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**PIONEER IN SHORT**

**HYD TO BE A GLOBAL CITY UNDER CM'S LEADERSHIP: TUMMALA**  
 Minister Tummalu Nageswara Rao announced that Hyderabad will enter a great era under the leadership of CM Revanth Reddy. He participated in the Somajiguda booth level meeting on Thursday. Speaking on the occasion, Minister Tummalu gave instructions to the booth-level activists to work comprehensively to achieve victory in the byelections. After asking about the local problems, Minister Tummalu assured that the main problems would be resolved immediately. He advised them to prepare for the elections while solving the problems.

**TAIWAN SEES INDIA AS KEY ECONOMIC PARTNER**  
 As global power dynamics undergo significant changes—with escalating trade tensions, rising US tariffs, and India deepening its engagement with the Global South—Taiwan has reiterated its long-term commitment to India. Speaking at the Taiwan Expo 2025 in New Delhi, James Huang, Chairman of TAITRA emphasized that the Taiwan-India economic relationship will continue to strengthen...

**SENSITIVE CASES TO BE PRIORITISED, SAYS SC**  
 The Supreme Court (SC) expressed serious concern over the discontinuation of the practice of holding trials on a day-to-day basis in important or sensitive cases, observing that a tradition that existed three decades ago has now been "given a complete go-by". "We sincerely believe that it is high time that the courts revert to that practice," said the bench comprising Justices JB Pardiwala and KV Viswanathan.

**INDIA VS SRI LANKA: FINAL TEST FOR JITESH AS FINISHER**  
 Sanju Samson being an apparent middle-order misfit will certainly worry head coach Gautam Gambhir and the Indian team management might be tempted to check out Jitesh Sharma during their inconsequential final Super 4 encounter against Sri Lanka in the Asia Cup on Friday. Once India won against Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, which had lost both its Super 4 encounters against Bangladesh and Pakistan...

**QUOTE OF THE DAY**



**SEEDS DETERMINE YIELD, ENHANCE THE EFFICIENCY OF FERTILISERS AND IRRIGATION, AND STAND AT THE CENTRE OF THE AGRICULTURAL CYCLE. HIGH-YIELDING VARIETIES ARE ESSENTIAL TO SUSTAIN FARMERS' INCOMES**

— N UTTAM KUMAR REDDY, IRRIGATION AND CIVIL SUPPLIES MINISTER



**Uttam foresees TG as India's seed hub**  
**Minister highlights innovation, exports and farmer incomes**

**PNS ■ Hyderabad**  
 Irrigation and Civil Supplies Minister Capt. N Uttam Kumar Reddy on Thursday said Telangana must strengthen research, expand exports and upgrade infrastructure to remain the "Seed Bowl of India." Addressing the Hyderabad Seed Conclave 2025, organised by the Seedmen Association at Hotel Dasapalla, Jubilee Hills, he described

**HEAVY RAINS CM directs officials to be on alert, monitor continuously**  
**PNS ■ Hyderabad**  
 Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy has alerted all departments on the Meteorological Department's report that there will be heavy rains for the next two days. The Chief Minister has ordered to be constantly alert as there is a possibility of heavy rains in view of the depression in the Bay of Bengal. He has asked the Collectors of all districts to be on high alert and review the situation. He has advised to evacuate people in low-lying areas in advance and shift them to rehabilitation centres if necessary. He has asked to examine all the causes, identify areas where flood water will accumulate on the roads and stop traffic in advance. He has asked the Electricity department to take special care and take steps to ensure uninterrupted power supply. In addition to removing hanging wires, he has asked to ensure that no lives are lost. He has also asked educational institutions to be alert to the rains despite the Dasara holidays. He has advised people to come on the roads only if necessary during the rains. The Chief Minister has ordered GHMC, HYDRAA, NDRF and SDRF teams to be on alert in Hyderabad.

**Amid H1B concerns.. Visa Balaji in focus!**  
**People queue up to Chilkur temple for blessings**  
**PNS ■ Hyderabad**  
 Amid concerns over US President Donald Trump's proclamation imposing a USD 1,00,000 fee on H1B visas, a famous Balaji temple on the outskirts of Hyderabad is in focus. Known as the 'Visa Balaji temple', the shrine located in Chilkur has been popular for over two decades, as many devotees believed that they would get a visa if they worship here. Vinay, a technology analyst in a private company and an H1B aspirant, who visited the temple after not getting a

**Will launch breakfast plan in TG: Revanth**  
**Tamil Nadu CM Stalin says TN to follow Telangana schemes**  
**PNS ■ Chennai**  
 Chief Minister MK Stalin and his Telangana counterpart Revanth Reddy on Thursday together inaugurated the expansion of a Tamil Nadu scheme of Rs 1,000 per month financial support to college students. Speaking on the occasion, Reddy said he drew inspiration from the Tamil Nadu CM's Breakfast scheme and described it as heart-touching, as it helps the children of the poorest of the poor. He said his government would implement the breakfast scheme from the next academic year and added that the entire country should emulate TN's education initiatives. Reddy said he drew inspiration from the Tamil Nadu CM's Breakfast scheme and described it as heart-touching, as it helps the children of the poorest of the poor.

**Nobel experts aren't betting on Trump for Peace Prize**

**PNS ■ Oslo**  
 US President Donald Trump will not win the Nobel Peace Prize, opens new tab he so covets as he is dismantling the international world order the award committee cherishes, according to experts. His lobbying is likely to be counterproductive too. The award-giving committee prefers to work independently, one of its members said, sheltering from outside pressures. Instead, the five-strong body may wish to highlight a humanitarian organisation working in an environment that has become more challenging partly due to Trump's US aid cuts. The announcement is on October 10. This could mean an award for the UN refugee agency, UNHCR, the UN children's agency, UNICEF, the Red Cross, Doctors Without Borders, or a local grassroots group such as Sudan's Emergency Response Rooms, among others. "He has no chance to get the Peace Prize at all," said Asle Sveen, a historian of the award, citing Trump's support for Israel in the war in Gaza and his attempts at rapprochement with Russian President Vladimir Putin, among the reasons. Alfred Nobel's will, the award's foundation, says the award should go to the person "who has done the most or best to advance fellowship among nations". That is something Trump is not doing, according to Nina Graeger, director of the Peace Research Institute Oslo. "He has withdrawn the US from the World Health Organisation and from the Paris Accord on climate, he has initiated a trade war on old friends and allies," she told Reuters. "That is not exactly what we think about when we think about a peaceful President or someone who really is interested in promoting peace." To be sure, many surprising candidates have won the Nobel Peace Prize in the past - Barack Obama less than eight months after he became US President or US National Security Adviser Henry Kissinger at the height of the Vietnam War. "Sometimes people have received the Peace Prize in spite of a brutal record, an authoritarian record, a background where they've contributed to evil, or at least wrongdoing," said Henrik Syse, a former member of the Norwegian Nobel Committee. "But they had explicitly seen the things that they had contributed to were wrong, and therefore took the steps necessary to correct these wrongs," he said, citing the example of FW de Klerk, the last apartheid-era leader of South Africa, who won the prize jointly with Nelson Mandela in 1993. Should Trump be able to put pressure on Putin to end the war in Ukraine or on Israeli leader Benjamin Netanyahu to stop the war in Gaza, he could well be discussed as a possible candidate, Graeger said.

**TG to acquire L&T's stake in Hyd Metro Rail project for ₹ 2,000 cr**  
**Agrees to take over company's debt of ₹ 13k crore**

**PNS ■ Hyderabad**  
 Telangana government has agreed to take over Phase-I of Hyderabad Metro Rail project from L&T Group by paying Rs 2,000 crore for the equity in the concessionaire L&T Metro Rail Hyderabad Ltd, official sources said on Thursday. It was agreed that the state government would also take over the company's debt of Rs 13,000 crore, they said. L&T has about 90 per cent equity in the project. Last month, the infrastructure major expressed its desire to offload its stake, the Metro Rail project, about 70 KM, to either the state or central government through a new Special Purpose vehicle (SPV), citing operational and accumulated losses. Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy, along with senior officials of the state government, held a meeting with L&T group CMD S N Subrahmanyam and others on Thursday to discuss the way forward. "After detailed negotiations, to expedite the phase 2 approval by GoI, it was agreed in principle that the State government would take over the Phase-I Metro Rail project by taking over the debt of the project, which now stands at about Rs 13,000 cr. Further, the state government will pay about Rs 2,000 cr to L&T towards their equity investment in L&TMRHL as a one-time settlement," sources said.



Chief Minister Revanth Reddy with L&T officials at a meeting held in Hyderabad on Thursday

**Notification issued for new liquor shops**  
**PNS ■ Hyderabad**

The government has issued a notification for new liquor shops in Telangana. Applications will be accepted from Friday (September 26) to October 18. Liquor shops will be allotted through a draw on October 23. The license period for new shops has been fixed from December 1, 2025 to November 30, 2027. The tender fee has also been fixed at Rs 3 lakh. Earlier, the tender fee was Rs 2 lakh, but now it has been increased by an additional Rs 1 lakh to Rs 3 lakh. Also, the facility of paying the fee in six installments has been notified instead of all at once.

**'People frustrated with Cong rule, hoping for return of KCR'**  
**Get ready for local body polls, KTR urged BRS leaders**

**PNS ■ Hyderabad**  
 Asserting that the people of Telangana are frustrated with the rule of the Congress party, BRS working president K.T.Rama.Rao has called upon the party leaders to work concerted for the success of the party in the soon-to-be-held local body elections. He said that the people are hopefully looking for the return of BRS president K.Chandrasekhara Rao to power. Addressing party leaders through a teleconference on Thursday, along with Harish Rao, he urged the party cadre to be ready for local body elections, whenever they are held. He also asked them to hold preparatory meetings at the local level to enhance winning chances for the party. He also asked them to select candidates based on their winning chances and their reach and good will among people. Saying that anti-government sentiment is building among people for its failure on all fronts, KTR asked the party leaders to create awareness among people by highlighting the failures of the government. He alleged that the government failed to fulfill the promises given during the elections. "While highlighting the failures of the government...the party leaders should also remind the people of the welfare measures implemented during the BRS rule," KTR urged the party leaders.

**Bhu Bharati staff recognised as contract employees**

**PNS ■ Hyderabad**  
 The Revanth Reddy government has taken a key decision during the Dasara Navratri festival. It has announced Dasara gifts for many employees. As part of this, the government has recognised Bhu Bharati Field Technical Staff as contract employees in the State. With this, the government has taken a decision to convert 708 FTSS into TGTS contract employees. The government has also issued orders on Thursday increasing the salaries of these employees. In this context, Konagala Mahesh, Honorary President of the Contract Employees Association, thanked CM Revanth Reddy.

**Nagarjuna moves Delhi High Court**

**PNS ■ Hyderabad**  
 Tollywood's famous actor and hero Akkineni Nagarjuna has approached the Delhi High Court. Hero Nagarjuna has filed a petition in the Delhi High Court seeking a ban on the use of his name along with his photo without his permission. This petition was heard by Justice Tejas Kariya on Thursday.

**BATHUKAMMA FESTIVAL**

## Ministers' focus on making it a grand event

PNS ■ Hyderabad

Ministers Jupally Krishna Rao, Konda Surekha, Seethakka have instructed the officials to make the Bathukamma celebrations, which are planned to be held at Saroor Nagar Stadium on the 29th of this month with the aim of setting a Guinness World Record, a success and to make arrangements in that direction. The ministers held a review with the officials at the Dr BR Ambedkar Secretariat.

In the review, the ministers said that there will be a Bathukamma Carnival on the Tank Bund on the 27th of this month, bike and cycle rallies on the 28th, a possible Bathukamma Guinness Book of World Record setting with 10,000 women at the Saroor Nagar Stadium on the 29th,



and Saddula Bathukamma programme on the Tank Bund on the 30th.

Sanitation and road repairs should be carried out in the areas surrounding the Tank Bund. Along with the Tank Bund, PV Marg, the Secretariat, and the Saroor Nagar Stadium should be decorated with electric lights. Measures should be taken to prevent accidents in the areas where Bathukammas are

immersed, the ministers told the officials. They directed that historical places and major junctions in Hyderabad should be decorated with beautiful designs and electric lights to reflect the grandeur of the festival and that it should be celebrated in a grand manner. They advised that tourism, culture, GHMC, HMDA, police, Transco and other departments should work in coordination.

They suggested that strict arrangements should be made to ensure that 10,000 people will participate in Bathukamma celebrations at Saroor Nagar Stadium on the 29th of this month and a 63-foot-tall Bathukamma should be set up and included in the Guinness Book of Records.

The SERF officials should take the responsibility of transporting women belonging to self-help groups, and in addition, the Hyderabad, Ranga Reddy and Yadadri collectors should coordinate to bring the rest.

They also said that steps should be taken to ensure that thousands of women, including folk and tribal artists, take Bathukamma in a procession and immerse it in the Tank Bund.

## Buy indigenous goods, Bandi's appeal to people

■ Says farmers are happy with GST reforms

PNS ■ Hyderabad

Union Minister of State for Home Affairs Bandi Sanjay Kumar has called upon people for using indigenous goods. He said that by buying goods made in the country, local companies and small businesses will be strengthened and job opportunities will increase. He said that the local economy will be strengthened and money will circulate within the country.

The Minister asked everyone to fully support the programmes being taken by Prime Minister Narendra Modi to develop it into a self-reliant country (Atma Nirbhar Bharat).

As a result of GST reforms, the price of Swaraj mahindra tractors has come down from Rs 80,000 to Rs 40,000,



bought was Rs 10.5 lakh, but now it is Rs 9.8 lakh, which has saved Rs 70,000, said Akhil, a farmer from Makkapalli.

Anil Kumar, a farmer from Lingapur, Manakondur mandal, said that he has saved Rs 50,000 due to GST. Venkatesh Yadav from Nustulapur said that he has saved Rs 50,000 by buying a tractor.

Swaraj tractor dealer Venkat said that with the GST reduction, the average price of various types of Swaraj tractors has been reduced by Rs 40 to Rs 80,000 each. He said that tractor sales have increased significantly and the farmers are also very happy.

Speaking on the occasion, Bandi Sanjay urged everyone around them to explain the benefits of GST.

and many farmers have bought them. The leaders of the Swaraj Tractors Dealers Association handed over tractors to the farmers through the hands of the Union Minister. On this occasion, Bandi Sanjay spoke to the farmers and dealers and enquired about the price reduction on each tractor. Due to the GST reforms, the price of the tractor he



### DGP's warning on social media posts

PNS ■ Hyderabad

Telangana DGP Jitender has given a strong warning to those who are committing cyber crimes on social media. The DGP has issued a statement to this effect. He has ordered to open rowdy sheets, history sheets and suspect sheets against those who are committing cyber crimes. DGP Jitender has issued orders to all police stations in Telangana to this effect.

It is known that cyber crimes are increasing on social media recently. Many innocent people are falling victim to them.

In this order, the Telangana Police is taking an iron fist on cyber crimes. In this context, DGP Jitender has ordered that those who are committing cyber crimes should not be left behind under any circumstances. The police believe that by doing this, cyber crimes can be curbed.

**KALESHWARAM CASE**

## Smita Sabharwal gets relief in High Court



PNS ■ Hyderabad

IAS officer Smita Sabharwal got relief in the Telangana High Court. The High Court has issued orders not to take action on the basis of the PC Ghosh Commission report on Kaleshwaram. It has taken up the case along with the petitions already filed saying that the commission did not seek her explanation. The case has been adjourned and the next hearing will be on October 7.

Meanwhile, a hearing was held in the High Court on Thursday on Smita Sabharwal's petition. She filed a petition seeking to quash

the PC Ghosh Commission report. Smita Sabharwal alleged that her explanation was not sought in the investigation on Kaleshwaram and that 8B and 8C notices were not given. However, the PC Ghosh Commission mentioned Smita Sabharwal's actions in the report.

The Ghosh Commission said that Smita Sabharwal reviewed the Kaleshwaram structures. The Commission has accused Smita Sabharwal of repeatedly sending feedback to the then CM KCR from some districts. The Commission recalled that Smita Sabharwal had visited the three barrages on several occasions as Special Secretary to the Chief Minister's Office. The Commission also said that Smita Sabharwal played a key role in issuing administrative permissions for Kaleshwaram.

The Commission report has stated that action should be taken against Smita Sabharwal for not presenting the facts before the Cabinet.

## Cong sure to win Jubilee Hills bypoll: TPCC chief

PNS ■ Hyderabad

TPCC chief Mahesh Kumar Goud expressed confidence that the Congress will definitely win the Jubilee Hills byelections. He said that they are implementing welfare and development for everyone in Jubilee Hills, not just for a single community. Surveys are being conducted on the Jubilee Hills byelections, he said and gave clarity that if anyone is ahead in the survey, they will be given seats.

He said that Telangana



has developed a lot during the one-year Congress rule. Mahesh Kumar Goud chatted with the media in Delhi on Thursday. He reminded that many people including CN Reddy, Baba Fasiuddin, Naveen Yadav, Bonthu

Rammohan are asking for Jubilee Hills tickets. He said that there is a demand to give Jubilee Hills tickets to the locals.

A decision will be made based on the results of the ministerial committee and the survey. He reminded that the Congress had won the cantonment by-elections in the past.

The TPCC chief said that the ministerial face-to-face programme at Gandhi Bhavan is going very well. He said that 22 observers will tour Telangana on October 4.



### Gutta stresses on the importance mother tongue

PNS ■ Hyderabad

Telangana Legislative Council Chairman Gutta Sukhender Reddy emphasized the importance of instilling mother tongue and culture in students from an early age. He was speaking at the launch of the book "Telangana Bhasha - Samagra Parishilana" (Telangana Language - A Comprehensive Review) alongside Planning Board Vice Chairman Dr. G. Chinna Reddy.

He expressed concern that children are being distanced from their mother tongue from a young age, with many being scolded for speaking in Telugu. He stressed that preserving the mother tongue is crucial

and can be achieved within school premises, particularly through teachers.

Without language and culture, relationships between teachers, parents, and students become artificial, he noted.

He pointed out that while government schools promote mother tongue preservation, private schools do not, highlighting a significant disparity.

Speaking on the occasion, Dr. Chinna Reddy asserted that the Telugu language originated in the Telangana region, not Andhra Pradesh. He mentioned that Telugu has existed in Telangana since the Satavahana era, with Urdu influence altering the dialect over time.

### Centre defends permanent commission policy

PNS ■ New Delhi

The Centre on Thursday defended its policy on the grant of permanent commission to Short Service Commission women officers and said the apex court's verdicts on the aspect were being followed without discrimination. A bench of Justices Surya Kant, Ujjal Bhuyan and N Kotiswar Singh reserved its verdict on a batch of 84 officers of the Army. The officers have challenged the denial of grant of permission commission.

### Group1 exams: Govt to give appointment letters tomorrow

PNS ■ Hyderabad

With the High Court suspending the single judgement subjecting it to final verdict on appeals, the Telangana government has decided to give appointment letters to 562 candidates who were selected for Group 1 posts..



The Chief Minister will hand over the appointment letters to the successful candidates on 27th at Silpa Kala Vedika. The Chief Secretary reviewed the arrangements for the programme to be held on Saturday and ordered that the certificate verification should be completed by Friday.

## Hyd to be a global city under CM's leadership: Tummala

PNS ■ Hyderabad

Minister Tummala Nageswara Rao announced that Hyderabad will enter a great era under the leadership of CM Revanth Reddy. He participated in the Somajiguda booth level meeting on Thursday.

Speaking on the occasion, Minister Tummala gave instructions to the booth-level activists to work comprehensively to achieve victory in the byelections. After asking about the

local problems, Minister Tummala assured that the main problems would be resolved immediately. He advised them to prepare for the elections while solving the problems.

The Minister stated that many welfare schemes are being implemented under the leadership of Chief Minister Revanth Reddy, and in addition, special programmes are being undertaken for the comprehensive development of Hyderabad.



### FROM PAGE - 1

#### TG to acquire...

The conditions of the takeover shall be worked out with mutual discussions, and the process will be carried forward in a carefully calibrated and mutually agreeable manner, duly ensuring all legal and statutory compliances, they further said.

According to the latest annual report of L&T Metro Rail, the revenue from operations and other income for the financial year 2024-25 was Rs 1,108.54 crore as against Rs 1,399.31 crore in the previous financial year, registering a decrease of 21 per cent in revenue. The loss before and after tax was Rs 625.88 crore for the financial year under review, as against the loss before and after tax of Rs 555.04 crore for the previous financial year, registering an increase of 13 per cent in loss. The company signed the Concession Agreement with the then Government of

Andhra Pradesh (undivided) in September 2010 and completed the financial closure for the Project in March 2011.

A consortium of 10 banks led by the State Bank of India has sanctioned the entire debt requirement of the project. Due to the delay and cost overrun, the concessionaire had submitted claims amounting to Rs. 3,756 crores to the state government in March 2017, which further enlarged to Rs 5,000 crore by the time the metro was fully commissioned in February 2020.

L&T Metro Rail also expressed its inability to participate in the Chief Minister warning of a GenZ movement. Kishan said it comes under anti national posture. He questioned KTR by asking him 'Are you wishing Nepal like situation in India'.

