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**TROOP WITHDRAWAL**  
China says there is 'some consensus'



**BALTIMORE TRAGEDY**  
U.S. seeks \$100 mn for bridge collapse



**HOLY DIP**  
46 drown across Bihar during Jitiya festival



**VAST POTENTIAL**  
Going bullish in Tamil Nadu



**GUNG HO**  
Confident India will look to wrap up series

**INSIDE**



**Road map on Assam Accord by Oct. 25: Himanta**

**NEW DELHI**  
The Assam government will prepare a road map to implement recommendations of the Justice Bipal Kumar Sharma Committee on Clause 6 of the Assam Accord by October 25, Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma said as the government published the committee's report. » PAGE 4



**Constitution has thrived as a living document: CJ**

**NEW DELHI**  
Chief Justice of India (CJ) D.Y. Chandrachud on Thursday said constitutional doctrine evolved with society, and no generation, including the present, could have a monopoly over solutions or confidence in its ability to foresee the future. » PAGE 5



**NC, PDP blame Centre for poll turnout in polls**

**BENGALURU**  
The National Conference and Peoples Democratic Party on Thursday blamed the Centre for the lower voter turnout in the second phase of the Jammu and Kashmir election on Wednesday. The PDP's phase recorded about 57% polling, and it was 51.1% in the first phase. » PAGE 5

**L69, G4 countries seek urgent reform of UN Security Council**

**Sriam Lakshman**  
NEW YORK  
With the United Nations (UN) approaching its 80th anniversary next year, the Group of Four (G4) countries — India, Brazil, Germany and Japan — seeking permanent membership and reform of the UN Security Council (UNSC) on Thursday called for urgent reform of the world body. Other plurilateral groupings, such as the G9 and C-10 also echoed these calls.  
The G4 meeting, held on the fringes of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) at the Foreign Minister level on September 23, reviewed progress made on these reforms. In

**Govt. advises Indian nationals to leave Lebanon, mulls naval evacuation**

**Kalol Bhattacharjee**  
NEW DELHI  
India has "strongly advised" its nationals to leave Lebanon. An advisory issued by the Embassy of India in Beirut has advised Indian citizens not to travel to Lebanon, which has been targeted by Israeli bombing raids over the past three days.  
Official sources here said the Union government is contemplating naval evacuation of Indian nationals from Lebanon in view of the deteriorating security situation in the country.  
Lebanon hosts around 3,000 Indians at present, sources said.  
"Exercise caution"  
"All Indian nationals in Lebanon are strongly advised to leave Lebanon. Those who remain for any reason are advised to exercise extreme caution, restrict their movements and remain in contact with Embassy of India in Beirut through our email ID: cons@indiaembassy.gov.in or the emergency phone number +96178660128," the Embassy of India said in a public notification.  
This is the first advisory by India since the pager attacks targeted Hezbollah, the armed Lebanese resistance group, in Beirut and southern Lebanon and capital Beirut.  
In retaliation, Hezbollah launched rockets and missiles that have hit northern Israeli cities like Safed, and the second largest city and the port of Haifa.  
On Wednesday, a ballistic missile fired by Hezbollah was intercepted above Israeli capital Tel Aviv.



**Reduced to rubble:** The destruction in Saksakiyeh, a town in Lebanon, after the Israeli air strikes on Wednesday night. AP

as several leading airlines have cancelled flights to and from Beirut.  
In view of this, discussions are currently under way in the South Block about carrying out a naval evacuation of Indians through the port of Beirut.  
A similar naval evacuation of Indian nationals was carried out in 2006 when Israel bombed Lebanon.  
At that time, four ships were deployed under Operation Sukoon to evacuate around 12,000 nationals from Lebanon.  
Operation Sukoon also rescued nationals from other countries such as Sri Lanka.  
A similar naval and air evacuation was also carried out from Libya in February 2011.  
The Embassy of India issued a similar advisory on August when the conflict between Hezbollah and Israel had been heating up in the backdrop of the Israeli military campaign in the Gaza Strip.  
**NO CANCELS: ISRAEL**  
» PAGE 14

**SC grants bail to ex-I.N. Minister Senthilbalaji citing delay in trial**

**He was arrested in case linked to 'cash-for-jobs scam' when he was Transport Minister; court says he has already undergone substantial part of the sentence prescribed under the PMLA; liberty cannot be withheld as form of punishment, court says**



**Out of jail:** Senthilbalaji after his release from Puzhal prison in Chennai on Thursday. ANH/A.SUDHAKAR

**Krishnadas Rajasekhar**  
NEW DELHI  
The Supreme Court on Thursday granted bail to DMK leader and former Nadu Minister V. Senthilbalaji in a money laundering case linked to the cash-for-jobs 'scam', saying liberty cannot be withheld as a form of punishment.  
A Bench of Justices A.S. Oka and Augustine George Masih noted that Mr. Senthilbalaji had been incarcerated for over 15 months. The three first information reports (FIRs) and several chargesheets covering scheduled offences, including criminal conspiracy, cheating and corruption, have attracted over 2,000 accused and more than 600 witnesses.  
The judgment authored by Justice Oka noted that in ideal cases, the possibility of the trial of scheduled offences concluding within a reasonable time of three or four years appears to be completely ruled out. Mr. Senthilbalaji had already undergone a substantial part of the prescribed sentence under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA). The Bench observed that stringent conditions enumerated in bail provisions such as Section 43(B) of the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act and section 45 of the PMLA must not be used as the "sole metric for denial of bail or for wholesale breach of constitutional right to speedy trial."  
The court laid down stringent bail conditions on Mr. Senthilbalaji, including bail bonds to the value of ₹25 lakh; personal attendance before the Deputy Director, Enforcement Directorate (ED), twice a week and appearance before the officers probing the scheduled offences on the first Saturday of every month; surrender of passport; regular presence for the trial and no seeking of adjournment.  
The former Minister has been barred from contacting any of the prosecution witnesses or victims. Breach of any of these conditions would amount to grounds for cancellation of his bail, the court warned.  
During the hearing, the Bench drew a parallel between Mr. Senthilbalaji's arrest and former Delhi Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia's case for

bail in the excise policy case. Mr. Sisodia, who had spent 17 months in jail, was granted bail on the ground that there was not even a remote chance of the trial getting away any time soon.  
Mr. Senthilbalaji is accused of playing a "central and pivotal role" in the "job racket scam" during his tenure as Minister. The case involves kickbacks for jobs in the Metropolitan Transport Corporation of Chennai and the Tamil Nadu State Corporation when he was the Transport Minister.  
The ED had said bank statements showed cash deposits of ₹1.34 crore in the account of Mr. Senthilbalaji. The ED had argued the "huge cash deposits" detected to Mr. Senthilbalaji were "nothing but part of proceeds of crime brought into the financial system for the purpose of laundering".  
Following the Supreme Court order, Mr. Senthilbalaji, the court warned, must be released from Puzhal Central Prison in Chennai around 7 p.m. on Thursday.  
**CM WELCOMES ORDER**  
» PAGE 4

**Karnataka govt. withdraws general consent to CBI to conduct probe**



**The Hindu Bureau**  
BENGALURU

Accusing the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) of being "biased and prejudiced" in its investigation into various cases, the Karnataka government on Thursday decided to withdraw its earlier notification granting unrestricted permission to the agency to conduct probe in the State.  
With this, Karnataka joins many non-BJP ruled States in withdrawing general consent for the CBI in recent years.  
The Cabinet decision came amid calls for a CBI investigation against Chief Minister Siddaramaiah in the alleged irregularities in allotment of 14 MUDA Mysore Urban Development Authority) sites to his wife, after a special court in Bengaluru on Wednesday directed the Lokayukta to probe the case.  
However, briefing decisions taken at a meeting presided over by Mr. Siddaramaiah, Law and Parliamentary Affairs Minister H.K. Patil said, "This was a subject of discussion and not related to the MUDA probe. In the case of the Chief Minister, the Special Court has directed for a Lokayukta inquiry. The question of the withdrawal of open consent to the CBI is not linked to it."  
He said, "The blanket permission was given earlier. We did not stop it. But when we found that Raj Bhavan is misused, institutions are misused, we felt that we should be cautious... The CBI and the Centre have not been using their instrumentalities in a judicious manner. As a consequence, we have decided to grant consent to the CBI on a case-by-case basis after examination."  
Under the Delhi Special Act, 1946, the government has earlier granted the CBI permission to freely carry out criminal investigation in the State, Mr. Patil said.  
**"No chargesheets filed"**  
He said that in some cases, when



**The Minister alleged that the CBI had been operating in a biased manner.** Only officers bearers from one political party are probed, which demonstrates a prejudiced approach. This is one of the reasons for our decision... We have taken this decision to prevent them [CBI] from going down the wrong path, Mr. Patil asserted.

