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From rising power demand to constant noise, the AI infrastructure boom is unsettling communities across the U.S.

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Andhra Pradesh braces for one more cyclone

VIJAYAWADA
After bearing the brunt of Cyclones Arnab and Murasu, Andhra Pradesh is bracing for another cyclonic storm within a week. According to the latest information from the IMD, Amaravati, the current weather system over the Bay of Bengal may intensify into a severe cyclonic storm by November 18, and move towards the A.P. coast. » PAGE 2



All legal steps for Hasina's return are taken: Dhaka

DHAKA
Bangladesh has completed all legal procedures required to secure the return of ousted Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina from India, and the next step rests with New Delhi, Minister of Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs of Bangladesh Md. Asaduzzaman said on Saturday, according to local media reports. » PAGE 3

Assam accident toll rises to 26; 17 still in hospital

GUWAHATI
Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Saturday said the driver of the minibus involved in a collision with a container truck near Kaziranga National Park on Friday may have had a health issue that resulted in the accident. The death toll in the collision rose to 26 on Saturday after another passenger died due to injuries. » PAGE 3

Pakistan picks vocal India critic for SCO dialogue in New Delhi

Climate Change Minister Musadik Masood Malik has called out India's decision to place Indus Treaty in abeyance after the Pahalgam attack; Islamabad says committed to promoting dialogue among civilisations; India had invited Culture Minister

Kallol Bhattacherjee
NEW DELHI

Pakistan's Federal Minister for Climate Change and Environmental Coordination, Musadik Masood Malik, will represent his country at the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) Civilisational Dialogue to be held here from November 20 to 22, Islamabad announced on Saturday.

Mr. Malik has been a vocal critic of New Delhi's decision to place the Indus Waters Treaty "in abeyance" following the April 2025 Pahalgam terrorist attack.

The last Pakistani Minister to visit India was Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, who had visited Goa in May 2023 for the SCO Foreign Ministers meeting.

The Hindu reported on October 28 that the Indian government had invited Pakistan's Minister for National Heritage and Culture, Aurungzeb Khan Khichi, to attend the SCO Civilisational Dialogue event, the first such Ministerial-level invitation since 2023. However, the Pakistani government has nominated a different representative.

"The Government of Pakistan remains committed to promoting dialogue among civilisations and fostering people to people contacts within the SCO framework in a spirit of mutual respect," the Pakistan government said in a statement on Saturday.

India and Pakistan engaged in military hostilities after the terror attack in Pahalgam, following which India placed the 1960 Indus Waters Treaty "in abeyance". Mr. Malik, a technocrat-turned-Minister, said in a press conference in June this year that Pakistan would "cut off those hands" that are attempting to control the Indus waters.

Asserting its claim on the Indus, Pakistan has been highlighting the Indus Valley civilisation of Mohenjo Daro and Harappa and other ancient sites in the country in recent months.

On World Heritage Day on April 18, Pakistan Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif had referred to the Indus Valley civilisation in his remarks, saying, "Pakistan's cultural heritage is enriched with a multifaceted civilisation. Our homeland carries the legacy of some of the world's oldest civilisations, reflecting a vibrant tapestry of human creativity and diversity."

'Shared past'

On Friday, Union Culture Minister Gajendra Singh Shekhawat said India and Pakistan have a shared "civilisational and cultural" past, adding that New Delhi hopes that Pakistan will attend the upcoming SCO Civilisational Dialogue. China, Kazakhstan, Iran, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan are among the countries that have already confirmed their participation.

"I believe that Pakistan's civilisational and cultural progress is no different from ours," Mr. Shekhawat said, in response to a question about the invitation, given the tensions with Pakistan. "They [Pakistan] separated from us less than 100 years ago, but prior to that, we [India and Pakistan] have evolved together. So we should not have any differences over these issues," he added.

Mr. Shekhawat said that the purpose of the SCO Civilisational Dialogue, first proposed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, was to see how the SCO could "go a step beyond geopolitical, strategic and bilateral relations and strengthen our cultural ties so that in the future we can have better relations and communications between the people of our countries."

Soon after Mr. Shekhawat's comments, however, the Ministry of External Affairs said that India would follow "national policy" regarding Pakistan in view of the Pahalgam terror attacks, indicating that it may not grant Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Singh Mann clearance to attend an international Punjabi cultural conference in Lahore at the end of the month.

A step across

Musadik Masood Malik will be the first Pakistani Minister to visit India since Bilawal Bhutto Zardari attended the 2023 SCO Foreign Ministers' meeting in Goa

- Pakistan's Climate Change Minister has been vocal against India placing the **Indus Waters Treaty** in abeyance following the Pahalgam terror attack
- The Minister will attend the **SCO Civilisational Dialogue** in New Delhi to be held from November 20 to 22
- Confirmation comes a day after India stressed the shared **'civilisational and cultural' past** of the two neighbours
- Committed to **fostering people-to-people contacts** within the SCO framework in a spirit of mutual respect, says Pakistan





Disputed waters: The Cauvery river at Sangama in Ramanagara district, a few kilometres before Mekedatu, Karnataka. FILE PHOTO

Mekedatu project is Karnataka's right: CM

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Karnataka Chief Minister D.K. Shivakumar on Saturday asserted the State will go ahead with the Mekedatu balancing reservoir project, describing it as their right and duty, while assuring that Tamil Nadu would receive its stipulated share of Cauvery water.

Responding to opposition from leaders in Tamil Nadu, Mr. Shivakumar said the neighbouring State should send a delegation to Karnataka to understand the project's benefits.

"... If they wish, let them send a delegation. I am prepared to take them to the dam site and explain the project," he told press.

Mr. Shivakumar said Karnataka would respect Tamil Nadu's entitlement of 177 tmc ft of water as stipulated by the Supreme Court. "We will build the dam and ensure they receive their share. Protecting Karnataka's water rights while ensuring Tamil Nadu gets its due share is our responsibility. We will not back down when it comes to safeguarding the interests of our State."

Describing opposition to the project as politically motivated, he said the issue should be viewed in the context of the law and the court's directions rather than political rivalry.

Mr. Shivakumar said the State had sought the necessary forest and environmental clearances from the Centre and was preparing the required documents. All political parties in Karnataka had supported the project, he said, pointing out that the government was ready to take it forward once the clearances were obtained.

The Centre's requirement to provide compensatory land for the forest area that would be submerged was among the issues to be addressed.

Centre's support

In his interaction with Prime Minister Narendra Modi during the latter's visit to Karnataka on Friday, the Chief Minister said political differences should not come in the way of development. He said he had also urged the Centre to reject the Kasturirangan report and sought equal participation by the Centre and the State in funding Bengaluru metro projects.

He had proposed the formation of a committee to oversee the projects and sought faster clearances for pending proposals. The State aimed to expand the metro network to 500 km in future phases, he said.

On the pending power dues raised during the Suvarna Soudha session, Mr. Shivakumar said the government's subsidy burden towards electricity supplied to farmers' irrigation pumpsets had increased from about ₹20,000 crore to ₹30,000 crore. He attributed the increase to higher power consumption during drought conditions and the use of lift irrigation schemes to fill tanks, among other factors. The government would address the issue and resolve the pending matters, he said.

Pulling off a heist



One for the ages: The India under-19 team chased down a target of 338 to regain the Asia Cup at Al Amerat in Oman on Saturday. With three needed off the last ball, Mohit Ulva smashed a boundary to seal an incredible one-wicket win against Pakistan. X@BCCI (REPORT: PAGE 13)

Quad leaders to meet in Philippines on Tuesday

Suhasini Haidar
NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will meet U.S. President Donald Trump and the leaders of Japan and Australia at the first Quad summit since 2024, on the sidelines of the ASEAN Summit the Philippines, on Tuesday, sources said.

The meeting will be the first in a non-Quad nation.

FULL REPORT ON » PAGE 3

Money power, capture of institutions pushed the Opposition to margins: Rahul

R. Ravikanth Reddy
HYDERABAD

India's democratic system was destroyed in 2014, the Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha, Rahul Gandhi, said on Saturday, claiming that money power and the capture of institutions have transformed the country's electoral and political landscape and pushed Opposition parties to the margins.

Speaking at the valedictory session of the Bharat Summit 2026, Mr. Gandhi claimed that millions of dollars were pumped into the electoral system during the 2014 Lok Sabha election, ushering in a new kind of politics that left Opposition parties in shock. The trend continued in subsequent elections, with the ruling party enjoying enormous financial resources while parties committed to democratic processes struggled to compete, he argued.

He attributed the marginalisation of Opposition parties to the growing influence of money power, divisive politics, and the alleged capture of institutions. The transformation was evident in the electoral landscape, which had earlier witnessed close contests and coalition governments but had since undergone a dramatic change, leaving Opposition parties wondering about the emerging political patterns, he said.



Global meet: Rahul Gandhi, Telangana Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy, and other dignitaries at the Bharat Summit. NAGARA GOPAL

Mr. Gandhi said the election results across States had been analysed to understand the changing electoral trends. Citing the Maharashtra elections, he alleged that the Opposition had secured almost the same number of votes in the Lok Sabha and Assembly elections, but the results were markedly different. He claimed that nearly seven million new voters were added to the electoral rolls in the three months preceding the Assembly election and alleged that all of them had voted for the BJP.

'Not a democracy now'

The Opposition's analysis, he said, indicated that similar patterns were visible in several other States as well. These findings had reinforced his belief that India was no longer functioning as a democracy, he said.

The Leader of the Opposition also apologised to international delegates who were invited to the Bharat Summit but were allegedly denied visas or permission to enter India.

"I would like to apologise to the many delegates and leaders who were scheduled to attend but were not allowed to come by the Government of India," he said, adding that the episode offered a glimpse of the situation the country was facing.

Expressing confidence that the situation would change, Mr. Gandhi vowed to reclaim the country from what he described as fascist forces, which he said were gaining ground across the world.

He maintained that the struggle against such forces would be pursued through love and non-violence, expressing faith in the ability of democratic and progressive forces to bring about change.

INBRIEF



Giri Babu, veteran Telugu actor, passes away at 80

Veteran Telugu actor Yerra Seshagiri Rao, popularly known as Giri Babu, died at a private hospital in Hyderabad on Saturday. He was 80 and had been suffering from age-related ailments. Born in Ravinuthala in Prakasam district, Giri Babu made his debut with *Jagame Maya*. Starting out as a lead actor, he moved to villainous and comic roles before becoming a familiar face in character roles. Giri Babu acted in over 600 films. He is survived by three children.

ED attaches properties worth ₹1.22 cr. in KPSC scam probe

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) has provisionally attached movable and immovable properties worth ₹1.22 crore belonging to former Karnataka Public Service Commission (KPSC) chairman Shivashankarappa Sahukar, commission member Geetha B.V. Shivamurthy and IAS officer Gyanendra Kumar Gangwar, who was then Controller of Examinations, in connection with the veterinary officer recruitment scam.

Three killed in separate road accidents in Vizag, Anakapalli

Three women were killed in road accidents in Visakhapatnam and Anakapalli districts in Andhra Pradesh on Saturday. Two women died after the two-wheeler they were riding was hit by a lorry at Addu Road Junction on NH-16. According to the police, the deceased were identified as Ratna Kumari (26) and Nookalathalli (50). In another incident, a woman died on the spot after a lorry ran over her near the Old Airport Road in Visakhapatnam.

Karnataka govt. urges Centre to protect SC, ST quota law

Chief Minister, Deputy CM write to the Prime Minister on including State's enhanced quota law in the Constitution; legislation provides 17% quota for SCs and 7% for STs in educational institutions

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Karnataka Chief Minister D.K. Shivakumar and Deputy Chief Minister G. Parameshwara have urged the Union government to initiate a Constitutional amendment to include the State's law providing enhanced reservation for the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes in the Ninth Schedule of the Constitution.

Laws included in the Ninth Schedule cannot be challenged in courts.

In separate communications to Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Mr. Shivakumar and Mr. Parameshwara sought the Centre's urgent intervention to protect the State's legislation providing for 17% reservation for SCs and 7% for STs in educational institutions and public employment.



Karnataka Chief Minister D.K. Shivakumar and Deputy Chief Minister G. Parameshwara cited Tamil Nadu's case in their letter. FILE PHOTO

In letters dated November 12 to the Prime Minister, Union Home Minister Amit Shah and Union Minister for Social Justice and Empowerment Virendra Kumar, Mr. Parameshwara sought a time-bound decision on Karnataka's proposal.

The appeal follows the Karnataka High Court's October 12 judgment striking down the enhanced reservation, which took the total quota to 56%, exceeding the 50% ceiling mandated by the Supreme Court.

Tamil Nadu precedent

Both leaders cited Tamil Nadu's 69% reservation framework, which was included in the Ninth Schedule through the 76th Constitutional Amendment in 1994, as a precedent for Karnataka's demand.

"If Parliament could act to protect a reservation framework of 69% in Tamil Nadu, Karnataka's considered request for 56% reservation, founded upon the recommendations of a judicial commission, deserves no less Constitutional attention," Mr. Shivakumar noted in his letter.

Rahul Gandhi promises health insurance, accident cover for gig workers in Telangana

R. Ravikanth Reddy
HYDERABAD

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi announced a series of social security measures for gig workers in Telangana, including accident insurance of ₹5 lakh, health cover of ₹10 lakh, and a mechanism to ensure that 1% of every transaction is credited towards their social security.

Addressing gig workers, Mr. Gandhi said the Congress government in Telangana was fulfilling its promise to protect workers engaged in the platform-based economy.

Under the proposed legislation, workers would be able to access details of their transactions, deliveries, working hours, and payments through their mobile phones. "The data belong to you, the labour is yours, but you were not even allowed to see your own data," he said.

Rest zones to be set up

He said the government would also establish dedicated, Wi-Fi-enabled rest zones in Hyderabad and other cities for delivery personnel and other gig workers.

Mr. Gandhi said every gig worker would receive ₹5 lakh in accident insurance and ₹10 lakh in health insurance. A social security contribution mechanism under which 1% of every transaction, including deliveries and cab rides, would be contributed towards the workers' future security.

The amount would be collected from companies and routed through the Gig Workers' Board before being transferred directly to the workers' bank accounts, he said.



Containment steps: A specialised team at a poultry farm in Cuddalore, Tamil Nadu, on Saturday. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Over 1,500 chickens culled due to avian flu in T.N. district

S. Prasad
CUDDALORE

Highly pathogenic avian influenza (H5N1) has been confirmed in chicken samples collected from a poultry farm at Kattiyankuppam village in Kurinjipadi taluk of Cuddalore district.

"The National Institute of High Security Animal Diseases (NIHSAD), Bhopal, had confirmed the presence of H5N1 avian influenza virus in samples collected from a poultry carcass on November 5, 2026," Cuddalore Collector Sibi Adhithya Senthil Kumar told *The Hindu*. The confirmation has triggered a full-scale containment operation, with the Animal Husbandry and Veterinary Services Department culling all birds in the affected farm and within a one-kilometre radius.

"As many as 35,647 bird deaths were recorded in the affected belt till November 13 [Friday], since the first case of sudden mortality was reported from a farm at Thamanampatti village in Thiyagavalli Panchayat on October 30. Veterinary teams that visited the farm on the day of the first report collected samples and sent them to the Poultry Disease Diagnostic Laboratory [PDDL] in Namakkal," Mr. Senthil Kumar said

As deaths mounted in neighbouring farms, further samples were routed to the PDDL, Erode, and the Central University Laboratory (CUL) at Madhavaram in Chennai.

So far, 1,550 birds have been humanely culled, and the department is working to cull 100% of the birds in the epicentre farm and within the one-kilometre radius, in accordance with the Government of India guidelines of 2021. The carcasses are being disposed of through deep burial in designated pits, with bleaching powder applied and biosecurity measures in place. An official said the movement of birds to and from the affected farms had been strictly restricted.

Karnataka mandates check-ups for girl students

Jayanth R.
BENGALURU

The Karnataka government will introduce mandatory gynaecological check-ups, sex education, and counselling in all schools, colleges, hostels, residential schools, and training institutions.

It recently issued a circular listing the measures. These include mandatory check-ups for all girls in schools by a gynaecologist, the provision of sex education, and the creation of awareness regarding teenage pregnancies, the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act, and child marriage.

CCTV cameras have been made mandatory in all schools and colleges. Failure to prevent cases of child marriage, teenage pregnancy, or POCSO cases will result in legal action against the officials concerned, it said.

Rising teen pregnancies

The circular is a culmination of a series of measures initiated in 2025 following the rise in cases of child marriages and teenage pregnancies. It said counsellors should be appointed in all schools and Pre-University colleges to tackle challenges. "If a girl student in a school or residential school remains absent for more than three days without providing any notification, the principal must inform the gram panchayat and the child helpline (1098) in writing. The Health Department has recommended action against shops selling abortion pills without doctor's prescription," the circular said.

After Arnab and Murasu, A.P. braces for another cyclone

The Hindu Bureau
VIJAYAWADA

After bearing the brunt of Cyclones Arnab and Murasu, Andhra Pradesh is bracing for another cyclonic storm within a week.

According to the latest information from the India Meteorological Department (IMD), Amaravati, the current weather system over the Bay of Bengal may intensify into a severe cyclonic storm by November 18, and move towards the A.P. coast. The current weather models indicate the probability of landfall along the North Coastal Andhra Pradesh on November 19 or 20.

The low-pressure area, formed over the south-east Bay of Bengal on November 13, intensified into a well-marked low-pressure area on Saturday. It may intensify into a depression by November 15.

The IMD has issued a heavy rainfall alert for coastal A.P., saying that the forecast may be updated as more clarity emerges. Wind speeds near the coast may increase from November 15, rising from 40 kmph to 50 kmph and reaching 105 kmph around November 18.

Meanwhile, the Central team began its tour on Saturday to the cyclone-hit districts of Bapatla, Palnadu, Eluru and East Godavari, to assess the damage.

Mass message



Hero's guide: Road safety banners featuring film one-liners by actor Mammootty seen on Kochi Metro pillars. He is the brand ambassador of 'Jeeva-Suyathra Mission', a drive to reduce road accidents. The initiative will be launched by Keralam CM V.D. Satheesan on Sunday. R.K. NITHIN

Toddler falls into chemical bucket in factory, dies

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

A toddler died after falling into a bucket containing hot chemicals at a copper factory near his house in Bengaluru recently.

The deceased was identified as Subramani, aged around two. The incident took place at the Shivam Copper Maker factory in L.N. Puram, Srirampura, on November 2.

According to the police, the boy was playing with his sister when he fell into the bucket on the factory premises.

Factory workers immediately rushed him to a hospital, where he died on Saturday.

No road, school or hospital, yet people continue to live in this village inside a wildlife sanctuary

Sathish G.T.
CHIKKAMAGALURU

For the residents of Paradeshappana Mutt, a village inside the Bhadra Wildlife Sanctuary in Karnataka, love for their native land comes at a price. They have no road, public transport, school, hospital, or electricity.

Around 30 families live in the sanctuary, near Sirivase in Chikkamagaluru taluk. "We have been here from time immemorial. My parents and their parents were born and buried here. Where else would we go?" said Rudraiah, who is in his 70s.



Defiant stand: Around 30 families stay put on their native land in Paradeshappana Mutt, part of Bhadra Wildlife Sanctuary. G.T. SATHISH

Even a bag of salt means a trip to Bogase, the nearest village, on foot or by a two-wheeler. Only in recent years have the houses been lit at night, thanks to solar panels donated by private companies.

The majority of the people in the village belong to Adi Karnataka, a Scheduled Caste.

Yashodamma, who is about 60 years, stays on to care for her husband, who is suffering from cancer. She earns about ₹600 a day working in agricultural fields, as does her son. With no hospital nearby, every medical need means a long journey.

According to records, the residents are "forest dwellers". "This has been our home for ages, but only in recent years has our place been considered a part of the Bhadra sanctuary," Mr. Kalaiah said.

Part of Project Tiger

The sanctuary, part of Project Tiger, was notified in 1998 and covers 12 villages identified for rehabilitation. According to the Forest Department's management plan, 418 families have been relocated to two centres, M.C. Halli in Tarikere taluk and Kelagur in Chikkamagaluru taluk. Twenty families at Paradeshappana Mutt and 46 more in three other villages are yet to be rehabilitated.

A senior Forest Department official said the department's hands were tied. "The law does not allow us to provide them with roads, electricity or any other facility, as it falls under the tiger reserve," he said. When contacted by *The Hindu*, Chikkamagaluru DC Bhanwar Singh Meena said he would soon convene a meeting with Forest Department officers on the issue.

A.P. summit secured investments worth ₹9.89 lakh crore: MP

The Hindu Bureau
AMARAVATI

Andhra Pradesh has attracted investments totalling ₹9.89 lakh crore following the two-day 31st CII Partnership Summit in Visakhapatnam, according to Vizianagaram MP Kalisetti Appalanaidu.

Addressing a media briefing at the Telugu Desam Party's (TDP) Central Office on Saturday, Mr. Appalanaidu said the summit had secured 194 agreements involving investments of ₹86,522 crore. He attributed the State's revival to the leadership of Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu and the efforts of Information Technology and Education Minister Nara Lokesh. The investment push followed 11 roadshows conducted in five countries, he said.

The summit had also focused on directing corporate social responsibility (CSR) funds towards poverty alleviation. Under the P4 initiative, Hero MotoCorp had partnered with the Swarnandhra Foundation to support 1,220 students of IIITs across 28 districts. ITC Limited had adopted 100 villages aiming to improve living standards.

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CBI searches 33 locations in betting app scam probe

The Hindu Bureau
RAIPUR


Saurabh Chandrakar

The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) on Saturday said it conducted fresh searches in connection with the Mahadev app scam case at 33 locations across six States based on disclosures made by key accused Saurabh Chandrakar, who was recently extradited from Oman.

Describing Mr. Chandrakar as one of the principal promoters of the platform, a CBI official said the searches led to the recovery and seizure of digital devices and incriminating documents showing the involvement of a hawala network and mule accounts.

The searches were conducted in Raipur and Durg in Chhattisgarh; Delhi; Amritsar, Nagaur, and Dholpur in Rajasthan; Bhopal and Indore in Madhya Pradesh; Ahmedabad, Vadodara, and Surat in Gujarat; and Mumbai and Nagpur in Maharashtra.

Mr. Chandrakar was arrested by the CBI on November 11 and produced before a Special Judge (CBI Cases) in Raipur, who granted eight days of police custody to the agency.

The Directorate of Enforcement (ED), which is probing the money laundering angle of the alleged scam, arrested him on Friday. A Special PMLA court on November 12 allowed the ED to keep him in custody until November 19.

The CBI has registered two FIRs after the case was transferred from the Chhattisgarh government.

"Investigation conducted so far has revealed that the platform is run from abroad through a head office and operates in India through a large network of panel operators. These operators handle customer IDs, collect betting money in bank accounts exclusively opened or hired in the names of third parties, and transfer the profits abroad through hawala channels," the CBI official said.

Quad summit likely to be held in Manila on Nov. 17

It is for the first time that the summit will be held in a non-member country; supply chains for critical minerals, securing commercial shipping lanes for energy supplies likely on the agenda

Suhasini Haidar
NEW DELHI


Leadership meet: The confirmation of the summit is significant for the Indo-Pacific grouping. REUTERS

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will meet U.S. President Donald Trump, Japanese Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi, and Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese at the first Quad summit since 2024, on the sidelines of the ASEAN Summit in Manila, Philippines, next week, sources said.