#### Kishan slams...

Asserting that the central government doesn't provide

funds blindly, he said that the state government has to give details as to how it is going to mobilise funds. He stressed that there should be a consensus Metro from L&T, and asked for a tri party agreement on the issue. Kishan said that the CBI probe issue on Kaleshwaram corruption has reached the centre and the agency is seriously pursuing it.

He clarified that the BJP will not join with any party and at the same time criticised the Congress party for its double standards. Taking serious note of BRS working president K.T.Ramarao's statement warning of a GenZ movement, Kishan said it comes under anti national posture. He questioned KTR by asking him 'Are you wishing Nepal like situation in India'.

#### Uttam foresees...

"Seeds determine yield, enhance the efficiency of fer-

tilisers and irrigation, and stand at the centre of the agricultural cycle. High-yielding varieties are essential to sustain farmers' incomes," he remarked.

He praised Agriculture Minister Tummala Nageswara Rao, describing him as unique among Indian politicians for being a hands-on farmer himself. "He understands farmers' hardships, is sympathetic to them and to seed companies, and under his leadership Telangana has achieved record production in both kharif and rabi seasons since December 2023," Uttam Kumar Reddy said. He added that Telangana had emerged as the number one paddy-producing state in the country under Nageswara Rao's stewardship.

#### Amid H1B concerns...

"We will only get to know

at the next lottery. And the lottery is always a matter of luck. Whatever the stakes may be, I am here to believe in Balaji, and I hope he guides me," he said.

As per their belief, the devotees perform 11 or 108 'pradakshinas' (circumambulation) around the temple for their wish to be fulfilled. "At that time, there was a boom of foreign travel - I am talking about the 1990s. There were a lot of engineering colleges around here, like the famous Chaitanya Bharati (Institute of Technology). The students used to come here and pray with 11 rounds, they got the visa, and then they gave the name Visa Balaji," said CS Rangarajan, chief priest of the temple.

Many devotees share stories of their visa dreams coming true after worshipping in this temple.

"I got my H1B on 19 September, and I had my

interview on 18th. It was a normal interview. They asked me a single question, and they told me my visa is approved. This was my H1B renewal. I came to Chilkur Balaji on the 10th. Yeah, it's always been a lucky charm for me," said Sai Rowtik, a Game Developer.

Not just the aspirants, but also parents of those already in the US visit the temple, praying that their children continue to receive the Lord's blessings. "We had visited the Balaji temple earlier as well, when our daughter went from India to the US, then from the US to Canada, and from Canada to the US again. In total, we have visited this temple six times," said Suguna, a devotee.

#### Will launch...

He said his government would implement the break-fast scheme from the next

democratic year and added that the entire country should emulate TN's education initiatives.

Addressing a mega education event, Stalin said his government is ready to implement the Telangana government's good schemes and declared that it is "healthy development politics."

He mentioned that, like Tamil Nadu, Telangana too has a fare-free bus travel scheme for women.

He said his government would implement the breakfast scheme from the next academic year and added that the entire country should emulate TN's education initiatives.

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He mentioned that, like Tamil Nadu, Telangana too has a fare-free bus travel scheme for women.

The Naam Mudhalvan scheme of imparting skill training to the youth has transformed them from being job seekers to job providers, Tamil Nadu Deputy Chief Minister Udhayanidhi Stalin said in his address.

#### Nagarjuna moves...

Bollywood heroes and heroines Amitabh Bachchan, Aishwarya, Abhishek Bachchan, Anil Kapoor and others have previously approached the Delhi High Court for personality rights. It is known that the Delhi High Court had previously given orders not to use the names of the film stars without their permission. In this context, hero Nagarjuna has approached the Delhi High Court.

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## PROSPECT

### Indian-origin Amita Chaudhary appointed Chair of UNEP FI board



Indian-origin Amita Chaudhary has been appointed the Chair of the Board of the United Nations Environment Programme Finance Initiative (UNEP FI) Principles for Sustainable Insurance (PSI).

An alumna of the Indian Institute of Management, Bangalore, she has held senior global roles including at Unilever and has been recognised with the Leading Women Award for Sustainable Development by the World Business Council for Sustainable Development.

"Indian origin Amita Chaudhary has been appointed as the Chair of the Board of UNEP FI PSI. She becomes the first woman of Indian origin to hold this prestigious global position," according to a statement.

Headquartered in Geneva, the United Nations Environment Programme Finance Initiative (UNEP FI) is a global partnership between the UN and the financial sector.

With over 500 members -- including banks, insurers, and investors -- it mobilises private finance for sustainable development and works to shape a financial system that delivers positive impact for people and the planet.

### Car company announces Volvo EX30 prize

The wait is finally over. Volvo Car India on Thursday announced the much-anticipated price of the Volvo EX30, the brand's most sustainable and stylish electric car. With an introductory ex-showroom price of ₹41,00,000, the EX30 is set to make luxury electric mobility more accessible than ever before. This festive season, Volvo Car India, together with its dealers, is bringing extra delight by offering the EX30 at ₹39,99,000 for those who pre-reserve the car before 19th October 2025. This special pre-reserve price is for a limited time, and customers can reach out to their nearest dealership for further details. The car will be available in five colors, and deliveries are scheduled to begin in the first week of November 2025.



## Indian textile delegation showcases strength in UK

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE  
■ New Delhi

The Ministry of Textiles in association with leading Export Promotion Councils including the Carpet Export Promotion Council (CEPC), organized a high-level delegation to the United Kingdom, led by Ms. Neelam Shami Rao, Secretary (Textiles).

As part of the visit, a Seminar was held in London on the theme "India - A Profitable Destination for Sourcing handicrafts, carpets & handlooms", which was graced by Vikram K. Doraiswami, High Commissioner of India to the UK. The seminar highlighted India's diverse textile strengths and invited UK



buyers to benefit from enhanced trade opportunities under the recently concluded India - UK FTA. Representing the handmade carpet sector, Kuldeep R Watal, Chairman - CEPC, underlined the global significance of India's hand-

made carpet industry, known for its quality, craftsmanship, and eco-friendly production.

He extended an invitation to UK buyers for the 49th India Carpet Expo scheduled from 11-14 October 2025 at Carpet Expo Mart, Bhadohi,

which will serve as a premier sourcing platform for carpets and floor coverings.

On the sidelines, Shri Kuldeep R Watal, along with the delegation, met High Commissioner Doraiswami and conveyed to the UK Government the importance of early implementation of the India-UK FTA, ensuring UK buyers can avail duty benefits and Indian exporters gain a stronger market foothold.

This initiative of the Ministry of Textiles in association with CEPC reflects the Government's commitment to promoting Indian textiles and carpets globally while creating profitable sourcing opportunities for UK buyers.



## Taiwan sees India as Key Economic Partner, unfazed by US tariffs and China ties

ASHOKE RAJ  
■ New Delhi

As global power dynamics undergo significant changes—with escalating trade tensions, rising US tariffs, and India deepening its engagement with the Global South—Taiwan has reiterated its long-term commitment to India. Speaking at the Taiwan Expo 2025 in New Delhi, James Huang, Chairman of TAITRA (the Taiwan External Trade Development Council), emphasized that the Taiwan-India economic relationship will continue to strengthen, regardless of India's shifting foreign policy or geopolitical alignments.

"India, by itself, is a huge market of 1.4 billion people and some of the best talent in the world," James Huang, Chairman of TAITRA told The Pioneer.

"Whether India strengthens ties with the United States, the Global South, or even China, our economic cooperation will remain strong. Our companies see long-term value here."

The remarks came amid growing speculation on how India's geopolitical decisions—especially in relation to the US, China, and the Global South—might impact its foreign investments. Taiwanese leaders dismissed any such concerns, saying their investment plans are based on India's economic fundamentals, not diplomatic alignments.

Taiwan also highlighted India's rapidly growing stature as a global economic player. With India now the fourth-largest economy in the world and projected to become the second or third largest by 2050, Taiwan sees unmatched opportunity. "Geopolitical shifts are short-term," the official added. "But India's rise is long-term. Taiwanese companies will continue to invest and support India's 'Make in India' policy."

At the Taiwan Expo, Taiwanese tech giants such as Foxconn, Delta Electronics, and Advantech showcased their contributions to India's economy. Foxconn, for example, has already created

over 72,000 jobs in India and continues to expand its presence across seven states.

The Expo also focused heavily on semiconductor collaboration. Taiwanese officials confirmed that Indian companies are already working closely with partners from Japan and Taiwan to set up domestic semiconductor manufacturing facilities.

"The potential is huge," one official noted. "No serious company in this sector can afford to overlook India anymore." As India and the US navigate trade disputes, including new tariffs, Taiwan expressed confidence that these short-term issues won't affect its business with India. "India has a long friendship with the US, and we believe those issues will be resolved. But either way, our engagement with India will continue."

The Taiwan Expo 2025, organized by Taiwan's Ministry of Economic Affairs and the Taiwan External Trade Development Council (TAITRA), brought together 107 Taiwanese companies. The event featured, Smart Manufacturing Pavilion: Automation, robotics, and precision engineering tools. Digital India Zone: Cloud computing, hydrogen energy systems, and drone tech. Electronics Manufacturing Zone: Contributions from Foxconn, U-CAN and others.

Taiwan Excellence Pavilion: AI solutions, smart healthcare, and tech innovation. Taiwan Select Food Pavilion: A debut feature with 40 companies offering bubble tea, noodles, and plant-based snacks. This year's Expo also aligned directly with key Indian initiatives like 'Make in India', 'Digital India', and the push for self-reliant electronics manufacturing.

As the world adjusts to a new economic reality, Taiwan is making its bet clear: India is central to its future plans. And while others may reconsider their strategies based on global tensions, Taiwan is choosing to go deeper. "This is not just about trade," a Taiwanese official said. "It's about a strategic partnership built on trust, opportunity, and long-term growth."

## India boosts green hydrogen space: Joshi

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
■ New Delhi

An amount of \$43.3 million has been allocated for research and development (R&D) in the green hydrogen space and \$13 million sanction for 23 projects, Union Minister Pralhad Joshi said on Thursday.

The Minister for New and Renewable Energy made the remarks in a virtual address to the World Hydrogen India conference organised by S&P Global Commodity Insights in the national capital.

In 2023, the Government launched the National Green Hydrogen Mission (NGHM) with an initial outlay of Rs 19,744 crore to produce 5 million metric tonnes (MMT) by FY30. Joshi said the goal to produce at least 5 MMT of green hydrogen per



annum by 2030 will be supported by an addition of 125 GW of renewable energy capacity. It is estimated that this will attract nearly USD 100 billion in investments and create over 6,00,000 jobs. "We have allocated \$45.3 million for R&D and have already sanctioned \$13 million for 23 projects," he said.

To date, 19 green hydrogen production projects with a capacity

of over 4,300 tonnes per annum have been commissioned, serving sectors from steel and glass manufacturing to refineries and transport.

"We are running 5 pilot projects to introduce green hydrogen in the steel sector. In surface transport, 5 pilot projects are deploying 37 hydrogen-fuelled vehicles and 9 refuelling stations across 10 major routes," the minister said.

Under the Strategic Interventions for Green Hydrogen Transition (SIGHT) programme, the government recently concluded auctions for the supply of 724,000 tonnes of green ammonia to fertiliser industry.

"We discovered a price as low as 49.75 per kilogram. That is approximately 55 US cents per kilogram. So we offer the most competitive prices discovered anywhere in the world. This demonstrates that green hydrogen derivatives in India are rapidly becoming economically competitive," Joshi said.

Incentives for the domestic manufacturing of 3,000 MW of electrolyzers annually have also been awarded. Of this, over 1,100 MW of electrolyser manufacturing capacity has already been installed in India.

## GST 2.0 brings significant savings: Joint Report

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE  
■ New Delhi

A joint report by The Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry's Committee Against Smuggling and Counterfeiting Activities Destroying the Economy (FICCI CASCADE) and the Thought Arbitrage Research Institute (TARI) reveals significant tax savings for Indian households under the new GST 2.0 regime. Titled "Decoding the Journey of GST Reforms: GST and Its Effect on Economy, Business and Household Consumption", the report highlights how the latest reforms are making daily life more affordable for both rural and urban populations. According to the report, GST 2.0 has lowered the tax burden on essential and discretionary items, making them more accessible to households.

Based on the report's analysis, households across India will experience relief of 27 to 30% in taxes due to GST 2.0. The report empha-

sises that the tax structure under GST 2.0 is now progressive, meaning that those with higher incomes pay a greater share in taxes. This ensures a fairer distribution of the tax burden across income groups.

Additionally, the lower rates under GST 2.0 are expected to ease pressure on household budgets, support small businesses (MSMEs), and further formalise the economy, moving India closer to the goal of a single, unified tax system.

One of the most important changes is the increase in the number of items taxed at just 5%. Under GST 1.0, only 54 consumption categories were taxed at this rate. With GST 2.0, that number has nearly tripled to 149 categories.

The report also points out that by reducing price differences, GST 2.0 helps curb smuggling and counterfeit goods, said a FICCI CASCADE on Press release.

## Cyrus Mistry's elder son Firoz joins Afcons board

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
■ New Delhi

Firoz Cyrus Mistry, son of late Tata Group chairperson Cyrus P Mistry, has joined the board of Afcons Infrastructure in a move signalling deeper involvement of the next generation of the Shapoorji Pallonji family in the group's flagship infrastructure and construction business.

Firoz, 29, has been appointed as a non-executive director, Afcons Infrastructure said in a statement. Alongside, veteran banker Santosh Balachandran Nayar has been appointed as an independent director on the Afcons board. Firoz is the eldest of the two sons of Cyrus Mistry, the youngest scion of the Shapoorji Pallonji Group, who died in a fatal car accident on September 4,

2022. He and Zahan, 27, inherited a portion of the family's 18.4 per cent stake in Tata Sons - the holding company of salt-to-software conglomerate. While Firoz Mistry studied at the University of Warwick, Zahan Mistry is an alumnus of Yale University.

The 160-year-old construction giant Shapoorji Pallonji Group was founded by Pallonji Mistry in 1865 as Littlewood Pallonji & Co. His son Shapoorji dropped out of school to work in the family business and went on to acquire a minority stake in Tata Sons.

Third-generation heir, Pallonji, named after his grandfather, in 2012, split the ownership of his empire, which spanned real estate to consumer goods, as well as the stake in Tata Sons, equally between his two sons - Shapoor and Cyrus. Shapoor took over as the

chairman of the group, while Cyrus was made the chairman of Tata Sons. Four years later, Cyrus was removed as chairman of Tata Sons after a fallout with Ratan Tata.

Pallonji Mistry, 32, son of Shapoor Pallonji Mistry, who was previously inducted on the board of the group holding company, had last month joined the board of Afcons. His sister Tanya handles corporate social responsibility activities of the SP Group.

Afcons executive chairman Krishnamurthy Subramanian said, "We are delighted to welcome Firoz Mistry and Santosh Nayar to our Board. Their entry marks their passionate involvement in shaping Afcons' future". Subramanian further said Firoz and Pallon have been engaged with the company for a long time in their individual capacities.

## Syngenta unveils AI-powered agri tech innovations in India

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
■ New Delhi

Global agricultural company Syngenta on Thursday announced AI-driven solutions to solve local agricultural challenges in the country. The new innovations were launched at the flagship developer conference, DevCon 2025, held in Pune and simultaneously across global platforms.

According to the company, Syngenta's AI initiatives are focused on precision agriculture through satellite imagery analysis, predictive modelling for crop diseases and pest management, and intelligent irrigation systems that optimise water use. "These innovations are being tailored to the Indian context,

where agriculture faces diverse regional challenges," the statement said. In India, Syngenta is deploying AI-powered advisory platforms in regional languages to make farming knowledge accessible to smallholder growers. Localised solutions in pest identification, crop health prediction, and climate-smart advisories are being designed to deliver personalised recommendations. AI-enabled supply chain tools are also helping reduce post-harvest losses and improve farmers' market access - addressing one of the most pressing challenges of Indian agriculture. Feroz Sheikh, Chief Information and Digital Officer, Syngenta, said, "We are taking global innovations and adapting

## INST hosts workshop on integrating ancient wisdom with modern Cognitive science

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE  
■ Kochi

A two-day workshop titled "Blending Ancient Wisdom with Modern Cognitive Science" was conducted by the Indian Navy's Institute of Naval Safety and Training (INST) at Kochi from September 23-24, 2025.

Led by Capt. Amit Singh of the Safety Matters Foundation, the workshop explored how safety principles rooted in ancient Indian wisdom can be effectively applied to modern safety practices.

On Day One, participants examined cultural dimensions such as power distance and mindfulness, drawing parallels with concepts from Indian scriptures. Day Two expanded into international best practices, including Japan's Shisa Kanko, inattention blindness, the use of semiotics in



safety communication, and the growing role of Artificial Intelligence in enhancing safety standards. The workshop highlighted the Indian Navy's continued commitment to strengthening its safety culture. A total of 33

officers from Naval Headquarters and various Commands took part in the event. Rear Admiral Srinivas Madulla, Flag Officer Sea Training, felicitated Capt Amit Singh at the conclusion of the workshop.



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### Order Order

## SC stays Allahabad HC order barring Ramleela



The Supreme Court (SC) on Thursday stayed the Allahabad High Court (HC) order which barred holding of Ramleela festivities in a school ground in Firozabad district of Uttar Pradesh. A bench of Justices Surya Kant, Ujjal Bhuyan and N Kotiswar Singh allowed the festivities to continue subject to the condition that no inconvenience is caused to students.

"Although we don't approve of holding religious festivities in school grounds but this Ramleela has been going on for past 100 years and festivities for this year began on September 14," the bench noted while staying the paragraph in the High Court order which barred holding of the festivities. Bench issued notice on the plea filed by Shree Nagar Ram Lila Mahotsav to the Uttar Pradesh Government and asked the High Court to direct the district administration to submit a proposal for another site in the future.

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE  
New Delhi

The Supreme Court (SC) expressed serious concern over the discontinuation of the practice of holding trials on a day-to-day basis in important or sensitive cases, observing that a tradition that existed three decades ago has now been "given a complete go-by". "We sincerely believe that it is high time that the courts revert to that practice," said the bench comprising Justices JB Pardiwala and KV Viswanathan.

The order uploaded on Thursday made guidelines for day-to-day trial in sensitive cases and directed to send to all High Courts to issues directions to trial courts handling sensitive cases.

The Bench observed, stressing those speedy and continuous trial hearings are essential for justice delivery, particularly in cases involving grave social or political ramifications. The top Court directed that all High Courts should constitute Committees to deliberate on how the practice of day-to-day trial can be revived and implemented effectively in their respective district judiciaries. "The practice of conducting trials on a day to day basis more particularly in important or sensitive cases as was the tradition about thirty years ago has been given a complete go-by. We sincerely believe that it is high time that the courts revert to that practice."

For the purpose of reverting to the old practice, it is necessary to understand the current social, political and administrative scenario including the way the Police are functioning. All the High Courts need to constitute a Committee to discuss this issue very seriously for the benefit of their respective district judiciaries," said the order.

"While limited judicial or court resources and a shortage of avail-



able court time due to the volume of cases are often cited for the use of this discretionary practice, the costs of non-continuous trials to both parties and to the justice system as a whole can far outweigh the perceived benefits," the top Court observed.

High Court Chief Justices asked to issue a circular The judgment suggested that the High Court Chief Justices on their administrative side may issue a circular for the district judiciary as follows:

[1] The proceedings in every inquiry or trial shall be held expeditiously.

[2] When the stage of examination of witnesses starts such examination shall be continued from day-to-day until all the witnesses in the attendance have been examined

except for special reasons to be recorded in writing.

[3] When the witnesses are in attendance before the Court no adjournment or postponement shall be granted without examining them, except for special reasons to be recorded in writing.

[4] The Court should not grant the adjournment to suit the convenience of the advocate concerned except on very exceptional grounds like bereavement in the family and similar exceptional reasons duly supported by memo. Be it noted that the said inconvenience of an advocate is not a "Special Reason" for the purpose of bypassing the immunity of Section 309 of the Cr PC.

[5] In case of non-cooperation of accused or his counsel, the follow-

ing shall be kept in mind:

a. In case of non-cooperation of the counsel, the Court shall satisfy itself whether the non-cooperation is in active collusion with the accused to delay the trial. If it is so satisfied for reasons to be recorded in writing, it may, if the accused is on bail, put the accused on notice to show cause why the bail cannot be cancelled.

b. In cases where the accused is not in collusion with lawyer and it is the lawyer who is not cooperating with the trial, the Court may for reason to be recorded, appoint an amicus curiae for the accused and fix a date for proceeding with cross-examination/trial.

c. The Court may also in appropriate cases impose cost on the accused commensurate with the

loss suffered by the witness including the expenses to attend the court.

d. In case when the accused is absent and the witness is present for examination, in that case the Court can cancel the bail of accused if he is on bail. (Unless an application is made on his behalf seeking permission for his counsel to proceed to examine the witness present even in his absence, provided the accused gives an undertaking in writing that, he would not dispute, his identity as a particular accused in 20 the case).

