of Jeevika Self-Help Groups.

Priority will be given to women from economically weaker sections or those without a permanent source of income. Applicants must be in the 18-60 age group, from nuclear families, and not income tax payees. All Jeevika SHG members are eligible. Unmarried adult women whose parents are no longer alive will also qualify.

The State Cabinet, chaired by Chief Minister Nitish Kumar, approved the scheme on August 29. Following a six-month performance review, an additional grant of ₹2 lakh will be given to eligible women entrepreneurs. The initial ₹10,000 assistance will not have to be returned.

AIMIM to launch yatra to campaign for Bihar election

Syed Mohammed
HYDERABAD



Asaduddin Owaisi

All India Majlis-e-Ittehadul Muslimeen (AIMIM) chief Asaduddin Owaisi on Tuesday reached Bihar to campaign for the Assembly election. His party is likely to field candidates in more than 20 constituencies.

The AIMIM campaign, scheduled to begin on Wednesday, will focus on the Seemanchal districts of Purnea, Katihar, Araria, and Kishanganj. Titled the *Seemanchal Nyay Yatra*, it will include roadshows and public meetings in constituencies where the party has contested earlier.

Mr. Owaisi has for several years sought to expand the AIMIM's presence in Bihar. His primary focus has been highlighting the backwardness of the Seemanchal region, which he has previously attributed to the Rashtriya Janata Dal and the Janata Dal(U) governments.

In the run-up to the polls, the party's Bihar leadership, led by Amour MLA Akhtarul Iman, had sought to join the INDIA bloc. The party, Mr. Iman said, had not asked for Ministerial positions but demanded a special package for Seemanchal, the space to contest six seats, and proportional representation for Dalits, Backward Classes, and minorities. The proposal did not receive a response.

'Visiting constituencies'

Mr. Owaisi said that the cadre had been preparing for several weeks. "The campaign has already begun under the leadership of Mr. Iman. The four-day programme in Seemanchal will entail visiting different Assembly constituencies," he told presspersons.

Tewari's comment on 'Gen Z revolts' triggers exchange of words with BJP

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The BJP terms it a hidden comment on the Gandhi family; the Congress leader hits back

A post on the social media platform X by Congress MP Manish Tewari on the Gen Z-driven revolt in India's neighbourhood led to an exchange of words between him and the ruling BJP over domestic politics.

On Tuesday, Mr. Tewari, in his post, said the recent change in governments in Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, and Nepal powered by protests by the younger generation showed that "entitlement is no longer acceptable to Gen X, Y, Z".

Mr. Tewari wrote, "The toppling of President Gotabaya Rajapaksa in Sri Lanka in July 2023, Sheikh Hasina in Bangladesh in July 2024, K.P. Sharma Oli in Nepal in September 2025 and now the protests against Ferdinand Marcos Jr in Philippines have one word written over them – entitlement is no longer acceptable to Gen X, Y, Z."

He also said, "Watch for my piece on 'The Social Media Trends that toppled or are challenging 'DYNASTS'. Study #nepokids or #TrillionPesoMarch in the meantime".

This was quickly taken up by the BJP as being a hidden comment on the Congress's leadership by the Gandhi family. BJP IT cell convener Amit Malviya termed Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi the "ultimate Nepo Kid" of Indian politics with Puri MP Sambit Patra stating that Indians had already removed the "nepokid" in 2014.

'Regressive politics'

"Senior Congress leader Manish Tewari, member of the G-23 rebel group, takes aim at Rahul Gandhi - the ultimate 'Nepo Kid' of Indian politics. Forget Gen Z, even Congress's own veterans are fed up with his regressive politics. The revolt is now from within," Mr. Malviya said.

"People of India are spiritual and awakened also. They did it in 2014 itself. People of India do not take to the streets to do such things," Mr. Patra said.

Mr. Tewari hit back saying his remarks should not be viewed as Congress versus BJP, but has serious national security implications for the country.

"Everything does not have to be dumbed down to a Cong. - BJP he said she said or targeting X or Y. What is happening in South Asia and East Asia has serious National Security implications and why it is happening needs to be understood in the correct perspective," the Congress leader said.

CPI(M) team on week-long visit to China from Tuesday

Press Trust of India
NEW DELHI

A six-member delegation of the CPI(M), led by party general secretary M.A. Baby, is on a week-long visit to China at the invitation of the International Department of the Communist Party of China (CPC), the CPI(M) said on Tuesday.

It said the delegation will be in China from September 23 to 30.

"The visit of the CPI(M) delegation is part of the party-to-party exchanges between the CPI(M) and the CPC. The delegation will hold discussions with the leadership of the CPC during its visit," it said.

INBRIEF



Bombay HC questions need of PIL plea against MNS chief

The Bombay High Court on Monday questioned the maintainability of a public interest litigation (PIL) plea seeking registration of a First Information Report against Maharashtra Navnirman Sena (MNS) president Raj Thackeray and his party workers, as well as the derecognition of the party, for allegedly targeting Hindi-speaking citizens and promoting Marathi imposition. However, a Division Bench led by Chief Justice Shree Chandrashekhar while hearing the petition filed by advocate Ghanshyam Upadhyaya questioned the need for a PIL in the matter, observing that affected individuals could directly approach the court.

India and Pakistan extend airspace closure till Oct. 24

India and Pakistan have extended the closure of their airspace for each other's civilian and military aircraft till October 24. Both countries have been keeping their respective airspace shut for each other's planes since April after the Pahalgam terror attack that killed 26. They have issued separate Notice to Airmen for extending the closure. Indian airspace will not be open for Pakistan-registered aircraft and aircraft operated/owned or leased by Pakistan airlines/operators, including military flights, according to the NOTAM. The airspace will be closed till 5.30 a.m. IST on October 24.

President lauds women-centric films

At National Film Awards ceremony, Murmu notes recognition of films focusing on women; she calls for adequate representation of women on the jury panels, says films should spread social awareness; receiving Dadasaheb Phalke Award, actor Mohanlal says cinema is the 'heartbeat of his soul'

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

President Droupadi Murmu on Tuesday presented the prestigious Dadasaheb Phalke Award for 2023 to actor Mohanlal and gave away awards to the other winners at the 71st National Film Awards ceremony.

"Cinema is the heartbeat of my soul. Jai Hind," Mohanlal said after receiving the country's highest cinema honour.

Congratulating all the winners, Ms. Murmu spoke about Mohanlal's phenomenal contributions, stating that the accomplished actor effortlessly portrayed emotions ranging from the most gentle to the most intense.

She noted that good films focusing on women were being made and recognised. "We all see that women, at some level, struggle with patriarchy and prejudiced attitudes. Today, the award-winning films include stories of mothers shaping the moral character of their children, women uniting to challenge social norms..., the stories of courageous women who raise their voices against patriarchal structures," she said, praising such filmmakers.



Top performances: The President gives the Dada Saheb Phalke Award to Mohanlal, the best male actor award to Shah Rukh Khan for *Jawan* and Vikrant Massey for *12th Fail*; and best female actor award to Rani Mukerjee for *Mrs. Chatterjee vs Norway*. SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA

The President said there should be adequate representation of women on the central and regional panels of the jury.

Underscoring the importance of cinema in spreading awareness of, and sensitivity to, social issues, particularly among the youth, Ms. Murmu said cinema should not only be popular but also serve a larger public interest. The President commended everyone involved in the award ceremony for encouraging films that focus on children, especially girls. Six child actors won awards this year.

Notable awards

The best male actor award went to Shah Rukh Khan for *Jawan* and Vikrant Massey for *12th Fail*, which was also declared the best feature film. Rani Mukerji got the best female actor award for her role in *Mrs. Chatterjee vs Norway*. The best direction award was bagged by Sudipto Sen for *The Kerala Story* (Hindi), which also won in the best cinematography (Prasantanu Mohapatra) category. P.V.N.S. Rohit and Shilpa Rao were adjudged the best male and female singers for the song *Premisthunna* in *Baby* (Telugu), which also won for the best screenplay (Sai Rajesh Neelam) along with *Parking* (Tamil) and *Chaleya* in *Jawan* (Hindi). The best debut film award went to Ashish Bende for *Aatmapamphlet* (Marathi), and the best popular film providing wholesome entertainment to Karan Johar-directorial *Rocky Aur Rani Kii Prem Kahaani*. Meghna Gulzar's *Sam Bahadur* was the best feature film promoting national, social, and environmental values.

Sudhakar Reddy Yakkanti-directed *Naal 2* (Marathi) was adjudged the best children's film and *Hanu-Man* (Telugu) the best film in the animation, visual effects, gaming and comic category.

The best male actor in a supporting role award was shared by Vijayaraghavan for *Pookkaalam* (Malayalam) and Muthupettai Somu Bhaskar for *Parking* (Tamil). Urvashi won the award for the best female actor in a supporting role for *Ullozhukku* (Malayalam) along with Janki Bodiwala for *Vash* (Gujarati).

The best child artiste award went to Sukriti Veni Bandreddi for *Gandhi Tatha Chettu* (Telugu), Kabir Khandare for *Gypsy* (Marathi), and Treesha Thosar, Shrinivas Pokale and Bhargav Jagtap for *Naal 2*.

The awards for music direction went to G.V. Prakash Kumar in *Vaathi* (Tamil) and Harshavardhan Rameshwar in *Animal* (Hindi); and for lyrics to Karsarla Shyam for the song *Ooru Palleturu* in *Balagam* (Telugu).

Deepak Kingrani won the award for the best dialogue writer for the Hindi film *Sirf Ek Bandaa Kaafi Hai*. *Rongatapu 1982* (Assamese), *Deep Fridge* (Bengali), *Parking* (Tamil), *Kandeelu* (Kannada), *Shamchi Aai* (Marathi), *Puskara* (Odia), *Godday Godday Chaa* (Punjabi), and *Bhagavanth Kesari* (Telugu) won in the language film categories.

Rajnath Singh launches India's first overseas defence facility in Morocco

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh and his Moroccan counterpart, Abdelatif Loudyi, inaugurated Tata Advanced Systems Limited's (TASL) defence manufacturing facility in Berrechid, Morocco, on Tuesday. This is the first such overseas plant by an Indian firm.

The 20,000 square metre facility will produce the indigenously developed Wheeled Armoured Platform (WhAP) 8x8, jointly designed by TASL and India's Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO).

According to the Ministry of Defence, it was a "historic moment" in India-Morocco ties.

Mr. Singh said the plant marked a new chapter in the strategic partnership and symbolised the strength of India's growing defence industry. Initial deliveries of WhAP vehicles to the Royal Moroccan Army will begin next month, with production starting three months ahead of schedule. It is Morocco's largest defence manufacturing facility and the first such overseas plant by an Indian private company in Africa.



Union Minister for Defence Rajnath Singh attends the inauguration of Tata Advanced Systems Limited's (TASL) state-of-the art defence manufacturing facility at Berrechid, in Morocco on Tuesday. PIB

The WhAP is a modular combat platform with advanced protection, mobility, and adaptability. Configurations include infantry fighting vehicle, armoured personnel carrier, reconnaissance, command post, mortar carrier, and ambulance variants, with options for remote weapon stations and anti-tank guided missile systems, said the MoD.

Mr. Singh highlighted that India's vision of Aatmanirbhar Bharat extends beyond self-reliance to "Make with Friends" and "Make for the World." He noted that the project will generate defence-related jobs in Morocco, with one-third of components sourced locally at the outset, rising to 50% in the coming years.

He stressed Morocco's strategic location as a gateway to Africa and Europe, making the facility an export hub that will deepen bilateral defence ties, strengthen local capacity, and contribute to regional security.

The ceremony was attended by Morocco's Minister of Industry & Trade, Ryad Mezzour, senior officials from both governments, the Royal Armed Forces, and TASL representatives.

Education Ministry to hold a virtual Buildathon contest for students from Classes 6 to 12

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Students in Classes 6 to 12 in six lakh schools across the country are being invited to participate in a virtual Buildathon contest by the Union Education Ministry in October.

Students who come up with ideas and products with a focus on self-reliance, indigenous knowledge, and sustainability that can help India reach its goal of becoming a developed nation by 2047 will be awarded from a ₹1-crore prize money pool.

They will have to come up with ideas and products that can help India become a developed nation by 2047

The Viksit Bharat Buildathon, 2025, launched by Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan on Tuesday, will kick off with a two-hour "live innovation event" on October 13. The goal of the initiative is to bring together children from all six lakh government and private schools in the country to develop ideas, School Education Secretary Sanjay Kumar said. "There are about 12 crore students in these classes in these schools, and the aim is to get them innovating on ideas for the future," he said.

Students will then take the rest of October to submit their ideas and prototypes on the Buildathon portal from which winners will be selected at the district, State, and national levels.

The government will get involved in hand-holding as well, Mr. Pradhan said.

The government's immediate aim is to ensure that flyers for the Buildathon, with a registration QR code, are circulated in all schools, with Mr. Pradhan expressing his faith in maximum participation. Registration will be open till October 6, after which teachers will have a week to prepare students for the live event.

On October 13, the students will be grouped into teams of three or four each to brainstorm ideas during the two-hour event.

A panel of experts will go through the entries in November and December to select 1,000 district-level winners, 100 state-level winners, and 10 national-level winners, who will be announced by January 2026.

Ayurveda can curb lifestyle diseases in India: Jadhav

The Hindu Bureau
GOA

Preventive therapy that traditional medicine offers is a unique opportunity which can be used to control lifestyle diseases afflicting India, Union Minister of State for Ayush Prataprao Jadhav said at the 10th National Ayurveda Day celebrations at the All-India Institute of Ayurveda (AIIA), Goa, on Tuesday.

Governor of Goa Ashok Gajapathi Raju, Chief Minister Pramod Sawant, and Union Minister of State for Power and New & Renewable Energy Shripad Yesso Naik were among those who participated in the event.

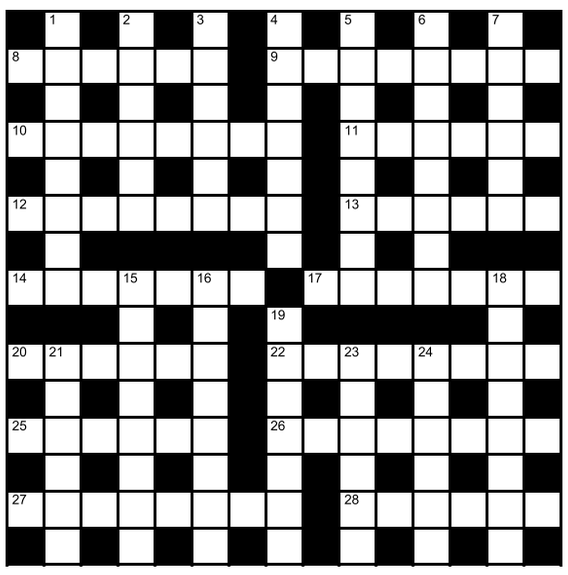
Mr. Jadhav said the celebrations marked a milestone in the Ministry's efforts to promote Ayurveda as a system of health and well-being.

TH CROSSWORD + 14597

(set by Afterdark)

To solve this puzzle online, get across to our crossword site. @ *https://qrgo.page.link/jjpTn*

SCAN TO PLAY



Across

8 Express right in time (6)
9 Men have vegetables in gardens (8)
10 Organized a party, essentially on open land at Germany (8)
11 Give away battery, one Tesla removed for repair (6)
12 Supply to food shop pure (8)
13 Holiday secrets all over the place, not thrilled primarily (6)
14 Fantastic, inspirational parson leaves in the beginning (7)
17 Looks of snake, etc is creepy? Yes, I would say so (7)
20 Snake crosses shelter to rest (6)
22 Mob never dispersed that month (8)
25 Indian organisation bypasses union to recall AI in the country (6)
26 Decides program is not organised (8)
27 Others' performance in school time was briefest (8)
28 Undergraduate's story on first recital was more revolting (6)

Down

1 Number like ether in theatre's primarily vapourises (8)
2 Ha, artificial intelligence used in West Indies island (6)
3 Unit's association (6)
4 Obey God in commotion for farewell (7)
5 Eccentric big seer primarily chastises cold people (8)
6 Piece of first Persian artefact (8)
7 Models have theory? Ladies are heartless (6)
15 At last, reassure release of one son (8)
16 Looked to change sides? Fascinated (8)
18 Surgeons' home base (8)
19 Children are fast in nabbing first, mischievous (7)
21 Requested for sawn-off shotgun for a change (6)
23 To begin with, Victor and Peter open up room to let out smoke (6)
24 For the most part, a person keeps one lady in the sides (6)

SUDOKU

			8	5	6		9	
			9			2	5	
		6		2	3			
4	2		6					
9	3						7	4
					9		2	1
			4	3		8		
	1	7			8			
	8		5	9	7			

No.SS6651 Distribution: www.knightfeatures.com

DIFFICULTY RATING: ★☆☆☆☆

Solution to previous puzzle

S	E	L	L	E	R		C	L
E		A		L			O	
L	E	N	D	E	R		C	A
F		D		C		M		M
S	P	L	I	T	P	E	A	
A		O		R		D		R
M	I	R	R	O	R	I	M	A
E		D		M		A		M
			C	A	R	T	E	B
L		H		G		E		L
A	R	O	U	N	D		H	E
D		T		E		B		R
I	N	A	C	T	I	O	N	
E		I		I		D		
S	T	R	I	C	K	E	N	

O	S	E	S	E	T			
	T		P		U			
E	R		C	A	V	A	L	I
R		M		M		T		R
		E	A		D	E	R	I
	D		R		D		T	
A	G	E	S					
	P		S		R			
		T	E	B	L	A	N	C
	R		R		S			
		H	E	A	T	W	A	V
	R		M		G		T	
		R	E	V	E	R	T	
	N		N		L			
S	T	O	D	G	E			

Solution to yesterday's Sudoku

2	4	3	9	6	7	8	5	1
6	5	9	8	1	4	7	3	2
8	7	1	3	5	2	6	4	9
3	8	6	7	9	1	4	2	5
9	2	7	5	4	3	1	6	8
5	1	4	6	2	8	3	9	7
7	6	2	1	3	5	9	8	4
4	9	8	2	7	6	5	1	3
1	3	5	4	8	9	2	7	6

FAITH

Dharma must be protected

King Pareekshit comes upon a one-legged bull and a sad cow during his *digvijaya*. The bull is dharma devata incarnate and the cow is Mother Earth. In Kalidasa's Raghuvamsa too, the earth is portrayed as a cow, said Valayapet Ramachariar in a discourse. The four oceans are its teats. King Dileepa is shown by Kalidasa as having taken care of the divine cow Nandini. He seeks out the best pastures for her to graze. He swats flies on her back, scratches her back when she feels itchy, and allows her to wander at will. There is a circle of dependency between everything in this world. When we protect cows, they give us milk. Milk and its byproducts are needed for performing yagas. When we perform yagas, Indra is pleased, and gives us copious rains. When there is an abundance of rain, crops thrive. Pastures are nourished by the rains, and cows feed to their heart's content, and give us plenty of milk, and thus the cycle goes on. So, protecting cows leads to the welfare of a kingdom. Dileepa, an ancestor of Rama, knew this.

But here before Pareekshit's eyes is a cow that looks unhappy. So, he asks the cow the reason for its sadness. The cow is sorry because those with dharma are few in number. A man in the guise of a king had been beating both the bull and the cow, and now Pareekshit turns his attention to him and is ready to kill him. The man reveals that he is Kalipurusha. Kalipurusha falls at Pareekshit's feet and asks him to spare his life. Pareekshit says he should leave his kingdom at once. Adharma is Kalipurusha's close companion. If Kalipurusha continues to live in Pareekshit's land, then adharma will have its way. That is something Pareekshit is determined to avoid.