According to the sources, the meeting is expected to take place on the evening of November 17.

While the confirmation of the Quad summit is significant for the Indo-Pacific grouping, much of the attention will be taken by Mr. Trump's pronouncements at his next stop in Shenzhen, China, where he will hold the first-ever three-way summit with Chinese President Xi Jinping and Russian President Vladimir Putin on November 19, to discuss global issues including nuclear arms control.

In Washington, U.S. officials briefing the media on Mr. Trump's travels also confirmed that he would travel to Manila and take part in, among other meetings, a "multilateral meeting" with the leaders of the Quad countries, news agency Reuters reported.

On the agenda

The agency quoted briefing by unnamed officials, who said that supply chains for critical minerals and securing commercial shipping lanes for energy supplies would be a key part of the agenda. "The issue of attacks on commercial ships is very likely to be taken up," the unnamed official quoted by Reuters said. The safety of ships and seafarers has been a particularly important issue for India, as at least 30 Indian seafarers aboard ships in the Strait of Hormuz, the Sea of Oman, and the Black Sea have been killed in attacks during the conflicts in Iran and Ukraine, respectively. Earlier, reports had indicated that a Quad Business Forum mechanism would also be announced during the summit.

The Manila meeting will be the first Quad summit being held in a non-Quad country and indicates the challenges that India has faced as the chair of the summit of the four-country grouping that revived its cooperation in the Indo-Pacific in 2017 and upgraded it during the COVID-19 pandemic in 2021 to leader-level meetings. Since then, the government has been unable to host the Quad summit in India even once, mainly due to the U.S. President's unavailability. New Delhi is unwilling to hand over the chairship of the summit without hosting it in the Indian capital, which may yet happen next year, sources said.

Officials did not clarify who would act as the official host of the meeting in Manila, which has been discussed for weeks, including during U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio's visits to India this year. The U.S. midterm election results had delayed the confirmation of Mr. Trump's travels to the Philippines for the East Asia Summit and to China for the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation Summit.

Ministry of External Affairs spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal on Friday told presspersons only that the Ministry would "keep [them] updated with developments in Manila pertaining to the Quad".

All legal steps for Hasina's return are taken, says Dhaka

Press Trust of India
DHAKA


Sheikh Hasina

Bangladesh has completed all legal procedures required to secure the return of ousted Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina from India, and the next step rests with New Delhi, Minister of Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs of Bangladesh Md. Asaduzzaman said on Saturday, according to local media reports.

"We have completed everything required from our side as part of the legal process. What they [India] will do is up to them," Mr. Asaduzzaman told presspersons after an event at the Bangladesh-China Friendship Conference Centre in Dhaka, according to *Prothom Alo*.

The Minister said Ms. Hasina would return through legal means and her extradition under the bilateral treaty would itself constitute a legal process.

Regarding whether she would be entitled to appeal her death sentence, Mr. Asaduzzaman said she would not have that opportunity under the relevant law, *Dhaka Tribune* reported.

India has acknowledged receiving Bangladesh's extradition requests but has not announced a decision on handing her over.

On Friday, Ministry of External Affairs spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said in New Delhi that Ms. Hasina's extradition was a legal matter and would be dealt with accordingly.

Ms. Hasina has said she intends to return to Bangladesh in December. She made the announcement during an audio-only virtual press conference with journalists organised in New Delhi on August 5.

The event drew a sharp reaction from Dhaka; Bangladesh's Foreign Ministry said it was "outraged" that Ms. Hasina had been allowed to interact with the media in New Delhi despite Dhaka conveying its concerns to the Indian government in advance.

Indian and Belgian navy chiefs hold bilateral talks to boost maritime ties

Press Trust of India
NEW DELHI


Chief of Indian Navy Admiral Krishna Swaminathan and Rear Admiral Tanguy Botman, chief of the Belgian Navy, greet each other in New Delhi on Saturday. SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA

Commander of the Belgian Navy, Rear Admiral Tanguy Botman held talks with Indian Navy chief Admiral Krishna Swaminathan on a range of issues, including maritime security, operational engagements, and collaboration in naval technology, officials said on Saturday.

Maritime cooperation

Rear Admiral Botman, was on an official visit to India on November 14. The bilateral talks were aimed at strengthening maritime cooperation and further deepening navy-to-navy engagements between the two countries, the officials said.

On arrival, he paid homage to fallen soldiers by laying a wreath at the National War Memorial.

Thereafter, he was accorded a ceremonial guard of honour at the South Block lawns. He also interacted with other senior officials to explore avenues for enhancing bilateral cooperation. India and Belgium share longstanding maritime linkages.

The visit marks an important milestone in bilateral navy-to-navy relations and is expected to provide impetus to maritime cooperation through strengthening existing engagements and exploration of new avenues for collaboration, the official said.

ECI assures SC of measures in place to enrol voters deleted by mistake

Krishnadas Rajagopal
NEW DELHI



The Election Commission of India (ECI) on Saturday filed a supplementary affidavit in the Supreme Court detailing "further measures" in place to ensure that voters who have been wrongly left out as "absent, shifted, dead or duplicate" from the draft electoral rolls are brought back in.

"The Commission remains alive to the need to ensure that all those who are eligible to vote find their name in the voters' lists," the ECI assured the public.

It said directions have been issued on November 6 to the Chief Electoral Officers of States and Union Territories where the special intensive revision (SIR) was under way to allow such voters to submit the duly-filled Enumeration Form (Annexure A) to the ERO or AERO communicating their current ordinary residence.

"Electors who have not shifted may submit the signed Enumeration Form (Annexure A) with the Annexure-B statement giving the reason for the earlier non-submission of the Enumeration Form. They can submit it to the ERO/ AERO/ BLO in person or through family members. Online submission option with e-sign will be available on the ECINET," the affidavit said.

For electors who have shifted within the State, and were found to be excluded from the draft roll, Form 8 (for shifting) is not required. "They can submit the Enumeration Form (Annexure A) with the Annexure-C statement (giving their new address and Assembly Constituency) and address proof to the ERO / AERO of the new constituency. They can also use the 'Book a call with BLO' facility, among others which are self-explanatory," the ECI noted.

The poll body informed the court that instructions have been given out to provide booth-wise lists of left-out electors (voters marked as absent, shifted, dead or duplicate or ASDD) to be displayed afresh along with the "probable reasons" for non-inclusion.

"The Enumeration Forms submitted by such electors shall be processed by the EROs in accordance with Rule 21(1) of the Registration of Electors Rules, 1960 [for inclusion of names inadvertently omitted from the electoral roll] and the same EPIC number shall be re-assigned to them," the affidavit clarified.

However, any previously-registered elector, who was deleted from the draft roll, but had already submitted Form 6 [application for new voters], need not submit the Enumeration Form afresh. Their applications would be processed in accordance with the November 3 clarification on re-inclusion into the electoral roll without the fear of facing any criminal prosecution.

"A mechanism has also been directed to be put in place to ensure that no elector is deprived of the opportunity to get his/her name included in the final electoral roll, subject to fulfilment of the prescribed eligibility conditions, while taking due care to avoid duplication in enrolment," the EC submitted.

Assam accident toll rises to 26; 17 still in hospital

The Hindu Bureau
GUWAHATI


Mortal remains of a victim of Friday's accident being transported from a mortuary in Golaghat, Assam, on Saturday. PTI

Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Saturday said the driver of the minibus involved in a collision with a container truck near Kaziranga National Park on Friday may have had a health issue that resulted in the accident.

The death toll in the collision rose to 26 on Saturday after another passenger died due to injuries.

Seventeen injured passengers are undergoing treatment at the Jorhat Medical College and Hospital, Jorhat, Assam.

Referring to a viral dashcam footage from the truck, he told presspersons that the minibus driver, who was among those who died, might have suffered a heart attack or stroke moments before the mishap occurred.

"Looking at the way the Traveller [minibus] rammed into the truck, Education Minister Ranoj Pegu, who is a doctor, said it *prima facie* suggested that the driver suffered a heart attack or stroke, following which he lost control of the vehicle," the Chief Minister said.

He said that the driver's post-mortem examination would be conducted.

The families of the deceased will receive ₹9 lakh each. This includes ₹5 lakh from the Chief Minister's Relief Fund, ₹2 lakh from the State Disaster Management Authority, and ₹2 lakh announced by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

India-Nepal train to connect Janakpur Dham and Ayodhya

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Indian Railways is going to operate a new weekly train service between Janakpur Dham in Nepal and Ayodhya in Uttar Pradesh.

The route will cover approximately 604 kilometres, connecting Janakpur Dham with Ayodhya Cantt.

The train will have stoppages at Jaynagar, Madhubani, Shisho, Sitamarhi, Raxaul, Narkatiaganj, Gorakhpur, Basti, Mankapur, and Ayodhya Dham, besides its terminal stations.

The Railway Ministry said the service would operate once a week, with its originating days being Saturday from Janakpur Dham and Monday from Ayodhya Cantt.

Citing the role of railway connectivity on bilateral cooperation, the Ministry said in a statement, "India and Nepal share centuries-old cultural, historical and social bonds, with religious traditions and cross-border community relationships forming an integral part of this partnership. The new train service will add another dimension to bilateral cooperation by using railway connectivity to bring communities closer."

India and Nepal have held discussions on cross-border railway links, including passenger train services on the Janakpur-Ayodhya section, and bilateral cooperation in the sector in June this year.

India backs UN resolution on rights of Palestinians

Press Trust of India
UNITED NATIONS


The UN General Assembly voted overwhelmingly in favour of the resolution.

India has voted in favour of a UN General Assembly draft resolution that reaffirms the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people and the population of the occupied Syrian Golan over their natural resources and demands that Israel cease the exploitation and damage of these resources.

The 193-Member UN General Assembly voted overwhelmingly on Wednesday in favour of the resolution 'Permanent sovereignty of the Palestinian people in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and of the Arab population in the occupied Syrian Golan over their natural resources' proposed by Uruguay. India voted in favour of the resolution along with 150 other UN Member States, while Israel and the U.S. were among the seven nations that voted against the draft, which got 11 abstentions.

The resolution reaffirmed the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people and of the population of the occupied Syrian Golan over their natural resources. It demanded that Israel "cease the exploitation, damage, cause of loss or depletion and endangerment of the natural resources in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and in the occupied Syrian Golan.

It stressed that the wall and settlements being constructed by Israel in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including in and around East Jerusalem, are contrary to international law and seriously deprive the Palestinian people of their natural resources.

The resolution called upon Israel to comply strictly with its obligations under international law and immediately and completely cease all policies and measures aimed at altering the character and status of the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem.

Nehru is principal architect of modern India: Congress

Leaders pay tribute to India's first Prime Minister; Kharge recalls Nehru's commitment to scientific thinking, secularism, and equality, and his faith in providing every citizen with equal opportunities

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Calling Jawaharlal Nehru the principal architect of modern India, the Congress on Saturday invoked the legacy of the country's first Prime Minister, highlighting his commitment to democracy, secularism, and scientific temper on his 137th birth anniversary.

Party president Mallikarjun Kharge and former party chief Rahul Gandhi recalled his contributions in building a progressive nation.

Mr. Kharge and Congress Parliamentary Party Chairperson Sonia Gandhi visited Shanti Van, Nehru's memorial, to pay their respects. Several Congress leaders, including former Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot, were present.

They later paid floral tributes to Nehru's portrait in the Central Hall of Samvidhan Sadan, the old Parliament building. Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla, Congress chief whip Kodikunnil Suresh, and other leaders were also present.


Congress leaders Mallikarjun Kharge, Sonia Gandhi, and others pay tribute to Jawaharlal Nehru on Saturday. SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA

However, Mamata All India Trinamool Congress leader Derek O'Brien pointed to the absence of Union Ministers at the tribute ceremony. "We paid floral tributes this morning in Central Hall, Parliament, to India's first Prime Minister, Pandit Nehru. Not even one of the current PM's 29 Cabinet Ministers was present. Decency? Common courtesy?" he asked in a post on X.

'Jewel of Hind'

Mr. Gandhi, in a post on X, described Nehru as the "Jewel of Hind" and said freedom was not his destination but a milestone in the country's new journey. "India was a quest, an idea for him – diversity as its strength, democracy as its faith, and equality as its foundation," he said.

Mr. Kharge said Nehru understood that a country as diverse as India could remain united only through democracy that accommodated different cultures, beliefs, political voices, and aspirations.

"As we pay our solemn tributes to him at Shanti Van today, we must reaffirm our resolve to preserve, protect, and defend the Constitution, our democratic institutions, and the values that bind us together," he said.

Mr. Kharge also recalled Nehru's commitment to scientific thinking, secularism, and equality, and his faith in providing every citizen with equal opportunities. Nehru's affection for children and his emphasis on their education, he said, remained a reminder that the country's future rested with the coming generations.

Congress communications chief Jairam Ramesh shared a post on X highlighting the interest generated by the digital archive of Nehru's works. "Over the past year, this digital repository of the 100 volumes of the Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru covering the period 1903-1964 has had well over 1 million unique visitors and has had 4 million+ page views...," Mr. Ramesh said.

"They are essential to understanding 20th century India through the eyes of someone who so very profoundly shaped it," he added.

BJP targets Congress over 'silence' on misconduct charges against its leaders

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) on Saturday accused the Congress of following a double standard on the issue of women's dignity, safety, and empowerment by publicly advocating women's rights while "remaining silent" on accusations of misconduct against its own leaders.

At a press conference, BJP MP Bansuri Swaraj referred to Jharkhand Congress MLA Bhushan Bara, who has been accused of sexually assaulting a 14-year-old tribal girl; MP Bimol Akoijam, who faces allegations of sexual harassment in Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU); and Uttarakhand party leader Harak Singh Rawat, who was earlier accused of raping a woman from Assam. The woman, who claimed that she became pregnant after the abuse, has now demanded a DNA test on her son. The three Congress leaders have denied the accusations.

> It is surprising that the Congress, which raises hollow slogans such as 'smash the patriarchy', along with its Leader of Opposition Rahul Gandhi, Priyanka Gandhi, Sonia Gandhi and Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge, has once again chosen to maintain silence on this matter
> **BANSURI SWARAJ**
> BJP MP



'Only slogans'

Ms. Swaraj questioned the "silence" of senior Congress leaders, stating that under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the BJP government was empowering women to become self-reliant and nation-builders, while the Congress was limited to raising slogans.

'Serious allegations'

She alleged that the Congress continued to "repeatedly insult women". "Tomorrow also marks the birth anniversary of Bhagwan Birsa Munda *ji* and Janjatiya Gaurav Diwas. On such an occasion, it is deeply shameful that Jharkhand Congress MLA Bhushan Bara is facing serious allegations of sexually assaulting a 14-year-old tribal girl," she said.

"It is surprising that the Congress, which raises hollow slogans such as 'Smash the Patriarchy', along with its Leader of Opposition Rahul Gandhi, Priyanka Gandhi, Sonia Gandhi and Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge, has once again chosen to maintain silence on this matter," she alleged.

"All these cases are distinct from one another, whether it is the rape of a tribal girl, the appointment of Bimol Akoijam as co-chairman of manifesto committee, or the appointment of Harak Singh Rawat as chairman of the election management committee in Uttarakhand. However, one thing is common to all these cases: the conspicuous silence of the Congress party and Rahul Gandhi," she said.

Bengal police question Abhishek over anti-CEC post

Senjuti Sengupta
KOLKATA

The West Bengal Police questioned Mamata All India Trinamool Congress (MAITC) general secretary Abhishek Banerjee for over three hours on Saturday in connection with a social media post against Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar.

Two days before the State Assembly election result was published, the Diamond Harbour MP had put up a post on his X handle calling the CEC a "puppet of the Gujarati gang".

A first information report was lodged at the Bhawanipore police station on May 27 against him for allegedly hurting the sentiments of the Gujarati community through the post.

On receipt of summons, he reached the Bhawanipore police station around 1.30 p.m. After leaving the police station, Mr. Banerjee said he was not afraid and stood by what he said. "Investigating agencies are doing their job. I have not run away. I respect the law enforcement agencies. But, I stand by what I said in the post. I had quoted a post by BJP leader Amit Malviya and called the BJP 'anti-Bengal'," he said.

Modi's '400-*paar*' slogan came true for Delhi AQI: Cong.

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Congress on Saturday took a swipe at Prime Minister Narendra Modi over his 2024 Lok Sabha election slogan, "*Abki baar,* 400-*paar*", saying it had come true in the national capital, with Delhi's air quality index (AQI) crossing the 400-mark.

In a post in Hindi on X, Congress communications chief Jairam Ramesh said, "*Abki baar*, AQI 400-*paar*. The '*pravachanmantri's*' (preaching minister) slogan is coming true when it comes to AQI!"

Referring to reports of worsening air quality in Delhi, Mr. Ramesh said the city had become the most polluted in the world, with toxic air making breathing difficult. Children and the elderly were bearing the brunt of the pollution, while the number of patients in hospitals was rising, he said.

"Slogans were tossed into the air; now the air itself has turned to poison," he said.

Mr. Modi had used the "*Abki baar,* 400-*paar*" slogan during the 2024 Lok Sabha election campaign, seeking a mandate of more than 400 seats for the National Democratic Alliance.

Several air quality monitoring stations in Delhi have recorded AQI levels in the 'severe' category (400-500) over the past few days.

Minister calls for coordinated action against air pollution across NCR

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Saying that air pollution does not recognise State boundaries, Union Minister for Environment, Forest and Climate Change Bhupender Yadav on Saturday emphasised the need for the coordinated implementation of pollution control measures across the National Capital Region (NCR), with real-time monitoring through integrated command and control centres and direct accountability of field officers for violations.

At a review meeting held to assess measures undertaken by Delhi, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh, and Rajasthan to mitigate air pollution in Delhi-NCR, he directed all agencies to move beyond planning and ensure rigorous, time-bound, and coordinated enforcement on the ground.


Delhi's air quality remained in the 'very poor' category on Saturday morning. SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA

Fixing responsibility

The Minister directed State governments to nominate secretary-level officials for seven cities in Haryana, four cities in Uttar Pradesh, and four cities in Rajasthan to make them responsible for the implementation of pollution control measures through field visits and report to Commission for Air Quality Management (CAQM) on a weekly basis.

He directed all States concerned to install Automatic Number-plate Recognition (ANPR) cameras at fuel stations, integrated with VAHAN and Pollution Under Control Certificate (PUCC) databases, for intensified action against old and polluting vehicles, failing which CAQM would initiate criminal proceedings against delinquent Transport Department officials after November 30.

The Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) was directed to immediately seal the identified 191 non-conforming polluting industries, which had not even placed orders for the installation of air pollution control devices (APCDs) despite repeated directions.

Delhi court denies bail to 2 accused of Parliament breach

Press Trust of India
NEW DELHI

A Delhi court has dismissed, for the second time, the regular bail pleas of two accused in the December 2023 Parliament security breach case.

In an order passed on Friday, Special Judge Kiran Bansal noted that the accused – D. Manoranjan and Sagar Sharma – sought bail citing long incarceration and parity with two co-accused who were granted bail by the Delhi High Court.

The judge underlined that the statutory bar on bail under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA) applied in the present case.

The Delhi High Court granted bail to co-accused Neelam Raoliya and Mahesh Kumawat in July 2025.

Mr. Bansal observed that the High Court had noted that Ms. Raoliya stayed outside Parliament and Mr. Kumawat was not in Delhi that day. "However, the present two accused persons had entered the main Parliament and jumped from the public gallery to the main hall of the Lok Sabha," the court said, adding that canisters "were concealed in the shoes and parliamentary proceedings were disrupted." "The grounds of parity are not available to the present accused persons," the judge said on Friday.

Himachal BJP corners govt. over stamp duty hike

Press Trust of India
SHIMLA

The Himachal Pradesh unit of Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) on Saturday slammed the Congress government in the State over a stamp duty hike, saying its "misplaced" economic policies were burdening the public.

The Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu government had revised the stamp duty in September, and the changes came into effect on October 28.

In a statement, State BJP spokesperson Ajay Rana said that certain documents and procedures that previously required a stamp duty of ₹100 now cost as much as ₹1,000. He accused the Congress of prioritising fee hikes under the guise of increasing revenue, while failing to show tangible results in financial management and reduction of unnecessary expenditures.

Talks on NCP merger ended with Ajit Pawar's death: Sule

The Hindu Bureau
MUMBAI

Putting a "full stop" on the discussion of a potential merger between the two Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) factions, NCP (Sharad Pawar) MP Supriya Sule said on Saturday that the talks ended with the death of her brother Ajit Pawar, the former national president of the rival faction.

"The merger talks were on till my brother was alive and the date was set. The day he died, the talks were given a full stop. Our spokesperson never made statements on it or gave counters to rival faction," Ms. Sule told the media.

Ajit Pawar, the former Deputy Chief Minister of Maharashtra, died in an aircraft accident on January 28 at the Baramati airport in Pune.

The speculation of a possible reunion between the rival factions have been intensifying over the last few days amid several high-profile meetings, including between senior NCP working president Praful Patel and NCP(SP) supremo Sharad Pawar. Meanwhile, current Deputy Chief Minister and NCP national president Sunetra Pawar met Chief Minister and Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) leader Devendra Fadnavis on Saturday.


Supriya Sule with Sunetra Pawar during the funeral of Ajit Pawar in Baramati on January 29, 2026. FILE PHOTO

NCP MP Sunil Tatkare dismissed any political intention behind Mr. Patel's meeting with Mr. Sharad Pawar and called it a personal visit.

Meanwhile, Shiv Sena (UBT) leader Sanjay Raut advised NCP(SP) not to get swept away in the merger game for ministerial posts, saying "there may be a handful of people in Sharad Pawar's party desperate for ministerial posts but it is not right for Sharad Pawar to destroy the principles he has upheld throughout his life for their sake."

The leader of the NCP (SP)'s Opposition ally also highlighted that it does not suit the faction to discuss matters with a group that "licks the BJP's boots" and create an "atmosphere of confusion" in Maharashtra.

'Seat-sharing talks under way between BJP and SAD ahead of Punjab election'

Press Trust of India
CHANDIGARH

Negotiations on seat sharing between the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and the Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD) for the 2027 Punjab Assembly election are under way, sources said on Saturday amid speculation that the two parties may join hands again. After the finalisation of seats, a formal announcement on the alliance is expected this month, according to sources in both the SAD and BJP. The SAD had snapped its 24-year-old alliance with the BJP in September 2020 over the now-scrapped three farm laws.

Senior Punjab BJP leader Harjit Singh Grewal on Saturday said that the party's central leadership will take a call on any alliance. Mr. Grewal, who is the chairperson of the National Commission for Minorities, said common people and some BJP leaders who came from other political parties have a view that the election could be won if an alliance takes place. "But BJP's core team, comprising those who have been working for the last 40-50 years, does not want an alliance," he told presspersons.


Prime Minister Narendra Modi with Shiromani Akali Dal president Sukhbir Singh Badal in Punjab's Gurdaspur in 2019. FILE PHOTO

These two views are doing the rounds, he said. "I believe that governments come and go. But the ideology of nationalism must certainly thrive in Punjab," said Mr. Grewal.