**L69, G4 countries seek urgent reform of UN Security Council**

A joint statement released on September 26, External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar and his G4 counterparts noted the "multilateral challenges" to the multilateral system, centred around the UN. They welcomed the urgent call for reform at the UN's 'Summit of the Future' held earlier this week.  
The G4 Ministers reiterated the need for an increase in both permanent and non-permanent categories of UNSC membership to enhance the participation of developing countries, as well as "those significantly contributing to international peace and security" at the UN.  
The group highlighted the need for better representation of regions such as Africa, Asia-Pacific and Latin America and the Caribbean in permanent and non-permanent categories.  
The group held a joint meeting with the C-10 group of countries, of which India is a part, met on Thursday, un-



**Meeting of L69 and C10 groupings of nations." Mr. Jaishankar stressed.** Greater representation They emphasised that transformative reform of the Security Council must include greater representation for the Global South. The Ministers said developing countries had an "indispensable" role in safeguarding the relevance and effectiveness of the Security Council.  
"The Ministers reiterated the urgent need to make the Security Council more transparent, efficient, effective, democratic and accountable, and recognised the Summit of the Future provided an opportunity

for renewed commitment to Security Council reform," the group said.  
Both the L69 and the G4 reaffirmed their strong support to the Common African Position (CAP) based on the Ezulwini Consensus and the Sirte Declaration. The countries said they will continue to push for comprehensive reform impacted by the UN's "credibility and legitimacy".  
On Thursday, Mr. Jaishankar announced that he would visit his counterparts Foreign Ministers from Brazil, South Africa, Ronald Lamola of South Africa in the IBSA (India, Brazil, South Africa) group.  
"We share convergent views on reform of UN system and of its Security Council," he said.

# L69, G4 countries seek urgent reform of UN Security Council

**Sriram Lakshman**

NEW YORK

With the United Nations (UN) approaching its 80th anniversary next year, the Group of Four (G4) countries – India, Brazil, Germany and Japan – seeking permanent membership and reform of the UN Security Council (UNSC) on Thursday called for urgent reform of the world body. Other plurilateral groupings, such as the L69 and C-10 also echoed these calls.

The G4 meeting, held on the fringes of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) at the Foreign Minister level on September 23, reviewed progress made on these reforms. In

a joint statement released on September 26, External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar and his G4 counterparts noted the “significant challenges” to the multilateral system, centred around the UN, as they welcomed the urgent call for reform at the UN’s ‘Summit of the Future’ held earlier this week.

The G4 Ministers reiterated the need for an increase in both permanent and non-permanent categories of UNSC membership, to enhance the participation of developing countries, as well as “those significantly contributing to international peace and security” at the UNSC.

The group highlighted the need for better repre-



External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar with German, Brazilian and Japanese counterparts during the G4 Foreign Ministers Meeting. ANI

sentation for regions such as Africa, Asia-Pacific and Latin America and the Caribbean in permanent and non-permanent categories.

The L69 group of countries, of which India is a part, met on Thursday, un-

der the chairmanship of the Prime Minister of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Ralph E. Gonsalves. The group held a joint meeting with the C-10 group of 10 African countries. “Encouraged by the first-ever Joint Ministerial

Meeting of L69 and C-10 groupings of nations,” Mr. Jaishankar tweeted.

## **Greater representation**

They emphasised that transformative reform of the Security Council must include greater representation for the Global South. The Ministers said developing countries had an “indispensable” role in safeguarding the relevance and effectiveness of the Security Council.

“The Ministers reiterated the urgent need to make the Security Council more representative, transparent, efficient, effective, democratic and accountable, and recognised that the Summit of the Future provided an opportunity

for renewed commitment to Security Council reform,” the group said.

Both the L69 and the G4 reaffirmed their strong support to the Common African Position (CAP) based on the Ezulwini Consensus and the Sirte Declaration. The countries said further delays in comprehensive reform impacted the UN’s “credibility and legitimacy”.

On Thursday, Mr. Jaishankar announced that he had also met his counterparts Foreign Ministers Mauro Vieira of Brazil and Ronald Lamola of South Africa in the IBSA (India, Brazil, South Africa) group.

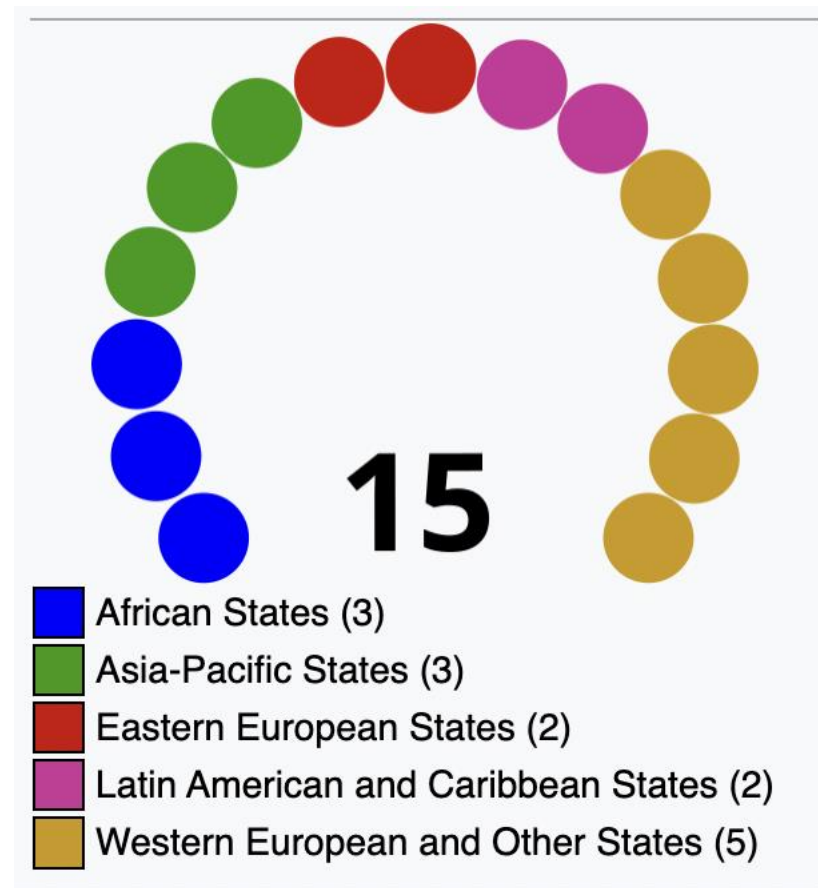
“We share convergent views on reforms of UN system and of its Security Council,” he said.





UN Security Council Chamber in [New York City](#)

<b>Abbreviation</b>	UNSC
<b>Formation</b>	24 October 1945
<b>Type</b>	<a href="#">Principal organ</a>
<b>Legal status</b>	Active
<b>Headquarters</b>	<a href="#">New York City, U.S.</a>
<b>Membership</b>	<b>Permanent members:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li> <a href="#">China</a><sup>[a]</sup></li><li> <a href="#">France</a></li><li> <a href="#">Russia</a><sup>[b]</sup></li><li> <a href="#">United Kingdom</a></li><li> <a href="#">United States</a></li></ul> <b>Non-permanent members on rotation:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li> <a href="#">Algeria</a></li><li> <a href="#">Ecuador</a></li><li> <a href="#">Guyana</a></li><li> <a href="#">Japan</a></li><li> <a href="#">Malta</a></li><li> <a href="#">Mozambique</a></li><li> <a href="#">Sierra Leone</a></li><li> <a href="#">Slovenia</a></li><li> <a href="#">South Korea</a></li><li> <a href="#">Switzerland</a></li></ul>
<b>Presidency</b>	<a href="#">Slovenia</a> (September 2024)



# G4

*Grupo dos Quatro* (Portuguese)

*Gruppe der Vier* (German)

४ राष्ट्रों का समूह (Hindi)

G4諸国 (Japanese)



Map of G4 countries

<b>Formation</b>	2005
<b>Type</b>	Political cooperative alliance
<b>Purpose</b>	Reform of the <a href="#">UNSC</a>
<b>Membership</b>	 <b>Brazil</b>  <b>Germany</b>  <b>India</b>  <b>Japan</b>
<b>Leaders</b>	Lula da Silva Olaf Scholz Narendra Modi Fumio Kishida

Some Member States of the L.69 Group of Developing Countries include:



St. Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, India, Brazil, South Africa, Nigeria, Rwanda, Burundi, Papua New Guinea, Palau, Fiji, Ethiopia, Bhutan, Venezuela, Mongolia, Nicaragua, Bahamas and Seychelles.