IPR Gandhinagar proposes roadmap for India's fusion power plans

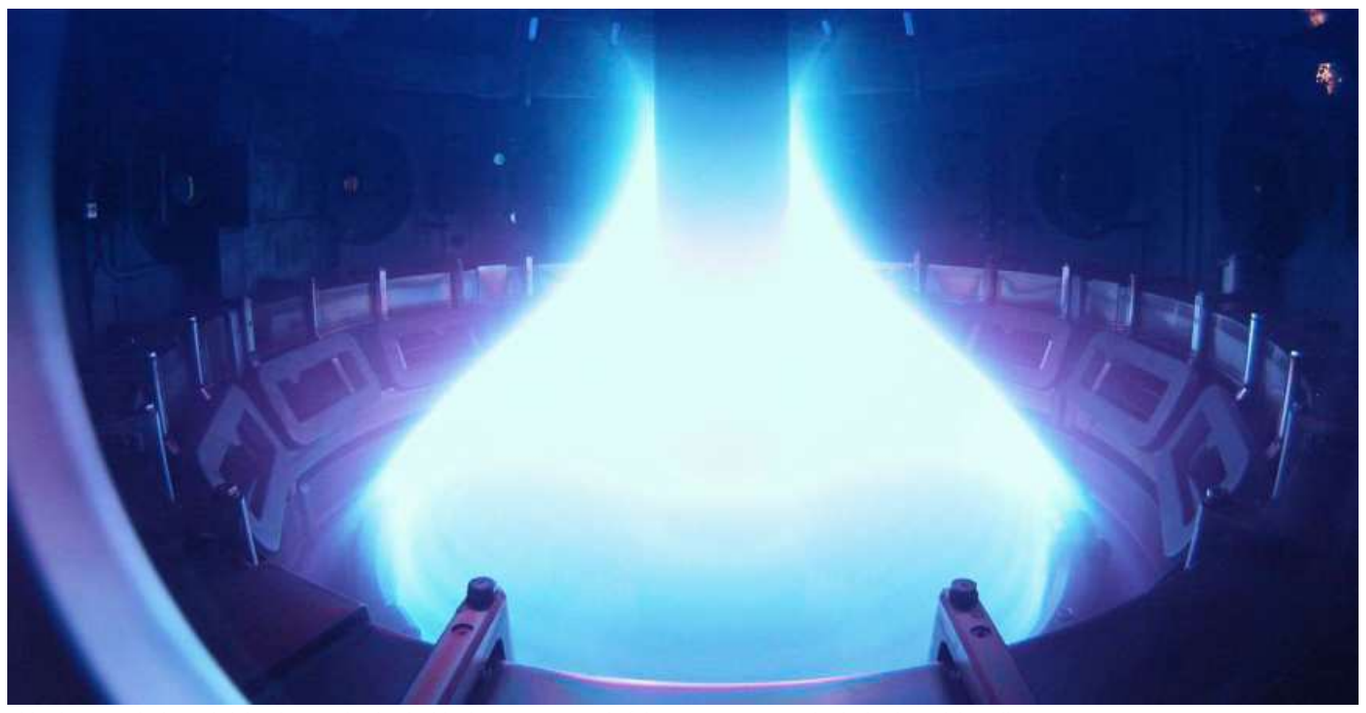
Controlled fusion can only happen in extreme conditions, the kind that exists inside stars; there are currently two popular ways to achieve this: inertial confinement and magnetic confinement. India is already invested in the magnetic confinement technique as a member of the ITER project, which is building a reactor in France

Unnati Ashar

Researchers at the Institute for Plasma Research (IPR) in Gandhinagar have laid out a roadmap for India to achieve fusion power.

They envisage developing India's first fusion electricity generator, called the Steady-state Superconducting Tokamak-Bharat (SST-Bharat), with a power output 5x the input. According to the team, it will be a fusion-fission hybrid reactor with 100 MW of the total 130 MW provided by fission. The estimated construction cost is ₹25,000 crore.

The team ultimately aims to commission a full-scale demonstration reactor by 2060 with an ambitious output-to-input power ratio of 20 and to generate 250 MW.



This photograph shows bright plasma glowing inside the reactor vessel of the Mega Ampere Spherical Tokamak in Culham, UK. EYE STEEL FILM (CC BY)

Fission to fusion

"Fusion is the process where two small, light atoms come together to form a bigger, heavier atom. When this happens, a huge amount of energy is released," Daniel Raju, Dean of academics and student affairs at IPR and lead author of the new study, said.

Nuclear fusion is the reason stars exist and produce heat and light.

For decades, fission reactors have provided the backbone for nuclear power. Fusion, however, is more attractive than fission because it produces less radioactive waste, eliminating many (but not all) of the costs and headaches of storing hazardous material.

Controlled fusion can only happen in extreme physical conditions, the kinds that exist in the belly of a star. There are currently two popular ways to achieve this: inertial confinement and magnetic confinement. Inertial confinement uses powerful lasers to blast a capsule with X-rays to initiate fusion. Magnetic confinement works by recreating some of the conditions inside stars.

India is already invested in magnetic confinement as a member of the International Thermonuclear Experimental Reactor (ITER) project, which is building a large reactor in France. In this method, scientists heat plasma to 100 million degrees C, then gently guide the nuclei with magnetic fields until they fuse. To compare, temperatures in the sun's core reach 15 million degrees C.

Maintaining the plasma

The ratio of the output power to the input, called the Q value, determines efficiency.

"We need Q to be much greater than 1, meaning the reactor gives us more energy than we use to run it. Right now, the best result has come from the Joint European Torus in the U.K., which got about 0.67, that is, 67% of the energy back," Raju said.

ITER aims to achieve a Q of 10. Future fusion power plants are expected to achieve a value of 20 to be commercially feasible.The doughnut-shaped reactor vessel in which fusion happens is called a tokamak. Its success is measured by how long it can hold the plasma together without dissipating.

"The longer we can hold it, the closer we get to continuous and reliable fusion reactions," Raju said.

In February 2025, the WEST tokamak in France maintained plasma for a record 22 minutes. The current state-of-the-art facility in India is the SST-1 tokamak at IPR. According to Raju, "It has managed to produce plasma for about 650 milliseconds, and it is designed to go up to 16 minutes."

SST-1 is a research machine and not meant to generate electricity. SST-Bharat is presented as the next step beyond this experimental base.

Digital twinning

To strengthen the new roadmap, the researchers have proposed digital twins – virtual replicas of physical systems that mimic real-time conditions inside a tokamak. This would allow scientists to test new designs and troubleshoot before building them physically. They also suggest machine learning-assisted plasma confinement and programmes to develop radiation-resistant materials. These innovations are still at an early stage, but the roadmap argues they are critical to making progress.

In February 2025, the WEST tokamak in France maintained plasma for a record 22 minutes

Globally, however, timelines remain uncertain. The U.K.'s STEP programme aims for a prototype fusion plant by 2040. Several U.S. private firms claim they will demonstrate grid-connected fusion as early as the 2030s. China's EAST tokamak has already set records for plasma duration. India's target of 2060 places it on a longer path – one that may be less competitive but more cautious.

Funding and policy are crucial. While the EU and U.S. are investing billions of dollars in fusion R&D and private start-ups, India's budgets remain modest and almost entirely public-sector driven. The absence of Indian private-sector engagement stands out when compared with the global boom in fusion start-ups. Within India's wider energy policy, fusion also competes with pressing commitments: net zero by 2070, major expansions in solar and wind, and a long-standing nuclear fission programme.

Rough terrain

M.V. Ramana, Simons Chair in Disarmament, Global and Human Security at the University of British Columbia, also struck a note of caution on the prospects for fusion.

"Timelines in nuclear fusion are realistic and often not achievable," Mr. Ramana emphasised.

He also pointed out that the economic viability of fusion power is unproven: "The unstated assumption is that electrical power from this process will be affordable at some future date. There is no reason to expect that to be the case."

Raju himself acknowledged the cost challenge: "The economic viability of fusion energy will certainly face a huge challenge while competing with fission and other energy sources due to costs in R&D, construction, and operations."

Even if commercial viability remains elusive, the researchers argued that fusion R&D will produce dividends in other areas, including radiation-hardened materials, superconducting magnets, plasma modelling, and high-temperature engineering. These capabilities have strategic value, potentially upgrading Indian industry and strengthening technological autonomy. Partnerships with ITER and global firms may also spark innovation and bring project management expertise into Indian labs.

"Since its [commercial viability hasn't been demonstrated so far], we are aware that it would be difficult to push it as a potential source of energy in the near future," Raju said. "Since a lot of private [entities], start-ups, and government bodies across the world are jumping into fusion energy, it makes sense for us to go with optimism and align our domestic fusion programmes with the world."

(Unnati Ashar is a freelance science journalist. unnati_a@ymail.com)

THE GIST

Fusion happens when two atoms fuse to form a bigger atom. A huge amount of energy is released as a result. Fusion reactors are more attractive than fission because they produce less radioactive waste, eliminating many costs associated with storing hazardous material

India participates in magnetic confinement research through the International Thermonuclear Experimental Reactor project in France. In this approach, scientists heat plasma to 100 million degrees Celsius and guide atomic nuclei to achieve fusion

Even if commercial viability remains elusive, researchers contend that fusion R&D will produce dividends in other areas, including radiation-hardened materials, superconducting magnets, plasma modelling, and high-temperature engineering

BIG SHOT



Employees collect goji berries amidst a complex of solar panels at Ningxia Baofeng's agri-solar installation outside Yinchuan, in China. The installation is part of a network across northern and western China that uses the bulk and shade of solar panels to stop and reverse the spread of deserts. REUTERS

QUESTION CORNER

Coughing either way

Vasudevan Mukunth

Q: How can an allergic reaction in the throat feel like a throat infection?

A: An allergic reaction in the throat can feel remarkably similar to a throat infection because both conditions involve inflammation of the same tissues, and inflammation tends to produce a narrow range of sensations.

When allergens such as pollen, dust or certain foods enter the body, the immune system responds by releasing histamine and other chemical mediators. These substances increase blood flow and cause swelling in the mucous membranes of the throat. The result is a sense of tightness, an itch-like feeling, and/or soreness and is often accompanied by an urge to clear the throat. Postnasal drip, which frequently accompanies allergic responses, can add to the irritation.

On the other hand, infections arise when viruses or bacteria directly invade throat tissues. The immune system mobilises white blood cells to fight the pathogens, producing redness, swelling, and pain. In this case, the discomfort may be worse, particularly when swallowing, and is often accompanied by other signs of systemic illness such as fever, body ache, and fatigue. Bacterial infections like strep throat can also produce visible white patches or pus on the tonsils; these features are absent in allergies.

The key to distinguishing between the causes lies in specific symptoms. TOWFIQU BARBHUIYA

Despite these differences, the overlap in symptoms can be confusing. Both conditions activate nerve endings in the throat, which transmit similar signals of pain and irritation to the brain. The key to distinguishing between them lies in specific symptoms: itching and sneezing without fever point to allergy whereas fever and systemic malaise suggest infection.

For feedback and suggestions
for 'Science', please write to
science@thehindu.co.in
with the subject 'Daily page'

Penalty in proportion

Criminal defamation is incompatible with democratic debate

When the Supreme Court of India upheld the validity of criminal defamation in *Subramanian Swamy* (2016), reasoning that reputation is part of the right to life, it may not have anticipated the difficulties of this position. On September 22, during criminal defamation proceedings against the Foundation for Independent Journalism, Justice M.M. Sundresh of the Court voiced his unease at the growing use of criminal defamation proceedings by private individuals and political actors as an insurance against criticism and as a means of retribution. His observation echoes a broader judicial anxiety expressed in recent proceedings against Rahul Gandhi, Shashi Tharoor and other public figures: that the law is being misused. Criminal defamation proposes imprisonment for speech that injures reputation, a remedy disproportionate to the harm caused. Unlike physical harm, reputational injury can be addressed adequately by monetary damages or injunctions. While protecting dignity may justify strong safeguards, protecting reputation seldom warrants criminal punishment. Since 2016, criminal defamation has become a tool of intimidation. Editors of *The Hindu* faced such cases under the Jayalalithaa government, and Mr. Gandhi over remarks about political leaders, with trial courts issuing summons that required the Court's intervention. The tendency of the lower judiciary to issue summons without weighing the threshold of defamatory speech has aggravated the problem.

The law has also become an instrument of propaganda: criminal complainants have weaponised statements taken out of context or distorted in circulation, which the law has compounded by attaching the threat of jail time to contested interpretations. In this way, criminal defamation has fostered opportunistic litigation. For example, Subramanian Swamy versus Sonia Gandhi and Mr. Gandhi (2012-14) entangled rivals in a punishing process rather than seeking timely resolution, while suits filed by Nitin Gadkari and Arun Jaitley against Arvind Kejriwal and AAP leaders kept the Delhi government from performing its duties. For journalists in towns, criminal defamation complaints from local politicians or business interests create the risk of arrest and onerous travel to distant courts, fostering self-censorship. Instead, those genuinely aggrieved can approach civil courts for damages, injunctions or retractions, which address the harm of reputational injury and strike a balance between free expression and protecting reputation. Importantly, civil proceedings also reduce the scope for misuse by the powerful to silence criticism. Many countries, including the U.K., have abolished criminal defamation because such laws are incompatible with democratic debate. It is time for India to follow suit.

Right to state

Recognition of Palestine is more than just symbolic

When the state of Israel was declared in Palestine on May 14, 1948, the U.S. recognised it in just 11 minutes. In the years since, most UN members extended recognition to the Jewish nation, which became a UN member in 1949. When the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) declared a state of Palestine in 1988, much of the Global South recognised it, but powerful western nations stayed away with the position that recognition would come only as part of a negotiated two-state settlement. But this week, at the UN General Assembly, the U.K., France, Canada and Australia finally recognised Palestine, which shows their fraying ties with Israel and diminishing faith in a coercion-free diplomatic process leading to a final settlement. For Palestinians, the western recognition could be seen as a diplomatic respite but comes too late – Gaza has been devastated by Israeli forces; Jewish settlements and Israeli checkpoints have mushroomed in the West Bank; and settler violence has displaced thousands of Palestinians over the past two years. Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu openly declares that there will never be a Palestinian state, and Washington offers Israel unconditional support.

Recognition may not have an immediate impact on the ground. Israel's ruling coalition is incapable of even ending the slaughter in Gaza, let alone discuss a two-state solution. Yet, this wave of recognition is not just a symbolic act. It shows cracks in the post-1948 pro-Israel consensus in the West. The U.K. played a decisive role in the establishment of the state of Israel. France armed it in its early years and helped it build nuclear weapons. These powers bear historical responsibility to find a solution to the problem they were a party to from the beginning. And Palestinians have an internationally recognised right to have their own independent, sovereign state. If Israel does not stop the war in Gaza, which should be the first step, and continues with the settlements in the West Bank, Europe should impose an arms embargo on Tel Aviv. Israel should be warned against annexing the West Bank, which should be treated as a red line. Mr. Netanyahu and his extremist Ministers, though internationally isolated, will not be persuaded. But they will not rule forever. A future Israeli leader could abandon Mr. Netanyahu's militarism. This forever war and genocidal tag are not helping Israel's interests either, even though it allows Mr. Netanyahu to cling on to power. The recognition of today should serve as a stepping stone for a Palestinian state tomorrow. That is the best chance for peace for Palestinians, Israelis and West Asia.

The interpretation of the law in Trumpland



Arjun Appadurai

is Emeritus Professor of Media, Culture and Communication at New York University, and lives in Berlin

There are more than 1.3 million lawyers in the United States, of whom more than 2,50,000 are criminal defence lawyers. Prosecuting attorneys at the State level are about 35,000 in number and about 90 are federal prosecutors. There are more than 4,00,000 law firms in the country, that range from solo practices to large legal firms. The top 30 corporate law firms employ anywhere between 1,000 and 4,000 lawyers each.

What weaves these facts together are some patterns. First, that the top lawyers have large salaries and assets. Second, among this top rank of wealthy attorneys, there is a disproportionate number of revolving door veterans, who have monetised skills and networks gained in one sector (typically, the government) to make enormous sums in another sector (typically, corporate law). Third, many of the most successful beneficiaries of the revolving door are attorneys who are willing to take up controversial criminal defence cases, and to become highly visible in political controversies and causes. These patterns have helped U.S. President Donald Trump to avoid legal culpability repeatedly and at the same time to activate, deflect or weaponise the law at all levels.

All these lawyers are personally wealthy, have moved through numerous revolving doors during their careers, and have monetised their ties to one another and to other influence-brokers, lobbyists and to elected politicians, not least to Mr. Trump. Any sociogram of their public roles in the last decade would make Mr. Trump the nodal figure of their power, and thus the object of their unreserved loyalty.

The unfinished tactical skirmishes between the White House, the Congress, the Department of Justice and the attorneys working on behalf of Ghislaine Maxwell, and the growing chorus of Jeffrey Epstein and Maxwell's victims and their advocates, are lapping dangerously close to the toes of Donald and Melania Trump, and the whole Trump family.

Integral to the Trump strategy

Mr. Trump's currently active legal praetorian guard continues a long history in which lawyers have been a vital part of his wealth accumulation and risk mitigation strategies, hired to shield, protect and burnish the vital links between his brand-polishing, his near-fraudulent business tactics, his aversion to taxes, and his obsession with money. The law and lawyers are the medium in which Mr. Trump has been swimming for three decades.

In his career since the 1990s, Mr. Trump, either personally or through one of his companies, has engaged in over 4,000 suits, ranging from defamation to breach of contract, from tax fraud to unmet contractual obligations, from sexual exploitation to inciting mass violence.

> The formula is to avoid legal culpability and, at the same time, to activate, deflect or weaponise the law at all levels

The thread that links these hundreds of suits is that they amount to a business strategy for Mr. Trump, which is founded on a mix of bullying, gambling, evading negative court rulings and enforcing settlements. Indeed, Mr. Trump believes in the law as the main means for making adversarial deals out of court. Courts for Mr. Trump are not tools for obtaining equity, justice or compensation. They are a path to Deals. I have argued elsewhere that Mr. Trump's obsession with deal-making is not about contracts, markets or even about business. It is about winning, either monetarily, reputationally or politically. His completely chaotic approach to tariffs is a clear index of the complete absence of any rational economic calculus in his tariff roller coaster. In the end, tariffs on Brazil and massive extortion from Columbia, Harvard and many other universities belong to the same family of deal-making, which is proudly promoted in the title of Mr. Trump's 1987 book.

Mr. Trump's reckless misuse of the Constitution and his open cynicism about the law as the glue of contractual stability and social reciprocity are grounded in his view of his lawyers as his weapons. We do not know how many of Mr. Trump's 4,000-plus deals he won or lost. But there is ample evidence that many of them were settled "out of court", with optimal money gains for Mr. Trump and minimum concessions of guilt on his side.

These hired legal revolvers are the tools of Mr. Trump's assault on most democratic institutions and their liberal foundations, in which the sabotage and subversion of the law have been a consistent feature. American universities have been ravaged by new readings of the laws that govern civil rights, affirmative action and racial discrimination. The Congress has been effectively neutered as an organ for overseeing the powers of the executive. The idea of precedent has been cynically suborned by mining it for obscure justifications of tyrannical policies towards migrants, aliens and tourists. The Constitution has been given renewed vitality in the protection of felons, sex offenders and thieves but has been leashed in matters of academic speech, immigrant rights and press freedom. Impunity in the face of the law is the calling card of the Trump regime.

Beyond letter and spirit

Yet, the law has been the primary recourse of any principled effort to resist Mr. Trump. From Mahmoud Khalil to E. Jean Carroll, from Harvard to The Wall Street Journal, from Maurene Comey to Gavin Newsom, the law is the frontline and the foundation of most efforts to delegitimise Mr. Trump. But it is hard to deny that Mr. Trump's multiple efforts to subvert the Constitution through its most vulnerable parts appears to be doing vastly better than those of its opponents. How has this been accomplished?

One argument for Mr. Trump's legal victories in law has pointed to his willingness to sacrifice the spirit of the law in favour of the letter. This theory too is not entirely satisfactory, since it overlooks Mr. Trump's cherry-picking of the letter of the law to favour his preferred versions of its spirit.

The truth is that Mr. Trump is equally capricious about both the letter and spirit of the law, and typically subordinates them to any goal which serves his interests. Hence, the idea that he values the letter over the spirit of the law gives him too much credit for some sort of principle.

Another tool in Mr. Trump's subversion of the law to advance his personal pride, prejudice and pocketbook is his success in seducing the Congress, especially The House of Representatives, into his personal dominion. The ruling icon of Congressional subservience to Mr. Trump is MAGA Mike Johnson, the Speaker of the House.

The creation of a complex machinery

As far as the law is concerned, this last factor, the principles of reasonable doubt, the presumption of innocence and the right to avoid self-incrimination have been steadily converted from protections for the innocent into the privileges of scofflaws. The biggest such scofflaw is Mr. Trump himself who has escaped massive indictments by one or other loophole designed for more exalted purposes. But he has set the pace for numerous others to escape the full force of the law by turning the fine points of a legal criminal defence into a complex machinery for minimising, delaying or eliminating punishment for criminal wrongdoing.

The sobering fact is that 90% of criminal cases in the U.S. are settled by plea bargains, arrangements (often with no public disclosure of their negotiating background) between prosecutors and defence lawyers, blessed by judges, to save time, reduce legal costs and prevent massive logjams in court dockets. This pragmatic motivation combines with the more exalted doctrine of the presumption of innocence, to help someone such as Mr. Trump, who exploits the weaknesses of the judicial system. His commitment to a winning deal, in every aspect of his life, is realised by recruiting lawyers who can get him to a favourable deal as independently of the law as he can manage. The Letter of the Law, for Mr. Trump, is just a springboard to the Spirit of the Deal.

Getting GST 2.0 to run like a well-oiled machine



Chandrajit Banerjee

is Director-General, Confederation of Indian Industry

The clearance by the Goods and Sales Tax (GST) Council at the 56th GST Council meeting on September 3, 2025 of the GST reforms has transformed India's indirect tax framework. As this writer engages with industry leaders, both big and small, the more I realise the depth of this change, which compels me to write again on the subject, unfolding its newer dimensions.