In another development, Union Jal Shakti Minister C.R. Patil, who is also the BJP's Punjab election in-charge, is expected to visit the State on Tuesday. He will be meeting State BJP leaders in Chandigarh, sources said.

Former Punjab Chief Minister and BJP leader Amarinder Singh had also met Prime Minister Narendra Modi in Delhi a few days ago, sources said. He is learnt to have discussed State issues, including drug abuse, with the Prime Minister, they said.

Last month in Delhi, Union Home Minister Amit Shah predicted a National Democratic Alliance (NDA) government in Punjab in 2027. When he came to Chandigarh on November 1, he again said an NDA government will be formed in the border State. The statement reignited the buzz about a possible SAD-BJP alliance.

On November 2, when SAD president Sukhbir Singh Badal was asked about the possibility of a re-alliance, he gave a guarded response to speculation, saying, "You will come to know in a few days as to what will happen."

He reiterated that except for the Congress and the ruling Aam Aadmi Party, he is open to an alliance with other parties which accept his party's philosophy. Punjab BJP leaders, however, have been maintaining that they are preparing to fight all 117 Assembly seats in the coming election due early next year.

INBRIEF



Centre operationalises portal for declaration of paddy stock

The government has operationalised a portal for online declaration of paddy or rice stock, a move aimed at preventing hoarding and to check prices. As per the November 6 order, traders and wholesalers, retailers, large retail chains, processors and millers must declare stocks under six categories – Basmati rice, non-Basmati premium rice, non-Basmati rice, parboiled rice, broken rice and paddy. In a social media post on Saturday , the nodal Food Ministry said it has operationalised the portal for this purpose. As per the order, every unit holding stocks will have to update details on the Food Stock Portal (foodstock.dfpd.gov.in) every Friday. PTI

Indian envoy slams USCIRF over Sharjeel Imam remarks

Indian Ambassador Vinay Mohan Kwatra has asked an American advisory body to introspect on its own prejudices and stop lecturing others, after the bipartisan agency flagged arrests in India allegedly on religious grounds. Mr. Kwatra's retort on Friday came after the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF) shared Sharjeel Imam's profile on *X*, describing him as "a Muslim man detained in India for his religious freedom advocacy". The former Jawaharlal Nehru University scholar has been booked under the UAPA on allegations of being among the masterminds of the February 2020 riots in Delhi that left 53 people dead. PTI

Four killed, 18 injured after two buses collide in Punjab

At least four persons were killed and 18 others injured after two pilgrimage buses collided in Punjab's Tarn Taran district on Saturday evening. Tarn Taran Senior Superintendent of Police Surendra Lamba said the accident occurred when the driver of a bus, in an attempt to rescue a motorcycle, crossed over to the wrong side of the road and collided with another bus. "At least 18 persons are severely injured," Mr. Lamba said. A doctor at the Civil Hospital in Tarn Taran said four people were brought dead. The injured were rushed to the Civil Hospital and those critically injured were referred to a hospital in Amritsar for more advanced treatment. PTI

Ex V-P Jagdeep Dhankhar discharged from AIIMS

Former Vice-President Jagdeep Dhankhar was discharged from AIIMS in New Delhi on Saturday, three days after he was admitted, family sources said. The 75-year-old was admitted to the hospital on November 11 after he collapsed during his morning walk and remained unconscious for a few minutes. He was admitted to the hospital's Cardio-Neuro Centre and was under the care of the Department of Cardiology for medical evaluation and treatment. Security personnel accompanying Mr. Dhankhar had initially taken him home in a PCR vehicle after he collapsed. Later, he was admitted to AIIMS. PTI

SUDOKU

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Solution to yesterday's Sudoku

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

Air passenger traffic takes a hit, down 2.9% in April-Sept.

The decline in passenger traffic has been accompanied by a fall in aircraft movement, with airlines having found it more economical to ground planes than operate them due to costly aviation fuel

Jagriti Chandra
NEW DELHI

Air passenger traffic in India has slipped into contraction, declining 2.9% in the April-September period, with international travel taking a bigger hit than domestic flying. While domestic passenger traffic fell 1.9%, international traffic was down a sharper 7.1%.

The slowdown comes at a time when airlines are grappling with the fallout of the conflict in West Asia. Higher aviation turbine fuel costs, airspace disruptions and longer flight routes have added to operating expenses, forcing airlines to trim capacity or flights and raise fares. The resulting increase in travel costs may also be weighing on passenger demand.

The weakness follows a year of near-stagnant growth. In FY2025-26, passenger traffic grew by just 1.9%, with domestic travel barely inching up and international traffic doing somewhat better. This marked a sharp deceleration from the double-digit growth recorded in the years immediately after the pandemic.

All passenger figures are from Airports Authority of India's monthly passenger traffic data that calculates both arriving and departing passengers across all airports.



While domestic passenger traffic fell 1.9%, international traffic was down a sharper 7.1% in the April-September period. FILE PHOTO

Reduced flights

The decline in passenger traffic has been accompanied by a fall in aircraft movements, pointing to a reduction in the number of flights operated by airlines.

This reflects not only cancellations of international services but also capacity rationalisation on domestic routes, where some airlines have found it more economical to ground aircraft than operate them amid higher aviation turbine fuel (ATF) costs. Aircraft movements – counting each landing and take-off – fell 3.5% in April-September compared with the corresponding period last year.

According to IndiGo CEO William Walsh in a post-results analyst call last month, the airline is seeking to strike a balance between yield management, or the revenue earned per passenger for every kilometre flown, and load factor, or the proportion of seats occupied on an aircraft, to maximise revenue.

This means airlines are willing to let some seats go unsold if that helps them maintain higher fares and maximise overall revenue. IndiGo's revenue per seat kilometre saw a growth of 34% but seats sold saw 2-percentage point reduction. Across the industry, there were 5% fewer seats in the July-September period.

In October, average airfares were a massive 43% higher compared to the same month last year, according to Consumer Price Index. Of all the 358 goods and services in the CPI basket, airfares saw the largest increase in price (13.36%) from the previous month. In September, airfares were 29.9% higher compared to the same time previous year. "But demand has held up pretty well" even at the inflated airfares, Mr. Walsh said about the months of July-September.

ATF prices

India's ATF prices have risen sharply since the escalation of tensions in the Gulf in February 2026. In Delhi, the price for domestic airlines has climbed from approximately ₹91.39 per litre in February to ₹138.50 per litre in November.

From April 1 to June 8, the government had capped the ATF price increase for domestic airlines at 8.5%, limiting the pass-through of an international price shock that would otherwise have more than doubled fuel prices to approximately ₹2.07 lakh per kilolitre.

India to contribute €7 million to Italian research facility

Jacob Koshy
NEW DELHI

Indian scientists have conducted research at Elettra since 1998 and continue to use its facilities

India has committed to contribute at least €7 million (approximately ₹73 crore) over the next five years, beginning in the current financial year, towards the Elettra 2.0 programme, Union Science Minister Jitendra Singh said in Italy on Saturday.

Elettra Sincrotrone Trieste is an international research centre in Trieste, Italy, that operates a synchrotron light source – a facility in which electrons are accelerated to nearly the speed of light and made to emit extremely bright X-rays and other forms of electromagnetic radiation. These beams allow scientists to examine the structure and properties of matter at the atomic and molecular scales, with applications ranging from materials science and nanotechnology to biology, medicine, archaeology, and cultural heritage.

The centre operates two major facilities: Elettra, a third-generation synchrotron light source, and FERMI, a free-electron laser that produces exceptionally bright, ultrashort light pulses.

Its scientific importance lies in giving researchers access to experimental tools that can reveal the structure, composition, and behaviour of matter with extraordinary precision, including processes occurring over extremely short timescales.

Scientific partnership

India's participation will support the development of research infrastructure and human resource capacity, marking a "significant new phase" in the longstanding scientific partnership between India and Italy, an accompanying press statement noted.

India and Italy have collaborated on research for at least 25 years, with Indian scientists having conducted research experiments at Elettra since 1998 and continuing to use its facilities. India is currently the second-largest user of Elettra after Italy, reflecting the sustained engagement of its scientific community.

Around 1,100 proposals for experiments were received by Elettra from Indian research groups. India ranks second in the number of proposals submitted, after Italy.

Manipur Naga organisation seeks NIA probe into Ukhrul killing, action against Kuki rebels

The Hindu Bureau
GUWAHATI

A Naga organisation in conflict-scarred Manipur has issued a three-day "public ultimatum" to the Union and State governments to drive out Kuki rebels from Naga areas and let the National Investigation Agency probe the killing of four Naga civilians in Ukhrul district on Friday.

The four – identified as Kapangkhui R.S., her son Haoleila R.S., Khanmila Keishing, and August Ngalung, all from Ukhrul district – were killed when armed assailants ambushed two vehicles on National Highway-202. The State government said the attackers were unknown gunmen.



Condolence meet: Family members mourn around coffins of four Naga civilians killed in firing. PTI

Tangkhul Naga civil society organisations held a meeting after the killing and decided to issue the ultimatum. "This is the fourth such incident at the same location. The entire responsibility for failing to protect the lives of innocent civilians is solely fixed upon State and Central governments," the Tangkhul Naga Long (TNL), an apex Naga organisation, said.

'Lost faith'

Stating that Naga people have lost complete faith in the Central security forces, the TNL said all Central security forces deployed on that stretch of the road must be immediately withdrawn.

"The victim families resolved not to claim the bodies until then. Failing this, it is resolved that the general public would be compelled to resort to an indefinite agitation until complete justice is delivered," the TNL warned.

The four Naga civilians were killed a day after a Kuki woman was killed and two men from the Kuki community were injured in a similar firing incident in Kangpokpi district. Ukhrul and Kangpokpi are Naga and Kuki-majority districts, respectively.

Security review

Chief Minister Yumnam Khemchand Singh reviewed the prevailing law and order situation in the State on Saturday. "It was decided that combing operations will continue to nab the culprits involved in various crimes. It was further decided that the respective security posts will have to strengthen security cover in their area of deployment," the government said in a statement.

Police file chargesheet in Delhi park gang-rape case

Press Trust of India
NEW DELHI

The Delhi Police have filed a 450-page chargesheet against three men accused of posing as police personnel before allegedly raping a 17-year-old girl at knife-point inside south Delhi's Aastha Kunj Park in September. The chargesheet, filed before a court on Friday, names Mohammad Asif, Hemant Singh and Mukesh Singh as accused and includes statements of 57 witnesses. Investigators have relied on CCTV camera footage, call detail records (CDRs), forensic evidence and the victim's statement.

1,000 drums power Meghalaya harvest festival

In world-record performance, 1,000 drummers play the *dama* during Wangala, a Garo harvest festival dedicated to the Sun God and marking the onset of winter; it began with 10 drums in 1976

Rahul Karmakar
TURA

The biggest organised harvest festival of Meghalaya's Garo community expanded from a hundred to a thousand drums on its golden jubilee on Saturday, creating a world record.

Also known as a '100 drums festival', the festival of farmers is the occasion when the tribal people offer sacrifices to please their main deity *Saljong* - the Sun God. The harvest festival marks the end of a period of toil and signifies the onset of winter.

Called *dama* in the Garo tongue, each drum is almost 4 feet long. Wangala was given a formal shape in 1976 after a Block Development Officer, who felt the drumbeats were losing their reverberating sound, scouted 10 dama players and organised a Wangala at the Chandmary Field in Tura, the second-largest urban centre in the State. Captain Williamson A. Sangma, then Chief Minister, felt 10 drums were not enough and organised 100 drummers for a repeat festival in December 1976 at Asananggre, about 16 km from Tura.



Garo drummers create a Guinness World Record on the 50th anniversary of Wangala festival on Saturday. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Fifty years later, about 1,500 women dancers, 1,000 drummers, and other participants from across five Garo Hills districts assembled at Wangala A'dam (Wangala Ground) near Tura for the record-breaking performance for the grand finale at the conclusion of the four-day Wangala festival on Saturday. A representative of Guinness World Records announced the new achievement after the 1,000-drum ensemble ended in the afternoon.

"This is a proud moment for the Garo people. We felt it was appropriate to celebrate the 50th anniversary of Wangala grandly. The outcome is a world record," Chief Minister Conrad K. Sangma said.

Union Minister of Art and Culture and Tourism Gajendra Singh Shekhawat, the chief guest at the event, said Prime Minister Narendra Modi's focus on preserving cultural heritage has elevated traditional festivals across India, resulting in record-breaking performances. "In the coming days, it will become an international festival like [Nagaland's] Hornbill," he said.

Bihar Police say over 1 lakh bank accounts linked to cybercrime

Amit Bhelari
PATNA

The Bihar Police Cyber Unit has identified a total of 1,09,475 bank accounts suspected of involvement in cybercrime.

Ranjit Kumar Mishra, Inspector-General, Cyber Crime and Security Unit, said on Friday that a total of ₹72.53 crore had been deposited in these mule accounts across all 38 districts. The police would soon initiate action against these accounts under the Cyber Prahar 5.0 campaign, he said.

Patna leads with the highest number of mule accounts (14,644), followed by Gaya (6,172), Muzaffarpur (4,244), Nalanda (4,146), Bhagalpur (4,197), West Champaran (3,945), Siwan (3,859), Vaishali (3,441), and Aurangabad (3,326). Mr. Mishra said another cyber police station would soon be established in Patna district to address rising cybercrimes.

Earlier, the Bihar Police launched the Cyber Prahar 4.0 and 4.1 campaigns to combat cybercrime, Mr. Mishra said.

A total of 47,659 cybercrime complaints were registered in Bihar, while 5,69,160 complaints were registered at the national level. Similarly, cyber fraud amounting to ₹121.26 crore was reported in Bihar. Of this, accounts worth ₹36.94 crore were frozen and ₹8.04 crore has been refunded to victims.

According to police data, cyber fraud of ₹3,503 crore was reported nationally during the same period. Of this, accounts worth ₹993 crore were frozen, and ₹57 crore has been refunded to victims.



A touch of tradition: A man gets a sacred symbol on his forehead at a *tika* ceremony at Rani Pokhari in Kathmandu on Bhaitika or Bhai Tihar.



Bonds beyond blood: The annual collective bhaitika ceremony offers those without siblings an opportunity to receive the seven-coloured *tika* and flower garlands.



Applause for paws: The Nepal Army honours its trained K9 (canine) unit on Kukur Tihar. It also showcases the dogs' skills on the day.



Festive glow: Basantapur Durbar Square in Kathmandu illuminated with lights on Bhai Tihar.

A festival of lights, love and all life

Nepal gives Tihar a distinctive twist, honouring animals and cherishing familial ties, making Deepavali a festival that is one of inclusive celebration



Prabhat Khanal

For five days of Deepavali, Nepal comes alive with grand festivities celebrated with vigour. The festival of lights, or Tihar as it is known in Nepal, is that time of the year when community bonds are renewed and people pause to bow before and pay their respects to all that sustains them.

Along with Indian customs, such as illuminating homes and decorating them with garlands of flowers, the small Himalayan nation also has some interesting celebrations that make the festival particularly special.

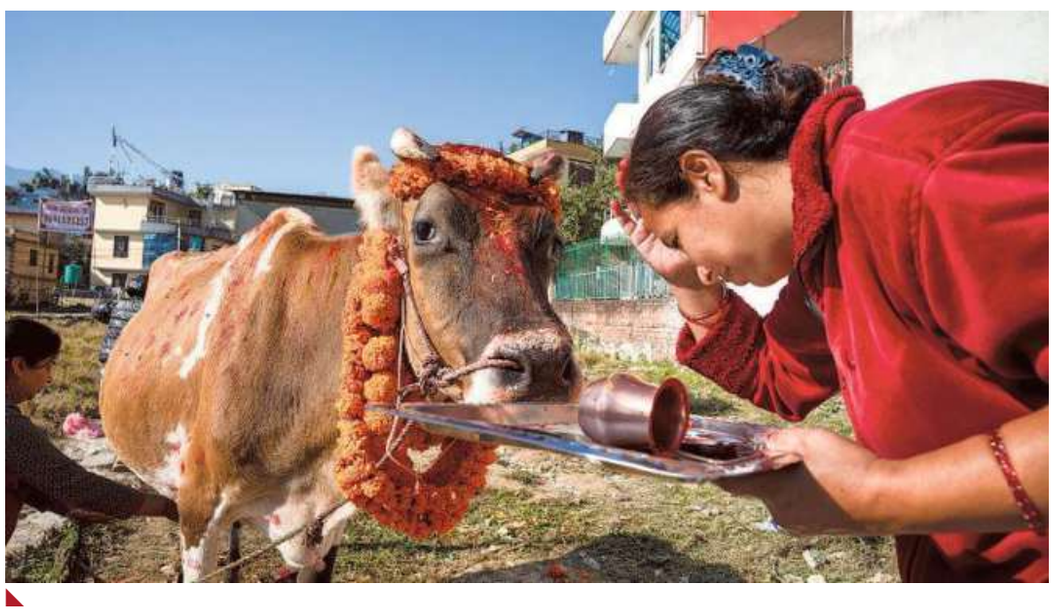
Some of these age-old traditions include the worship of animals closely associated with humans, application of a seven-coloured *tika*, and the 'Deusi-Bhailo' tradition, which involves singing and dancing from house to house.

The first day of festivities, Kaag Tihar, is dedicated to crows. These common visitors are regarded as messengers and associated with Yamaraj, the god of death. People offer food to crows, believing that pleasing the birds brings good fortune.

The second day, Kukur Tihar, is for dogs, recognising these faithful friends' loyalty, companionship and protective role in human lives. The canines are adorned with flower garlands and *tika*, and offered special food. The third day, Gai Tihar, is dedicated to honouring cows and performing a Lakshmi puja. Goddess Lakshmi, revered as the deity of wealth and prosperity, is welcomed into homes illuminated with oil lamps and decorated with flowers and lights. Cows are honoured as manifestations of the goddess and as *Gau-mata* (mother).

The fourth day, known as Goru Tihar or Hal Tihar, is marked by Govardhan puja. This one is for the oxen that pull the plough and help farmers grow crops.

On the final day, Bhai Tihar (Bhaitika), the spotlight shifts to siblinghood. Sisters pamper brothers with their favourite treats and sweets, while brothers return the love with gifts such as clothes or money. On the occasion, blessings are exchanged, celebrating love, laughter and enduring bonds.



Seeking bovine blessings: A cow is honoured during Gai Tihar, the third day of the festival, in Kathmandu.



Harvest hues: Farmers gather marigolds from a field in Kathmandu. The blooms are woven into garlands for Tihar rituals.



Vibrant strings: Vendors make and sell garlands of marigolds and globe amaranths outside the historic Kasthamandap Temple.



A place for all: Women apply *tikas* and adorn men with globe amaranth garlands during a collective Bhaitika ceremony in Kathmandu.



Rhythm and revelry: Young people perform Deusi-Bhailo, the traditional song-and-dance ritual of Tihar, at Basantapur Durbar Square.



City of lights: Swayambhunath Temple, a heritage site, and the rest of the Kathmandu Valley is illuminated for Lakshmi puja.

What are the hurdles in Hasina's return?

Bangladesh govt. calls her a 'terrorist' and will not issue passport; repatriation or extradition requires the document

Kallol Bhattacherjee

The story so far:

Sheikh Hasina sought a new passport and a national identity card from the Government of Bangladesh on November 9. In response, Acting Foreign Minister Humayun Kabir said that Bangladesh seeks her extradition under an "acceptable prisoner transfer process". This is the latest episode in the Hasina saga that began when she came to India on August 5, 2024, after the student-led uprising toppled her government.

What are the twin challenges faced by Hasina in returning to Bangladesh?

Ms. Hasina faces a dilemma. She wants to return as a political leader and reclaim her party, the Awami League. But she stands accused of ordering the police crackdown of July-August 2024 by the International Crimes Tribunal (ICT) in Dhaka, which has sentenced her to death for it. Her challenge is now to return to face justice and yet emerge as a leader of her country. She has refused to apologise for the crackdown, saying the police did not take her orders, but responded to angry agitators and militants who had provoked them. The death sentence makes it clear that she will have to face the ICT on her return, so it will have to be part of the process that delivers justice in Bangladesh.

Apart from that, she does not hold a Bangladesh passport, which leaves her without a valid travel document. Repatriation or extradition will have to rest on the availability of a passport or some other form of travel document such as an emergency certificate without which India may not be able to transfer her. The Government of Bangladesh, however, has said it will not issue her a passport because she is a "terrorist".

Tribunal in Dhaka has sentenced her to death for the crackdown on protesters; she will have to face the tribunal if she returns passport, which leaves her without a valid travel document

Why does the current government refer to her as terrorist?

Mr. Kabir called Ms. Hasina a "terrorist" on November 9. The fundamentalist political party Jamaat-e-Islami has used the same term. Ms. Hasina stands accused of ordering the police crackdown that led to the deaths of hundreds of civilians, including students protesting against her rule. She maintains that during her tenure she implemented a tough counter-terror policy, led by the Rapid Action Battalion (RAB), a force she says was raised under her.

The label is common in Bangladeshi politics. During her own tenure, Ms. Hasina often called her opponents terrorists or supporters of Pakistan.

If Hasina indeed wants to return, which route will she have to take?

Ms. Hasina said on August 5, 2026, that she would like to return and indicated December as the month. She has not yet said how she might do so.If India hands her over under the 2013 extradition treaty, she will be arrested on arrival at the airport. If she returns on her own, she could instead use a land port such as Benapole-Petrapole on the West Bengal border.

What are the security risks if Hasina returns to her country?

The Awami League remains banned in Bangladesh, but it has a large number of supporters. If she returns through Benapole-Petrapole, her supporters are expected to gather in large numbers at the border, along with opponents from the ruling Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) and the Jamaat-e-Islami. This could turn into a tense confrontation and a major law-and-order challenge for the government's stretched security machinery. Bangladesh has already seen a few arson attacks in recent days, in which vehicles were set on fire.

There is growing concern that her return may embolden her supporters to clash with the government and destabilise a country that is yet to recover from the uprising of August 2024. The police are a particular worry. Their legitimacy and public acceptance remain low because of their role in the July-August 2024 crackdown.

Her return will be part of a legal process that will follow the verdict or a retrial before the ICT.

How will the political situation change in Bangladesh if Hasina is handed over?

At present, the BNP, the Jamaat-e-Islami, and the anti-Hasina student-led National Citizen Party occupy the centre-right and right of the spectrum. Her return is expected to energise the left and centre-left, helping parties such as the Jatiya Party and the Awami League hit the streets. That would challenge the Tarique Rahman government, which already faces labour unrest in the readymade garment sector.

Ms. Hasina may find a new Awami League on her return because the party, whose activities are banned in Bangladesh.

How Microsoft outage affected millions

When the problem first emerged, Microsoft engineers and automated systems shifted their workload to other machines, which then became overloaded and failed as well, thus triggering a chain reaction through its networks that affected multiple services

Sahana Venugopal
Vasudevan Mukunth

The story so far:

Software giant Microsoft faced a widespread outage affecting users of its Microsoft 365 service from the early hours of November 13.

How did the outage affect users?