[6] The Presiding Officer of each Court may evolve the system for framing a schedule of constructive working days for examination of witnesses in each case, well in advance, after ascertaining the convenience of counsel on both sides.

[7] The summons or process could be handed over to the Public Prosecutor in-charge of the case to cause them to be served on the witnesses, as per schedule fixed by the Court.

For offences like rape, the inquiry or trial should ideally be completed within two months from the date of filing the charge sheet. The Court cited multiple past judgments stressing that speedy trial is an integral and essential part of the fundamental right to life and liberty enshrined in Article 21 of the Constitution. The bench noted its pain that it is a "common practice and regular occurrence" for trial courts to flout the day-to-day mandate.

The top Court was considering an application filed by CBI to cancel the bail of on Mir Usman Ali, an accused in a rape case related to the 2021 West Bengal post-poll violence. Seeing the delays in trial in this case, the top court has passed orders to revive day-to-day trials in sensitive cases across the country.

## SC seeks reply of Centre on PIL seeking curbs on import of yellow peas

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE  
New Delhi

The Supreme Court (SC) on Thursday sought the Centre's response on a PIL seeking import curbs on yellow peas, which is considered a substitute to pulses, claiming its supply was affecting the livelihood of farmers.

Yellow peas (*pisum sativum*) belongs to the legume family (pulses) which is not traditionally grown in India and is an imported quality of pulses being used in India as a substitute for *tur/arhar*, *chana*, etc. The plea said in countries outside of India such as Canada, the US and Australia yellow peas are mostly used as cattle feed.

A bench of Justices Surya Kant, Ujjal Bhuyan and N Kotiswar Singh issued notice on a PIL filed by 'Kisan Mahapanchayat' and asked advocate Prashant Bhushan, appearing for the farmers' body, to examine whether there is sufficient production of pulses in the country.

"We are inclined to issue notice but the net result should not be that the

end consumers suffer," the bench said.

Bhushan said the import of yellow peas at a cheaper price of ₹35 per kg is affecting the farmers growing pulses like 'tur dal' (pigeon peas), 'moong dal' and 'urad dal' who get a MSP of ₹85 per kg.

"There have been numerous reports of expert bodies, including those of the Government, which have asked the Government to not import yellow peas as it would impact large-scale Indian farmers," he submitted, adding that unrestricted and cheap import of yellow peas should be stopped.

Bhushan said even the agriculture ministry and Niti Aayog have opined against the import of yellow peas and emphasised for enhancing local production of pulses.

The bench asked Bhushan, "You don't allow imports of yellow peas and then there is a shortage created in the market. We have to avoid hoarding of any kind. You have mentioned that yellow peas were used as cattle

fodder in some foreign countries. Have you examined its health impact?"

Bhushan replied there are adverse health impacts on people consuming yellow peas and it is a big problem.

"Large number of farmers are dying and committing suicide," he added.

The plea filed through advocate Neha Rathi sought directions setting aside notification dated May 31, issued by the Centre or any other similar notification that has been issued or may be issued in future by the respondents, in so far as the same allows unrestricted imports of yellow peas.

The plea also sought direction to the Centre and its authorities to impose such restrictions on the import of yellow peas to ensure the price at which imported yellow peas is sold in India is at or above the minimum support price (MSP).

The plea said the consistent duty free imports of yellow peas have caused the selling price of yellow peas to fall far below the MSP which is guaranteed for the Indian grown pulses like

'tur/arhar', 'chana', etc. It said the Commission for Agricultural Costs & Prices (CACP), an expert body which works under the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare, which also recommends MSP to the Government has also recommended a ban on any further import of yellow peas.

The plea said CACP in its recommendations has highlighted the negative impact of unrestricted imports on the domestic pulses market and pricing due to huge yellow pea imports adversely affecting Indian farmers.

It said the Government's import policy is contrary to the views of its own expert bodies and India has reportedly imported an unprecedented 6.7 million tonne of pulses in 2024, of which yellow peas alone comprised around 2.9 million tonne.

The plea said most of the imports have been below the MSP rates, which seriously impact farmers' earnings and distort the Indian market for pulses.

## SC reserves verdict on commission to women

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE  
New Delhi

The Centre on Thursday defended its policy on the grant of permanent commission to Short Service Commission women officers and said the top court's verdicts on the aspect were being followed without discrimination.

A bench of Justices Surya Kant, Ujjal Bhuyan and N Kotiswar Singh reserved its verdict on a batch of 84 officers of the Army.

The officers have challenged the denial of grant of permanent commission.

Additional Solicitor General Aishwarya Bhati, appearing for the Centre and the Army, submitted that the 2020 verdict in Babita Puniya case and 2021 verdict in Nitisha case had actually upheld the policy and whatever faults which were still there and pointed out by the court were eventually corrected.

Justice Kant told Bhati it did not mean that the Army had corrected its policy on permanent commission and whatever faults existed were removed post Nitisha verdict.

Concluding her arguments, Bhati said, "No process can satisfy everyone and there

will always be heartburn."

She said elimination was also part of policy to keep the forces young and it was equally applied to all without discrimination.

Senior advocates Maneka Guruswamy, V Mohana, Abhinav Mukherjee and Rekha Palli, appearing for the SSC officers, advanced counter submissions.

The bench said it would also hear similar pleas related to permanent commission from the Navy, followed by the Air Force and coast guard.

On September 24, the Centre denied any discrimination in granting permanent commission to SSC officers when compared with their male counterparts while assuring the top court that all parameters were being duly followed.

Bhati said uniform policy is followed for all in grant of permanent commission.

Countering the arguments of the women officers, who moved court, Bhati had said the annual confidential reports of those officers were actually gender neutral without an element of discrimination.

She had submitted that the methodology adopted is uniformly applicable to all

officers. "The aim of a confidential report is to have an objective assessment of an officer's competence, employability and potential as observed during the period covered by the report, primarily for organisational requirements," she had said.

Bhati said it was an impression sought to be created that there was discrimination but statistics since 1991 showed women officers were not discriminated against their male counterparts.

"In the Army, we have been following a very strict regime and there is no question of discrimination, as the selection board does not have the name of the officer before it. We are a professional army and do err sometime and AFT and courts have corrected us," she had said.

Dealing with the arguments of non-consideration of "criteria appointment" or difficult area posting in the ACR of women officers, Bhati had said such appointments were inconsequential and the officers were marked in average in the annual confidential reports. Bhati elaborated that there were no marks or distinction of "criteria" or "non criteria" appointments for PC selection board

and criteria appointments are specified for promotion to colonel, brigadier, major general and lieutenant general ranks.

She said below seven years of service, all confidential reports (CR) are non criteria reports and there are inherent checks available within the system for internal assessment of CRs to guard against subjectivity and bias assessment.

There are several aspects in the ACR which are considered at the time of grant of permanent commission. Criteria appointment is not the sole criteria which is considered, Bhati had submitted.

The women officers have contended that despite being posted in difficult areas and having participated in operations like Galwan, Balakot and the most recent Operation Sindoor, they were not considered for the PC.

A criteria appointment usually means an officer given command of a post in a difficult and hostile area or operation.

Bhati said the ratio of regular officers to the corresponding support staff through SSC against the desired ratio of 1:1.1 was very skewed.

## Decoding Supreme Court's greenlights on Waqf Reforms

HARSH RANJAN  
New Delhi



In a landmark ruling, the Supreme Court has upheld the Waqf (Amendment) Act, 2025, giving a decisive green signal to reforms long awaited in the management of waqf properties. The verdict settles months of speculation and debate, reaffirming the constitutionality, accountability, and forward-looking vision of the reforms initiated by the Government of India. For months, critics claimed the reforms were unconstitutional or hasty. The Court has now quashed those doubts, confirming that the Act not only aligns with the principles of the Constitution but also strengthens the legal, social, and economic framework around waqf institutions.

### Key Highlights of the Supreme Court's Order

The Supreme Court made it clear that all provisions of the Waqf Amendment Act remain intact, and the reforms promoting digitisation, transparency, and accountability are fully enforceable. The Court also clarified that no waqf property can be possessed without due process of law, and until final adjudication of such cases, no third-party rights will be created, thereby ensuring robust safeguards.

Importantly, the Court upheld the scrapping of the vague and frequently misused concept of "Waqf by User," which had often been a tool for encroachment under the garb of waqf claims. Similarly, the requirement of mandatory waqf registration was validated, making it clear that unregistered claims will no longer have legal validity. This step will eliminate ambiguity and ensure clean, credible records of waqf properties.

The composition of the Central and State Waqf Boards has also been upheld, with balanced representation and limits on non-Muslim members to ensure inclusivity and transparency. Likewise, the provision allowing flexibility in the appointment of Chief Executive Officers has been endorsed, with safeguards in place to guarantee accountability and strengthen pro-

fessional management.

Another significant aspect of the ruling is the application of the Limitation Act to waqf claims, which puts an end to indefinite, prolonged litigations and brings predictability and timely closure to disputes. The Court further recognised the importance of women's rights by upholding provisions under Waqf al-Awlad, ensuring that divorcees, widows, and orphans can derive benefits, thereby promoting inclusivity in waqf governance.

Finally, the Court provided categorical protection for tribal lands and heritage sites, ruling that waqf claims cannot override constitutional or cultural safeguards. This ensures a balance between the preservation of India's heritage and the rightful use of waqf assets.

### Judicial Endorsement of Reforms

The Supreme Court upheld all 48 sections of the Act, laying conditions in only three, thereby reinforcing that the law is broadly sound, balanced, and enforceable. Importantly, the Court reiterated the constitutional principle that Parliamentary laws enjoy a presumption of constitutionality—especially those enacted after rigorous Joint

Parliamentary Committee review and extensive deliberations across stakeholders.

### A Path Forward

The Supreme Court's interim order has not only upheld the reforms introduced by Parliament but also set the stage for a transformative chapter in waqf governance. By ensuring that these vast community assets are managed with transparency and accountability, the judgment opens the door for their effective deployment in education, healthcare, skills, and welfare.

The Ministry of Minority Affairs has welcomed this as a milestone moment, with its next big focus on operationalising the National Waqf Development Corporation (NAWADCO) to develop waqf properties within the safeguards of the new law. Alongside, model rules for states and a detailed dossier on the Court's order are being finalised to provide clarity and uniformity in implementation. Taken together, these steps mark the beginning of a new era—where waqf assets can truly become instruments of empowerment and inclusive growth for minority communities across India.

Writer is a Senior Journalist

## NGT issues notice to Haryana for narrowing definition of forest

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE  
New Delhi

The National Green Tribunal (NGT) issued notice to Haryana Government for narrowing the definition of forest. Petitioner environmentalist and retired Army officer Devender Singh Bamel sought to quash the August 18 notification of the Haryana Government, saying this move is violation of Supreme Court rulings and endangering the fragile Aravalli ecosystem.

The petitioner argues that the State's restrictive definition poses a "grave risk" to the environment, as large swathes of scrub and open forests in the Aravallis—already under pressure from mining, urbanisation and real estate expansion—would be excluded from statutory protection. The NGT has issued notices to the state Government and its forest department and listed the matter for hearing on December 1.

The petitioner argued that in August 2025 notification, Haryana had never formally codified a rigid, technical definition of "forest" under the "dictionary meaning" principle. There were no prescribed thresholds for area, canopy density, or contiguity. The latest notification marks the first time the state has attempted to lay down such criteria in precise terms.

GOVERNMENT OF TELANGANA OFFICE OF THE SPECIAL DEPUTY COLLECTOR, LA, HAML, HYDERABAD			
FORM-F Notification by the Collector (LA), HAML (See rule 7 (f))			
File No.:	C5/06/2025 - LHS-25/02	Dated:	25-09-2025.
Where as the following notifications were issued and Gazettes were published for the Public purpose for Hyderabad Airport Metro Limited, Phase-II, from MG85 to Chandrayangutta, Corridor-VI, situated at Share-E-Hyderabad Village, Bahadurpura Mandal of Hyderabad District for the Public purpose.			
In response to the said Notifications the following affected person (Property owners and others) have come forward to settle their claims through Negotiations.			
The details of the willing affected persons/Land Owners are as follows.			
S.NO.	NOTIFICATION NO. & DATE	GAZETTE NO. & DATE	
1	No. C5/2004-LHS (301 to 325)	HAML No.45 Dated 07-12-2024 (D).HAML No.87, Dated 10-06-2025	
Name and address	Sketch	Premises	Extent in Sq.Yds
		No.	
		1	2
		3	4
Sri Jai Raj D Bhalerao S/o Dhondiraj Bhalerao Bahadur (A.O-3-1238, Renuka Enclave, Somajiguda, Hyderabad 500082	LHS-303 (Part-B)	23-6-918	21.12
	LHS-304		88.06
			109.18
It is hereby notified calling for claims and objections if any, to be filed before the District Collector, Hyderabad District/Special Deputy Collector, LA, HAML, Rasoopura, Hyderabad within the Seven days of publication of this Notification.			
Sd/- Special Deputy Collector, LA, HAML, Rasoopura, Hyderabad.			
Date: 25-09-2025			
DIPIR No.647/LA-PP/Advt/Agency/2025-26			

## Shivakumar blames previous BJP Govt for potholes in Bengaluru



Karnataka Deputy Chief Minister D K Shivakumar on Thursday blamed the previous BJP Government's "misrule" for potholes in Bengaluru. He said ₹750 crore has been granted to fill potholes in the city. Speaking to reporters here, he said, "We are committed to fixing the pothole issue in Bengaluru. The CM has released a grant of ₹750 crore for this purpose."

## Mizoram Guv VK Singh proposes well-structured old-age homes

Asserting that the Indus Waters Treaty (IWT) was a "historic mistake", Lieutenant Governor VK Singh on Thursday proposed well-structured old-age homes in Mizoram, officials said. Singh made the proposal while reviewing the initiatives of the Social Welfare Department for elderly care, they said.



## Thane police launch first cryptocurrency investigation cell



The Thane city police have set up Maharashtra's first dedicated Cryptocurrency Investigation Cell, officials said on Thursday. The cell, launched on Wednesday at the office of Cyber Police Thane, aims to strengthen the investigation of cases involving cryptocurrency transactions used for embezzlement and fraud, an official release said.

## Six killed, 10 injured in bus-truck collision in Odisha

At least six people, including two women, were killed and 10 others injured in a collision between a truck and a bus with passengers on board in Odisha's Sundargarh district on Thursday, police said. The accident occurred on National Highway 520 around 11 am at a place near K Balang Police Station, a senior officer said.



# Curfew imposed in Leh after violent clashes, 50 arrested

MOHIT KANDHARI ■ Jammu

A day after the cold desert region of Ladakh witnessed violent protests leading to the killing of four civilians and injuries to over 80 others, palpable tension prevailed even as the Union Territory administration imposed strict curfew restrictions and rounded up over 50 civilians purportedly involved in the violent protests.

In Leh, Sonam Wangchuk reacted angrily, claiming that his imprisonment could create more problems for the Government than his freedom, and called the home ministry's act of blaming him for recent violent protests in Ladakh a "scapegoat tactic".

Meanwhile, the bodies of four civilians were handed over to their families in Leh on Thursday. Senior members of the Apex Body visited the hospital and paid tributes before the bodies were taken for last rites.

The deceased were identified as Tsewang Tharchin (46) of Skurbuchan, a retired soldier of the 3 Ladakh Scouts Regiment; Stanzin Namgyal (24) of Igloo; Jigmet Dorjay (25) of Kharnakling; and Rinchen Dadul (21) of Hanu.

Reacting to the MHA's statement, which had blamed him for provoking the mob violence on Wednesday, Wangchuk said he is prepared to be arrested under the stringent Public Safety Act (PSA).

"I see they are building up a case to bring me under the Public Safety Act and throw me in jail for two years," he told a wire news agency over the phone and added that "I am ready for that, but Sonam Wangchuk in jail may cause them more problems than free Sonam Wangchuk." The climate activist also said, "To say it (the violence) was instigated by me, or sometimes by Congress, is to find a scapegoat, rather than addressing the core of the problem, and this will lead us nowhere."

"They may be clever in making somebody else a scapegoat, but they are not wise. At this time, we all need wisdom rather than 'cleverness' because youths are already frustrated," said Wangchuk.

In Leh, Lieutenant Governor of the Union territory, Kavinder Gupta, chaired a security review meeting and called for heightened vigilance to safeguard peace.



Charred remains of a vehicle lies in the aftermath of violent clashes between demonstrators and police during a protest demanding statehood for Ladakh, outside BJP headquarters building in Leh

"The lieutenant governor chaired a high-level security review meeting to assess the emerging situation across Ladakh, emphasising the need for heightened vigilance, seamless inter-agency coordination, and proactive measures to safeguard peace, security, and public order across the UT," the L-G's office said in a post on X.

Officials said senior officers from the police, CRPF and civil administration attended the meeting and discussed in detail the prevailing law and

order situation in the region. According to official sources, at least 50 people were detained by the police in the aftermath of widespread clashes during a daylong shutdown call given by the youth wing of the Leh Apex Body (LAB) to advance talks with the Centre on the demand for statehood and extension of the Sixth Schedule to Ladakh.

In addition to Leh, strict prohibitory restrictions banning assembly of five or more persons have been

placed in other major towns as well, including Kargil, where a shutdown was given by the Kargil Democratic Alliance (KDA) in support of climate activist Sonam Wangchuk, who was leading a hunger strike. Kargil District Magistrate Rakesh Kumar issued prohibitory orders under Section 163 of the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita in the entire district.

Meanwhile, the police authorities are also probing the role of three injured citizens hailing from Nepal.

## LADAKH LG REVIEWS SECURITY SITUATION IN LEH, CALLS FOR HEIGHTENED VIGILANCE

Leh: A day after four persons were killed and more than 80 others were injured in widespread clashes amid a shutdown in Ladakh, Lieutenant Governor of the Union territory, Kavinder Gupta, on Thursday chaired a security review meeting here and called for heightened vigilance to safeguard peace.

The shutdown and protest was called by a constituent of the Leh Apex Body (LAB) in support of their demand to advance the proposed talks with the Centre on the extension of the Sixth Schedule of the Constitution and statehood to Ladakh.

"The lieutenant governor chaired a high-level security review meeting to assess the emerging situation across Ladakh, emphasising the need for heightened vigilance, seamless inter-agency coordination, and proactive measures to safeguard peace, security, and public order across the UT," the L-G's office said in a post on X.



Ladakh Lt Governor Kavinder Gupta chairing a high-level security review meeting to assess the situation across Ladakh

Officials said senior officers from the police, CRPF and civil administration attended the meeting and discussed in detail the prevailing law and order situation in the region.

Hundreds of protesters supporting the movement for statehood to Ladakh and extension of the Sixth Schedule turned violent on Wednesday and set the BJP office in Leh and several vehicles on fire, prompting the authorities to clamp curfew in the town and its adjoining areas.

The Centre alleged the mob violence was guided by the "provocative statements" of climate activist Sonam Wangchuk, while certain "politically motivated" individuals were not happy with the progress made in the ongoing talks between the representatives of the government and Ladakhi groups.

The climate activist, who was leading a hunger strike in Leh over the twin demands, called off his hunger strike after the violence on Wednesday.

## BJP names Pradhan as poll in-charge for Bihar, Bhupender for Bengal

MANISH SINGHAL ■ Patna/New Delhi

BJP on Thursday set the ball rolling for the Assembly elections due in Bihar in November by naming Union ministers Dharmendra Pradhan and Bhupender Yadav, both key OBC faces and the most seasoned poll managers of the party, as its in-charge for the Assembly elections in Bihar and Bengal, respectively.

Simultaneously, in an effort to retain the Nitish Kumar-led NDA Government of which BJP is a major constituent, Prime Minister Narendra Modi will launch Bihar's "Mukhyamantri Mahila Rojgar Yojana" on Friday and transfer Rs 10,000 each to the bank accounts of 75 lakh women across the state, totalling Rs 7,500 crore. Officials said the scheme is aimed at making women "aatmanirbhar" (self-dependent) and promoting empowerment through self-employment and livelihood opportu-



nities. PM Modi will attend the function via video-conferencing. Bihar elections are expected in November, followed by West Bengal and Tamil Nadu which are likely to go to polls in March-April 2026.

Making other important appointments for three poll-bound states, including for next year, the BJP also named Baijayant Jay Panda, one of its vice-presidents, its in-charge for the Assembly polls in Tamil Nadu where it is a junior partner to the AIADMK. Former Tripura chief minister

Biplab Kumar Deb is the co-in-charge for West Bengal, while Union minister Murlidhar Mohol is the co-in-charge for Tamil Nadu, it said. A BJP statement said Union minister C R Paatil, who heads the party's Gujarat unit and is considered a capable organisation hand, and Uttar Pradesh Deputy Chief Minister Keshav Prasad Maurya have been named co-in-charges for the Bihar polls.

Both Pradhan and Yadav come from the Other Backward Classes (OBCs) and

**BOTH PRADHAN AND YADAV COME FROM THE OTHER BACKWARD CLASSES (OBCS) AND ARE AMONG THE MOST EXPERIENCED POLL MANAGERS OF THE BJP**

are among the most experienced poll managers of the BJP. Pradhan was the in-charge for Haryana elections, while Yadav helmed a similar role for Maharashtra polls, both held in 2024, with the BJP pulling off wins of a stunning scale in the two states.