This is a historic stride in simplifying the GST. Having worked on indirect taxes for decades, I can say with confidence that the scale of reform, and its implications for consumers, micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSME), industry and the wider economy, are immense.

Consistent advocacy

From the moment the reforms were announced, the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) moved quickly. Its advocacy on GST 2.0, since December 2024, through reports, studies, multiple governmental engagements at the central and State levels, and press releases had consistently highlighted the need for rate rationalisation, simpler classification, and reduced compliance friction. MSMEs had shared their struggles over classification disputes, high taxes on essentials, inverted duty structures and cumbersome procedures. Many of these concerns were decisively addressed on September 3.

The reforms collapse the old four-slab structure (5%, 12%, 18% and 28%) into a simpler set: a low rate of around 5% for essentials, 18% as the standard, and 40% for luxury and sin goods. Numerous daily-use items – household goods, toiletries, and small appliances – have been shifted to lower slabs. Just as important, procedural simplifications have been introduced: stock adjustments without complete relabelling, clearer classification norms, faster refunds and easier compliance for small firms.

For consumers, the benefits are direct and visible. Goods that earlier attracted 12% or 18% tax will now face 5% or less. In her interviews, the Finance Minister underlined the point that "99% of goods and services will now fall under zero, 5% or 18%, with only 1% in the luxury or sin categories". This is not rhetoric. It means real savings for households, especially middle- and lower-income families, and will help moderate inflation.

> What will ensure the success of GST 2.0 is the bedrock of trust — between the government, industry and consumers

Multiple gains

For industry, particularly MSMEs, the gains go deeper. Input costs will decline, litigation will reduce, and compliance burdens will lighten. For Fast-Moving Consumer Goods (FMCG), textiles, small vehicles, appliances, cement and farm equipment – sectors often squeezed by inverted duties or higher rates – this is structural relief. CII member-companies have already pledged to pass on these savings to consumers. In fact, several are planning to extend benefits that are over and above the GST rate reductions.

The CII is also engaging with authorities on labelling and packaging adjustments to ensure smooth transition. Awareness sessions – virtual and in person – are being conducted nationwide so that businesses of all sizes understand the reforms clearly.

These changes are not without precedent. The Economic Survey had repeatedly flagged the costs of multiple slabs, classification disputes, compliance burdens and delays in input credits. It had urged simplification and greater ease of doing business, especially for smaller enterprises. Thus, GST 2.0 is the fruition of long-standing policy analysis.

The Finance Minister herself has called the reform process "rigorous but rewarding", noting that the Prime Minister had directed her months earlier to make GST "simplified, not simplistic". She stressed the need to reduce litigation and enhance predictability.

Her observation that even public sector insurers are committed to passing on rate cuts to policy-holders sets an important benchmark for all industries: the purpose of reform is not just to cut rates but to deliver benefits to the final consumer.

This writer believes that the economy will see multiple ripples. A boost in consumption, especially of non-luxury goods, is very likely, particularly in rural and semi-urban areas, given the factor of high price sensitivity. Inflation will face moderation in those components of the consumer basket that were experiencing sharp increases. MSMEs will see improved margins, less capital tied up in compliance delays and a clearer tax regime. For GDP growth, projections from analysts suggest that the reforms may add over one percentage point to growth via acceleration in demand. There will be short-term revenue cost for the Centre and the States, of course (estimates put the revenue foregone in tens of thousands of crores), but these may be compensated through increased consumption, greater compliance, formalisation and fiscal buoyancy.

The work ahead

Going forward, however, implementation is everything. It must be ensured that tax cuts are not "captured" upstream and that consumers actually pay less. It must be ensured that administrative systems such as the Goods and Services Tax Network (GSTN), State revenue departments, metrology, and labelling authorities are ready to power on. Particular attention must be paid to MSMEs, as they may lack sophisticated accounting or legal advice.

The CII will work on capacity-building for smaller firms so they can adjust. We also need strong feedback loops: items that cause classification confusion must be reviewed; transition issues for unsold stocks, labelling, packaging, old inventory must be handled sensitively.

This writer sees GST 2.0 as a defining reform. The CII and its industry-members are not just applauding; they are ready to partner with the government in ensuring that the promise becomes reality. The trust between government and industry and industry and consumers is the bedrock of the success of this reform. On behalf of the CII, this writer is committed to working tirelessly so that GST 2.0 is truly delivered on the ground. We had asked for it. Now, we have to play our role in full.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Issue of defamation

The suggestion by a sitting judge, that it is time for decriminalising slur to stem the proliferation of defamation suits, needs to be heeded by all (Front page, September 23). With political practices and parliamentary decorum plumbing ever new lows, it has become commonplace to convert seemingly public interest litigation to 'publicity interested litigation'. The tendency to score brownie points or settle political fights has, however, found a playfield in courts, stretching the sacred tenets of the law to absurd lengths.

Jose Abraham,
Vaikom, Kottayam, Kerala

Neighbours and matches

The Indian skipper's comment that India-Pakistan is not a rivalry anymore in cricket borders on a lack of professional humility ('Sport' page, September 23). Despite India's dominance over Pakistan, the spirit in which the matches have been played in Dubai and the handshake row begs the question whether these matches should be played in the first place.

Thomas Palocaren,
Vellore, Tamil Nadu

Portal and a glitch

There is a technical issue with the official High Security Registration Plate booking portal, which is blocking citizens in Telangana from completing the mandatory booking process. I have been trying to book/register the plate for my vehicle for over two months, but the issue persists. Upon entering my vehicle's registration number, the portal displays the error message, "Please input Correct Registration Number of Telangana State." This is not a user error, as I have verified the details against my vehicle's Registration Certificate.

Anand Kumar Chavan,
Hyderabad

Letters emailed to letters@thehindu.co.in must carry the full postal address.

Lessons from India's vaccination drive



N.K. Arora

President,
AIIMS Deoghar;
and Executive
Director, The INCLEN
Trust International



Dr. M.K. Das

Director,
The INCLEN Trust
International

Vaccination is one of the most effective and cost-efficient public health measures, saving millions of lives. India's Universal Immunisation Programme (UIP) is the world's largest, and annually vaccinates 2.6 crore infants and 2.9 crore pregnant women. It contributed to a decline in under-5 mortality from 45 to 31 per 1,000 live births between 2014 and 2021, according to the Sample Registration System 2021.

The UIP offers free immunisation against 12 diseases – 11 vaccines nationwide and one vaccine in endemic areas. In the past decade, six vaccines – Tetanus and Adult Diphtheria, Inactivated Poliovirus, Measles-Rubella, Rotavirus, Pneumococcal Conjugate, and Japanese Encephalitis – were added to the UIP across age groups.

India's full immunisation coverage was 62% in 2014 (National Family Health Survey-4, 2015-16). To achieve 90% coverage, India launched Mission Indradhanush (MI) in 2014. In 2017, it launched the Intensified MI (IMI) programme to strategically target low-coverage areas and missed populations. By 2023, 12 phases of the MI and IMI had been completed, vaccinating 5.46 crore children and 1.32 crore pregnant women. The MI and IMI phases were integrated into campaigns such as the Gram Swaraj Abhiyan and the Extended Gram Swaraj Abhiyan to further the outreach. As a result, full immunisation coverage increased in 2024-25.

However, challenges remain in reaching remote and migratory populations, clusters with low awareness, and populations with vaccine hesitancy. Innovative strategies such as 'zero-dose' outreach, digital tracking, and infrastructure improvements are being used to address these gaps.

Vaccine coverage

India has maintained its polio-free status since 2011 through continued stringent surveillance. Lessons from the National Polio Programme have strengthened the UIP and vaccine-preventable disease surveillance. India also achieved maternal and neonatal tetanus elimination in 2015 and was declared Yaws-free in 2016.

Between 2017 and 2019, through the nationwide Measles-Rubella catch-up campaign, 34.8 crore children aged 9 months to 15 years were vaccinated, alongside the introduction of the rubella vaccine into the UIP. The COVID-19 pandemic disrupted routine immunisation services, causing setbacks in the gains made under UIP. Disruptive measles outbreaks between 2022 and 2024 signalled immunity gaps and affected large clusters of unimmunised children. In response, the IMI 5.0 in 2023 targeted under-five children across the country. The Zero Measles-Rubella Elimination campaign was launched in 2025 to boost public awareness about immunisation. These efforts aim to surpass 95% national Measles-Rubella coverage and build strong herd immunity.

Tech integration

India has prioritised cold chain logistics, system strengthening through the Pradhan Mantri Ayushman Bharat Health Infrastructure Mission, and vaccine delivery and vaccination using the U-WIN platform. Building on the success of CO-WIN, U-WIN enables end-to-end digital vaccination and record keeping and tracking of vaccination for pregnant women and children up to 16 years. It enables nationwide, anytime-anywhere access for vaccination services, especially for migratory populations. Complementary digital technologies include the electronic Vaccine Intelligence Network for vaccine stock, the National Cold Chain Management Information System for real-time cold chain tracking, and the SAFE-VAC module for vaccine safety reporting.

> There remains a need to closely link high-quality and sensitive disease surveillance with immunisation efforts, as well as monitoring of anti-vaccine narratives

During the COVID-19 pandemic, India was a frontrunner in vaccine development. The COVID-19 vaccination programme was launched on January 16, 2021, just weeks after the global rollout. By January 2023, over 220 crore doses had been administered, covering 97% of citizens with one dose and 90% with both doses, marking a great achievement in public health on the global stage. Despite pressure from various sectors, India relied on its domestic vaccine development and manufacturing capacity.

With proactive public-private partnerships, India not only met its national needs but also supported many low and middle-income countries through the Vaccine Maitri initiative, reflecting the spirit of Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam (the world is one family). India is now the world's largest vaccine manufacturing hub. With the 'Make in India' strategy, the country has the potential to transform the future global vaccine landscape.

India's immunisation achievements over the past decade are path-breaking and globally recognised as a model for emulation. On March 6, 2024, India received the Measles and Rubella Champion Award from the Measles and Rubella Partnership, honouring its efforts in the South-East Asia Region.

India has made remarkable strides in expanding vaccine coverage, strengthening supply chains, enhancing surveillance, and building public trust. Notwithstanding these achievements, there remains a need to closely link high-quality and sensitive disease surveillance with immunisation efforts, as well as monitoring of anti-vaccine narratives. For a country's pandemic/epidemic preparedness, the immunisation and vaccine-preventable disease surveillance has to have a ONE-HEALTH lens. This would mean nurturing existing platforms and integrating joint surveillance of human, animal, and environmental systems.

Once again, anger over Almatti

The old issue has resurfaced, posing a challenge to the Congress government

STATE OF PLAY

R. Ravikanth Reddy
ravikanth.ramasayam@thehindu.co.in



The Almatti dam dispute, which had shaken political and inter-State relations in the late 1990s and early 2000s in Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh, has resurfaced in Telangana.

Recently, Karnataka decided to raise the height of the dam, claiming that it aligns with the 2013 Krishna Water Disputes Tribunal-II (KWDT-II) Award and utilises "excess water flowing into the sea". This has revived apprehensions in Telangana about irrigation being impacted.

The dam, part of the Upper Krishna Project in north Karnataka, is a hydroelectric and irrigation facility on the Krishna river. Originally designed with a Full Reservoir Level of 524.256 metres, it was capped at 519.6 metres with the Supreme Court's intervention.

As a lower riparian State, Telangana relies heavily on Krishna flows for drinking water and irrigation in its southern districts. Any attempt to raise Almatti's storage would mean holding back more water upstream, leaving little for projects downstream.

The issue has expectedly ignited a political battle in Telangana between the Congress and the Opposition Bharat Rashtra Samithi (BRS) and Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP). The BRS has accused Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy of not speaking openly on the issue. BRS leader B. Vinod Kumar has pointed out that Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis has already formally opposed Karnataka's move and has demanded to know why Telangana has not shown similar urgency.

Mr. Reddy has often assured the people that "not a drop of Telangana's share will be compromised." But these remarks were made in the context of Telangana's disputes with Andhra Pradesh. On the Almatti dam, his silence has only provided ammunition to the Opposition. MLC K. Kavitha said that Telangana would be left with no water, which would allow people to "play cricket in the Krishna river".

Irrigation Minister N. Uttam Kumar Reddy has clarified that Telangana will present its case before the Supreme Court, where the matter is still pending. He added that the State would, if necessary, initiate contempt proceedings, as the Brijesh Kumar Tribunal's Award (KWDT-II Award) remains under a stay. The minister is also scheduled to attend the KWDT-II hearing on September 23.

The stakes for Telangana are high. Large sections of the population in Mahabubnagar, Nalgonda, Ranga Reddy and Hyderabad's surrounding rural belts depend on the river. Drinking water and irrigation projects such as the Palmuru-Ranga Reddy Lift Irrigation Scheme, the Dindi project, the Srisailam Left Bank Canal, and numerous medium irrigation systems, draw water from Krishna inflows. Memories of past droughts and crop failures make water a politically explosive subject.

For the Congress, the timing could not be worse. With local body elections looming, rural voters, particularly farmers, are watching the government's response closely. If seen as failing to defend the State's interests, the government risks a backlash.

Almatti has historically been a flashpoint. In 1996, the Andhra Pradesh Congress Legislature Party leader, P. Janardhan Reddy, led a delegation to the dam site, raising tempers on both sides of the border. Under pressure, the Chandrababu Naidu-led Telugu Desam Party government also mobilised against Karnataka, sending its own delegation. The issue triggered law-and-order issues in the border districts. Though it subsided with judicial intervention, the latest decision to raise the height of the dam has revived memories of past conflicts.

For Telangana's farmers, Almatti is not only a legal matter, but also one that concerns their survival. Telangana's immediate focus will be on the KWDT-II hearing. Maharashtra's opposition to the new height will add weight to the State's argument.

Beyond the courts, the larger challenge for Congress is political. With the BRS planning to highlight the issue, the Congress cannot afford to appear passive. Almatti could well become the rallying point for the Opposition to corner the Congress government during the local body elections. Also, with the stage set for a potential face-off between two Congress-ruled States, the party high command's reaction will be important. The only solace for the Telangana Congress is that reservoirs under irrigation projects are overflowing and tanks are filled to the brim due to heavy rains this year.

Share of U-rated films highest in Malayalam, lowest in Bhojpuri

Between 2017 and 2025, the Central Board of Film Certification altered more than 720 hours of film content

DATA POINT

Vignesh Radhakrishnan

The Central Board of Film Certification (CBFC) certified nearly 18,000 films in India between 2017 and 2025. These included films from the largest (or major) Indian language industries – Hindi, Tamil, Telugu, Kannada, Malayalam, and Bhojpuri – as well as English; and also smaller industries, such as Odia and Gujarati. The major industries secured at least 1,000 certifications each during this period.

The CBFC's ratings show that among the major film industries, Malayalam emerged as the most "family-friendly", with the highest share of U-rated certificates in this period, followed closely by Tamil. Bhojpuri had the lowest share of U-rated releases. In fact, it was the only one among Indian language industries where a lower share of films was certified U compared to the English film industry.

These conclusions were drawn from data collated by CBFC Watch, an independent research project dedicated to exploring film censorship actions across India. The analysis includes all films and music videos longer than 60 minutes. So, it is reasonable to assume that most of them are full-length feature films. The open source data base was developed by Diagramchasing.fun.

Ratings

Film certifications fall broadly under three groups – adults only (A), unrestricted for all ages (U), and parental guidance/general audience (UA). **Chart 1** shows the share (in %) of movies rated U, U/A, and A within each language category in the 2017-2025 period. Most Indian language films were rated U/A. In every language, over 50% of the films were rated U/A.

With respect to A-rated content, only Telugu and Kannada films crossed the 10% mark. The highest share of films rated A was recorded in the English language category (more than 16%). Among Tamil and Malayalam films, the share of A-rated titles was lower than 7%.

These findings focus on the major film industries. Smaller industries are those where the number of movies released is relatively low. When we consider them as well, the narrative shifts a little and Odia emerges as the most family-friendly film industry with around 42% of films rated U. Only 1.2% of Odia films were rated A – the lowest share across all languages – followed by Gujarati (2.3%).

It is worth noting that an Odia dub of a Tamil film is treated as an Odia release in this analysis. This applies to other languages too. Moreover, there have been instances where the same film, when released in different languages, has received different ratings. In such cases, the versions are counted as separate films, since certification is the focus of this study.

Modifications

Before assigning ratings, the CBFC reviews a film's content. This process may result in deletions, additions, or replacements of scenes, dialogues, or music. Collectively, these are called modifications.

Between 2017 and 2025, the CBFC altered more than 720 hours of film content. The changes included deletion of scenes or music, replacement of dialogues, and insertion of metadata such as anti-smoking warnings.

Nearly 550 hours (76%) of the modified content were deletions, about 80 hours (12%) were insertions, and less than 35 hours (5%) were replacements. The remaining changes involved other types of modifications. These figures refer to the total duration of content altered, not the number of cuts. A single cut can range from several minutes of deletions (removing a song) to just a second (muting a word). **Chart 2** illustrates this split.

Deletions, insertions, and replacements can be applied to visual scenes, music, or dialogues. Data show that over 366 hours of modifications involved visual scenes (50%), 183 hours involved music (25%), and close to 120 hours (17%) were metadata insertions such as warnings. **Chart 3** illustrates the split.

Understanding the cuts

To better understand these terms, let us look at specific modifications in popular films. In *Viduthalai Part 2* (2024), starring Vijay Sethupathi and Manju Warrier, a line about voting being used as a weapon was added. This action falls under the category of an 'insertion' and the media element involved in this case was 'text dialogue'. Whenever anti-smoking messages are overlaid on the screen, they are also categorised as 'insertions'. In this case, the media element is 'metadata', since the warning does not alter dialogues or visuals.

In the Academy Award-winning 2019 Korean film *Parasite*, scenes involving stabbing, blood on the face, and intimate moments on a couch were removed. These changes are categorised as 'deletions', with the affected media element being 'visual scenes'. In total, 3 minutes and 54 seconds of content was modified in *Parasite*.

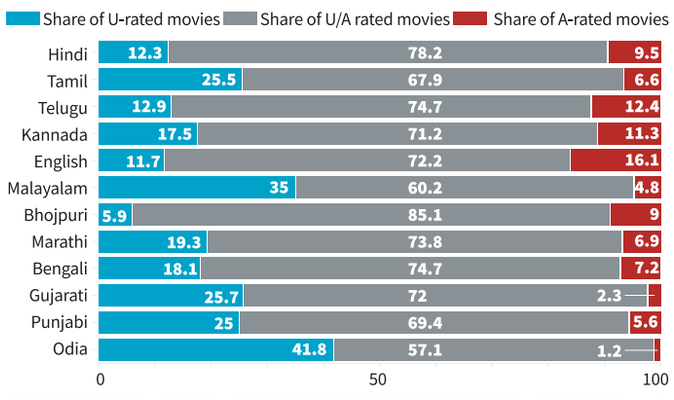
This pairing – deletions of visual scenes – was the most common form of censorship. As noted earlier, deletions made up 76% of all actions, while visual scenes accounted for 50% of the modified media elements (Charts 1 and 2).

In *OMG 2* (2023), starring Akshay Kumar and Pankaj Tripathi, scenes depicting the "messenger of God meditating and bathing" were replaced with approved visuals. This falls under 'replacements', with the affected media element being 'visual scenes'. In *Dabangg 3* (2019), instead of muting profane dialogues, the CBFC substituted them with milder expressions. These, too, are categorised as 'replacements', but the affected media element in this case is 'dialogues'.

On the cutting room floor

The data for the charts were sourced from CBFC Watch, an independent research project dedicated to exploring film censorship actions across India. The open source data base was developed by Diagramchasing.fun

Chart 1: The chart shows the share (in %) of movies rated U, U/A and A within each language in the 2017-2025 period





A still from the 2025 Malayalam film "Lokah Chapter 1: Chandra". Among Tamil and Malayalam films, the share of A-rated titles was under 7%.

Chart 2: The total duration of content altered (in hours) on the basis of the type of alteration between 2017 and 2025. A single cut can range from minutes of deletions (such as a full song) to one second (such as muting a word)

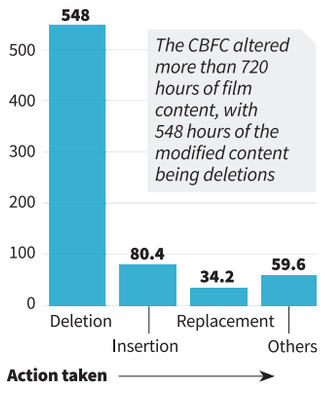
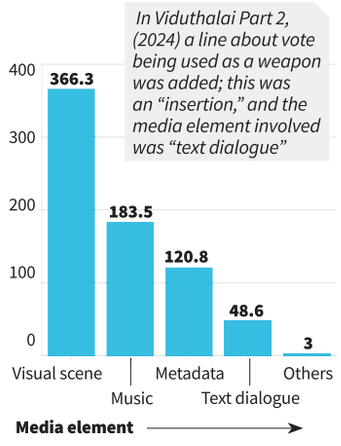


Chart 3: The chart shows the total duration of content altered (in hours) on the basis of the media element involved between 2017 and 2025



FROM THE ARCHIVES

The Hindu.