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- **Call for UNSC Reform:**

- The G4 countries (India, Brazil, Germany, Japan) have called for urgent reform of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) to include greater representation for developing nations, especially from the Global South.

- जी4 देशों (भारत, ब्राज़ील, जर्मनी, जापान) ने संयुक्त राष्ट्र सुरक्षा परिषद (यएनएससी) में विकासशील देशों, विशेष रूप से वैश्विक दक्षिण से अधिक प्रतिनिधित्व के लिए तत्काल सुधार की मांग की है।

- The members of the C-10 are the following countries and institutions: Algeria, Botswana, Cameroon, Egypt, Kenya, Nigeria, South Africa, Tanzania, the Central Bank of West African States (CBWAS), and the Central Bank of Central African States (CBCAS).



## L69 and C-10 Support:



Other groupings like L69 and C-10 have also echoed these calls for reform, with a special focus on increasing both permanent and non-permanent UNSC seats for regions such as Africa, Asia-Pacific, and Latin America.




अन्य समूह, जैसे कि एल69 और सी-10 ने भी अफ्रीका, एशिया-प्रशांत और लैटिन अमेरिका जैसे क्षेत्रों के लिए स्थायी और अस्थायी सीटों को बढ़ाने पर जोर दिया है।

## Significance for Developing Nations:



The Ministers emphasised the indispensable role of developing countries in safeguarding the relevance and effectiveness of the UNSC, calling for better representation and reforms.



मंत्रियों ने विकासशील देशों की महत्वपूर्ण भूमिका पर बल दिया और यूएनएससी में सुधार और बेहतर प्रतिनिधित्व की मांग की।

## African Representation:

G4 and L69 countries reaffirmed support for the Common African Position based on the Ezulwini Consensus and the Sirte Declaration.

जी4 और एल69 देशों ने एज़ुलविनी आम सहमति और सिरते घोषणा पर आधारित सामान्य अफ्रीकी स्थिति के प्रति अपना समर्थन दोहराया।



- 
- Which of the following groupings has called for urgent reform of the UN Security Council to include greater representation for the Global South?  
निम्नलिखित में से किस समूह ने संयुक्त राष्ट्र सुरक्षा परिषद में वैश्विक दक्षिण के लिए अधिक प्रतिनिधित्व की मांग की है?

1.G7

2.G20

3.G4

4.BRICS

# SC grants bail to ex-T.N. Minister Senthilbalaji citing delay in trial

He was arrested in case linked to 'cash-for-jobs scam' when he was Transport Minister; court says he has already undergone substantial part of the sentence prescribed under the PMLA; liberty cannot be withheld as form of punishment, court says

**Krishnadas Rajagopal**  
NEW DELHI

**T**he Supreme Court on Thursday granted bail to DMK leader and former Tamil Nadu Minister V. Senthilbalaji in a money laundering case linked to the cash-for-jobs 'scam', saying liberty cannot be withheld as a form of punishment.

A Bench of Justices A.S. Oka and Augustine George Masih noted that Mr. Senthilbalaji had been incarcerated for over 15 months. The three first information reports (FIRs) and several chargesheets covering scheduled offences, including criminal conspiracy, cheating and corruption, have arraigned over 2,000 accused and more than 600 witnesses.

The judgment authored by Justice Oka noted that even in ideal conditions, the possibility of the trial of scheduled offences concluding even within a reasonable time of three or four years appeared to be completely ruled out. Mr. Senthilbalaji had already undergone a substantial part of the prescribed sentence under the Prevention of Money Laundering



**Out of jail:** Senthilbalaji after his release from Puzhal prison in Chennai on Thursday. AKHILA EASWARAN

Act (PMLA). The Bench observed that stringent conditions enumerated in bail provisions such as Section 43D(5) of the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act and Section 45 of the PMLA must not be used as the "sole metric for denial of bail or for wholesale breach of constitutional right to speedy trial".

**'Infringement of rights'** Justice Oka said the trial in the scheduled offences had not even reached the stage of framing of charges. There was no possibility of the trial commencing in the near future. The exist-

ence of proceeds of crime at the time of the PMLA trial can be proved only if the scheduled offence is established, the court observed. "If the appellant's detention is continued, it will amount to an infringement of his fundamental right under Article 21 of the Constitution of speedy trial," Justice Oka noted.

The court laid down stringent bail conditions on Mr. Senthilbalaji, including bail bonds to the value of ₹25 lakh; personal attendance before the Deputy Director, Enforcement Directorate (ED), twice a week and appear-

ance before the officers probing the scheduled offences on the first Saturday of every month; surrender of passport; regular presence for the trial and no seeking of adjournments.

The former Minister has been barred from contacting any of the prosecution witnesses or victims. Breach of any of these conditions would amount to grounds for cancellation of his bail, the court warned.

During the hearing, the Bench drew a parallel between Mr. Senthilbalaji's situation and former Delhi Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia's case for

bail in the excise policy case. Mr. Sisodia, who had spent 17 months in jail, was granted bail on the ground that there was not even a remote chance of the trial getting under way any time soon.

Mr. Senthilbalaji is accused of playing a "central and pivotal role" in the "job racket scam" during his tenure as Minister. The case involves kickbacks for jobs in the Metropolitan Transport Corporation of Chennai and the Tamil Nadu State Corporation when he was the Transport Minister.

The ED had said bank statements showed cash deposits of ₹1.34 crore in the account of Mr. Senthilbalaji. The ED had argued the "huge cash deposits" detected to Mr. Senthilbalaji were "nothing but part of proceeds of crime brought into the financial system for the purpose of laundering".

Following the Supreme Court order, Mr. Senthilbalaji was released from the Puzhal Central Prison in Chennai around 7 p.m. on Thursday.

- **Supreme Court Grants Bail to Senthilbalaji**

- The Supreme Court granted bail to former Tamil Nadu minister V. Senthilbalaji, who was arrested in connection with the "cash-for-jobs" scam.
- सप्रीम कोर्ट ने तमिलनाडु के पूर्व मंत्री वी. सेंथिलबालाजी को "नौकरी के बदले नकद" घोटाले से जुड़े मामले में जमानत दी है।

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- **Delay in Trial Cited**

- The court noted that Senthilbalaji had been incarcerated for over 15 months and the trial was delayed, with over 2,000 accused and more than 600 witnesses yet to testify.
- अदालत ने कहा कि सेंथिलबालाजी 15 महीने से अधिक समय तक जेल में रहे हैं और मुकदमे में देरी हो रही है, जिसमें 2,000 से अधिक आरोपी और 600 से अधिक गवाह अभी गवाही देना बाकी हैं।

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- **Liberty and Fundamental Rights**

- The court emphasized that liberty cannot be denied indefinitely and highlighted the constitutional right to a speedy trial under Article 21.
- अदालत ने कहा कि स्वतंत्रता को अनिश्चित काल तक नहीं रोका जा सकता और संविधान के अनुच्छेद 21 के तहत शीघ्र सुनवाई के अधिकार को रेखांकित किया।

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- **Conditions for Bail**

- The bail was granted with stringent conditions, including a ₹25 lakh bond and regular attendance at court. Senthilbalaji was barred from contacting prosecution witnesses.
- जमानत कड़े शर्तों के साथ दी गई, जिसमें ₹25 लाख का बांड और नियमित रूप से अदालत में उपस्थिति शामिल है। सेंथिलबालाजी को अभियोजन पक्ष के गवाहों से संपर्क करने पर रोक लगा दी गई।

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## 1. Comparison to Other Cases

1. The judgment drew parallels with the case of Manish Sisodia, where similar delays in trial were cited for bail.
2. इस फैसले की तुलना मनीष सिसोदिया के मामले से की गई, जहां जमानत के लिए इसी तरह की मुकदमे में देरी का हवाला दिया गया था।

- 
- **On what grounds did the Supreme Court grant bail to former Tamil Nadu minister V. Senthilbalaji?**

**सुप्रीम कोर्ट ने तमिलनाडु के पूर्व मंत्री वी. सेंथिलबालाजी को किन आधारों पर जमानत दी?**

1. Lack of evidence
2. Completion of trial
3. Delay in trial
4. Political influence



**IN BRIEF**



**Alexander Dunn to get 2024 SASTRA Ramanujan Prize**

The 2024 SASTRA Ramanujan Prize will be awarded to Alexander Dunn of the Georgia Institute of Technology, U.S. A press release said the prize is being given to Mr. Dunn, who has achieved several breakthroughs in the study of modular forms, half-integral weight forms, metaplectic forms and their connections to prime numbers and integer partitions. The prize will be awarded on December 20 and 22 at SASTRA University, Kumbakonam.