Pradhan's formal appointment for the Bihar polls came very close to the elections, though he had been involved in the state's affairs.

He was the party's co-in-charge for the 2010 Bihar polls, when the BJP-JD(U) alliance scored its most emphatic victory. He was also the in-charge in for the Assembly elections in Uttar

Pradesh, Uttarakhand and Karnataka, while Yadav oversaw polls in Bihar and Gujarat, among others, in the past.

The OBC plank is especially resonant in Bihar where the community has been the dominant political force for decades, with the extremely backward classes, a subset of more deprived castes, along with a section of Scheduled Castes seen to be holding the balance of power.

Pradhan's immediate challenge will be to ensure a smooth seat-sharing arrangement among the BJP's allies, some of whom have been seeking a much larger share than it is willing to part with.

Both the BJP and the JD(U) headed by Chief Minister Nitish Kumar are expected to contest almost an equal number of seats in the elections to the 243-member Assembly, though the other allies such as Union ministers Chirag Paswan and Jitendra Ram Manjhi too have been vocal in airing their demands.

## NC to decide Rajya Sabha seats for itself, allies: Omar Abdullah

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Jammu

Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Thursday said his party National Conference will take a call on who will contest in the upcoming elections to four vacant Rajya Sabha seats from the Union Territory.

The Election Commission (EC) on Wednesday announced that the biennial elections to fill the four Rajya Sabha seats of Jammu and Kashmir, lying vacant since 2021, will be held on October 24.

"There are four seats. We will decide how many seats we will fight and how many seats we will leave for others to fight," Abdullah told reporters during his visit to flood-hit Mahore sub-division in Reasi district.

Asked about reports that NC president Farooq



Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Omar Abdullah during his visit for conducting an aerial survey of the flood-hit areas in Mahore district

Abdullah and former minister Sajjad Kitchloo will contest the Rajya Sabha elections from the party, he said, "You can name anyone you want but it is the party which is going to decide on this."

"As far as I know, there has been no such talk in the national conference."

Abdullah said the recent flash floods have caused

immense loss to the public and private property across Jammu and Kashmir.

"In some places, the entire mountain has come down, resulting in damage to a large number of houses. There are some places where the houses have been washed away besides damage to the agricultural land," he said.

## Right time to waive farm loans, says Uddhav after visiting flood-hit areas

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Chhatrapati Sambhajnagar

Shiv Sena (UBT) president Uddhav Thackeray on Thursday said this was the right time to grant a loan waiver to farmers as he visited areas affected by floods in the Marathwada region of Maharashtra.

Was the BJP-led government looking for an auspicious time in a 'panchang' (almanac) to help farmers, the former chief minister asked. Heavy rains and swollen rivers have caused large-scale damage in Marathwada since September 20, claiming at least nine lives. Crops on more than 30,000 hectares were washed away due to the floods, as per the state government.

Speaking at Itkurla of Dharashiv district, Thackeray said, "This is a severe calamity. Every time (a calamity happens), Chief Minister (Devendra Fadnis) talks about the right time (to offer help to farmers). When would



Shiv Sena (UBT) chief Uddhav Thackeray interacting with farmers whose crops were destroyed due to heavy rainfall during an inspection of flood-affected areas at Itkurla village in Dharashiv district of Maharashtra

be the right time? Are you going to consult a 'panchang'? "This is the right time to waive the loans of farmers, like we did earlier," he said, referring to his tenure as chief minister from 2019 to 2022.

He also demanded that the farmers in the flood-affected areas should get an aid of Rs 50,000 per acre.

"Farmers are demanding Rs 50,000 per acre, because the top layer of soil in the fields has been washed off. It will

take them 3 to 5 years to make the fields suitable for cultivation again," Thackeray said.

The ₹2,215 crore aid announced by the state government is not enough as each farmer will barely get ₹8,500 out of it, he said, asserting that farm loans must be waived.

He also appealed farmers not to resort to extreme measures such as suicide, saying the bad times too will pass.

## MiG-21 fighter jets to retire from IAF today

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Chandigarh

Six decades after they were inducted into the force, Indian Air Force's workhorse, the legendary Russian-origin MiG-21 fighter jets, will finally retire from the IAF at a mega event to be held on Friday.

A farewell will be bid to the fighter jets, which have been part of the IAF's combat fleet since the 1960s, at a decommissioning event in Chandigarh, where the iconic aircraft was first inducted over six decades ago. On Friday, Air Chief Marshal A P Singh, will fly the last sortie of the MiG-21 Bison aircraft.

Dilbagh Singh, who became the IAF chief in 1981, had led the first MiG-21 Squadron here in 1963.

The culmination of MiG-21 operations is set for September 26 with a ceremonial flypast and decommissioning event, marking the closure of a historic chapter in India's air power.

The last of the MiG-21 jets, belonging to number 23



Squadron nicknamed "Panthers", will be given a farewell at the decommissioning ceremony at the Chandigarh Air Force station in which chief guest will be Defence Minister Rajnath Singh.

Upon landing, the six MiG-21 jets, belonging to number 23 Squadron, taking part in the flypast ceremony on Friday, will be given a water cannon salute and among the pilots will be Squadron Leader Priya Sharma, who also flew in the full dress rehearsal on Wednesday, and will leave her name in the annals of aviation history as the last woman fighter

pilot to have flown the aircraft one final time.

In a recent post on X about the retiring MiG-21s, the IAF said, "Six decades of service, countless tales of courage, a warhorse that carried pride of a nation into the skies". The MiG-21 fighter jets used to be the mainstay of the IAF for a long period of time. After its first induction, the IAF procured over 870 MiG-21s to boost its overall combat prowess.

The supersonic jets were the dominant platforms during 1965 and 1971 wars with Pakistan. The aircraft also played a key role in the 1999 Kargil conflict as well as

2019 Balakot airstrikes.

However, the IAF's workhorse, the MiG-21 aircrafts, were also involved in multiple crashes in the last six decades, with spotlight many times being on the safety record of the ageing fleet of the Soviet-origin aircraft.

Rajnath Singh, Chief of Defence Staff General Anil Chauhan, Army Chief Gen Upendra Dwivedi, Air Chief Marshal A P Singh and Navy Chief Admiral Dinesh K Tripathi, will be among those present on the occasion here on Friday.

Officials from the Defence Ministry, Defence Research and Development Organisation and Hindustan Aeronautics Limited will also be present. A full dress rehearsal for this ceremony was held at the IAF station here on Wednesday.

## BJP MLA Ganesh Gaonkar elected Goa Assembly speaker

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Panaji

BJP legislator Ganesh Gaonkar was on Thursday elected speaker of the Goa legislative assembly after securing a majority vote during a special session of the House.

Governor P Ashok Gajapathi Raju summoned the special session to elect the new speaker, as the post fell vacant last month due to the resignation of Ramesh Tawadkar, who was inducted into the Pramod Sawant-led state cabinet. Gaonkar polled 32 votes against his rival Congress candidate Alton D'Costa, who was supported by only seven MLAs.

Deputy Speaker Joshua D'Souza, who chaired the House proceedings, declared 66-year-old Gaonkar as the next speaker of the legislative Assembly. Chief Minister Pramod Sawant and Leader of Opposition Yuri Alemoa later escorted the newly elected speaker to the Chair and congratulated him.



**Editor's TAKE**

## Discontent spills over in Ladakh

The Government must address genuine demands of Ladakh and chart a roadmap towards meaningful self-governance before the people feel alienated

The trouble has been brewing in Ladakh for quite some time now. Ever since Article 370 was abrogated, people are demanding more autonomy so that they can have more tailored policies that address their specific problems. So far the protests have been peaceful, but now it looks like people are losing their patience. At least four people were killed and over a hundred injured in Leh this week after protests demanding full statehood and constitutional safeguards turned violent.

Ladakh, a Union Territory of India since August 5, 2019, was carved out of the erstwhile state of Jammu and Kashmir after the abrogation of Article 370. Unlike many other UTs, it has no legislature and is governed directly by the Centre, with local matters partly managed by the Autonomous Hill Development Councils of Leh and Kargil. However, growing demands for greater autonomy persist. Local groups seek full statehood, inclusion under the Sixth Schedule for tribal protections, and stronger safeguards for land, jobs, and culture.

The absence of safeguards for land, jobs, and culture has led to frustration among the youth who have to seek jobs outside. Ladakh's population is small and its ecological balance fragile. Fears that outsiders might dominate the job market, purchase land, or dilute cultural traditions have become central to the political discourse. Unemployment among Ladakhi youth has only deepened the anger.

Over the past two years, this discontent has expressed itself through hunger strikes, long agitation, and periodic shutdowns. Activist Sonam Wangchuk has become the face of the movement, drawing public attention with his fasts and appeals for justice. The Government did respond with partial measures, including new rules that allowed up to 85 per cent reservation in jobs, recognised five official languages, and mandated a fifteen-year residency for domicile.

However, these steps fell short of the core demand for statehood and constitutional guarantees. When two activists were hospitalised during Wangchuk's hunger strike, thousands of frustrated youth spilled onto the streets. The Government must realise that this is not a separatist movement; it is a demand for dignity, representation, and security within the Indian Union. To dismiss these protests fanned by local leaders is to brush the core issue under the carpet which will not work. Ladakh borders China and Pakistan, and alienating its people carries strategic risks India can ill afford. So far government has resorted to policing to contain the movement which only aggravates the situation rather than soothe the tempers. What Ladakh needs is not suspicion and bureaucratic approach but trust and empowerment. Only then can this region feel truly at home in the Indian democracy.

## UN at 80: Between hope and strain

The UN was meant to serve as a forum for dialogue, peace, and cooperation. Yet, as it marks its 80th anniversary, the institution faces unprecedented strain — from great power rivalries to nationalist pushbacks



SANTHOSH MATHEW

"The United Nations was not created to take mankind to heaven, but to save humanity from hell." Dag Hammarskjöld's words ring with renewed urgency as the UN marks its 80th anniversary this year. Born in 1945 from the ashes of the Second World War, the institution was meant to embody a pledge of "never again" — a promise of peace, dialogue, and cooperation among nations. Eight decades later, however, the UN stands at a fragile crossroads. It is weakened by rivalries among major powers, pressured by nationalism and isolationism, and tested by crises that often move faster than its machinery can respond. The latest diplomatic storm — Israel's declaration of Secretary-General António Guterres as persona non grata — illustrates this precarious moment. The move followed Guterres' comments highlighting civilian suffering in Gaza and calling for urgent humanitarian relief.

Israel dismissed those words as biased, interpreting them as undermining its right to self-defence. By barring entry to the UN's top diplomat, Israel delivered not just a personal rebuke but a broader statement: even the Secretary-General, custodian of the UN Charter, is not beyond rejection. This unprecedented step cast a long shadow over United Nations Day, observed globally on October 24.

A day meant to celebrate multilateralism instead became a stark reminder of the scepticism that increasingly surrounds global institutions. The term persona non grata has long been a sharp instrument in international diplomacy, most often used against foreign ambassadors to signal rejection. When deployed against the UN Secretary-General, however, the symbolism is extraordinary. It is not merely António Guterres being told he is unwelcome; it is the very idea of the UN as an impartial mediator being pushed aside. The episode forces deeper reflection: Is the UN still capable of serving as the one global table where adversaries meet? Or has it been reduced to another arena where national grievances overwhelm the ideals of cooperation? The answer depends largely on how the world's most powerful nations choose to treat the institution. Unfortunately, the outlook is troubling.

In Washington, former President Donald Trump's return to power has brought a more forceful scepticism of the UN. During his first term (2017-21), Trump dismissed the body as ineffective and wasteful. Many hoped that stance would remain an anomaly. But in his second term, he appears more emboldened, intent on sidelining the UN from global decision-making. His "America First" message portrays the UN as a globalist bureaucracy draining US resources. In his speech-



**The Pioneer SINCE 1865**

A MISSION THAT ENDURES HAMMARSKJÖLD'S REMINDER — THAT THE UN WAS DESIGNED NOT TO BRING HEAVEN TO EARTH BUT TO SAVE HUMANITY FROM HELL — REMAINS THE GUIDING COMPASS

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dailyopinion @veranani The Pioneer

es, Trump boasts of "ending seven wars" in the early months of his new term — claims aimed at thrilling his domestic base while subtly undermining the UN Security Council, the body mandated to safeguard peace and security. If America, the UN's most powerful member and principal financial backer, treats it with disdain, the institution's legitimacy inevitably weakens.

Beijing, meanwhile, treats the UN as a stage for influence. Through peacekeeping contributions, Belt and Road partnerships, and leadership bids within UN agencies, China uses multilateralism to expand soft power. Russia, under pressure from sanctions and diplomatic isolation, wields its Security Council veto to blunt criticism and protect its interests. The result: paralysis, mistrust, and an institution caught in the grip of great-power rivalry. And yet, dismissing the UN as irrelevant would be wrong. Its humanitarian work in war zones, refugee assistance, climate negotiations, and public health campaigns remain vital. During the pandemic, the World Health Organisation — despite criticism — co-ordinated a global response. UN agencies still deliver food, shelter, and protection to millions trapped in conflicts. The problem, therefore, is not the UN's utility but the political will of member states to empower it.

The Israel-Guterres episode demonstrates what is at stake. If humanitarian concerns can be silenced by threats of exclusion, diplomacy risks becoming hollow — an echo chamber of national interests rather than a platform for compromise. The growing rise of nationalism and isolationism deepens this risk, making governments less willing to accept scrutiny from international institutions. Reform or Decline?

At 80, the UN faces not only a survival test but also an opportunity for renewal. Calls for reform are hardly new — expanding the Security Council, ensuring accountability in peacekeeping, and strengthening conflict-prevention mechanisms have long been on the agenda.

What has been lacking is genuine political will. Middle powers such as India, Brazil, and South Africa can play a decisive role here. India, in particular, has argued that its population size, democratic record, and economic strength warrant a permanent Security Council seat.

But beyond the question of membership, the real opportunity lies in shaping a multilateralism that reflects today's fractured world — one not dominated solely by Washington, Beijing, or Moscow, but sustained by broader coalitions of states committed to problem-solving.

A Mission That Endures Hammarskjöld's reminder — that the UN was designed not to bring heaven to earth but to save humanity from hell — remains the guiding compass. The task of preventing catastrophic wars and fostering dialogue is as urgent today as it was in 1945. From Gaza to Ukraine, from forgotten conflicts in Africa to looming climate disasters, the need for international cooperation has never been more obvious.

The UN's future is uncertain. Its authority is under attack, its leaders challenged, and its structures weighed down by rivalry. But history shows the organisation's resilience. It survived Cold War paralysis, adapted to new global challenges, and expanded its scope from peacekeeping to sustainable development. Its survival today will depend not on lofty speeches but on whether nations, large and small, can rediscover the value of working together in an age of division. United Nations Day should not be a mere commemoration. It must serve as a call to action. At 80, the UN's fate rests less on the hostility it faces and more on the resolve of its members to make multilateralism meaningful again.

In a world bristling with conflict, mistrust, and populist rhetoric, the UN remains humanity's imperfect but indispensable safeguard. The challenge now is to ensure it can still fulfil its most basic mission: not to deliver paradise, but to prevent the descent into chaos.

**PIC TALK**



The embrace of Ram and Sita, celebrated with devotion at the Luv Kush Ramlila performance in New Delhi. PHOTO: PANKAJ KUMAR

## Healing yourself is the greatest gift to children



ASHA IYER KUMAR

**THE PIONEER 2ND OPINION**

What do good parents give their children from the moment they are born? A treasure chest of visible blessings — unconditional love, tender care, a safe and secure childhood, survival skills, lessons in right and wrong, the values of kindness and respect, a sound education, and perhaps later in life, whatever savings they can set aside.

Yet this is only half the story. Alongside these visible gifts, parents also pass on unseen legacies, often without even being aware of it. Our fears slip quietly behind our smiles, our frustrations burst forth in misplaced anger, and our inner struggles echo in our children's minds long before they can understand them. These invisible inheritances play a profound role in shaping who our children become, influencing their character, choices, and relationships.

The irony is that this is rarely intentional. A father raised in an environment of relentless criticism may, unknowingly, replicate the same climate at home. A mother who never received open affection might struggle to express love freely, even while caring deeply for her child. Thus, emotional distance, unspoken expectations, and silent disappointments flow from one generation to the next like an unseen river. Every parent carries some psychological baggage into adulthood. Dreams unfulfilled, battles left half-fought, identities muted by circumstance — all these burdens quietly trickle down. They shape the way our children view themselves, the way they connect with peers, partners, and colleagues, and ultimately the way they measure happiness in their lives.

For decades, no one shed light on how deeply a parent's unresolved wounds shape the well-being of their children. Why has this remained invisible? Because most parents grew up in a time when mental health was either ignored, dismissed, or feared. Many learned to swallow their pain, hide their anxieties, or cope in silence. Some feared judgement; others did not even have the vocabulary to articulate what they were experiencing. And so, unresolved struggles were buried, only to resurface in their children's lives. But today, we know better. It is time to break this cycle. Parents need to acknowledge their own emotional reali-

ties, confront their hidden wounds, and actively mend their inner fabric. Healing is also an act of love towards one's children. Because the unhealed scars we carry silently scratch our children too, setting off a ripple effect that spreads across generations. Today, we understand that the mind can falter in ways that are less visible yet equally destructive — in sleepless nights, gnawing anxiety, suppressed anger, and chronic dissatisfaction.

A troubled mind does not always announce itself with noise; sometimes it hides in silence. Addressing our emotional burdens not only for our own fulfilment but also to ensure that our children are not saddled with the weight of our unresolved struggles. Children are remarkably perceptive; they pick up energies and emotions we never voice. By learning to neutralise these hidden currents, we give them a gift more valuable than money or material success — the foundation for a joyful, balanced life. Good parenting, then, is not just about what we give our children outwardly. It is also about what we refuse to pass on inwardly — the baggage, the bitterness, the shadows. Healing ourselves is the truest inheritance we can offer them.

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## TRUMP'S FOREIGN POLICY: ILLUSION OVER REALISM

At the United Nations General Assembly, US President Donald Trump declared that he had "stopped seven wars," a claim that reads more as self-congratulatory theatre than serious statesmanship. In truth, his foreign policy has been a mixture of chaos, photo-op diplomacy, and reckless disengagement masquerading as peace.

By tearing up the Iran nuclear deal, he reignited tensions, emboldening hardliners and destabilising the Gulf. His Afghanistan deal with the Taliban was no breakthrough but a hasty retreat, leaving behind a fractured nation and emboldened militants.

In Syria, he betrayed US allies with a sudden withdrawal that permitted Turkish incursions. Arms sales fuelled the brutal war

in Yemen, intensifying civilian suffering. With North Korea, he alternated between brinkmanship and fawning summits, achieving nothing beyond glossy images. Calling such recklessness "stopping wars" is pure distortion. Trump did not dismantle conflicts; he outsourced, abandoned, or froze them.

His UNCA proclamation is less the voice of a peacemaker than that of a salesman peddling illusions, attempting to mask a legacy of instability and betrayal. This record of recklessness should serve as a warning. True peacemaking demands accountability, not self-promotion. The world deserves leadership rooted in action, not illusion.

N SADHASIVA REDDY | BENGALURU

Please send your letter to the info@dailyopinion.com. In not more than 250 words. We appreciate your feedback.

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### Foreign policy without moral compass

The Narendra Modi Government's stance on the Israel-Palestine conflict reflects silence that abandons both humanity and morality. India's position appears more influenced by the Prime Minister's personal ties with Benjamin Netanyahu than by constitutional values or strategic interests. Such personalised diplomacy is untenable and has failed elsewhere, including in the United States, in humiliating ways.

India once stood for liberation struggles in South Africa, Algeria, and Bangladesh, and in 1988, New Delhi formally recognised the State of Palestine. Yet, since October 2023, when hostilities erupted, India has virtually relinquished its moral role.

While we rightly condemned Hamas's 7 October attacks, Israel's response has been nothing short of genocidal — over 65,000 Palestinians killed, including 17,000 children. Gaza's schools, hospitals, farms, and industries have been obliterated. Civilians face famine and are even shot while seeking food. While 150 UN members — including France, the UK, Portugal, Canada, and Australia — have recognised Palestine, India instead signed an investment deal with Israel and hosted its far-right finance minister accused of inciting violence. Silence in the face of genocide is complicity.

BHAGWAN THADANI | MUMBAI

### Youth anger ignites Ladakh protests

Movements erupt when oppression, exploitation, and injustice persist. The First War of Independence in 1857 reflected resentment against British plunder. The Quit India Movement in 1942 erupted after relentless repression. Today, though India is free, repressive policies remain unchanged — only the rulers' skin colour has altered. Neighbouring Nepal recently witnessed a Gen Z movement, dismissed as an internal issue.