Microsoft said users might be unable to connect to multiple Microsoft 365 services, particularly those that interact with its Exchange Online and email services. Microsoft's Exchange Online is the cloud-based messaging platform that facilitates its users' emails, calendars, contacts, and tasks.

Think of Microsoft's Exchange Online as a huge ice rink that enables various Microsoft service users to 'skate' on top and carry out their tasks and reach various locations. However, the company has said elements of these services that do not depend on interaction with Exchange Online remained functional. These would be the non-skaters who don't need to be on the rink and can simply walk around it to get to their destination.

Microsoft Teams users had a split experience. While some were completely unable to make or receive calls, others found that previously scheduled meetings were able to proceed as planned. Microsoft updated its website to explain that most of the core functionality of Teams was not affected but that tasks hinging on Exchange Online were failing.

Some social media users also said they could still use their Microsoft apps at work even as others were struggling to view their emails.

That said, the number of affected services came with significant consequences for professional users as well as entire sectors. With Microsoft 365 Admin Center affected, administrators were unable to load crucial pages. With Apps down, many users couldn't access their recent files. Since Microsoft 365 Education was affected, students/teachers were not able to use offerings such as Assignments, Reading Progress, and Speaker Progress, and so on. Cybersecurity was endangered: with Microsoft Defender for Office 365 not functioning as intended, the Safe Links services might have been unable to verify URLs, the company said.

The outage drew calls for critical enterprises, governments to diversify their IT infrastructure providers

U.S. and Australian government bodies have put out notices informing users of the changes and have acknowledged impact on operations.

Microsoft has said it will investigate the outage and publish an incident report.



Logged out: The temporary shutdown of services came with significant consequences for professional users as well as entire sectors. AP

What did the 48-hour email timeout mean?

On November 13 afternoon, as part of its rolling updates on the Service Health Status page, Microsoft said it was expanding its email timeout to 48 hours. This did not refer to email services being down for 48 hours.

When you hit 'send' on an email, your email application – Outlook, GMail, etc. – will send your message to an outgoing mail server. This server will identify the recipient's email provider and contact it over the Internet. The receiving server will check the message, including whether it could be spam, and store it in the recipient's mailbox. When the recipient opens their open application, they will be able to see your message. If the receiving server is unavailable, the sending server will hold your message in a queue and keep attempting to deliver it. And if they fail beyond a point, the sender will be told that delivery failed. Microsoft's update referred to this point.

What describes the outage?

Microsoft shared on X on November 13 that a portion of infrastructure was experiencing elevated load across multiple regions, and this could likely be contributing to the connectivity errors. However, Microsoft later clarified that the elevated load was not driven by an increase in traffic. Rather, servers were unexpectedly unavailable, which further affected the remaining infrastructure that was online.

Microsoft said it was addressing a problem causing servers to fail automated health checks before becoming unavailable, but users were concerned as the outage continued to persist for hours with no signs of recovery. The company tried limiting traffic to some of its infrastructure and tried to bring servers back into service but said the changes were "not taking as expected".

"We're identifying alternative workstreams that can be applied to increase capacity in the face of sustained traffic management imbalances," the company said.

The demand for Microsoft products helps explain at least part of why the company struggled in its recovery efforts. While there is no count now of exactly how many users were affected, the company puts it at 450 million paid Microsoft 365 subscriptions. The outage affected businesses in at least 74 countries and territories.

As Microsoft executive vice-president of Copilot Charles Lamanna wrote in a post on X.com, "Our investigation points to technical challenges and failure modes (cascading failures + thundering herds at our network perimeter) that made recovery more difficult than normal." This means that when the original problem emerged, Microsoft engineers as well as automated systems shifted their workload to other machines, which then became overloaded and failed as well, thus triggering a chain reaction through Microsoft networks that affected multiple services.

Likewise, "thundering herds" referred to the fact that when a service became available again, a larger number of clients and systems tried to reconnect or to retry pending requests at the same time, overwhelming the just-recovering infrastructure and potentially causing it to fail again. (The network perimeter is the infrastructure handling traffic entering or leaving Microsoft's networks.) According to Mr. Lamanna, this combination of loads slowed the company's efforts to restore affected services.

What was the public response?

While Microsoft shared updates on X.com and on the Service Health Status page, among other fora, several customers criticised the company's updates as being too technical and requested more customer-friendly language. Many called on CEO Satya Nadella to directly address the incident.

Many users were curious as to whether the outage involved malicious actors or errant artificial intelligence (AI) models. However, Mr. Lamanna had stressed that the incident was not caused by a cyberattack. "We will continue to share more information as soon as we have it, and for now I can confirm that there is no indication this is the result of malicious or cyber activity," he wrote on X.com.

The outage drew calls for critical enterprises and governments to diversify their IT infrastructure providers, echoing those issued in the aftermath of similar incidents involving various providers in the past. However, these changes have been either slow or absent because these services are deeply integrated and relatively inexpensive at scale, and switching providers would entail significant costs, including to retrain staff. That said, the providers often passively encourage such dependence by bundling their services together for discounts and restricting interoperability.

Can India refuse summons in Pannun case?

A U.S. court has allowed Khalistani separatist Gurpatwant Singh Pannun to pursue serving summons on India's National Security Adviser Ajit Doval and former RAW chief Samant Goel through Indian courts. The order raises several legal questions

Aaratrika Bhaumik

The story so far:

A U.S. court on November 9 permitted Khalistani separatist Gurpatwant Singh Pannun to serve summons on National Security Adviser Ajit Doval and former Research and Analysis Wing (RAW) chief Samant Kumar Goel through Indian courts, in connection with a civil lawsuit alleging a conspiracy to assassinate him. The lawsuit filed by Mr. Pannun, wanted in India on terror charges, is separate but linked to the U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigation's findings of an assassination plot against him in June 2023.

How are summons served by other nations on defendants in India?

The Hague Service Convention, formally known as the Convention on the Service Abroad of Judicial and Extrajudicial Documents in Civil or Commercial Matters, 1965, provides a framework for serving judicial and extrajudicial documents abroad and facilitates proof of service. Both India and the U.S. are parties to the Convention. Each member state must designate a central authority to receive and process requests for service. In India, the Law and Justice Ministry is the designated central authority. The treaty provides for alternative channels, including diplomatic and consular channels, postal service, and direct communication between judicial officers or other competent persons in the originating and destination states.

India limits service of summons through diplomatic or consular channels to nationals of the country from which documents originate

India acceded to the Convention subject to certain reservations, including objections to the alternative methods of service under Article 10. It stipulated that service through diplomatic or consular channels would be limited to nationals of the country from which the documents originate. Thus, U.S. diplomatic or consular officials cannot serve documents in India unless the recipient is a U.S. national.

The Law Ministry can reject a request for service but must specify the reasons. Under Article 13, a request can be denied if the country considers that its sovereignty or security would be compromised, but not merely because its domestic law does not recognise the underlying claim. If accepted, the central authority proceeds with service and issues a certificate confirming whether it was effected (the request is accepted).

To give effect to the Convention, the Union government issued a notification on January 12, 2009, extending the procedure under Section 29(c) of the Code of Civil Procedure, 1908 (CPC), to civil courts in countries that are parties to the Convention. The provision allows summons issued by such courts to be transmitted to Indian courts for service on defendants within their jurisdiction, in the same manner as summons issued by Indian courts.



India has dismissed allegations against National Security Adviser Ajit Doval (in picture) and former RAW chief Samant Goel by Gurpatwant Singh Pannun. PTI

What are the procedural hurdles?

Experts have pointed out that the central authority mechanism has often fallen short of the Convention's objective of simplifying and expediting service abroad. The treaty prescribes no deadline for processing requests, leaving litigants with limited recourse against delays or refusals. In a 2009 assessment based on responses to a questionnaire circulated among member states, the Permanent Bureau, the secretariat that monitors the Convention's operation, found that 66% of requests were completed within two months, 18.3% took at least a year to receive a certificate of service, and another 10.3% were returned unexecuted.

U.S. courts have particularly noted delays in serving documents through India's central authority.

What did the United States court order in the Pannun case?

District Judge Katherine Polk Failla noted that Mr. Pannun's three attempts to personally serve the summons on Mr. Doval during the official visits of the NSA to the U.S. were blocked by security personnel. His attempts to serve Mr. Doval, Mr. Goel, and former RAW officer Vikash Yadav through the Union Law and Justice Ministry had also failed. Before granting his request for alternative service, the court consulted the U.S. Attorney's Office and the State Department, which it said took "no position" on the proposed method.

The court relied on Article 19 of the Convention, which recognises more liberal methods of service permitted under the receiving country's domestic laws, even if not expressly provided for under the treaty. Citing U.S. judicial precedents, Judge Failla noted that Section 29(c) of the CPC, read with the Union government's 2009 notification, permits summons issued by courts in Convention countries to be transmitted to Indian courts for service. She accordingly authorised summons against Mr. Doval and Mr. Goel to be transmitted to three Delhi district courts – Patiala House, Dwarka, and Tis Hazari – identified as having jurisdiction over the areas where they are believed to reside.

The judge rejected Mr. Pannun's argument that India's earlier refusal to execute the requests rendered the Convention inapplicable, noting that the reasons for the refusal remained unclear. She nevertheless left open the possibility of reconsidering its applicability if the Government of India or an Indian court expressed a contrary view.

What are the implications?

External Affairs Ministry spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal has dismissed Mr. Pannun's lawsuit as "fabricated and malicious" and said all official communications would be routed through the Ministry of Law and Justice. The November 9 order concerns only the service of summons and does not establish liability on the part of the Indian government or the two officials.

India has previously invoked diplomatic immunity to refuse service under the Convention.

AI rainmaker meets his Waterloo

Jensen Huang

The Nvidia chief's abrupt exit marks a stunning fall from grace for the man who built the hardware foundation of the AI revolution, forged deep ties with Silicon Valley's tech leaders and expanded the company's reach across every layer of the AI stack

John Xavier

"In another life, Jensen Huang might have been a teacher," says Tae Kim in his book *The Nvidia Way*. Whether he likes it or not, the Nvidia co-founder's reality has now been reset, forcing him back to his idiosyncratic style of solving problems: diagramming on a whiteboard. But this time he won't get a clean start as the scandal-hit former chief of Nvidia will face intense scrutiny over his affair with a Chinese businesswoman who is at the centre of an alleged spy scandal.

Within days of reports emerging about Mr. Huang's affair with Alice Huang, *The New York Times* reported a second relationship, with Kimberly Powell, Nvidia's head of healthcare and one of his direct reports. By then, the controversy had come to a head, forcing Mr. Huang to resign as CEO of Nvidia, the company he had built from scratch.

Several hours after Nvidia announced Mr. Huang's departure, Reuters reported a third extramarital affair involving another of his direct reports. Nvidia has said CFO Colette Kress will serve as interim CEO while it searches for a permanent successor, and that former Synopsys chief Harvey Jones will become its first-ever Board chair.

A week earlier, Mr. Huang was at the top of the AI game. His abrupt exit from Nvidia is a shocking fall from grace for someone who built the very hardware foundation for today's AI companies, developed deep connections with Silicon Valley tech leaders, and vertically integrated Nvidia into every layer of the AI stack.

Early bet

Mr. Huang co-founded Nvidia three decades ago to make graphics cards that can transform 3D coordinate data into 2D screen pixels through a multi-step process. His chips were largely popular in the gaming community. But, by 2006, he began pushing the company towards general-purpose computing with the Compute Unified Device Architecture (CUDA) platform that could make Nvidia graphics cards do more than 3D rendering.

That bet put Nvidia's GPUs at the centre of advances in artificial intelligence. The chips were not only good at rendering video games but also at image processing and matrix multiplication, a crucial mathematical operation used to train and run deep learning models.

Mr. Huang hand-delivered Nvidia's first AI super computer – the DGX system – to OpenAI back in 2016. ChatGPT and its predecessor models were all trained on Nvidia's hardware. But Mr. Huang didn't want Nvidia to be just a GPU maker. More data processing would need more networking and that means more interconnects. He bought the Israeli-American high-speed computer networking company Mellanox in 2020. Beijing was sceptical of the $6.9 billion deal as it would allow Nvidia to bundle its products and create customer lock-ins.

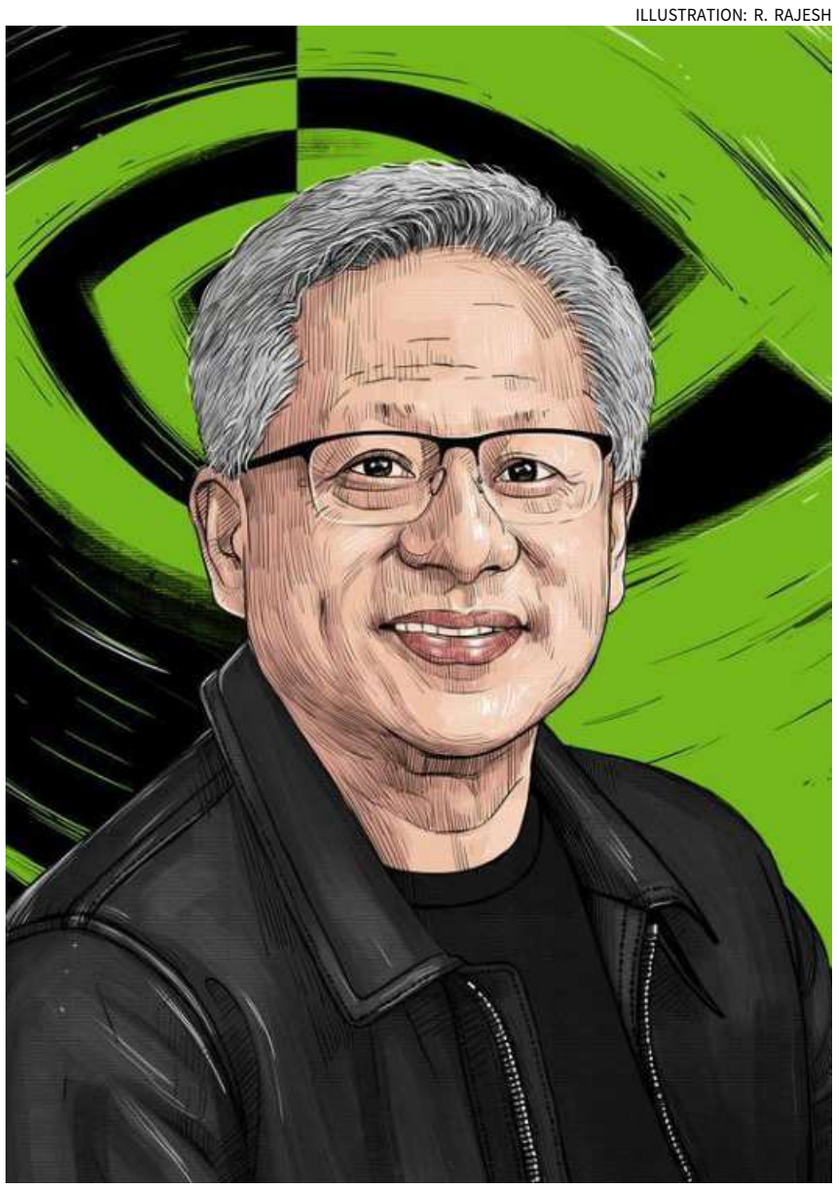
Strategic approval

China's market regulator, State Administration for Market Regulation, approved the deal on the condition that the AI chipmaker would supply Mellanox's products to the Chinese market on fair, reasonable, and non-discriminatory terms. The deal paved the way for Nvidia to become a full-stack data centre architect.

OpenAI has since signed large multi-year compute deals with Nvidia; Anthropic, Google, Meta, xAI and others also buy Nvidia's AI chips in huge volumes to train their AI models. Hyperscalers like Amazon Web Services (AWS), Google Cloud, Meta, and Microsoft's Azure account for roughly 60% of Nvidia's revenue today. And the company's data centre revenue for the quarter ended in July stood at $89 billion, which accounts for 93% of the company's total quarterly revenue of $96.2 billion.

While the company has been growing steadily over the years, the jump in its valuation since ChatGPT launched was astronomical – soaring from $400 billion to $4 trillion.

ILLUSTRATION: R. RAJESH



Despite the size and scale, Nvidia's organisational structure was deliberately kept flat. In the book, *The Nvidia Way*, Mr. Kim portrays Mr. Huang as a leader who expects flat communication and sits atop an unusually wide organisation with about 60 executives reporting to him directly.

While a flat organisational structure reduces bureaucracy and helps the firm move fast, it also centralises power and creates key-man risk. Any system that is driven by a single large force moves quickly towards a singular goal, but becomes fragile if that primary driver fails or stalls.

Mr. Huang has carried that culture playbook to other places, including the White House where he secured an unusual degree of closeness with President Donald Trump.

His arguments that chip restrictions only strengthen Chinese chip makers like Huawei and that China should stay reliant on the American tech stack, found a receptive audience in Mr. Trump. He used the direct connection to tweak certain Biden-era export controls that blocked Nvidia from selling its top AI chips like the A100, H100 to China in October 2022.

Limits of influence

Still, Mr. Huang's influence had limits as Blackwell – Nvidia's top tier data centre chip – remains blocked for sales in China. But it was made available to Megaspeed – the Singapore-based AI infrastructure firm helmed by Alice Huang, the businesswoman with whom Mr. Huang had an affair.

Reports have also suggested that Trump administration officials knew of the allegations some time ago. As of this writing, their claims are unproven. Attorney General Todd Blanche has said the Justice Department has not determined whether Ms. Huang is a Chinese spy.

China's Foreign Ministry has called the spying allegations baseless and a smear campaign. Megaspeed has said that repeated inspections by U.S. and Nvidia officials have found no illegal chip transfers.

Nvidia's chips underpin the AI efforts of American companies and their Chinese rivals alike, and its China strategy sits between a Washington that swings between bans and revenue sharing and a Beijing that is withholding H200 chips from import approvals. Under an interim chief, Colette Kress, and a new chair, every one of those negotiations will now be handled in the absence of Mr. Huang.

For Mr. Huang, before he goes back to that whiteboard in a now reset reality, he will have to answer the U.S. Congress in a closed-door briefing on Nvidia's security protocols and his interactions with the Megaspeed executive Ms. Huang. This will be an entirely new battle for a chief who built a massive tech empire only to watch it slip away over a personal indiscretion.

THE GIST

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- Huang used the direct connection to tweak certain Biden-era export controls that blocked Nvidia from selling its top AI chips like the A100, H100 to China in October 2022
- Still Huang's influence had limits as Blackwell — Nvidia's top tier data centre chip — remains blocked for sales in China. But it was made available to Megaspeed, the Singapore-based AI firm helmed by Alice Huang

At the centre of the storm

Megaspeed

The Singapore-based company that came to play a vital role in the global chip trade is under scrutiny after its former CEO was linked to Nvidia's Jensen Huang in an alleged spy scandal

Ananth Krishnan

At the centre of the scandal surrounding Nvidia, which led to the resignation of founder-CEO Jensen Huang on November 12, is a little-known Singapore-based business founded by Chinese tech executive Alice Huang that came to play a vital role in the global chips trade.

Set up in 2023, with no background in AI or semiconductors, Megaspeed grew within the span of a few months into a linchpin of the semiconductors and data centre business in Asia, connecting Chinese tech companies with valuable Nvidia chips amid tightening U.S. export controls. Over the course of a couple of years, the new company would purchase between $4-5 billion of Nvidia technology, according to reports.

Its story begins in 2023, when Ms. Huang, who had been active in the financial industry in Shanghai, acquired a Singapore-registered gaming company called 7Road International. She renamed it Megaspeed and pivoted into the data centre and cloud computing business, with the aim of filling a crucial void for Chinese tech companies – providing them access to Nvidia chips. This was when she struck up a relationship with the Nvidia co-founder.

U.S. export controls prevented Nvidia from directly selling many of its most advanced chips in China. Singapore and Southeast Asia emerged as a workaround: companies registered in Singapore could purchase the chips and route them to data centres built in nearby Malaysia and Indonesia, where Chinese firms such as Alibaba could tap into computing power without violating the law. Megaspeed counted Alibaba as among its major clients.

AFP



Even before the current scandal, which erupted into the public domain after reports that the U.S. was investigating Mr. Huang's romantic relationship with Alice Huang and her ties to Chinese authorities, Megaspeed had been on the radar of the Singapore government.

Singapore authorities said on November 12 the Singapore Police Force (SPF) and Singapore Customs initiated "an independent investigation into several companies and their key officers, including Megaspeed... and its controllers" in February 2025.

Ms. Huang, as CEO, was then investigated, but "not for espionage". Her passport was confiscated, and when the SPF concluded earlier this year there was insufficient evidence to establish if she committed any offences, she was allowed to leave Singapore. No wrongdoing was established against either Megaspeed or Ms. Huang, but the new attention has left the company's future under a cloud.

The spy who wasn't?

Former CEO Ms. Huang's particular role in the affair has been under the lens. After initial media reports in the U.S. described her as "an alleged spy", subsequent statements have left a murkier picture. On November 13, U.S. reports said there was "disagreement among U.S. officials about the strength of evidence" that Ms. Huang was working for China's Ministry of State Security (MSS) as a spy, while U.S. President Donald Trump, who has been a strong backer of Mr. Huang and allowed the exports of some chips to China, said that he himself wasn't clear.

Part of the reason for the suspicion was her stunning rise from a television journalist to CEO of a company handling billions of dollars worth of strategic chips. Yet her story was not exactly unusual in China's fast-moving tech and finance space, where fixers often conceal the true ownership of firms.

"My suspicion is that Alice Huang was not a spy who happened to become a businesswoman. She was a commercial fixer... whose value lay in connecting powerful interests while keeping their involvement at arm's length," wrote Desmond Shum, author of *Red Roulette*.

Even if Ms. Huang has ended her connections with Megaspeed, the company very much remains active, although its future operations in Singapore remain unclear given the fresh scrutiny and signs that the U.S., following this episode, will move to tighten controls further and target third countries that have been facilitating this trade.

Nvidia maintains their engagement was above board as it was dealing with a Singapore entity and not a Chinese subsidiary. Megaspeed, in a statement, said it had "cooperated with inspections" by the U.S. and was "committed to working constructively and transparently with the U.S. government".

From rebellion to despair

M. John Harrison

The British author who won this year's Booker Prize has long championed resistance to the *status quo*, but his latest novel reflects a deepening pessimism about humanity and its future

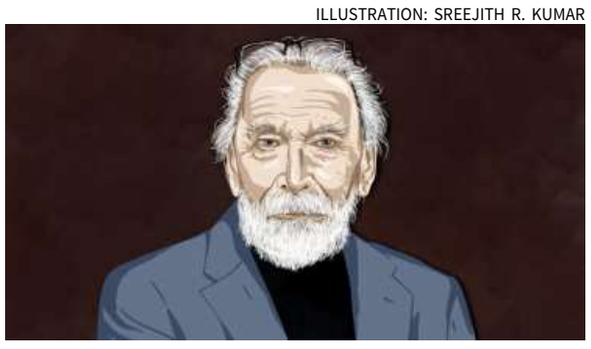
Vasudevan Mukunth

In 2019, British writer M. John Harrison said he supported Extinction Rebellion, a global environmental movement, and people taking action to change the world. But last week, after winning the Booker Prize for his "destabilising and satirical dystopian novel", *The End of Everything*, he said he had lost hope for humanity – even as people continued to fight to change the world. Did something change in seven years?

