

# India Monitor

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**Wadephul visit: India hopes of conclude FTA with EU soon**

India would like to see its negotiations with the European Union for a free trade agreement move to a "decisive conclusion" soon, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar said on Wednesday. Jaishankar made the remarks at a joint media briefing after holding wide-ranging talks with his German counterpart Johann Wadephul. Jaishankar said his talks with Wadephul focused on boosting bilateral ties in areas of economy, climate change, defence, technology. Jaishankar also welcomed Germany's interests for cooperation with India in the semiconductor sector.



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## GST-2: 2-tier structure reduces rates, gives major exemptions; 40% tax for sin, luxury goods

NEW DELHI, SEPT 3 / PTI

The 56th meeting of the GST Council on Wednesday cleared a raft of reforms designed to simplify India's indirect tax system, reduce rates on essential goods and services, and provide relief to households and small businesses. The decisions, anchored in Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Independence Day call for "next-generation GST," mark the most ambitious overhaul of the tax framework since its rollout in 2017.

At the heart of the reform is the rationalisation of GST into a two-tier structure — 5% for merit goods and 18% as the standard rate — replacing the current four-slab regime of 5, 12, 18 and 28%. A special 40% demerit slab will apply to tobacco, luxury cars and select ultra-luxury items. Officials described the move as a "simple tax" structure aimed at citizens and the common economy.

Everyday items such as shampoos, soaps, hair oil, toothbrushes, bicycles, tableware and kitchenware will now attract only 5% tax, down from 12-18%. Popular food products including namkeens, noodles, chocolates, sauces, butter, ghee, pasta and dry fruits will also shift to the 5% bracket. UHT milk, paneer, and all Indian breads — chapati,



paratha, parotta — have been exempted altogether. Farm and labour-intensive sectors stand to benefit significantly. GST on tractors, harvesters, threshers, and composting machinery has been cut to 5%, while handicrafts, leather goods, marble and granite blocks also move to the lowest slab. Cement — a key driver for construction and infrastructure — will drop

from 28% to 18%. The Council exempted GST on all life and health insurance policies, including term, family floater, and senior citizen plans. Life-saving drugs for cancer, rare diseases and chronic ailments will now carry zero tax. Rates on most other medicines and diagnostic equipment have been halved to 5%, alongside devices such as glucometers, bandages,

and diagnostic kits.

To spur demand in a sluggish market, tax on small cars, motorcycles up to 350cc, buses and ambulances has been lowered from 28% to 18%. Auto parts will carry a uniform 18% rate. Consumer durables such as televisions, ACs, dishwashers and refrigerators are also down to 18%.

Beyond rates, the Council approved operationalising the Goods and Services Tax Appellate Tribunal (GSTAT). It will begin accepting appeals by September-end and start hearings before December 2025. The tribunal, with a principal bench doubling as a national appellate authority, aims to unclog disputes, ensure consistency in advance rulings, and enhance taxpayer confidence.

Most revised rates will come into effect from September 22. However, pan masala, gutkha, tobacco and related products will continue at existing rates until the Centre clears pending liabilities under the compensation cess account.

Officials said the changes would reduce costs for households, simplify compliance, and strengthen small businesses. "This is a structural, citizen-centric reform to make GST easier, fairer and more transparent," Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said.

## Rains batter north India; red alert in Delhi

Monitor News Service  
NEW DELHI, SEPT 3

RELENTLESS monsoon rains battered large parts of north India on Wednesday, with the India Meteorological Department (IMD) sounding fresh warnings across Delhi, Himachal Pradesh, Punjab, Haryana, and Jammu and Kashmir. Torrential downpours triggered flash floods, landslides, and widespread disruption, even as the weather office indicated only a marginal let-up on Thursday.

Delhi and its adjoining cities remained under a red alert, with the Yamuna once again breaching the 207-metre danger mark—its fifth such breach since 1963. In low-lying areas, residents waded through waist-deep water; one man was seen carrying his child in a bucket through floodwaters. The Delhi Rescue Boat Club deployed 25-30 motorboats across the city, while the airport authority issued an advisory warning of possible delays and cancellations due to inclement weather.

In Punjab, incessant rains compounded what officials described as the state's worst flood crisis in nearly four decades. All 23 districts have been hit, with at least 30 lives lost and over 3.5 lakh people displaced. Schools, colleges, and universities have been ordered shut until September 7. Rupnagar and Patiala districts are on high alert as swollen rivers inundated villages. Relief opera-

tions are underway on a war footing with support from the NDRF and Army.

Himachal Pradesh continued to reel from landslides and flash floods. In Mandi, four more bodies were recovered from the debris of a massive slide, taking the death toll to seven, five of them from a single family. In Kullu, two houses collapsed, leaving at least two feared dead, including an NDRF jawan. The pilgrimage route to the Mata Vaishno Devi shrine in Reasi, J&K, was hit by another landslide, while the Katra base camp recorded 200 mm of rainfall in 24 hours, the highest in the Jammu region.

Officials ordered all schools and colleges in Himachal closed until September 7. Shimla Mayor Surinder Chauhan said Chief Minister Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu's parents may be temporarily relocated from their official residence, deemed "a little dangerous" due to repeated landslides nearby.

In Jammu's Garkhal area, 45 people trapped in floodwaters were airlifted by helicopters after overnight rescue efforts were thwarted by strong currents. Budgam in Kashmir reported flood-like conditions, with the district administration shifting families to evacuation centres.

The Central Water Commission said on Wednesday 21 monitoring stations, including one in Delhi, have reported rivers in "severe flood situation," while 33 others are flowing above normal.

## Kavitha resigns from BRS, MLC post; points at move to 'finish' KCR

HYDERABAD, SEPT 3 / PTI

A DAY after her suspension from KCR-led BRS, senior leader K Kavitha on Wednesday announced her resignation from the party and trained her guns against cousin and former minister T Harish Rao.

Kavitha, daughter of party founder and former Telangana Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao (KCR), also announced quitting as Member of the Legislative Council and indicated there was "pressure" on her father to act against her.

She accused Harish Rao of "conspiring" against the KCR family.

Addressing a press conference here, the 47-year-old former MP charged Harish Rao with having a "tacit understanding" with Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy.

Kavitha said her brother and BRS Working President K T Rama Rao should be "careful" about the alleged conspiracies by Harish Rao.

She said her brother did not back her when a "malicious campaign" was launched against her.

In the 2018 assembly elections,



Harish Rao gave additional funding to 20-25 MLAs in addition to the funding provided by the party, she alleged.

She further alleged that Harish Rao sent money to defeat KT Rama Rao in Sircilla constituency in the 2009 assembly polls.

"(Intentions) are to defeat KCR, KTR and to manage all MLAs in my Nizamabad MP segment (where she lost in Lok Sabha polls). It (Intention) is to defeat all and divide all in KCR family. I am straightforward on issues. I was sacrificed today. But, same danger lurks around Ramu anna and you (KCR). I was eliminated as part of a conspiracy to grab BRS ultimately," she said.

## Wong's 3-day visit to see uptick in India-Singapore business ties

NEW DELHI, SEPT 3 / PTI

FIVE agreements providing for boosting ties in sectors such as shipping, civil aviation and space will be inked between India and Singapore during Singaporean Prime Minister Lawrence Wong's three-day trip to New Delhi that began on Tuesday.

Authoritative sources said the overall focus of Wong's first visit to India as the prime minister will be to further explore ways to expand two-way economic engagement based on the foundational complementarities between the two sides.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Wong will hold wide-ranging talks on Thursday following which they are set to virtually inaugurate a container terminal at Nhava Sheva port in Mumbai. The Port of Singapore Authority (PSA International) has invested over US\$ 1 billion in the project.

In their talks, the two leaders are expected to finalise a roadmap for boosting cooperation in eight specific pillars which include economic cooperation, skills training, digitalisation, sustainability, connectiv-



ity, healthcare and medicine, and defence and security.

The two sides are also likely to deliberate on joint development of small modular reactors (SMRs) in

the civil nuclear sector, the sources said. Singapore is a key source of investment in India with its cumulative investment since 2014 reaching a whopping US\$ 175 billion that

included US\$ 60 billion in the post-Covid period, according to official data.

The city-state is India's sixth largest trade partner (FY 2024-25) with a share of around 2.96 per cent of India's overall trade. The overall bilateral economic relations are anchored by the Comprehensive Economic Cooperation Agreement (CECA) that was signed in 2005.

It said Wong's visit, which coincides with the 60th anniversary of India-Singapore diplomatic relations, "reaffirms" the continued commitment of the two countries to further strengthen their comprehensive strategic partnership.

"The visit will provide an opportunity for both prime ministers to review our robust and multifaceted cooperation and to set the path for future collaboration," it said.

India-Singapore relations were elevated to comprehensive strategic partnership during PM Modi's visit to that country in September last year.

Export of green ammonia and green hydrogen from India to Singapore is another proposal being discussed.

# Govt raises financial powers of top bureaucrats for official works

NEW DELHI, SEPT 3 / PTI

THE Delhi government has revised the financial powers delegated to the heads of departments (HoDs) and administrative secretaries, with the authority to sanction larger sums on office equipment, refreshments and food served at official programmes, hire vehicles and for other official purposes. The financial powers of the Delhi government's top bureaucrats were last revised in 2019.

According to a finance department memorandum, under the revised financial powers, the HoDs and administrative secretaries have also been authorised to directly procure IT-related items, carry out repairs of office buildings, maintenance and rentals, purchase equipment, hire human resources, appoint consultants and even replace condemned official vehicles.

The financial powers of the HoDs and administrative secretaries for sanctioning various works, projects and schemes of the government remain unchanged at Rs 10 crore and Rs 50 crore, as were fixed in the 2019

revision, respectively.

The administrative secretaries will now have full financial powers regarding contingent expenditure, while the HoDs will have limits of Rs 15 lakh (recurring) and Rs 5 lakh (non-recurring expenditures).

For the purposes of hiring any kind of vehicles, the administrative secretaries will have full powers, while the HoDs will be authorised to sanction Rs 5 lakh per month as well as reimburse Rs 4,000 per person per month as conveyance charge.

According to the 2019 revision, the finance department's permission was needed for vehicles to be hired by the departments.

The bureaucrats will also have enhanced financial powers in the payment of legal charges. The administrative secretaries will have full powers in these matters subject to the law department's rules and rates. The administrative secretaries have been given full financial powers for the purchase, repair, hire and condemnation of furniture and fixtures in offices, while a limit of Rs 10 lakh per annum has been put in case of the HoDs.

Although the bureaucrats cannot purchase new official vehicles, the administrative secretaries have been delegated the financial power for the replacement of vehicles against condemnation, according to the net dealer price prescribed by the Staff Car rules, the memorandum said.

For the purposes of minor repairs and day-to-day maintenance of government buildings, the administrative secretaries have been empowered with sanctioning Rs 20 lakh and the HoDs Rs 10 lakh per annum.

The administrative secretaries will also be able to hire consultants, consultancy services and professionals now.

For the purchase of stationary stores, the administrative secretaries will have full financial powers, whereas the HoDs will have a cap of Rs 50 lakh per year. Both the administrative secretaries and HoDs will have full financial powers in the purchase of all office equipment and other services, including IT-related goods and services.

The administrative secretary will have full powers to decide whether

the equipment and services fall under this category in accordance with the information technology (IT) department's instructions.

The administrative secretaries were earlier provided Rs 25 lakh and Rs 10 lakh, respectively, for the purchase of computers, laptops, printers and furniture.

The administrative secretaries will exercise full financial powers for expenditure on refreshments and meals served at official press conferences, meetings, and seminars. The amount will be capped at Rs 50 lakh per annum for HoDs.

The existing powers of the HoDs and secretaries were Rs 5 lakh and Rs 10 lakh per year according to the 2019 revision. There was a ceiling of Rs 50 per person on refreshments served at official meetings and conferences. The cap on meals was Rs 300 per head in case of the HoDs and Rs 500 in case of the administrative secretaries. All financial powers will be exercised by HoDs and administrative secretaries subject to the budget allocations and the extant govt rules and codal formalities and guidelines, the memorandum said.

# Court acquits man, brother-in-law, flags misuse of section 498A

NEW DELHI, SEPT 3 / PTI

A DELHI court has overturned the conviction of a man and his brother for allegedly subjecting his wife to cruelty, calling the matter a "classic case" of misuse of Section 498A of the Indian Penal Code (IPC), which deals with cruelty by husbands or in-laws.

Additional Sessions Judge Shivali Bansal on August 29 set aside a magisterial court's 2023 order that had sentenced Mukhtiar Singh and his brother, Satender Partap Singh, to one year of imprisonment along with a fine of Rs 50,000.

The court noted inconsistencies in the woman's allegations, questioning why she and her family repeatedly attempted reconciliation if the husband had indeed made her life "miserable." It observed that while many women in Indian society endure domestic difficulties to preserve marriages, such a generalization could not apply in this case where the wife was independent and educated.

One allegation—that the hus-

band once held their child on a balcony and threatened to drop him—was cited by the court as particularly grave. However, it found it improbable that the wife would not have immediately lodged a complaint if such an incident had occurred, given the life-threatening risk to a six-year-old.

"The conduct of respondent no. 2 (wife) is questionable. The alleged incident was so grave that any female ought to have registered a complaint," the court remarked, adding that the complaints made in 2007 and 2008 appeared to have been filed after the relationship had broken down "to take revenge and vengeance."

While the woman's parents and brother supported her claims, the judge emphasized the need to scrutinize testimony from close relatives. Independent testimony from a family acquaintance of over 50 years, who participated in reconciliation talks, revealed no knowledge of dowry demands. This, the court said, "casts serious doubts upon the veracity of the allegations."

# Left parties slam bail denial in 2020 riots conspiracy case

NEW DELHI, SEPT 3 / PTI

LEFT parties on Wednesday said it deplored the Delhi High Court's refusal to grant bail to former JNU scholar Umar Khalid, activist Sharjeel Imam and seven others accused in the alleged "larger conspiracy" behind the February 2020 Delhi riots, terming the decision a grave miscarriage of justice.

The Communist Party of India (Marxist) said the order marks the fifth rejection of bail pleas for the activists, who have been in jail for more than five years under the stringent Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA), without charges being framed.

"The Polit Bureau of the CPI(M) deplores the Delhi High Court's denial of bail to Umar Khalid,

Sharjeel Imam and eight others. It is all the more disturbing that even the charges against them have not been framed in the last five years. The decision amounts to a travesty of justice and a negation of the principle that bail is the rule and jail the exception," the party said in a statement. The CPI(M) contrasted the prolonged incarceration of the activists with the freedom of BJP leaders such as Kapil Mishra and Anurag Thakur, who were accused of making inflammatory speeches before the riots. "While these 10 youth languish in jail, those who delivered hate speeches roam scot-free," the party said, also drawing comparisons with the acquittal of Malegaon blast accused including BJP MP Pragya Singh Thakur and Colonel Prasad Purohit.

# HC urges Moitra, Dehadrai to resolve dispute

NEW DELHI, SEPT 3 / PTI

THE Delhi High Court on Wednesday asked Trinamool Congress (TMC) MP Mahua Moitra and advocate Jai Anant Dehadrai to consider settling their dispute over the custody of a pet dog outside the courtroom.

Justice Manoj Jain issued notice to Moitra on Dehadrai's appeal against a trial court order that barred him from publicising details of the case. The judge observed the matter might be better resolved through dialogue, remarking, "Why don't the parties sit together and sort out the issue?" Moitra and Dehadrai were earlier in a relationship but later parted ways. The disagreement centers on their Rottweiler, named Henry.

# CM urges Haryana to fix Mungeshpur drain breach

NEW DELHI, SEPT 3 / PTI

DELHI Chief Minister Rekha Gupta held a late-night phone call with her Haryana counterpart Nayab Singh Saini over a breach in the Mungeshpur drain that caused flooding in parts of the national capital, the Delhi government said on Wednesday.

The breach occurred on Tuesday afternoon in Bahadurgarh, Jhajjar district, near the Delhi-Haryana border, allowing water to gush into nearby villages and unauthorized colonies in Delhi, including Jharoda. Acting on Gupta's instructions, Divisional Commissioner Neeraj Semwal oversaw the evacuation of around 2,000 residents from sub-merged colonies. Those displaced have been relocated to temporary

shelters set up at Baba Haridas Temple and an MCD school in Jharoda.

Gupta flagged the matter directly to Saini around midnight, prompting officials from both states to launch joint repair efforts with assistance from the National Disaster Response Force (NDRF).

"The repair work began immediately after the call. Teams from Delhi and Haryana are working together to contain the breach and prevent further flooding," an official statement said.

Meanwhile, West Delhi MP Kamaljeet Sehrawat visited the affected areas to review the ongoing relief operations. The repair work was supervised by South West Delhi District Magistrate Mekala Chaitanya Prasad.

# HC seeks reply on 'misuse of CAPF personnel'

NEW DELHI, SEPT 3 / PTI

THE Delhi High Court on Wednesday sought the Centre's response to a Public Interest Litigation (PIL) alleging "rampant misutilisation" of Central Armed Police Forces (CAPF) personnel, including Border Security Force (BSF) staff, for domestic work at officers' residences.