**'Prajwal's voice matched with male voice in video footage'**

The STF on Thursday told the Karnataka HC that the report of the FSL had stated that the voice samples of former MP Prajwal Revanna matched with the voice of the male recorded in a video footage in which an aged woman was allegedly being raped by him. Special Public Prosecutor (SPP) Ravivarma Kumar said that the video footage, recovered from a mobile phone, was also found to be genuine, continuous, not edited and not morphed.

**Karnataka govt. to reject Kasturirangan panel report**

The Karnataka government on Thursday decided to reject the Kasturirangan Committee report on the protection of the ecologically sensitive areas (ESAs) Western Ghats region from environmental degradation, despite advocating in the last few months that the report would be reviewed. Law and Parliamentary Affairs Minister H.K. Patil said a decision was taken to reject the recommendations of the committee report, which legislators had been strongly opposing.

**Nitin Jamdar sworn in as Kerala HC Chief Justice**

**The Hindu Bureau**  
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

Justice Nitin Madhukar Jamdar was sworn in as the Chief Justice of Kerala at Raj Bhavan here on Thursday.

Kerala Governor Arif Mohammed Khan administered the oath of office. Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan was also in attendance during the swearing-in ceremony. The Chief Justice, who succeeded Ashish Jitendra Desai, was previously a judge of the Bombay High Court. A native of Maharashtra, he practised at the Bombay High Court.

**Munirathna raped in Vikasa Soudha and in a car: woman**

**K.V. Aditya Bharadwaj**  
BENGALURU

The woman, who has filed a rape case against Karnataka BJP MLA Munirathna, has made a startling allegation that she came in contact with the Minister's chamber allotted to him in the Vikasa Soudha, the administrative headquarters of the State, and also in his rapist car while he was Minister and at a godown owned by him. The victim claimed that Mr. Munirathna raped her repeatedly between 2020 and 2023, during which time he was a Minister from August 2021 to May 2023. This is part of her statement she recorded before the Magistrate Chandini N.

**Kerala CM should relinquish Home portfolio: LDF MLA**

Anvar accuses Pinarayi Vijayan of sacrificing CPI(M) at the altar of political self-preservation, family interests, and favouritism; he says CM's popularity has plummeted, party workers hate him

**The Hindu Bureau**  
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

Left Democratic Front (LDF) independent legislator P.V. Anvar appeared to have crossed a political rubicon on Thursday by demanding Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan relinquish the Home portfolio on moral grounds.

At a press conference in Malappuram, Mr. Anvar dared Mr. Vijayan to declare a judicial inquiry into the accusation that a "criminal clique" allegedly led by the Additional Director General of Police, Law and Order, and political secretary P. Sasi used the police to waylay gold carriers out-



LDF MLA P.V. Anvar says the CM threatened him with an illegal wiretap investigation and mocked him at a public meeting.

side the Karipur airport for their contraband. Mr. Anvar declared he was no longer a member of the CPI(M) parliamentary party and would remain an independent MLA in the House. He said he felt personally

betrayed by Mr. Vijayan. "I considered him a patriarchal figure. I candidly told him about the criminal clique. But my trust in him was misplaced. The Order of political secretary me as a guardian of gold smugglers and threatened

me with an illegal wiretap investigation. Later, he mocked me at a public meeting in Thrissur and boasted the government would strike its case undeterred. I might be arrested or killed anytime. But my commitment to my voters and CPI(M) workers will endure," he added.

He claimed Mr. Vijayan's popularity had plummeted. "The sun has set on most party workers and people hate him (Mr. Vijayan)," he said. Mr. Anvar took a jibe at Mr. Vijayan, who has been examining the stocks at the Kanaka Durga temple for two days. As the quality was poor, they seized the stocks on Wednesday.

**Officials seize cashew, raisins in A.P. temple**

**Rajulapudi Srinivas**  
VIJAYAWADA

The Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) has seized 1,600 kg of cashew and 800 kg of raisins (dry grapes), which were found to be of poor quality at the Sri Durga Mallikarjuna Swamy Varaha Devasthanam atop Indrakeladi in Vijayawada.

A team of the FSSAI, led by Joint Food Controller of A.P., N. Purnachandhra Rao, has been examining the stocks at the Kanaka Durga temple for two days. As the quality was poor, they seized the stocks on Wednesday.

"As the cashew and the raisin stocks were found to be sub-standard, we have seized the stocks," Mr. Rao said. "We have collected the samples of cashew, Bengal gram, cashew, rais-

ins, cow ghee, edible oil, rice, tamarind and other groceries being used for preparing prasadam, besides the Anna Prasadam, which will be sent for testing," he added.

"FSSAI has enquired about the contractor who supplied the cashew and raisin stocks, which are used in laddu, pongali and other prasadams. Notices will be served to the contractor," Mr. Rao said.

The officials will also collect samples from the godowns and stores of the contractors (outside the temple) and verify the quality of the material.

As the Navaratri Utsavams were scheduled to commence in a few days at the temple, the Devasthanam authorities were asked to maintain quality in preparing prasadams and Anna Prasadam.

**VIT's fest graVITas'24 to commence today**

**The Hindu Bureau**  
CHENNAI

Vellore Institute of Technology's (VIT) annual international techno-management fest, graVITas'24, will begin on Friday with the theme "Innovate, sustain, Transform". The 15th edition of the event helps students to showcase their talents and innovations.

According to a press release, these events are designed to engage participants in a real-world

problem-solving atmosphere that address societal challenges. Apart from this, graVITas'24 will host events for schoolchildren with five events. Winners of the fest will compete for goodies which will include cash prizes, gift vouchers, and software subscriptions worth over ₹25 lakh.

Additionally, graVITas'24 will host 50 international students. The Hindu is the print media partner for the fest.

**Data theft: HC fiat to Telegram, Cloudflare**

**Mohamed Inramullah S.**  
CHENNAI

The Madras High Court has restrained Telegram Messenger and Cloudflare from allowing their platforms to be used by unethical hackers to share or sell sensitive customer data allegedly stolen from the computer systems of Chennai-based Star Health and Allied Insurance Company Limited.

Justice Senthilkumar Ramamoorthy also restrained the messaging service platform and the IT management services

company. Recently, highly confidential and sensitive data related to the insurance company, its customers, and employees was illegally hacked by a group that identified itself as xenzen. The stolen data included health insurance policy details, claims and related documents, and other personally identifiable information of the company.

The hackers sent mails to the insurance company on August 8 and August 10, threatening to disseminate the stolen data if their monetary demands were not met. When the insurance company did not budge to the illegal demands, the hackers began disseminating the sensitive private data through telegram bots and websites created using Cloudflare.

A criminal complaint was also lodged with the cyber crime cell of the Greater Chennai Police on August 13. Thereafter, the plaintiff wrote to Telegram seeking details of the accounts from which the bots

operated. The plaintiff also sought an injunction restraining the defendants from using their services to disseminate the stolen data.

The court granted the plaintiff's plea and issued a writ of mandamus directing the defendants to provide the details of the accounts from which the bots operated. The court also granted an injunction restraining the defendants from using their services to disseminate the stolen data.

The court also granted an injunction restraining the defendants from using their services to disseminate the stolen data.

**Telangana officials raze building on Malkapur Lake**

**Serish Nanietti**  
HYDERABAD

Telangana Revenue, Panchayat and Irrigation officials teamed up on Thursday to carry out a controlled demolition of a four-storeyed building built in the Malkapur Peddacheruvu, Sangareddy district. As the waters of the lake lapped the plinth area of the building, it collapsed after a series of announcements to steer clear of the premises.

Officials cited the absence of no objection certificate (NOC) from Irrigation Department to carry out demolition. "The building owner had secured an NOC for construction but it was not occupied on a perma-



Officials demolish a four-storey building on the Malkapur Lake in Sangareddy district of Telangana. MOVED APO

nent basis. The owners were renting out the premises for short duration to people coming from Hyderabad," said an official.