FIFTY YEARS AGO SEPTEMBER 24, 1975

Another attempt on Ford's life: woman arrested

Washington, Sept. 23: The U.S. President, Mr. Gerald Ford, escaped unharmed after another attempt on his life was made by a woman, who fired a gun as he came out of a San Francisco hotel yesterday afternoon.

The gun was deflected, even as it went off, by an alert bystander, and Secret Service guards, who immediately formed a human shield around Mr. Ford, pushed him into a car which sped away to the airport from where the Presidential plane took off from Washington within half an hour of the incident.

Yesterday's shooting came 17 days after another woman was foiled in a similar attempt to kill the President. In that episode, which took place in Sacramento, also in California State, the would-be assassin, who pointed a gun at him from close range, was disarmed before she could fire the gun. In both incidents Mr. Ford became a target while he was shaking hands with well-wishers in the street.

While the first would-be assassin, Lynette Fromme, now in custody, was a 23-year-old follower of convicted mass killer, Charles Manson, the second woman, Sarah Jane Moore, who was seized with a gun yesterday was a well-to-do 46-year-old mother, who claimed she was an informer for the FBI before she became devoted to radical left-wing causes. Only the previous day the San Francisco police had found her with another gun. Though that weapon had been confiscated, she had not been detained.

Security around the President had been tight since the first attempt on his life, but the gregarious Mr. Ford, who loves crowds, had ignored advice that he avoid, as far as possible, wading into unscreened crowds in public, where a gunman might be lurking. It was not known, if at the time a shot was fired at him, Mr. Ford was protected by the bullet-proof vest he had begun wearing since the first assassination attempt.

A HUNDRED YEARS AGO SEPT. 24, 1925

Nature's havoc

Geneva, Sept. 23: The Maharaja of Patiala, in a long speech in the Committee, opposed the Italian scheme for mutual assistance in case of disaster like floods, famines, and earthquakes, as it was impracticable. He pointed out that the scheme excluded the so-called endemic calamities.

Text&Context

THE HINDU

NEWS IN NUMBERS

Number of people who died in the Himachal monsoon

451 Himachal Pradesh is reeling from the heavy monsoon impact, with 451 people dead, 497 injured, and 47 missing. The State recorded 47 cloudbursts, 98 flash floods, and 148 major landslides this season. Around 340 roads remain closed, including the NH-3 and NH-503A. PTI

The cap on movie ticket prices in Karnataka challenged

200 In ₹. The Karnataka High Court stayed the government's order capping movie ticket prices at ₹200. The stay came after the Multiplex Association of India challenged the amendment, arguing it lacked legislative backing and infringed on cinema owners' rights. PTI

Number of migrant worker deaths reported in Odisha

289 Between 2021 and August 2025, 5,612 distressed workers were rescued from other States. The government issued 1,037 licences in 2024 and 217 in 2025 (August) for migration. A task force and surveys across 20+ districts aim to reduce distress migration. PTI

Number of people arrested in a drug bust in Jharkhand

4 In the East Singhbhum district, the Jharkhand police arrested four alleged drug peddlers and seized around 10 grams of brown sugar in 106 small packets, valued at ₹50,000. Acting on a tip-off, officers chased the suspects on motorcycles along NH-49. The accused have been sent to judicial custody. PTI

Number of people executed by Iran in this year

1,000 According to Norway-based Iran Human Rights, this is the highest annual toll since 2008. The majority of hangings were in prisons while there are occasional public hangings. AFP

COMPILED BY THE HINDU DATA TEAM

Follow us facebook.com/thehindu X.com/the_hindu instagram.com/the_hindu

The mapping of the India-China border

During the Simla Conference, the delegate from the Republic of China categorically maintained that Tibet had no claim to the territories of the tribal belt (corresponding to present day Arunachal Pradesh) on the Assam side of the Himalayan divide, for they were not ethnically Tibetan and were self-governing

WORLD INSIGHT

Sunil Khatri

In a three-part series on the India-China border issue that appeared in the columns of *The Hindu* from September 5-9, 2025, the author, Manoj Joshi, develops a narrative on the assertion that the India-China border was not properly defined. This article presents another view on the same.

Official Manchu maps

During the 267-year Manchu rule (1644-1911), two major maps of the Empire, drawn to scale with coordinate lines, were prepared with the assistance of European Jesuits. The first is Emperor Kang-hsi's map (1721), depicting the territorial bequest of the Tibet-Assam segment to the then Republic of China (RoC). In the map, Tibet was never conceived as a trans-Himalayan state. Its southern boundary extended only upto the Himalayas, for Tibetans never resided on the southern side of the Himalayan divide. Consequently, non-Tibetan Tawang, south of the Himalayan divide, although Buddhist, was not depicted as Tibetan territory. Corroborative evidence in this regard comes from the RoC delegate's statement during the Simla Conference (1913-14), in which he categorically maintained that Tibet had no claim to the territories of the tribal belt (corresponding to present day Arunachal Pradesh) on the Assam side of the Himalayan divide, for they were not ethnically Tibetan and were self-governing.

Moreover, the RoC delegate did not claim this non-Tibetan tribal-belt on behalf of his country, leaving it to the Indian delegate to include it in Assam as it had already been under its sphere of influence for centuries. The resultant Indo-Tibetan boundary agreement in March 1914, also called the 1914 alignment, was in keeping with Kang-hsi's map.



Clear boundaries: Indian Army and ITBP personnel, along with villagers and students, participate in a 'Tiranga Rally' at the forward areas of Chuna in Tawang district, Arunachal Pradesh on August 14. PTI

The second Manchu map that depicts its territorial bequest to the RoC in the eastern Turkestan-Kashmir segment is Emperor Ch'ien-lung's map (1761), which shows that Eastern Turkestan (a region in the northwestern part of the now People's Republic of China) was never conceived as a trans-Kunlun territory (mountain range abutting eastern Turkistan). Consequently, the Manchu never claimed the stretch of desolate area south of the Kunlun mountain extending all the way upto the Hindu Kush-Karakoram mountains, lying further south. A proposal was submitted to the Manchu Foreign Office in 1899 suggesting the division of this area on the watershed principle, resulting in the Kashmir-Sinkiang boundary line, which became the 1899 alignment (related to the Aksai Chin region).

Territorial claims to the contrary

Apart from the official Manchu maps cited above, there is no subsequent official Manchu map. In 1943, when World War II was at its peak, a tottering RoC felt emboldened enough to set aside the Manchu's territorial bequest (1721 & 1761 maps), resulting in the emergence of a claim to large tracts of Indian territory. On being questioned on the new map, the RoC's response was, "The map was but an unprecise draft, to be corrected later on." A similar map was repeated by the RoC in December 1947, at a vulnerable moment, when a newly independent India's energies were directed on its military conflict with Pakistan.

China retained the same map-making pattern set by its predecessor regime. In a rare moment of candour in Peking in October 1954, Chou En-lai, the then Chinese Premier acknowledged in the presence of the Indian Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru, '...it is a historical question and we have been mostly printing old maps...At least we do not have any deliberate intentions of changing boundaries as KMT (RoC) had. The whole thing is ridiculous....'.

It has been shown that during his talks with Jawaharlal Nehru on the boundary question in New Delhi in April 1960, Chou En-lai had, more or less, conjured up a narrative in support of the Chinese position. He did so by attempting to pick holes in the evidence in support of India's claim through a clever play of words and assertions, not backed by facts. However, he was cautious in making a reference to evidence of Chinese origin, for he knew that here he could be skating on thin ice.

He slowly revealed his tactic to resolve the boundary question: that instead of focusing on maps and documents alone, both sides should agree to the use of a set of principles, enunciated by him, for a resolution. This was a trap, as reasoned by former Foreign Secretary Vijay Gokhale in his book, *The Long Game*. There appears to be no evidence in the public domain to suggest that Chou En-lai had proposed a territorial swap – where India would concede to the Chinese position in the Aksai Chin region in exchange for Chinese acceptance of India's claim over Arunachal Pradesh.

Instead, the way forward, as agreed to by both parties, was through a package deal that would aim at resolving not only the entire length of the boundary, but also address other pending geopolitical and trade-related matters. To break the impasse, both sides would need to work towards a "...solution which brings no defeat to any side and that it should be reasonable, equitable and friendly...and which is...consistent with dignity and self-respect of both countries." The broad contours of such a solution could possibly lead to the acceptance of the 1899 and 1914 alignments respectively, with a provision for a territorial swap to meet each other's security concerns.

The author is a former civil servant.

THE GIST

During the 267-year Manchu rule, two major maps of the Empire were prepared. The first is Emperor Kang-hsi's map (1721), depicting the territorial bequest of the Tibet-Assam segment to the then Republic of China (RoC).

The second Manchu map that depicts its territorial bequest to the RoC in the eastern Turkestan-Kashmir segment is Emperor Ch'ien-lung's map (1761).

In 1943, when World War II was at its peak, a tottering RoC felt emboldened enough to set aside the Manchu's territorial bequest.

How is the jewellery sector coping with U.S. tariffs?

What are the short-term measures sought by India's diamond and jewellery sector from the government?

Vinaya Deshpande Pandit

The story so far:

India's diamond and jewellery sector has been hit due to the U.S. tariffs. While the U.S. has imposed a 50% import duty on India's cut and polished diamonds, it has imposed a 50-57% duty on studded and non-studded jewellery, upsetting decades of well-set trade. At such a time, the sector wants government intervention which could absorb the shock caused by U.S. tariffs.

Why government intervention?

The U.S. is the largest importer of diamonds from India. In 2024-25, India exported diamonds worth ₹46,000 crore and studded gold jewellery worth ₹23,000 crore. Moreover, India's cut and polished diamond industry employs 8.2 lakh skilled workers. The U.S. tariffs are likely to affect the jobs of 1.7 lakh skilled workers, as per the Gems and Jewellery Export Promotion Council's prediction. Of India's exporters, 85% are Medium and Small Scale Enterprises (MSMEs) which will not be able to bear the shock of the loss of the U.S. market in the short term. The industry has therefore sought short-term measures in terms of policy reliefs, aid for workers, and monetary and marketing benefits for three to six months, to help the manufacturers absorb the shock. Gujarat, Rajasthan and Maharashtra are the worst-hit States.

What are the sought policy reliefs?

Some of the key policy reliefs sought by the industry are: to extend the export obligation period for exports made to the U.S. from 90 days to 270 days; allow reverse job work in DTAs (Domestic Tariff Areas) by jewellery manufacturing Special Economic Zones (SEZs); and allow SEZs to sell in the domestic market on payment of duty foregone. In simple terms, if a jewellery manufacturer imports gold for the export of jewellery, such export of ready-made jewellery has to take place within a period of 90 days. If not, an import duty of 6% and GST of 3% is levied. But with the orders from the U.S. suddenly drying up, many exporters are unable to ship their jewellery. That is why, the industry now wants the export obligation period to be increased.

The industry also wants the government to allow the SEZs to sell their goods in the domestic market with import duty forgone. Currently, the exporters are allowed to sell in the domestic market, but with a duty of 20% on the finished product. This makes them less competitive as compared to domestic manufacturers. Reverse job order refers to SEZs being allowed to manufacture for domestic buyers so that idle machinery and capability can be utilised; skilled workers can stay gainfully employed; and that factories set up after years of hard work can keep running.

What are the incentives demanded?

Some of the demands by the industry are – monetary incentives like interest subvention offered during the COVID period; temporary subsidisation of exports to the U.S.; worker-related benefits like restructuring of personal loans and inclusion under healthcare schemes; and marketing benefits such as giving exporters funding to explore newer markets. Other demands include banking incentives, liquidity packages, and finance extensions, among others.

Why the urgency?

The tariffs are disrupting businesses which were set for almost five decades. These tariffs will disproportionately affect MSMEs which have invested for years to build up their businesses. While large exporters will be able to navigate through this change, the bottom-line will be wiped out unless the government intervenes and provides short-term relief for three to six months, says the industry. The total bailout package in the form of various incentives is likely to be to the tune of ₹500 crore as per rough industry estimates. "The U.S. forms 30% of India's gem and jewellery export. Most of this demand is fulfilled by MSMEs, which form the backbone of the sector, and which are now struggling to survive. We need urgent government help," said Kirit Bhansali, chairperson of Gem and Jewellery Export Promotion Council.

THE GIST

While the U.S. has imposed a 50% import duty on India's cut and polished diamonds, it has imposed a 50-57% duty on studded and non-studded jewellery, upsetting decades of well-set trade.

The industry also wants the government to allow the SEZs to sell their goods in the domestic market with import duty forgone. Currently, the exporters are allowed to sell in the domestic market, but with a duty of 20% on the finished product.

The tariffs are disrupting businesses which were set for almost five decades. These tariffs will disproportionately affect MSMEs which have invested for years to build up their businesses.

CACHE



GETTY IMAGES

How Trump's H-1B fee threatens India's IT firms and Big Tech business models

If U.S. companies cannot economically hire foreign workers for onshore roles, they may shift entire operations overseas. This could reduce employment opportunities for U.S. workers rather than increasing them

John Xavier

The Trump administration has deployed a $1,00,000 annual fee on H-1B visas, a move designed to obliterate the business models of India's IT giants and Big Tech's wage arbitrage schemes while leaving the U.S.'s universities and startups standing. Whether this crude instrument will achieve its intended effect without inflicting collateral damage on the U.S.'s innovation ecosystem remains an open question.

The policy addresses a genuine issue as H-1B workers now account for 65% of America's IT workforce, up from 32% in 2003. This surge did not just occur because of a shortage of U.S. talent. The administration notes that computer science graduates face unemployment rates of 6.1%, while their peers in computer engineering struggle with 7.5% joblessness. Meanwhile, some technology firms filed over 10,000 H-1B applications in the 2024 fiscal alone, often in the same years they conducted mass layoffs of U.S. workers.

The outsourcing reckoning

After a back and forth over the weekend, the Trump administration has confirmed that the fee will apply only to new visa applications. Still, this will devastate India's IT services industry. Companies like Tata Consultancy Services, Infosys and Wipro have built empires on a simple arbitrage: import Indian engineers willing to work for substantially less than their American counterparts. Their business model depended on H-1B visas costing a few thousand dollars in filing fees, making it economical to flood the system with applications and cherry-pick the most cost-effective workers.

At $1,00,000 per visa, this lottery system becomes prohibitively expensive. Indian IT firms face a stark choice: raise prices dramatically or retreat to offshore delivery models. Either option undermines their competitive position against U.S. rivals, though the latter may paradoxically accelerate job losses as entire functions may migrate overseas rather than remaining onshore with H-1B workers.

American technology companies will face their own reckoning. The minimal cost of H-1B applications previously allowed HR departments to treat visa petitions like lottery tickets. Now each hire becomes a significant capital allocation requiring executive approval. This should naturally filter applications toward genuinely exceptional candidates with irreplaceable skills, which was the programme's original purpose.

An innovation exodus

Yet the policy's collateral damage may prove severe. International students contribute over $40 billion annually to America's economy, with more than half pursuing STEM fields. These represent the world's intellectual elite, individuals who have already demonstrated commitment to U.S. institutions through years of study and substantial financial investment.

The $1,00,000 fee signals a considerable dimming of these individuals' prospects in the U.S. post-graduation. Countries like Canada, Australia and the United Kingdom have crafted sophisticated strategies to attract precisely these individuals. As the U.S. raises barriers, competitors lower them, potentially capturing the talent that will drive the next decade's technological breakthroughs.

The timing seems particularly unfortunate. China's growing technological prowess and geopolitical tensions have intensified competition for global talent. Pushing the world's brightest minds toward rival nations does not eliminate security risks, but merely transfers competitive advantages to America's competitors.

A blunt instrument

The policy's design reflects a preference for simplicity over sophistication. Rather than treating all H-1B applications equally, a more nuanced approach might have created fees based on salary levels, exempted graduates from elite American universities, or established lower rates for workers in cutting-edge research fields. Such refinements could have maintained the policy's effectiveness against labour arbitrage while preserving the U.S.'s ability to attract exceptional talent. The current approach resembles using a sledgehammer where a scalpel might suffice. The broader implications extend beyond immigration policy. America's post-war dominance in science and technology rested partly on its ability to attract and retain global talent. The H-1B programme, whatever its flaws, served as one mechanism for this attraction. By making the programme prohibitively expensive for most employers, the administration risks severing connections between American institutions and international talent pools.

Unintended consequences

The policy may also accelerate trends it ostensibly seeks to reverse. If American companies cannot economically hire foreign workers for onshore roles, they may shift entire operations overseas. This could reduce employment opportunities for U.S. workers rather than increasing them.

Similarly, the fee structure may inadvertently benefit the largest technology companies at smaller firms' expense. Google or Microsoft can absorb $1,00,000 fees more easily than startups or mid-sized companies, potentially concentrating talent among established players rather than distributing it throughout the innovation ecosystem.

The administration's approach reflects a broader philosophical shift from balancing corporate needs with talent attraction toward prioritising domestic workers. This addresses legitimate concerns about wage suppression and worker displacement. However, immigration policy operates in a global context where other nations compete aggressively for the same talent the U.S. now seems increasingly reluctant to welcome.

The irony is stark: having spent decades building the world's most attractive higher education system and innovation ecosystem, the U.S. now risks gifting its carefully cultivated advantages to competitors through self-imposed barriers. Whether the benefits of reduced labour arbitrage will outweigh the costs of diminished talent attraction remains unclear. What seems certain is that other nations stand ready to welcome the exceptional individuals America may no longer want.

For global Big Tech and Indian IT firms, the $100K will clearly make them put their house in order and re-evaluate how they plan to hire and deploy human resources in the coming months.

THE DAILY QUIZ

Please send in your answers to dailyquiz@thehindu.co.in

American novelist and writer F. Scott Fitzgerald was born on this day in 1896. Here is a quiz on one of the greatest American writers of the 20th century

Sindhu Nagaraj

QUESTION 1

What is the term he popularised which depicted the flamboyance and excess mainly in the period between 1920 and early 1930s? He has written a short story collection which talks about this period.

QUESTION 2

This Side of Paradise was Fitzgerald's first novel which propelled him to fame. The writer took inspiration for the title from a line in a poem called *Tiare Tahiti*. Who wrote the poem?

QUESTION 3

Fitzgerald frequented Europe after he established himself as a serious writer. During this time, he befriended many writers and artists, including Ernest Hemingway. What was this cohort called? The term was also particularly used to refer to a group of American expatriate writers living in Paris during the 1920s, and was popularised by Gertrude Stein.

QUESTION 4

Name the 1938 American film which was written by Fitzgerald. This is his sole screenplay credit.

QUESTION 5

American socialite Ginevra King inspired many characters in the novels written in the 20th century, one of them being this character in Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby*. Which is the famed character?

QUESTION 6

This 2008 American romantic fantasy drama film directed by David Fincher was adapted from Fitzgerald's 1922 short story of the same name. Name the work.



Visual question:

How is this 1924 painting related to Fitzgerald? What is it called?

Questions and Answers to the previous day's daily quiz: 1. The five 'parameters' often used in linguistic descriptions of sign languages. **Ans: Handshape, orientation, location (place of articulation), movement, and non-manual expression.**

2. The most-used sign language in the world, in terms of users, according to Ethnologue. **Ans: The Indo-Pakistani Sign Language.**

3. The term "classifier" refers to this. **Ans: A handshape that represents a category of objects or people, used to convey information about their size, shape, or movement**

4. The primary purpose of fingerspelling in sign languages. **Ans: To represent proper names, technical terms, or words for which there is no established sign**

Visual: Identify this sign language. **Ans: American Sign Language**

Early Birds: Tito Shiladitya| Maanas Nair. G



FROM THE ARCHIVES

Know your English

Upendran

"I did everything that he asked me to. Now the thing won't even start."

"Who asked you to listen to that dumbo?"

"That what?"

"D..u..m..b..o.. The first syllable 'dum' rhymes with 'come', 'sum' and 'gum'. The second syllable rhymes with 'toe' and 'go'."

"The stress is on the first syllable, I suppose?"

"That's right! Any idea what 'dumbo' means?"

"Someone stupid?"

"Very good! 'Dumbo' is an informal word meaning 'stupid'."

"In some of our movies, the hero is a dumbo."

"There are very few of those. In most of our movies, it's the policemen who are presented as a bunch of dumbos."

"That's very true."

"Some people use 'dumbbell' instead of 'dumbo'. The two words mean the same."

"I see. So, can I say, Kalyani is not a dumbbell?"

"You certainly can. Who is the dumbbell who tore my shirt?"

"I have no idea. Sujatha uses the word 'loony' very often. Do 'loony' and 'dumbo' mean the same thing?"

"No, they don't. A 'dumbo' is a stupid person. A 'loony', on the other hand, is an eccentric or crazy person."

"My father tells me that his office is full of loony people."

"You should meet the loony characters in my family! My uncle is as potty as they come!"