The PIL, filed by BSF DIG Sanjay Yadav, claimed that soldiers were being diverted from critical duties to serve in private households, even to the extent of taking care of senior officers' pets. A bench of Chief Justice Devendra Kumar Upadhyaya and Justice Tushar Rao Gedela issued notice to the Ministry of Home Affairs, observing the seriousness of the allegations.

# Delhi contemporary art week turns galleries into lived spaces

NEW DELHI, SEPT 3 / PTI

AT THE 8th edition of the Delhi Contemporary Art Week (DCAW), art is not something one simply observes; it is something one inhabits. Curator Priyanshi S' experimental showcase, Taqiya Kalam, reimagines the conventional gallery format by transforming rooms into lived spaces where art spills across couches, cupboards, and even bathrooms.

Designed by Amrita Guha and Joya Nandurdikar of Untitled Design, the exhibition at Bikaner House breaks down the "white cube" gallery walls to stage a collector's home filled with contemporary art. "We are used to reading text, not visuals," Priyanshi explained. "I want people to learn to read art the way we learn to read a language — in a lived format."

## Art in Everyday Corners

Visitors drift through reimagined rooms, encountering art that unsettles and provokes. In Richa Arya's iron-sheet calendars, memory resists erasure; Tayeba Begum Lipi's stilettoes, crafted from razor blades, evoke violence against women; Amit Ambalal's langurs in unnaturally vivid hues remind viewers of absurdities hidden in the familiar.

Even the bathroom becomes a site of intimacy and politics, featuring Sunil Gupta's photographs with subtle queer narratives and Chandan Bez Baruah's woodcut prints, A Place Called Home, reflecting on migration and identity in Assam amid NRC anxieties. Gupta's images, including a candid embrace with historian Saleem Kidwai against



Visitors at 'Taqiya Kalam' exhibition during the '8th Delhi Contemporary Art Week' at Bikaner House, in New Delhi. The exhibition curated by Priyanshi S and designed by Amrita Guha and Joya Nandurdikar of Untitled Design reimagines the gallery space through the lens of domesticity. PTI

## Six Galleries, 70+ Artists

Beyond Taqiya Kalam, DCAW's main exhibition features 70 artists under the banner of six Delhi-based galleries — Blueprint 12, Exhibit 320, Latitude 28, Gallery Espace, Shrine Empire, and Vadehra Art Gallery.

Blueprint 12 presents Mapping the Margin, featuring works across textiles, printmaking, photography,

and sculptural painting. Artists such as Aravni Art Project, Tanvi Ranjan, Zoya Chaudhary, and Vasundhara Sellamuthu engage with geographies of memory and displacement. Exhibit 320 highlights displacement through Richa Arya's iron-sheet collages and B Pradhan's monumental sculptures exploring migration and labour. Director Rasika Kajaria

said these practices "demonstrate how recurring motifs and techniques become visual languages of resistance."

Gallery Espace offers an exploration of recurring motifs and gestures through artists like Gogi Saroj Pal, Sheetal Gattani, and Chintan Upadhyay, while Latitude 28's In-Between / Beyond features 17 artists from across

South Asia. These include Farhat Ali, who reimagines Disney characters in miniature paintings, and Khadim Ali, whose glittering tapestries draw on folklore to address present-day uncertainties.

Shrine Empire and Vadehra Art Gallery present a mix of senior and emerging voices, from Sudhir Patwardhan and Jagannath Panda to younger artists like Viraj Khanna and Awdesh Tamrakar, spanning themes of migration, urbanisation, gender, and technology.

## Reading the Visual, Not the Label

The absence of name tags in Taqiya Kalam forces viewers to pause and engage with works before seeking attribution.

"We tend to read who made it first, not what it shows us," Priyanshi said, framing her curatorial strategy as a critique of art's reliance on textual framing.

By extending art into the fabric of everyday domesticity, she encourages audiences to reflect on how personal and political narratives intertwine — whether in a razor-blade stiletto, a woodcut of a displaced home, or a candid photograph of men challenging social norms.

## Platform for South Asian Voices

The week-long event, which runs until September 4, has grown into a key fixture of Delhi's cultural calendar.

DCAW's strength lies in its collaborative model, allowing galleries to share resources and present a cross-section of contemporary practices from India, Bangladesh, Pakistan, and Nepal.

# Yamuna breaches danger mark again in the city

NEW DELHI, SEPT 3 / PTI

Delhi continued to reel under spells of rain for the third consecutive day on Wednesday, with overcast skies and intermittent showers keeping the city drenched and temperatures below normal. The India Meteorological Department (IMD) has predicted similar weather conditions to persist, bringing more rainfall over the coming days.

The IMD had initially issued red and orange alerts, warning of heavy to very heavy rainfall in parts of the city. However, as the intensity of showers eased, the alert was downgraded to yellow, which urges residents to remain watchful of weather-related disruptions.

According to IMD data till 5.30 pm, Safdarjung — Delhi's primary weather station — recorded 15.2 mm of rainfall. Lodhi Road logged 18.2 mm, Palam 22 mm, while heavier showers were seen at the Ridge (59.6 mm) and Aya Nagar (54.8 mm).

The rainfall has pushed Delhi's seasonal tally past the 1,000 mm mark, an unusual surge for this time of year. The capital had already surpassed its annual average rainfall of 774 mm in August, making this monsoon one of the wettest in recent memory.

The showers brought much-needed

respite from humidity but also slowed traffic across several stretches of the city. Commuters faced waterlogging in low-lying areas, particularly in parts of South and West Delhi, though officials said no major disruptions were reported.

With the rain and cloud cover, Delhi's maximum temperature settled at 32.3 degrees Celsius — nearly two degrees below the season's normal. The minimum was recorded at 22.8 degrees Celsius, about three

notches lower than average. "The weather is likely to remain cloudy on Thursday, with light to moderate rain at several places," an IMD official said, adding that the maximum and minimum temperatures may hover around 33 and 24 degrees Celsius.

The showers also had a positive effect on air quality. The city's Air Quality Index (AQI) was recorded at 57 at 4 pm, placing it in the "satisfactory" category, according to the Cen-



tral Pollution Control Board (CPCB). Rain typically helps disperse pollutants, improving air quality across the region.

The CPCB classifies an AQI between 0-50 as "good," 51-100 "satisfactory," 101-200 "moderate," 201-300 "poor," 301-400 "very poor," and 401-500 "severe."

In the days prior to the rain spell, Delhi's AQI had frequently hovered in the "moderate" range.

The capital and its adjoining areas, including parts of Haryana and Uttar Pradesh, are expected to witness similar conditions through the weekend, according to the IMD's regional forecast. Officials have advised residents to keep track of

updates and exercise caution while travelling during peak rain hours.

As Delhiites adjusted their routines to the soggy weather, the IMD said that rainfall activity in north-west India this week has been stronger than average, contributing to both relief from heat and a record seasonal surplus for the capital.

The Delhi Traffic Police announced traffic diversions at Wazirabad-Signature Bridge and Chandgi Ram Akhada-IP College red light through alternate routes as heavy congestion is expected on the Outer Ring Road and adjoining stretches. Vehicles will not be permitted on the affected stretches and will be diverted accordingly.

## Heavy waterlogging near Palam Mor triggers jams, delays for fliers

NEW DELHI, SEPT 3 / PTI

HEAVY waterlogging on a key stretch of NH-48 near Palam Mor in southwest Delhi on Wednesday caused massive traffic snarls, leaving commuters stranded and delaying passengers on their way to Indira Gandhi International Airport's Terminal 1.

Long queues of vehicles formed on the arterial route as rainwater accumulated, forcing vehicles to crawl. Several travellers expressed frustration over missed or delayed flights due to the gridlock.

"The road goes to the IGI Airport Terminal 1 and due to heavy traffic, many people who have flights to catch are getting late. Many will miss their flights today because of the heavy waterlogging," said commuter Dristi Singh.

Officials of the Public Works Department (PWD) said two quick response teams (QRT) with

heavy-duty pumps were deployed to clear the water. "The flooding is due to the heavy flow of rainwater in the nearby stormwater drain outlet. Waterlogging should be cleared within 20-30 minutes," an official said.

Delhi has been lashed by continuous rainfall since Monday, with several areas reporting severe inundation. On Wednesday, overcast skies and intermittent heavy showers further worsened the situation.

The India Meteorological Department (IMD) issued a Red Alert for central, east, northeast, Shahdara, south and southeast Delhi, while an Orange Alert was sounded for New Delhi, north, northwest, southwest and west districts, along with NCR cities such as Gurugram, Faridabad, Ghaziabad and Noida.

Traffic police have advised commuters to avoid severely flooded stretches and allow extra travel time.

## MCD intensifies insecticide spraying, awareness drives in flood-hit areas

NEW DELHI, SEPT 3 / PTI

WITH the Yamuna river continuing to swell and flood its low-lying banks, the Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) on Wednesday ordered intensified spraying of insecticides and health awareness drives to prevent outbreaks of vector-borne diseases.

MCD Standing Committee Chairperson Satya Sharma said additional domestic breeding checkers (DBC) will be deployed in relief camps to curb mosquito breeding and control diseases such as dengue, malaria and chikungunya. A special team will be formed to ensure spraying of insecticides in coordination with zonal officers. "No camp or locality should be left unattended," she said. Sharma also directed officials to distribute chlorine bottles and ORS packets in relief camps to prevent the spread of waterborne diseases.

## Nigambodh Ghat halts cremations as Yamuna flood waters inundate premises

NEW DELHI, SEPT 3 / PTI

CREMATIONS at Nigambodh Ghat, Delhi's oldest and busiest cremation ground, were suspended on Wednesday after floodwater from the Yamuna River entered the facility, officials confirmed.

The Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) reported that cremations stopped around 2:30 pm, with only those rituals already underway earlier in the day being completed. "Until about two hours ago, only rainwater had seeped into the premises. However, a section of the boundary wall, nearly seven to eight feet high, gave way, allowing Yamuna water to flow inside," a management official at the ghat told PTI.

Situated along Ring Road near the Red Fort, Nigambodh Ghat has 42 cremation platforms and typically handles 55 to 60 cremations daily. An electric crematorium was added in the 1950s, followed by a

CNG-based facility in 2006. With floodwaters disrupting operations, families are now being advised to seek services at other cremation grounds in the capital.

The crisis follows a steady rise in the Yamuna's water level, which crossed the evacuation mark on Tuesday. By Wednesday morning, the river was recorded at 206.03 metres.

Authorities attributed the surge primarily to heavy discharges from upstream barrages. At 8 am, the Hathnikund Barrage released 1.62 lakh cusecs of water, while the Wazirabad Barrage discharged 1.38 lakh cusecs.

As a precaution, district authorities evacuated residents from low-lying areas, and the Old Railway Bridge was shut to traffic. "Forecasts suggest the water level may continue to rise, given the volume of water being released," an official from the Central Flood Control Room warned.

## Dozens of dogs rescued from flood-hit Yamuna banks in Delhi

NEW DELHI, SEPT 3 / PTI

ANIMAL activists and volunteers have rescued dozens of dogs, many of them injured, weak, or pregnant, from flood-affected areas near the Yamuna River in Delhi over the past two days.

Leading the efforts, activist Fateh and his wife said they managed to save at least 16 dogs from Yamuna Bazaar and Majnu ka Tila.

"Most of the dogs we rescued were either pregnant, lactating, or very young puppies. Many were injured after being stranded in flooded lanes without food or shelter. We are shifting them to NGO Maa ka Aanchal for proper care," Fateh said.

He added that he has shared his contact details widely so animal lovers can alert him to stranded pets.

## Govt to form PWD engineering cadre to fast-track projects: CM

NEW DELHI, SEPT 3 / PTI

THE Delhi Cabinet has approved the creation of a separate engineering cadre within the Public Works Department (PWD) to accelerate infrastructure projects and ensure greater accountability, officials announced on Wednesday.

Chaired by Chief Minister Rekha Gupta, the Cabinet meeting endorsed a proposal to allow the Delhi government to independently recruit engineers and fill vacancies without depending on the Central Public Works Department (CPWD). At present, all 3,214 sanctioned engineering posts in the Delhi PWD belong to CPWD cadre, with appointments made by the Centre.

"This dependency slowed down Delhi's projects and created hurdles in timely decision-making. For 30 years no decision was taken on this crucial matter. Now, Delhi will have its own dedicated cadre," Gupta said. The chief minister emphasised the urgent need for rapid construction of new infrastructure, including a modern secretariat, mini-secretariats in all 11 districts,



sports complexes, and mandis. She announced the formation of a high-level committee to design the structure and functioning of the cadre. Initially, CPWD officers willing to transfer will be accommodated, and if vacancies remain, other recruitment mechanisms will be adopted.

Gupta said the new cadre would create a specialised, locally experienced workforce committed to long-term projects. "Until now, accountability was diffused. Engineers could evade responsibility through transfers. That will no lon-

ger be possible," she noted.

Framing the reform within Prime Minister Modi's motto of "reform, perform and transform," Gupta called it a milestone in building Delhi's future. "This will make the government more efficient, accountable, and visionary. It is a historic step towards transforming the national capital into Viksit Delhi," she said. Officials added that the move represents a structural reform that will give momentum to sustainable development and directly benefit residents by speeding up projects and strengthening infrastructure.

## NDMC clears projects to improve public amenities

NEW DELHI, SEPT 3 / PTI

THE New Delhi Municipal Council (NDMC) on Wednesday approved an ambitious package of civic projects aimed at transforming public amenities and enriching cultural life in the capital's central zone.

The council meeting, chaired by Delhi minister Parvash Sahib Singh Verma, was attended by New Delhi MP Bansuri Swaraj, NDMC Chairperson Keshav Chandra, Vice-Chairman Kuljeet Singh Chahal and MLA Virender Singh Kadian. Chahal said the measures are intended to "improve the quality of life, modernise facilities and provide a richer experience for visitors." One of the proposals is the "Night Food Bazaar" at CP and India Gate. Modeled on Indore's Sarafa Bazaar and Ahmedabad's Manek Chowk, it envisions 50-60 food trucks operating daily between 10:30 pm and 1 am.

## AISA moves HC against parental surety bond in DUSU polls

NEW DELHI, SEPT 3 / PTI

THE All India Students' Association (AISA) on Wednesday moved the Delhi High Court against Delhi University's decision requiring parents or guardians of student candidates to sign a ₹1 lakh surety bond for the upcoming Delhi University Students' Union (DUSU) elections.

The rule, announced by the DUSU Election Commission on Tuesday, mandates that parents furnish names, signatures, and bank details on non-judicial stamp paper, making them liable for violations such as defacement of university property during campaigns.

AISA condemned the provision as "intimidation" and an "attack on students' autonomy."

In a statement, the student group argued, "As adults contesting elections of their own volition, why should parental signatures be required?" Activists Anjali and Manish will serve as petitioners in the case.

The controversy follows last

week's Delhi High Court hearing on a similar issue. AISA activists had challenged DU's earlier notification mandating a ₹1 lakh bond for university polls and ₹25,000 for college-level elections. The petitioners argued such financial barriers discriminated against students from marginalised and economically weaker backgrounds. While disposing of the case, the court recorded DU's assurance that only a regular affidavit, not a bond, would be required.

AISA now alleges DU has "violated its own declaration" by introducing parental surety, effectively reintroducing financial and procedural hurdles.

The bond mechanism was first proposed after the 2024 DUSU elections, when results were delayed nearly two months following court intervention over campus defacement.

DU had promised stricter preventive measures this year.

The DUSU elections for the 2025-26 academic session are scheduled for September 18, with counting on September 19.



## Rain mayhem in J&K; highway closed

SRINAGAR, SEPT 3 / PTI

Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Wednesday reviewed the situation arising from incessant rains that have swelled rivers and streams across the Union Territory, officials said. Authorities announced the closure of schools and colleges across the Kashmir Valley for the day, as the weather department has forecast more rainfall over the next 24 hours, they said.

The chief minister chaired a meet-

ing this morning to assess the situation, the CM's office said in a post on X.

Abdullah directed the administration to intensify the ground response, ensure clearance of water-logged areas, safeguard essential services, carry out timely evacuations in critical zones, and provide immediate relief.

"Hon'ble Ministers @JavedRanaa and @satishsharmajnk briefed on the situation in Jammu, while Hon'ble Minister @sakinaitoo and Advisor to the CM @nasirsogami

provided updates on the situation in Kashmir. The Chief Minister appealed to the people to follow advisories, avoid vulnerable spots, and stay safe," the CM's office said.

Although the Jhelum river and its tributaries are flowing significantly below the danger mark, water levels in parts of south and central Kashmir, including Srinagar, have risen sharply since the rainfall began on Tuesday, officials said.

The Irrigation and Flood Control Department said water gauges are rising and may increase further due

to continued rainfall.

"All the concerned authorities are requested to remain alert and take necessary measures. The general public is advised not to venture close to water bodies and exercise caution. All officers assigned flood duties must immediately report to their posts," the department said in a post on X.

The heavy downpour over the past 24 hours also led to the closure of the Jammu-Srinagar National Highway (NH-44) due to landslides, shooting stones, and waterlogging

at multiple locations.

"The highway has been closed for all types of vehicular traffic," officials said. As a precautionary measure, all educational institutions across the Kashmir division have been closed for the day.