The building owner had secured an NOC for construction but it was not occupied on a perma-



Official structure but could not obtain the NOC from the Irrigation Department," said the official. The detonators were placed on Thursday and the building collapsed into a heap of concrete within a few minutes.

**SIT formed to nab gang which robbed jeweller in Thrissur**

**The Hindu Bureau**  
KOCHI

A 12-member gang allegedly robbed a gold jeweller worth ₹1.84 crore in broad daylight by waylaying his car at Kallidukku along National Highway 544 near Peruthi Thrissur district on last Sunday.

The police has registered an FIR based on a complaint lodged by the victim, Arun Sunny, P.O., a resident of Chembukkavu in Thrissur. His friend Roy Thomas was also with him on the front passenger seat at the time of the incident.

An SIT led by Officer Assistant Commissioner of Police has been formed to

crack the case. "The team split into five separate teams and searched across the district and the suburbs. We have received a CCTV image of one of the accused changing cars during the course of the robbery though he was masked. We have widely shared his photograph. The registration numbers of the vehicles used by the accused were found to be fake. Neither have they been traced through either of the two toll plazas in the region," said sources.

The victims were reportedly coming from Coimbatore to Thrissur with the jewellery when the accused in three SUVs hijacked their car on Kallidukku Service Road.

**A.P. Minister vows action in Bollywood actor case**

**Rajulapudi Srinivas**  
VIJAYAWADA

Andhra Pradesh Home Minister Vangalapati Anil Kumar has said that all those involved in the harassment of actor Kadambari Jethwani and her family members would be brought to book. Addressing the media in Vijayawada on Thursday, he said the people who harassed Ms. Jethwani and her family members would be punished irrespective of their rank and cadre.

"Five police officers, including three IPS officers, have been suspended and the main accused in the case has been arrested. More officers are likely to be booked for harassing the actor," she said.

**Hands-on!**



Practice sessions: Members of the S.H. Boat Club, Kainakery, train on the snakeboat 'Karuvitta Sree Vinayakan Chundan' on Punnameda Lake in Alappuzha on Thursday. The 70th edition of Nehru Trophy Boat Race will be held in the lake on Saturday. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

**Special initiative to drive away wild elephants from human habitations in Idukki village**

**The Hindu Bureau**  
TRICHUR

The Forest Department started a special initiative to drive away wild elephants that wreak havoc in Kanthallur village under the Marayur forest division in Idukki. According to the department officials, an 84-member team began the initiative on Thursday morning to drive away the elephants from human habitations in Kanthallur panchayat to Chinnar Wildlife Sanctuary.

Marayur divisional forest officer P.J. Shubash said the drive will continue on Friday. "The department aims to drive away problematic elephants from farm-



A wild tusker roaming in Kanthallur panchayat in Idukki on Thursday. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

lands," said the official. Kanthallur panchayat president P.T. Thankachen expressed satisfaction with the department's special drive addressing man-animal conflict in the panchayat. "As many as 18 wild elephants were camping in

various parts of the panchayat, which made it hard for the people to engage in farming activities," he said. M.K. Kannarayal, a farmer in Kanthallur, said that for the past three months, wild elephants have been camping on the farmlands.



## Alexander Dunn to get 2024 SASTRA Ramanujan Prize

The 2024 SASTRA Ramanujan Prize will be awarded to Alexander Dunn of the Georgia Institute of Technology, U.S. A press release said the prize is being given to Mr. Dunn, who has achieved several breakthroughs in the study of modular forms, half-integral weight forms, metaplectic forms and their connections to prime numbers and integer partitions. The prize will be awarded on December 20 and 22 at SASTRA University, Kumbakonam.

- 
- The **SASTRA Ramanujan Prize**, founded by Shanmugha Arts, Science, Technology & Research Academy (SASTRA) located near Kumbakonam, India, Srinivasa Ramanujan's hometown, is awarded every year to a young mathematician judged to have done outstanding work in Ramanujan's fields of interest.
  - The age limit for the prize has been set at 32 (the age at which Ramanujan died), and the current award is \$10,000.

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- The DST-ICTP-IMU Ramanujan Prize for Young Mathematicians from Developing Countries is a mathematics prize awarded annually by the International Centre for Theoretical Physics in Italy.
  - The prize is named after the Indian mathematician Srinivasa Ramanujan. It was founded in 2004, and was first awarded in 2005.



The prize is awarded to a researcher from a developing country less than 45 years of age who has conducted outstanding research in a developing country.



The prize is supported by the Ministry of Science and Technology (India) and Norwegian Academy of Science and Letters through the Abel Fund, with the cooperation of the International Mathematical Union.

<b>Year</b>	<b>Winner</b>	<b>Country</b>
2005	<b>Marcelo Viana</b>	 Brazil
2006	<b>Ramdorai Sujatha</b>	 India
2007	<b>Jorge Lauret</b>	 Argentina
2008	<b>Enrique Pujals</b>	 Brazil
2009	<b>Ernesto Lupercio</b>	 Mexico
2010	<b>Shi Yuguang</b>	 China
2011	<b>Philibert Nang</b>	 Gabon
2012	<b>Fernando Codá Marques</b>	 Brazil
2013	<b>Tian Ye</b>	 China
2014	<b>Miguel Walsh</b>	 Argentina
2015	<b>Amalendu Krishna</b>	 India
2016	<b>Chenyang Xu</b>	 China
2017	<b>Eduardo V. Teixeira</b>	 Brazil
2018	<b>Ritabrata Munshi</b>	 India
2019	<b>Hoàng Hiệp Phạm</b>	 Vietnam
2020	<b>Carolina Araujo</b>	 Brazil
2021	<b>Neena Gupta</b>	 India
2022	<b>Mouhamed Moustapha Fall</b>	 Senegal
2023	<b>Not awarded</b>	
2024	<b>Ruochuan Liu</b>	 China

INBRIEF



LIC setting up testing centre of excellence in Bhubaneswar

The Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC) is setting up a testing centre of excellence (TCoE) in Bhubaneswar initially with 100 IT professionals, who will focus on enhancing the insurer's digital capabilities.

SC reserves verdict on appeal by U.S. creditor in Bvju's case

The Supreme Court on Thursday reserved its judgment on an appeal filed by U.S.-based creditor Glas Trust against the NCLAT judgment allowing ed-tech firm Bvju to pay a settlement amount of ₹58 crore to the BCLT.

Indian Bank board approves raising ₹5,000 cr via bonds

The board of directors of Indian Bank has approved raising an additional ₹5,000 crore through long-term infrastructure bonds, the public sector lender said in a filing.

SEBI unveils fixed price mechanism for delisting

Markets regulator SEBI has notified rules allowing companies to delist shares through a fixed price mechanism as an alternative to the reverse book building process, a move aimed at facilitating ease of doing business for listed firms.

Tata Electronics, PSMC sign pact for Gujarat chip facility

Tata Electronics, a wholly owned subsidiary of Tata Sons said it had completed the definitive agreement with Taiwan's Powerchip Semiconductor Manufacturing Corporation (PSMC) to establish a semiconductor fab in Gujarat, license a broad portfolio of technologies and provide engineering support to successfully transfer & license technologies to

Steelmakers seek higher tariffs amid Chinese supply surge

India's steelmakers have called on the government to double tariffs on steel imports to curb a surge in cheaper steel shipments from China, according to a letter from an industry association seen by Reuters.

The world's second-biggest crude steel producer became a net exporter of the metal through March 2024 and the trend has continued into the current year. Finished steel imports from China hit a seven-year high over April-August while overall finished steel

Urban consumption weakening, public capex to pick up

Finance Ministry cites moderation in passenger vehicle sales as sign of weakness in consumption; flags risks of a correction in stock markets

The Hindu Bureau NEW DELHI

The Finance Ministry on Thursday flagged signs of a weakening in urban consumption, which warranted monitoring, even as it projected public expenditure to pick up in the rest of the year after a tepid start amid the general elections, adding that India's economic momentum had sustained so far in 2024-25



Cautionary signal: Ministry terms easing in car sales amid inventory build-up as sign of weakness. PTI

On robust domestic consumption and investment. Terming the continuing uncertainty in global economic prospects a macro-economic challenge, the ministry said in its review for August that "a cycle of policy rate cuts globally" was likely amid fears of a recession in advanced economies and continuing geo-political conflicts.

While low oil prices were a bright spot for India's economy, the Finance Ministry said, booming stock markets around the world posed the risk of "an event-based correction" which may have global spill-over effects if it materialised.