Harrison was born in 1945 and grew up in the shadow of the Second World War. He has said he was impressed by *The Waste Land* by T.S. Eliot, especially the way its narrative could pull fragments together into a coherent whole without also pretending it depicted a complete reality. Harrison later moved to London from Warwickshire determined to become a professional writer, despite financial difficulties.

He published his first short story in 1966 and thereafter became involved with the influential science fiction (sci-fi) magazine *New Worlds*, edited by Michael Moorcock. This is when the 'New Wave' movement against traditional sci-fi emerged, with its vanguard – including Harrison, Moorcock, Brian Aldiss, and J.G. Ballard – bringing sexuality, political conflict, and experimental narrative structures, a lot of which sci-fi had until then avoided, to the genre's then-conventional tropes of exploring space and celebrating the ingenuity of the human species.

ILLUSTRATION: SREEJITH R. KUMAR



Of Harrison's own work in this time, *The Centauri Device* and The *Viriconium* sequence stand out. *The Centauri Device* is a space opera led by a non-hero that ends in catastrophe rather than progress. *Viriconium* remains influential to this day, including for refusing to reclaim some glorious past and so restore the honour of its decaying world and for denying its readers narrative closure – paralleling Britain's nostalgia for its imperial greatness and the cultural disorientation of the Margaret Thatcher years.

Harrison has said fiction should confront readers with reality rather than offer an escape. For many years, he has borne an anti-authoritarian, anti-capitalist disposition and has been sceptical of proclamations of progress and consumerism. The people in his stories do not become more powerful by accumulating knowledge or technics, and they fail by not acting to change their circumstances.

Loss of meaning

This same iconoclast wrote *The End of Everything*, a bleak novel about the total loss of meaning. But while many have said the book is a "difficult" read, Harrison has been making his way to this point since the late 1980s, and not always through sci-fi.

His 1989 novel *Climbers* seemed to ask whether ordinary Britons really understood their own existence, forget their "great past", in the country's post-industrial social landscape. In *The Course of the Heart* (1992) and *Signs of Life* (1997), Harrison extended his investigation of the ways in which people hurt each other in order to escape their own intolerable realities.

He returned to sci-fi with *Light* (2002), which launched the Kefahuchi Tract trilogy in which humans confront the possibility of sensing a strange astronomical phenomenon without ever being able to explain it. Yet, the trilogy also allows its characters to comprehend the exploitation of their fellow people. This message echoes the unspoken paradigm of *The End of Everything*: humans may never understand everything but they already understand enough about destroying themselves.

Harrison had said in a previous era that escapist literature could encourage people to accept their circumstances instead of endeavouring to change them, and his books have always been the parables to illustrate the folly. For example, the deceptively bleak *The End of Everything* could be a clarion call to militate against the loss of meaning.

The Booker Prize judges' choice has divided readers, however. Supporters see a win for science fiction itself given that is Harrison's 'home genre' and thanks to his use of the fantastic to reveal the inadequacies of the present and the future they portend. Detractors, however, have been put off by what they perceive to be a defiance of the conventions of literature for its own sake.

Today, Harrison's earlier insistence that people must act for a better world may be a more useful message than the despair of the novel that finally won him the Booker Prize.

Ancient south Indian diets featured milk, wild game: study

Divya Gandhi

The archaeology of food is well documented in North India's ancient Indus Valley Civilisation, where the culinary repertoire, deduced from rigorous studies of pottery shards, comprised dairy, meat, and plant-based products as far back as 2500 BC.

A new study has now pieced together the culinary composition of prehistoric South India's cuisine and revealed advanced plant processing and a custom of consuming cow milk in 600-100 BC, in two important archaeological sites: Keezhadi in Tamil Nadu from 6th to 2nd century BC and in Gottiprolu in Andhra Pradesh from 2nd to 1st century BCE.

The study, published in Heritage Science, said: "This indicates that the societies primarily depended on agriculture, cattle rearing, and dairying practices." In Keezhadi, the authors analysed 70 animal skeletal fragments and found a predominance of cattle, buffaloes and goats, and the presence of wild animals such as antelope and wild boar, "with cut marks [suggesting] hunting supplemented" people's diets.

At Gottiprolu, the team found remains of several fauna, including cow/ox, buffalo, sheep, goat, horse, dog, and pig. Researchers used organic residue analysis to examine dietary biomarkers in pottery. Trapped in the vessels' pores, these molecules remained preserved for millennia.

While both Gottiprolu and Keezhadi are situated on river banks, "the chosen pottery may not have been used to cook aquatic species such as fish," the study said. However, the study analysed only four shards as a proof-of-concept, co-author and Vellore Institute of Technology associate professor Vijayanand Chandrasekaran told *The Hindu*: "It is entirely possible that the inhabitants consumed fish but cooked them in other, unsampled vessels or prepared them using methods that did not require pottery."

Artefacts excavated recently from Keezhadi have pointed to a prosperous urban settlement in the Sangam age, replete with brick structures and thriving trade. Researchers have also found evidence of weaving and dyeing industries as well as gold ornaments, ivory bangles, and dice games.

According to Dr. Chandraseharan, the new finding is also an advance because it moves beyond structural artefacts to direct biomolecular evidence. And "it provides the first direct chemical evidence of prehistoric dairying practices in South India, previously thought to be strictly limited to North India and the Indus Valley civilisation," he added.

Potent perovskites demand domestic manufacturing push

As China tightens export controls on next-generation photovoltaic technology, local enterprises are racing to establish independent supply chains; national testing facilities are now vital to ensure lightweight modules become viable

Sonam Raina
BENGALURU

Perovskite solar cells are an exciting technology in the solar industry because they extract more power from a given area than silicon. They get their name from the crystals they are made of, metal-halide perovskites. They absorb sunlight strongly, so require an active layer only a few hundred nanometres thick, three orders of magnitude thinner than silicon wafers.

China is already regarding them as a strategic asset. On October 16, the country proposed adding 12 photovoltaic technologies to its export control list, including manufacturing technologies for perovskite and tandem solar-cell modules above certain production and efficiency thresholds. Tandem cells have both perovskite and silicon layers and can generate even more electricity from the same area.

India's solar industry depends heavily on imports from China. It has no polysilicon manufacturing capacity and imports the vast majority of wafers as well as the machines used to make them, according to a report by The Energy and Resources Institute, New Delhi. The country has built a self-reliant solar-power supply chain but the road there has been marked with temporary cell shortages and legal challenges. If perovskites become the next major solar technology, India will need to build the capacity to manufacture them domestically.

Dinesh Kabra, co-founder of Advanced Renewable Tandem-Photovoltaics (ART-PV) India, a start-up developing high efficiency tandem cells, said he expects perovskites to complement silicon over the coming decade rather than replace it. For example, the relative thinness of perovskites' active layers could bring solar power to surfaces where conventional panels do not work, such as windows and in space.

ART-PV has tested a machine from a Taiwanese supplier that applies a thin layer of perovskite material onto a solar cell. The team used its own formulation of the material and is now finalising a deal to buy the equipment, Dr. Kabra said.

Sooraj Kumar, co-founder and chief executive officer of P3C Technology & Solutions, another company developing perovskite solar technology, said it has built most of its core manufacturing equipment in India. P3C has also scaled cells from about a centimetre across to mini-modules spanning one square foot, each of which has an active area with an efficiency of 17%-18%.

Durability challenge

The company's next step is to build a larger sub-module that is field-ready. Experts at the company have projected that manufacturing costs could fall to ₹12 per watt at the gigawatt scale, assuming favourable yield, production volumes, and reliability and the cost of the complete module being competitive in the future market. Dr. Kumar also suggested that high-purity input materials like iodide salts, lead iodide, and glass with transparent and conductive oxide coating, which are mostly being imported today, will eventually be developed in India.

Dr. Kabra said buyers perceive solar panels as infrastructure rather than as consumer gadgets, and expect the panels to last for decades. Silicon panels are indeed generally designed for a service life of 25 to 30 years. Perovskites, however, may not last as long: moisture can trigger chemical reactions that break down the light-absorbing material. So experts have suggested unconventional uses for perovskite setups for now.

Ke Xiao, assistant professor at the Nanjing University School of Advanced Manufacturing, said they can be deployed in orbit because tandem cells are more efficient and, as studies have found, perovskite cells can tolerate particle radiation better than silicon or gallium arsenide cells. That said, researchers say standards for testing how perovskite solar cells perform under orbital conditions have yet to be developed.

Some important barriers still need to be overcome, including encapsulating perovskites to protect from heat, according to Dr. Xiao. In June, his team reported a certified 26.2% efficiency on a 65 cm^2 all-perovskite tandem module, which is a noteworthy high and a milestone towards manufacturing.

Most high-performing perovskite formulations also contain a small amount of lead. Dr. Kumar said P3C seals its modules with lamination and barrier sheets to prevent leaching.

Domestic capacity

He added that he wants the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy to back pilot and megawatt-scale production lines, and that the industry will benefit from national testing facilities, certification standards, and demonstration projects on public buildings.

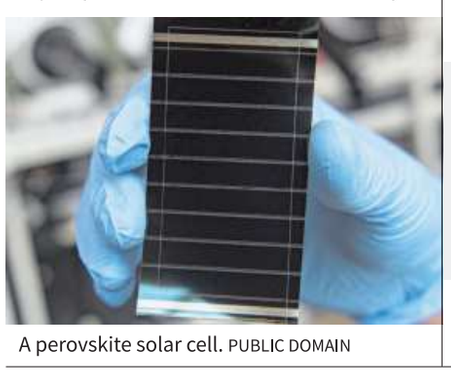
The IIT-Bombay has also set up a 6,300 sq. ft facility for perovskite-silicon tandem research. Indian Institute of Science, Bengaluru, researchers are working on scalable fabrication. GREW Solar has partnered with U.S.-based Caelux to target 4-GW of hybrid perovskite-silicon tandem module production in India by 2028. Ultimately, Dr. Kabra said money is not the main obstacle.

He wants the government to instead trust Indian researchers and manufacturers to build the technology.

(Sonam Raina is a Bengaluru-based journalist who covers sustainability in business. sonam.raina@gmail.com)

Place in the sun

If perovskites become the next major solar technology, India will need to build the capacity to manufacture them domestically



A perovskite solar cell. PUBLIC DOMAIN

- Perovskite solar cells have higher power yields than silicon while potentially requiring less energy to manufacture
- With China restricting technology exports, India urgently needs to develop a domestic perovskite manufacturing supply chain
- Innovative Indian startups are currently developing scalable perovskite solar modules and building local core manufacturing equipment
- Despite their impressive efficiency, perovskite materials face severe durability challenges because moisture triggers chemical degradation
- Due to these challenges, experts say that early Indian applications will target environments related to space exploration
- To succeed, the emerging domestic industry needs dedicated testing facilities, certification standards, and the government's trust

There is more to vanilla than its taste and aroma



SPEAKING OF SCIENCE
D. Balasubramanian

Vanilla is a common additive to make cakes, ice creams, and fragrant body lotions. Children enjoy a good vanilla ice cream. People often use vanilla as the primary flavour in baked goods and in chocolates. It is not just the flavour: vanilla also has health-promoting properties that have been known for centuries.

Vanilla comes from the fruits of the orchid herb that botanists call *Vanilla planifolia*, found mostly in tropical countries. Its medicinal properties have been known since ancient times. Traditional physicians of the 15th century in the Aztec region of Mexico had used the orchid pods as a remedy for stress and mental strain.

In India, the vanilla plant was brought by the Colonial British and the plant is now grown in Keralam, Karnataka, and Tamil Nadu.

In 2013, a group of scientists from Mysuru described the cultivation, chemistry, and nutraceutical properties of vanilla (DOI: 10.1080/10408398.2011.563879).

In 2024, a group of researchers in Uttar Pradesh also summarised the use of vanilla by Ayurvedic physicians for its therapeutic properties (*Int. J. Environ. Clim. Change,* vol.14, no. 2, pp. 809-817, 2024).

The vanilla flowers are greenish in colour with a soothing fragrance. Newborns breathe calmer and better when they smell vanilla, and adults sleep better. It is also known to reduce inflammation.

Vanilla's active component is an aromatic benzaldehyde called vanillin, which offers a sweet smell, taste, and flavour, while its sugar content is negligible. Vanillin is approved by the World Health Organization, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration, and the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India as a food additive. The Barnes Jewish Hospital in Washington University in the U.S. has listed that a tablespoon of vanilla extract has several minerals and vitamins but no fatty acids or cholesterol.



The vanilla flower belongs to the orchid family. FILE PHOTO

Vanilla's medicinal properties are largely due to vanillin. It soothes coughing, reduces blood pressure, and acts as an antidepressant. It also has reliable healing properties against certain wounds and is efficient as an antibacterial and anti-fungal agent. A review by a group of scientists from Nigeria (DOI: 10.1016/j.ejmcr.2022.100055) has shown that vanillin helps with regulating blood pressure, digestion, and has antimicrobial, antioxidant, and neuroprotective properties.

Likewise, a group of pharmacologists from Adelaide in Australia has also shown the biomedical advantages of vanillin in chronic wound healing and tissue regeneration (DOI: 10.1016/j.ijpharm.2026.127263). Given the vanilla plant is not available in several countries, and the medical and cosmetic advantages of vanillin, a short review of its chemical synthesis and biotransformation was recently published by a group from Jiangsu University, China in (DOI: 10.1016/j.rser.2023.113905).

The group also chemically modified lignin, which is present in plant cell walls, to produce vanillin. Scientists have also made vanillin by genetically modifying microbes (DOI: 1016/j.ces.2022/8049).

A 2019 review by Banerjee and Chattopadhyay from the University of Gauhati summarised the biotechnological aspects of vanillin (*J. Sci. Food Agric.* 99, 4999-506, 2019), including a description of how the molecule, besides its medicinal value, can also be used for metal plating, as a herbicide, a deodorant, and of course as a flavouring agent.

In addition to domestic consumption, India exports its vanilla to various countries, notably Bangladesh, Germany, and several in Africa, for several million dollars in revenue every year.

So the next time you have vanilla ice cream, you can enjoy its taste as well as its versatility.

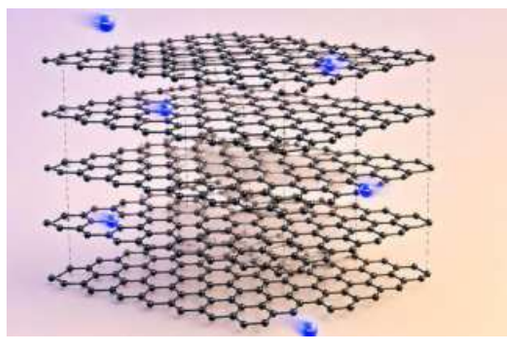
dbala@lvpei.org

SNAPSHOTS



CO_2 emissions briefly dipped in 2026 due to West Asia war

Between 2019 and 2025, global fossil fuel emissions grew 0.8% annually. Now, researchers have projected a 0.4% drop in 2026, likely temporary, due to high oil prices linked to the West Asia conflict, which constrained supply chains and drove fuel prices up by 10% to 50% in major economies, including the U.S., China, and Europe. Oil-linked emissions thus dropped by 1.9%, pulling total CO_2 levels down despite a 0.6% increase in coal emissions.



Graphene adds new feather to cap of unusual properties

Magic-angle twisted bilayer graphene (MATBG) consists of two layers of graphene twisted at a small angle to create unique properties. Scientists have found that straining MATBG even slightly drastically changes its electrical resistance. Its sensitivity to strain was over 100-times greater than that of ordinary metals, and depended on the material's temperature and electron density. The findings suggest physical strain could be an effective new tool to control the unusual quantum physics in MATBG.



Ebola outbreak 'flowed' along major travel, trade routes

The Bundibugyo virus (BVD) outbreak in the DRC this year expanded rapidly early, with the caseload doubling roughly every 10 days. The primary driver was human movement, with BVD following major travel and trade routes radiating from Mongbwalu, Rwampara, and Bunia. By combining local health records with mobile phone mobility data, researchers found tracking human relocation could accurately forecast which areas would become infected – a highly actionable finding since there are no approved vaccines for BVD.

Question Corner

Smoke in the air

Why do firecracker emissions sometimes linger in the air?

Emissions from firecrackers can linger when local atmospheric conditions keep the pollutants from dispersing or being moved away.

For example, winds can carry pollutants away from their source and dilute them in cleaner air. When the winds are weak, smoke and fine particles can accumulate near where firecrackers are burst. If people also repeatedly burst firecrackers over several hours, the pollutants can fill the air faster than they can be dispersed. Normally, warm air near the ground lifts pollutants upward. But during an inversion, a layer of warmer air sits above the surface air, trapping pollutants near the ground.

When the lowest part of the atmosphere, called the boundary layer, becomes shallow, the pollutants also become confined to a smaller volume of air. Many particles released by firecrackers can also absorb moisture and swell, rendering them 'more visible'. Taken together, the aftermath of an explosive spree can seem to be the worst when the winds are weak, the boundary layer is shallow, and an inversion is in play.

Readers may send their questions / answers to science@thehindu.co.in

INBRIEF



Goyal in Egypt, to discuss strengthening bilateral ties

Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal will begin a two-day visit to Egypt on Sunday, focusing on ways to strengthen bilateral trade, investment ties and explore opportunities for cooperation in the Suez Canal Economic Zone, industrial development, an official statement said. A high-level Indian business delegation are accompanying the minister to participate in the India-Egypt Joint Business Council (JBC), and Joint Trade Committee (JTC) meetings. PTI

Mahanadi Coalfields files RHP for proposed ₹9,500 cr. IPO

Mahanadi Coalfields Ltd. (MCL), a wholly owned subsidiary of Coal India Ltd., on Saturday said it had filed the Red Herring Prospectus (RHP) for the proposed IPO. The proposed IPO comprises an offer for sale (OFS) of up to 66.18 crore equity shares by Coal India, representing 10% of its stake in the subsidiary. The issue is estimated to fetch around ₹9,500 crore. The proposed public issue remains subject to receipt of applicable approvals, Coal India said in a filing. PTI

Centre operationalises portal to declare rice, paddy stock

The government has operationalised a portal for online declaration of paddy or rice stock by all entities, a move aimed at preventing hoarding and to check prices. As per the November 6 order, all traders and wholesalers, retailers, large retail chains and processors and millers in all States and Union Territories must declare stocks under six categories – Basmati rice, non-Basmati premium rice, non-Basmati rice, parboiled rice, broken rice and paddy. PTI

Anthropic's valuation can't secure its moat

Its engineers need to keep building progressively more capable models; the AI firm has also not established that it will be able to sustain its profitability after honouring its infra commitments. neither Anthropic nor its competitors, has a lasting competitive advantage, a.k.a. a moat

Vasudevan Mukunth
CHENNAI

Artificial intelligence (AI) company Anthropic, best known as the maker of the Claude AI model, is preparing to go public at a valuation of $1.4 trillion, which could make the IPO one of the largest in history. However, this particular refrain has of late seemed more ominous than cause for optimism, and the Anthropic IPO could be no exception.

The company has said it will offer 825 million shares at $70-78 apiece, to raise up to $64.4 billion. The valuation includes shares to be issued through employee options and other arrangements, and its market capitalisation based on outstanding shares is likely to be near $1 trillion. (It was valued at $965 billion in a private funding round in May.)

Anthropic's financial prospects depend on continuing to spend extraordinary sums of money. Its amended prospectus filed with the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission on November 10 revealed roughly $900 billion in spending commitments, almost entirely for computing infrastructure, until 2045. Of this, the company expects to incur half by 2030 and $70.7 billion in the twelve months from September 30.

The filing also mentions another $150-175 billion in potential payments under arrangements sans fixed dollar commitments.

These figures clarify a colossal exposure to future demand that neither Anthropic nor other Big AI companies have thus far been able to guarantee.



Money counts: Anthropic's financial prospects depend on continuing to spend extraordinary sums of money. REUTERS

And while Anthropic's revenue has also been growing, from $2.5 billion in the first three quarters of 2025 to $33.2 billion in the corresponding slice of 2026, the proposed fully diluted valuation exceeds annualised sales 17-fold.

The current business model is, largely, to charge customers according to how many tokens they use to run their tasks on its AI models. From January to September 2026, this revenue constituted 79% of the total revenue, giving Anthropic a reason to encourage users to maximise token use, irrespective of changes in the value of the output generated – a tendency famously called tokenmaxxing. But three factors complicate this picture. First, Anthropic has said AI models released within the last six months accounted for more than 80% of its third quarter revenue, which means its engineers need to keep building progressively more capable models. Second, it has not established that it will be able to sustain its profitability after honouring its infrastructure commitments.

The third factor is the most important, however: neither Anthropic nor its competitors, including OpenAI, currently has a lasting competitive advantage, a.k.a. a moat.

In fact, the difficulties of securing a moat are better illustrated by OpenAI CEO Sam Altman's position of late, in favour of new regulatory and compliance demands. These demands could impose costs that larger AI companies will bear more easily than smaller ones.

Legitimate reasons

Legitimate reasons to regulate AI include security failures and the risks posed by autonomous systems but governments should endeavour overtly to prevent such regulatory capture given the perverse incentives facing AI companies.

Overall, neither Anthropic nor its competitors have presented evidence of a sturdy moat. Instead, thanks to capable open-source development, models are becoming cheaper and competitors are catching up, and efficiency gains threaten the pricing power on which their valuations depend.

Iron ore capacity under-utilisation in major-producing States prompts concerns

Saptaparno Ghosh
NEW DELHI

With India's iron ore demand projected to rise to 772 million tonnes (MT) by 2047, miners in Odisha, the country's largest iron ore reserve holder, are yet to utilise nearly 40% of their existing capacities, raising concerns over resource wastage and potential revenue losses.

The issue has come under judicial scrutiny, with both the Supreme Court earlier this month and the Odisha High Court in January flagging the underutilisation of mining capacities.

The Odisha High Court, while agreeing with petitioners who highlighted the sluggish operationalisation of mines despite environmental clearances, observed that the delay had resulted in an average annual revenue loss of ₹4,000 crore to the State.

Data cited by petitioner Citizens' Action Forum (Bhubaneswar) show that of the 246 million tonnes per annum (MTPA) of mining capacity granted environmental clearance in FY25, only around 159 MTPA had been operationalised.

The underutilised capacity is particularly significant as it largely involves hematite, the highest-grade variety of iron ore.

Odisha accounted for more than 50% of India's domestic iron ore production during FY26. Chhattisgarh contributed around 17.1%, followed by Karnataka at 16.6%. Capacity utilisation in the two states - albeit with significantly lower volumes than Odisha - stood at 62% and 80%, respectively, according to calculations based on BigMint data.

Apparel exports surge 20% on currency slump

M. Soundariya Preetha
COIMBATORE

India's apparel exports registered a 20.33% year-on-year growth (YoY) in dollar terms in October 2026, largely aided by the depreciation of the rupee, even as growth in the volume of garments shipped remained subdued.

"If companies had not invested in expansion projects in the last one year, they would be running at full capacity now," said a leading garment exporter.

He cautioned that the increase in export value was unlikely to have been matched by a significant rise in shipment volumes.