"In view of inclement weather, schools and colleges across the Kashmir division shall remain closed today, on 03.09.2025," authorities said. Examinations of Kashmir University and other universities in the valley scheduled for Wednesday have also been postponed.

## Odisha's Debrigarh set to become India's newest tiger reserve

SAMBALPUR, SEPT 3 / PTI

IN the dense forests where freedom fighter Veer Surendra Sai once evaded British forces, Odisha's Debrigarh Wildlife Sanctuary is scripting one of India's most remarkable conservation success stories as it prepares to become the country's newest tiger reserve.

The 804-square-kilometre sanctuary, which received National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA) approval in July 2025, has transformed from a conflict-prone area with human habitation into a thriving ecosystem that generated Rs 5 crore in tourism revenue and attracted 85,000 visitors in 2025 alone. "We have very healthy prey density with populations of gaur, sambar, spotted deer, wild boar and recovering wild dog numbers. The leopard population is also good," Divisional Forest Officer Anshu Pragna Das told PTI.

What makes this transformation extraordinary is the numbers: 40 per cent of all animal herds now consist of newborns, while the Indian gaur population jumped from 670 to over 700 in just six months, indicating a thriving ecosystem ready to support big cats.

The sanctuary's success stems from an unprecedented community engagement approach. Over 400 families were voluntarily relocated from the core area under a comprehensive package that included Rs

15 lakh compensation, agricultural land, pucca houses, and skill development training.

Unlike typical relocation stories marked by conflict, Debrigarh's families have embraced entrepreneurship. Former forest dwellers now run computer centres, garages, shops and travel businesses, using their compensation as seed capital for new ventures. "Many have procured agricultural land, some have started their own business—computer shops, garages, travelling businesses. Different kinds of occupations are coming up in one colony," Das explained.

The relocation freed up 500 hectares of forest area, which has been successfully converted into stable

grasslands crucial for herbivore populations. More significantly, over 155 peripheral villages have been transformed from potential adversaries into conservation partners. Debrigarh's geographical positioning creates its competitive edge. Sharing over 100 kilometres of border with Hiraakud Wetland, the sanctuary offers a rare amphibious habitat ranging from wetlands to grasslands to forests.

The sanctuary hosts over 300 bird species, with more than 120 migratory species using Hiraakud Wetland as a crucial stopover. During the peak season from October to March, over four lakh birds congregate here while migrating to Chilika Lake.

### Best time to visit:

October–March for birds; April–June for wildlife sightings. The sanctuary offers accommodation facilities and is accessible year-round.



People protect themselves with raincoats while looking at the damaged remains of the 4th Tawi Bridge, after rain continues to lash parts of the city, in Jammu. PTI

## Maharashtra Cabinet clears amendments to extend daily working hours in pvt sector

MUMBAI, SEPT 3 / PTI

THE Maharashtra cabinet on Wednesday approved key amendments to labour laws that will allow private sector employees to work up to 10 hours a day, raising the current limit from nine.

The decision, cleared in a meeting chaired by Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis, will amend provisions of the *Factories Act, 1948* and the *Maharashtra Shops and Establishments (Regulation of Employment and Conditions of Service) Act, 2017*.

According to an official statement, the reforms are designed to "attract investments, generate employment and safeguard workers' rights" while aligning Maharashtra with states such as Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Telangana, Uttar Pradesh, and Tripura, which have already enacted similar changes.

### Key changes to labour laws

Under the amended *Factories Act*:

- The maximum daily work limit will rise from nine to **12 hours**, provided employees get longer rest breaks.
- Workers must be given a rest

interval after **six hours**, instead of the current five.

- Overtime limits will increase from **115 to 144 hours per quarter**, with written consent required from workers.
- Weekly working hours will go up from **10.5 to 12 hours**.

For establishments covered under the *Shops and Establishments Act*:

- Daily working hours will increase from nine to **10 hours**.
- Overtime limits will also be raised to **144 hours per quarter**.
- Emergency duty hours may extend up to **12 hours**.
- The reforms will apply to establishments employing **20 or more workers**.

Additionally, smaller establishments with fewer than 20 employees will no longer need to obtain registration certificates. Instead, they will be able to notify authorities through a simplified intimation process, reducing compliance burdens.

Officials argued that the reforms will provide greater operational flexibility to industries, especially

during peak demand or workforce shortages, while ensuring workers are compensated fairly. The government emphasised that **overtime will be paid at double the regular wage rate**, and all changes will require employee consent.

The labour department, which put forward the proposal, has maintained that the reforms will improve the overall working environment, especially for women, and address long-standing demands of both employees and employers. "This move will promote ease of doing



## Union Cabinet clears ₹1,500-cr incentive to boost recycling of critical minerals

NEW DELHI, SEPT 3 / PTI

THE Union Cabinet on Wednesday approved a ₹1,500-crore incentive scheme aimed at promoting the recycling of critical minerals, a move designed to strengthen India's domestic capacity and reduce dependence on imports for key raw materials needed in the clean energy transition.

The decision, taken at a cabinet meeting chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, seeks to develop industrial-scale recycling facilities for extracting critical minerals from secondary sources. These include e-waste, lithium-ion battery (LIB) scrap, and other end-of-life materials such as catalytic converters in vehicles.

According to the Ministry of Mines, the programme is part of the larger National Critical Mineral Mission (NCMM), which was cleared earlier with a total outlay of ₹34,300 crore over seven years.

Of this, ₹16,300 crore will come from government allocations, while public sector enterprises are expected to contribute another ₹18,000 crore.

"Critical minerals such as copper, lithium, nickel, cobalt, and rare earth elements are essential inputs for clean energy technologies.

Recycling these resources from secondary sources will help build resilience in India's supply chain and lower reliance on costly imports," the ministry said.

## 20 Naxalites surrender in Chhattisgarh's Sukma district

SUKMA, SEPT 3 / PTI

AS many as 20 Naxalites, 11 of them carrying a collective bounty of Rs 33 lakh, surrendered in Chhattisgarh's Sukma district on Wednesday, police said.

Out of the 20 Naxalites, nine are women, including a hardcore cadre of the Peoples' Liberation Guerrilla Army (PLGA) battalion no.1, which was considered as the strongest military formation of Maoists, an official said.

They turned themselves in before senior police and CRPF officials here citing disappointment with "hollow" Maoist ideology, atrocities committed by cadres on innocent tribals and growing internal differences within the banned outfit, Superintendent of Police Kiran Chavan said.

business, attract new investment and create jobs, while protecting workers through enhanced wage and overtime provisions," the statement said.

Maharashtra, one of India's top industrial hubs, has been competing with southern states to attract global investors, particularly in manufacturing and IT-enabled services. Officials said the legal flexibility in working hours will help companies manage productivity cycles better, especially in sectors like automobiles, textiles, and information technology.

However, labour unions are expected to closely scrutinise the amendments. Similar reforms in other states have drawn criticism from worker groups who argue that longer hours may compromise health and safety, despite higher overtime pay. The government has sought to address these concerns by mandating consent and ensuring stricter monitoring of working conditions.

The amendments will be tabled in the state legislature for approval in the upcoming session before being formally enacted.

# Have faith, no Maratha in Marathwada will be left out of reservation: Jarange



CHHATRAPATI SAMBHAJINAGAR, SEPT 3 (PTI)

MEMBERS of the Maratha community will now get reservation in Marathwada and western Maharashtra, said quota activist Manoj Jarange on Wednesday, appealing to his supporters to maintain calm and have faith in his decision.

The 43-year-old activist, who returned from Mumbai after ending his hunger strike, was talking to reporters in Chhatrapati Sambhajnagar, where he is receiving medical care in a private hospital for dehy-

dration and low blood sugar.

"We have scored a victory, and the credit goes to the Maratha community. Maratha people from Marathwada and Western Maharashtra will now get quota," he said.

Jarange on Tuesday ended his five-day-old fast after the Maharashtra government accepted most of his demands, including granting eligible Marathas Kunbi caste certificates, which will allow them to avail of quota in education and jobs enjoyed by Other Backward Classes (OBCs).

The activist called off his hunger strike in the presence of senior BJP

minister Radhakrishna Vikhe Patil, who heads the cabinet sub-committee on Maratha reservation, and other members of the panel at south Mumbai's Azad Maidan, the site of his agitation since August 29.

"Not a single line had been written by the state government in our favour till now. People should not believe in the 'joker-type' individuals (who have criticised his move). Those speaking against the decision have done nothing for the Maratha community," Jarange said.

The activist said the members of his community will eventually understand his decision to call off

the agitation. "No Maratha in the Marathwada region will be left out of quota," he said, adding that village-level committees will be made to help Marathas establish their Kunbi lineage.

"The community is happy, I am happy," he said.

The state on Tuesday issued a government resolution (GR) on the Hyderabad gazetteer and announced the formation of a committee to facilitate the issuance of Kunbi caste certificates to Marathas who are able to produce documentary evidence recognising them as Kunbis in the past. A village-level mechanism will be put in place for this, said the government.

"The community should maintain peace and have faith (in his decision). Everything is perfect, and if anything goes wrong, we will get it corrected. I have the word for this from the people who came to meet me yesterday (Tuesday)," Jarange said. Asked about state minister Chhagan Bhujbal, who has been opposing reservation to Marathas under the OBC category, skipping the cabinet meeting on Wednesday, Jarange said, "That means he is a clever leader. It also means that the Maratha community has succeeded in getting reservation."

Jarange also claimed that attempts to take the matter to court will fail as the "GR cannot be challenged". "The petitions will be dismissed as the GR is based on a government document like a gazette," he added.

# Frame policy for foreigners jumping bail: SC to Centre

NEW DELHI, SEP 3 (PTI)

AFTER it learnt that a foreign national accused in a cheating case jumped bail and is on the run, the Supreme Court has underlined the need for a policy to ensure foreign nationals committing crimes in the country don't "flee from justice".

The apex court had on December 4 last year set aside the Jharkhand High Court's May 2022 order granting bail to accused Alex David. When the matter came up for hearing on August 26 before a bench of Justices Dipankar Datta and Augustine George Masih, it said there was no bilateral treaty between Nigeria and India over extradition of a Nigerian national to face criminal proceedings in the country.

"The special leave petition stands disposed of, confirming the order of cancellation of bail but leaving it open to the central government to formulate an appropriate policy or initiate such further action as deemed necessary and proper so that foreign nationals do not flee the course of justice after committing crimes in India," the bench said.

David was booked for various offences, including cheating besides the Information Technology Act. After he was granted bail by the high court, the state challenged the order in the top court. But David was stated to have jumped bail and gone absconding, the apex court was informed. The top court then asked Centre about its procedure and guidelines laid down in such

cases. The Centre filed an affidavit, indicating the presence of comprehensive guidelines for investigation abroad and issue of letter rogatory, mutual legal assistance request and service of summons, notices and judicial documents with respect to criminal matters.

On December 4 last year, the apex court set aside the high court order and directed the Centre to take appropriate measures as suggested in their guidelines.

When the matter came up for hearing on August 26, the counsel appearing for the Centre placed before the bench a communication addressed to the solicitor general by the consultant (legal) of the Ministry of External Affairs.

The bench recorded the content of the communication which read, "However, it may be noted that in the absence of a bi-lateral extradition treaty between India and Nigeria, the Nigerian authorities are unlikely to extradite their own national."

The communication said the extradition request was sent to the High Commission of India in Abuja, Nigeria, on the basis of "assurance of reciprocity" for the onward transmission to the Nigerian authorities concerned.

Considering the communication and the fact that there was no bilateral treaty between the two countries over the extradition of a Nigerian national for facing criminal proceedings in India, the bench said keeping the petition pending would serve no purpose.

# Arun Gawli walks out of Nagpur jail after 17 yrs as SC grants bail

MUMBAI, SEPT 3 (PTI)

AFTER spending more than 17 years behind bars, gangster-turned-politician Arun Gawli on Wednesday walked out of the Nagpur Central Jail with the Supreme Court granting him bail in a 2007 murder case, officials said.

The apex court granted bail to 76-year-old Gawli, who was serving life imprisonment for the murder of Mumbai Shiv Sena corporator Kamalakar Jamsandekar. A bench of Justices M M Sundresh and N Kotiswar Singh noted that Gawli was in jail for over 17 years and his appeal was pending before it.

"After the completion of all legal formalities of the prisons department, Gawli came out of the jail around 12.30 pm," an official said.

He was welcomed by his family members, lawyer and supporters.

Gawli was booked under the provisions of Maharashtra Control of Organised Crime Act (MCOCA).

The top court granted bail to Gawli subject to terms and conditions imposed by the trial court.

Gawli had challenged the December 9, 2019 verdict of the Bombay High Court, upholding his life sentence given by the trial court.

He shot to prominence from Dagdi Chawl, a neighbourhood of Byculla, and is the founder of the Akhil Bharatiya Sena. He was an MLA from 2004 to 2009 from the Chinchpokli assembly constituency in Mumbai.

In August 2012, a sessions court in Mumbai sentenced him to life imprisonment in the case and imposed a Rs 17 lakh fine.



Gangster-turned-politician Arun Gawli arrives at Nagpur airport following his release from prison. After spending more than 17 years behind bars, Gawli on Wednesday walked out of the Nagpur Central Jail with the Supreme Court last week granting him bail in a 2007 murder case. PTI

# Sardar Sarovar Dam 3.3 metres short of full reservoir level; water stock rises to 89 per cent

EKTA NAGAR (GUJARAT), SEPT 3 (PTI)

AMID a huge inflow of water from the upstream of the Narmada river in recent weeks, the water level in Gujarat's Sardar Sarovar Dam rose to 135.38 metres on Wednesday, 3.3 metres short of its full reservoir level, officials said.

The water stock in the dam, situated near the Statue of Unity in the Narmada district, has reached 89 per cent of its capacity, they said.

The dam is currently receiving 1.18 lakh cusec (cubic feet per second) of water. Its full reservoir level is 138.68 metres.

To regulate the water level, 95,111 cusecs of water is being released through 10 of the 30 gates of the dam, while 23,021 cusecs of water is being released in the Narmada canal, said a government release.

The water level in the reservoir would increase in the next 24 hours as the authorities in neighbouring Madhya Pradesh have announced the release of 2.21 lakh cusecs of water by opening 12 gates of Indira Sagar Dam at 1.30 pm on Thursday, said the release.

The dam now has 8,428.8 million cubic meters (MCM) of water against its total water storage capacity of 9,460 million cubic meters, it added.



# Haryana's most wanted criminal repatriated from Cambodia

NEW DELHI/GURUGRAM, SEPT 3 (PTI)

A NOTORIOUS criminal wanted by Haryana Police, Mainpal Dhilla, was extradited from Cambodia in an operation coordinated by the CBI in collaboration with the state police, Union home ministry and external affairs ministry, officials said on Wednesday.

Dhilla, who also goes by the alias of Maipal Badli and Sonu Kumar, has several serious cases, including that of murder, registered against him and was serving life term. He is also accused of committing a murder while in jail. He was released on parole on July 17, 2018, after which he escaped abroad on a fake identity.

On a request from Haryana Police, the CBI got a Red Notice published against Dhilla through Interpol on November 6, 2024 and contacted NCB Bangkok, which revealed that he had travelled from Thailand to Cambodia.

The CBI immediately contacted NCB-Phnom Penh and informed the authorities that the wanted criminal was travelling on a fraudulent travel document in the name of Sonu Kumar, officials said.

"A request for provisional arrest was sent to NCB-Phnom Penh, Cambodia, through Interpol channels on March 26, 2025. NCB-Phnom Penh on July 24, 2025 conveyed the arrest of the subject and requested for Extradition Request through diplomatic channels. Cambodian authorities later intimated that they had decided to hand over the subject to Indian authorities," a CBI spokesperson said in a statement.

Later, a team of Haryana Police went to Cambodia and brought back Dhilla on Tuesday, they said.

Dhilla was convicted and sentenced to life imprisonment for the offence of murder, attempt to murder, illegal use of firearms and criminal conspiracy on April 29, 2013 in a case registered in Bahadurgarh.

# Deve Gowda lauds PM Modi's 'multi-alignment' policy amid US tariff war

BENGALURU, SEPT 3 (PTI)

LAUDING the Prime Minister's efforts in actively seeking alternatives after the United States initiated an "unreasonable and unjust tariff war", JDS supremo H D Deve Gowda on Wednesday said Narendra Modi's policy of "multi-alignment" is bound to offer rich dividends in the near future.

The former PM said the US may eventually have to reconsider its stance because "dharma" is on India's side, and the nation offers a

blend of economic, demographic and democratic advantages like no other in the world.

"I closely followed the news of your visit to Japan and China. I am relieved like millions of Indians that you have been actively pursuing alternatives after the United States started an unreasonable and unjust tariff war. I trust you had a very successful visit and India will reap the benefits of your negotiations and new initiatives," Gowda said in a letter to Modi.

"The photographs and videos of



yourself with President Putin (of Russia) and President Xi Jinping (of China) that have flooded the media

across the globe communicated something beyond routine bonhomie and friendship between heads of state," he said and suggested they symbolised a "new awakening" and perhaps the beginning of a new world order with India at its center.