It also flagged "incipient signs of strains in certain sectors, including the lower capital expenditure by States this year and a moderation in passenger vehicle sales in the first five months of the year even as

Adequately replenished reservoir levels would "potentially give a fillip to the upcoming rabi crops as well" but skewed spatial distribution of rains may impact farm output in a few regions, the ministry cautioned. "However, in the absence of any serious adverse climate shocks, rural incomes and demand should get stronger, and food inflation will be milder," it asserted.

On the external front, even after factoring in the dip in petroleum product prices, goods exports had grown negligibly between April and August, the ministry said. "It reflects weak global demand and India's persisting challenges with scaling up production, productivity and competitiveness," it said. "Strong domestic demand will help to keep merchandise imports grew well."

E-tail boosted jobs, consumer welfare

Vikas Dhoot NEW DELHI

The Finance Ministry on Thursday extolled the role of e-commerce players in generating jobs and enhancing consumer welfare over the past decade, citing the same study that Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal had "completely" dissociated from last month as he flagged predatory business practices of e-tailers like Amazon that hurt small retail stores.

The Ministry noted in its review for August that India's "online shopping scene has expanded significantly" over the past decade, "playing a vital role in the country's retail environment," citing the study released by the Fabre India Foundation (FIF) in partnership with People Research in India's Consumer Economy (PRICE).

Impact on the company's profit due to this termination, says Gillette India

The upsurge in Bangladesh has started impacting bilateral trade. Procter & Gamble Bangladesh Private Ltd., a distributor of Gillette India Ltd's products, said.

"There is no material impact on the company's profit due to this termination," Gillette India, however, added.

"As a consequence of the termination, the company will have a non-material portionate drop in net sales under this agreement," Gillette India said.

MARKETS

MARKET WATCH

Table with 2 columns: Index, % Change. Includes Sensex, Nifty 50, etc.

NIFTY 50

Table with 3 columns: Index, Price, Change. Lists various stock indices and their performance.

EXCHANGE RATES

Table with 3 columns: Currency, ₹/₹, ₹/₹. Lists exchange rates for various currencies.

Gillette India's Bangladesh dealer ends agreement

The upsurge in Bangladesh has started impacting bilateral trade. Procter & Gamble Bangladesh Private Ltd., a distributor of Gillette India Ltd's products, said.

With ₹1 lakh cr. corpus, DRDO to unveil first-of-its-kind deep tech research for military use

Dalit Singh NEW DELHI

Backed by the ₹1 lakh crore corpus for promoting transformative potential of research, armaments and the interim Budget, the Defence and Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) is set to unveil a first-of-its-kind deep tech research programme into emerging technologies and cutting edge technology.



Arsenal of future: Five proposed projects have been earmarked a maximum of ₹50 crore each. VIJAY SOMJI

The primary focus of DRDO's programme is to propel research in futuristic and disruptive technologies in the organisation told businessinsia. These breakthroughs have been identified for inviting proposals from the industry for deep tech projects in five areas. They are: the categories of indigenous, futuristic and disruptive technology and cutting edge technology.

20% grant Though volume of funding would be project-specific, DRDO officials stated that normally a maximum of 20% grant would be released in the first instalment, and the remaining would follow on the basis of appraisals by an integrated team that will house, among other internal experts, outside experts, user experts, certifying agencies and qualifying experts. (The writer is with The Hindu Businessline)

EU to apply deforestation rule from Dec. 30 despite protest

Amit Sen NEW DELHI

The EU will go ahead with the implementation of its controversial EU Deforestation Regulation (EUDR) from December 30, as planned, despite strong protests from countries including India, Brazil, Indonesia and the U.S. at the WTO, a Geneva-based trade official has said.

Members are concerned as the regulation is set to hit export of farm products such as palm oil, cattle, soy, cocoa, coffee, rubber, and timber and a range of derived items to the bloc," the official told businessinsia.

The EUDR requires exporters of the identified products to prove that the goods do not originate from recently deforested land (post December 31, 2020), involve forest degradation, or breach local environmental and social laws. It is aimed at reducing the EU's impact on global deforestation and forest degradation. "The EU has not yet shared its assessment methodology and there is much confusion on how it will benchmark countries into high, standard and low risk categories. It is just not possible for Indian farmers and industry to be ready to provide the required land records and traceability evidence at such short notice. New Delhi will continue to oppose it at the WTO and also during the negotiations for the India-EU free trade pact," Delhi-based source tracking the matter said. (The writer is with The Hindu Businessline)

Tata Electronics, PSMC sign pact for Gujarat chip facility

Tata Electronics, a wholly owned subsidiary of Tata Sons said it had completed the definitive agreement with Taiwan's Powerchip Semiconductor Manufacturing Corporation (PSMC) to establish a semiconductor fab in Gujarat, license a broad portfolio of technologies and provide engineering support to successfully transfer & license technologies to

The Hindu Bureau MUMBAI

Domestic carrier SpiceJet has cleared all pending salary dues of its employees after securing a fresh capital infusion of ₹3,000 crore, a source has said.

The salaries for July and August for all employees, as well as the remaining June salaries for those who were partially paid, were deposited into their accounts on Wednesday evening, according to the source. A SpiceJet spokesman confirmed the disbursement of employees' salaries.

SpiceJet clears pending salaries till Aug.

Press Trust of India MUMBAI

Domestic carrier SpiceJet has cleared all pending salary dues of its employees after securing a fresh capital infusion of ₹3,000 crore, a source has said.

"Pending salaries of employees were disbursed on Wednesday evening," the spokesperson said on Thursday.

With ₹1 lakh cr. corpus, DRDO to unveil first-of-its-kind deep tech research for military use

Backed by the ₹1 lakh crore corpus for promoting transformative potential of research, armaments and the interim Budget, the Defence and Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) is set to unveil a first-of-its-kind deep tech research programme into emerging technologies and cutting edge technology.

Dalit Singh NEW DELHI

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Global instances There are global instances of such programmes being funded by state defence agencies like the U.S. Defence Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA) on the lines of which the DRDO is at present planning to launch. These parks will be initiated in some cases and construction is ongoing in the remaining parks," Mr. Ravikumar said.

# With ₹1 lakh cr. corpus, DRDO to unveil first-of-its-kind deep tech research for military use

**Dalip Singh**  
NEW DELHI

Backed by the ₹1 lakh crore corpus for promoting transformative potential of research, announced in the interim Budget, the Defence and Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) is set to unveil a first-of-its-kind initiative that will remodel its research programme into emerging technologies for military usage.

India's premier government defence research agency is funding five high-value deep tech innovation projects, with each having been allotted a maximum of ₹50 crore to promote indigenisation of defence products having long-term positive impact on national security.

The primary focus of DRDO's programme is to propel research in futuristic and disruptive technologies in the sphere, including quantum, blockchain and artificial intelligence.

Futuristic and disruptive technologies are innovations that significantly alter or revolutionise existing industries, markets or societal norms by introducing new approaches, products or services.

## Global instances

There are global instances of such programmes being helmed by state defence research organisations like the U.S. Defence Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA) on the lines of which the DRDO is attempting to fashion its deep tech initiative.

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh has given the nod to the investment in



**Arsenal of future:** Five proposed projects have been earmarked a maximum of ₹50 crore each. VIJAY SONEJI

the deep tech projects that would be undertaken through the DRDO's Technology Development Fund (TDF), which has been engaging the private industry, mainly MSMEs and start-ups, for R&D in military hardware and software that armed forces require, sources in the organisation told *businessline*. Three broad contours have been identified for inviting proposals from the industry for deep tech projects in five areas. They are in the categories of indigenisation, futuristic and disruptive technology and cutting edge technology.

## Reducing imports

While through indigenisation, the DRDO will seek to reduce dependence on imports of systems, sub-systems and components sought by the tri-services, by way of futuristic and disruptive technologies it will attempt at solutions to concepts that do not exist in India or even abroad, DRDO sources said.

The DRDO sought market inputs and had sessions with other stakeholders to

decide on the five deep tech topics, informed sources. The details of projects, for which funding will be rolled out in five tranches, will be published soon inviting bids from the industry. The successful bidder may get 90% funding of the project cost.