A. Sakthivel, chairman of the Apparel Export Promotion Council (AEPC), said ready-made garment exports recorded an encouraging growth of 20% in October compared with the corresponding month last year.

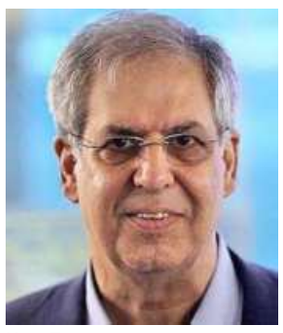
'Why to tinker with something that has delivered value for 150 years'

Lalatendu Mishra
MUMBAI

Tata Trusts Chairman Noel Tata has cautioned that listing Tata Sons could fundamentally alter the group's distinctive operating philosophy, with shareholder interests potentially taking precedence over philanthropy.

Amid growing demands for listing Tata Sons in line with the Reserve Bank of India's (RBI) requirements, Mr. Tata on Saturday made a strong pitch for maintaining the status quo.

"Why tinker with something that has delivered value for 150 years. Why do you want to change that," he asked, referring to calls for listing from some


Noel Tata

Tata Sons board members and a section of Tata Trusts trustees.

He said the Trusts would engage constructively with regulators and other stakeholders to find a solution that preserves the group's traditional governance structure.

"My worry is that listing, which is what some people are proposing, will change the Tata way. And one day, if we have 30,000-40,000 shareholders, profit may take precedence over philanthropy. And I think that will fundamentally change the Tata way of working," he said at a function in New Delhi.

Explaining the philosophy, Mr. Tata said: "Charity precedes commerce. Charity owns commerce and it is not the other way around." He added that the group's ownership structure ensured continuity.

On the group's strategic direction, Mr. Tata said its twin objectives of philanthropy and nation-building remained unchanged, but called for greater discipline in executing large projects involving long gestation periods and substantial capital commitments.

"Philanthropy on one hand. Nation building on the other hand. This is independent of leadership and personalities and this will continue. I do not question the direction of what we have done. I question, sometimes, the delivery of what we are doing," he said.

Recalling the legacy of Sir Ratan Tata and Sir Dorabji Tata, who dedicated their wealth to charity rather than passing it on to their families, he said their commitment to institution-building and helping the needy remained his guiding principle.

₹37,500 cr. coal gasification push: study identifies priority chemicals to cut imports

Press Trust of India
NEW DELHI

Hydrogen, synthetic natural gas (SNG), methanol and ammonia should be prioritised for production from coal to reduce India's dependence on imported fuels, fertilisers and industrial chemicals, according to a new study.

The study by Centre for Domestic Economy Policy Research (C-DEP) and the Centre for WTO Studies (CWS) ranks 23 coal-derived products across eight economic, industrial and strategic parameters to guide investments under the government's ₹37,500-crore scheme for promoting surface coal and lignite gasification projects.

Hydrogen emerged as the highest-priority product, followed by SNG, methanol, ammonia, dimethyl ether (DME), LNG, LPG, urea and diammonium phosphate (DAP), the study said.

The recommendations come as India seeks to expand coal gasification capacity to reduce its reliance on imported energy and fertiliser products.

The government scheme aims to facilitate the gasification of an additional 75 million tonne of coal and lignite annually, while the country's target is to achieve 100 million tonne of coal gasification capacity by 2030.

India imported nearly $37 billion worth of LPG, LNG, urea and DAP in 2024, underscoring the potential for domestic coal-based production to substitute imports. LPG and LNG imports alone exceeded $27 billion, while urea and


India imported nearly $37 billion worth of LPG, LNG, urea and DAP in 2024.

DAP imports accounted for another $9.6 billion, the report said.

The study, titled "Coal-to-Chemicals Policy in India: A Strategic Framework for Product Prioritisation under the National Coal Gasification Mission", argues that investments should be directed towards products offering the greatest potential for import substitution, economic returns and strategic supply security.

Addressing the report's release, Petroleum and Natural Gas Regulatory Board (PNGRB) Chairperson Anil Kumar Jain said coal gasification in India was still at an early stage and that the commercial viability of technologies suited to Indian coal needed to be established, according to a statement issued by the organisers.

"While import dependence, supply security and strategic importance should guide product prioritisation, we must first allow industry to test these technologies and establish their feasibility. The government has created the necessary policy and financial support. The next step is for industry to demonstrate commercially viable projects, after which a more targeted product prioritisation framework can be developed," he said.

C-DEP President Jaijit Bhattacharya said the government's ₹37,500-crore commitment made it important to identify products that could deliver the greatest economic benefits. "Our analysis provides a framework for directing investment towards products that can reduce imports, strengthen domestic supply chains and support India's industrial self-reliance," he said.

China lessons

The report also draws lessons from China's coal-to-chemicals industry, which expanded domestic production of fertilisers, methanol and downstream chemicals through integrated industrial clusters.

However, China's experience also highlights the risks of rapid capacity expansion, including underutilised plants, high capital costs and water constraints, the study said.

It recommends that India adopt a phased investment approach and develop integrated manufacturing clusters where common coal gasification facilities can supply multiple downstream chemical industries.

The study said a product-focused strategy could help India leverage its substantial coal reserves to reduce import dependence in energy and fertilisers while developing domestic chemical manufacturing capabilities.

Softbank trims India e-commerce exposure

Press Trust of India
NEW DELHI

Japanese investor SoftBank Group has sold 1.65% stake in Meesho for ₹1,885 crore, further trimming its investments in India's e-commerce sector.

In the latest transaction, SVF II Meerkat (DE) LLC, an affiliate of SoftBank, offloaded 7.64 crore shares in Bengaluru-based Meesho, according to the block deal data on the National Stock Exchange (NSE).

The share sale was executed on Friday at an average price of ₹246.75 apiece, taking the total deal value to ₹1,885.17 crore.

With this, the affiliate's holding in Meesho has fallen to 5.19% from 6.84%.

The stake sale, however, found buyers, with a clutch of domestic and foreign institutional investors participating in the transaction, with Societe Generale (SocGen) emerging as the largest buyer. Paris-based financial services firm SocGen picked up more than 1.47 crore shares, or a 0.32% stake, for ₹364.65 crore. Domestic institutional buyers included mutual funds managed by Motilal Oswal, HDFC, Edelweiss and Aditya Birla Sun Life, along with Bajaj Life Insurance. Overseas participants included Morgan Stanley, Fidelity Investments, BNP Paribas, Goldman Sachs, Ghisallo Capital Management, William Blair Investment Management and Texas Municipal Retirement System.

The Singaporean government, Monetary Authority of Singapore and Norway's sovereign wealth fund Government Pension Fund Global, also participated in the transaction.

LPG distributors seek higher commissions and new connections

Saptaparno Ghosh
NEW DELHI

LPG distributors have sought a revision in commissions, permission to issue fresh connections and a balanced approach to piped natural gas (PNG) expansion during an interaction with Union Petroleum Minister Hardeep Singh Puri on Friday.

Two industry executives who attended the meeting told *The Hindu* that distributors flagged rising operational costs amid declining refill sales as PNG gains ground.

They said refill sales had suffered amid the PNG push, while commissions, last revised in October 2023, remained unchanged despite rising technology and safety costs.

"However, what has also happened is that refill sales have suffered amidst the PNG push and as a result, with [distributor] commissions not revised, our operational margins, be it for the requisite technology and safety have gone up," they said.

Distributors also sought a "balancing act" between PNG and LPG, arguing that consumers should retain the freedom to choose.

The Hindu has sought the government's response.

TRAI barred 1.24 lakh mobile connections in July-Sept. for spam

Press Trust of India
NEW DELHI

The regulator also blocked 3,725 SMS headers and blacklisted 374 senders for one year

Regulator TRAI took enforcement action against more than 1.24 lakh telecom resources and blacklisted 374 entities for one year for violating unsolicited commercial communication (UCC) norms during July-September, as it stepped up efforts to curb spam calls and messages.

A total of 1,10,325 telecom resources, including mobile numbers, were barred from outgoing services for 15 days for the first violation, while 13,777 were disconnected for one year for repeat violations, according to TRAI's report for the second quarter of 2026-27. The regulator also blocked 3,725 SMS headers and blacklisted 374 senders for one year, during which they cannot obtain fresh telecom resources.

TRAI received 15.29 lakh complaints of unsolicited commercial communications during the quarter, of which 7.23 lakh were classified as actionable.

WASHINGTON

Trump to raise nuclear-arms cuts with Putin, Xi, says White House



AP

U.S. President Donald Trump will raise nuclear-arms reduction at a meeting in China with Russian President Vladimir Putin and Chinese President Xi Jinping, the White House said on Friday. Mr. Putin, Mr. Xi and Mr. Trump are expected to meet on the sidelines of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation forum in Shenzhen. REUTERS

CHICAGO

Microsoft says services are fully restored after hours-long outage



REUTERS

Microsoft said on Saturday that services were fully restored after a massive outage that lasted for hours. It said the incident "was introduced by an issue during an earlier network capacity upgrade that surfaced" following a recent network change. Users in more than 70 countries were affected, according to an online tracker. AP

WASHINGTON

Rubio acknowledges 'people are struggling' economically in speech



REUTERS

U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio gave a sweeping speech to fellow conservatives on Friday evening acknowledging that Americans are struggling in the current economy. "I think we have to recognize that people are struggling. There's no doubt about it," he said. Mr. Rubio, however, defended the Iran war. AP

STARBASE

SpaceX's Starship set for return to Earth after booster catch aborted



AP

SpaceX's Starship spacecraft was "healthy" as it orbited the Earth and on track to return Saturday, where Elon Musk's company was planning to "catch" the vehicle for first time. Successful recoveries of both the Super Heavy booster and the Starship would have marked a milestone in pursuit of fully reusable rocket systems. AFP

'Trump may hold off on new strike unless provoked by Iran, Houthis'

The U.S. President expresses sympathy for allies in the region who have asked him not to return to full-scale war, saying he is pursuing a 'more civil' path at their request; White House officials say that Trump will decide whether and when to act

Reuters
WASHINGTON/RIYADH

U.S. President Donald Trump has told senior advisers in recent days that he may hold off on attacking Iran if the U.S. faces no new provocations from Tehran or the Houthis (Ansar Allah) in Yemen, according to three people familiar with the matter.

Mr. Trump has alternated between threats of escalating the war with new strikes and winding down hostilities, and current and former officials say he does not appear to have made up his mind about how to resolve the unpopular conflict, which he launched in February with Israel.



Weapons array: Visitors walk past drones on display during an exhibition at the National Aerospace Park outside Tehran. AFP

But in meetings with his national security advisers and after a series of intelligence briefings, Mr. Trump said he was considering holding off on strikes, said the people, who, like others interviewed for this story, spoke on condition of anonymity.

He has also indicated sympathy for allies in the region who have asked him not to return to a full-fledged war.

"I could end it immediately, but at the request of the nations that I am looking to protect, we are doing it a little bit longer way, a bit more civilly," Mr. Trump told sports broadcaster Stephen A. Smith on Thursday.

The war has hiked global fuel prices and proven unpopular with U.S. voters, who handed control of Congress to the Democrats in last week's midterm elections. In a Reuters/Ipsos poll taken shortly before the November 3 elections, 55% of Americans said the war was not worth the cost, and Vice-President J.D. Vance cited it as the reason Mr. Trump's Republicans lost Congress.

Mr. Trump's private comments build on public remarks playing down the likelihood of major warfare resuming.

"As Commander-in-Chief, President Trump is the architect and sole decision-maker who holds all the cards and will always ensure that America's interests are protected," a White House official said in a statement. "The United States is in a very strong position with control of the Strait of Hormuz and the Iranian economy collapsing. Only President Trump knows what he will do, and when."

Airlines cancel thousands of flights across the U.S.

Associated Press
WASHINGTON

Airlines cancelled thousands of flights across the U.S. on Saturday as they worked to recover from a nationwide ground stop a day earlier that left passengers scrambling for seats and disrupted travel around the world.

The U.S. air travel schedule should be back to normal by the end of Sunday, two days after what was the nation's longest ground stop in 25 years, said Bryan Bedford, administrator of the Federal Aviation Administration. He said airlines "will still have delays and cancellations" on Saturday but promised that the "worst is behind us".

New technology being added to the nation's air traffic control system overloaded antiquated equipment and caused "intermittent" communications and radar gaps, leading to Friday's ground stop that lasted more than four hours, Trump administration officials said.



Lengthy wait: Passengers look at departures and arrivals boards at Logan airport in East Boston, Massachussetts on Friday. REUTERS

Transportation Secretary Sean Duffy told reporters on Saturday that a contractor had been replacing a section of the system's old copper wire with new fibre wire, and that work somehow caused the system overload.

Andrew Charlton, an aviation consultant, said Friday's stoppage affected about a quarter of the 45,000 flights in the U.S. each day.

The nationwide stop was the first since January 2023, when a key FAA computer system malfunctioned, and the second since the 9/11 attacks.

Bangladesh garment-makers threaten to quit wage talks

Agence France-Presse
DHAKA

Unions representing Bangladeshi garment manufacturers threatened on Saturday to walk away from wage negotiations and shut factories indefinitely if protesters kept vandalising them during demonstrations for higher pay.

Bangladesh is the world's second-largest garment exporter after China, producing clothes for major international brands like Fruit of the Loom, Levi Strauss and VF Corp, whose labels include Vans, Timberland and The North Face.

Worker unrest over wages began in October and has occasionally turned violent, with demonstrators torching police vehicles and damaging property during clashes this month.

The 'no work, no pay' provision allows factories to suspend operations without paying workers

The two main manufacturing unions – the Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA) and the Bangladesh Knitwear Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BKMEA) – sharpened their rhetoric on Saturday.

"BGMEA and BKMEA have questioned the justification of continuing to participate in wage board negotiations without any assurance that the factories will be protected," BGMEA president Mahmud Hasan Khan said at a news briefing in the capital Dhaka. "If the situation persists, we must reconsider," Mr. Khan said.

"Garment factories that have been unable to continue production due to the ongoing unrest will remain indefinitely closed from tomorrow under... Bangladesh's labour law," he added on Saturday.

The "no work, no pay" provision of Bangladesh labour law allows factory owners to suspend operations without paying workers.

Workers say rising food, housing, transport and healthcare costs have eroded their purchasing power in a country where inflation is running at around 8%. They are demanding a minimum monthly wage of 30,000 taka (₹23,000) – a 140% increase on the current 12,500 taka.

The protests have threatened to disrupt an industry that earns around $38 billion annually.

Civic dissent



Fiery outburst: A protester stands in front of a burning barricade during riots after a demonstration as part of a nationwide protest over the rising cost of living and inequality organised by the Yellow Vest movement in Lyon, France on Saturday. AFP

Saudi Arabia executes two convicted on 'terror' charges

Agence France-Presse
DUBAI

Saudi Arabia on Saturday executed two men convicted of "terrorist" offences, authorities said, with a rights group saying one was a minor at the time of the alleged crime.

Fadel al-Safwani and Jawad Qureiris were found guilty of a range of offences that included firing on security personnel and joining a foreign terrorist organisation, an Interior Ministry statement said.

The pair, both Saudi nationals, were put to death in Eastern Province after an appeal at the country's Supreme Court failed.

Since August 2025, Saudi Arabia has executed five men who were children at the time of their alleged crimes, the group added.

Myanmar air strike kills 12 in camp for displaced persons

Agence France-Presse
PONNAGYUN

A Myanmar military air strike on a camp housing people displaced by the civil war killed 12 people in the westernmost State of Rakhine, witnesses and a rescue worker said on Saturday.

Chit Su Wai, a 27-year-old shopkeeper, sobbed as she described how her daughter, aunt and mother were killed on Friday evening in Byar La IDP camp in Ponnagyun township, northeast of State capital Sittwe.

Khine Hein Htet, chairman of the Phyusin Yin Khwin Foundation, a rescue and emergency service, said a five-year-old was among the dead, while 18 were also injured in the camp, where many residents had been living for four years.

"They believed the camp was safe, and they sheltered there together. When we arrived at the scene, most of the victims had died in one place."

Zelenskyy says new European security plan floated by U.S. could benefit Putin

Associated Press
KYIV

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said the United States had raised the possibility of a new security framework for Europe as part of efforts to end Russia's war in Ukraine, warning that Moscow could use such discussions to weaken NATO and reshape the continent's borders.

Separately, Ukrainian forces struck a major Russian oil facility supporting Moscow's war effort, Ukraine's General Staff said in a statement on Saturday.



Workers clear debris at a heavily damaged thermal power plant in Ukraine following Russian missile and drone strikes. AFP

"In my view, this can be dangerous," Mr. Zelenskyy told reporters on Friday, referring to the new security framework. "This should not be the main agenda."

He said he believed Moscow was interested in reopening broader questions about European security rather than focusing exclusively on ending the war.

"(Russian President Vladimir) Putin's desire to change borders in Europe is a fact. I am sure this is part of his concept of revising security guarantees in Europe," he said. "This is dangerous because, in my view, it is precisely things like this that lead to wars or escalations."

European leaders have stressed that decisions about the continent's security must be made by Europeans themselve.

South Sudan puts off first national polls until February 2027

Agence France-Presse
JUBA

South Sudan on Saturday postponed its first national elections from December to February amid growing violence, political battles between its President and deposed Vice-President and voter registration only just starting.

Legislative and presidential elections had been scheduled for December 22, having already been delayed several times.

The electoral commission issued a new calendar on social media on Saturday, with a new election date of February 11 and the results to be announced four days later.

Commission secretary general Ahon Malou Lueth confirmed the change but would not explain why the decision had been taken or give other details.

According to the World Bank, some 90% of the country's 15 million inhabitants have no state-recognised identification, further complicating process.

BRAVE EFFORT

‘I wanted to score regardless of copping a blow on my arm’



SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

I don’t feel any pain in my hand any more. I cannot believe what I have witnessed. I still have goosebumps. Emotions are very high whenever it is India-Pakistan. I wanted to score today regardless of copping a blow on my arm. It was hurting, but I knew if I stayed in the middle, it would put pressure on Pakistan — Aaryavir Sehwag.

CAPTAINSPEAK

‘It was a roller-coaster ride... we believed in our lower-order’



X@BCCI

India skipper Lakshya Raichandani lauded the grit of the lower-order batters. “We believed in ourselves to chase this target. It was a roller-coaster ride. I always believed in the batting strength of our lower-order. We were playing with almost 11 batters. I thank the fans for their support and request them to keep supporting us”.

BELIEF

I knew it was my day and I would take my team over the line: Mohit



ACC

I had belief in God in the last over. I believe myself to be an all-rounder. This tournament had not gone well for me. I knew it was my day and I’d take my team over the line. I needed Manal Chauhan’s support, which he provided. We were telling ourselves that if Pakistan can score this many, then we can too — Mohit Ulva.

ONE STEP AT A TIME

I looked for a boundary every over: Manal on his modus operandi



X@BCCI

I want to thank the support staff for trusting me with the role of the finisher. I was told to enjoy out in the middle. I was breaking down the target and was looking for a boundary in each over because I knew I would be able to take my team close. I had tears in my eyes after I got out — Manal Chauhan.

India roars back to win last-ball thriller, regains title

Manal and Mohit emerge as the unlikely batting heroes after Pakistan puts its rival in trouble at 252 for eight in pursuit of a daunting 338; Raichandani and Aaryavir, too, shine in the stunning chase

U-19 ASIA CUP

Press Trust of India
AL AMERAT

Lower-order batters Mohit Ulva and Manal Chauhan held their nerve in the crunch moments as India pulled off a stunning one-wicket win off the final ball against Pakistan to regain the under-19 Asia Cup crown here on Saturday.





Red-letter day for Boys in Blue: The India players are over the moon after Mohit, right, snatched victory from the jaws of defeat in a nerve-wracking summit clash on Saturday. X@BCCI

Rising up

India, chasing a massive 338, was in all sorts of trouble at 252 for eight in the 42nd over, but it found two unlikely batting heroes in Manal (47, 32b, 3x4, 3x6) and Mohit (49 n.o., 26b, 5x4, 3x6) to cross the line. Mohit fittingly smashed a boundary off the last ball, bowled by spinner Ahmed Hussain, to seal the match and title.

Turning it around

When Manal and Mohit joined forces, Pakistan had one hand on the trophy. But they faced a confident opponent and handled the pressure bravely during their 57-run stand for the ninth wicket. But there was another twist to the game when Manal departed with the Boys in Blue requiring a further 36 runs for victory.

Mohit, however, found another stouthearted ally in C. Venkata (11 n.o.), and India needed eight runs off the last over. The equation narrowed down to three runs off the last ball, in which Mohit smashed Hussain wide of long-off.

Prior to that, skipper Lakshya Raichandani (80, 101b, 5x4) and Aaryavir Sehwag (58, 61b, 9x4) kept India’s fight going, adding 95 runs for the opening wicket. Aaryavir’s departure and the back-to-back dismissals of Raichandani and Anvay Dravid pushed India into a tough spot before the team pulled off a Houdini act. Earlier, opener Usman Khan’s composed 107 (111b, 11x4, 3x6) guided Pakistan to 337 for nine.

Usman stitched a quick 62-run alliance with his opening partner Hayam Khan and it was just an appetiser. Usman, who reached his hundred off 106 balls, and No. 3 Abdul Qadir (80, 54b, 3x4, 8x6) smashed 135 runs as Pakistan got a serious middle-order move-on.

Skipper Farhan Yousaf made a 63-ball 60 (4x4, 3x6) to help Pakistan go past the 300-run mark.

Pacers Kavya Patel (four for 68) and Venkata (three for 40) picked up some late wickets, but by then Pakistan had already reached a big score.

The scores: Pakistan 337/9 in 50 overs (Usman Khan 107, Abdul Qadir 80, Farhan Yousaf 63, Kavya Patel 4/68, C. Venkata 3/40) lost to India 339/9 in 50 overs (Lakshya Raichandani 80, Aaryavir Sehwag 58, Manal Chauhan 47, Mohit Ulva 49 n.o., Rizwanullah 3/53).
Toss: Pakistan.
PoM: Mohit; **PoS:** Aaryavir.

Gurnoor added to India’s Test squad; Kuldeep released

CRICKET

Amol Karhadkar
MUMBAI

Gurnoor Brar has been drafted into India’s Test squad for the New Zealand series while Kuldeep Yadav has been released to play domestic cricket, with the team management opting to bolster the pace attack.

Rishabh Pant, the enigmatic wicketkeeper-batter, has joined the squad after recovering from a back injury.

The Hindu understands that the decision to bring in the lanky fast bowler was influenced by the favourable conditions expected during the two-match series, which begins in Wellington on Thursday. Gurnoor has been impressive in the ongoing ODI rubber and is expected to provide another seam-bowling option.

The 26-year-old has been in New Zealand for well over three weeks. He had travelled as part of Test captain Shubman Gill’s personal bowling entourage before joining the ODI squad. Having spent considerable time acclimatising to the conditions, Gurnoor will now link up with the Test contingent and will not be available for Sunday’s fifth and final ODI. India has decided against naming a replacement for him.



Gurnoor.
FILE PHOTO: K. MURALI KUMAR

Pant had hurt his back during the Irani Cup tie last month. The 29-year-old proved his fitness and obtained clearance after featuring in a two-day match simulation at the BCCI Centre of Excellence in Bengaluru last week.