Praising Modi for speaking to President Putin about ending the war in Ukraine, Gowda said, "You have been consistent on this issue, and I am sure India's words are taken far more seriously in this regard for the sincerity it is filled with

and the values it has represented historically."

"The policy of 'multi-alignment' that you followed is bound to offer rich dividends in the near future. The world has only begun to understand its importance and pragmatism," said the JDS leader and called it a "very constructive and positive formulation" compared to our earlier policy of non-alignment.

"Times have changed and we need a new language to pursue our fair dreams. We should interact with the world as per our needs, on our

terms, but with also enormous civilizational grace that we possess. That will make India stand out," he added.

Noting that Modi is determined to convert the challenge that exists before India currently into an opportunity, without sacrificing any of its core values, the former PM said, "To navigate the curve that our nation is in, currently, needs enormous patience and confidence. Am glad God has given you both in good measure. May he bless you with greater energy and good health."

## India's chip moment: From slogans to silicon

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's address at *Semicon India 2025* placed semiconductors at the heart of India's next phase of industrial ambition. He noted that ten projects worth over USD 18 billion are underway and reiterated that commercial chip production will begin this year. These projects, involving companies such as Micron, Tata Electronics, CG Power, and Kaynes Technology, mark the country's most serious push into an industry long seen as critical for economic and strategic security. The Prime Minister also announced a revamp of the Design-Linked Incentive (DLI) scheme and signaled the launch of the next phase of the *India Semiconductor Mission*.

The government has highlighted its efforts to reduce procedural hurdles: a single-window clearance system now integrates central and state approvals, and new semiconductor parks aim to provide land, power, logistics, and access to skilled labour under a plug-and-play model. Incentives have been designed to cover the chain from design to fabrication to advanced packaging.

The ambition is to move beyond India's historic role in back-end operations toward a full-stack semiconductor ecosystem. If successful, this would place the country in a stronger position within global supply chains currently dominated by a handful of East Asian economies.

However, challenges remain significant. Global semiconductor leaders invested decades of capital and expertise to achieve high yields and secure trust. India, by contrast, is still at the pilot stage. The sector continues to depend on imported critical minerals and international technology partnerships. While design capacity is expanding in hubs such as Noida and Bengaluru, scaling to globally competitive levels will require consistent policy, long-term investment, and stable execution.

The timing of India's push is notable. The global semiconductor market, that is valued at USD 600 billion, is projected to cross USD 1 trillion in the coming years. The diversification of supply chains, driven by geopolitical and security considerations, creates opportunities for new entrants. India's combination of a large domestic market, policy support, and skilled workforce makes it an attractive partner, though the outcomes will depend on the delivery rather than the declarations and the projections made.

The *India Semiconductor Mission* was launched in 2021 with the goal of creating not just a few fabrication plants but a broader ecosystem. The progress of these ten projects and the effectiveness of the DLI revamp will be early indicators of whether India can move from intent to impact.

For now, India's semiconductor story is at a formative stage: marked by strong commitments, visible early projects, but still awaiting proof of scale and sustainability.

## Family feuds in Telangana politics

TELANGANA'S politics has always been as much about personalities as parties, and the latest drama within the Bharat Rashtra Samithi (BRS) highlights how brittle family unity can become in power. On Wednesday, K Kavitha, daughter of former Chief Minister and BRS founder K Chandrasekhar Rao (KCR), quit both the party and her seat in the Legislative Council. The resignation followed her suspension, but what truly grabbed attention were her sharp attacks on cousin T Harish Rao, a senior leader long seen as the party's organisational backbone.

In a fiery press conference, Kavitha accused Harish Rao of conspiring against KCR's immediate family and of building a tacit alliance with Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy, the Congress leader who ended BRS rule in 2023. She went further, blaming Harish Rao and another cousin, Santosh Rao, for irregularities that allegedly prompted a CBI probe into the state's marquee Kaleshwaram irrigation project. The developments matter because the BRS has always presented itself as a disciplined, family-led formation under KCR. Kavitha's public rupture exposes what insiders have whispered for years: that tensions between Harish Rao's camp and KCR's children, particularly working president K T Rama Rao (KTR), have never been far from the surface. Her advice to KTR to "be careful" of alleged conspiracies was read as a direct warning about succession politics inside the party.

KTR has long been groomed as his father's heir, but Harish Rao has cultivated grassroots strength and loyalty that make him a formidable presence. With the Congress pressing hard on corruption probes and keeping the BRS on the defensive, these internal rivalries risk sapping the party's cohesion further. For the ruling Congress, the timing could not be better. A distracted BRS is less capable of mounting a unified opposition. But for the BRS cadre, Kavitha's exit raises some uncomfortable questions about loyalty, leadership, and whether the Telangana party can still project stability.

Indian politics has seen such family battles before, from Uttar Pradesh to Tamil Nadu. Rarely do they leave the parent party unscathed. For the BRS, the test will be whether it can contain the fallout and rally around a single line of succession — or whether this rupture marks the beginning of a deeper realignment in Telangana's political landscape.

Ritu Jha

SCROLL through any feed today, and it is clear: politics has become a game of seconds. A snappy clip of a minister fumbling, a protester's chant compressed into 15 seconds, a policy announcement with peppy music — all designed to capture attention in the fleeting window before a thumb swipes up. The rise of short-video culture, from TikTok reels to Instagram stories to YouTube shorts, is not just changing entertainment. It is rewiring politics, protests, and even how policies are debated.

Once, politics played out through lengthy speeches, manifestos, and television debates. Today, candidates' fortunes depend on viral clips. A fiery one-liner, a sharp take-down, or a carefully staged photo-op is more likely to shape public

opinion than a 50-page manifesto. Short videos reward charisma and performance. And often that happens at the cost of substance. Politicians know well that it both an opportunity and a trap. A witty reel pitches a lesser-known leader into the spotlight. But the same brevity kills nuance. Surely the complex grind of policymaking cannot be condensed into a few seconds without distortion. When politics becomes all about setting trends, governance is a casualty.

### Protests Go Viral

Short-video platforms have also transformed protests. Movements that once relied on pamphlets or word-of-mouth now rely on hashtags and clips to spread. Farmers in India, climate activists in Europe, and student groups worldwide have all used video snippets to

amplify their demands.

Viral feeds force mainstream media and policymakers to pay attention. A single clip of police excess can rally global outrage in hours. The downside is that protest movements often become defined by their most "shareable" moments rather than their long-term agendas.

The temptation to perform for the camera overshadows the slower, more difficult work of building coalitions and negotiating change.

### Policy in the Age of Reels

Policy debates have also entered the short-video arena. Government departments release snappy explainers with animated graphics. Think tanks break down complex issues in 60-second bites. Activists use the same formats to counter official narratives. In such an environment, misinfor-

mation spreads as fast as accurate information, often faster. A polished video with misleading data can reach millions before fact-checkers catch up.

### The New Battle for Attention

AT the heart of this shift is the economics of attention. Platforms are designed to monetise engagement, not truth. What keeps users scrolling is what gets rewarded. So outrage travels while calm explanation gets a short shrift. Conspiracy gets eyeballs but not clarity.

The attention economy does not distinguish between a dance video and a dangerous rumour. For democracies, this creates a paradox.

Short videos can make politics more accessible, inclusive, and dynamic. But they trivialise debate,

polarise citizens, and reduce policy to performance art.

### Striking a Balance

The answer certainly is not nostalgia for an era of long speeches and dense newspapers. Short videos are here to stay, and they serve a purpose in engaging younger generations who consume information differently. The challenge is to balance immediacy with depth. Policymakers must invest in sustained communication beyond reels — white papers, detailed FAQs, town halls. Media must contextualise viral clips with rigorous reporting.

Citizens must cultivate media literacy, learning to swipe with scepticism. The "attention wars" will not be won by ignoring short-video culture but by reshaping it: rewarding content that informs as well as entertains, and holding leaders account-

able for what they say on camera and off it.

Neither saviour nor villain, short-video culture is a mirror — reflecting the speed and spectacle of our times. If politics becomes only about viral moments, democracy risks being reduced to a performance. But if used responsibly, the same platforms can energise participation, amplify marginalised voices, and make policy debates part of everyday life. The real test is whether societies can turn fleeting attention into lasting engagement. Because in politics, as in protest, what matters is not who trends today, but who endures tomorrow.

*The writer is a keen observer of politics, media, and society, with a special focus on how technology is transforming civic life and democratic participation*

# A new deal for Indian taxpayers

When Parliament passed the Income Tax Act, 2025, it marked more than a routine reform. Effective April 2026, the law replaces decades of jargon and patchwork with plain language, digital compliance, and clear rules — a bid to transform taxation from a dreaded chore into a transparent civic duty.

Raghav Iyer

When Parliament signed off on the Income Tax Act, 2025, it wasn't just another bill sailing through the House. It was a conscious attempt to untangle the web that Indian taxpayers have been caught in for over sixty years. From April 1, 2026, the new law comes into effect, promising a simpler, clearer and more modern framework for how we earn, declare and pay our dues to the state.

For millions of Indians — from the shop owner in Surat to the IT professional in Bengaluru, from the diamond exporter in Mumbai to the salaried employee in Ranchi — this law isn't an abstract piece of legislation. It's a daily companion. For decades, that companion has been unfriendly, often unreadable, and at times downright hostile. The hope now is that it will become less of a burden and more of a guide.

### From Complexity to Clarity

The Income-tax Act, 1961 was a product of its time. It tried to modernise India's tax framework for a newly independent country finding its feet. But over the years, it became a lumbering giant. With more than 4,000 amendments — tacked on piecemeal through finance acts and special amendments — it turned into a patchwork quilt no ordinary taxpayer could navigate.

Ask any small trader or a first-generation entrepreneur what it felt like to make sense of that law. The answer would range from bewilderment to frustration. The legal jargon, endless provisos, and convoluted explanations meant you needed either a lawyer, a chartered accountant, or both to understand even basic obligations.

Then there were the exemptions. Each was crafted with a noble intention: encourage savings, promote exports, nudge investment in rural areas. But stacked together, they hollowed out the tax base, complicated filings, and invited disputes. What was supposed to incentivise compliance often ended up deterring it.

By the early 2020s, consensus had formed across parties, businesses, and professionals: the system had to be rebuilt, not just patched.

### Long-Awaited Reform

In July 2024, the Finance Minister declared it was time to rewrite the playbook. An internal committee under the Central Board of Direct Taxes went to work, consulting industry bodies, accountants, lawyers, and international experts. The UK and Australia's reform journeys provided useful lessons.



The Income Tax Act, 2025 promises to replace decades of confusion with clarity. But can plain language, digital-first compliance, and streamlined provisions truly transform India's fraught relationship with taxation — or will the old culture of complexity creep back in?

The first draft bill of 2025 was tabled, debated, and then withdrawn after heavy criticism for its lack of clarity. In its place came the Income-tax (No. 2) Bill, 2025, enriched by feedback from a Select Committee of Parliament and voices from the ground.

The new bill was guided by three simple principles:

- Simplify the language and structure.
- Do not shake up tax policy or rates.
- Modernise compliance with a digital-first approach.

What emerged is not a revolution in tax rates, but a revolution in how the law itself is written and used.

### The New Tax Vision

The new Act has been framed to make taxation predictable, transparent, and less adversarial. Some of its standout features are worth noting:

- **A single "Tax Year":** No more juggling "assessment years" and "previous years." One clear term, aligned with the financial year beginning April 1.
- **Consolidated provisions:** Rules that were once scattered across multiple sections are now grouped logically. For instance, all matters relating to TDS sit neatly in one section, not sprinkled across the text like clues in a scavenger hunt.
- **Digital by default:** The law pushes faceless assessments and e-compliance, minimising direct contact between taxpayer and officer — a long-standing breeding ground for mistrust.
- **Acknowledging the digital age:** Cryptocurrencies, tokenised

assets and blockchain-driven instruments now fall under the legal umbrella of "Virtual Digital Assets."

- **Government schemes for efficiency:** Section 532 allows the Centre to design schemes that reduce red tape and improve accountability.

In short, it's a law written not just for accountants and lawyers, but for citizens who want to comply without losing their way.

### Why Simplification Matters

Skeptics often point out: if tax rates haven't changed, what's the big deal? The answer lies in psychology as much as economics.

For decades, Indian taxpayers have treated the Income-tax Act like a hostile stranger. Every filing season came with dread of notices, disputes, and obscure clauses. By rewriting the law in plain language, pruning obsolete sections, and providing clearer definitions, the government is trying to build trust.

A law you can actually read and understand without professional help is more likely to be respected and followed. That, in turn, can widen the tax net and reduce the chronic backlog of litigation that clogs both revenue offices and courts.

### The Challenges Ahead

Still, no law is self-executing. Three hurdles loom large:

1. **Digital Divide:** A faceless system is fine for tech-savvy urban professionals. But what about a shopkeeper in a tier-3 town with patchy internet and little digital literacy? Unless the state invests in hand-holding and infrastruc-

ture, simplification could feel like exclusion.

2. **Institutional Culture:** India's tax machinery has a reputation for targets, discretion, and aggressive assessments. Unless officers are retrained and incentives realigned, simplification on paper won't prevent harassment on the ground.

3. **Cryptocurrency Grey Zone:** By defining Virtual Digital Assets, India has taken a bold step. But global consensus on regulating crypto remains elusive. Too much regulation risks stifling innovation; too little could open doors to evasion. The bureaucracy will have to show agility it hasn't always displayed.

### Global Lessons, Indian Context

Many countries have walked this path. The UK simplified its tax law in the 1990s; Australia undertook a major rewrite. India has drawn from these experiences but adapted them to its own needs. By keeping tax rates steady while streamlining the text, the government avoids unsettling revenue flows yet makes compliance less painful. This cautious but steady approach may disappoint those hoping for radical tax cuts, but it acknowledges India's fiscal reality: the state needs steady revenue, and taxpayers need predictability.

### The Larger Message

At a deeper level, the Act is about rewriting the social contract between citizen and state. A law that treats taxpayers with respect, clarity, and transparency nudges them to reciprocate with compliance and honesty. If it works as intended, the benefits are clear:

- A broader tax base.
- Lower evasion.
- Less litigation.
- Greater investor confidence.

A government able to collect revenue more cheaply and use resources more productively. This fits neatly into the government's vision of "Viksit Bharat" — a developed India built on trust, transparency, and digital governance.

### The Risk of Complacency

A law can promise clarity; only practice can deliver it. If taxpayers still face delayed refunds, opaque notices, or arbitrary interpretations, faith in the reform will quickly erode. There's also the thin line between efficiency and intrusion. Digital compliance tools must be designed to serve citizens, not to surveil them. Trust, once broken, is hard to rebuild.

*The writer is a policy commentator focusing on taxation, governance, and economic reform.*

# Attention wars: How short-video culture is reshaping politics & debate

# China's rejuvenation is 'unstoppable', Xi says amid PLA display of military might

BEIJING, SEPT 3 (PTI)

CHINESE President Xi Jinping on Wednesday said the rejuvenation of the Chinese nation is "unstoppable" as the country's military displayed for the first time some of its brand-new weapons, including hypersonic, laser and long-range ballistic missiles.

Addressing an impressive parade to commemorate the 80th anniversary of China's victory against Japanese aggression in World War II, Xi called on the People's Liberation Army (PLA) to provide strategic support for national rejuvenation and make greater contributions to world peace and development. The Chinese military for the first time displayed in the parade some of its most advanced military hardware in an apparent show of strength to the world, especially the US.

Xi, who heads the Central Military Commission (CMC), the overall high command of the PLA, asked the Chinese military to build itself into a world-class force and resolutely safeguard national sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity.

China is the second largest defence spender after the US. Its annual defence budget this year amounted to USD 250 billion.

Besides the military hardware, the parade also showcased China's diplomatic power as 26 foreign leaders, including Russian President Vladimir Putin and North Korean leader Kim Jong Un, attended the event.

From India's neighbourhood, Pakistan Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, Nepal Prime Minister K P Sharma Oli and Maldives President Mohamed Muizzu took part in the event. India's Ambassador to China Pradeep Kumar Rawat attended the event, according to sources.

Leaders from the US and heads of the European Union, besides Japan and South Korea have stayed away from the parade. The presence of foreign leaders at the parade has become a diplomatic spat between



Japan and China after Tokyo urged the world leaders to refrain from attending. China lodged a diplomatic protest with Japan for its request to the world leaders not to attend the event.

In his speech, Xi said victory against Japan in WWII marks China's first complete victory against foreign aggression in modern times.

Noting that the victory was achieved under a national united front against the Japanese aggression led by the ruling Communist Party of China (CPC), Xi said that the Chinese people made a major contribution to the salvation of human civilization and the defence of world peace with immense sacrifice in the war.

"Only when nations across the world treat each other as equals, live in harmony and mutually support one another can common security be safeguarded, the root cause of

war eliminated, and historical tragedies prevented from recurring," he said, flanked by Putin and Kim

"Today, humanity is again faced with a choice between peace or war, dialogue or confrontation, and win-win outcomes or zero-sum games," Xi said.

"The Chinese people will stand firmly on the right side of history and on the side of human progress, adhere to the path of peaceful development, and join hands with the rest of the world to build a community with a shared future for humanity," he added.