Yet, anger has spilled into Ladakh, where people demand full statehood and inclusion in the Sixth Schedule of the Constitution. Since the Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation Act of 2019, Ladakh has remained a Union Territory, leaving its people disillusioned. Prominent activist Sonam Wangchuk has resorted to a long-term hunger strike, supported by youth who accuse the Government of inaction. Their frustration culminated in protests at BJP offices.

Similar demands have been raised in Jammu and Kashmir but repeatedly delayed through judicial manoeuvres. Suppressing voices cannot resolve grievances. If legitimate aspirations in Ladakh continue to be ignored, violent protests may erupt, risking unrest across the Himalayan region and even the Kashmir Valley.

JANG BAHADUR SINGH | JAMSHEDPUR

### Philosopher-novelist who provoked thought

The passing of SL Bhyrappa marks the end of one of India's finest intellectual voices. His works were never just novels but philosophical explorations that redefined the scope of Indian literature.

With masterpieces such as Parva and Grihabhanga, he pushed the boundaries of mythological and historical fiction. Bhyrappa's gift lay in merging scholarship with storytelling. His narratives, while deeply rooted in Hindu philosophy and Indian culture, spoke to universal truths about human nature.

By making complex ideas accessible, he engaged readers far beyond academic circles. He was fearless in confronting controversy, using it as an avenue for meaningful debate rather than evasion.

His writings were not merely entertainment but tools for introspection, urging readers to examine morality, history, and identity. Kannada literature, and indeed Indian thought, has lost an irreplaceable mind. Though his voice has fallen silent, his intellectual and literary legacy will continue to inspire writers, thinkers, and readers for generations to come.

His passing leaves a profound void in Indian literature, yet his timeless works will continue to guide and inspire generations.

VIJAYKUMAR HK | KARNATAKA



# US-Pakistan tilt: Shifting power game in South Asia

For India, this renewed tilt presents a familiar challenge. Each cycle of US -Pakistan engagement raises questions about balance in South Asia. Yet history shows such tilts are temporary and transactional

**FIRST Column**



ABHINAV NARAYAN



SRIJAN SHARMA

Pakistan Army Chief Asim Munir's second visit to the United States drew considerable attention in diplomatic and strategic circles. His itinerary was far from routine: he shared lunch with US President Donald Trump and delivered remarks at the retirement ceremony of General Michael Kurilla, the outgoing head of US Central Command (CENTCOM). These gestures underscored Washington's recognition of Pakistan's continuing relevance in its regional calculus. Yet the visit also carried a sharper undertone. Munir, in a strikingly assertive manner, issued direct threats to India — including a nuclear threat — marking the first instance of such rhetoric being delivered from US soil. For Pakistan, the visit was an opportunity to reassert its strategic value; for the United States, it reflected a familiar pattern of "tilt tactics" used historically to preserve influence and recalibrate power balances in volatile regions.

### Understanding Tilt Tactics

The concept of "tilt tactics" is deeply rooted in US foreign policy practice. It gained prominence during the Nixon administration, when three imperatives shaped American strategy: securing immediate strategic security, creating long-term geopolitical advantages, and maintaining Washington's global relevance. Tilt tactics are often paired with what scholars describe as "strategic de-hyphenation" — the deliberate attempt to deal with rival states independently, avoiding zero-sum choices. In practice, this means the US may engage India and Pakistan separately, but tilt toward one at key junctures to serve broader objectives. The origins of this approach in South Asia date back to the early 1970s. Confronted with Soviet expansion and eager to open channels with China, Washington relied on Pakistan as a bridge. Declassified CIA files reveal how Yahya Khan played messenger between Nixon and Zhou Enlai. Pakistan facilitated secret diplomacy that led to Henry Kissinger's historic visit to Beijing in 1971, paving the way for Sino-American normalisation.

Yet, this tilt came at a moral cost. Washington turned a blind eye to Pakistan's brutal Operation Searchlight in East Pakistan, which unleashed mass atrocities later docu-



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INDIA MUST RESPOND WITH RESTRAINT, FOCUSING ON LONG-TERM ECONOMIC AND STRATEGIC CONSOLIDATION RATHER THAN REACTIVE POSTURING

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mented in the famous Blood Telegram. Despite an official arms embargo, the US covertly supported Pakistan with spare parts and weapons routed through third parties like Jordan and Iran. The tilt was therefore less about principle and more about expediency: while maintaining nominal ties with India, the US prioritised Pakistan to serve its China and Cold War strategy.

### The First Abandonment

However, tilt tactics have historically been transactional, not permanent. After Pakistan's defeat in the 1971 war and the birth of Bangladesh, Washington quickly reassessed. Financial aid dropped dramatically, military assistance shrank under revived embargoes, and by the late 1970s, Pakistan faced new pressures. The Symington Amendment imposed sanctions on nuclear aspirants, with Pakistan a prime target. CIA assessments increasingly focused on instability and proliferation risks rather than on cultivating Islamabad as a frontline ally. This first abandonment revealed the cyclical nature of US engagement: once Pakistan's immediate utility declined, strategic indifference followed.

### Power Management Beyond South Asia

South Asia was not unique. The US tilt-abandonment cycle also played out in Latin America. In Chile, Nixon and Kissinger funded covert operations to destabilise

Salvador Allende, ultimately paving the way for Augusto Pinochet's 1973 coup. Washington tilted heavily toward Pinochet, overlooking widespread torture and even the killing of American citizens. But when Pinochet's utility waned in the late 1980s, Washington distanced itself, supporting democratic forces in the 1988 plebiscite. The Middle East offers similar examples. Saddam Hussein was courted in the 1980s as a bulwark against Iran, only to be discarded and destroyed once his power grew inconvenient.

Saudi Arabia, too, has experienced phases of tilt and disengagement — courted during energy crises, briefly shunned after the Khashoggi murder, then re-engaged when oil and Iran's assertiveness demanded it. These cases illustrate the broader US strategy: power management through selective tilting, temporary indulgence, and eventual recalibration.

### Renewed Tilt Toward Pakistan

Against this backdrop, Asim Munir's recent US visit signals a renewed tilt toward Pakistan. Ironically, this comes at a time when Pakistan's economy is fragile, its energy sector dependent, and its domestic politics unstable. Yet Washington perceives Pakistan's strategic utility, particularly in relation to Iran. President Trump's announcement of US investment in Pakistan's oil refineries, despite Pakistan's limited crude production, highlights how symbolism often matters more than sub-

stance in tilt phases. Several factors underpin this renewed engagement:

### Strategic Intelligence on Iran

Declassified CIA assessments from the 1980s emphasised Pakistan's role in monitoring Iran through SIGINT and HUMINT. Baluchistan's proximity to Iran's restive Sistan-Baluchestan province makes Pakistan uniquely placed to provide intelligence on insurgent movements and Iranian-backed groups. More recent assessments, particularly during US operations in Afghanistan, confirm Pakistan's intelligence-sharing on Iran's Quds Force. As tensions between Israel and Iran escalate, this role becomes vital.

### Ideological Counterbalance

Pakistan's Sunni-majority identity has long been leveraged by the US to curb Iran's Shia ideological outreach. During Zia-ul-Haq's Islamisation, Washington tacitly supported policies that checked Tehran's influence over Afghan and South Asian Shia networks. Today, sectarian violence in Pakistan's border regions — such as clashes involving Iran-backed Zainabiyoun Brigade militias — provides another justification for US-Pakistani cooperation framed as counterterrorism.

### Backchannel Diplomacy

Historically, Pakistan has served as a discreet mediator. From shuttling messages between Washington and Beijing in the 1970s to offering mediation during US-Iran

clashes in 2019, Pakistan has repeatedly filled this role. Declassified reports also note Pakistan's facilitation of US messages during the Iran-Iraq war.

As Iran-US tensions rise, Pakistan again offers itself as a backchannel, mirroring its Cold War function. Thus, despite Pakistan's limited economic weight, it is once again positioned as a valuable partner for Washington's Gulf and Iran strategy.

### India's Strategic Response

For India, this renewed tilt presents a familiar challenge. Each cycle of US — Pakistan engagement raises questions about balance in South Asia. Yet history shows such tilts are temporary and transactional. Washington tilts when expedient but rarely sustains exceptional support once circumstances shift. Prime Minister Modi's doctrine of "Equi Closeness" provides India with a strategic cushion. By engaging multiple poles — US, Russia, Europe, Japan, and the Gulf — India ensures that no single tilt undermines its rise. This multipolar outreach also tempers US leverage. India's larger economic weight, its centrality to Indo-Pacific strategy, and its growing partnership with Western powers ensure that Washington cannot afford to alienate New Delhi even while courting Islamabad. Nevertheless, vigilance is essential.

Pakistan may exploit this temporary tilt to amplify rhetoric, escalate tensions, or project renewed relevance in multilateral forums. India must respond with restraint, focusing on long-term economic and strategic consolidation rather than reactive posturing. By demonstrating maturity, India can prevent Washington's tilt tactics from destabilising regional equations.

### Conclusion

Asim Munir's visit to Washington and his nuclear threats from US soil underscore the transactional nature of great-power politics. For the US, tilt tactics are not about loyalty or morality but about power management. Pakistan, despite its fragility, remains valuable for intelligence, ideology, and backchannel diplomacy vis-à-vis Iran.

Yet, as history shows, once Pakistan's utility diminishes, abandonment is inevitable. For India, the lesson is clear: avoid emotional responses to temporary tilts. Instead, invest in strategic resilience, diversify partnerships, and remain the indispensable partner Washington cannot overlook. Tilt tactics may sway in the short term, but India's steady rise provides the longer-term equilibrium in South Asia.

## Pakistan's international aid paradox: Dependency, diversion, and defence



N C BIPINDRA

For more than seventy years, Pakistan has remained one of the most consistent recipients of international aid and financial support. Multilateral institutions such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank, and the Asian Development Bank (ADB) have repeatedly extended rescue packages to keep the economy afloat. Bilateral donors including Japan and the United States have offered loans, grants, and technical support. In parallel, preferential trade schemes like the European Union's Generalised Scheme of Preferences Plus (GSP+) have given Pakistani exports privileged access to European markets. On paper, these inflows were designed to stabilise Pakistan's fragile economy, promote structural reform, and improve human development indicators. In practice, however, the outcomes have been far less encouraging. Instead of becoming a springboard for sustainable growth, aid has been mismanaged, misdirected, and ultimately used to entrench dependency.

At the centre of this story lies a consistent diversion of resources from development priorities to the country's bloated defence establishment. The result is a paradox: international aid meant to secure peace and prosperity often ends up reinforcing militarisation, fiscal opacity, and instability. One of the most striking examples of this paradox is Pakistan's experience with American military and security assistance. Since the onset of the "War on Terror" in 2001, billions of dollars have flowed annually into Pakistan under the justification of counterterrorism. Officially, this support was intended to modernise Pakistan's military, improve internal security, and prevent terrorist networks from spilling across borders.

Yet closer examination reveals a troubling pattern. Sophisticated systems such as F-16 fighter aircraft, surveillance drones, and attack helicopters supplied under counterterrorism justifications were frequently redeployed for conventional posturing against India. The same weapons meant to dismantle insurgent havens often became tools of military brinkmanship in South Asia. Even more concerning were the indirect linkages between aid flows and militant networks. Watchdogs repeatedly warned that porous oversight

allowed resources to seep into extremist ecosystems. The Financial Action Task Force (FATF) flagged Pakistan between 2018 and 2022 for its inability to curb terror financing and money laundering, keeping the country on its grey list. Though Pakistan was delisted in 2022, the FATF's June 2025 assessment highlighted new proliferation financing risks, citing a 2020 incident where missile-related equipment was disguised in shipping documents linked to Pakistan's National Development Complex.

Such revelations highlight how aid meant to contain instability often ends up sustaining it. No external actor has shaped Pakistan's economic trajectory more than the IMF. Since 1958, Pakistan has entered 26 separate IMF programmes — among the highest globally. These programmes, worth over \$34 billion in total, range from short-term standby loans to sweeping rescue packages. Notable examples include the \$7.2 billion bailout in 2008 and the \$5.3 billion Extended Fund Facility approved in 2024. As recently as May 2025, Pakistan secured \$1.4 billion under the IMF's Resilience and Sustainability Facility, extending its reliance yet again. The World Bank and ADB have complemented this support. The World Bank has disbursed more than \$48 billion since 1950, unveiling a new \$40 billion partnership framework in 2025. The ADB has committed over \$52 billion since 1966, with its latest \$800 million programme targeting fiscal stability and private investment mobilisation.

Despite this massive inflow of capital, developmental progress remains stunted. Weak governance, persistent fiscal indiscipline, and the prioritisation of defence spending over reform mean the same story repeats: bailout, brief recovery, renewed crisis, and yet another bailout. Among bilateral partners, the United States and Japan illustrate contrasting paths. Washington's assistance has been overwhelmingly security-driven. Billions of dollars have been spent on military hardware and counterterrorism initiatives, but as critics observe, these resources are often diverted to conventional military goals rather than internal reform. Japan, in contrast, has prioritised development. Since the 1960s, it has channelled over \$15 billion into concessional loans and grants for energy projects, infrastructure, disaster preparedness, and human capital development. In April 2025, Tokyo announced another \$300 million package for renewable energy and vocational training. Yet even Japanese aid has been undermined by Pakistan's governance failures. Despite the development-oriented intent, outcomes remain diluted by resource leakage and the overwhelming dominance of defence expenditure. Beyond loans and grants, Pakistan has

reaped significant benefits from trade preferences. Under the EU's GSP+ scheme, operational since 2014, Pakistani exports enjoy duty-free or reduced-tariff access to two-thirds of EU tariff lines. This has transformed Europe into Pakistan's largest export destination, with exports rising from €3.8 billion in 2013 to over €8 billion by 2025. The textile and apparel sectors, in particular, have thrived, creating millions of jobs. But GSP+ is not unconditional. Beneficiaries must uphold standards on human rights, labour protections, and governance. EU monitors have repeatedly expressed dissatisfaction with Pakistan's compliance.

Critics say GSP+ earnings fund defence and fiscal gaps rather than education or welfare. Pakistan's opaque defence spending, with no detailed breakdown and excluding external aid, worsens this diversion. Major acquisitions — fighter jets, submarines, missile systems — are often camouflaged under "development expenditure" or "civilian imports." Loans and grants officially designated for economic support frequently subsidise these acquisitions indirectly. Even defence-related debt servicing is buried in unrelated budget lines. This lack of transparency shields the military from accountability and entrenches a "defence-first" fiscal culture that sidelines human development. Ultimately, Pakistan's predicament is not a paradox but a deliberate pattern. Leaders and generals appeal for bailouts in the name of survival while sustaining one of the most militarised states in the world. Aid that should fund schools, hospitals, and welfare schemes is redirected to weapons procurement, elite privileges, and covert patronage networks. The misuse extends beyond militarisation.

Investigations reveal that aid inflows and trade revenues often bankroll the lavish lifestyles of elites — luxury vehicles, overseas real estate, and offshore accounts — while ordinary citizens grapple with poverty, unemployment, and collapsing services. Billions are siphoned abroad annually through illicit financial flows, cementing elite capture of national resources.

The consequence is a vicious cycle: aid prevents immediate collapse but does not build resilience. Instead, it fuels corruption, strengthens militarisation, and erodes incentives for reform. For international donors, the lesson is unambiguous — without robust transparency, enforceable accountability, and strict conditionality, every dollar risks reinforcing Pakistan's dependency and decay rather than promoting stability and development.

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## Beyond Jan Dhan: Building trust, and true empowerment



SHIKHAR AGGARWAL

A decade ago, a vegetable seller in a small Indian town lived in a fragile financial world. Cash was the only currency she trusted, her modest savings were tucked away at home, and the idea of insurance or a bank loan was beyond imagination. If she needed money, the local money-lender was her sole resort — unreliable, expensive, and often exploitative.

Today, her life looks entirely different. She accepts QR-code payments, maintains a Jan Dhan account to secure her earnings, pays a few rupees a month for life or accident insurance, and can even apply for collateral-free loans. This transformation began in 2014 with the launch of the Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana (PMJDY). In less than ten years, more than 55 crore accounts were opened, drawing millions — especially women — into the formal banking system for the first time.

A simple bank account became more than a passbook. It was a gateway to government benefits, a recognised identity, and a step toward dignity and independence. The safety net expanded in 2015 with affordable insurance and pension schemes. The Pradhan Mantri Suraksha Bima Yojana, Pradhan Mantri Jeevan Jyoti Bima Yojana, and the Atal Pension Yojana gave daily wage workers, vendors, and artisans financial protection they had never imagined. Over 83 crore enrolments brought social security to the masses, ending its status as the privilege of a few.

For small entrepreneurs, the introduction of MUDRA loans was equally transformative. With access to collateral-free credit, shopkeepers, artisans, and micro-businesses could grow without being trapped by informal lenders. Unlike the shadowy world of handwritten IOUs, formal credit came with clear terms, receipts, and trust. If Jan Dhan was the foundation, the digital revolution gave inclusion its wings. The rise of UPI, supported by affordable mobile data, reshaped how Indians transacted.

By 2024, UPI processed over 12 billion monthly transactions. Suddenly, a farmer could sell produce at the mandi and be paid instantly, while a migrant worker could send money home in seconds. The spread of digital finance created a network effect — once some adopted it, others quickly followed, making money management more democratic than ever before. This leap was



supported by grassroots infrastructure. More than 13.5 lakh Bank Mitras and Aadhaar-enabled service points took banking to villages where branches never existed. FinTech companies then layered on innovations — crop insurance linked to weather data, digital credit scores, and micro-investments — tailored to farmers, women entrepreneurs, and gig workers. Yet, challenges remain. Inclusion has not always meant empowerment.

Millions of Jan Dhan accounts remain inactive, and for many, digital finance is limited to sending or receiving money. Rising digital frauds and phishing scams have also dented trust, demanding stronger consumer protection and awareness. Equally urgent is financial literacy. Access without understanding remains shallow; people need guidance on safeguarding PINs, evaluating insurance, and avoiding predatory loans. The next phase of inclusion will be powered by technology — AI-driven credit design, blockchain for tamper-proof records, satellite-based crop insurance, and portable benefits for gig workers.

But as India advances, it must ensure no one is left behind — the elderly, the digitally excluded, or those still dependent on cash. India's financial story is not only about big numbers but about individual empowerment: the woman in Bihar saving without fear, the gig worker in Bengaluru with health coverage, the shopkeeper who sees credit as a ladder, not a trap. The first chapter was about access. The next must be about empowerment — making finance not just inclusive but meaningful, resilient, and dignified.

**The Pioneer**  
SINCE 1865

The writer is a fintech expert and writes on political and economic development

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## FROM THE WORLD

### SRI LANKA

#### Seven Buddhist monks killed

Seven Buddhist monks, including an Indian national, were killed and six others were injured after a cable-operated rail cart overturned at a forest monastery in northwestern Sri Lanka, police said on Thursday. The incident occurred on Wednesday night at the Na Uyana Aranya Senasana, a renowned Buddhist monastery located in Nikaweratiya, about 125 km from Colombo. The monastery is known for its meditation retreats and draws practitioners from around the world. Among the seven deceased monks were an Indian, a Russian, and a Romanian national, police said.

### UNITED NATIONS

#### Sviatlana warns Donald Trump

The Belarusian president, whose iron-fisted rule earned him the nickname of "Europe's Last Dictator", wants to fool President Donald Trump with gestures like prisoner releases, the expelled leader of Belarus' opposition leader Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya told UN General Assembly. Sviatlana fled Belarus under Government pressure. That election gave him his sixth term in office and largest wave of mass protests in Belarus' history.

### PAKISTAN

#### Religious radical attack Ahmadi

Religious extremists led by members of a radical Islamist party attacked the houses and shops of Ahmadi over the burial of an Ahmadi woman in Pakistan's Punjab province, an organisation representing the minority community said on Thursday. According to Jamaat-e-Ahmadiyya Pakistan, the incident occurred this week in Piru Chak, Sialkot District, approximately 130 km from Lahore. Ahmadi woman Qudsiya Tabassum, died this week. When she was taken to the graveyard of Piru Chak for burial, a group of Muslim extremists reached there and obstructed her burial, it said.

# Pakistan PM holds meeting with Bangladesh's Yunus

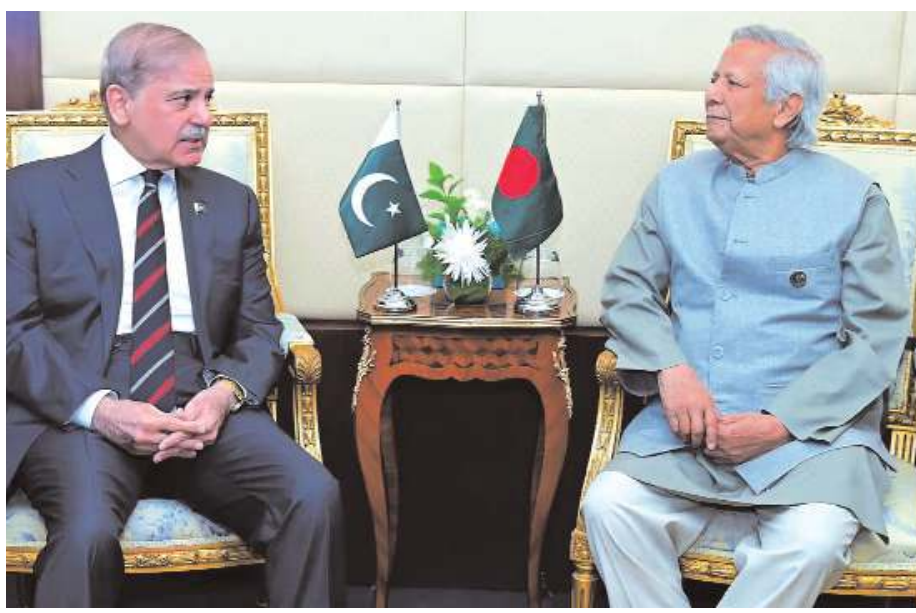
PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

■ ISLAMABAD

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif held separate meetings with Chief Adviser of Bangladesh Muhammad Yunus and President of Sri Lanka Anura Kumara Dissanayake and discussed bilateral ties, it was announced on Thursday.