" 'Potty'? Does it mean eccentric too?"

"Yes, that's right! 'Potty' is an informal word mainly used in British English."

"Is it O.K. to say some of our politicians have very potty ideas?"

"Just be glad that not all of them have potty ideas!"

"That's true! By the way, I met that silly cousin of yours yesterday."

"Who? Gopa? Where did you meet that nincompoop?"

"That what?"

"N..i..n..c..o..m..p..o..o..p. The I in the first syllable 'nin' sounds like the I in 'it', 'pit' and 'fit'. The 'o' in the second syllable is pronounced like the 'a' in 'China'. The final 'poop' rhymes with 'soup' and 'loop'. And the stress is on the first syllable."

"What does it mean?"

"It means 'silly' or 'foolish'. For example, there are times when I wonder why my friend Usha married a nincompoop like Umesh."

"Perhaps she is a nincompoop too!"

"The world is full of nincompoops."

"That's true. You are the biggest nincompoop I know."

"And you are the biggest nitwit!"

" 'Nitwit'? Does it mean the same thing as 'nincompoop'?"

"More or less. A 'nitwit' is a stupid or foolish person. For example..."

"....our new landlord is a nitwit."

"See. One thing that you have to remember is that 'nitwit' and 'nincompoop', like 'dumbo', 'loony' and 'potty' are used in informal contexts. Be careful how you use them."

Published in The Hindu on March 17, 1998.

Word of the day

Pecuniary:
relating to or involving money

Synonyms: monetary

Usage: *He received thanks but no pecuniary compensation for his services.*

Pronunciation: newsth.live/pecuniarypro

International Phonetic Alphabet: /pɪˈkjuːn(jə)ɹi/

For feedback and suggestions for Text & Context, please write to **letters@thehindu.co.in** with the subject 'Text & Context'

INBRIEF



Rupee hits a new low of 88.73 against 'sliding' U.S. dollar

The rupee slid 45 paise to hit a new low of 88.73 a dollar on Tuesday even as the dollar is depreciating in response to the staggered U.S. foreign policy. The major trigger behind this trend is that there is no clarity yet on the tariffs, currency experts said. Further, the central bank has not made any major intervention. After two consecutive days of depreciation triggered by global factors, the current decline makes rupee the weakest performer among Asian currencies.

SMBC picks up additional 4.22% stake in Yes Bank

Yes Bank on Tuesday said Sumitomo Mitsui Banking Corporation (SMBC) of Japan has acquired an additional 4.22% stake in the Mumbai-based bank. With the acquisition, SMBC's stake in Yes Bank has increased from 20% to 24.22%. SMBC acquired 132.39 crore shares via off-market sale on September 22, Yes Bank said in a regulatory filing. With the acquisition, the total holding of the Japanese entity in the bank rose to 759.51 crore shares, it said. PTI

Surat-based Rocket raises $15 mn in seed funding

Rocket, an AI-powered app-building platform, on Tuesday said it has raised $15 million (about ₹133 crore) in seed funding led by Salesforce Ventures and Accel. The Surat-based start-up said the capital will be deployed to bolster research and development, accelerate product innovation, and expand its global footprint. As part of its growth plans, Rocket will establish a North American headquarters in Palo Alto, California, and expand engineering and product teams in India. PTI

Accenture proposes new campus in AP, eyes adding 12,000 jobs

Reuters
HYDERABAD/BENGALURU

Tech consultancy Accenture has proposed setting up a new campus in the southern Indian state of Andhra Pradesh, aiming to eventually add about 12,000 jobs to its workforce in India, three sources familiar with the matter told Reuters.

The move follows similar deals by IT firms Tata Consultancy Services and Cognizant, which are leveraging a new state policy offering leased land at ₹0.99 ($0.0112) per acre to large firms willing to generate employment.

India is already Accenture's largest employee base globally, with more than 300,000 of its 790,000 employees based in the country.

As part of the proposal being reviewed by the state government, Accenture has requested land of about 10 acres in the port city of Visakhapatnam on similar terms, the sources said, requesting anonymity as the matter is private.

Accenture did not respond to Reuters' request for comment.

The Andhra Pradesh government is eager to bring in Accenture, a state official said, adding that while approvals may take time, the proposal is expected to be cleared.

"It is not an unreasonable ask by Accenture, and the proposal will go through," the official said on condition of anonymity.

GST rate cut, festival offers skyrocket auto sales: SIAM

Tata Motors sees more than 10,000 cars and SUVs delivered and over 25,000 inquiries received on Day One of Navratri; Maruti Suzuki witnesses "phenomenal customer response in 35 years"

Lalatendu Mishra
MUMBAI

In an encouraging start to the Navratri festival season, auto makers have reported robust business backed by the cut in Goods & Services Tax (GST) beginning Monday.

"The start to this festive season has been extremely encouraging. The recent GST reduction and special festive offers have sparked an extraordinary wave of consumer interest and enthusiasm," said Shailesh Chandra, President, SIAM and MD, Tata Motors Passenger Vehicles Ltd and Tata Passenger Electric Mobility Ltd.



Business unusual: Maruti Suzuki says it received 80,000 enquiries on the first day of the festive season when GST 2.0 kicked in. PTI

On the first day of Navratri, Tata Motors had reported deliveries of over 10,000 cars and SUVs and received over 25,000 inquiries, the company said.

Maruti Suzuki India Ltd., the country's largest car maker, said the response from customers had been "phenomenal" – something it had not seen in the last 35 years.

"On the very first day, we recorded 80,000 enquiries, and have already delivered over 25,000 cars, with deliveries expected to touch 30,000 shortly. Since September 18, when we announced additional price reduction (over and above GST), we have received 75,000 bookings, with nearly 15,000 bookings coming in every day – about 50% higher than usual," the company said in a statement.

"Enquiries remain very high, and we may even run out of stock for certain variants. Compared with last year, the overall response has been exceptionally strong," the company said.

Private sector growth loses some steam in Sept., PMIs show

Reuters
BENGALURU

India's private sector growth remained strong in September but cooled from August's multi-year high as softer demand tempered new orders and failed to translate into faster job creation.

HSBC's flash India Composite Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI), compiled by S&P Global, fell to 61.9 this month from a final reading of 63.2 in August and below a *Reuters* poll median forecast of 62.9.

However, it was the second-sharpest rate of expansion in just over two years and was comfortably above the 50-mark separating growth from contraction. The moderation was seen across the economy, with both factory output and services growth cooling from last month.

IT stocks fall for second day; Hexaware Tech declines 5%

Press Trust of India
NEW DELHI

IT stocks fell for the second day in a row on Tuesday, amid concerns over the hike in U.S. H-1B visa fees.

Hexaware Technologies tumbled 5.04%, Mphasis declined 2.58%, Mastek Ltd lost 2.40%, Tech Mahindra fell by 2.07%, HCL Tech dipped 0.74%, Tata Consultancy Services (0.38%), Wipro (0.26%) and Infosys (0.16%) on the BSE.

The BSE IT index declined 0.63% to 34,769.38.

"FMCG, IT, and realty lagged, with IT feeling the impact of worries about rising US visa fees (H-1B) and their possible effect on earnings," Ajit Mishra, SVP - Research at Religare Broking Ltd, said.

IT stocks also dropped on Monday. Last week, the U.S. announced a one-time $100,000 fee on H-1B visas.

MARKETS

MARKET WATCH

	TUESDAY	% CHANGE
Sensex	82,102	-0.07
US Dollar	88.73	-0.50
Gold	1,18,900	2.32
Brent oil	67.69	1.91

NIFTY 50

	PRICE	CHANGE
Adani Enter	2676.40	46.90
Adani Ports	1441.60	-2.60
Apollo Hosp	7684.00	-55.00
Asian Paints	2446.90	-35.80
Axis Bank	1170.80	26.40
Bajaj Auto	8984.50	-70.00
Bajaj Finserv	2084.40	14.90
Bajaj Finance	1025.50	19.00
Bharat Elec	404.45	-1.95
Bharti Airtel	1938.70	-17.50
Cipla	1527.10	-15.10
Coal India	394.05	-0.65
Dr Reddys Lab	1308.40	7.00
Eicher Motors	6990.50	44.50
Eternal Ltd	338.35	-3.50
Grasim Ind	2813.50	-40.60
HCL Tech	1429.80	-10.10
HDFC Bank	957.20	-7.00
HDFC Life	775.05	-12.75
Hero MotoCorp	5370.50	-59.00
Hindalco	745.90	0.20
Hind Unilever	2522.20	-50.00
ICICI Bank	1394.30	-7.20
IndusInd Bank	755.25	20.95
Infosys	1497.50	-2.00
ITC	403.20	-3.75
Jio Financial Servic-es Ltd.	312.55	-1.30
JSW Steel	1138.40	21.40
Kotak Bank	2047.70	26.00
L&T	3657.60	13.10
M&M	3614.60	29.80
Maruti Suzuki	16097.00	281.00
NestleIndia	1168.40	-19.90
NTPC	343.00	3.80
ONGC	236.66	-0.81
PowerGrid Corp	288.60	1.95
Reliance Ind	1389.80	-0.80
SBI Life	1819.40	-38.30
State Bank	870.60	15.35
Shriram Finance Ltd.	628.80	0.95
Sun Pharma	1631.20	-12.80
TataConsumerPro-duct	1128.50	-1.60
Tata Motors	701.35	5.10
Tata Steel	173.29	1.90
TCS	3062.40	-11.40
Tech Mahindra	1471.90	-33.50
Titan	3439.20	-18.30
Trent Ltd.	4891.00	-119.50
UltraTech Cement	12401.00	-249.00
Wipro	249.63	-0.70

Schneider, ISRO to offer advanced automation tech

Schneider Electric has partnered with the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) to offer advanced automation technology, as per a Schneider Electric statement.

Jio-Blackrock unveils maiden new fund offer

Ashokamithran T.
MUMBAI

Jio Blackrock AMC, joint venture between Jio Financial Services and American investment management firm Blackrock, introduced its first new fund offer on Tuesday.

The Asset Management Company (AMC) will pursue only direct mutual fund business through its technology platform. The company will use AI platform to pick stocks and has systems to narrow the risk of downside volatility to between 2-3%, said Rishi Kohli, chief investment officer, Jio Blackrock AMC.

Through technology, the company "aims to transform traditional and alternative data – ranging from social media conversations to satellite data –



into investible insights for the benefit of the Indian investors," the company said, adding it would focus on long-term returns.

The entry of Jio-Blackrock into the already buzzing mutual fund industry assumes importance when seen in the context of analyst commentary and industry data.

In a report, Kotak Institutional Equities said, "India has largely stayed an active market but it runs the risk of passive funds increasing share in overall shareholding of companies. The entry of Blackrock-Jio with focus on passive funds may accelerate the process, as other AMCs may be forced to launch more passive funds to counter the disruption," the research report read.

Jio Blackroack, however, introduced its first fund as an active flexicap fund, contrary to expectations.

S&P retains India's GDP growth outlook at 6.5% on local demand

Press Trust of India
NEW DELHI

S&P Global Ratings on Tuesday retained India's GDP growth forecast at 6.5% in the current fiscal, citing strong domestic demand amid a largely benign monsoon.

S&P also said it expects a 25 bps (basis point) rate cut by the RBI this fiscal as it revised its inflation forecast down to 3.2% for this fiscal year. India's GDP grew at 7.8% in the April-June quarter.

Benign monsoon

"We forecast India's GDP growth to hold steady at 6.5% this fiscal year (year ending March 31, 2026).

"We expect domestic demand to remain strong, supported by a largely-benign monsoon, cuts in the income and the goods and services tax and accelerating government investment," S&P said in a statement here.

'Huge scope for Indian tea sector'

M. Soundariya Preetha
COIMBATORE



India must focus on quality for better realisation and explore new markets, says Perera.

India has all the ingredients to become the superpower of the tea industry, according to the Executive Director of the International Tea Committee, James Suranga Perera.

Mr. Perera, who spoke recently at the India International Tea Convention in Kochi, told *The Hindu* that India was the second-largest producer and consumer of tea and the third-largest exporter. Of the total global tea output of 7.074 billion kg and consumption of 6.97 billion kg in 2024, India produced 1.303 billion kg and consumed 1.22 billion kg.

Largest exporter

On exports, Kenya, which is the largest exporter of tea, ships almost the entire quantity it produces and China, the second-largest exporter, consumes locally a substantial volume of the tea it produces. Sri Lanka shipped 245 million kg worth $1.4 billion.

However, India exported 255 million kg worth almost $800 million. Hence, India should focus on quality to get better realisation and explore newer markets such as South America and Africa, Mr. Perera said.

Per capita consumption

On the domestic front, Indian consumers are increasingly willing to pay more for quality. While India's per capita consumption is 840 gm a year, Turkey's per capita consumption of 3 kg a year is the highest globally.

If the Indian per capita consumption can touch even one kg, it will consume the entire quantity that it produces. "So, the scope is definitely there (for the Indian tea sector)," he said.

ACME Solar gets ₹1,100 cr. from SBI for green unit

Press Trust of India
NEW DELHI

ACME Solar Holdings on Tuesday said it has raised ₹1,100 crore in domestic funding from the State Bank of India (SBI) for its 300 MW renewable energy (RE) project in Rajasthan.

The funds will be utilised to refinance the existing debt and reduce financing cost by about 100 bps for the Rajasthan project.

This refinancing has been secured from the State Bank of India (SBI) for a tenure of approximately 17 years. ACME Solar Holdings said the refinancing is consistent with the company's strategy to optimise financing costs across its portfolio and strengthen its credit profile through rating upgrades.

The 300 MW renewable energy project in Rajasthan has an operational track record of about six months and has consistently maintained optimum capacity utilisation factor levels. The reduced cost of debt enables ACME Solar to strengthen its financial position further.

Festival shopping



Brisk sales: A man looks at a unicorn head at a shop selling mid-autumn festival merchandise in the Old Quarter of Hanoi on Tuesday. AFP

'38% of IPOs issued in 2024 trading at a loss'

Yashaswani Chauhan
CHENNAI

As many as 38.7% of companies listed in 2024 are now trading below their issue price, highlighting the risks faced by both retail and institutional investors despite a buoyant IPO market. Of the 75 IPOs launched that year, 29 are in the red.

In contrast, 2025 has shown signs of improvement. Only 8 of the 36 IPOs issued so far this year (22.2%) are trading at a loss, indicating stronger market sentiment and improved pricing discipline.

Va Nagappan, a market expert and former President of the Hindustan Chamber of Commerce, says: "First, there is excess liquidity chasing a limited set of stocks. Second, while foreign investors have been net sellers in the secondary market, they have emerged net buyers in IPOs." However, experts caution that over-subscription, often ranging from 100x to 700x in smaller issues with thin float and higher promoter holding, can create a false sense of demand, leading investors to mistake it for quality and buy aggressively.

(The writer is with The Hindu businessline)

'Automotive software seeing long development cycles'

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Automotive software developers in India, who are mostly focused on innovations around software-defined vehicle (SDV), are witnessing long development cycles, highest globally, as several regulatory pressures are compounding existing development bottlenecks, reported QNX, a division of BlackBerry Ltd., a Canadian software firm that specialises in secure communications and IoT.

However, automotive software developers teams in India remained the most resilient and forward-looking in the SDV space, the company said.

The firm also said that the majority of automotive software developers across Asia (including India), North America and Europe, expected AI to play a major role in software development in the near term and estimated that AI could replace 43% of current roles by 2035.

Firms pouring billions to advance AI infrastructure



Two to tango: Nvidia and Intel Nvidia will invest $5 billion in Intel. AFP

FACTBOX

Reuters

Nvidia is set to invest up to $100 billion in OpenAI and supply it with data centre chips, in a deal that gives the chipmaker a financial stake in the world's most prominent AI company, which is already an important customer.

Investments in systems powering AI have surged since OpenAI launched ChatGPT in 2022, on expectations that companies across sectors will integrate the technology into their products and services.

Here is a list of multi-billion dollar AI, cloud and chip deals signed recently:

Nvidia and Intel: Nvidia will invest $5 billion in Intel, giving it roughly 4% of the company after new shares are issued. Oracle and Meta: Oracle is in talks with Meta for a multi-year cloud computing deal worth about $20 billion, underscoring the social media giant's drive to secure faster access to computing power.

Oracle and OpenAI: Oracle is reported to have signed one of the biggest cloud deals ever with OpenAI, under which the ChatGPT maker is expected to buy $300 billion in computing power from the company for about five years.

CoreWeave and Nvidia: CoreWeave signed a $6.3 billion initial order with backer Nvidia, a deal that guarantees that the AI chipmaker will purchase any cloud capacity not sold to customers. Nebius Group and Microsoft: Nebius Group will provide Microsoft with GPU infrastructure capacity in a deal worth $17.4 billion over a five-year term.

Meta and Google: Google struck a six-year cloud computing deal with Meta Platforms worth more than $10 billion, *Reuters* had reported in August. Intel and SoftBank Group: Intel is getting a $2 billion capital injection from SoftBank Group, making the Japanese tech investor one of the top-10 shareholders of the troubled U.S. chipmaker.

Sourcing chips

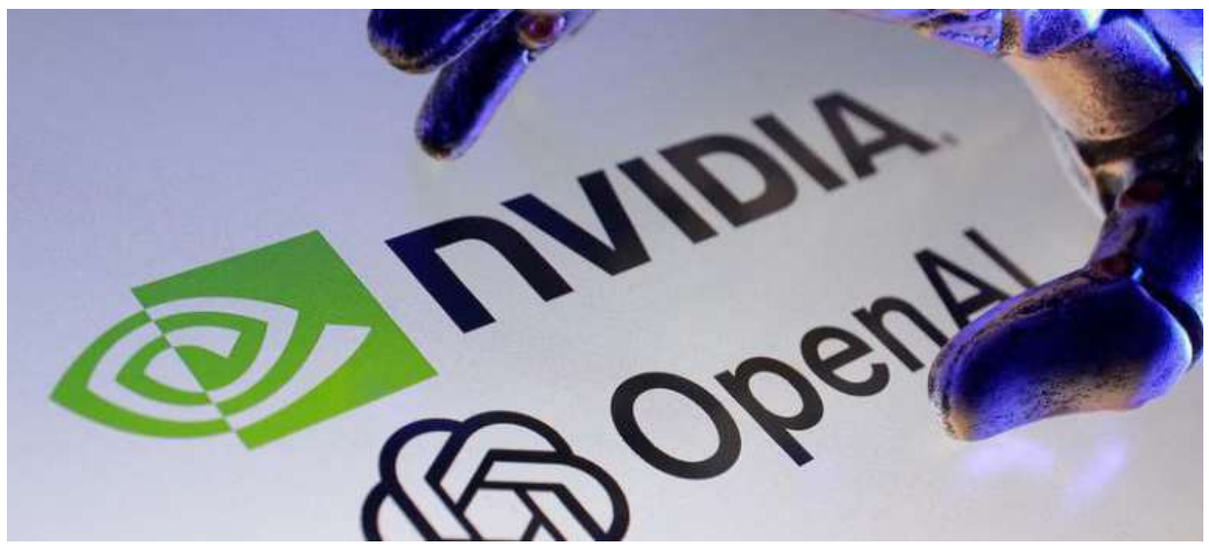
Tesla and Samsung: Tesla signed a $16.5 billion deal to source chips from Samsung Electronics, with the EV maker's CEO Elon Musk, saying that the South Korean tech giant's new chip factory in Texas would make Tesla's next-generation AI6 chip. Meta And Scale AI: Meta took a 49% stake for about $14.3 billion in Scale AI and brought in its 28-year-old CEO, Alexandr Wang, to play a prominent role in the tech giant's artificial intelligence strategy. Google and Windsurf: Google hired several key staff members from AI code generation startup Windsurf and will pay $2.4 billion in license fees as part of the deal to use some of Windsurf's technology under non-exclusive terms. CoreWeave and OpenAI: CoreWeave signed a 5-year contract worth $11.9 billion with OpenAI in March, before the Nvidia-backed startup's IPO. Amazon and Anthropic: Amazon.com pumped $4 billion into OpenAI competitor Anthropic, doubling its investment in the firm.

More questions than answers in Nvidia's $100-billion OpenAI deal

Investment will fund some, but not all, of OpenAI's computing needs; long-term impact of deal on OpenAI's valuation remains unclear; funding could bolster certainty of OpenAI's Oracle cloud contracts; key question is whether OpenAI has the cash to pay for the contracts

NEWS ANALYSIS

Reuters
SAN FRANCISCO



Huge cost: Nvidia committed to invest in OpenAI to help it build 10 GW data centre capacity, or about $10 billion per gigawatt. REUTERS

Nvidia's move to invest up to $100 billion into OpenAI at the same time it plans to supply millions of its market-leading artificial intelligence chips to the ChatGPT creator has little precedent in the technology industry.

Under the deal, Nvidia will be taking a financial stake in one of its largest customers, but without receiving any voting power in return, according to a person close to OpenAI.