He called on Chinese people of all ethnic groups to stay united and work hard under the "strong leadership" of the CPC to build a "strong country and advance national rejuvenation on all fronts".

At the parade, China for the first time displayed a range of new weapon systems which included

new-type DF-5C liquid-fuelled intercontinental strategic nuclear missiles.

State-run Global Times reported that the missile has an estimated range of more than 20,000 kilometres, and has advantages in defence penetration and precision. It can cover the entire globe under its strike range, it quoted an expert as saying.

Other weapon systems on display included, a vehicle-based laser defence weapon, four types of aircraft carrier-based jet fighters, deep-sea drones, H-6J long-range bomber, airborne early warning aircraft, army and navy drones, DF-26D anti-ship ballistic missiles with a range of 5000 km, CJ-1000 long-range hypersonic cruise missiles, air defence systems, HQ-29 ballistic missile interceptor, 'Carrier killer' missiles, new battle tank Type 99B and multi-rocket launchers.

# Kim assures 'all possible help' to Putin in Beijing

BEIJING, SEPT 3 (AP)

RUSSIAN President Vladimir Putin and North Korean leader Kim Jong Un have met to begin bilateral talks in Beijing. The two leaders met at the Diaoyutai state guest house after travelling together from a formal reception in the same car, according to the Kremlin. Their meeting comes amid growing military and political cooperation between Moscow and Pyongyang.

In opening remarks, Putin praised the "bravery and heroism" of North Korean soldiers who fought alongside Russian forces in repelling what Moscow described as a Ukrainian incursion into its Kursk border region.

South Korean intelligence estimates that around 15,000 North Korean troops have been dispatched to Russia since last year. Pyongyang has also reportedly supplied ballistic missiles, artillery, and other military equipment to bolster Russia's three-year war in Ukraine.

Kim, in his remarks, emphasized that ties between the two nations had "significantly strengthened" since the signing of a strategic partnership pact during his summit with Putin in Pyongyang in June 2024. He avoided direct reference to the Ukraine conflict but pledged continued solidarity.

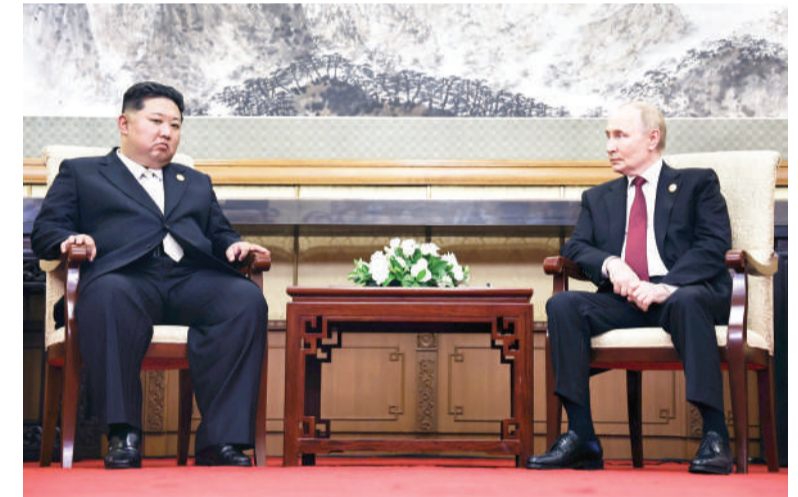
"If there's anything I can do for you and the people of Russia, if more needs to be done, I will consider it a fraternal duty," Kim said, vowing North Korea would remain prepared "to do everything possible to help."

The Beijing celebrations mark the first time in his 14-year rule that Kim has joined a major multilateral event. His presence alongside Putin and Chinese President Xi Jinping underscores a rare display of unity among the three countries.

Analysts say the gathering could signal a tightening of their strategic alignment, particularly in the face of Western sanctions and diplomatic isolation. Observers are closely watching for the possibility of a separate Kim-Xi meeting or even a trilateral dialogue with Putin and Xi, although no such sessions have been confirmed.

South Korean officials estimate North Korea has dispatched about 15,000 soldiers to Russia since last year, along with significant military supplies, including artillery and KN-23 ballistic missiles, to bolster Moscow's war effort in Ukraine.

Analysts say Pyongyang is receiving advanced Russian military technology in return, including satellite guidance systems that could further enhance its missile programme.



Russian President Vladimir Putin, right, speaks with North Korean leader Kim Jong Un during their meeting at Diaoyutai State Guesthouse in Beijing, China. AP/PTI

# Walden drops out of NYC mayor race against Mamdani

NEW YORK, SEPT 3 (AP)

JIM Walden, an independent candidate in New York City's mayoral race, announced Tuesday that he was suspending his campaign, while urging his fellow candidates to unite against the Democratic primary winner, Zohran Mamdani.

"For those still trailing in the polls by month's end, I implore each to consider how history will judge them if they allow vanity or stubborn ambition to usher in Mr. Mamdani," Walden wrote in a statement announcing his exit.

He warned that Mamdani, a Democratic Socialist, would represent a "Trojan Horse taking over City Hall," adding that time was "slipping away" for an alternative option to gain momentum in the crowded field.

Walden, an attorney who has represented Robert F. Kennedy Jr. and mixed martial arts fighter Conor McGregor, had positioned himself as a free-market technocrat in the mold of former New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg. But he struggled to register among voters already contending with several familiar names: current New York City Mayor Eric Adams, former Gov. Andrew Cuomo and Guardian Angels founder Curtis Sliwa.

Walden last month issued a "drop out challenge" to those three candidates, arguing that they would maximize their odds of beating Mamdani if they collectively agreed to consolidate behind whoever was leading in the polls come fall.

None of the candidates agreed to the proposal, though both Adams and Cuomo have called on the other to drop out.

# US strike on vessel targeted Venezuela's Tren de Aragua gang; killed 11: Trump

WASHINGTON, SEPT 3 (AP)

PRESIDENT Donald Trump said Tuesday that the US has carried out a strike in the southern Caribbean against a drug-carrying vessel that departed from Venezuela and was operated by the Tren de Aragua gang. The president said 11 were killed in the operation.

"The strike occurred while the terrorists were at sea in international waters transporting illegal narcotics, heading to the United States," Trump said in a social media posting. "No US Forces were harmed in this strike. Please let this serve as notice to anybody even thinking about bringing drugs into the United States of America."

Secretary of State Marco Rubio said earlier on X that the vessel was being operated by a "designated narco-terrorist organization." He described the operation as a lethal strike. Rubio addressed the strike on Tuesday shortly before

he was scheduled to depart for Mexico and Ecuador for talks on drug cartels, security, tariffs and more. The US recently announced plans to boost its maritime force in the waters off Venezuela to combat threats from Latin American drug cartels.

The US has not signalled any planned land incursion by the thousands of personnel being deployed. Still, President Nicolás Maduro's government has responded by deploying troops along Venezuela's coast and border with neighbouring Colombia, as well as by urging Venezuelans to enlist in a civilian militia.

Maduro has insisted that the US is building a false drug-trafficking narrative to try to force him out of office. He and other government officials have repeatedly cited a United Nations report that they say shows traffickers attempt to move only 5% of the cocaine produced in Colombia through Venezuela.

# 14 killed, 35 injured in suicide bombing after BNP rally in Pak's Balochistan

KARACHI, SEPT 3 (PTI)

A SUICIDE bombing near a political rally in Pakistan's restive Balochistan province killed at least 14 people and left 35 others injured, authorities confirmed on Wednesday. The blast took place shortly after the Balochistan National Party (BNP) concluded a public gathering in Quetta on Tuesday night.

According to police, the explosion occurred about 15 minutes after the rally ended at Shahwani Stadium in the Sariab area, where BNP leaders had assembled to mark the fourth death anniversary of Sardar Attaullah Mengal, a veteran Baloch nationalist leader.

Provincial Health Minister Bakht Muhammad Kakar confirmed the casualties, while investigators said it was a suicide attack. The bomber reportedly detonated his explosives-laden jacket in the stadium's

parking lot as participants were dispersing. BNP chief Akhtar Mengal, who presided over the gathering, was unharmed. "I am safe but deeply heartbroken at the loss of our workers," he posted on social media, claiming that 15 BNP workers had died in the attack.

Other prominent political figures present — including Paktunkhwa Milli Awami Party chief Mehmood Khan Achakzai, Asghar Khan Achakzai of the Awami National Party, and former senator Mir Kabeer Muhammad Shai of the National Party — also escaped unscathed.

However, several BNP leaders and supporters were among the wounded. Former BNP lawmaker Mir Ahmed Nawaz Baloch and the party's central labour secretary Musa Jan sustained injuries and were hospitalized along with dozens of others.

Balochistan Chief Minister Mir Sarfaraz Bugti strongly condemned the bombing, describing it as a "cowardly act by the enemies of humanity." He said the attack was an attempt to destabilise the province and spread fear among ordinary citizens. Authorities have formed a special investigation committee to probe the incident, while security has been tightened across Quetta to prevent further attacks.

No group has claimed responsibility so far, but the province has long faced violence from separatist militants and extremist organisations targeting political leaders, security forces, and civilians.

The bombing underscores the fragile security situation in Balochistan, where nationalist grievances and militant insurgencies have intersected with broader instability in Pakistan, leaving political gatherings vulnerable to deadly assaults.

# We get along with India very well: Trump

NEW YORK/WASHINGTON, SEPT 3 (PTI)

US PRESIDENT Donald Trump has said the US gets along with India "very well" but the relationship was "one-sided" for many years since New Delhi was charging Washington "tremendous tariffs".

"No, we get along with India very well," Trump said in the White House on Tuesday in response to a question on whether he is considering taking away some of the tariffs imposed on India.

Trump's comments come amid a strain in ties between New Delhi and Washington after the US imposed 50 per cent tariffs on India, among the

highest in the world.

He said that for many years, the relationship between India and the US was "one-sided" and that changed when he assumed office.

"India was charging us tremendous tariffs, about the highest in the world," Trump said, adding that the US was therefore not doing much business with India.

"But they were doing business with us because we weren't charging them, foolishly, we weren't charging them," he said, adding that India was pouring its products into the US. "They'd send it in, pour it into our country. Therefore it wouldn't be made here, which is a negative, but we would not send in anything



because they were charging us 100 per cent tariffs," Trump said. The US president cited the exam-

ple of the Harley Davidson motorcycles, saying the company couldn't sell into India because there was a 200 per cent tariff on a motorcycle.

"So what happens? Harley Davidson went to India and built a motorcycle plant, and now they don't have to pay tariffs, same thing as us," he said. On Monday, Trump claimed that India has now "offered" to cut its tariffs to nothing, "but it's getting late", as he said that India buys most of its oil and military products from Russia and very little from the US.

The Trump administration has imposed 25 per cent reciprocal tariffs on India and an additional 25 per cent levies for Delhi's purchases of Russian oil, bringing the total du-

ties imposed on India to 50 per cent, with effect from August 27.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has asserted he can't compromise on the interests of farmers, cattle-rearers, small-scale industries, cautioning "pressure on us may increase, but we will bear it". India has called the tariffs imposed by the US "unjustified and unreasonable".

New Delhi said that, like any major economy, it will take all necessary measures to safeguard its national interests and economic security. In 2024-25, the bilateral trade in goods between the two countries stood at USD 131.8 billion (USD 86.5 billion exports and USD 45.3 billion imports).

# US court blocks Alien Enemies Act for Venezuelan deportations

WASHINGTON, SEPT 3 / AP

A FEDERAL appeals court on Tuesday rejected the Trump administration's attempt to invoke a centuries-old wartime law to accelerate the deportation of migrants accused of belonging to a Venezuelan gang, setting up an almost certain legal showdown at the U.S. Supreme Court.

In a 2-1 decision, the Fifth U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals said former President Donald Trump could not rely on the Alien Enemies Act of 1798 — a statute historically reserved for wartime use — to expel people alleged to be members of Tren de Aragua, a criminal group with roots in Venezuela.

The ruling halts deportations from Texas, Louisiana, and Mississippi under the policy and casts doubt on an administration strategy that became a central talking point in Trump's immigration agenda.

The Alien Enemies Act has been used only three times in U.S. histo-

ry, each during a formally declared war: the War of 1812, World War I, and World War II. The Trump administration argued that Tren de Aragua had ties to the Venezuelan government and posed a national security risk that warranted application of the law even in peacetime.

The majority of the three-judge panel disagreed. Writing for the court, Judges Leslie Southwick, appointed by George W. Bush, and Irma Carrillo Ramirez, a Biden appointee, concluded that the allegations did not meet the threshold of "invasion or predatory incursion" envisioned by Congress when the act was passed. "A country encouraging its residents and citizens to enter this country illegally is not the modern-day equivalent of sending an armed, organized force to occupy, to disrupt, or to otherwise harm the United States," the judges wrote.

Judge Andrew Oldham, a Trump appointee, dissented, warning that the ruling undermines presidential authority in national security and foreign affairs. "The majority's ap-



Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Secretary Kristi Noem at the Terrorist Confinement Center CECOT in Tecoluca, El Salvador in March. File photo

proach to this case is not only unprecedented—it is contrary to 200 years of precedent," he wrote.

Before the injunction, the Trump administration deported hundreds of alleged Tren de Aragua members to a prison in El Salvador, arguing that U.S. courts had no authority

to order their release from custody abroad. In July, over 250 migrants were returned to Venezuela under a deal. Critics argued these deportations violated protections and risked sending individuals into unsafe conditions without adequate review.

Lee Gelernt, who argued the case

for the American Civil Liberties Union, welcomed Tuesday's ruling. "The Trump administration's use of a wartime statute during peacetime to regulate immigration was rightly shut down by the court," he said. "This is a critically important decision reining in the administration's view that it can simply declare an emergency without any oversight by the courts." The court's decision underscores a broader debate about presidential power in immigration enforcement. Historically, federal courts have given the executive branch wide latitude in foreign affairs, particularly when claims of national security are raised. Trump's lawyers leaned heavily on that tradition, insisting courts could not second-guess his designation of Tren de Aragua as a national threat.

But the majority opinion emphasized limits. The judges said allowing the administration to invoke the Alien Enemies Act without evidence of actual wartime hostilities would mark an unwarranted expansion of presidential authority.

## Israeli drones drop grenades near UN peacekeepers

BEIRUT, SEPT 3 (AP)

ISRAELI drones dropped four grenades close to UN peacekeepers in southern Lebanon near the border with Israel as they were working to clear roadblocks, the force said Wednesday. No one was hurt in the attack.

The peacekeeping force known as UNIFIL described the Tuesday morning incident as "one of the most serious attacks on UNIFIL personnel and assets" since the cessation of hostilities in November that ended the 14-month Israel-Hezbollah war.

UNIFIL said Israeli drones dropped four grenades close to the peacekeepers, who were working to clear roadblocks that hindered access to a UN position along the border line.

# Rescuers race to find Afghan quake survivors as death toll passes 1,400

JALALABAD, SEPT 3 (AP)

THE United Nations warned of an exponential rise in casualties from a major earthquake in eastern Afghanistan, as the Taliban said the death toll passed 1,400 on Tuesday, with more than 3,000 people injured.

The figures provided by Taliban government spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid were just for the province of Kunar.

Sunday night's powerful 6.0 magnitude earthquake struck several provinces, causing extensive damage. It flattened villages and trapped people under the rubble of homes constructed mostly of mud bricks and wood that were unable to withstand the shock.

Rough terrain is hampering rescue and relief efforts, forcing Taliban authorities to air-drop dozens of commandos to evacuate the injured from places where helicopters cannot land.

Aid agency Save the Children said one of its teams walked for over 12 miles (19 kilometers) to reach villages cut off by rock falls, carrying medical equipment on their backs with the help of community members.

An aftershock of 5.2 magnitude close to the epicenter of Sunday's quake rattled the area on Tuesday, according to the U.S. Geological Survey. There were no immediate reports of damage.

Indrika Ratwatte, the UN's resident coordinator for Afghanistan, said rescuers are scrambling in a "race against time" to reach the mountainous and remote area. In a media briefing in Geneva Tuesday, he warned of a surge in casualty numbers.

"We cannot afford to forget the people of Afghanistan who are facing multiple crises, multiple shocks, and the resilience of the communities has been saturated," Ratwatte said, while urging the international



Civil defense workers, locals, and army soldiers clear rubble of a collapsed house after a powerful 6.0-magnitude earthquake struck eastern Afghanistan on Sunday, killing many people and destroying villages, in Mazar Dara, Kunar province, Afghanistan. AP/PTI

community to step forward.

"These are life and death decisions while we race against time to reach people," he said.

It is the third earthquake since the Taliban seized power in 2021, and the latest crisis to beset Afghanistan, which is reeling from deep cuts to aid funding, a weak economy, and millions of people forcibly returned from Iran and Pakistan.

Ratwatte said that when the walls of wooden and mud homes collapse, the roof falls on the occupants, causing injury or death. While the area was low-density, the earthquake struck when everybody was asleep.

"If you were to model it based on what has happened before, clearly there's no question that the casualty rate is going to be rather exponential," he said.

Aid is trickling in to help victims. The Taliban government, which is only recognized by Russia, has appealed for assistance from the international community and the humanitarian sector. However, help for Afghanistan is in short supply due to competing global

crises and reduced aid budgets in donor countries.