The meetings were held on Wednesday on the sidelines of the 80th session of the UN General Assembly in New York where all three leaders were present to attend the session.

During Sharif's "warm and cordial" meeting with Yunus, the two leaders reviewed the current state of Pakistan-Bangladesh



and cultural linkages. "The meeting was held in a cordial and friendly atmosphere, reflecting the mutual commitment of both countries to work together for the well-being of their people and the stability of South Asia," the statement added. According to another statement, PM Sharif and President Dissanayake meeting, held at Sri Lanka's Permanent Mission to the UN, covered a wide range of areas, including high level exchanges, bilateral trade, educational cooperation, cultural exchanges, and defence cooperation. They also exchanged views on various regional and global issues. "Both leaders expressed sat-

isfaction over the robust nature of Pakistan-Sri Lanka bilateral relations. They affirmed to continue working closely to ensure that these relations would grow from strength to strength, during the years ahead," the statement said. The prime minister reaffirmed Pakistan's commitment to enhance bilateral engagement with Sri Lanka in all spheres, and appreciated the close cooperation between the two countries at various international fora. Both leaders agreed to enhance exchanges in sports, particularly cricket. Both sides agreed to remain engaged for the advancement of Pakistan-Sri Lanka bilateral relations, it added.

# Trump demands investigation into triple sabotage at UN

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

■ New York/Washington

US President Donald Trump has demanded an investigation into three "sinister events" at the UN headquarters, including an escalator breaking down while he and First Lady Melania Trump were on it, describing them as "triple sabotage". In a post on Truth Social on Wednesday, he also said the UN should be "ashamed" of itself.

"A REAL DISGRACE took place at the United Nations yesterday — Not one, not two, but three very sinister events!" Trump said. The first incident was when the escalator going up to the main speaking floor came to

**A REAL DISGRACE took place at the United Nations yesterday — Not one, not two, but three very sinister events!**

— DONALD TRUMP, US PRESIDENT

a "screeching halt" shortly after the First Lady and Trumps stepped onto it. "It stopped on a dime. It's amazing that Melania and I didn't fall forward onto the sharp edges of these steel steps, face first. It was only that we were each holding the handrail tightly or, it would have been a disaster.

This was absolutely sabotage," Trump said adding that those behind the incident should be arrested. Then, as Trump came on the

UNGA podium to deliver his address to the General Debate of the 80th UN General Assembly session, the teleprompter broke.

"Then, as I stood before a television crowd of millions of people all over the world, and important leaders in the Hall, my teleprompter didn't work. It was stone cold dark. I immediately thought to myself, 'Wow, first the escalator event, and now a bad teleprompter. What kind of a place is this?'" he said. Trump proceeded to

deliver his 57-minute speech without a teleprompter, which started working about 15 minutes later.

"The good news is the speech has gotten fantastic reviews. Maybe they appreciated the fact that very few people could have done what I did," he said.

Thirdly, Trump said that he was told, after he finished delivering his speech, that the sound was completely off in the UN General Assembly hall and the world leaders couldn't hear a thing unless they used the interpreters' earpieces.

"The first person I saw at the conclusion of the speech was Melania, who was sitting right up front. I said, 'How did I do?' And she

said, 'I couldn't hear a word you said.'" Trump said these incidents were not a coincidence but a "triple sabotage at the UN" and the organisation ought to be "ashamed" of itself. "I'm sending a copy of this letter to the Secretary General, and I demand an immediate investigation. No wonder the United Nations hasn't been able to do the job that they were put in existence to do.

All security tapes at the escalator should be saved, especially the emergency stop button. The Secret Service is involved." Trump also referred to a report in The London Times that said UN workers had "joked" about turning off an escalator.

# Indian woman among 26 climbers to scale Mount Manaslu

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

■ Kathmandu

An Indian woman was among the 26 climbers who successfully scaled the world's eighth-highest peak, Mount Manaslu in Nepal. Dwarka Vishwanath Dokhe climbed the highest peak in the Gorkha District.

"Twenty-six climbers, including 12 Nepali Sherpa guides and an Indian national stood atop the 8,163-metre mountain Wednesday morning," Pemba Sherpa, a staff at 8K expeditions, said.

Climbers continued their summit push heading to the peak of Mount Manaslu as they found a fair window, he added.



Demonstrators block a road during protests against diesel price hikes following fuel subsidy cuts by President Daniel Government in Otavalo

# US lawmaker in China says there's a lot of work to do to resolve trade conflict

ASSOCIATED PRESS

■ Shanghai

The head of a US congressional delegation visiting China said on Thursday that much needed to be done to resolve the US-China trade conflict, which he said is creating difficulties for companies on both sides of the Pacific.

His biggest takeaway was that a lot of business is going on between the two economies despite the trade war, Republican Adam Smith, a Democrat from Washington state, said on the final day of a five-day trip.

"We have a lot of work to do to resolve those issues, but China, the US and the world can benefit from resolving some of our differences and

working better together," he told journalists after a meeting with the American Chamber of Commerce in Shanghai. The group of three Democrats — Smith and Republican Ro Khanna and Chrissy Houlahan and Republican Michael Baumgartner could be seen having a coffee at a Starbucks in an office building lobby after their meeting with the Chamber. The Democrats are all members of the House Armed Services Committee, and Smith repeated his call from the outset of the trip for more communication between the US and Chinese militaries.

"Two of the largest nuclear powers in the world need to be talking to each other, particularly considering the fact that we do have some disagreements," he said. The lawmakers arrived in Shanghai on Wednesday after three days of meetings with Chinese political leaders in Beijing, including Premier Li Qiang, Foreign Minister Wang Yi and Defence Minister Dong Jun Smith said the main purpose of trip was to open up lines of communication between the Governments.

Theirs was the first by a delegation from the US House of Representatives since 2019.

A US Senate delegation visited in 2023. US President Donald Trump said recently that he would meet Chinese leader Xi Jinping at a regional summit in South Korea in late October and visit China in the early next year.

# Paris court sentences Sarkozy to prison despite appeal

ASSOCIATED PRESS

■ Paris

A Paris court sentenced former French President Nicolas Sarkozy to five years in prison and — in a major surprise — said he'll be incarcerated even if he appeals, after finding him guilty on Thursday in his trial for alleged illegal campaign financing by Libya.

The court said the date of his incarceration will be decided later, sparing the 70-year-old the humiliation of being marched out of the courtroom by police officers and going straight to jail. The court found Sarkozy guilty of criminal association in a plot from 2005 to 2007 to finance his campaign with funds from Libya in exchange for diplomatic favours. But it cleared him of three other



Former French President Nicolas Sarkozy and his wife Carla Bruni arriving at the court house in Paris

charges — including passive corruption, illegal campaign financing and concealment of the embezzlement of public funds. The court also found two of Sarkozy's closest associates when he was president — former ministers Claude Guéant and Brice Hortefeux — guilty of criminal association but likewise acquitted them of some other charges. Overall, the ruling

suggested that the court believed that the men conspired to seek Libyan funding for Sarkozy's 2007 campaign but that judges weren't convinced that the conservative leader himself was directly involved in the funding effort or that any Libyan money ended up being used in his winning campaign. The chief judge, in an hours-long reading of

the lengthy verdict, said Sarkozy allowed his close associates to reach out to Libyan authorities "to obtain or try to obtain financial support in Libya for the purpose of securing campaign financing." He stood as she read out the verdict. But the court also said it couldn't determine with certainty that Libyan money ended up financing Sarkozy's campaign. Still, under French law, a corrupt scheme can still be a crime even if money wasn't paid or cannot be proven, the court explained. Sarkozy, accompanied by his wife, the singer and model Carla Bruni-Sarkozy, was present in the courtroom,

which was also filled with reporters and members of the public. Sarkozy sat in the front row of the defendant's seats. His three adult sons were also in the room. Sarkozy, who was elected in 2007 but lost his bid for reelection in 2012, denied all wrongdoing during a three-month trial earlier this year that also involved 11 co-defendants, including three former ministers. Despite multiple legal scandals that have clouded his presidential legacy, Sarkozy remains an influential figure in right-wing politics in France and in entertainment circles, by virtue of his marriage to Bruni-Sarkozy.



# Ragasa pushes across China's south coast toward Vietnam

ASSOCIATED PRESS

■ Hong Kong

A weakened Tropical Storm Ragasa pushed west along the southern Chinese coast toward Vietnam on Thursday after flooding streets and homes in the economic hub of Guangdong province and causing deaths in Taiwan and the Philippines earlier in the week. In the Guangdong city of Yangjiang, over 10,000 trees were damaged and branches floated on the water in submerged streets. Crews used excavators to clear toppled trees and worked clear blocked roads, Yangjiang Daily reported. Nearly half a million households suffered power outages. More than a third of those homes remained without electricity Thursday morning, the newspaper reported.

# FBI seized documents labelled classified from Bolton's office

ASSOCIATED PRESS

■ Alabama

Federal agents seized multiple documents labelled 'classified', 'confidential' and 'secret' from the office of former national security adviser John Bolton as part of an investigation into whether Bolton mishandled defence records, according to court filings. The seized documents marked as confidential appear to be about weapons of mass destruction, national "strategic communication" and the US mission to the United Nations, investigators wrote in a catalogued list of what was collected during the search in late August. The list did not specify when the documents are from. The FBI also seized phones and computer equipment at the time, according to the court filings that were unsealed on Tuesday.

**GOVERNMENT OF TELANGANA**  
**OFFICE OF THE COLLECTOR SURVEY & LAND RECORDS KHAMMAM DISTRICT**  
 Tender Notice No. A3/268/2025 Dt: 25-09-2025  
 The short tenders are hereby called from various proprietors/suppliers for supply of (10) Nos of GNSS IMU RTK receiver with 1408 channels with 2w radio Frequency with all standard accessories Controllers and latest Android version software with required specifications two years warranty. The sealed covers should reach from 25-09-2025 to 30-09-2025 in office hours (ie. 10-30 AM to 5-00PM) and the drop box is available at Office of the Assistant Director Survey & Land Records, Room No.52, Second floor, IDOC, V.V.Palera, Khammam. Note: Opening of tenders: 7-10-2025 at 3-00PM in the chamber of Chairman (DPC) & Additional Collector (Rev.) Khammam District. Sd/- Chairman (DPC) & Additional DPCR No. 8688-PPCLADVT/1/2025-26, Dt: 25.09.2025 Collector (Revenue), KHAMMAM

**GREATER HYDERABAD MUNICIPAL CORPORATION**  
**'E' PROCUREMENT SHORT TENDER NOTICE**  
 NIT No.: 26/EE-Div-29/SBZ/GHMC/2025-26 Dated: 25.09.2025  
 Name of the Work : Repairs to collapsed RR Masonry wall of Nala at Markandeya nagar and at Friday market due to heavy rains in ward No. 145, Seethapalmandi division in Secunderabad Circle-29, GHMC. Estimate Amount /ECV in lakhs : 5.10 Start date / Last date & Time for receipts of Bids : From : 26.09.2025 @ 4:00 PM To 30.09.2025 @ 4:00 PM. Name & Address of officer Cell No: Executive Engineer, Div-29, GHMC, Sec-Bad, Cell No. 8704405075. Further details can be seen at e-Procurement @https://www.tender.eprocurement.gov.in. Sd/- Executive Engineer, DPCR No. 8628-PPCLADVT/1/2025-26, Dt: 25.09.2025 Div-29, Sec-Bad, GHMC.

## Kazakhstan's President calls for UN reform

ASHOKE RAJ  
New Delhi

Kazakhstan's President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev delivered a sweeping and visionary address at the 80th session of the United Nations General Assembly, calling for urgent reforms to the UN system, renewed global cooperation and stronger action on climate change, peacebuilding, and digital transformation.

In a time marked by deep geopolitical fractures and rising global tensions, President Tokayev urged world leaders to embrace diplomacy, trust, and shared responsibility.

"The United Nations remains today a symbol of hope for millions around the globe," he stated. "But we cannot turn a blind eye to the real crisis of trust in multilateral institutions." Tokayev underscored that reforming the United Nations is no longer a matter of debate but an urgent imperative.

He called for the creation of a new, high-level group of professionals tasked with proposing concrete reforms to adapt the UN to today's complex geopolitical landscape. A key focus of his speech was the reform of the UN Security Council. He



advocated for the inclusion of major powers from Asia, Africa, and Latin America on a rotational basis and argued for a greater role for so-called "Middle Powers" in bridging divides when major powers are at odds.

"The voices of responsible Middle Powers must be amplified," he said.

"They can act as bridges within the UN when major powers are divided." Reflecting on the devastating consequences of global conflicts, Tokayev warned that violations of international law have become normal-

ized, eroding global stability. He highlighted the ongoing Ukraine crisis and the humanitarian catastrophe in Gaza, calling for peaceful resolutions and adherence to international humanitarian law. He reaffirmed Kazakhstan's support for a two-state solution in the Middle East and praised diplomatic breakthroughs such as the normalization of ties between Azerbaijan and Armenia. "The psychology of animosity drags all involved in conflicts to the abyss," Tokayev cautioned. "Political leadership must

be rooted in mutual understanding and respect, not mutual suspicion and arrogance." Kazakhstan, a long-time advocate of nuclear disarmament, offered to host a new dialogue on nuclear non-proliferation. Tokayev emphasized the collapse of arms control treaties and called for high-level talks among nuclear states to reduce global risks. He also renewed Kazakhstan's proposal to establish an International Agency for Biological Safety and Security, aimed at preventing misuse of biological

research and promoting transparency. Climate change was a central theme in Tokayev's address. He detailed the environmental degradation facing Central Asia, including the drying Caspian Sea and the melting glaciers of the Alatau mountains. Kazakhstan, he said, will host a Regional Ecological Summit in Astana in April 2026 and is actively leading regional environmental initiatives, including the preservation of the Aral Sea and a national campaign titled "Clean Kazakhstan."

He proposed a UN resolution to designate April 22 as the International Day of Greening the Planet, encouraging a global movement toward sustainability. President Tokayev emphasised that Artificial Intelligence must serve humanity and called for global cooperation on AI governance. He welcomed the establishment of a UN-led Global Dialogue on AI and pledged Kazakhstan's full participation. Domestically, he highlighted Kazakhstan's rapid digital transformation, citing the country's goal to become a fully digital power within three years. With 90% of public services already digitized and a national super-

computer launched, the country is preparing its youth for an AI-driven future. Touting over \$400 billion in foreign investment since independence, Tokayev emphasized Kazakhstan's open market principles and strategic role as a logistics hub between Asia and Europe. Ongoing investments in transport corridors — including the Belt and Road Initiative and Trans-Caspian routes — are positioning Kazakhstan at the heart of the global trade network. Agriculture and energy diversification, he said, will continue to fuel growth, with 2025's GDP expected to grow over 6 per cent.

Concluding his address, Tokayev reaffirmed Kazakhstan's commitment to being a "bridge-builder and peace-maker," calling on world leaders to choose cooperation over confrontation and balance over domination.

"We remain firmly on this path — deepening governance reforms at home while supporting global Governance abroad," he said. "Kazakhstan stands ready to renew the promise of the United Nations as a beacon of peace, justice and cooperation."

## Lula surprised by Trump chemistry despite strains



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United Nations

Brazil's president said he was surprised as US President Donald Trump when they met by chance and "there was some chemistry", given the deteriorating relations between the two largest economies in the Americas. Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva told a news conference that their first-ever encounter made him "very happy" and "optimistic" about the possibility of Brazil and the US holding a meeting as soon as possible and doing away with the "bad feeling" in Brazil-US relations. The Trump administration has slapped sanctions on judges and others and imposed 50 per cent tariffs on many of Brazil's exports to the United States over the arrest and conviction

of the president's ally, former President Jair Bolsonaro, who was sentenced this month to 27 years in prison for attempting a coup in the South American nation.

Trump and Lula ran into each other as the Brazilian leader was walking out after delivering his speech to the annual gathering of world leaders at the UN General Assembly on Tuesday and the US president was walking in and about to step to the podium. "I saw him, he saw me, and we embraced," Trump said in his speech to the leaders. "We didn't have much time to talk, like about 20 seconds. We had a good talk, and we agreed to meet next week." Lula "seemed like a very nice man", and "I liked him", the US president said. "We had excellent chemistry."

## One detainee killed and two others critically injured in Dallas ICE

ASSOCIATED PRESS  
Dallas

A shooter with a rifle opened fire from a nearby roof onto a US Immigration and Customs Enforcement location in Dallas on Wednesday, killing one detainee and wounding two others in a transport van before taking his own life, authorities said.

The suspect has been identified by a law enforcement official as 29-year-old Joshua Jahn. The official could not publicly disclose details of the investigation and spoke to The Associated Press on condition of anonymity. The exact motivation for the attack was not immediately known.

FBI Director Kash Patel posted a photo on social media that showed a bullet found at the scene with the words "ANTI-ICE" written on it in what appeared to be marker. The attack is the latest public, targeted killing in the US and comes two weeks after conservative leader Charlie Kirk was killed by a rifle-wielding shooter on a roof. The Department of Homeland Security said in a release that shots were fired "indiscriminately at the ICE building, including at a van in the sallyport", a secure and gated entryway.

The surviving detainees were in critical condition at a hospital, said DHS, which earlier had said two detainees were killed and one was wounded before later issuing a correction. At a news conference earlier in the day, authorities gave few details about the shooting and did not release the names of the victims or the gunman. The FBI said it was investigating the shooting as "an act of targeted violence".

Officers responded to a call to assist an officer on North Stemmons Freeway around 6.40 am on Wednesday and determined that someone opened fire at a Government

building from an adjacent building, Dallas police spokesperson Officer Jonathan E Maner said in an email. Edwin Cardona, an immigrant from Venezuela, said he was entering the ICE building with his son for an appointment around 6.20 am when he heard gunshots. An agent gathered people who were inside, took them to a more secure area and explained that there was an active shooter, Cardona said.

"I was afraid for my family because my family was outside. I felt terrible because I thought something could happen to them. Thank God no," Cardona said. Cardona said his family was brought into the building, and they were later reunited. The ICE facility is along Interstate 35 East, just southwest of Dallas Love Field, a large commercial airport serving the Dallas-Fort Worth metropolitan area, and blocks from hotels catering to travellers.

Shortly after the shooting and before officials said at least one victim was a detainee, Vice President JD Vance posted on the social platform X that "the obsessive attack on law enforcement, particularly ICE, must stop". Republican US Senator Ted Cruz from Texas continued in that direction, calling for an end to politically motivated violence.

"To every politician who is using rhetoric demonising ICE and demonising CPB: stop," Cruz told reporters, referencing Customs and Border Protection.

The Ashley Anne Sipe, who prays outside of the Dallas ICE facility every Monday, called the shooting heartbreaking. "Violence doesn't heal anything," Sipe, a pastor in Lewisville near Dallas said. Sipe and other local faith leaders who have decried deportations hold weekly vigils and serve as "moral witnesses".

## Ukraine's President says world facing 'most destructive arms race in human history'

ASSOCIATED PRESS  
United Nations

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy told global leaders that the world is in "the most destructive arms race in human history" and urged the international community to act against Russia now, asserting that Vladimir Putin wants to expand his war in Europe.

In a bleak view of today's world, he told the annual high-level meeting of the UN General Assembly on Wednesday that weak international institutions including the United Nations haven't been able to stop wars in Ukraine, Gaza, Sudan and elsewhere and international law can't help nations survive. "Weapons decide who survives," the Ukrainian leader said. "There are no security guarantees except friends and weapons."



Zelenskyy spoke from the podium of the vast assembly chamber a day after he met with President Donald Trump, who expressed support for Ukraine's efforts and criticised Russia.

Trump said Tuesday that he believed Ukraine could win back all territory lost to Russia, a dramatic shift from the US leader's repeated calls for Kyiv to make concessions to end the war sparked by President Vladimir Putin's February 2022 invasion of its

smaller neighbour. Zelenskyy did not comment on the surprise US pivot, saying only that he had "a good meeting" with Trump and with many other "strong leaders".