The ChatGPT maker will receive some – but not nearly all – of the capital it needs for its ambitious plans to build the sprawling supercomputers required to develop new generations of AI.

Nvidia's initial $10 billion investment would go toward a gigawatt of capacity using its next-generation Vera Rubin chips, with a build-out starting in the second half of 2026. The deal raises many questions. Here are five of the biggest ones:

Rest of money?

In an earnings call in August, Nvidia CEO Jensen Huang said that AI data centres cost about $50 billion per gigawatt of capacity to build out, with about $35 billion of that money going toward Nvidia's chips and gear.

Nvidia has committed to investing in OpenAI to help it build 10 gigawatts of data centre capacity, or about $10 billion per gigawatt. That leaves about $40 billion in additional capital required for each gigawatt of capacity OpenAI plans to build. OpenAI has not signalled whether it agrees with Mr. Huang's cost estimates or, if it does, where it would procure the additional funds from. OpenAI did not return a request for comment about its funding plans. Nvidia declined to comment beyond what it has said publicly.

A for-profit firm?

OpenAI is a non-profit corporation, a structure that dates to its days as an AI research group. It has been looking to change to a more conventional structure that would allow it to more easily raise money and hold a public offering.

OpenAI has held extensive discussions with Microsoft , a major shareholder that funded OpenAI's early computing needs, to change its structure.

Earlier this month, the two firms said they had reached a tentative deal on OpenAI converting to a for-profit public benefit corporation that would be overseen by OpenAI's existing non-profit, though that move still needs approval from state officials in Delaware and California.

On Monday, a person familiar with the matter told *Reuters* that Nvidia would be making a cash investment into OpenAI similar to other OpenAI investors.

Moreover, Nvidia's initial $10 billion investment will not begin until OpenAI and Nvidia reach a definitive agreement in the coming months.

It was not immediately clear whether Nvidia planned to invest in OpenAI's non-profit entity or whether its plans depend on OpenAI's conversion to a public benefit corporation overseen by a non-profit.

OpenAI's valuation?

OpenAI is currently valued at $500 billion, and a person familiar with the matter told *Reuters* that Nvidia's initial $10 billion investment for one gigawatt of capacity would be at that valuation.

But neither Nvidia nor OpenAI gave a timeframe for the entire 10 gigawatts of capacity coming online or for the $100 billion of investment to take place.

Also unanswered is whether subsequent Nvidia investments in OpenAI would take place at OpenAI's current valuation, or at the valuation of the company at the time Nvidia makes each investment.

Competition?

The deal between Nvidia and OpenAI could see Nvidia earmarking a significant number of its chips, which remain in high demand several years into the AI boom and access to which can determine success or failure in the field, to a single customer in which it is also a shareholder.

An important question is whether OpenAI's rivals such as Anthropic, or even Microsoft, which competes with OpenAI to sell AI technology to businesses, will retain access to Nvidia's chips.

The deal also raises questions about whether AMD, which is aiming to compete with Nvidia in selling chips to OpenAI and others, will have a viable chance of selling chips to AI companies.

Impact on Oracle

Oracle said earlier this month that it has signed hundreds of billions of dollars in contracts to provide cloud computing services to OpenAI and a handful of other large customers, which sent its stock soaring and made co-founder Larry Ellison one of the world's richest people.

But one of the key questions lingering after that forecast – and a question that debt-rating firm Moody's raised – is whether OpenAI has the cash to pay for the contracts.

On Monday, shortly before Nvidia's announcement, Oracle re-affirmed its forecast as it named two new CEOs. It is possible that Nvidia's investment plans could put Oracle's revenue forecast on a firmer footing because a key customer, OpenAI, has fresh capital commitments.

'Europe will succumb to slowdown caused by tariff'

Reuters
FRANKFURT



Concerns linger: The industrial rebound may be fizzling out, leaving services to support growth. REUTERS

Euro zone economic growth continues to hold up as Germany's budget largesse props up sentiment and offsets turmoil in France, but more weakness may be ahead as U.S. tariffs start to exert their full effect, key data showed on Tuesday. The euro zone has been expanding quicker than economists had expected this year, sparking debate over whether the bloc is simply more resilient than thought and how much damage French political turmoil will do across the 20 nations.

Seemingly adding to the resilience case, the HCOB flash composite PMI edged up to 51.2 in September from 51.0 in August for its the ninth consecutive month of growth.

Carrying Eurozone

But the underlying trend was mixed and suggested that the industrial rebound may be fizzling out, leaving services to support growth. "The details are not as rosy as the headline index suggests," Oxford Economics' Riccardo Marcelli Fabiani said.

"Sentiment was soft and incoming orders from abroad continued worsening, pointing to no strong rebound happening after the drop in exports following the introduction of tariffs," he said.

Another concern is the steady improvement in PMI figures is solely attributable to Germany, where fiscal expansion is likely to drive growth for years to come. "France stands out negatively," ING economist Bert Colijn said.

"With heightened political uncertainty, the French economy appears to be mirroring this sense of instability."

Germany PMI rebound

Germany's PMI bounced to a 16-month high of 52.4, beating poll expectations for a modest lift to 50.6 from 50.5. But in France, activity contracted for a 13th month and at the fastest pace since April, with its PMI falling to 48.4.

Echoing the euro zone number, British firms also reported a loss of momentum and confidence as the PMI fell slowed to 51.0 in September from 53.5 in August.

Full tariff effect

The euro zone is still to take the full hit from U.S. tariffs, which will slow its already modest growth rate even further, the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development said in a separate report.

"The full effects of tariff increases have yet to be felt - with many changes being phased in over time and companies initially absorbing some tariff increases through margins - but are becoming increasingly visible," the OECD added.

This will slow euro zone growth to just 1.0% next year from 1.2% this year, as increased trade frictions and geopolitical uncertainty negate the boost from lower ECB interest rates and Germany's fiscal expansion.

U.K. dropping

Growth in the U.K. is also seen dropping to 1.0% next year from 1.4% in 2025 on a tighter fiscal stance, higher trade costs and greater uncertainty.

"Fiscal expansion is expected to boost economic activity in Germany, but expected consolidation in both France and Italy will dampen growth," the OECD added. However, the OECD confirmed the ECB's view that inflation will now hold at or just below the 2% target, which will keep alive hopes for more policy easing, especially as consumption growth softens.

U.S. Treasury's support for Argentina gives peso, Milei leg-up

NEWS ANALYSIS

Reuters
WASHINGTON

U.S. Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent's pledge of "large and forceful" actions to stabilise Argentina's wobbling currency by using a 91-year-old U.S. crisis fund could help the peso find its footing, at least for a while.

Mr. Bessent's backstop for Argentina with Treasury's occasionally used $219.5 billion Exchange Stabilization Fund sent the peso and other Argentine assets soaring after major losses last week. But he said decisions on any U.S. intervention would come after he and President Donald Trump meet with Argentine President Javier Milei in New York on Tuesday.

Short-term boost

"U.S. support for Argentina will provide a short-term boost both to the peso and the government's standing in the midterm elections," said Martin Muehleisen, a former International Monetary Fund strategy chief who is now a senior fellow at the Atlantic Council. Mr. Muehleisen said any conditions Treasury adds to a loan or intervention could compound an already complicated debt situation for Argentina. Such a loan from Washington might also push other creditors such as China back in the repayment line, experts say.



Political play: Bessent's support partly reflects Trump's affinity for the right wing Milei. REUTERS

Treasury's Exchange Stabilization Fund is a powerful tool that has helped ease numerous crises, backing Federal Reserve lending facilities during the 2020 COVID-19 pandemic and the 2008-2009 global financial crisis. It was also deployed to ease financial crises in Mexico and Brazil in the 1990s and Uruguay in 2002.

It was created in 1934 to stabilise the dollar's value during the Great Depression after a reduction in the greenback's gold weighting. With authorisation from the Treasury Secretary, it can be used for the purchase or sale of foreign currency, issuing loans or credit to foreign governments or entities or acquiring and using Special Drawing Rights (SDRs), the IMF's reserve asset.

Right wing support

Mr. Bessent's pledge to support Mr. Milei partly reflects Mr. Trump's affinity for the right wing leader, who attended Mr. Trump's inauguration in January and who has embarked on a range of private sector reforms to try to revive Argentina's economy.

Washington's support also contrasts sharply with the Trump administration's treatment of Brazil's leftist government over its prosecution of former right-wing President Jair Bolsonaro.

As of July 31, the ESF had total assets of $219.5 billion, but the readily available liquid assets are far lower since $173.7 billion of the total is in IMF SDRs. Brad Setser, a trade and currency expert with the Council on Foreign Relations, estimates the readily available firepower in the ESF is just under $30 billion, comprising $21.9 billion in Treasury securities, $1.6 billion in cash and $5.7 billion in foreign currency holdings.

Stem crisis

That's likely more than enough to stem a crisis for a country like Argentina, which is not a systemically critical part of the global financial system.

The Treasury last pledged ESF funds in March 2023 - $25 billion - to back a new Fed bank emergency liquidity programme after Silicon Valley Bank and Signature Bank failed. The Fed's Bank Term Funding Program shut down after a year. As the COVID-19 pandemic erupted in March 2020, the Treasury pledged $10 billion in ESF capital to back a new Fed commercial paper funding facility to help businesses manage their liquidity during the sharp economic downturn. In September 2008, the Treasury pledged $50 billion from the ESF to backstop money market mutual funds that were seeing unprecedented withdrawals. The Treasury also has occasionally dipped into the ESF during U.S. debt ceiling crises to avoid breaching the limit.

GENEVA

UN slams 'systematic' Russian torture of Ukraine civilians



REUTERS

Russian authorities subjected civilian detainees in Ukrainian areas it occupies to torture, including sexual violence, in a "widespread and systematic manner", the United Nations said in a report on Tuesday. It interviewed 216 civilians released from detention since June 2023, of which a full 92% gave detailed accounts of torture. AFP

HONG KONG

Schools shut, flights cancelled as Typhoon Ragasa nears Hong Kong



REUTERS

Hong Kong and parts of southern China ground to a halt on Tuesday evening as Super Typhoon Ragasa approached with high winds and lashing rain, forcing Chinese authorities to shut down schools in at least 10 cities. Ragasa had already toppled trees, torn the roofs off buildings and killed at least two people in northern Philippines. AFP

TEHRAN

Iran executed at least 1,000 this year in prison 'mass killing': NGO



AP

Iran executed at least 1,000 people so far in 2025, the highest such figure in some three decades, an NGO said, denouncing the "mass killing campaign" in prisons as a crime against humanity. At least 64 people were hanged in the past week, an average of more than nine per day, said the Norway-based Iran Human Rights group. AFP

SINGAPORE

Singapore firm rejects paying $1bn Sri Lankan pollution damages



AFP

A Singapore shipping company said it will refuse to pay Sri Lankan court-ordered damages of $1 billion for causing that country's worst case of environmental pollution. X-Press Feeders chief executive Shmuel Yoskovitz said he believed paying would have wide-ranging implications and "set a dangerous precedent". AFP

NATO asks Russia to stop 'escalatory' airspace violations on eastern flank

NATO and allies will employ, in accordance with international law, all necessary military and non-military tools to deter all threats from all directions, says the military bloc; Norway complains of air space violations by Russia thrice this year

Agence France-Presse
BRUSSELS



On guard: A NATO official assesses the air and surface situation from aboard a surveillance aircraft over Polish airspace. AFP

NATO on Tuesday warned Russia to stop an "escalatory" pattern of airspace violations along its eastern flank, after the alliance held urgent talks about a jet incursion over Estonia last week.

"Russia bears full responsibility for these actions, which are escalatory, risk miscalculation and endanger lives. They must stop," NATO's 32 member states said in a statement.

"Russia should be in no doubt: NATO and allies will employ, in accordance with international law, all necessary military and non-military tools to defend ourselves and deter all threats from all directions," the bloc's statement read

It added that NATO would "continue to respond in the manner, timing, and domain of our choosing" and that the alliance's commitment to its collective defence pact remained "ironclad".

Meanwhile, Norway's government said on Tuesday that Russia had violated Norwegian airspace three times this year, branding the incidents "not acceptable".

It said a Russian SU-24 fighter jet entered Norwegian airspace for four minutes on April 25, followed by a L410 Turbolet transport aircraft that stayed for three minutes on July 24.

Most recently, on August 18, an SU-33 fighter jet was in Norwegian airspace for a minute.

"Russia has violated Norwegian airspace on three occasions this spring and summer," Prime Minister Jonas Gahr Store said in a statement.

Other complaints

In response to the drone raid in Poland, NATO announced it was bolstering its eastern defences to help to counter the threat from Moscow.

Besides Poland and Romania, other eastern flank countries including Romania, Lithuania, Latvia and Finland have seen recent violations of their airspace.

Danish PM flags drone flights over Copenhagen airport

Agence France-Presse
COPENHAGEN

Large drones that flew over Copenhagen airport for hours and caused it to shut down constituted the "most serious attack on Danish critical infrastructure" to date, Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen said on Tuesday.

Airports in Copenhagen and Oslo reopened early on Tuesday, hours after unidentified drones in their airspace caused dozens of flights to be diverted or cancelled, disrupting thousands of passengers.

"This is part of the development we have recently observed with other drone attacks, airspace violations, and cyberattacks targeting European airports," Ms. Frederiksen said.



Awry plans: Passengers stand in a queue to get new tickets at the Copenhagen Airport in Denmark on Tuesday. AFP

She referred to similar drone incidents in Poland and Romania and the violation by Russian fighter jets of Estonia's airspace.

Moscow under scanner

The governments of Poland, Estonia and Romania have pointed the finger at Moscow, which has brushed off the allegations.

Ms. Frederiksen told Danish broadcaster DR she could "not rule out" that Russia was behind the drone activity.

Moscow denied involvement, with Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov criticising her remarks as "unfounded accusations".

High-skilled migrants are 'key' for U.S. growth, warns OECD chief economist

Agence France-Presse
PARIS



Alvaro Santos Pereira

High-skilled migrants are vital for the U.S. economy, the OECD's chief economist said, after the U.S. imposed a $100,000 fee for H-1B visas widely used by the tech industry. Alvaro Pereira, who is leaving his post after being named governor of Portugal's central bank, spoke as the Paris-based organisation released an updated outlook for the world economy.

The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, a 38-member grouping of wealthy nations, upgraded the forecast to 3.2% growth in 2025, up from 2.9% in its last report in June. The OECD said the economy "proved more resilient than anticipated" in the first half of the year as companies rushed to import goods before U.S. President Donald Trump's tariffs took effect.

It also raised the U.S. growth outlook from 1.6% to 1.8% but warned it was expected to slow as higher tariffs start to bite. The OECD said cuts in the U.S. federal workforce and Mr. Trump's crackdown on immigration would also soften growth.

He noted that the report was written before the new H-1B visa fee rule came into force. "We do think that continuing to attract high-skilled individuals from around the world is a key strength of the U.S. economy," Mr. Pereira said. "This will only become exacerbated with the AI boom, because basically there's significant labour shortages in the ICT (information and communication technology) sector."

H-1B visas allow companies to sponsor foreign workers with specialised skills – - such as scientists, engineers and computer programmers – to work in the U.S., initially for three years but extendable to six.

Such visas are widely used by the tech industry. Indian nationals account for nearly three-quarters of the permits allotted via lottery system each year.

In speech to UN, Trump accuses global body of 'not living up' to its potential

Associated Press
NEW YORK

U.S. President Donald Trump returned to the United Nations on Tuesday to boast of his second-term foreign policy achievements and lash out at the world body as a feckless institution.

World leaders listened closely to his remarks at the UN General Assembly as Mr. Trump has already moved quickly to diminish U.S. support for the world body in his first eight months in office.

Mr. Trump escalated his criticism of the UN on Tuesday, saying it's "empty words don't solve wars." "What is the purpose of the United Nations?" Mr. Trump said. "I have always said (the UN) has such tremendous, tremendous potential, but it's not even coming close to living up to that potential." Mr. Trump offered a weave of jarring juxtapositions in his address to the assembly.



Admonishing speech: Donald Trump addresses the General Assembly at the UN headquarters in New York on Tuesday. REUTERS

He trumpeted himself as a peacemaker and enumerated successes of his administration's efforts in several hotspots around the globe. At the same, Mr. Trump heralded his decisions to order the U.S. military to carry out strikes on Iran and more recently against alleged drug smugglers from Venezuela and argued that globalists are on the verge of destroying successful nations.

The U.S. President's speech is typically among the most anticipated moments of the annual assembly.

China penalises online platforms owned by Alibaba, ByteDance

Agence France-Presse
BEIJING

China's top Internet regulator said on Tuesday it would take action against ByteDance-owned news app Jinri Toutiao and Alibaba's Internet browser company UCWeb for allegedly displaying harmful content, a day after announcing a two-month social media crackdown.

The Cyberspace Administration of China (CAC) vowed on Monday to combat content containing "malicious incitement of conflict" and "negative outlooks on life such as world-weariness".

Beijing requires social media companies to moderate content on their platforms, with posts strictly controlled to avoid anything deemed to be too subversive, vulgar, pornographic or generally harmful.

China's Internet regulator had already announced penalties this month against three popular digital platforms

The CAC had already announced penalties this month against three popular digital platforms – micro-blogging platform Weibo, short video app Kuaishou and Instagram-like Xiaohongshu – for allegedly neglecting content management duties.

Authorities have not specified what punitive actions are being taken against those platforms.

The CAC said on Tuesday that measures taken against news aggregator app Toutiao included "summoning the company for a meeting, ordering rectification within a specified time limit, issuing a warning, and strictly dealing with those responsible". The platform had failed to fulfil its primary responsibility of managing information content and allowed "harmful content" to appear on the main section of its trending search list, "thereby damaging the online ecosystem", the statement said.

It gave no further details about the content type or punishments.

Crackdown to continue

"Internet regulators will continue to focus on prominent illegal and non-compliant activities that undermine the online ecosystem," the CAC added.

In a separate statement on Tuesday, the CAC said it would take similar measures against UCWeb after the Alibaba-owned platform displayed entries relating to "extremely sensitive and malicious" events and topics such as "online violence and the privacy of minors".

Need ties with 'landlocked' Nepal, Bhutan, India's northeast: Yunus

Kallol Kanti Bhattacherjee
NEW DELHI



Muhammad Yunus

Bangladesh needs to strengthen economic relations with "landlocked" Nepal, Bhutan as well as the northeastern States of India, said Chief Adviser to the interim government of Bangladesh, Muhammad Yunus, in a meeting with Sergio Gor, U.S. President Donald Trump's Ambassador-Designate for India and Special Envoy for South and Central Asia.

Mr. Yunus and Mr. Gor held talks on Monday, on the sidelines of the UNGA's annual session, about the prevailing situation in Bangladesh, including the prospects of election that is scheduled to be held in February 2026. He informed Mr. Gor that Dhaka has intensified the process to revive the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC). "The election will be held in February. It will be free, fair, and peaceful. The country is fully prepared," Mr. Yunus said.

"Additionally, he emphasised the importance of strengthening economic ties with landlocked Nepal and Bhutan, as well as with India's seven Northeastern states," said the Chief Adviser's press wing. "We can accelerate our economic growth through closer regional cooperation," said Mr. Yunus. Mr. Yunus had described India's northeastern States as "landlocked" during the March-April visit to China when he called for greater economic ties between China and South Asia.

The Chief Adviser's office said the discussion with Mr. Gor, who is expected to arrive in New Delhi later this year, covered the situation in South Asia, including the Rohingya crisis. "The Chief Adviser sought continued U.S. support for more than one million Rohingya refugees currently residing in camps in Cox's Bazar. In response, U.S. officials said their life-saving aide for the Rohingyas would continue," said the Office of the Chief Adviser.

"Professor also expressed Bangladesh's interest in joining ASEAN, stating that integration with Southeast Asian economies could significantly accelerate the country's development," said the press wing.

Iran 'will not yield' to pressure to abandon uranium enrichment

Agence France-Presse
TEHRAN

Iran's supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei on Tuesday said the Islamic republic would not give in to pressure to abandon its enrichment of uranium.

Mr. Khamenei, in a televised address, also called any talks with the U.S. a "dead end" that were of no benefit to his country.

"The American side has been adamant that Iran must not have (uranium) enrichment," Mr. Khamenei said. "We did not surrender and we will not. We did not and will not yield to pressure in this matter or any other matter," he added.

Negotiating with America "not only brings no benefit, but also causes major harm under the current conditions, some of which might even be described as irreparable", he said. "Let us not forget the experience of these past 10 years, and the other side – which is the subject of our discussion for now – is the U.S.," he continued, referring to the 2015 nuclear deal that Washington withdrew from three years later. "This other side consistently breaks promises, lies about everything, deceives and threatens militarily at every opportunity," Mr. Khamenei said.



Ayatollah Ali Khamenei



Emission watch: A coal-fired power plant in Yinchuan, Ningxia autonomous region in China. FILE PHOTO

Amid U.S. fossil fuel push, China plans new climate targets

Agence France-Presse
NEW YORK

All eyes are on China this week, as the world's biggest polluter readies a new emissions-cutting plan – reinforcing its role as a steadfast defender of global climate diplomacy while Europe stalls and the United States doubles down on fossil fuels.