The United Nations humanitarian office released \$5 million from its emergency fund to help kick-start the UN response and that will be matched by \$5 million from the Afghanistan Humanitarian Fund, UN spokesman Stéphane Dujarric said Tuesday.

The UN has dispatched at least 25 assessment teams to the region, deploying essential items including blankets and solar lamps to areas that can be reached, Dujarric said. Humanitarian experts said that immediate priorities include emergency shelter, critical medical supplies, drinking water and emergency food aid. UK has pledged 1 million pounds (\$1.3 million) to be split between humanitarian agencies rather than going to the Taliban government, which it does not recognize. The European Union is sending 130 tons of emergency supplies and providing 1 million euros (\$1.16 million). Other countries, including the United Arab Emirates, India and China have pledged disaster relief support.

## Israel launches satellite to expand its surveillance capability

JERUSALEM, SEPT 3 (AP)

ISRAEL has launched a new spy satellite that defence officials described as a strategic cornerstone, saying it will strengthen their surveillance capacity across the Middle East in the years ahead.

Military officials and Defence Minister Israel Katz said on Wednesday that the satellite, launched on late Tuesday, will enhance Israel's ability to collect images like the 12,000 gathered over Iran during a 12-day war earlier this year.

"This is also a message to all our enemies, wherever they may be - we are keeping an eye on you at all times and in all situations," Katz said in a post on X. In addition to monitoring Iran, Israel gains reconnaissance capabilities in other parts of the Middle East as it conducts what Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has called a "seven-front war," with Israeli forces striking targets in Lebanon, Syria, Yemen and Iraq throughout the 23 months of war in Gaza.

Maj. Gen. Amir Baram said the satellite, called Ofek 19, was part of a broader effort "to maintain persistent, simultaneous surveillance of any point throughout the Middle East."

Israel's decades-old space program has expanded its fleet with several satellite launches in recent years and is one of the few nations globally with high-resolution monitoring and intelligence gathering capabilities. The aerospace and defence industry is a pillar of Israel's economy, and the satellite manufacturer, Israel Aerospace Industries, builds and sells satellites, missile systems, drones and aircraft to Israel as well as countries in Europe, Asia and North America.

# Construction intensifies at site linked to Israel's suspected N-program

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# Papua New Guinea's 'bold climate action' earns praise from Guterres

MELBOURNE, SEPT 3 (AP)

UN CHIEF Antonio Guterres congratulated Papua New Guinea on Wednesday for its global leadership role on climate change during the first visit by a serving United Nations secretary-general to the South Pacific island nation. Guterres' visit comes ahead of the developing nation commemorating the 50th anniversary of its independence from near-neighbour Australia on September 16.

He said the first lesson Papua New Guinea had taught the world was the "art of forging consensus through dialogue" since becoming an independent nation.

"The second lesson you offer to the world is bold climate action," Guterres said in an address to the

National Parliament in the capital, Port Moresby.

"Time and again we have seen climate leadership flow not from countries with the most wealth and power but from those who know the stakes firsthand," he added.

Guterres credited Papua New Guinea with playing a leading role in initiating the International Court of Justice's advisory opinion in July that countries could be violating international law if they failed to take measures to protect the planet from climate change, and nations harmed by its effects could be entitled to reparations. The ICJ's non-binding opinion, backed unanimously by the court's 15 judges, has been hailed as a turning point in international climate law.

The case was led by the South Pa-



cific island nation of Vanuatu and backed by more than 130 countries.

"It's a testament to the leadership of Papua New Guinea, Melanesia and the wider Pacific region," Guterres said.

"Papua New Guinea does not contribute to climate change. You are even a carbon sink country," he added, referring to the nation's forests and surrounding seagrass absorbing more carbon dioxide than

the population emits.

Guterres did not mention that Papua New Guinea has been exporting liquid natural gas since 2014 and plans to expand its fossil fuel industry. Papua New Guinea Prime Minister James Marape told Parliament in response to Guterres' speech that his nation's "development pathway will be green, resilient and inclusive."

Marape has long argued that the biggest carbon-emitting countries had a "moral obligation and the bigger responsibility" to manage climate change.

He was critical of President Donald Trump's withdrawal of the United States from the landmark Paris climate agreement in January.

Paul Barker, executive director of the Port Moresby-based think tank

Institute of National Affairs, said Papua New Guinea's effectiveness as a carbon sink had likely been reduced by decades of rainforest logging.

"It's a mixed story and the data is a little uncertain," Barker said on changing land uses under what the government calls forest conversion agreements.

Papua New Guinea is the South Pacific's most populous country after Australia. Australia has 27 million people, while Papua New Guinea's statistical office estimates its population is approaching 12 million. A widely accepted census has not been completed since 2000.

Papua New Guinea is also an extraordinarily diverse population, with more than 800 Indigenous languages.

# US court orders big changes in Google's search business

SAN FRANCISCO, SEPT 3 / AP

A federal judge has ordered a shake-up of Google's search engine in an attempt to curb the corrosive power of an illegal monopoly while rebuffing the US government's attempt to break up the company and impose other restraints.

The 226-page decision made by US District Judge Amit Mehta in Washington, DC, on Tuesday will likely ripple across the technological landscape at a time when the industry is being reshaped by breakthroughs in artificial intelligence — including conversational "answer engines" as companies like ChatGPT and Perplexity try to upend Google's long-held position as the internet's main gateway.

The innovations and competition being unleashed by AI also reshaped the judge's approach to the remedies in the nearly five-year-old antitrust case brought by the US Justice Department during President Donald Trump's first administration and carried onward by President Joe Biden's administration.

"Unlike the typical case where the court's job is to resolve a dispute based on historic facts, here the court is asked to gaze into a crystal ball and look to the future. Not exactly a judge's forte," Mehta wrote.

The judge is trying to rein in Google by prohibiting some of the tactics the company deployed to drive traffic to its search engine and other

services. The ruling also will pry open some of the prized databases of closely guarded information about search that have provided Google with a seemingly insurmountable advantage.

The handcuffs being slapped on Google will preclude contracts that give its search engine, Gemini AI app, Play Store for Android and virtual assistant an exclusive position on smartphone, personal computers and other devices.



But Mehta stopped short of banning the multi-billion dollar deals that Google has been making for years to lock in its search engine as the default on smartphones, personal computers and other devices.

Those deals, involving payments of more than \$26 billion annually, were one of the main issues that prompted the judge to conclude Google's search engine was an illegal monopoly, but he decided banning them would do more harm than good. The judge also rejected the US Justice Department's effort to force Google to sell its popular Chrome browser, concluding it was an unwarranted step that "would be incredibly messy and highly risky".

Partially because he is allowing the default deals to continue, Mehta is ordering Google to give its current

and would-be rivals access to some of its search engine's secret sauce — the data stockpiled from trillions of queries that it used to help improve the quality of its search results.

That is a measure that Google had also fiercely opposed, contending it was unfair and would raise privacy and security risk for the billions of people who have posed questions to its search engine — sometimes delving into sensitive issues.

The Justice Department's anti-trust chief, Gail Slater, hailed the decision as a "major win for the American people," even though the agency didn't get everything it sought. "We are now weighing our options and thinking through whether the ordered relief goes far enough," Slater wrote in a post.

Google framed Mehta's ruling as a vindication of its long-held position that the case never should have been brought. The decision "recognises how much the industry has changed through the advent of AI, which is giving people so many more ways to find information," wrote Lee-Anne Mulholland, Google's vice president of regulatory affairs.

The Mountain View, California, company has vowed to appeal the judge's monopoly findings issued 13 months ago that led to Tuesday's ruling. "You don't find someone guilty of robbing a bank and then sentence him to writing a thank you note for the loot," said Nidhi Hegde, executive director of the American Economic Liberties Project.

# Gold prices storm past ₹1.07 lakh per 10g

NEW DELHI, SEPT 3 / PTI

Gold prices soared to an unprecedented high of ₹1,07,070 per 10 grams in Delhi on Wednesday, extending their record-breaking rally as investors sought refuge in the yellow metal amid expectations of U.S. Federal Reserve rate cuts, escalating geopolitical tensions and growing unease over the American economy.

According to the All India Sarafa Association, gold of 99.9% purity jumped ₹1,000 from Tuesday's close of ₹1,06,070. Similarly, gold of 99.5% purity surged ₹1,000 to ₹1,06,200 per 10 grams (inclusive of taxes), marking its eighth consecutive day of gains. It had settled at ₹1,05,200 in the previous session.

Silver, meanwhile, held steady at ₹1,26,100 per kilogram, its all-time high level, as per the association's data.

The rally mirrored international trends, where spot gold hit a record \$3,547.09 per ounce. Analysts said the rush into bullion reflected mounting safe-haven demand, driven by concerns about the global economy, energy markets and trade policy uncertainty.

"Gold continues to rise higher as safe-haven demand stayed strong amid hopes of Fed easing rates, mounting geopolitical tensions and growing worries around the U.S. economy," said Chintan Mehta, CEO of Abans Financial Services. He added that oil market volatility was also supporting gold: "OPEC+ is meeting this week while Russian supply fears persist after a Ukrainian strike damaged 17% of Russia's refining capacity. Oil has bounced from recent lows, which could weigh on inflation, weaken the dollar and further support gold."

Investors are closely tracking signals from the U.S. Federal Reserve, with markets widely anticipating a rate cut this month — a move that would make non-yielding assets like gold more attractive.

"The upside march of the precious metal extends beyond being only a hedge against inflation," said N.S. Ramaswamy, Head of Commodity and CRM at Ventura. "The Fed is poised to start cutting rates in a hotter inflation environment. Expectations of easing, coupled with uncertainty over President Donald Trump's tariff policies, continue to fuel demand."

# Rupee recovers 9 paise, ends at 88.06 against dollar

MUMBAI, SEPT 3 (PTI)

THE rupee staged a mild recovery on Wednesday, appreciating 9 paise to close at 88.06 against the US dollar after hitting an all-time low in the previous session. Softer crude oil prices, a weaker US dollar index, and a rebound in domestic equities supported sentiment, though foreign fund outflows and trade tensions with the US kept pressure on the local currency.

At the interbank foreign exchange market, the rupee opened at 88.15 per dollar and oscillated between an intraday low of 88.19 and a high of 87.98 before finally settling at 88.06. On Tuesday, the currency had ended at a record low of 88.15.

"The Indian rupee strengthened against the US dollar today on positive domestic equities and softening of crude oil prices. Weakness in the dollar index also favoured the rupee," said Anuj Choudhary, Research Analyst, Currency and Commodities at Mirae Asset ShareKhan.

However, Choudhary cautioned that persistent foreign institutional investor (FII) outflows amid ongoing tariff-related concerns between India and the US may limit gains. "Overall weakness in the US dollar and positive tone in the domestic markets may support the rupee at lower levels, but traders will watch US economic data including job openings and factory orders, ahead of the crucial

non-farm payrolls report later this week," he added.

The dollar index, which measures the greenback's strength against a basket of six major currencies, slipped 0.20 per cent to 98.19. Brent crude futures also eased 1.66 per cent to trade at USD 67.99 per barrel, easing concerns over India's energy import bill.

Domestic equities posted a strong rebound, providing further support to the rupee. The 30-share BSE Sensex climbed 409.83 points to close at 80,567.71, while the NSE Nifty advanced 135.45 points to end at 24,715.05. Despite the rally, FIIs remained net sellers, offloading equities worth Rs 1,159.48 crore on Tuesday, according to exchange data.

On the macroeconomic front, the Indian services sector expanded at its fastest pace in 15 years in August, with the HSBC India Services PMI rising to 62.9 from 60.5 in July. The data indicated strong demand conditions, new orders, and output, lending further optimism to the domestic outlook.

Meanwhile, geopolitical noise continued to hover over currency markets. Former US President Donald Trump remarked that while the US and India "get along very well," the trade relationship had long been "one-sided," citing "tremendous tariffs" imposed by New Delhi. His comments came amid escalating tensions after Washington imposed 50 per cent tariffs on Indian goods.

# Stock markets rebound, Sensex gains 410 points

MUMBAI, SEP 3 (PTI)

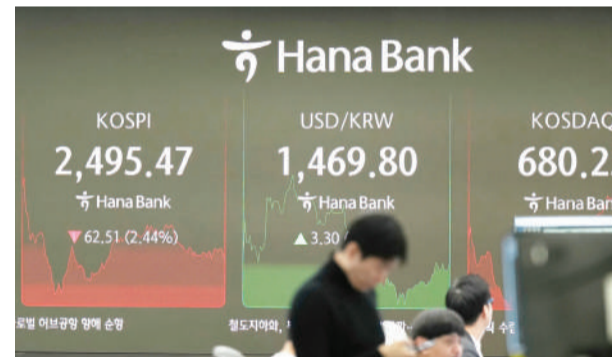
INDIAN equity benchmarks staged a strong comeback on Wednesday, reversing the previous day's losses and ending higher despite a volatile session marked by sharp swings. Gains in metal, banking, and select consumer stocks helped offset weakness in IT and telecom counters as investors tracked developments from the ongoing GST Council meeting in New Delhi.

The 30-share BSE Sensex advanced 409.83 points, or 0.51 per cent, to close at 80,567.71. The index swung 666 points during the day, hitting an intraday high of 80,671.28 and a low of 80,004.60. The broader NSE Nifty climbed 135.45 points, or 0.55 per cent, to settle at 24,715.05.

Market sentiment was buoyed by expectations that the GST Council may move toward rationalising tax slabs, with discussions focused on trimming rates to 5 per cent and 18 per cent. Analysts believe such a move could provide a consumption-led push to the economy, which in turn lifted investor appetite for consumption-oriented and cyclical stocks.

Among Sensex constituents, Tata Steel led the rally with a 5.9 per cent surge, followed by gains in Titan, Mahindra & Mahindra, ITC, State Bank of India, Trent, and Eternal.

# Asian markets slip after Wall Street tumble



TOKYO, SEPT 3 (AP)

ASIAN shares mostly declined Wednesday, following an overnight slump on Wall Street, as political uncertainty in Japan and rising bond yields weighed on sentiment. Japan's benchmark Nikkei 225 fell nearly 1% to 41,894.70 in afternoon trading. Prime Minister Shigeru Ishiba has faced pressure to resign after an election setback and the rise of fringe parties weakened confidence in the ruling Liberal Democratic Party. Concerns grew after his ally, party secretary general Hiroshi Moriyama, said he would step down.

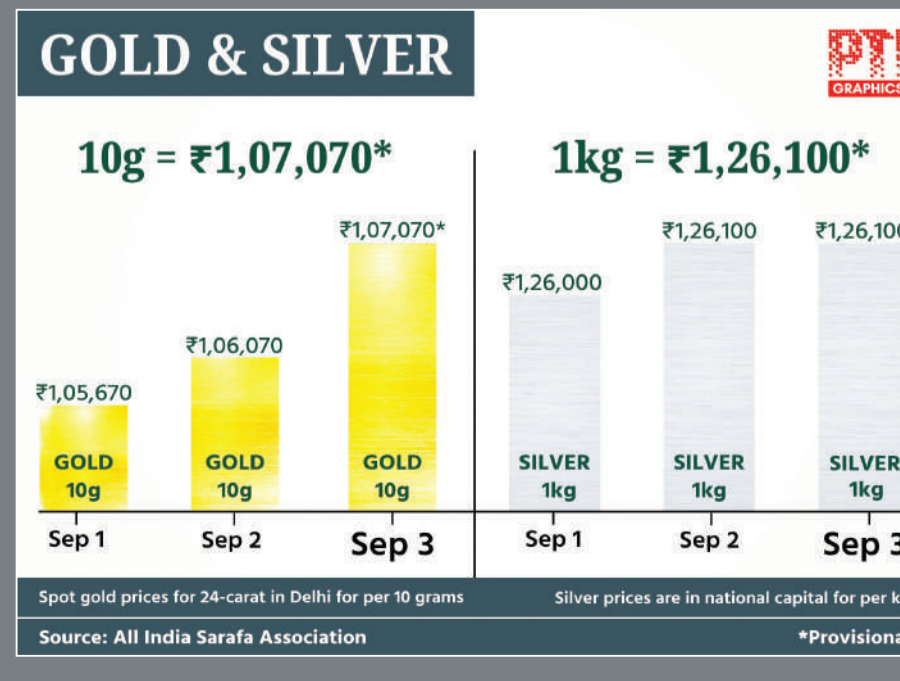
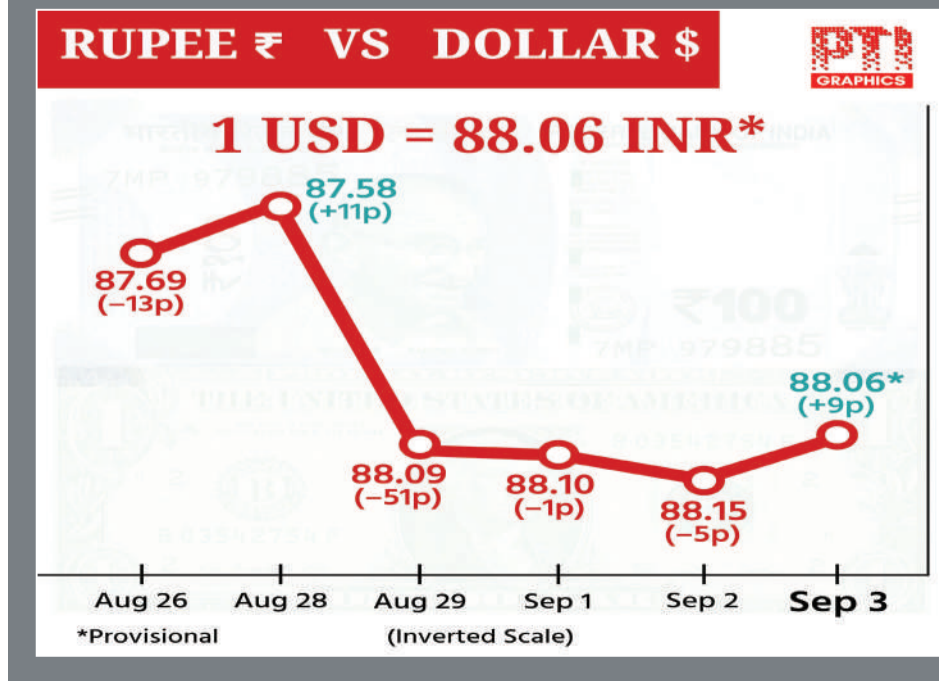
"The political tremor is domestic, with Prime Minister Ishiba's key power broker signalling his resignation, shaking the foundations of the ruling party," said Stephen Innes, managing partner at SPI Asset

Management. Elsewhere in Asia, Australia's S&P/ASX200 dropped 1.8% to 8,737.40. Hong Kong's Hang Seng lost 0.6% to 25,337.95, and the Shanghai Composite shed 0.8% to 3,826.05. South Korea's KOSPI rose 0.2% to 3,177.87.