"Together, we can change a lot," he said, expressing appreciation for support from the United States and Europe, and urging all UN member nations to condemn Russia while it "keeps dragging this war on". If Putin isn't stopped

now, the Ukrainian president warned the assembly that he will keep driving the war forward, "wider and deeper". "Ukraine is only the first, and now Russian drones are already flying across Europe, and Russian operations are already spreading across countries," he said. Zelenskyy said neighbouring Moldova is defending itself again from Russian interference and should not be allowed to move toward dependency on Russia as Georgia and Belarus are. "Europe cannot afford to lose Moldova, too," he said, stressing that the country needs funding and energy support, not just "political gestures".

Since Russia invaded Ukraine, Zelenskyy said, weapons and especially drones "are evolving faster than our ability to defend ourselves".

## Won't mediate India and Pakistan issue: US official

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
New York

Kashmir is a "direct issue" between India and Pakistan and the US has no interest in "asserting" itself between the South Asian neighbours on the matter, a senior State Department official said here. The senior State Department official said Wednesday that it is a "long-standing" policy of the US that Kashmir is a "direct issue" between India and Pakistan. The official added that if the US is asked to offer its good offices on any issue, it is ready to help.

US President Donald Trump has "enough crises" on his hands and "we leave that (issue of Kashmir) up to India and Pakistan to solve," the official told reporters at a briefing. "We have no interest in asserting ourselves between India and Pakistan." In his address

A LONGSTANDING POLICY OF THE US THAT KASHMIR IS A DIRECT ISSUE BETWEEN INDIA AND PAKISTAN

to the UN General Assembly, Trump declared again that he had stopped the conflict between India and Pakistan.

The senior State Department official also said that "it is a fact that the United States was involved in that crisis and absolutely helped broker that ceasefire." The official also said that "it is a fact that the United States was involved in that crisis and absolutely helped broker that ceasefire."

India maintains that it does not want any third-party involvement in its discussions with Pakistan on issues such as terrorism, as New Delhi believes they must remain bilateral.

## Jaishankar strengthens global partnerships at UNGA

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
New York

External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar held a series of bilateral meetings with his counterparts from Mexico, Cyprus, and several Pacific Island nations on the sidelines of the 80th session of the United Nations General Assembly, reaffirming India's commitment to strengthening global partnerships.

Sharing about the meetings in a series of social media posts, Jaishankar said he met Juan Ramon de la Fuente, Secretary of Foreign Affairs of Mexico, on Wednesday here, and both sides agreed to "build on our recent exchanges and create a fresh roadmap" to enhance bilateral ties. He also held talks with Cypriot Foreign Minister Constantinos Kombos during which the two leaders reviewed progress in bilateral relations since Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit



Union External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar during a meeting with Secretary of Foreign Affairs of Mexico Juan Ramon de la Fuente and others in New York

to the island nation earlier this year. "Appreciate his insights on developments in Europe. Reaffirmed support for a comprehensive and lasting settlement of the Cyprus Question in accordance with the agreed UN framework and relevant UNSC resolutions," Jaishankar

said, adding that he looked forward to welcoming Kombos to India soon.

The External Affairs Minister also met leaders from several Pacific nations on the sidelines of the FIPIC, Foreign Ministers' Meeting (FMM) held. He met Foreign Minister

Kalani Kaneko of the Marshall Islands, Foreign Minister Paulson Panapa of Tuvalu, and Minister of State Gustav Aitaro of Palau, holding warm exchanges and reaffirming India's commitment to engagement with the Pacific region.



## Indonesia faces calls to halt free meals programme

ASSOCIATED PRESS  
Bandung

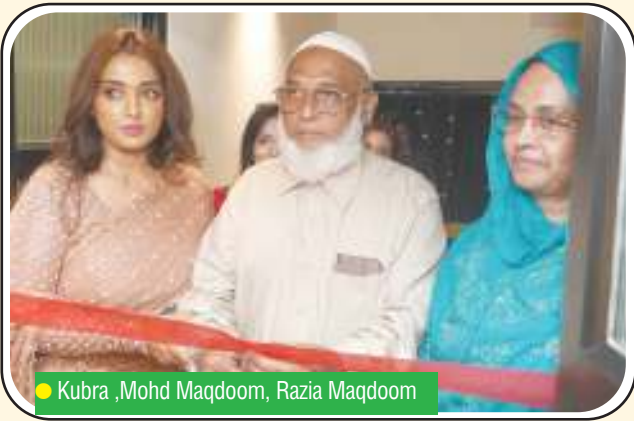
Indonesia's Government was facing calls on Thursday to suspend President Prabowo Subianto's multi-billion-dollar free meals programme after thousands of school pupils fell ill in an food poisoning outbreak. Television reports showed hospital wards filled with children, with some crying in pain and clutching their stomachs, while police and health workers carried away other victims in ambulances, vans and trucks. The Free Nutritious Meal programme was started in January with the aim of fighting malnutrition by feeding nearly 90 million children and pregnant women. The initiative, which is expected to cost \$28 billion through 2029, delivers on a campaign promise by Subianto, who was elected last year, which has more than 282 million people and Southeast Asia's largest economy.



## Former President Mutharika wins Malawi election

ASSOCIATED PRESS  
Blantyre

Former President Peter Mutharika has been declared the winner of Malawi's election, ousting incumbent Lazarus Chakera to return as leader of one of Africa's poorest countries. Chakera conceded defeat in a speech on national television hours before the final results were announced on Wednesday. Supporters of Mutharika and his Democratic Progressive Party had already gathered in the streets of the commercial capital, Blantyre, to celebrate. The 85-year-old Mutharika, who was president from 2014-2020, won 56 per cent of the vote, according to the Malawi Electoral Commission. Chakera was second with 33 per cent. The winning candidate needed to receive more than 50 per cent of the vote to avoid a runoff.



● Kubra ,Mohd Maqdoom, Razia Maqdoom

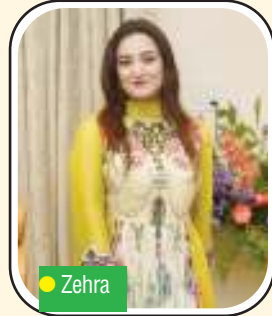
Kubra Maqdoom Makeup and Academy is proud to announce the grand opening of its new studio in Hyderabad, a premier destination designed to offer both luxury makeup services and professional training programs for aspiring artists.



● Sahar



● Zehra, Ismath, Kubra ,Caroline and Sahar



● Zehra

Lords Mark Industries Ltd. (LMIL), one of India's fastest-growing diversified business groups, was honoured with the prestigious 'Innovation in Diagnostic Devices' Award at the Viksit Bharat Investment Summit 2025, hosted by the Indo-European Business Forum (IEBF) at the historic House of Lords in London. The award, received by Subodh Gupta, CEO of Lord's Mark Microbiotech, a subsidiary of LMIL, acknowledges the company's breakthrough contributions to MedTech, diagnostics, and biochemistry innovation. Welcoming the dignitaries, IEBF Founder Vijay Goel highlighted the significance of the summit, Speaking on the recognition, Subodh Gupta, CEO Lord's Mark Microbiotech said: "This honour at IEBF London is not just a milestone,



The 15th India Climate Policy and Business Conclave, organized by the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI), in partnership with the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC), Government of India, and the Ministry of Environment, Japan, provided a high-level platform to discuss key industry actions like climate adaptation, resilience, carbon mitigation, advanced clean technologies, digital transformations, nature-based solutions and climate resilient agriculture. Navin Mittal, IAS, Principal Secretary - Energy Department, Government of Telangana, delivered the Vaedictory Address, stating that India has crossed the solar tipping point, with non-fossil fuel capacity now exceeding 50% of total installed capacity.



Sphoorthy Engineering College, Hyderabad, has entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with SR University, Warangal, to strengthen academic cooperation and promote collaborative research initiatives. The MoU was formally signed by Dr. Gurunadham Goli, Dean, School of Business, SR University, Warangal and Dr. Ramesh R, Dr. V. S. Giridhar Akula, and Dr. Ravikanth Regalla, ceremony was held in the presence of Chalna Reddy, Jagannathan Reddy, are seen.

Abhyaas Edu Technologies, a Forbes India listed company and a three-time winner of the ET Industry Achievement Award for Education Excellence, proudly announces two landmark initiatives — the launch of Abhyaas Lex Quest and the unveiling of its coffee table book "The Chronicles of Change." Founded by Naresh Reddy Dubbudu, an alumnus of IIM Bangalore and NIT Warangal gold medallist, Abhyaas Edu Technologies has been at the forefront of innovative learning for over a decade, with strong expertise in CLAT, IPMAT, IIT-JEE, CAT, GRE, and IELTS. Abhyaas Law Prep also launched its first-ever coffee table book at Hotel Mercure KCP, Banjara Hills.



PARTY  
Photos by- SV Chary

## TC candyman introduces storybooks "once upon a time by candyman"

TC Candyman, the beloved confectionery brand known for its playful spirit, vibrant flavours, and mischievous charm, has unveiled a truly unique initiative for children — 'Once Upon a Time by Candyman.' With this innovative platform, ITC Candyman aims to set a new benchmark for immersive, child-centric brand experiences in India. In today's fast-paced, digital-first world, parents often struggle to find meaningful ways to engage with their children. With this initiative, the brand aims to build stronger bond between parents and children blending creativity with digital

innovation. 'Once Upon a Time by Candyman', allows parents to create personalised storybooks featuring their child's name, picture, and a starring role in a delightfully illustrated tales. on the launch, Anuj Bansal, Vice President and Head of Marketing — Chocolates, Coffee and Confectionery, Foods Division, ITC Limited, said, "With 'Once Upon a Time by Candyman', our goal is to spark children's imagination and make reading storybooks an exciting, interactive experience. Kids often see others playing the hero's role, but this time the spotlight is on them and the story is all about their little adventures. By letting children see themselves as heroes of their own story, we hope to create lasting memories while inspiring a lifelong love for storytelling."



## OPPO launches the reno14 5G diwali edition

Building on the tremendous response to the Reno14 series, OPPO is bringing festive sparkle to its lineup with the introduction of the Reno14 5G Diwali Edition. Designed exclusively for India, this special edition brings together two firsts: a one-of-a-kind, in-depth cultural design that beautifully integrates a mandala, peacock and festive motifs, and the industry's first

heat-sensitive colour-changing technology for India". This innovation creates a unique experience that feels just as meaningful as it is magical, symbolising the spirit of Diwali with the triumph of light over darkness. The Reno14 5G Diwali Edition is now available in an 8GB + 256GB variant for ₹39,999, but as a special festive offer, it can be purchased for as low as ₹36,999 — across mainline retail outlets, OPPO e-store, Flipkart, and Amazon.



STANDALONE

## \*Viswaguru world records holder jonpaul sets new milestone\*

Miami, Florida (USA) Jonpaul, an outstanding talent in the world of filmmaking, has been officially recognized by Viswaguru World Records for his remarkable achievement. His live-action fictional short film titled "DOJO," produced and written by Jonpaul himself and directed by Armin Alic, has won an unprecedented 1200 international film awards from various countries, establishing a new world record. This spectacular accomplishment sets a new Viswaguru World Record for the "Most awards won by a Live-Action Fictional Short Film," highlighting Jonpaul's creativity, dedication, and global artistic impact. Viswaguru World Records, a platform dedicated to acknowledging extraordinary talents and innovative achievements worldwide, has certified Jonpaul's record as an inspiration for artists.



## FUN

### ARCHIE

### CALVIN AND HOBBS

### GARFIELD

### NANCY

### GINGER MEGGS

### REALITY CHECK

### SPEED BUMP

### CROSSWORD

#### JUNIOR CROSSWORD

1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20

**ACROSS**

- Mend
- Very thin metal sheet used in the kitchen
- The line where material is joined
- Murdered
- Talks
- The later part of the day
- Wanting food
- Money someone has to pay as a punishment
- A fruit from a palm tree
- A light wind

**DOWN**

- Have a lie down
- Braided lengths of hair
- These birds hunt at night
- A climbing aid with rungs
- Birds that fly back home
- Courage
- Showed
- Ask to come
- A tangle in your hair
- At this place

### SUDOKU

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

Yesterday's solution

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

Rules

- Each row and column can contain each number (1 to 9) exactly once.
- The sum of all numbers in any row or column must equal 45.

**EMIs AND GST**



Indian policy-makers and experts feel that the real gains of GST 2.0, and the subsequent price dips, will favour the middle class and the rich segment. Yes, grocery bills and normal household expenses will come down, as most products now attract zero and five per cent GST. But the impact on individual families, according to one estimate, will be less than ₹1,000 a month. Other predictions put the figure at ₹2,000-3,000 per month. The former may not enthrall many. The latter will satisfy lower-income households, with combined monthly salaries of ₹30,000 or less each. With savings of up to 10 per cent, the poor will feel happy.

However, the real and substantial impact will be on big-ticket items, which are generally purchased by the middle class and rich, even if these are one-time purchases that last from a few years to a lifetime. Such segments include automobiles, real estate (homes and property), and expensive personal and home appliances. The article in 'Our Take' on this page examines what is happening in the last category. According to reports, auto sales have taken off during the first few days of this festive season. We need to wait a while, possibly till October, to figure out what will happen in real estate. The hints are that sales may take off, especially in Tier II and III cities.

The reasons are obvious. As prices of inputs and finished products have come down, they are cheaper and affordable. Lower EMIs and discounts will provide a further fillip to sales. The festive season may continue till December, and even encompass the last quarter due to extra buying pressure in February (due to the Union Budget) and March (due to fiscal-end buying spree). Although the Reserve Bank of India did not cut interest rates last time, it did so several times earlier. The lag effect may ensure that the benefits begin to show in the third quarter of this fiscal. The latter will further lower EMIs. The combination will pull buyers to make decisions.

However, let us not get carried away with the current trends. While they indicate positive vibes related to the GST cuts, there are a few hidden factors. For the past few months, potential buyers have sat on decisions due to the US tariffs. They realised that if the Indian exports to the US are hit, manufacturers will need to sell more locally. They may offer deals and discounts. Since August 15, when Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced a double-Diwali bonanza related to GST, more purchasers decided to wait till Navratri. The economic and stock market uncertainty further tightened purse strings, especially among middle-class households. People felt more inclined to buy gold, or take loans against gold.

The result was a huge pent-up demand across segments and sectors. The buying-related animal spirits were suddenly unleashed in the past few days. Car makers sold tens of thousands of vehicles on the first day of Navratri. The sales of ACs, TVs and smartphones jumped wildly. There was a carnival-like atmosphere in shops, malls and markets. Everyone, well most of us, wanted to buy something or the other, even goods we did not want, due to lower prices. This demand will get satiated in a few days or weeks. The real test will be towards the end of October. Will this frenzy continue or subside? Apart from those who had postponed decisions, will new ones join the queue?

More importantly, most of the current news about festive frenzy is coming from online sales, and among urban households, even in cities like Ludhiana in Punjab. But they may not be the correct indicators to gauge overall demand and consumption trends. According to a recent study, online shopping was expected to grow by more than 100 per cent this season among urban households. The percentage of surveyed people who said that they would visit malls and markets dropped from 70 per cent in 2024 to 56 per cent this year. There is a substitution effect in action, from physical to online purchases. This may or may not result in overall higher purchases.

The same survey indicates that the total buying this festive season may be ₹2.19 lakh crore. Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman indicated a similar figure. In 2024, the estimate was ₹1.85 lakh crore, or a difference of less than 20 per cent. The GST cuts may make this kind of a difference, and only for a few weeks or months. If this momentum sustains, GST 2.0 will be a grand success. If it does not, it may fizzle out a bit. More importantly, one needs to see if the upward demand curve pushes private investments.

**Deals, discounts and dreams**

Festive times are associated with sales and discounts. With e-commerce, one now gets big-ticket discounts on many products. This year is special. It is dubbed as 'Bachat Utsav' by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, and not just as 'Buying Utsav,' because of the huge GST cuts that became applicable from the first day of Navratri. As in the past, few products generated as much buzz as the iPhone. Each year, people time their upgrades with this season, and hope to grab the latest model. iPhone launches too are timed for the occasion.

Flipkart used its 'Big Billion Days' sale to offer iPhone 16 and iPhone 16 Pro. The base iPhone 16 (128 GB) was listed at ₹51,999 after bank and exchange discounts. iPhone 16 Pro was offered at ₹69,999, again with stacked offers. Compare these with the launch price of ₹79,900 for iPhone 16, or a difference of nearly ₹28,000, and it is clear why buyers wait for the festive window.

Amazon gave this a go this year, and did not put its weight behind iPhone deals, which was disappointing to consumers. Instead, the e-commerce giant pushed an Android flagship. The headliner was Samsung's Galaxy S24 Ultra, which was under ₹71,999 for members. Platforms do segment their strategies.

Despite these sales, the broader smartphone market may remain constrained. Market agencies project a modest growth in the phone market, but expect the premium segment (above Rs 30,000) to grow by 18 per cent year-on-year this festive season. Apple and iPhones are likely to ride this wave. Media reports indicate that the sales of the just-launched iPhone 17 were stronger than iPhone 16. The ultra-premium category (₹1,00,000 and above) may witness a triple-digit growth, despite zero discounts on the new iPhones.

Large appliances, especially air condition-

ers and TVs, are being reshaped by this desire-for-premium trend. But in this, it is being accelerated not just by aspiration but by policy. The GST cuts, which lowered slabs on both ACs and TVs, trimmed prices and gave fresh momentum. Dealers contend that the impact is clearly visible.

"Trends of primary regular sales are encouraging. Till 5 pm in the evening (on the first day of Navratri), our dealers reported almost double the sales compared to any other Monday before it," Haier India President NS Satish told a news agency. Blue Star MD B Thiagarajan added, "Going by the enquiries, I think the mood is upbeat. Rough estimate is that the growth compared with last year's September will be around 20 per cent."

In the case of ACs, this year has been a difficult one. A mild summer and uncertainty over GST kept buyers on the sidelines, which led to sluggish sales and high inventory. Manufacturers offered discounts ahead of the festive season. Thiagarajan told a news agency that the company expected 10-15 per cent growth in room ACs but has revised it to 20 per cent on the back of the tax cuts. But he agreed that sales in the second quarter (July-September) before the season may have fallen by 50 per cent due to the postponement of purchases.

On the first day of Navratri, the sales of ACs and TVs were almost double than those on normal days. LG, Haier and Godrej have supported the tax cuts, and feel they will revive the market. Blue Star is targeting sales of 5,00,000 smart ACs in 2025, which may contribute nearly 30 per cent of its annual sales.

As ACs try to claw back lost ground, TVs embody how the bigger-is-better aspiration is driving consumption. Earlier, the 32-inch sets

dominated the market. Now, there is strong demand for 45-inch and 55-inch screens, which is visible in Tier 2 and Tier 3 cities too. Financing schemes and festive discounts make these upgrades possible. Samsung's TV business crossed ₹10,000 crore in India in 2024, and the company believes that future growth will be anchored in the premium 55-inch-and-above category.

Hisense is an aggressive player in this space. After the launch of its 80-inch TV, it said that sales crossed 2,500 units in two months, which made it one of the top sellers in market rankings. The appetite for extra-large screens is due to lower prices, of between a couple of thousand to Rs 50,000, on large TV sets, thanks to the recent GST slashes, which make the premium models more affordable.

The larger picture is of divergence. Mass segments remain soft, but the premium end is expanding. The question is whether this is sustainable. E-commerce gross merchandise value this festive season is projected to cross ₹1.2 lakh crore, a 27 per cent year-on-year jump. This looks impressive, but the growth at the bottom segments will remain muted. The sale of premium brands has risks.

One of them is that the demand is front-loaded. Consumers postponed purchases, and waited for the tax cuts and festival deals. This created an ongoing sales bulge (September-October). If supply chain or inventory missteps occur, or discounts do not meet expectations, demand can quickly dry up. There is the margin question. Aggressive discounting on iPhones may drive volumes, but reports of order cancellations during Flipkart's sale have triggered backlash. The phrase "Big Billion Scam" is trending on social media.

For ACs, the gamble is sharper. Cooling is a seasonal category, and heavily dependent on weather and timing. If sales spike too quickly and fall, inventory management becomes a nightmare. To counter this, most brands have focused on the hot-and-cool ranges. Blue Star launched almost double the number of models in this category.

For TVs, the long-term bet is whether the upgrade cycle to larger screens becomes entrenched across India, or remains confined to premium buyers in topnotch cities. Mini LED is the new technology that is picking up, but people are opting for QLED and OLED TVs. Buyers may decide between screen sizes, and new technology.

Despite the GST cuts and 'Bachat Utsav,' what this festive season demonstrates is that the Indian consumers are becoming increasingly aspirational, which is a given. Yet, they remain price-sensitive and deal-driven. Platforms, brands and dealers are converging on the premium segments. However, the crucial question lingers on: Will the current surge sustain once the lights are packed away, candles are blown off, and firecrackers die down. If it does, India's consumer tech pyramid may shift upwards, and become bigger and bulging at the top. If not, this season may be remembered as a bubble that was inflated by tax cuts, deals, discounts and dreams.

**OUR TAKE**



**UP International Trade Show**

**Stress on self-reliance in times of tested ties with Russia**

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday underscored India's "time-tested" partnership with Russia, highlighting long-standing defence cooperation between the two countries — a remark that comes amid ongoing US concerns over India's continued oil trade with Moscow.