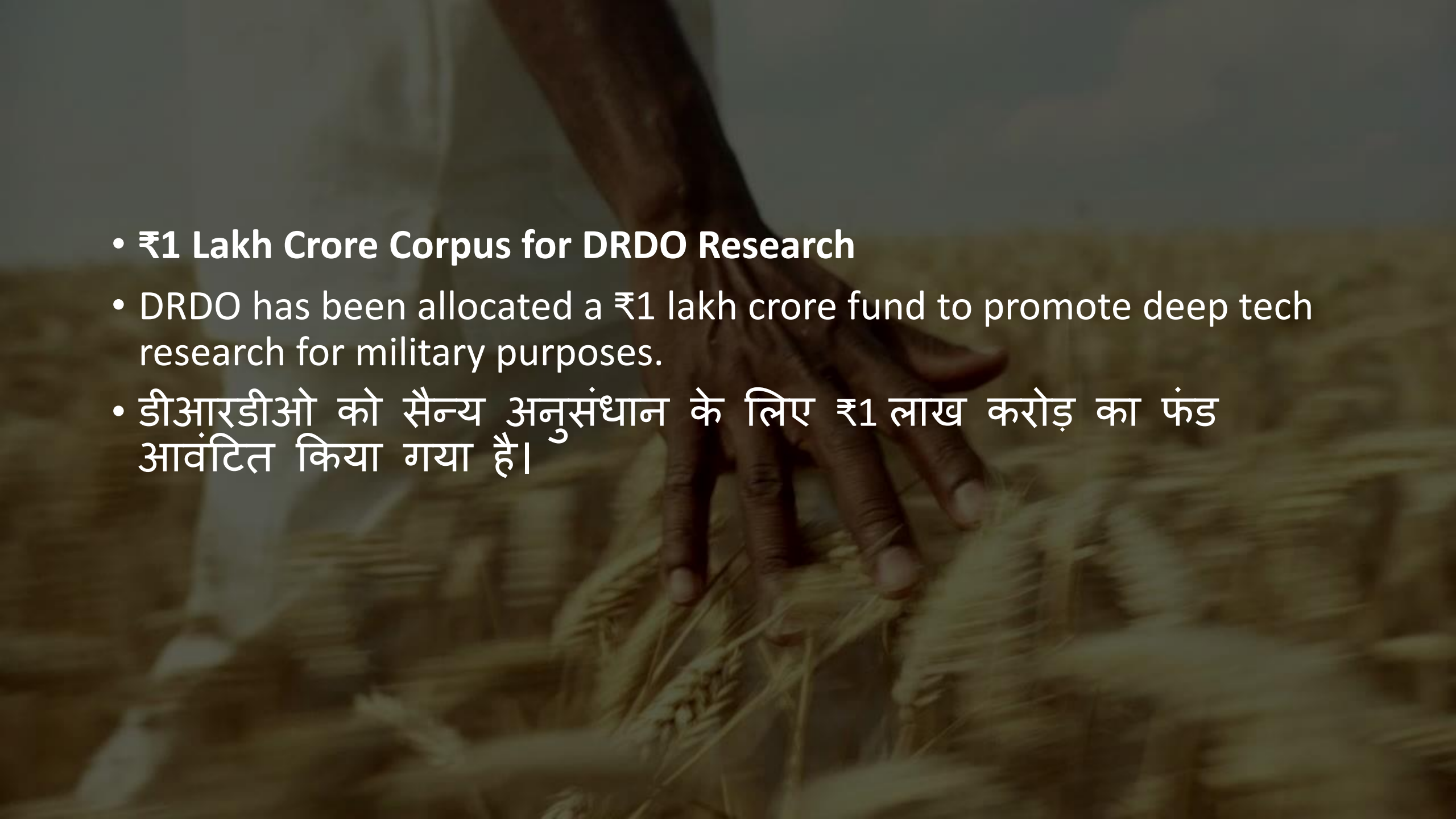
Depending on the quality of response, the DRDO is open to providing opportunities to more than one successful participant, allowing them to come up with innovations that may require a long gestation period.

## 20% grant

Though volume of funding would be project-specific, DRDO officials stated that normally a maximum of 20% grant would be released in the first instalment, and the remaining would follow on the basis of appraisals by an integrated team that will house, among others internal experts, outside experts, user experts, certifying agencies and qualifying experts.

*(The writer is with The Hindu businessline)*



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- A close-up photograph of a hand gently touching the heads of wheat stalks. The background is a soft-focus field of wheat under a bright sky. The image has a warm, golden-brown color palette and is slightly dimmed to serve as a background for the text.
- **₹1 Lakh Crore Corpus for DRDO Research**
  - DRDO has been allocated a ₹1 lakh crore fund to promote deep tech research for military purposes.
  - डीआरडीओ को सैन्य अनुसंधान के लिए ₹1 लाख करोड़ का फंड आवंटित किया गया है।

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- **Focus on Deep Tech Innovation**

- DRDO will fund five key projects, each with a budget of ₹50 crore, focusing on futuristic and disruptive technologies like quantum, blockchain, and AI.

- डीआरडीओ पांच प्रमुख परियोजनाओं को वित्त पोषण करेगा, जिनमें प्रत्येक का बजट ₹50 करोड़ होगा, जिसमें क्वांटम, ब्लॉकचेन और एआई जैसी नवीन तकनीकों पर ध्यान दिया जाएगा।

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- **Private Industry Involvement**

- Private industries, particularly MSMEs and start-ups, will be invited to participate in the R&D projects through DRDO's Technology Development Fund (TDF).

- निजी उद्योगों, विशेष रूप से एमएसएमई और स्टार्ट-अप्स को डीआरडीओ के प्रौद्योगिकी विकास कोष (TDF) के माध्यम से अनुसंधान परियोजनाओं में भाग लेने के लिए आमंत्रित किया जाएगा।

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- **Reducing Imports**

- DRDO aims to reduce imports by promoting indigenous development of systems, sub-systems, and components required by the tri-services.
- डीआरडीओ का लक्ष्य तीनों सेवाओं के लिए आवश्यक प्रणालियों, उप-प्रणालियों और घटकों के स्वदेशी विकास को बढ़ावा देकर आयात को कम करना है।

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## 1. Funding Model

1. DRDO will provide up to 90% of the project cost, with funding released in five phases, and a 20% grant in the first installment.
2. डीआरडीओ परियोजना लागत का 90% तक वित्त पोषण करेगा, जिसमें पहले चरण में 20% अनुदान दिया जाएगा।

What is the primary objective of DRDO's new ₹1 lakh crore corpus?  
डीआरडीओ के नए ₹1 लाख करोड़ कोष का मुख्य उद्देश्य क्या है?

To manufacture defence products

To promote research in deep tech for military use

To collaborate with foreign companies

To establish new defence institutions

Meta debuts first-ever AR glasses called Orion

NEW DELHI, FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 27, 2024

# ORION

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## IN THE NEWS

### MODI LAUNCHES THREE INDIA-MADE SUPERCOMPUTERS

PRIME MINISTER NARENDRA MODI, through a video link, on Thursday launched three PARAM Rudra supercomputers, developed indigenously under the National Supercomputing Mission, reports PTL. ■ PAGE 23

### WAZIR GETS 4-MTH MORATORIUM FROM SINGAPORE COURT

A SINGAPORE COURT has granted Wazir a four-month moratorium, allowing it to restructure its liabilities in the aftermath of the cyberattack that wiped out nearly ₹2,000 crore, or 65% of its users' assets, reports Akshata Gode. ■ PAGE 6

### FMCG FIRMS SEE RURAL GROWTH TOPPING URBAN

SOME OF THE TOP FMCG COMPANIES expect rural sales momentum to continue for the third straight quarter in the July-September period, reports Vivek Susan Pinto. ■ PAGE 4

### GOVT HINTS AT RISE IN PRICE OF ETHANOL, SUGAR

THE GOVERNMENT IS likely to approve an increase in domestic prices of ethanol as well as the minimum sale price for sugar as has been demanded by the industry, food minister Prakash Joshi, on Thursday, reports Sandip Das. ■ PAGE 3

## FE SPECIAL

### Why Telegram is a problem for govts

The messaging app has agreed to provide some user data to law enforcement agencies. ■ EXPLAINER, PP

## NORMS TO BE UNDER CONSUMER PROTECTION ACT

# Centre, not Triai, to take on WhatsApp spam menace

JATIN GROVER

New Delhi, September 26

IT WILL NOT be the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (Trai), but the consumer affairs ministry, which will step in to curb spam calls and messages on over-the-top (OTT) applications like WhatsApp.

Officials said that Trai has recommended that the consumer affairs ministry step in as it has the powers to regulate OTT apps under the Consumer Protection Act. "This is the best way to come up with a regulatory mechanism to check spam calls and messages on WhatsApp," officials added.