On Wall Street, the S&P 500 fell 0.7% for its worst day in a month. The Dow Jones Industrial Average slipped 249 points, or 0.5%, and the Nasdaq lost 0.8%. All three remain close to record highs.

Tech giants led declines. Nvidia fell 2%, dragging the S&P lower, while Amazon dropped 1.6% and Apple slipped 1%. Analysts said valuations may be stretched after years of rapid gains.

Bond markets added to the pressure. The yield on the 10-year U.S. Treasury climbed to 4.27% from 4.23% Friday, part of a global rise in longer-term yields tied to worries over debt burdens.



NSE NIFTY TOP GAINERS		September 3, 2025	
%	POINTS		
+5.96	167.83	Tata Steel	
+3.02	742.70	Hindalco	
+2.94	1,074.70	JSW Steel	
+2.45	389.40	Coal India	
+2.21	767.80	IndusInd Bank	
+1.86	3,688.00	Titan	
+1.65	3,288.00	M&M	
+1.21	326.30	Eternal	
+1.13	813.00	SBIN	
+1.08	691.80	Tata Motors	

NSE NIFTY TOP LOSERS		September 3, 2025	
%	POINTS		
-1.25	1,480.00	Infosys	
-0.72	1,192.30	Nestle India	
-0.70	777.25	HDFC Life	
-0.55	249.54	Wipro	
-0.54	334.50	NTPC	
-0.37	3,100.00	TCS	
-0.26	1,508.90	Tech Mahindra	
-0.26	2,670.00	Hindustan Unilever	
-0.25	1,810.00	SBI Life	
-0.24	286.00	Power Grid	

BSE SENSEX TOP GAINERS		September 3, 2025	
%	POINTS		
+5.90	167.80	Tata Steel	
+1.73	3680.40	Titan	
+1.62	3286.10	M&M	
+1.19	411.50	ITC	
+1.16	326.00	Eternal	
+1.15	692.15	Tata Motors	
+1.14	5470.85	Trent	
+1.02	812.15	SBIN	
+1.00	953.80	HDFC Bank	
+0.97	1961.35	Kotak Bank	

BSE SENSEX TOP LOSERS		September 3, 2025	
%	POINTS		
-1.19	1479.30	Infosys	
-0.55	334.35	NTPC	
-0.49	2663.90	Hindustan Unilever	
-0.45	3098.20	TCS	
-0.36	1331.20	Adani Ports	
-0.27	1883.70	Bharti Airtel	
-0.23	286.00	Power Grid	
-0.13	1509.80	Tech Mahindra	
-0.12	1054.45	Axis Bank	

# Maharashtra cabinet clears metro, rail projects

MUMBAI, SEPT 3 (PTI)

The Maharashtra cabinet on Wednesday approved a series of major infrastructure projects spanning metro, suburban rail and road development in Mumbai, Pune and Nagpur, alongside measures in social welfare and education.

The most prominent clearance came for Mumbai Metro Line-11, a 23,487.51-crore project connecting Wadala, CSMT and Gateway of India. Officials said the corridor is expected to boost connectivity in South Mumbai, easing traffic and supporting the city's expanding metro grid.

In Thane, the cabinet approved a ring metro project and gave the nod for an elevated corridor linking the city with the upcoming Navi Mumbai International Airport. The project will be executed on a public-private partnership model by the City and Industrial Development Corporation (CIDCO).

For Pune, extensions of Metro Line-2 and Line-4 were cleared along



Maharashtra cabinet clears 15 key decisions on urban infra development, amendments to two laws

with changes to the Swargate-Katraj corridor. Two new stations — Balajinagar and Bibwewadi — will be added, and the Katraj station relocated, at an additional outlay of Rs 683.11 crore. The state also committed to funding suburban rail expansion under the Mumbai Urban Transport Project (MUTP) 3, 3A and 3B.

A long-pending decision on the Pune-Lonavala suburban third and fourth lines was finalised, with Maharashtra agreeing to shoulder Rs 2,550 crore of the Rs 5,100 crore cost. Contributions will come from Pune Municipal Corporation (Rs 510 crore), Pimpri-Chinchwad Municipal Corporation (Rs 510

crore), and PMRDA (Rs 765 crore), with the balance funded by the state government.

In Nagpur, Phase II of the metro project was approved, alongside plans for an International Business and Finance Centre (IBFC) on 692 hectares in Hingna taluka under the "New Nagpur" initiative. The Nag-

pur Metropolitan Region Development Authority will also develop an outer ring road with four integrated truck and bus terminals.

Beyond infrastructure, the cabinet sanctioned Rs 3,750 crore for a new High Court complex at Bandra East, Mumbai. Monthly assistance under the Sanjay Gandhi Niradhar Yojana and Shraavanbal scheme for persons with disabilities will rise by Rs 1,000 to Rs 2,500.

In the education sector, the state will implement the Centre's pre-matric scholarship scheme for Scheduled Tribe students of Classes 9 and 10, replacing its Golden Jubilee Tribal Pre-Matric Scholarship.

The cabinet also approved amendments to the Maharashtra Shops and Establishments Act, 2017, and the Factories Act, 1948, along with a policy for the use of fly-ash from state-run Mahagenco's thermal power plants.

Officials said the projects underline the government's commitment to improving urban mobility, social security and institutional infrastructure across key cities.

## Labour Ministry warns against fake PMVBRY portals

NEW DELHI, SEPT 3/PTI

THE Ministry of Labour & Employment has cautioned citizens against fraudulent websites claiming to represent the Pradhan Mantri Viksit Bharat Rozgar Yojana (PMVBRY). The ministry said portals such as <https://viksitbharatrozgaryojana.org/> and <https://pmviksitbharatrozgaryojana.com/> were "falsely claiming to be undertakings of the Government of India" and allegedly inviting applications for recruitment. "The Ministry denies any association with these websites or their activities. Citizens are advised not to share personal information, engage with, or make any payments through such portals," it said.

The ministry stressed the only authentic portals are <https://pmvbry.epfindia.gov.in> and <https://pmvbry.labour.gov.in>, where employers can complete one-time registration process.

## Govt panel to address tax, export clearance hurdles

NEW DELHI, SEPT 3/PTI

THE government has constituted a high-level committee to examine taxation and export clearance challenges faced by the manufacturing sector and recommend reforms, as Indian exporters grapple with steep U.S. tariffs that threaten competitiveness.

The panel comprises officials from the finance ministry, Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT), Department of Commerce, Directorate General of Foreign Trade (DGFT), and the Reserve Bank of India (RBI). It will also include special invitees from industry chambers, the Federation of Indian Export Organisations, export promotion councils and leading consultancy firms.

According to officials, the committee will review existing export-related tax structures — including customs duties and incentive schemes — and assess clearance procedures to gauge their impact on competitiveness. It will also identify sector-specific bottlenecks in high-potential areas such

as engineering, pharmaceuticals, electronics, chemicals, agro-products, textiles, leather, and gems and jewellery.

In addition, the panel will study global best practices in export taxation and customs facilitation and propose policy measures to streamline processes. The report is expected within two months.

The move comes in the wake of the U.S. decision to double tariffs on most Indian exports to 50% from August 27, a step that has rattled exporters. The higher duties are likely to hit labour-intensive sectors hardest, making Indian goods less competitive compared to rivals such as Vietnam, Bangladesh and Thailand, which enjoy lower tariff access. The U.S. is India's largest export market, accounting for about 20% of total shipments, or USD 86.5 billion, of the country's overall goods exports worth USD 437 billion in 2024-25.

Officials said the government hopes that faster clearances, simpler tax structures and targeted reforms will help soften the blow and sustain export growth despite external headwinds.



Workers engaged in processing of prawns at a seafood plant, in Khordha district, Odisha. India's seafood industry is expected to be affected by the recent hike in US tariffs on Indian exports. PTI

## Centre defers decision on Vedanta proposal

NEW DELHI, SEPT 3/PTI

THE Union Environment Ministry has put on hold Vedanta Limited's proposal to divert 708 hectares of forest land in Odisha's Rayagada and Kalahandi districts for the Sijimali Bauxite Mines, citing unresolved issues over community consent, compensatory afforestation and ecological risks, official records show.

The ministry's Forest Advisory Committee (FAC), which met on August 25, noted that state government reports did not address concerns raised by villagers and petitioners before the Orissa High Court. In March, the court recorded allegations that Gram Sabha resolutions backing the project were "fraudulently" obtained and directed authorities to ensure affected communities were properly consulted before clearance.

The proposal covers part of a 1,548-hectare leasehold area. Vedanta, which secured the block in a March 2023 auction, plans to mine nine million tonnes of bauxite annually to partly supply its six-million-tonne refinery at Lanjigarh, according to meeting minutes.

The FAC also flagged ecological sensitivities, pointing out that the project site lies within elephant habitat and faces risks of severe soil erosion.

## Chhattisgarh power capacity soars to 30,000 MW in 25 yrs

RAIPUR, SEPT 3/PTI

CHHATTISGARH Chief Minister Vishnu Deo Sai on Wednesday said the state's power generation capacity has expanded more than twentyfold since its formation in 2000, rising from 1,400 megawatts to 30,000 megawatts today. Sai was speaking in Nava Raipur Atal Nagar after laying the foundation stone for a new joint headquarters of Chhattisgarh's state power companies. Reflecting on the state's 25-year journey, he said the progress in the energy sector symbolised the "collective efforts, faith, and hard work" of its people.

The CM cited the inauguration of a 1,320 MW plant by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, adding that the state's mineral resources had

supported rapid growth in electricity production. Sai also pointed to investment commitments worth nearly ₹3 lakh crore under the new industrial policy. These MoUs are expected to help generate another 30,000 MW in the coming years, ensuring uninterrupted power supply to households and enabling Chhattisgarh to serve neighbouring states.

On the clean energy front, Sai said the PM Surya Ghar Muft Bijli Yojana was extending solar benefits to even remote areas, bringing the state closer to a future of free and renewable power.

The new multi-storey headquarters, spread over 10,017 sq. metres, will house the offices of the state power generation, transmission, and distribution companies.

## India-EFTA trade pact to take effect from Oct 1

NEW DELHI, SEPT 3 (PTI)

THE free trade agreement between India and the four-nation European Free Trade Association (EFTA) will come into effect from October 1, Switzerland said on Wednesday, highlighting that the deal includes India's first-ever legally binding provisions on trade and sustainable development.

"For the first time, India has laid down legally binding provisions on trade and sustainable development in a free trade agreement," Switzerland said in a statement.

The EFTA bloc comprises Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland. India and EFTA members signed the Trade and Economic Partnership Agreement (TEPA) on March 10, 2024, after nearly 16 years of negotiations.

Under the pact, India secured an

investment commitment of USD 100 billion over 15 years from the bloc. This includes USD 50 billion within the first decade and another USD 50 billion over the subsequent five years. According to the agreement, these investments are expected to generate one million direct jobs in India, a first-of-its-kind pledge in any of India's trade deals so far.

On the trade front, India agreed to lower or eliminate duties on a range of products, including Swiss watches, chocolates, and cut and polished diamonds. In return, Switzerland said the pact will enhance legal certainty and predictability for bilateral trade, while improving market access for Swiss exports.

"India grants Switzerland improved market access for 94.7% of existing exports (2018-2023, excluding gold)," it noted. Key sectors to

benefit include pharmaceuticals, machinery, optical instruments, watches, and processed agricultural products.

The agreement also reaffirms the contracting parties' rights and obligations under other international treaties, covering areas such as trade, environment, social affairs, and human rights.

"This is to ensure that neither the environmental and labour legislation of the partner countries nor international environmental and social laws are violated in connection with the agreement," the Swiss statement added.

Officials said the entry into force of TEPA marks a significant step in deepening India's engagement with Europe beyond the EU, offering new opportunities for investment, exports, and sustainable cooperation.

How GST changes could benefit the common man		How GST changes could benefit the common man		How GST changes could benefit the common man		How GST changes could benefit the common man		How GST changes could benefit the common man		
GST RATE		GST RATE		GST RATE		GST RATE		GST RATE		
Current 12% → Proposed 5%		Current 12% → Proposed 5%		Current 12% → Proposed 5%		Current 12% → Proposed 5%		Current 12% → Proposed 5%		
ITEMS		ITEMS		ITEMS		ITEMS		ITEMS		
Dairy Products (Butter, Ghee)	Namkeen, Snacks	Footwear (<2500)	Umbrella	Pencil, Crayon, Pastels	Combs & Hair pins	Handicraft items	Most medicines	Medical Devices	Jam/Ketchup	Non-aerated drinks
							Nuts & Dates	Condensed milk	Apparels (>1000/piece)	Apparels (<2500/piece)



## DULEEP TROPHY SEMIFINALS

# West vs Central, North vs South in high-stakes clashes

BENGALURU, SEPT 3 / PTI

The Duleep Trophy is set for a gripping semifinal stage with two intriguing contests on the cards. At the Chinnaswamy Stadium, a star-studded West Zone side faces a confident Central Zone, while elsewhere North Zone and South Zone prepare for their own battle.

For West, the spotlight will firmly be on Shreyas Iyer, Yashasvi Jaiswal and Shardul Thakur. All three have a point to prove, albeit for different reasons. Iyer, left out of India's Asia Cup squad despite a prolific IPL season with Punjab Kings — 604 runs at a strike rate of over 175 — will be eager to convert his frustration into runs. With upcoming home assignments against the West Indies and an away tour of Australia, he knows every innings counts.

Jaiswal's case is less about survival and more about rhythm. The young left-hander has already established himself in the Test squad, most recently playing the England series.

But with no immediate international fixtures in white-ball cricket, he will look to sharpen his red-ball skills in this competition.

Captain Thakur, meanwhile, will



aim to bolster his case for continued national consideration.

His all-round skills remain valued, but muted returns against England in the Anderson-Tendulkar Trophy earlier this year have left him with ground to cover. Add in Ruturaj Gaikwad and the promising all-rounder Tanush Kotian, and West Zone boast of an enviable depth.

Central Zone, however, arrive with quiet confidence. Even

without injured wicketkeeper-batter Dhruv Jurel, they impressed in the quarterfinals, where stand-in skipper Rajat Patidar, Danish Malewar and Shubham Sharma struck hundreds.

Should Jurel recover in time, their batting will look even stronger. Their bowling too offers balance, with the pace duo of Khaleel Ahmed and Deepak Chahar complemented by young left-arm spinner Harsh Dubey.

The absence of Kuldeep Yadav, drafted into the Asia Cup squad, is a setback, but Central are no pushovers. The clash promises an engrossing battle: West's big names versus Central's in-form unit on a slow, batting-friendly BCCI Centre of Excellence pitch.

Meanwhile, the second semifinal between North Zone and South Zone is equally compelling, though both sides are missing their key players.

South have lost Tilak Varma, drafted into India's Asia Cup squad, along with injured bowlers Vysakh Vijayakumar and R Sai Kishore. They will rely on seasoned campaigners N Jagadeesan, Devdutt Padikkal and Salman Nizar — the latter fresh from a blistering 11 sixes in 13 balls in the Kerala Cricket League — to anchor their innings.

North also face setbacks, with pacers Arshdeep Singh and Harshit Rana unavailable due to Asia Cup duty.

The responsibility of leading their attack will likely fall on Anshul Kamboj, while batting hopes rest on skipper Ankit Kumar, Ayush Bandoni and Yash Dhull, all centurions in the quarterfinals.