Kuldeep will return home after spending much of the tour on the sidelines. With the left-arm wrist-spinner unlikely to feature prominently in the team’s plans for the two Tests, the management and the selection committee felt that releasing him would allow him to get some much-needed game time.

Batters need to fire as India targets series win

INDIA IN NZ

Press Trust of India
MOUNT MAUNGANUI

The Indian batters would be determined to put up a much improved performance against the seaming ball with the series at stake in the fifth and final ODI against New Zealand here on Sunday.

India leads 2-1 despite its second-heaviest loss by runs in ODIs in the fourth match here on Friday.

The Indian batters came a cropper in seaming conditions with Matt Henry effectively sealing the game for his team in his opening over by striking thrice. India was bowled out for 89 in 26.4 overs while chasing 334.

India needs to get better on pace-friendly surfaces as it could get similar conditions in the 2027 ODI World Cup in South Africa.

Considering the collective failure of the batting line-up, it would not be fair to single out an individual. Having said that, Rohit Sharma and Shreyas Iyer, who had a forgettable captaincy debut, are yet to make an impact.

While Henry squared Rohit up with a beauty, Sheyas was caught in the crease against a sharp incoming delivery on Friday.

For Rohit and Virat Kohli, the game presents a final opportunity to enthral the crowd on probably their last tour of New Zealand. Kohli, too, had no response to Henry’s magic in the last outing.

Stand-in captain Shreyas said conditions changed drastically in favour of the bowlers in the second innings.

New Zealand, on the other hand, finds itself in another must-win situation as it aims to level the series. Opener Tim Seifert may have resurrected his career with a fifty in the fourth ODI, while Young, who was dropped twice in the slip cordon, went on to make a fine hundred.

The Indian pacers will need to stop the openers from taking the game away from them in the first 10 overs.

The Black Caps have not lost a bilateral ODI series at home in seven years.

Match starts at 7.30 a.m. IST.



Real struggle: Rohit has looked out of sorts in the ODI series.
CREIMAS/BCCI

Harshal set to move from SRH to GT in all-cash deal

Amol Karhadkar
MUMBAI

Two-time IPL Purple Cap winner Harshal Patel is set to join Gujarat Titans from Sunrisers Hyderabad in an all-cash trade ahead of the retention deadline on November 17.

The Hindu understands that the 35-year-old pacer, whose death bowling skills made him a sought-after commodity, will move to the Ahmedabad-based franchise for ₹4 crore – half the price SRH paid to acquire him at the IPL 2025 auction.

Harshal’s stint with SRH failed to take off as expected. After a below-par 2025 season, the franchise relied heavily on uncapped Indian pacers Sakib Hussain and Praful Hinge during IPL 2026, leaving the experienced campaigner with just five appearances.



Harshal. FILE PHOTO



Marching ahead: Svitolina overcame a mid-match blip. REUTERS

Svitolina gets past Sabalenka to seal a semifinal spot

WTA FINALS

Agence France-Presse
LOS ANGELES

Ukrainian veteran Elina Svitolina beat World No. 2 Aryna Sabalenka in a rollercoaster three sets on Friday to punch her ticket to the WTA Finals last four, where she’ll face Wimbledon champion Linda Noskova.

Broken to start the third set, sixth-ranked Svitolina stormed home, winning six straight games to win 6-3, 3-6, 6-1.

She claimed just her second career victory in eight meetings with the Belarusian star, whose first-serve struggles and 35 unforced errors proved too much to overcome.

The match concluded round-robin play in the elite season-ending event. Earlier Friday, French Open champion Mirra Andreeva capped an unbeaten run through the group stage with a 6-2, 6-1 victory over Diana Shnaider.

Andreeva, already assured of a semi-final spot as a group winner, needed just 56 minutes to beat Shnaider, a late replacement for ailing Karolina Muchova. The 19-year-old Russian, ranked third in the world, next faces fifth-ranked American Jessica Pegula.

Katerina Siniakova clinched her record sixth year-end finish as the world’s top-ranked doubles player on the WTA Tour. She will have held the top spot for 209 weeks as of Monday, leaving her second all-time behind Martina Navratilova, who was No. 1 for 237 weeks.

INBRIEF



India holds off Bhutan to reach SAFF C'ship final

India survived a second-half fightback from Bhutan to register a 2-1 win in Dhaka on Saturday and enter the SAFF Championship final. P.V. Vishnu (ninth minute) and captain Chinglensana Singh (27th) scored before the interval, but Kinzang Tashi Tobden's (48th) goal early in the second period brought Bhutan back into the semifinal that India largely controlled. The Video Assistant Referee played a big role, overturning the offside decision against Bhutan's goal while cancelling a penalty awarded to India.

Aguadze scores at both ends as Sethu FC edges Kickstart

Ghanaian forward Juanita Aguadze was the unlikely protagonist as Sethu FC began its Indian Women's League campaign with a 2-1 victory over Kickstart FC, Bengaluru, at Kalyani on Saturday. Aguadze scored twice for Sethu but also put through one in her own net. She opened the scoring in the 18th minute with a solo effort. However, the forward undid her good work when an attempted clearance off a corner resulted in a misdirected header into her own goal in the 30th minute. Sethu regained the lead midway in the second-half when Malavika P. was brought down inside the penalty area. Aguadze stepped up and confidently converted the spot-kick.

The result: Sethu FC 2 (Juanita Aguadze 18, 67-pen) bt Kickstart FC 1 (Juanita Aguadze 30-og).



Lakshya beats Farhan, storms into the final

India's Lakshya Sen stormed into his second consecutive men's singles final with a stunning three-game win over World No. 10 Alwi Farhan of Indonesia at the Kumamoto Masters Japan Super 500 badminton tournament in Kumamoto on Saturday. World No. 13 Lakshya brightened his chances of qualifying for the BWF World Tour Finals in Hangzhou, after reaching the final with a 21-12, 15-21, 21-11 win over sixth seed Farhan. Eighth seed Lakshya, who is currently 12th in the BWF World Tour rankings with 64,980 points, needs to break into the top eight to qualify for the season-ending event. A title win at the Super 500 event will earn Lakshya 9,200 points, while a runner-up finish will fetch him 7,800 points. Either result should take him into the top eight of the BWF World Tour rankings.

Salah nets a brace to become Egypt's all-time top-scorer

Mohamed Salah netted a brace as he became the leading all-time scorer for Egypt with 70 goals, achieving the feat in the 5-0 rout of Malawi in an Africa Cup of Nations qualifier in Cairo on Friday. The 34-year-old overtook Hossam Hassan.



Gokulam scores a dramatic win over Nagaland United

Two-time champion Gokulam Kerala scored a dramatic 2-1 victory over Nagaland United in the Indian Football League at Chumukedima on Saturday. Crislan Henrique had given the Gokulam men the lead in the 18th minute and they were leading 1-0 till the fag end of the match. But Zomuansanga found the equaliser for the home side in the sixth minute of the stoppage time, but another three minutes later, Victor scored the goal that would give the two-time defending champion its third win in as many matches. Gokulam thus maintained its top position. The Kozhikode-based club has nine points.

The result:
Nagaland United 1 (Zomuansanga 90+6) lost to Gokulam Kerala 2 (Crislan Henrique 18, Victor 90+9).

Patidar guides MP past sloppy Kerala

The skipper makes the most of an early reprieve as his side overhauls the modest target of 139 with eight balls to spare; Andhra pacers Stephen and Sasikanth rise to the occasion as it scores a comfortable win over Tripura; stumper Revanth effects a record-equalling six dismissals for the victor

SMAT

M.R. Praveen Chandran
NEW CHANDIGARH

Kerala floundered with the bat and on the field as Madhya Pradesh registered a five-wicket win in the Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy Elite Group C match here on Saturday.

Kerala put down four catches including that of Madhya Pradesh captain Rajat Patidar, who guided his side home with an unbeaten 36 (29b, 2x4, 1x6). Patidar, who was dropped early by M.D. Nidheesh at short third man off Karthik B. Nair, slammed Bjiu Narayanan over the long-on fence to seal the win with eight balls to spare.

Chasing a modest target of 139, opener Akshat Raghuwanshi (45, 28b, 4x4, 2x6) gave Madhya Pradesh a flying start.

He added 51 for the second wicket with Shivang Kumar (15) before leg-spinner Karthik B. Nair came up with a lion-hearted bowling effort (two for 23) in the middle overs to scupper the chase.



Responsible knock: Patidar took his side past the finish line. FILE PHOTO: K. MURALI KUMAR

A stutter

Madhya Pradesh stuttered, losing three wickets for 23 runs, but Patidar and Rahul Batham (10 not out) played sensibly to take it past the finish line.

Avesh Khan rattled Kerala by dismissing Sanju Samson (four) in the first over. Kerala slumped to 30 for three before Salman Nizar (69, 53b, 5x4, 2x6) and Akhil Scaria (32, 35b, 2x4, 1x6) added 67 runs for the fourth wicket. But the final charge came a bit late for Kerala as it ended up with a sub-par total of 138 for six.

Earlier in the first match, a resilient Andhra defended 141 in style to chalk up a 43-run win over Tripura.

K. Revanth Reddy's record-equalling performance – six dismissals which included four catches and two stumpings – headlined the comprehensive win.

Tripura was never in the hunt after losing wickets in clusters in the PowerPlay. Andhra pacers C.V. Stephen and K.V. Sasikanth took out Tripura's top-order early on while the spinners choked the run flow the middle overs.

Eventually, the Tripura batters succumbed to the pressure and was bundled out for 98.

Put in to bat Andhra lost Hemanth Reddy in the first over and it was followed by steady fall of wickets. Ashwin Hebbar, reprieved on four by Lakshya Thareja, muscled a 16-ball 34 (1x4, 3x6) to give momentum to the innings.

S.D.N.V. Prasad then smashed an unbeaten 50 off 33 balls (6x4, 1x6) to prop up the total.

Sooryavanshi's record

Vaibhav Sooryavanshi, at 15 years and 232 days, became the youngest captain in men's Twenty20 history when he led Bihar against Saurashtra on Saturday.

SYED MUSHTAQ ALI TROPHY — SATURDAY'S SCORES

Elite: Group A: At Mumbai: Baroda 148/6 in 20 overs (Shivalik Sharma 45, Krunal Pandya 40 n.o.) lost to Chandigarh 149/7 in 19.5 overs (Shivam Bhambri 45).
Mizoram 76 in 19.2 overs. (Pratyush Singh 3/13, Harsh Raj 3/16) lost to Jharkhand 81/4 in 8.3 overs (Utkarsh Singh 45).
U.P. 171/6 in 20 overs (Siddharth Yadav 37, Sameer Rizvi 74 n.o.) lost to Rajasthan 172/4 in 15.4 overs (Abhijeet Tomar 63, Rohan Rajbhar 48, Mahipal Lomror 33).
Karnataka 184 in 20 overs (Karun Nair 53, Pravin Dubey 30 n.o., Sayan Ghosh 4/28) bt Bengal 165/9 in 20 overs (Sudip Gharami 65, Shahbaz Ahmed 56, Abhilash Shetty 4/26, V. Vyshak 3/28).
B: Indore: Haryana 190/6 in 20 overs (Dinesh Bana 42, Rahul Tewatia 35 n.o.) lost to Punjab 193/6 in 19.1 overs (Vihaan Malhotra 86, Uday Saharan 42 n.o., Sumit Kumar 3/55).
Bihar 137/9 in 20 overs (Prithvi Raj 38, Chetan Sakariya 3/33, Prerak Mankad 3/20) lost to Saurashtra 138/5 in 16.3 overs (Harvansh Singh 33, Suraj Kashyap 3/39).
Tamil Nadu 172/7 in 20 overs (Amith Sathvik 38, B. Sachin 33, Shahrukh Khan 46 n.o., R. Rajkumar 31) bt Railways 166/9 in 20 overs (Zuber Ali 46, Toufik Mondal 57, Athisayaraj Davidson 3/47).
Delhi 243/6 in 20 overs (Priyansh Arya 58, Ayush Badoni 37, Tejasvi Dahiya 46, Himmat Singh 63 n.o.) bt J&K 140 in 19.2 overs (Yawer Hassan 70, Mayank Yadav 5/14).
C: Chandigarh: Pondicherry 204/9 in 20 overs (Bhanu Anand 46, Akash Pugazhanthi 42, S. Parameeshwaran 46) bt Maharashtra 189/5 in 20 overs (Prithvi Shaw 32, Arshin Kulkarni 33, Sahil Parakh 57, Rahul Tripathi 35 n.o., Badal Rawat 3/12).
Andhra 141/9 in 20 overs (Ashwin Hebbar 34, S.D.N.V. Prasad 50 n.o., Viki Saha 3/23) bt Tripura 98 in 17.2 overs (C.V. Stephen 3/29, K.V. Sasikanth 3/12).
Himachal Pradesh 176/6 in 20 overs (Mridul Surroch 52) bt Assam 119/6 in 15 overs (Saahil Jain 37 n.o.). **Note:** revised target: 136 in 15 overs.
Kerala 138/6 in 20 overs (Salman Nizar 69, Akhil Scaria 32, Tripuresh Singh 3/28) lost to Madhya Pradesh 142/5 in 18.4 overs (Akshat Raghuwanshi 45, Rajat Patidar 36 n.o.)
D: Kolkata: Hyderabad 172 in 20 overs (Abhirath Reddy 35, Maxwell Swaminathan 3/23) lost to Mumbai 174/3 in 13.1 overs (Musheer Khan 51, Suryakumar Yadav 60 n.o.).
Gujarat 250/9 in 20 overs (Urvil Patel 62, Harshal Patel 30, Khilan Patel 84, Lalit Yadav 3/36, Debabrata Pradhan 3/34) bt Odisha 229/8 in 20 overs (Kartik Biswal 55, Subhranshu Senapati 89, Arzan Nagwaswalla 4/50).
Goa 146/9 in 20 overs (Deepraj Gaonkar 39, Saurabh Dubey 4/30) lost to Vidarbha 150/3 in 17.3 overs (Atharva Taide 52, R. Samarth 53).
Uttarakhand 197/6 in 20 overs (Avneesh Sudha 48 n.o., J. Suchith 46) lost to Chhattisgarh 202/5 in 18.3 overs (Vikalp Tiwari 50, Ajay Mandal 66).
Plate: Sovima: Meghalaya 165/6 in 20 overs (Raj Biswa 32, Jiwanjot Singh 45) bt Nagaland 147/4 in 20 overs (Rongsen Jonathan 60 n.o., Chetan Bist 31).
Manipur 167/9 in 20 overs (Ulenyai Khwairakpam 72, L. Keishangbam 31, Yab Niya 3/35, Darge Bagra 3/21) bt Arunachal Pradesh 106/9 in 20 overs (Salil Malhotra 53, Kishan Singha 3/13, Mohammad Sultan 4/14).
Sikkim 167/7 in 20 overs (Parth Palawat 35, Gurinder Singh 42, Satyajit Bachhav 34) lost to Services 168/4 in 18.4 overs (Kunwar Pathak 38, Suraj Vashisht 67, Leeyong Lepcha 3/30).



Keeping at bay: Malappuram's Hadzic is thwarted by Thrissur goalkeeper Kamaludheen. K.K. NAJEEB

Forsy fires Malappuram to the second spot

SLK

P.K. Ajith Kumar
THRISSUR

Malappuram FC's fans came in large numbers, hiring several buses. And they could return home happy as Malappuram beat Thrissur Magic 2-1.

The win has taken Malappuram to second place in the Super League Kerala, and thus a step closer to a place in the knockout phase. It has 14 points from eight games.

Calicut FC is on top of the table with 17 points and has already made it to the semifinals. 'Forca Kochi has 13 and is lying third.

Thiruvananthapuram Kombans is on 11 points, while Thrissur and defending champion Kannur Warriors are on seven each. 'The Warriors, though, have played a game less, and they will take on Calicut FC at Kozhikode on Sunday in the last of the eighth round matches.

Malappuram had started with a handicap: its leading scorer Amadou Soukouna would take no further part this season because of his injury.

But the team showed it still could come up with a fine show. Abdelhay Forsy is one of the reasons for that.

The Moroccan, in fact, gave his team the lead late into the opening half, with a superb free-kick just a few yards outside the box. It was a foul by M. Harikrishnan that resulted in the free-kick and the defender was given a red card, which looked a bit harsh.

After Silajit Santra equalised for the host with a long-ranger, Forsy set up the winning goal for Malappuram; his brilliant pass, on a counter-attack, was given the finishing touch by Grace Adieu Youmou four minutes from time.

The result: Thrissur Magic 1 (Silajit Santra 45+2) lost to Malappuram FC 2 (Abdelhay Forsy 42, Grace Adieu Youmou 86).

Warner hits out at CA, accuses it of cover-up

SANDPAPERGATE

Agence France-Presse
SYDNEY

David Warner blasted Cricket Australia's handling of the 2018 ball-tampering scandal as "a cover-up" on Saturday, escalating a row that has torn apart the sport.

Former opener Warner, who was banned for a year over his part in the Sandpapergate incident in Cape Town, lashed out at what he claimed was "a shoddy investigation".

"As far as I am aware, CA did not interview Josh Hazlewood, Mitchell Starc or Nathan Lyon in their 2018 investigation," he said on Instagram.

"If that's correct then how can CA push the idea that the bowlers didn't know? "It looks like they had decided who they wanted to blame from the very beginning, ran a shoddy investigation to serve the purpose and now they want to maintain the false narrative that the bowlers had no idea.

"That stinks of a cover-up," added the 40-year-old.



Warner. AFP

Germany, Netherlands notch up victories

NATIONS LEAGUE

Agence France-Presse
BELGRADE

Germany cruised to a 3-1 win over Serbia in the Nations League on Friday, setting up a crunch clash with the Netherlands in Berlin on Monday.

The Netherlands' 7-0 annihilation of Greece in Amsterdam means the Germans will likely need to win on Monday to reach the quarterfinals, unless Serbia beats the Greeks.

Serbia is guaranteed to finish bottom of the group after a fifth loss in a row.

The results: Group A2: Serbia 1 (Babic 56) lost to Germany 3 (Babic 3-og, Wirtz 14, Gruda 50); Netherlands 7 (Summerville 6, Reijnders 12, 18, 33, J. Timber 40, 59, Malen 61) bt Greece 0; **B1:** Scotland 2 (McGinn 54, 74-pen) bt North Macedonia 1 (Rastoder 57); Slovenia 0 drew with Switzerland 0; **C3:** Moldova 2 (Popescu 39, 77) bt Kazakhstan 1 (Chesnokov 51); Slovakia 2 (Prekop 17, Haraslin 74) drew with Faroe Islands 2 (Davidsen 30-pen, Samuelsen 47); **C4:** Luxembourg 0 lost to Estonia 1 (Paskotsi 42); Bulgaria 0 lost to Iceland 5 (Gudjohnsen 17-pen, 68, 79, Oskarsson 21, Tsenov 52-og); **D1:** Andorra 2 (Lopez 24, Rosas 35) bt Gibraltar 0; **D2:** Liechtenstein 0 lost to Azerbaijan 1 (Emreli 26).



Reijnders. GETTY IMAGES

SNAPSHOTS

Hamza, Paterson recalled for first Test against Bangladesh

JOHANNESBURG: South Africa has recalled Zubayr Hamza to fill its No. 3 role and added Dane Paterson to the team that was named to take on Bangladesh in the first Test at the Wanderers on Sunday.
The squad: Temba Bavuma (Capt.), Aiden Markram, Marques Ackerman, Zubayr Hamza, Matthew Breetzke, Ryan Rickelton (wk), Wiaan Mulder, Marco Jansen, Simon Harmer, Dane Paterson and Kagiso Rabada.

India blanks Guam

KUALA LUMPUR: Raj Singh Wahengbam and Dallalmuon Gangte scored a hat-trick each as India trounced Guam 12-0 in a group match of the AFC under-17 Asian Cup Qualifiers on Saturday.
The result: India 12 (Thongbam 5, Gangte 13, 27, 32, Hrishikesh 20, Irom 53, Wahengbam 55, 73, 83, 84, Saikhom 56, Ristik 87) bt Guam 0.

Chawla and Shrikrishna in the final stage

INDORE: Kamal Chawla outplayed Laxman Rawat to book a spot in the final stage of the IBSF World snooker championships at the Yeshwant Club in Indore. Kreishh Gurbaxani, S. Shrikrishna, Piyush Kushwaha, Ranveer Duggal and Digvijay Kadian were other Indians to advance to the final stage.

Suraj in second round

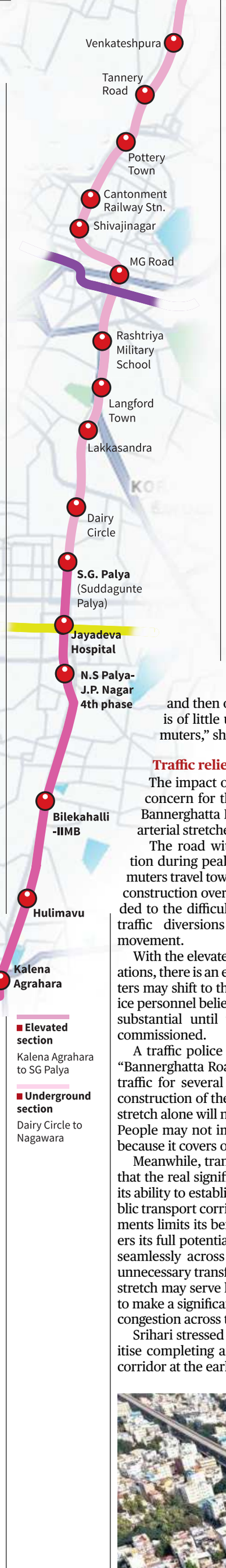
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM: H. Suraj moved into the men's second round of the Sree Chithra State-ranking tennis tournament at the TTC courts on Saturday. Top seed V.S. Sreenath breezed past Rahul Krishna to make the second round in boys under-18 category. Sreenath also put it across Aromal Aji 6-0, 6-0.
The results: First round: Men: H. Suraj bt Eashwar 6-0, 6-0; V.S. Sreenath bt Aromal Aji 6-0, 6-0; S.D. Adithyan bt Anto Liju 6-0, 6-1, Rahul Krishna bt George Domanic 6-0, 6-0; Shaan Madhu bt K.P. Harishankar 6-1, 6-0; Sathvik Arun bt Jibin Philip 6-1, 6-3; Siddhant bt Harish Babu 6-2, 6-1.
Boys: U-18: V.S. Sreenath bt Rahul Krishna 6-1, 6-0; A.R. Sreekarthik bt A. Akash 6-1, 6-1, Shaan Madhu bt Jonnes Joseph 6-1, 6-4; **U-16:** A.R. Sreekarthik bt Navneeth 9-0; Nivin S. Vinod bt Rafael 9-0; Aman K. Mathew bt Madhav Vinod 9-2; Antonio Joseph bt Pavan Rah 9-5; **U-12:** Aarav Kiran bt Devicharan 8-0; L.P. Abhay bt G. Karthik 8-0; Sathvik bt Denin S. John 8-1; Vivekanandan bt Kousthubh 8-2; V. Ouseph bt Roice Noble 8-4; Mahath Ram bt Johan Joseph 8-3; Adhivik Nath bt Athel Peter 8-0.