The Prime Minister — who made the remarks at the UP International Trade Show, where Russia is the international partner — again made a pitch for *atmanirbharta* or self-reliance, saying a country like India does not want to depend on anyone. "This time, the country partner of the trade show is Russia. That means we are further strengthening a time-tested partnership through this trade show," the Prime Minister said.

His remarks came amid strain in ties between India and the US following the Trump administration imposing highest 50 per cent tariffs on Indian imports and balking at New Delhi's continued purchase of Russian oil. Modi further said India's armed forces seek indigenous solutions and aim to reduce external dependence.

"The country must become self-reliant, every product that can be made in India should be made here," Modi said.

"Soon, production of AK-203 rifle will begin from a factory set up with Russia's help. A defence corridor is also being set up in Uttar Pradesh. Production of several weapons, including BrahMos missiles has already started." "In India, we are developing a vibrant defence sector, creating an ecosystem where every component bears the mark of 'Made in India'," he said, highlighting Uttar Pradesh's significant role in this transformation.

He called upon all stakeholders to invest and manufacture in Uttar Pradesh, which boasts of a robust and expanding network of millions of MSMEs, and assured all support to them. Modi further said despite global disruptions and uncertainty, India's growth remains attractive. He reiterated that the nation's resolve and guiding mantra is *Atmanirbhar Bharat* (self-reliant India).

"In a changing world, the more a country depends on others, the more its growth remains compromised. Therefore, a country like India can no longer afford to depend on anyone... India must become self-reliant," he said. He stressed that every product that can be made in India must be made in the country itself.

Meanwhile, Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Thursday said the state is effectively fulfilling its role as a growth engine under the guidance of Prime Minister Narendra Modi.



He was speaking at the inaugural session of the third edition of the UP International Trade Show (UPITS) 2025 in Greater Noida.

"In this UPITS 2025, more than 550 buyers from 80 countries and over 2,250 exhibitors are participating. With cooperation from all 75 districts of Uttar Pradesh, stalls have been put up at the event," Adityanath said.

He also recalled Deen Dayal Upadhyaya's concept of *'antyyodaya'* and said Modi's vision is transforming it into *'Rashtrodaya'*. He highlighted the revival of traditional enterprises, growth of start-ups, benefits under the CM Yuva Udyami Yojana, PM Vishwakarma scheme, and increasing GI product registrations. "Today, Uttar Pradesh is becoming a global hub for IT, semiconductors and electronics manufacturing. The state accounts for 50 per cent of the country's mobile phone production," he added.

The chief minister also underlined improved infrastructure, connectivity, law and order, and new employment zones being developed across districts to boost industri-

al growth and self-reliance.

UP industry development and exports promotion minister Nand Gopal Gupta 'Nandi' on Thursday said Russia's active participation in the Uttar Pradesh International Trade Show will give a fresh impetus to international collaboration and cement the state's role as a crucial trade hub.

Russia's participation adds weight to this edition of the trade show, and this will open new avenues for bilateral trade, technology exchange, and long-term strategic alliances, Nandi said.

"With Russia's active participation, the show will give a fresh impetus to international collaboration and cross-border ventures, cementing Uttar Pradesh's role as a crucial trade hub," he said.

UPITS 2025 is designed to be bigger, broader, and more inclusive, strengthening the state's position as a global sourcing hub with its theme, 'Ultimate Sourcing Begins Here', Nandi, UP Minister for Industrial Development, Export Promotion, NRI &

Investment Promotion, said.

This year's edition introduces a three-dimensional buyer strategy, categorising participation into international buyers, domestic B2B buyers, and domestic B2C buyers — ensuring opportunities across the value chain for large exporters, small businesses, and end consumers alike, the minister said.

The show is expected to host over 2,400 exhibitors, 1.25 lakh B2B visitors and 4.5 lakh B2C visitors, spread across 1,10,000 sqm of gross exhibition space.

With sectors ranging from handicrafts, textiles, leather, agriculture, food processing, IT, electronics, wellness, AYUSH, and more, the trade show demonstrates the full spectrum of Uttar Pradesh's potential, Nandi added.

One of the main objectives of UPITS-2025 is to highlight Uttar Pradesh's diverse craft traditions, modern industries, robust MSMEs, and emerging entrepreneurs on a single platform. (Inputs from PTI)



### Bumrah set for WI tests; Karun, Easwaran left out

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
Dubai

Pace spearhead Jasprit Bumrah was on Thursday named in India's Test squad for the home series against the West Indies, while Devdutt Padikkal replaced Karun Nair, who could not deliver fully on what was "expected" of him in the opportunities offered so far.

While announcing the 15-member squad at the Indian team hotel here, Chairman of Selectors Ajit Agarkar dropped elaborate hints that Nair and Bengal opener Abhimanyu Easwaran are no longer in the scheme of things.

Rishabh Pant's absence has resulted in Ravindra Jadeja's elevation as vice-captain for the West Indies, while stylish Karnataka left-hander Padikkal, 25, is being seen as a long-term investment along with the 23-year-old Sai Sudharsan, who has locked the Number 3 slot.

On Bumrah, Agarkar was clear that the pacer is well-rested and good to go in the series that gets underway on October 2 in Ahmedabad.

"This is a team for both the Test matches. So, he's available for both. We've had a fair break after England. He didn't play the fifth Test either. There's been a month or five weeks of break," he said in response. "This tournament (the ongoing Asia Cup here

where Bumrah is playing) has been fairly spaced out till this last week. He's ready and keen to play both Test matches," Agarkar explained. However, while speaking on Nair, he was clear that the 30-year-old burly Bengaluru man didn't make full use of opportunities, scoring one fifty in eight innings during the tour of England.

"We feel Padikkal offers a little bit more at this point and I wish we could give everyone 15 or 20 Tests. Unfortunately, it doesn't work that way," Agarkar said.

"Padikkal's been in the Test squad. Frankly, we expected a bit more from Karun in England. Devdutt was in the Test squad in Australia, played in Dharamsala against England, got a 50 there. He's shown some decent form within the race," the former pacer stated.

When asked why Sudharsan got the nod when he and Nair had a similar run in England, Agarkar said: "Eventually, it's a little bit about continuity. There were a few changes at No.3 because of the combination that we played."

"But going forward, Sai has shown a lot of promise. We know he's a very good player. Hopefully, we can give him a longish run from now on, at a particular number," he explained.



Pace spearhead Jasprit Bumrah

Easwaran, a frequent traveller with the squad for the last three to four years but never a member of the playing team, now finds himself out of the picture.

Agarkar urged people not to read too much into it, although with no foreign tours for the next one year, Easwaran's Test debut looks unlikely with N Jagadeesan being looked at as a poten-

tial third opener.

"Normally, when you travel abroad, you carry 16 or 17, you take a third opener. KL Rahul and (Yashasvi) Jaiswal haven't done too badly. At the moment, we don't need a third opener just sitting out in the squad," Agarkar said. "If needed, we can always fly him and play the Test."

The selectors felt that Axar

Patel as an all-rounder is a better fit. "You get an extra spinner all-rounder in Axar Patel who wasn't part of the squad to England and we've only picked 15 here. There's nothing to his story."

Agarkar also informed that Jadeja, being the senior-most player, was announced vice-captain as Pant will only be available for the South Africa Tests.

"Rishabh is the vice-captain at the moment and a key player. But unfortunately, he hasn't quite recovered to make this particular Test series. We're hopeful that he'll be available for South Africa. And Jadeja has been one of your top performers," he said. The series against South Africa will feature two Tests in Kolkata and Guwahati from November 14 to 26. A three-match ODI and five-match T20 International series will follow the red-ball rubber.

The full tour by the Proteas will conclude with the final T20I on December 19. On the status of veteran pacer Mohammed Shami, Agarkar said he is unaware of how fit he is and hinted that he is not in the scheme of things. "I don't have an update," was his quick retort when asked about Shami.

"He's played a couple of matches. But he's not had a lot of cricket. In the last two-three years, I think he's played one match for Bengal and one match in the Duleep Trophy," the chairman said.

**SQUAD:**  
Shubman Gill (C), Yashasvi Jaiswal, KL Rahul, Sai Sudharsan, Devdutt Padikkal, Dhruv Jurel (WK), Ravindra Jadeja (VC), Washington Sundar, Jasprit Bumrah, Axar Patel, Nitish Kumar Reddy, N Jagadeesan (WK), Mohammed Siraj, Prasidh Krishna, Kuldeep Yadav.

### Powerplay bowling not aiding spinners on these tracks: Chakravarthy



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
Dubai

India mystery spinner Varun Chakravarthy feels wickets in the ongoing Asia Cup are not offering much assistance to tweekers in the early part of the matches but it's been comparatively easier for them to get some purchase off the track in the final 10 overs so far.

Chakravarthy, who has taken four wickets in four games at an impressive economy rate of 5.85, has been unlucky as many catches have been dropped off his bowling during the course of the tournament.

When asked if he felt more comfortable bowling towards the back-end in this tournament, the Tamil Nadu mystery spinner nodded in agreement, citing a softer ball and the spread out field as contributing factors. "The harder the ball is, it

definitely is not getting much purchase for a spinner. Talking from a spinner's perspective, if you are bowling in the powerplay or right after the powerplay, there's not much help from the wicket. But as the game progresses and as the field spreads out, it's getting better," he explained. Chakravarthy said that run-containment isn't an option in Powerplays and one needs to go for wickets.

"In Powerplay, the only aim is to look for wickets. It's just looking for that one ball if it pitches on that right spot and it turns a little bit and it can edge it. It's about looking for that because that's my role in the team.

"Even if I go for little runs, my aim is to keep on attacking and try to look for more wickets," he said.

He said against Bangladesh too, once the ball got older, he found himself to be more effective.

### Shreyas Iyer to lead India A

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
New Delhi

Shreyas Iyer was on Thursday appointed India A captain for a three-match one-day series against Australia in Kanpur from September 30, setting him up for a possible leadership role with the senior 50-over side even though he will be away from red-ball cricket for the next six months.

Besides Iyer, who recently informed the BCCI's chairman of selectors Ajit Agarkar that he cannot take the rigours of red-ball cricket owing to a stiff back, the other key players in the India A squad are Ravi Bishnoi, wicketkeeper-batter Prabhsimran Singh, big-hitting all-rounder Riyan Parag and Ayush Badoni among others.

Harshit Rana and Arshdeep Singh, who are currently in the UAE for Asia Cup, will join the side for the second and third match on October 3 and 5. Rajat Patidar was named captain of the Rest of India squad for the Irani Cup clash against Vidarbha from October 1 in Nagpur.

"Mr Shreyas Iyer has informed the BCCI of his decision to take a six-month



break from red-ball cricket. Having undergone back surgery in the UK and managed his recovery well, he has recently experienced recurring back spasms and stiffness while playing the longer format," BCCI secretary Devajit Saikia said in a statement.

"He wishes to utilise this period to build endurance, body resilience and work on his fitness. In view of his decision, he was not considered for selection for the Irani Cup," he added.

**SQUADS:**  
**India A squad for 1st one-day match:** Shreyas Iyer (c), Prabhsimran Singh (wk), Riyan Parag, Ayush Badoni, Suryansh Shedge, Vipraj Nigam, Nishant Sindhu, Gurjapneet Singh, Yudhvir Singh, Ravi Bishnoi, Abhishek Porel (WK), Harshit Rana, Arshdeep Singh.

**Rest of India squad (Irani Cup):** Rajat Patidar (C), Abhimanyu Easwaran, Aryan Juyal (WK), Rituraj Gaikwad (VC), Yash Dhull, Shaikh Rasheed, Ishan Kishan (WK), Tanush Kotian, Manav Suthar, Gurmoor Brar, Khaleel Ahmed, Akash Deep, Anshul Kamboj, Saransh Jain.

Singh, Ravi Bishnoi, Abhishek Porel (WK), Priyansh Arya, Simitarjeet Singh.

**India A squad for 2nd and 3rd one-day matches:** Shreyas Iyer (C), Tilak Varma (VC), Abhishek Sharma, Prabhsimran Singh (WK), Riyan Parag, Ayush Badoni, Suryansh Shedge, Vipraj Nigam, Nishant Sindhu, Gurjapneet Singh, Yudhvir Singh, Ravi Bishnoi, Abhishek Porel (WK), Harshit Rana, Arshdeep Singh.

**Rest of India squad (Irani Cup):** Rajat Patidar (C), Abhimanyu Easwaran, Aryan Juyal (WK), Rituraj Gaikwad (VC), Yash Dhull, Shaikh Rasheed, Ishan Kishan (WK), Tanush Kotian, Manav Suthar, Gurmoor Brar, Khaleel Ahmed, Akash Deep, Anshul Kamboj, Saransh Jain.

### I just go with the flow: Abhishek Sharma

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
Dubai

Flamboyant Indian opener Abhishek Sharma on Wednesday credited his fearless batting to sheer hard work and hours of practice in the nets after pummelling another fifty against Bangladesh.

The 25-year-old, currently ranked No. 1 in T20Is, smashed a blistering 37-ball 75 studded with six fours and five sixes as India crushed Bangladesh by 41 runs to storm into the Asia Cup final.

This was his second successive half-century in the Super 4s stage after his 74 against Pakistan.

"I was just doing my job. I have told before as well that I do not think much (while going in to bat) and go with the flow," Abhishek said at the presentation after bagging his second man-of-the-match award in a row.

"If it is in my range, even if it is the first ball, I go for it and try to get the power play (going) for my team."

On his approach against Bangladesh, he said: "In a few matches, I wanted to go (after the first ball).



Flamboyant Indian opener Abhishek Sharma

There are certain bowlers who want to go for a wicket off the first ball. In this match, because this was a new pitch, I wanted to check how it was doing. It was swinging and seaming."

"I always try to go with the field, because there are certain shots I back really hard. I see the field and then go for the shots. I am not someone who goes all-out like that."

Abhishek's bold approach has its roots in his formative years. His father Rajkumar Sharma, a

former first-class cricketer, had always encouraged him to back his instincts, often telling him that "balls are meant to be hit."

"I have done a lot of work in practice sessions — I feel that is the time when batters get time to work on themselves," Abhishek said about where his power-hitting comes from.

"I had a plan that if I have to play with such intent, I have to practice really hard for it. When you play too many shots in the nets, there are chances you can get out. It was in

my mind not to get out while playing too many shots."

India, powered by Abhishek's blazing start, posted 168/6 before bundling Bangladesh out for 127 in 19.3 overs.

India will await the winners of the Pakistan versus Bangladesh match on Thursday for the Sunday's summit clash.

India retained their playing eleven but skipper Suryakumar Yadav rejigged his batting order and Shivam Dube was promoted to No.3. "They had a left-arm spinner and a leg-spinner and Dube was the perfect match-up."

"His entry point (between overs 7-15) was also perfect. It did not go well but going ahead, we will definitely try doing that," said Suryakumar.

India faltered in the back end of the innings and the skipper blamed it on the slow outfield.

"If the outfield would have been really fast, it would have been 180-185 but with the bowling lineup we have, if we bowl 12-14 good overs, we will win on most occasions," he added.

### Romain gets back to F1 five years after crash



ASSOCIATED PRESS  
Scarperia E San Piero (Italy)

Nearly five years after his time in Formula 1 ended in a fiery crash, Romain Grosjean is getting back behind the wheel of an F1 car.

Grosjean will be reunited with former colleagues and crew from the Haas team as he tests a 2023 car on Friday at the Mugello circuit in Italy.

Grosjean will wear a special-edition helmet decorated with drawings from his three children which he had meant to use in what would have been his final race of the 2020 season in Abu Dhabi.

He never got to use it because of a crash at the Bahrain Grand Prix the month before which has

gone down in F1 history. Grosjean's car broke in two and became stuck in the barrier as fuel ignited. He needed treatment for burns, missed the final two races of the season, then was without an F1 seat for 2021.

"I really can't believe it's been almost five years, but to come back and have this outing with my old team is truly something special," Grosjean said.

Since leaving F1, Grosjean has raced mostly in the United States in IndyCar and sportscar series, driving the Indianapolis 500 three times and the 24 Hours of Le Mans once.

Friday's event will also see former IndyCar driver and F1 presenter James Hinchcliffe test the 2023 Haas.

### India vs Sri Lanka: Final test for Jitesh Sharma as finisher

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
Dubai

Sanju Samson being an apparent middle-order misfit will certainly worry head coach Gautam Gambhir and the Indian team management might be tempted to check out Jitesh Sharma during their inconsequential final Super 4 encounter against Sri Lanka in the Asia Cup on Friday.

Once India won against Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, which had lost both its Super 4 encounters against Bangladesh and Pakistan, was ousted from the competition and will be taking the field to complete formalities.

The stage is now set for an India-Pakistan showdown in the final on Sunday.

Apart from Samson, who is not fitting into the puzzle called the Indian batting order, the only other worry at the moment could be missing 10 catches so far in the tournament, including five against Bangladesh en route to final.

In a high-stakes game, the margins are thin and even mystery spinner Varun Chakravarthy, who suffered on account of dropped catches on multiple occasions, agreed that there is a lot of room for improve-



ment in that aspect.

"As they say, you can't give excuses at this level. As a team, we have to definitely start catching all those because we have qualified for the finals and we should be taking all those catches," said Chakravarthy, who got a couple of wickets against Bangladesh but also saw a few chances go abegging off his bowling.

He did give benefit of doubt to the fielders because the Dubai Stadium's floodlights are not high towers and resemble football stadium lights. "But if you ask me, the 'ring

of fire' (floodlight design) definitely is a little bit of disturbance as it comes in the eyesight sometimes. We have to get acclimatised to it," the mystery spinner said.

While fielding is one aspect that needs attention, there are also little chinks in the Indian armoury which are being overlooked because of the comfortable victories in all the five games that Suryakumar Yadav's men have played so far.

Against Bangladesh, Samson wasn't even considered good enough to come inside the top seven of the line-up and that begs a

question as to what is he doing in the team if he isn't good enough to come ahead of Axar Patel.

The promotion of Shivam Dube as Number 4 was understandable because of his 'match-up' against wrist spinners but it didn't work in order to keep the left-right combination in the middle. Hardik Pandya was sent ahead of him along with two left-handers in Tilak Varma and Axar.

"Sanju is still figuring out how to bat at No. 5," fielding coach Ryan ten Doeschate had said before the Bangladesh game.

There is a chance that Samson might again be promoted to No.3 in the inconsequential game against Sri Lanka and not sent in that position come Sunday when India play the final.

But that's easier said than done as Samson doesn't have the game to be a floater, who can attack the bowling in the back-10 when the ball goes softer and the pitch becomes a tad slower.

His fifty against Oman was, at best, scratchy. It is understood that Samson's past record at the top is preventing the team to drop him but in a format where one needs to assign specific roles, it is Jitesh

Sharma who fits into the character of a middle-order slogger come finisher.

A look at his batting sample size at various positions in the IPL over past few seasons will give a clearer picture.

Jitesh at No.5 has played 18 knocks and scored 374 runs in 253 balls at a healthy strike-rate of 147.8 while at No.6 he has performed even better.

He scored 384 runs off 230 balls in 15 innings at a strike rate of 167. The Vidarbha stumper, at No.7, has played 76 balls and scored 136 runs in seven innings at a strike-rate of 178.9.

The numbers show that Samson is being forced to don a role which is out of his character while the team management has a 'ready-made option' for the same part.

But as of now, in this bioscope, the director (Gambhir in this case) isn't flexible as far as changing characters are concerned.

Hence Jitesh might have to wait a bit longer but India wouldn't like to pay a price for that. The Sri Lanka match also gives them a chance to rest Jasprit Bumrah (only if he wants) before the grand finale.

### India eye tune up in Australia before Junior Women's Hockey World Cup

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
Canberra

The Indian junior women's hockey team will look to fine-tune the grey areas ahead of the upcoming FIH Hockey Women's Junior World Cup when it kick starts its five-match tour of Australia starting here on Friday.

Indian will play five matches at the National Hockey Centre in Canberra from September 26 till October 2.



The squad will play the first three fixtures against the Australia junior women's team on September 26, 27, and 29 followed by two matches against Canberra Chill, a club which plays in Australia's Hockey One League, on September 30 and October 2.

The Indians will be led by Jyoti Singh with Tushar Khanderkar as their coach. The tour is crucial as the side gears up for the Junior World Cup in Santiago, Chile in December.

The Indians went on a similar tour to Europe in June, where they faced Belgium, Australia, and Netherlands over five matches.

India defeated Belgium three games in a row, followed by a win against Australia and a shootout loss against the Netherlands.

"After our last tour, we have worked on some areas in terms of structural play and individual technical skills. We have reflected on those matches over the past three months and have done a good job in improving as a group," coach Khanderkar said.

"I hope that in the upcoming five games we'll be able to show what we have learned and worked on.

"We've been training in the camp in Bangalore and it has been really good. Our preparations for the World Cup are on track and we are here in Australia to play some competitive games. The goal of this tour is to identify which are the areas we need to work on and test ourselves before the World Cup," he added.