United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres has convened a mini climate summit today during a week of high-level talks, where Beijing is expected to unveil its updated "Nationally Determined Contributions." These need to be in place before the main climate gathering of the year, the COP30 summit in Belem, Brazil, in November.

Although China accounts for nearly 30 per cent of annual global greenhouse gas emissions, it has increasingly positioned itself as a driving force in international climate talks and as a green technology superpower.

"China is a very stable partner," Brazil's Ana Toni, CEO of COP30, told *AFP*. Chinese Premier Li Qiang is poised to be the first speaker at the mini summit and could unveil the new plan then, or it may come before.

Beijing has said its 2035 plan will, for the first time, cover all economic sectors and greenhouse gases. Under its last plan, announced in 2021, China said it would aim to peak carbon dioxide emissions before 2030 and achieve net zero by 2060 – deemed highly insufficient by stakeholders.

By contrast, the European Union failed to adopt a unified plan ahead of the UN General Assembly, although it has decarbonised faster than many other developed nations. Meanwhile, the United States under President Donald Trump has recast itself as a zealous promoter of fossil fuels.

Germany bets on tens of thousands of volunteers to strengthen its military

'We must have the strongest conventional army in NATO on the European side,' says Chancellor Merz; Berlin has committed billions to beefing up its military's equipment after years of neglect; the new martial system lays groundwork to bring back compulsory service, notes defence policy expert

Associated Press
ROSTOCK



Youth and vigour: New recruits of the German Army Bundeswehr watching armed soldiers at a ceremony to take their oath in Duesseldorf this month. AP

More than 3 and half years after Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine kick-started efforts to revitalise the Bundeswehr, the challenge of strengthening the German military has grown along with fears of the threat from Moscow.

Alongside the higher military spending that Germany and NATO allies agreed on this year, the alliance is encouraging members to increase personnel numbers. Berlin wants to add tens of thousands of service members.

Chancellor Friedrich Merz says that "because of its size and its economic strength, Germany is the country that must have the strongest conventional army in NATO on the European side." He hasn't defined that goal in detail, but the tone underscores a shift in a country that emerged only gradually from its post-World War II military reticence after reunification in 1990.

Earlier this month, the military's top brass watched as a ferry packed with armoured vehicles was escorted out of the Baltic port of Rostock, drones were intercepted in the air and on the water and fighter jets circled above. That was part of an exercise focused on moving troops and equipment to Lithuania – an ally on NATO's eastern flank where modern Germany is stationing a brigade abroad on a long-term basis for the first time.

"Credible deterrence requires operational readiness," said the Bundeswehr's chief of staff, Gen. Carsten Breuer. "And operational readiness requires materiel, personnel, training and ... exercising, exercising, exercising."

Germany suspended conscription for men in 2011 and subsequently struggled to attract large numbers of short-term volunteers. In recent years, the number of military personnel has hovered just above 180,000 – compared with 300,000, more than a third conscripts, in 2001. Now the government wants to raise it to 260,000 over the next decade, and says it will also need around 200,000 reservists, more than double the current figure.

Incentives and issues

Better pay is one way to make the Bundeswehr more attractive, said Thomas Wiegold, a defense policy expert who runs the *Augen geradeaus!* military blog. But a key issue is fixing the military's long-standing equipment problems, "because a force that doesn't have enough tanks, that doesn't have enough ships, that also doesn't have enough barracks, is not particularly attractive for applicants."

F-35 fighter jets, Chinook transport helicopters, Leopard 2 tanks, frigates and other hardware are on order after a 100 billion-euro ($117 billion) special fund was set up in 2022 to modernise the Bundeswehr, but they will take time to arrive. This year, Merz's new coalition enabled higher spending by loosening strict rules on incurring debt, a big step for a historically debt-averse nation.

After conscription was suspended, the Bundeswehr gave up 48 barracks. A report by the parliamentary commissioner for the military said that some remaining barracks and other facilities are still in a "disastrous" state after years of penny-pinching. A program to build now aims to build 76 new military accommodations by 2031.

The Cabinet last month approved plans for a new military service system. The aim is to draw sufficient recruits without reviving conscription, an idea unpopular with **Social Democratic Party of Germany**, the centre-left junior partner in Mr. Merz's coalition, but the plan leaves the door open to do so if not enough people volunteer.

In a first step beginning next year, the government plans to send questionnaires to young men and women turning 18 about their willingness and ability to serve Starting in mid-2027, young men will be required to undergo medical examinations, though not to sign up for the military.

"I think what is happening now is above all preparation for compulsory service that is possible later, because not only was compulsory service suspended 14 years ago, but also the whole apparatus to administer compulsory service was scrapped," Mr. Wiegold said.

There's widespread scepticism in Merz's conservative bloc that some kind of conscription can be avoided. It's shared by the head of the Bundeswehr-Verband, essentially a union for service members.

"We must not suggest to people in this country that this growth will certainly happen voluntarily – I strongly doubt that," its head, Col. André Wüstner, said in an TV interview, suggesting that Germany should move "step by step" to compulsory service.

Charm offensive

Wiegold noted that the military has had a different status in Germany than in countries such as Britain, France and the U.S. because of the country's history. But the invasion of Ukraine means that "the perception of the Bundeswehr as an important element of Germany has become much greater."

Authorities have worked to raise esteem for military service. Ads exhorting people to consider joining the military have shown up on pizza boxes, kebab wrappers and elsewhere. The Bundeswehr has sent personalised postcards to 16 and 17 year-olds pointing to career opportunities. Its social media efforts include a "Bundeswehr career" channel on TikTok.

In June, Germany marked an annual "veterans' day" for the first time.

One of the newly trained recruits in Duesseldorf, a 21-year-old woman who like others was only permitted to give her first name, Lina, said that the state of the world "is getting ever more tense and, if no one goes into this service, who will do it?"

Two for the road



Canine cruise: A motorist with a dog wades through a flooded road, following heavy rain intensified by Super Typhoon Ragasa, in Apalit, Pampanga province in the Philippines on Tuesday. REUTERS

In China visit, U.S. lawmaker says both sides 'talking past each other'

Associated Press
BEIJING



Stabilise ties: U.S. Rep. Adam Smith (left) shakes hands with Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi in Beijing on Tuesday. REUTERS

The United States and China are "talking past each other" on key issues, according to a U.S. lawmaker leading a bipartisan congressional delegation visiting Beijing on Tuesday – the first visit from the House of Representatives to China since 2019.

Led by Rep. Adam Smith, a Democrat on the House Armed Services Committee, the visit comes as tensions have risen between the two countries over trade, technology and opposing views on global conflicts.

The aim of the trip, Mr. Smith said, is to increase dialogue between the two sides. "You have to be willing to start the process of saying, 'Okay, this is where I'm coming from, where are you coming from?' And we're not even at that point yet. We're still sort of talking past each other," Mr. Smith said Tuesday.

The U.S. delegation said it hoped China would take meaningful action to reduce the inflow of fentanyl into the U.S. and they expressed concern over China's restrictions on the global supply of rare earths.

Mr. Smith also said on Tuesday he is concerned that the U.S. and Chinese militaries are coming too close to each other operationally.

In October 2023, the U.S. military said that a Chinese fighter jet came within 10 feet of an American bomber over the South China Sea.

Mr. Smith and Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi struck a warmer tone during a meeting later on Tuesday, with Mr. Wang telling Mr. Smith that China's door was always open to him.

"There are many things that we can work together on because the capabilities of China, the capabilities of the U.S. are the greatest in the world," Mr. Smith said.

Since arriving on Sunday, the delegation met with several top Chinese officials, including Premier Li Qiang, Defense Minister Dong Jun, Vice Premier He Lifeng and National People's Congress Chairman Zhao Leji.

U.S. President Donald Trump said he would meet with Mr. Xi at a regional summit in South Korea in late October and visit China in the "early part of next year," following a lengthy phone call between the two on Friday.

Uganda's authoritarian President, in power since 1986, gears up for re-election

Associated Press
KAMPALA

Uganda's authoritarian leader, who has been in power since 1986, was confirmed on Tuesday as a candidate in January's presidential vote and urged supporters to back his vision for the future.

Electoral officials formally declared President Yoweri Museveni a candidate at an event just outside of Kampala, the Ugandan capital, after more than 2 million supporters signed on to back his bid, according to his party.

Museveni's ruling National Resistance Movement controls the national assembly, which is widely seen as weak and subservient to the presidency. In 2017 lawmakers removed a constitutional age limit on the presidency, leaving room for Museveni, now 81, to run for as long as he wishes.

Museveni told supporters after he was officially nominated that his goal is "to convince the people of Uganda of what has been achieved in the past and what we are planning to do now."

Attracting more foreign investors into the east African country is a priority, he said.

Hundreds were gathering at ceremonial grounds in Kampala to celebrate the nomination later on Tuesday.

Mr. Museveni first took power by force and remained unelected until 1996. Elections since 2001 have been marred by allegations of rigging and interference by the military, now led by Mr. Museveni's son.



Tight hold: Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni addresses the media after being nominated in Wakiso on Tuesday. AFP

Lone Opposition

Museveni's main political opponent, Bobi Wine, is a popular entertainer whose real name is Kyagulanyi Ssentamu. He is scheduled to be nominated later this week.

In the 2021 election, Mr. Wine secured 35% of the vote, while Mr. Museveni, with 58%, posted his worst-ever result, establishing Mr. Wine as the president's most potent challenger in decades. Mr. Wine alleged his victory was stolen through widespread ballot stuffing and other malpractices. Electoral authorities denied the allegations.

The January vote is expected to reprise the contest between the two. Mr. Museveni dismisses his opponent as an agent of foreign interests and has questioned his patriotism.

Yet Mr. Wine has a large following among working-class people in urban areas, and his party has the most seats of any opposition party in the national assembly.

At a press conference on Tuesday, Mr. Museveni said another five-year term in office would allow him to prioritise restoring public safety, fixing transportation infrastructure, and expanding health care and free education.

"There's a bit of crime and impunity," he said, referring to public concerns about a wave of crime in urban areas. His governing National Resistance Movement party would also work on "getting rid of corruption," he said.

Museveni's government is eyeing an economic boom when the country begins shipping crude oil next year, with growth seen leaping to double digits next financial year.

The president's opponents have long accused him of using state patronage and the military to maintain his grip on power, and of using kidnappings and torture against adversaries, claims he denies.

Mr. Museveni has been campaigning in recent days in Kampala as he tries to bolster his chances among people likely to support Mr. Wine, urban residents often without a reliable source of income who hope for a change of government.

Uganda has the second-youngest population in the world, with more than three quarters of its people below the age of 35, according to the U.N. children's agency. It is one of at least four African nations that have agreed to receive migrants deported from the United States.

(With inputs from Reuters)

STIFF BACK

Shreyas informs BCCI he is taking a break from red-ball cricket



FILE PHOTO: K. MURALI KUMAR

India batter Shreyas Iyer has informed the chairman of selectors Ajit Agarkar that he cannot take the rigours of red-ball cricket at this point owing to a stiff back, and also asked not to consider him for the home Test series against West Indies. Shreyas had pulled out of India-A's second four-day 'Test' against Australia-A at Lucknow.

BREACH OF OBLIGATIONS

ICC announces the suspension of USA Cricket's membership



REUTERS

The ICC on Tuesday announced the suspension of USA Cricket's membership with immediate effect, saying the decision has been taken after a "thorough review of affairs". In a media statement, the global governing body blamed USA Cricket for repeated and continued breaches of its obligations as an ICC member.

AUSTRALIA-BOUND

Stokes on track for Ashes opener; Brook appointed vice-captain



AP

England captain Ben Stokes is on track to be fit for the start of the Ashes against Australia. He will have a new vice-captain in Harry Brook. **The squad:** Stokes (Capt.), Archer, Atkinson, Bashir, Bethell, Brook, Carse, Crawley, Duckett, Jacks, Pope, Potts, Root, Smith, Tongue, and Wood.

THRILLERS

Titans get the better of Giants; Pink Panthers edge out U Mumba



SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Telugu Titans defeated Gujarat Giants 30-29 in a close encounter in a PKL-12 match in Jaipur. Bharat Hooda's nine points, coupled with Vijay Malik's seven points, negated Mohammadreza Shadloui's super-sub performance to win. Jaipur Pink Panthers tied with U Mumba 38-38 before winning the Five Raids 6-4.

Men in Blue hold all the aces against upbeat Bangladesh

Suryakumar & Co. will look to continue their T20I supremacy over the neighbour; the Tigers' bowling unit runs into the in-form Abhishek; a trial by spin awaits Litton's men in crucial clash

ASIA CUP

Vivek Krishnan
DUBAI



In focus: Abhishek will look to sizzle again while Litton will aim to inspire his team. AP & AFP

A chance to take a firm step towards the Asia Cup final beckons when India takes on Bangladesh in a Super Four contest at the Dubai International Cricket Stadium on Wednesday. Both teams notched up victories in their opening encounters of this phase.

While Bangladesh sneaked past the Sri Lankans by four wickets in pursuit of 169 on Saturday, India hammered Pakistan by six wickets the following evening.

In theory, India has a distinct advantage going into this clash too. Akin to its primacy in T20I contests against Pakistan, it has a monopoly over its eastern neighbour as illustrated by 16 victories in 17 meetings. Bangladesh's only triumph came at Delhi's Arun Jaitley Stadium in 2019.

So far in the eight-team continental event, Suryakumar Yadav's men haven't really been put to the test.

In the bitterly-contested joust on Sunday, a stand of 72 runs between Sahibzada Farhan and Saim Ayub may have evoked a tinge of anxiety in the Indian camp, but the bowlers clawed their way back and kept Pakistan down to 171 for five.

The key breakthroughs of Farhan and Saim interestingly came from Shivam Dube, a sign that his endeavour in the nets towards becoming a better bowler is paying dividends.

"You could say Dube's spell was the turning point," Suryakumar observed after the win against Pakistan.

"He has been working really hard on his bowling in all the practice sessions. He has always wanted to bowl a minimum of two overs. He got his quota of four overs and he was very happy with the way he delivered. He has got clear plans."

Once the bowlers did their bit, Abhishek Sharma and Shubman Gill tore into the Pakistan attack in an opening partnership of 105 runs. While Gill's stroke-play is a mix of convention and calculated aggression, Abhishek's is all about merciless ball-striking.

For Bangladesh to effectively quell India's batting firepower, Mustafizur Rahman will have to sparkle. Although he has not kicked on in the Indian Premier League (IPL) after his initial success with Sunrisers Hyderabad in 2016, there can be no misgivings about the left-arm pacer's body of work for his national side. In Bangladesh's most recent appearances, against Sri Lanka and Afghanistan, the 30-year-old scalped successive three-wicket hauls.

With the bat, skipper Litton Das, Saif Hassan and Towhid Hridoy will have to show up. In the win against Sri Lanka, Hassan put together 59 runs with Litton in a second-wicket partnership, and added a further 44 with Hridoy to help Bangladesh keep up with the asking rate in a stiff chase.

"Every team has the ability to beat India," Bangladesh coach Phil Simmons proclaimed on the eve of the match. "The game is played on the day. It's not what India has done before. We will hope to force mistakes in India's armoury. That's the way we win games."

Barring the 2007 ODI World Cup, Bangladesh has never managed to throw a spanner in the works on big occasions. Will Wednesday prove any different?

The teams (from): India: Suryakumar Yadav (Capt.), Shubman Gill, Abhishek Sharma, Tilak Varma, Hardik Pandya, Shivam Dube, Axar Patel, Jitesh Sharma (wk), Jasprit Bumrah, Arshdeep Singh, Varun Chakaravarthy, Kuldeep Yadav, Sanju Samson (wk), Harshit Rana, Rinku Singh.

Bangladesh: Litton Das (Capt.), Tanzid Hasan, Jaker Ali (wk), Nurul Hasan (wk), Parvez Hossain Emon (wk), Towhid Hridoy, Mahedi Hasan, Saif Hassan, Mohammad Saifuddin, Nasum Ahmed, Rishad Hossain, Shamim Hossain, Tanzim Hasan Sakib, Mustafizur Rahman, Shoriful Islam, Taskin Ahmed.

Match starts at 8 p.m. IST.

'Samson the best man for the No. 5 slot'

Vivek Krishnan
DUBAI



Samson. AP

There is often a fine balance to tread between demanding flexibility in a batting order and providing players comfort in a particular position. In the current Indian T20I line-up, it seems particularly important to let Sanju Samson know that the team management views him as an essential cog at No. 5.

Having been demoted down the order after Shubman Gill's recall at the start of the Asia Cup, Samson was pushed to No. 3 for the inconsequential game against Oman and hit a scratchy half-century before going back to No. 5 for the clash versus Pakistan. He made 13 off 17 balls before a heave across the line against Haris Rauf clattered his stumps.

On the eve of the Super Four clash against Bangladesh, India assistant coach Ryan ten Doeschate provided reassurance to the 30-year-old. "Samson has had two decent chances and he's still figuring out how to play that role (at No. 5). The surface got a little bit tired in the Pakistan game. We're really looking for a No. 5. We believe Samson is the best man for that job, and we've got no doubt he'll figure out how to play that role in the future," ten Doeschate told reporters on Tuesday.

When the discussion veered to Jasprit Bumrah's rare off-day versus Pakistan, the Dutchman was asked whether the spearhead could be rested for one of India's remaining games in the Super Four given the emphasis on the management of his workload. He was given a break from the group fixture against Oman.

"It's very unlikely that you will go into the last Super Four game knowing you have qualified. So I'd say it is unlikely he'll get a rest. Also bearing in mind we have a Test match (against West Indies) starting on Thursday, so it's actually quite good preparation in terms of workload management," he said.

Today's match

SUPER 4s

Dubai, 8 p.m. IST

HEAD-TO-HEAD T20Is

Played: 17

India 16 | Bangladesh 1

LIVE ON SONY SPORTS TEN 5 (SD & HD) & LIV

Talat-Nawaz duo guides Pakistan home

Dhruva Prasad
ABU DHABI



All-round show: Talat picked up two wickets and remained unbeaten in a tricky chase. AP

On an error-strewn day for specialist batters, the level-headedness of all-rounders Hussain Talat and Mohammad Nawaz saved the day as Pakistan clinched a nervy five-wicket win against Sri Lanka in a Asia Cup Super Four match at the Zayed Cricket Stadium here on Tuesday.

Talat and Nawaz joined forces with Pakistan struggling at 80 for five and blunted the Lankans by attacking their strike weapon, Wanindu Hasaranga. The leg-spinner had his tail up after bamboozling Saim Ayub and skipper Salman Agha with his googlies.

With Pakistan needing 47 from 42 balls with five wickets in hand, Nawaz collected consecutive fours in Hasaranga's third over. Talat added two more boundaries off Hasaranga's final over to deflate the Islanders.

Pakistan sealed the win with Nawaz smashing three sixes off Dushmantha Chameera in the 18th over and kept its campaign alive, leaving Sri Lanka at the mercy of other teams.

Earlier, after electing to bowl, Pakistan's pace trio of Shaheen Afridi, Faheem Ashraf and Haris Rauf utilised the bowling-friendly conditions to rock Sri Lanka early. With the ball holding in the surface, Talat's gentle medium pace also came in handy after the field spread, reducing Sri Lanka to 58 for five inside eight overs.

Afridi accounted for openers Kusal Mendis and Pathum Nissanka, while Rauf sent Kusal Perera back in the final over of the fielding restrictions. Talat's lack of pace was a blessing in disguise for Pakistan as it resulted in Charith Asalanka and Dasun Shanaka perishing off consecutive deliveries.

Kamindu Mendis and Hasaranga went into damage control mode, adding 22 runs off 28 balls, before the latter was bowled by Abrar Ahmed. Kamindu scratched around before reaching his half-century off 43 balls with a miscued pull, and that encapsulated Sri Lanka's innings, which never hit a higher gear.

The scores: Sri Lanka 133/8 in 20 overs (Kamindu Mendis 50, Shaheen Afridi 3/28) lost to Pakistan 138/5 in 18 overs (Hussain Talat 32 n.o., Mohammad Nawaz 38 n.o.); **Toss:** Pakistan. **PoM:** Talat.

Legendary Dickie Bird passes away aged 92

Associated Press
LONDON



Dickie Bird. FILE PHOTO

Harold "Dickie" Bird, the charismatic and much-loved former cricket umpire from England who officiated in 66 Tests and three World Cup finals, has passed away. He was 92.

Bird's death was announced on Tuesday by English club Yorkshire, his home county where he was made president in 2014. Yorkshire said he died "peacefully" at his home. Yorkshire called Bird a "national treasure" who was "known not only for his umpiring excellence but also for his eccentricities and warmth."

"He leaves behind a legacy of sportsmanship, humility, and joy."

Bird's First Class playing career, which included spells with his beloved Yorkshire and Leicestershire, was cut short by injury at the age of 32, with an average of 20.71.