MOSC Medical College enters semifinals

CHANGANASSERY: MOSC Medical College (Kolenlenchery) edged out host Pushpagiri Medical College (Thiruvalla) to enter the semifinals of the Kerala University of Health Sciences inter-medical college basketball tournament.
Mount Zion Medical College and Believers Church Medical College also moved into the last-four stage.
The results: Quarterfinals: MOSC, Kolenlenchery 34 (Vedanth Rohit 16) bt Pushpagiri, Thiruvalla 32; Mount Zion 28 (Abhishek 11, Bestin 10) bt Al Azhar, Thodupuzha 19; Believers Church, Thiruvalla 56 (Ammaan Abdul Rafeeq 18, Eric Davis 10) bt Sree Narayana IMS, Ernakulam 16.

Mind the gap: Partial opening of Pink Line leaves commuters wanting

The opening of the elevated section of the Namma Metro Pink Line is expected to offer only minor relief to the city's gridlock, with the crucial underground section connecting the Central Business District to north Bengaluru awaiting completion, writes **Darshan Devaiah B.P.**





"Every day, I travel on this route by bus. I have been waiting for years for the Pink Line to open so that I can reach my office on M.G. Road directly. However, after years of missed deadlines, only 7.5-km elevated section is being opened. There is no point in taking the metro if I still have to depend on a bus to reach my destination," says Shankar Prasad, an office-goer from Hulimavu in south Bengaluru.

For Shankar, who travels every day to the Central Business District (CBD), the partial opening of Namma Metro's Pink Line only means another long wait.

His daily commute illustrates the limitations of the upcoming service. He usually takes BMTC bus number 368 to Shivajinagar. When that service is unavailable, he boards the G-4 bus to Brigade Road junction and walks nearly a kilometre to his office on M.G. Road. He had hoped the Pink Line would offer a more convenient alternative, after construction began in 2020. But the opening of just the elevated section has done little to change his daily commute.

Now, Shankar will have to board the metro at Hulimavu, alight at S.G. Palya, and find another mode of transport to continue his journey towards the CBD. He believes that the time spent entering and exiting the metro station, followed by another bus journey, would make little practical difference.

"I do not understand the purpose of opening this stretch separately. The line was meant to connect residents along Bannerghatta Road to the Central Business District and north Bengaluru," he says.

Shankar's frustration reflects a larger concern among commuters along Bannerghatta Road. The 7.5-km elevated section of the Pink Line, running between Kalena Agrahara and S.G. Palya (Suddagunte Palaya), is scheduled to be inaugurated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday, with commercial operations beginning the following day. While the opening marks the completion of a significant part of the corridor, the absence of its underground section means that one of the project's primary objectives, establishing a north-south connection across the city, will remain unfulfilled.

Short stretch, big promise

The Pink Line is part of Phase 2 of Namma Metro and is designed to connect Kalena Agrahara in south Bengaluru with Nagawara in the north. The 21.25-km corridor comprises a 7.5-km elevated section and a 13.76-km underground section. Once fully operational, it is projected to carry approximately 3.76 lakh passengers daily, according to the Detailed Project Report (DPR).

The corridor is particularly significant because it is intended to connect residential neighbourhoods in south Bengaluru with the Central Business District and the northern parts of the city. It is also expected to provide interchange facilities with other metro lines, particularly yellow and green lines.

However, the initial opening will cover only a fraction of this. The elevated section will serve six stations along Bannerghatta Road, including important locations around the Indian Institute of Management Bangalore (IIMB), Hulimavu, and Jayadeva Hospital. It is expected to provide an alternative for people travelling to destinations along this stretch, including educational institutions, hospitals, and IT parks. For commuters whose journeys begin and end within this limited corridor, the service could offer a useful alternative. But for those travelling towards the CBD, Shivajinagar, M.G. Road, or north Bengaluru, it remains a disppointment.

Sreevani N., a fashion designer from Bilekahalli who travels to Hebbal every day, is among those who feel that the partial opening does not address the challenges they face. She currently depends on an airport bus, route number KIA-14, to reach her workplace. With this journey expensive and entailing traffic congestion for hours, she had been looking forward to switching to the metro.

"The airport bus costs me more, and I still get stuck in traffic. I was waiting for the metro to start so that I could travel directly towards Nagawara and then reach my office in Hebbal. But now the government is opening only the elevated stretch with seven stations. What is the point?" she asks.

Sreevani believes that taking several years to construct the metro line and then opening only a section of it defeats the purpose of investing in a mass public transport system. "Bangalore Metro Rail Corporation Ltd. (BMRCL) should understand that taking years to construct the Metro and then opening only half the corridor is of little use to a large section of commuters," she says.

Traffic relief may remain limited

The impact of the partial opening is also a concern for those monitoring traffic along Bannerghatta Road, one of the city's busiest arterial stretches.

The road witnesses considerable congestion during peak hours as thousands of commuters travel towards central Bengaluru. Metro construction over the past several years has added to the difficulties faced by motorists, with traffic diversions and restrictions affecting movement.

With the elevated section now ready for operations, there is an expectation that some commuters may shift to the metro. However, traffic police personnel believe that the change may not be substantial until the underground section is commissioned.

A traffic police official from Bilekahalli said: "Bannerghatta Road has been witnessing heavy traffic for several years, especially during the construction of the metro. Opening the elevated stretch alone will not resolve the traffic problem. People may not immediately shift to the metro because it covers only a few stations."

Meanwhile, transport expert M.N. Srihari said that the real significance of the Pink Line lies in its ability to establish a seamless north-south public transport corridor. "Opening the line in fragments limits its benefits. A metro corridor delivers its full potential when commuters can travel seamlessly across major interchanges without unnecessary transfers. While a short operational stretch may serve local commuters, it is unlikely to make a significant impact on peak-hour traffic congestion across the wider corridor," he said.

Srihari stressed that the BMRCL should prioritise completing and commissioning the entire corridor at the earliest.

"A fully operational Pink Line would encourage a substantial number of commuters to shift from road transport to the metro, delivering the intended benefits in terms of traffic decongestion and urban mobility," he added.

The 13.76-km underground section, which will be Bengaluru's longest underground metro stretch, is scheduled to open by May 2027, according to BMRCL officials. It will connect Dairy Circle to Nagawara, passing through central locations such as M.G. Road, Shivajinagar, and Tannery Road.

> A fully operational Pink Line will encourage a substantial number of commuters to shift from road transport to metro.
>
> **M.N. SRIHARI,** Transport expert

Its completion will allow commuters from Bannerghatta Road to travel towards the CBD and north Bengaluru, with interchange facilities providing access to other operational lines.

BMRCL officials maintain that the decision to open the elevated section separately was necessitated by the difference in construction progress between the two portions. While civil construction on the elevated section has been completed and operational clearances obtained, work at stations and systems-related activities are continuing underground. "Track installation and systems integration activities are under way across sections," the official said.

Logistics challenges

The underground construction, however, has encountered several technical and logistical challenges. Bengaluru's unpredictable subterranean geology has been a major obstacle during tunnelling, with engineers encountering unexpected hard rock formations that slowed the progress of tunnel-boring machines. "At Lakkasandra, tunnelling work encountered a large, forgotten underground garbage dump, which took months to clear," an official said.

"One of the most challenging sections was the 2.2-km tunnel between Shivajinagar and Vellara junction. Progress here slowed considerably because of rocky terrain and the densely populated neighbourhoods above the alignment. The section has been one of the reasons for repeated revisions of completition schedule," the official added.

Although tunnelling was completed late 2024 and track-laying by mid-2026, subsequent systems-related work faced delays. One of the major bottlenecks was the delayed arrival of the imported Platform Screen Doors from China. These doors are required for the underground stations, and the signalling systems cannot be fully integrated and calibrated until their installation is completed. This further pushed back the testing schedule.

Project that missed several deadlines

Like several other Namma Metro projects, the Pink Line has experienced repeated delays.

Originally promised for commissioning in 2020, the project subsequently saw its completion target revised to December 2025. BMRCL has now indicated that the entire corridor will be available to commuters only in 2027. The tendering process for the elevated section began in 2017, but execution moved slowly.

Meanwhile, BMRCL is preparing to begin passenger operations on the elevated section with a limited number of trains. Initially, services will operate at eight-minute intervals during peak hours, compared to the five-minute frequency planned earlier.

Five train sets will be deployed for operations, with an additional train kept on standby. The frequency may be revised depending on passenger demand.

However, a senior BMRCL official said: "More trains can be deployed to increase the frequency. However, given the relatively short length of this section, trains will require longer turnaround times at the terminal stations, Kalena Agrahara and S.G. Palya."

Station names, another point of contention

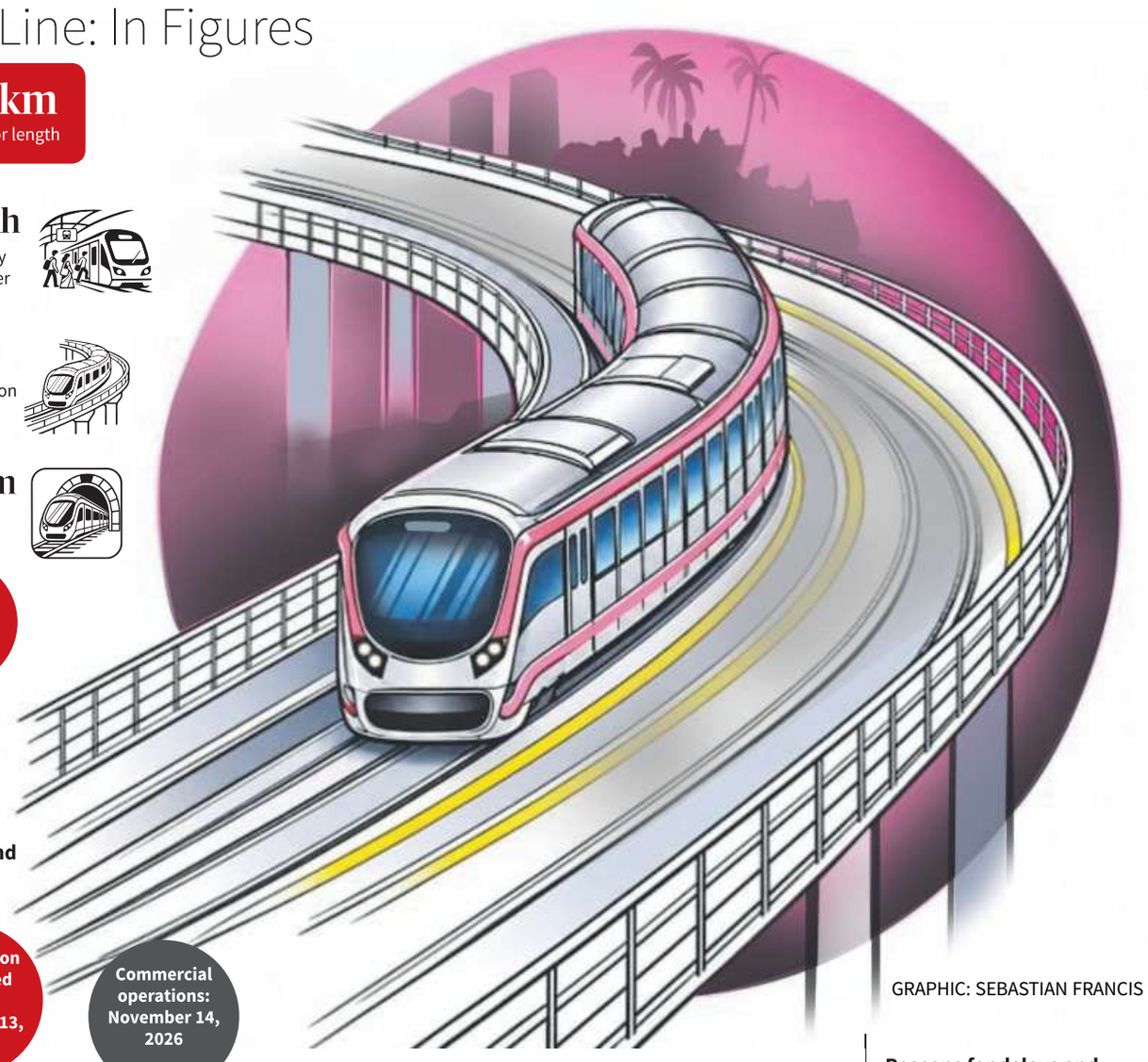
Even as commuters await the full corridor, the proposed names of some stations have triggered discussions among residents and elected representatives.

However, on November 11, the Union Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs approved the renaming of three stations on the Pink Line following demands from residents and elected representatives, according to Greater Bengaluru Development Minister Krishna Byre Gowda and Bangalore South MP Tejasvi Surya.

Under the revised names, IIMB Metro Station will be renamed Bilekahalli-IIMB, JP Nagar 4th Phase will become NS Palya-JP Nagar 4th Phase, and Tavarekere will be renamed S.G. Palya.

The renaming request was recently jointly submitted by elected representatives, including Minister Ramalinga Reddy, Mr. Byre Gowda, Mr. Surya, and MLAs Satish Reddy, Uday Garudachar, and M. Krishnappa.

Pink Line: In Figures



21.25 km Total corridor length

3.76 lakh Projected daily ridership as per DPR

7.5 km Elevated section opening

13.76 km Underground section

Route: Kalena Agrahara – Nagawara

Elevated section 6 stations

Underground section 12 stations

Inauguration of elevated section: November 13, 2026

Commercial operations: November 14, 2026

Initial peak-hour frequency **8 minutes**

Train deployment **5 trains**, with one on standby

Pink Line: Cost and construction delays

- Original completion target **March 2016**
- Construction began **2020**
- Route **Kalena Agrahara – M.G. Road – Nagawara**

Phase 2 cost escalation

- Original estimate **₹30,695 crore**
- Revised estimate **₹40,425 crore**

₹9,730 crore increase

GRAPHIC: SEBASTIAN FRANCIS

Reasons for delays and cost escalation

- Tendering delays and bureaucratic hurdles
- Complex underground tunnelling
- Rising material prices
- High land acquisition costs



Going live: The 7.5-km elevated section of the Pink Line will be inaugurated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in Bengaluru on Friday, with commercial operations beginning the following day. ANI



Coconut trees uprooted due to gusty winds triggered by Cyclone Arnab at Bandamurulanka village in Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Konaseema district; (below) a family tries to salvage fishing nets after Cyclone Arnab ravaged Odalarevu village in Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Konaseema district. V. RAJU

Twin cyclones leave livelihoods in tatters

Cyclones, Arnab and Murasu, which hit the Andhra Pradesh coastline within a span of a week, delivered a severe blow to the fisherfolk communities, coconut and casuarina growers in West Godavari and Konaseema districts, many of whom may have to look for alternative livelihoods for two to three years, writes **Nellore Sravani**

For generations, coconut trees have been more than just crops for the people in the coastal districts of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Konaseema, and West Godavari. They have been their livelihood. However, two cyclones that hit the coastal district of Andhra Pradesh within the span of a week have left the coconut growers, farmers and fishing communities in the region staring down the barrel as thousands of coconut trees were flattened, lakhs of acres of paddy fields were wiped out, and dozens of boats became dysfunctional. Konaseema district has witnessed the swath of destruction, with over 73,500 coconut trees uprooted and paddy destroyed across 1,18,109 acres, leaving around 88,000 farmers in tatters. Meanwhile, in West Godavari district, 27,397 coconut trees were destroyed, affecting more than 5,000 small and marginal growers.

Andhra Pradesh was ravaged by two cyclones between October 28 and November 3. One was a 'Very Severe' Cyclonic Storm (VSCS) Arnab and the other, a 'Severe' Cyclonic Storm (SCS) Murasu, leaving the districts of West Godavari, Konaseema, and Bapatla in ruins, while Guntur, East Godavari and Palnadu were also affected, according to the A.P. State Disaster Management Authority. Coastal areas in two districts of West Godavari and Konaseema were ravaged by violent gales of around 150 kmph at the time of Arnab's landfall on October 28 and 29, and suffered once again when extremely heavy rainfall pounded the districts on November 3 and 4 after Murasu made landfall near Ongole.

In an announcement, Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu put together the economic losses at approximately ₹6,500 crore, even as the officials are still preparing the overall State report on the trail of destruction the twin cyclones left behind. Besides property losses, at least 20 cyclone-related deaths were reported.

> Even during the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami, the damage was not much
>
> **SAMBA MURTHY**
> A daily wage worker

'No household left untouched'

"Not a single household in the mandal [Mogalturu] was left untouched by the cyclones," says Tirumani Srinivas, a coconut grower and a fisherman at Perupalem. *The Hindu* visited seven villages of Mogalturu and Narsapur mandals of West Godavari district, and every narrow road bore the marks of the disaster. Srinivas cultivates coconut trees in four acres, and around 50 trees of the total 300-400 trees growing in his land fell to the ground due to the gales. Every household grows at least 50 trees on average, and everyone has lost at least 10-15% of their crop, he says. "Our lives are built around these trees, and the very foundation has now been shaken," he says.

Perupalem, populated by a fisherfolk community and coconut and casuarina cultivators, has more coconut trees than households. Locals say the entire stretch between Mogaltur mandal and Odalarevu, another coastal town in Konaseema, has borne the brunt of the cyclone impact. The people of Perupalem had never seen a calamity of this magnitude. "Even during the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami, the damage was not this much," says a daily wager, Samba Murthy, whose house stands without a roof today.

Built around 25 years ago, the house, covered with a tiled roof, was damaged during the night of the cyclone's landfall. According to information from the Mandal Revenue Officer, 2,670 houses were partially or fully damaged in Mogaltur. But his family of four had shifted to another place by evening, when winds gained speed. Now, he lives in a rented house, paying ₹2,000. But the going is getting difficult for him. It has been 15 days since he found work.

Treacherous road to normalcy

The path to normalcy is riddled with challenges. The coconut growers say it will take around ten years and consistent care to help grow a tree to its usual height. The government pays ₹1,500 per tree towards compensation. But the growers say it barely scratches the surface.

"A tree never ages. It keeps bearing fruit every 40 days. How can ₹1,500 be enough?" says Nageswara Rao of Mollaparu, who lost around 100 trees due to the impact of the cyclones. He has suffered a loss of ₹4-5 lakh. According to information from the district officials, none of these coconut growers opted for any crop insurance, despite low premiums. A single coconut tree is a source of livelihood to more than three persons, including the growers, the labourers who harvest the tree, those who load them onto trucks for bigger markets, and those who make a living by selling fronds. All these people are staring at losses, Nageswara Rao and Srinivas explain.

Plight of fishing community

Belonging to the economically weaker sections and dependent solely on fishing, around 20 people at a government school in Dibbalapallipalem village of West Godavari district that has been converted into a cyclone shelter say they have had no work since the cyclone struck the coast. In the village, which is home to 200 families, every couple goes for fishing in a nearby stream, Kunteru. That day, despite warnings, many went fishing.

They say, in unison, that till around 6 p.m., a sense of calm prevailed at the sea. The weather was steady and encouraging, making many wonder if the warnings about a 'big' cyclone crossing the coast near their place were true.

"We get anywhere between ₹500 and ₹1,000 a day by selling the catch, which is either fish or crab. We could not afford to lose a day's savings," Mamudlamma, a resident, says. She adds that they left the boats, as usual, tied to wooden logs. The next morning, they were all in a shambles. "We never saw or heard of such a destruction," another fisherwoman, Lakshmi, says, adding that they would have been more careful had they understood the severity.

> Two cyclones in a week is a rare phenomenon, but not new
>
> **MRUTYUNJAYA MOHAPATRA**
> Director General of Meteorology at IMD

Deprived of their only source of income and amid growing debts, the fishing community in the village are surviving on the rice and pulses being given by the State government. "It will take a minimum of ₹60,000 to have a new boat built. And the work may take up to 15 days. We do not have that kind of money," a fisherwoman, Lakshmi from the village, says. Even if they did manage to get some money, they may need four years to repay this amount.

What was different this time?

There is a general belief here that it was only in 1969 that something of this magnitude struck the coast. "During the tsunami, we did not see gales. This time, the strong winds, which began around 6.30 p.m. on October 28, continued till noon the next day, forcing us to stay indoors," says Lakshmi. Tropical cyclones are not new to Andhra Pradesh. Various studies point out that 80% of the cyclones affecting the country have originated over the Bay of Bengal, due to favourable Cyclogenesis factors, including sea surface temperatures. "The Bay is warmer than the Arabian Sea, because when many rivers pour into the Bay, it leads to stratification, which is what keeps the surface waters warm," explains Mrutyunjaya Mohapatra, Director General of Meteorology at the India Meteorological Department.

As a result, the eastern coast, comprising the States of Tamil Nadu, A.P., Odisha, and West Bengal, sees frequent tropical cyclones. According to the IMD, most of the tropical cyclones forming over the Bay in October make landfall near the Odisha-West Bengal coast, the November ones make landfall near the A.P. coast, and the December ones near the Tamil Nadu coast.

From 1970 till date, at least 63 cyclonic storms, including Arnab and Murasu, have affected the A.P. coast. But this time, it was different. For the fourth time, a tropical cyclone crossed the State's coast as a Very Severe Cyclonic Storm (VSCS) during this period.

The previous ones were in 1999, 2014 (Hudhud) and 2018 (Titli). It was after a long time that the State experienced two cyclones within a span of a week. A similar situation was last seen in the year 2013, when two cyclones, Helen, a Severe Cyclonic Storm and Lehar, a Very Severe Cyclonic Storm that later weakened into a depression, battered the A.P. coast between November 22 and 28. And before that, it was in 1987 and 1976.

"Two cyclones in a week is a rare phenomenon, but not new," Mrutyunjaya Mohapatra says, citing the previous ones. "We have come a long way in grappling with the impact of the cyclones. There was a time when thousands of people were getting killed. However, with advanced technology, improved forecasting, and early warning systems, we can minimise the damage since the governments get enough time to prepare," he says, adding that more focus should be on building climate-resilient infrastructure.

Role of climate change

Researchers at the Grantham Institute, Imperial College London, found that climate change increased the maximum wind speed by 5% and eyewall rain by 11%. About 25% of the economic damage can be attributed to climate change, they say. The researchers estimated that share of climate change in the intensity of Arnab was about 16%. Elaborating on how exactly it exacerbated the situation, Ralf Toumi, Director of the institute, says: "Climate change can modify the conditions that initiate the storms, including the organisation of thunderstorms. More directly, a warmer ocean surface drives the intensity through more rainfall in the eyewall," the professor says.

Explaining the increased wind speed, the professor says climate change can make the ocean warmer, causing more evaporation and more atmospheric moisture, which acts as a catalyst to intensify the storm.

In 2023, the India Meteorological Department (IMD) prepared cyclone hazard proneness of districts in the country, based on frequency of total cyclones, total severe cyclones, actual/estimated maximum wind strength, and other parameters. Of 100 districts, most of which fall on the eastern coast, 12 are classified as 'very highly prone'. Of these, three are in A.P., and they are the composite districts of Krishna, East Godavari and Nellore. The districts of Srikakulam, Visakhapatnam, Guntur, West Godavari, Prakasam and Vizianagaram are highly prone.