Both semifinals begin on Thursday morning at 9:30 a.m. for the high-stakes tournament...

## Indian boxers brace for stern test at World Championships

LIVERPOOL, SEPT 3 / PTI

INDIAN boxers will face one of their toughest assignments in recent memory when the World Boxing Championships kicks off here on Thursday, bringing together over 550 athletes from more than 65 countries, including 17 medallists from last year's Paris Olympics.

For the first time, the event is being held under the newly formed governing body, World Boxing, and will feature men's and women's competitions together. India enters the tournament hoping to replicate the highs of 2023 — when the women's team won four gold medals in New Delhi and the men secured three bronze in Tashkent. But since then, results are uneven, with underwhelming performances at the Asian Games and the Paris Olympics campaign in 2024.

Two of India's biggest names, Nikhat Zareen and Lovlina Borgohain, will mark their international return after more than a year away. Both have featured in just one domestic competition since the Paris Games, leaving them unseeded in Liverpool and potentially vulnerable to difficult early-round draws.

Nikhat, a two-time world champion, begins anew in the 51kg category, having previously won titles

at 52kg and 50kg. She will need to overcome weight-management challenges that hampered her Paris outing, where she fell in the second round. Lovlina, a Tokyo Olympic bronze medallist and reigning world champion in the 75kg division, enters as one of the most experienced names in the squad but faces a crowded field of challengers.

Veteran Pooja Rani, a two-time Asian champion and silver medallist at the July World Cup, bolsters the women's line-up. They are joined by Jaismine Lamboria (57kg), Sakshi (54kg) and Nupur Sheoran (80+kg), all of whom arrive with strong recent form and World Cup golds to their name.

The men's squad, by contrast, has a fresh look. Bronze medalists from 2023 — Nishant Dev, Deepak Bhoria and Mohammad Hussamuddin — are all absent. Leading the side are Sumit Kundu, returning from injury, and Sachin Siwach, the 2021 World Youth champion. Harsh Choudhary (86kg) adds top-level experience. Several newcomers, including Jadumani Singh Mandengbam (50kg), Hitesh Gulia (70kg) and Abhinash Jamwal (65kg), will make all be making their world championship debuts.



## CSK hails Srinivasan's return

NEW DELHI, SEPT 3 / PTI

N SRINIVASAN, one of Indian cricket's most influential administrators, has formally returned to sports management as chairman of the Chennai Super Kings, in what the franchise calls a significant boost to its operations. Appointed at a recent board meeting, the 80-year-old former BCCI president will serve in an advisory capacity, with his role focusing on guidance rather than day-to-day travel. "It's a great boon for CSK. He has been the best administrator for us and I'm very happy he's come back," CEO Kasi Viswanathan told PTI.

Viswanathan said Srinivasan will oversee all CSK properties, including the team's ventures in South Africa's SA20 league and Major League Cricket in the United States. "He will be in charge of everything. Though he doesn't travel much, both of us are in Chennai," the CEO added.

The return comes at a transitional moment for CSK. Senior India spinner R Ashwin announced his IPL retirement last month. Viswanathan said the off-spinner is already involved with the academy but is only registered for the UAE's ILT20.

# Climate 11 summit calls for unique green commitment in sports

Monitor News Service

GHAZIABAD, SEPT 2

THE Climate 11 Summit — Delhi Edition concluded on Tuesday with a landmark commitment: the signing of the Delhi Declaration on Environmental Sustainability in Indian Sport. In a first-of-its-kind moment, athletes, federations, leagues, government officials, academics, sponsors, broadcasters and media representatives came together on one stage to endorse climate action across the sporting ecosystem.

Adopted in the Delhi NCR, the declaration lays out a framework to embed sustainability into the core of Indian sport, with annual progress reviews at subsequent Climate 11 conferences. Organisers described it as a turning point in positioning sport not just as entertainment or industry, but as a platform for environmental responsibility.

The signatories and participants reflected the breadth of Indian and international sport. Among them were Devendra Jhajharia, President of the Paralympic Committee of India; Piara Powar, convener of Climate 11 and trustee of the Chelsea Foundation; David Goldblatt, football historian and climate activist; senior sports journalist Sharda Ugra; and representatives from the AFC, UN Global Compact, Warner Bros. Discovery India, and IMT Ghaziabad.

A striking feature of the Delhi edition was the presence of a Kashmiri voice at the forefront.



Participants at the Climate 11 Summit — Delhi Edition after the signing of the Delhi Declaration on Environmental Sustainability in Indian Sport on Tuesday.

Arhan Bagati, a Kashmiri Pandit and founder of KYARI (Kashmir's Yumberzal Applied Research Institute), participated as both speaker and moderator. Bringing a grassroots perspective from the Valley, he underscored immediate steps that sports venues and organisers can adopt: monitoring heat and air quality, ensuring shaded spaces and hydration for athletes and fans, making venues accessible and inclusive, and setting simple seasonal targets to track sustainability performance. "The Delhi Declaration is not about distant promises," Bagati said. "It's about what can be done before the next season, before the next event, to make sport safer, cleaner and fairer."

The declaration is now set to be circulated among national sports bodies, leagues, city authorities and corporates, inviting them to join partnerships and translate the commitments into measurable actions. From stadium operators to grassroots clubs, stakeholders are being urged to view environmental protection as both an operational necessity and a chance to innovate.

Launched in 2021, Climate 11 has built a reputation for convening leaders from sport, business, policy and media to accelerate climate solutions. The Delhi Declaration marks its most ambitious step yet: embedding climate accountability into Indian sport's DNA.

## Cook call for fresh reforms in Test cricket

LONDON, SEPT 3 / PTI

FORMER England captains Alastair Cook and Michael Vaughan have called for fresh reforms in Test cricket to make the longest format more flexible and contemporary.

Cook, England's record Test run-scorer who retired in 2018, proposed that teams should be free to take the new ball at any stage within 160 overs, instead of being restricted to the current 80-over cycle.

"A new rule I would add would be, how about, in 160 overs, you can take the new ball whenever you want? You've got two new balls for those 160 overs, and you can take that second ball whenever you want — even after 30 overs if you wanted to," Cook said on the *Stick to Cricket* podcast.

He argued that such flexibility would inject tactical depth, giving captains more control over conditions and strategy.

Vaughan, who led England to their landmark 2005 Ashes triumph, used the same platform to highlight the need for broader substitution rules in Tests.

Currently, replacements are only permitted for concussion cases.

## Alcaraz cruises, Pegula shines at US Open

NEW YORK, SEPT 3 / AP

ON a day when Carlos Alcaraz stormed into the semifinals, Jessica Pegula broke her quarterfinal curse, Novak Djokovic celebrated with a K-pop dance, and India's Yuki Bhambri scripted history in doubles, the U.S. Open delivered both drama and delight across its courts.

Alcaraz's Surge

Carlos Alcaraz reminded the tennis world why he's already considered the future of the sport. The 22-year-old Spaniard defeated Jiri Lehecka 6-4, 6-2, 6-4 in a commanding quarterfinal win inside Arthur Ashe Stadium. After sealing the match, he wagged his finger at the crowd and cupped his hand to his ear, urging fans to roar even louder.

Alcaraz, who won his first Grand Slam at Flushing Meadows in 2023, is now into his ninth semifinal at a major before the age of 23 — trailing only Rafael Nadal's tally of 10.



"Everyone knew he's a contender," said Lehecka. "He just proved it again."

Next up is a blockbuster clash with Novak Djokovic, who has beaten him twice in the past year — at the Australian Open and again in the gold medal match at the Paris Olympics. For Alcaraz, there's also the prospect of reclaiming the

world No. 1 ranking from Jannik Sinner if he lifts the trophy on Sunday. Djokovic's Win — and His Dance Djokovic's 6-3, 7-5, 3-6, 6-4 victory over Taylor Fritz was businesslike on court but playful once it was done. The 24-time major winner broke into a choreographed dance from the viral film *KPop Demon Hunters*, a routine he said was

taught to him by his daughter, Tara, who turned eight on Tuesday.

"This was a big present for her," Djokovic told the crowd. "We are at home doing different choreographies, and this is one of them. Hopefully I'll make her smile when she wakes up in the morning."

The celebration — part of an internet phenomenon around the hit movie — was a rare lighthearted glimpse from a player more associated with relentless focus.

On the women's side, Jessica Pegula, 31, is showing that persistence pays off. The American beat Barbora Krejcikova 6-3, 6-3 to advance to the semifinals for the second year running. Pegula had endured 22 Grand Slam main draws without reaching the last four until her breakthrough here last year. With back-to-back semifinal runs, she joins rare company: the first woman since Serena Williams (2011-14) to reach consecutive U.S. Open semifinals.

## Happiest moment turned tragic: Kohli reflects on Bengaluru tragedy

BENGALURU, SEPT 3 / PTI

VIRAT Kohli has broken his silence on the stampede that overshadowed Royal Challengers Bengaluru's IPL victory celebrations in June, describing the tragedy as "a heartbreaking nothing in life really prepares you for."

The June 4 event at M Chinnaswamy Stadium, where an estimated 2.5 lakh fans gathered to celebrate RCB's maiden IPL title, turned deadly when a crowd surge left 11 people dead and dozens injured.

"What should've been the happiest moment in our franchise's history... turned into something tragic," Kohli said in a message posted on RCB's official X handle. He added that his thoughts remain with the bereaved families and injured supporters. "Your loss is part

of our story now. Together, we will move forward with care, respect and responsibility."

An official inquiry into the disaster blamed inadequate clearances and poor crowd management, citing social media calls by the franchise that drew an overwhelming turnout. Police admitted they were outnumbered, while investigators held RCB accountable for encouraging the massive gathering.

Facing criticism, the franchise announced a compensation of ₹25 lakh each for the families of those killed. It also pledged to take "meaningful action" in their memory, launching a foundation called RCB Cares. The initiative aims to collaborate with stadium authorities, league partners, and sporting bodies to strengthen safety and prevent such tragedies in future.





# 'Nobody thought I could be humorous before *The Family Man*'



By Komal Panchamatia

**M**anoj Bajpayee seems to have found his funny bone, first with his critically-acclaimed series "The Family Man" and now as a Mumbai cop hot on the heels of a notorious criminal in "Inspector Zende". Bajpayee, whose name is often associated with intense roles, especially when it comes to cops thanks to his portrayals in "Shool", "Special 26" and

"Bhonsle", says he loves humour that's relatable.

"Before 'The Family Man', nobody thought that I would be humorous with a straight face. So, the straight face humour is a word that people have given to it. But I enjoy creating humour out of a situation which is real and relatable," Bajpayee told PTI in an interview.

His character of Madhukar Zende is inspired by a real life cop who caught notorious serial killer

Charles Sobhraj twice. In the movie, Sobhraj is called Carl Bhojraj and portrayed by Jim Sarbh. Bajpayee said his character in the movie is quirky but not by design, the quirk comes from the overall scene.

"He's not going out of his character. It's about the seriousness with which he approaches the comedic moment. That really sells it and makes it work without distancing

the actor from the character. That is a tricky point. (But if you) don't attempt comedy, the humour will come out," he added.

Ramgopal Varma's 1999 film "Shool" was the first time Bajpayee played a cop on screen. Asked how he has changed between his first titular cop role to his latest, Bajpayee said he was a different actor when he did "Shool". "Shool" was about a young cop who is full of idealism about his job, and he keeps getting disillusioned by his family, society and his own department. It was a story of how he keeps losing near and dear ones when he is quite stubborn about following the rules.

"I had to immerse myself completely into the role, which resulted in me losing my balance. I realised that this is not the way I should go (about playing the character) because though it was temporary, it cost me my health, mental health," he said.

"Inspector Zende", directed by Chinmay Mandekar, is the polar opposite of "Shool", he added.

"It's a comic take on the chase of one of the most dreaded psychopaths of this world. Charles Sobhraj is also not only a criminal and a psychopath; he has been a talk of the nation and a talk of all the international communities and law forces for many years. He was

part of pop culture; he was more of a hero with intrigue for people than a criminal. Chinmay's take is endearing, quite hilarious, so mostly we had fun. There was no scope of immersing yourself completely and losing your mind."

Mandekar said that the humor in Zende's world emerges from the absurdity of his circumstances, rather than from the character himself "We were very clear he is not Jacques Clouseau (Pink Panther). The situation around him turns out to be humorous or ironic but he is always a hero. He was the one who was selected for this job, he did not land up catching Carl. If you ask Inspector Zende in real life about it, he says, 'This is like one of the things that I did. He does not give much credit to this. He has done so many other things,' the director said.

"Inspector Zende" features acclaimed actors from the Marathi film industry like Sachin Khedekar, Bhalchandra Kadam, Girija Oak, Onkar Raut, and Harish Dhadhade among others. The film will debut on Netflix on September 5.

Mandekar said he wanted to remain authentic in terms of casting the supporting actors. "Most of the characters that you will see in the film are Marathi, they belong to a particular socio-economic background and I wanted Marathi actors to play Marathi roles, North Indian actors for Carl's team."

## Jason Segel joins Angelina Jolie in 'Anxious People'

LOS ANGELES, SEPT 3/PTI

ACTOR Jason Segel, best known for his role in the sitcom "How I Met Your Mother", has become the latest addition to the star cast of "Anxious People", headlined by Angelina Jolie and Aimee Lou.

According to the entertainment news outlet Deadline, the upcoming film is an adaptation of the 2019 novel of the same name by Fredrik Backman. It is directed by Marc Forster, known for "Stranger Than Fiction" and "World War Z", from a script by David Magee.



The story of "Anxious People" revolves around an investment banker, Zara (Jolie), who begrudgingly finds herself mingling with a group of strangers at an open house, a day before Christmas Eve. When a reluctant bank robber inadvertently takes the group hostage, chaos and oversharing ensue, secrets are revealed, and literally nothing goes according to plan. Previously, the book was adapted into a series by Netflix in 2021. The film is produced by Fredrik Wikstrom Nicastro under the production banner Hope Studios alongside Renee Wolfe through 2DUX.

## Nandita Das part of Busan International Film Festival's jury

NEW DELHI, SEPT 3/PTI

ACTOR-filmmaker Nandita Das is part of the seven member competition jury at the 30th Busan International Film Festival with Korean filmmaker Na Hong-Jin serving as the jury president, the festival announced on Wednesday.

BIFF has introduced the new competition section and the 'Busan Award' and the winners will be revealed at the closing ceremony. Jury head Na Hong-Jin is one of the new age masters in South Korean cinema. He is best known for films such as "Chaser", "The Yellow Sea" and "The Wailing", which earned international acclaim. He recently backed the Thai-Korean co-production "The Medium". The director's upcoming film "Hope" will feature Hwang Jung-min, Zo In-sung, and Hyeon, Alicia Vikander and Michael Fassbender.

Das, a prominent name in Indian cinema for her roles in films such as "Earth", "Fire" and "Bawandar", turned director with his critically-acclaimed



film "Firaq" in 2008. The actor, who has been part of jury at several international film festivals including Cannes, is also known for her directorial ventures "Manto" and "Zwigato".

The jury also includes the internationally acclaimed Hong Kong actor Tony Leung Ka-fai. His popular films are "Reign Behind a Curtain", "Farewell China", "Center Stage", "Dragon Inn", "The Lover", "Cold War" and "The Shadow's Edge".

Jury member Marziyeh Meshkini, the leading female director of the Iranian New Wave cinema, is a graduate of the Makhmalbaf Film School. She made her directorial debut with "The Day I Became a Woman". She has also

directed "Stray Dogs" and "The Man Who Came with the Snow" Korean-American filmmaker Kogonada has directed "Columbus", "After Yang" and "Pachinko". His next film, A Big Bold Beautiful Journey (2025), starring Margot Robbie and Colin Farrell, will be released in the United States on September 19 and in Korea in October.

## South Korea selects Park Chan-wook's 'No Other Choice' for Oscars

CELEBRATED filmmaker Park Chan-wook's dark comedy "No Other Choice" has been selected by the Korean Film Council as the country's entry for best international feature category at the Academy Awards.

"No Other Choice", starring popular Korean cinema stars like "Squid Game" fame Lee Byung-hyun, "Crashlanding on You" actor Son Ye-jin and "My Name" star Park Hee-soon in lead roles, marks Park's return to direction after "Decision to Leave" in 2022. The director is internationally known for his films "Sympathy for Mr. Vengeance", "Oldboy" and "The Handmaiden".

It will be the second time that Park's film will be seeking award



glory as his "Decision to Leave" also represented Korea at the Oscars. The decision was announced by the Korean Film Council and selected by a jury, chaired by "Parasite" producer Kwak Sin-ae, reported Screen Daily.

"It stands out for its outstanding quality and the actors' performances, and it has a high level of completeness, along with a glob-

ally recognised director and a distributor with Academy Award experience," Kwak said.

"No Other Choice", which had its world premiere at the Venice Film Festival, revolves around a man who is determined to land a new job after being fired from his old paper company. He decides to eliminate other candidates to better his chance.

The film is also slated to screen at Toronto and open the Busan International Film Festival.

Neon, which also distributed Bong Joon-ho's Best Film Oscar-winner "Parasite" in 2020, represents the film in North America, while Mubi has taken multiple territories outside of North America, including the UK.

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