He went on to become arguably the world's most famous umpire, standing in an English County match for the first time in 1970 and his first Test three years later.

In 1975, Bird took charge of the inaugural men's Cricket World Cup final. At his final Test in 1996, a guard of honour by the players of England and India at Lord's reduced him to tears. "Dickie enjoyed an illustrious career as an umpire," the Lord's-based Marylebone Cricket Club said.

The Bird who soared to great heights as an umpire

Ashwin Achal



Applauding greatness: Dickie Bird being given a guard of honour by the Indian team as he takes the field for his last Test as an umpire at Lord's in 1996. GETTY IMAGES

Harold 'Dickie' Bird, who passed away on Tuesday, was destined for a life in sports. His father James Bird, having spent his life toiling hard as a coal miner in Barnsley, was not about to let his son follow that same tough path. "You will play sport for a living. You will not go down that coal mine like I did," James told a young Dickie.

And thus Bird laced up his football boots, playing alongside his close mate Tommy Taylor, who would go on to represent Manchester United and England.

A knee injury forced Bird to trade the tough tackles for cover drives. As a teenager turning out for Barnsley Cricket Club, Bird counted two more celebrities-in-waiting – television presenter Michael Parkinson and legendary England opener Geoffrey Boycott – as teammates.

Bird went on to have a long run in the senior ranks – earning 93 First Class caps for Yorkshire and Leicestershire. It was towards the end of his playing career that he decided to give umpiring an honest shot.

Bird may not have reached the greatest of heights as a cricketer, but with the white coat on, his popularity was unmatched.

A firm, quirky umpire, Bird was loved and respected by players. He stood for tried and tested norms – as evidenced by his reluctance to give leg-before decisions unless the batter was absolutely plumb.

Bird was known to be an 'early bird'. For his first umpiring gig, Bird turned up to the ground even before the gates were opened!

Bird reached the very top of his profession, having officiated in three ODI World Cup finals (1975, 1979 and 1983).

Bird called time on his international umpiring career in 1996, in the India-England Test at Lord's. An emotional Bird was given a guard of honour by the players. The call of duty, however, came ever so quickly, as Bird raised his finger to adjudge Michael Atherton leg-before to Javagal Srinath in the very first over of the match.

INBRIEF



Napoli pips Pisa, returns to the top of Serie A

Leonardo Spinazzola and Lorenzo Lucca scored late as Napoli bounced back from a Champions League defeat at Manchester City to beat Pisa 3-2. Napoli's fourth victory in a row took it back to the top of Serie A, two points ahead of Juventus.

The result: Napoli 3 (Gilmour 39, Spinazzola 73, Lucca 82) bt Pisa 2 (Nzola 60-pen, Lorran 90).

Graham to replace injured Harris for ODI World Cup

Australia all-rounder Grace Harris was on Tuesday ruled out of the upcoming ODI World Cup due to a calf strain. According to media reports, Western Australia all-rounder Heather Graham was called up to replace the big-hitting Harris for the tournament starting in Guwahati on September 30. India and Sri Lanka are co-hosting the tournament.

Rahul Chahar to play for Surrey in final county match

India leg-spinner Rahul Chahar has been drafted into the Surrey squad for its season-ending fixture against Hampshire in the English County season. The game is scheduled to take place at the Utilita Bowl from September 24 to 27.



Teenager Ranveer leads in Andhra Pradesh amateur golf

Ranveer Mitroo found his rhythm and range on the back nine to take the lead on the opening day of the IGU Andhra Pradesh amateur golf championship at the East Point Golf Club in Visakhapatnam on Tuesday. The 16-year-old, playing his first full season on the circuit, shot a five-under 66 for a one-shot lead. Deepak Yadav and Puthuru Raj Kumar were tied second on four-under 67, one ahead of Sukhman Singh.

Leading scores: 66: Ranveer Mitroo; **67:** Deepak Yadav, Puthuru Raj Kumar; **68:** Sukhman Singh; **69:** Akash Kumar, Harman Sachdeva, Arkin Patil, Krish Chawla, Akshat Sharma, Arin Ahuja.

Former Davis Cup-winning captain Pilic passes away

Croatian tennis legend Nikola Pilic, who captained multiple Davis Cup-winning sides and was an early mentor to Novak Djokovic, has died at the age of 87, the country's tennis association announced on Tuesday. In Davis Cup, Pilic guided Germany to victory in 1988, 1989 and 1993, Croatia in 2005, and Serbia in 2010.

Dembele, Bonmati crowned the best in the world

The latter becomes only the third player in the award's history to win three in a row after Platini (1983–85) and Messi (2009-12); the Frenchman pips Barcelona's Yamal for the title; PSG and Arsenal claim the Club of the Year honours

BALLON D'OR

Associated Press
PARIS



Glorious day: Bonmati and Dembele pose with the coveted Ballon d'Or award. AFP

Ousmane Dembele won the Ballon d'Or for leading Paris Saint-Germain to its first Champions League title, and Aitana Bonmati received the women's award for a third successive year.

Dembele succeeded Manchester City midfielder Rodri to become the sixth Frenchman to win it after Raymond Kopa, Michel Platini, Jean-Pierre Papin, Zinedine Zidane and Karim Benzema.

Bonmati won ahead of her Spain teammate Mariona Caldentey. She's only the third player in the award's history to win three in a row after Platini (1983-85) and Lionel Messi (2009-12).

Dembele delivered 35 goals and 16 assists in 53 official matches last season, and was involved in 14 goals (8 goals, 6 assists) in the Champions League in 15 appearances.

Dembele received the Ballon d'Or from former winner Ronaldinho and teared up during his acceptance speech, in which he asked his mother to join him on the stage.

"It's incredible to win a trophy like this," he said in French. "I worked for the team to help win PSG's first Champions League... to then be rewarded with an individual trophy like the Ballon d'Or is truly exceptional."

Dembele won ahead of teenage star Lamine Yamal.

The forward, who turned 18 in July, helped Barcelona win LaLiga and the Copa del Rey last season and reach the Champions League semifinals. Yamal was given the Kopa award for the best under-21 player for the second straight year.

"I need to keep on working to win other awards in the future," Yamal said through a translator.

The winners: Men's and Women's: Ballon d'Or: Ousmane Dembele & Aitana Bonmati.
Kopa Trophy (under-21): Lamine Yamal & Vicky Lopez.
Yashin Trophy (goalkeeper): Gianluigi Donnarumma & Hannah Hampton.
Johan Cruyff coaching award: Luis Enrique & Sarina Wiegman.
Gerd Muller top-scorer honour: Viktor Gyokeres & Ewa Pajor.
Club of the Year: Paris Saint-Germain & Arsenal.
Socrates award (humanitarian work): Xana Foundation.

Super Cup to kick off from Oct. 25 in Goa

Press Trust of India
NEW DELHI

The season-opening Super Cup will kick off from October 25 in Goa, an official of the All India Football Federation (AIFF) said on Tuesday.

All the Indian Super League clubs except Odisha FC have agreed to take part in the tournament. The ISL clubs will be joined by four I-League teams – Inter Kashi, Real Kashmir, Gokulam Kerala FC and Rajasthan United.

The draw of the tournament will be held virtually on Thursday.

The Super Cup has normally been the season-ending tournament but due to the prevailing circumstances, it will open the season this time.

The AIFF has told the clubs that the winning team of the Super Cup will be awarded the AFC Champions League 2 play-off spot for the 2026-27 season.

But the winning team will have to possess the Premier 1 Licence under the Indian Club Licensing Regulations relevant for the 2026-27 season.

Suthar runs through the Australia-A middle-order

CRICKET

Sahil Mathur
LUCKNOW

Manav Suthar's usual modus operandi is to amble in diagonally and float the ball to seed doubt in the batter's mind. On Tuesday, though, the left-arm spinner bowled quicker through the air without losing his bite, and it worked just as well.

He claimed five wickets on the opening day of the second 'Test' between India-A and Australia-A at the Ekana Cricket Stadium to keep the visitor to 350 for nine despite Nathan McSweeney's 74 and Jack Edwards' counterpunching 78-ball 88.

Edwards, batting at No. 7, was the only one to dominate Suthar.

The 25-year-old struck a six over long-on and employed sweeps and reverse sweeps to keep the scoreboard moving. He punished Mohammed Siraj and raced to his fifty in 46 deliveries. Just short of a century, he miscued a leading edge off Gurnoor Brar to mid-off.



Suthar returned with a five-for after tweaking his bowling style slightly. UPCA

For others, Suthar was a handful on the mixed-soil pitch. He bowled Oliver Peake through the gate, had Cooper Connolly caught behind, and dismissed Josh Philippe for 39 with a return catch after being struck for three boundaries in an over.

Skipper Dhruv Jurel's move to place himself at leg-slip worked when Will Sutherland glanced straight to him, before Corey Rocchiccioli's miscued reverse slog sealed Suthar's five-for.

Australia-A captain McSweeney played a patient hand, compiling stands of 86 with Sam Konstas, 46 with Peake, and 52 with Philippe. He eventually fell to Brar for 74, pulling to mid-wicket. Konstas, after dominating in the previous match, was subdued for 49 as Siraj found his edge.

Earlier, Prasidh Krishna removed Campbell Kellaway cheaply, and alongside Siraj, kept the openers quiet with disciplined new-ball spells after opting to field.

But it was Suthar's sustained threat that shaped the day, leaving India-A with the upper hand despite Edwards' flourish.

The scores: Australia-A 350/9 in 84 overs (Sam Konstas 49, Nathan McSweeney 74, Jack Edwards 88, Manav Suthar 5/93) vs India-A; **Toss:** India-A.

Satwik and Chirag eager to climb back to the top

BADMINTON

K. Keerthivasan
CHENNAI

For a pair which reclaimed its World No. 1 ranking in men's doubles badminton as early as May 2024, finishing with a World championships bronze (August 2025) and reaching back-to-back finals at the Hong Kong Open and China Masters (September 2025) wouldn't be considered as a big achievement.

Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty, who have dropped to World No. 6, are aware of the huge expectations and working hard to match them.

"It's not been the most ideal year. Whatever we have been through personally (Satwik's father demise in February) and professionally (Satwik's shoulder injury and Chirag's back issues), we have played much better than our own expectations. In that sense, it's been a good year. A lot of people think we have to keep playing in finals and win titles. A crown is still to be won this season... we are hungry and a title will eventually come," said the 28-year-old Chirag.



The target(s): Chirag and Satwik are looking to be more consistent and also book a place in the World Tour Finals. GETTY IMAGES

The two, encouraged by the positive results, are eager to regain the top ranking and also book a spot in the BWF World Tour Finals (WTF) in Hangzhou from December 17 to 21.

"We want to qualify the World Tour Finals as it is one of the big events on the calendar. We have played in the WTF only once (2021). I think right now we are in a good place to make it. We also want to go deep in the tournament."

For Satwik, too, getting back to World No. 1 is top priority. "We want to play a little more consistently and that has happened in the past few weeks. Of course, getting back to World No. 1 is always there. We have tasted it and want to taste it again," he said.

Sreejesh aspires to coach senior team

HOCKEY

Press Trust of India
NEW DELHI



Sreejesh.
FILE PHOTO: R.V. MOORTHY

Legendary goalkeeper P.R. Sreejesh says he hopes to realise his dream of becoming chief coach of the senior national team in the next five years, by which time he expects to gain the required maturity while working with juniors.

"Coaching is new to me. I played hockey for 25 years. So juniors is the right place for me to learn. I don't have the patience for the sub-junior level where you need to teach basics," Sreejesh said.

"From a player to becoming a coach is a transition. I feel juniors is the best platform where I can learn a lot of things. So right now I am in that process. I need that maturity of becoming a senior coach.

"I can't suddenly jump into that. But definitely that's a future target. I am doing my bit, I have done FIH Level 3 coaching course."

"Five to six years down the line I think I will have the experience to head the Indian men's team as coach," said the talismanic custodian,

'Pragg has been amazing this year'

CHESS

Tarun Shastry
CHENNAI



The big click! Anand feels that Vaishali won the FIDE Grand Swiss tournament as she was relaxed and free. @VISHY64THEKING

Five-time World champion Viswanathan Anand feels R. Praggnanandhaa has made a remarkable turnaround this year, showcasing "technical excellence" as well as strong "psychological resilience."

Anand, speaking on the sidelines at an event where he was honoured with the Super Chennai-Icon of the Month award, also shared his thoughts on reigning champion D. Gukesh's dip in form and R. Vaishali's Candidates qualification.

"Praggnanandhaa has been amazing this year," Anand said. "Everything is coming together... his preparation is top-tier, and psychologically, he's competing and pushing hard. It's a combination of factors that are working well.

"He did struggle a bit in Tashkent but his approach to each game – the calculated risks he takes, match strategy and how he adjusts to each opponent – has improved."

Shifting his focus to Gukesh, the 55-year-old admitted that the 19-year-old was going through a rough patch and called it a learning curve. "He's certainly having a bumpy run at the moment. I was optimistic after Norway, but it's been a bit tougher since then. At this level, you either play well or you don't – that's all. Gukesh is adjusting, learning, and adapting to the pressures of being the World champion. That, in itself, is a new and demanding experience."

What has impressed Anand the most about Gukesh is the mindset and willingness to keep fighting. "I really appreciate the fact that he's not hiding from new challenges. He's continuing to push himself and that's what matters. He has a whole year ahead to prepare, improve and defend his crown. His current form will not define where he will be next year.

About Vaishali, Anand said: "She made a remarkable recovery after the tournament in Chennai. I think she felt more relaxed and free. Sometimes, when the pressure is off, you just start playing better... that's exactly what happened with her. It was a fantastic result and qualifying for the Candidates is a great achievement."

AFA's venue manager visits Kochi stadium

FOOTBALL

Sports Bureau



Cabrera with sports minister Abdurahiman at the Jawaharlal Nehru international stadium.
R.K. NITHIN

Hector Daniel Cabrera, the venue manager of Argentina Football Association, paid a visit to the Jawaharlal Nehru international stadium in Kochi on Tuesday, inspected the facilities and assessed the security at the venue that will host Argentina during its visit to Kerala in November this year.

He was accompanied by Kerala Sports Minister V. Abdurahiman and officials from Reporter Broadcasting Company (RBC) which is sponsoring the Argentina team's visit to Kerala.

Hector, later held talks with the sports minister and officials of RBC.

The opponent for the friendly match against Argentina has not been finalised. The RBC has had preliminary discussions with a few countries and among them, Australia has showed interest to play against Argentina in Kerala. A final decision regarding this will be made soon.

No better person than Jayasuriya to guide Sri Lanka cricket

The former captain talks about his journey as Oman's head coach, being the manager of the Sri Lankan team that won the 1996 World Cup, and his regret at getting out on 94 in the second innings of a Lord's Test after a century in the first

INTERVIEW

DULEEP MENDIS

Vivek Krishnan
DUBAI

Among the eminently stylish cricketers that Sri Lanka has produced over the years, Duleep Mendis was an early pioneer. In the 1970s and 80s, when the island nation was making a foray into international cricket, Mendis was a leading figure in some of its noteworthy deeds. He smashed a 57-ball 64 in Sri Lanka's first-ever ODI win, against India in the 1979 World Cup at Manchester.

It was with Mendis as captain that Sri Lanka registered its maiden Test win, also against India, in Colombo in 1985. By then he had already smashed hundreds in both innings of a Test against India in Madras, and narrowly missed the feat at Lord's when he hammered 111 and 94 against England in the summer of 1984.

After retirement, he went on to be manager of the Sri Lankan team that won the 1996 ODI World Cup in the subcontinent, and also served as chief selector in his country. Since 2012, Mendis' wisdom and experience have been expended on guiding Oman as head coach.

In an exclusive interview with *The Hindu* during Oman's maiden Asia Cup campaign, which saw the men from the Middle East run India close in a 21-run defeat, he revealed how the current stint came about, and reminisced about some of his illustrious achievements as a player and manager with the Sri Lankan team. *Excerpts:*

How did your association with Oman cricket begin?

When I finished my stint with Sri Lanka cricket, I was just taking things easy. Pankaj Khimji (chairman of the Oman cricket association) was the one who got in touch with me in Sri Lanka. He inquired whether I could come and help to build Oman cricket.

At that time, I had no clue about the standard of Oman cricket or anything like that. He was insistent that I come and improve the standard. I started on an assignment basis. I did that for almost one-and-a-half years. And then in 2013, I signed on a long-term basis, and then I started living there. So, that is how I started.

Oman gained Associate status in 2014. It has played in three T20 World Cups. It played in the Asia Cup for the first time. What would you say about the progress from where you started to where it is now?

Well, I would start by saying that I was fortunate to work with a cricket board that gave full support and encouragement. I would say there were a few hiccups during this period of time, but on the whole, we were ascending. We were climbing the ladder. As you say, we have participated in a few T20 World Cup tournaments.

We got the ODI status (in 2019), which was a very big thing for Oman. And also we have built the infrastructure. We installed new lights and grandstands at the ground and we have a newly-done indoor facility. It has seven pitches -- two are fast, three are normal and two are slow tracks. The indoor facility is fully air-conditioned.

The infrastructure paved the way for me to go ahead and build the team. As far as performances, there were one or two major ones. We beat Ireland, one of the Test-playing countries, in a 50-over contest in 2023. People then started recognising Oman.

You mentioned that it has been an ascending journey. In terms of the road ahead, obviously there is the T20 World Cup next year in India and Sri Lanka. Any specific targets?

We are playing the T20 World Cup qualifiers in Oman in October. The top three teams will get into the World Cup. And in preparation for that, we have invited Kerala to play against us. We have also played against Karnataka in preparation for previous tournaments. These domestic teams from India are very competitive. When you play and perform against them, you get confidence.

There is a gulf between the Test teams and the Associate nations. You were a key part of Sri Lanka getting Test status in 1982 and climbing the ladder. In your experience, what is the way around the lack of opportunities for Associates and how can they improve?

I have always said that you have to play with better sides if you want to improve. I will always say that the Associate members should get an opportunity with the big boys. Fortunately in Asia, we have five Test-playing countries. The Associates must get the opportunity to play against some of these five teams. If you want to improve, you have to get beaten first. Only then will you learn the lessons. It doesn't have to be their main side. It can be against the 'A' teams.

> T20 cricket is being played all over the world. But at the same time, I would like to see Test cricket as number one. You have to get the correct balance

You donned various hats in Sri Lankan cricket. What was the most fulfilling accomplishment?

Well, the biggest achievement was the team winning the 1996 World Cup when I was manager. Winning the World Cup is the pinnacle. That was the greatest achievement. And then there are a few other Tests that were special. At Chepauk, I got two hundreds in a Test. And then almost repeated that at Lord's.

I would also say registering the first Test win against Kapil Dev's team in Sri Lanka. So those were some of the highlights of my days with Sri Lanka cricket.

In your playing days, you were known for your flamboyant batting and the ability to hit sixes when bats weren't as good. How did you hone these skills?

These things came naturally. But I would say these days, the bats are different. You can see many sixes hit these days. The techniques are also a bit different. But if you talk about me, I would say that it was instinctive. I was always on the attacking side. It was my style as a batsman and even as a captain.

You mentioned missing out on twin hundreds at Lord's. You would have been part of an elusive club if you had done that. Is that a regret?

I must say I regret a lot the fact that I missed those few runs in the second innings. Even then I regretted it after the innings. And I continue to regret it now to be very frank.

You had some great innings against India in your time. What was it about the Indian bowling that you scored a lot of runs in those contests?

I don't know for what reason, but I always had a liking for India. The runs always came against the Indians. It just happened. It was perhaps just a coincidence that whenever I played against India, I scored runs. I was so grateful for that.

What is your take on Sri Lankan cricket right now? It has had its disappointments in recent years. Do you think there are major concerns to sort out?

Before I say anything, I must mention that I have been away from Sri Lankan cricket for almost 12 to 13 years now. But from outside, when I look at the team, I think there are a good bunch of young cricketers with a lot of talent.

They have Sanath Jayasuriya as coach with them. And you cannot get anyone better than Sanath. Because he knows Sri Lankan cricket inside-out. He has performed to the maximum in international cricket. And the boys look up to him. That is very important. Whatever he says, the boys will accept. And you can't get a better person than Sanath to guide them.

It is the right time for Sanath to be there with them. They will go from strength to strength.

What is your view on the state of international cricket? There seem to be concerns about the increasing influence of T20 cricket...

I would say that T20 cricket is quite popular and it is going very strong. There are advantages and drawbacks.

The fielding standards have improved. In Test matches back in the day, we would get about 80 runs in a session and be very happy about it. But now, you see teams going past 100 runs in one session.

You see some entertaining cricket. The negative side is for people who like five days of Test cricket and would like to see a batter building an innings. Or they would like to see a bowler working out a batter and planning a dismissal.

You can look at it from two different angles. Yes, T20 cricket is being played all over the world. But at the same time, I would like to see Test cricket as number one. You have to get the correct balance.





THE HINDU ARCHIVES AND GETTY IMAGES