On the broader OTT regulations, officials said that the Trai is looking at coming up with a consultation paper to examine whether the definition of telecom services cover OTTs too. The exercise may not yield much as the Telecom Act has not defined OTTs as telecom services.

## TO RAISE ₹6.61 LAKH CRORE Govt retains H2 borrowing goal

Gold bonds to be used 'as and when required'

FE BUREAU New Delhi, September 26

THE CENTRE Thursday announced a plan to borrow ₹6.61 lakh crore from the market in the second half of the current fiscal, as part of its plan to finance the fiscal deficit. This accounts for 47.1% of the projected gross market borrowings for the current financial year, in sync with the budgeted programme, and broadly in line with market expectations.

The overall deficit financing plan unveiled in the Budget also included raising monies via sovereign gold bonds (SGB), an official said. "Decision is to use (them) as and when required". Reports had indicated the government wasn't keen to use the SGB route, due to its high cost and other considerations. The borrowing plan per se is unlikely to significantly alter the current market sentiment. Indian government bonds have been among the best performers in Asia so far this year, supported by foreign inflows of about \$1.3 billion, spurred by the inclusion of sovereign notes into JP Morgan Chase & Co's emerging market bond index. Hopes of a rate cut from the Reserve Bank of India, especially after the recent move by the US Federal Reserve, have also boosted sentiments.

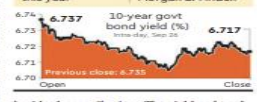
### EYE ON THE TARGET

14.01 lakh cr projected gross borrowing for FY25

₹7.4 lakh cr scheduled in H1 FY25

47.1% is the H2 target of the projected gross market borrowings

Indian govt bonds have been among the best performers in Asia this year



besides lower oil prices. The yield on benchmark 10-year bond has declined more than 80 basis points this year, the most in Asia after China. The yield fell to as low as 6.71% on Thursday, a level last seen in February 2022.

Continued on Page 7

## UNDER-35 POWER

ShareChat's Ankush Sachdeva is the youngest under-35 Indian entrepreneur. The list highlights 150 outstanding entrepreneurs, including seven women, with Parita Parekh of Techstar and Ishu Ambani of Reliance Retail being the youngest. Bengaluru and Mumbai lead the way with 29 and 26 entrepreneurs

Infographic showing youngest entrepreneurs: Ishu Ambani (32), Parita Parekh (32), Ankush Sachdeva (31), and others. Includes bar chart of first-generation shine (123) vs third-generation (17).

## STRONG SIGNAL

Consumer affairs ministry to step in to curb spam calls and messages on OTT apps like WhatsApp

Infographic explaining the algorithm for identifying spam calls and messages on WhatsApp, including steps like 'An algorithm likely to run a check on phone numbers and messages'.

Officials said that the consumer affairs ministry is likely to work on an algorithm which would run a check on phone numbers and messages to see if these are being used for marketing purposes. For instance, the algorithm will check how many calls or messages the identified numbers have made within a 2-3 hours. If the same runs into high double digits, they would be identified as 'pesky', be blocked, and penalty will be levied

## New IT portal to fast-track refund of unclaimed shares

Blueprint prepared, facility to be up and running by early 2025

PRIVANSH VERMA New Delhi, September 26

IN AN ATTEMPT to expedite the refund of unclaimed shares to the rightful parties, the government is working on setting up an integrated digital portal soon. The facility would make the process of "searching and claiming the lost shares easier".

According to official sources, the proposed information technology (IT) portal would be operational by early 2025. The Investor Education and Protection Fund Authority (IEPFA), the organisation responsible for refunding unclaimed shares, has already prepared a blueprint on the functionality of the portal. "Once operational, the refund process will speed up significantly," an official said.

As of now, the total number of unclaimed shares lying with the IEPFA is

## INTERNATIONAL P17

### China to issue \$284 bn of sovereign debt

FOLLOW US ON TWITTER & FACEBOOK. APP AVAILABLE ON APP STORE & PLAYSTORE WWW.FINANCIALEXPRESS.COM

### 1.1 billion total number of unclaimed shares lying with Investor Education and Protection Fund Authority

₹1 lakh crore total value of unclaimed shares

₹5,700 crore total value of unclaimed dividends

over 1.1 billion, valued about ₹1 lakh crore. The total value of unclaimed dividends stands at about ₹5,700 crore.

The sources said that the new IT portal will equip IEPFA to efficiently process and refund unclaimed shares to rightful claimants "in a timely manner". The government has put on backburner a plan to restrict companies with the responsibility of managing these refunds. In a discussion paper issued in March, the IEPFA had said that to ease the

## Swiggy files papers for ₹3,750-cr IPO

AYANTI BERA Bengaluru, September 26

FOOD-TECH UNICORN SWIGGY has filed its updated draft red herring prospectus (DRHP) with the Sebi for an initial public offering (IPO) to raise ₹3,750 crore through a fresh issue. The issue will also have offer for sale (OFS) component of up to 18.53 million shares.

The Bengaluru-based food-tech giant began as a restaurant aggregator in 2014, will be the second company to go public in the food-tech space after Zomato. The issue will see 10 of its existing shareholders, including Accel, Apollovia, Elevation Capital, Norwest Venture Partners and Chinese internet major Tencent's Netherlands-based arm Tencent Cloud Europe, selling part of their stakes in the company.

Netherlands-based MHH India Food Holdings plans to sell up to 1.18 million shares, venture capital firm Accel may sell up to 10.6 million shares, while Elevation Capital plans to sell up to 7.4 million shares in the upcoming IPO. Among the seven book-running lead managers for the IPO are Kotak Mahindra Capital, Citigroup Global Markets India, Jefferies India, Avenidas Capital, JP Morgan India, JP Morgan India, Red Securities India and ICICI Securities.

With the capital raised, Swiggy plans to use it to biggest chunk, about ₹992 crore, for expanding the dark store network for its quick-commerce arm Instamart. It will also use around ₹930 crore for marketing and promotional expenses, while the rest will be used for technology and cloud infrastructure, debt repayment and potential acquisitions.

The offer document further shows that

### JUST A CLICK AWAY

1.1 billion total number of unclaimed shares lying with Investor Education and Protection Fund Authority

₹1 lakh crore total value of unclaimed shares

₹5,700 crore total value of unclaimed dividends

over 1.1 billion, valued about ₹1 lakh crore. The total value of unclaimed dividends stands at about ₹5,700 crore.

## Buch hopes for equity market-like growth in corp bonds

FE BUREAU Mumbai, September 26

THE SECURITIES AND EXCHANGE Board of India (Sebi) expects corporate bond market to soon grow at the same pace as equity markets, chairman Madhavi Puri Buch said on Thursday.

"The transparency that has come in and the way in which there is now technology enablement, we certainly hope that the bond market will rapidly see the kind of growth that we have seen in the equity markets. Buch said at the Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the Association of Mutual Funds in India (Amfi).

Buch said the building block needed for the growth of corporate bond market are already in place. "Now, it is a question of activating those building blocks," she said. Sebi also highlighted that India saw ₹8 lakh crore of corporate bond issuances last year, but the corporate bond repo is just around ₹20,000 crore per month.

With Sebi awaiting some approvals from the Reserve Bank of India (RBI), she expects the market to rise in the future. "Our strength as a country lies in retail investors. Buch said, adding that there is need to encourage their participation in the corporate bond market.

She emphasised that the mutual fund industry needs to work as vehicle to be the voice of retail investors. "The reality is that retail investor, even today, does not have that consolidated power in order to really assert himself as a shareholder of the company. So, the stewardship code, which has been adopted by the industry... we believe that there is huge value," she said, adding that there are a lot of expectations from this industry in respect of going forward and strengthening their stewardship code.

Continued on Page 7

## Accenture sees FY25 revenue growth of 3-6%

ACCENTURE, WIDELY CONSIDERED as the bellwether for the Indian IT industry, has forecast revenue growth between 3-6% for FY25, higher than 2% in FY24, reports Ayanti Bera. However, the analyst later to a range of 36.8-68.8 billion, the mid-point of which is the short analyst's estimate of \$68.7 billion, as per Bloomberg. ■ PAGE 4

## Markets surge to close at new record highs

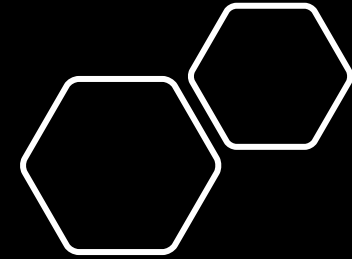
BENCHMARK SENSEX RALLIED 666 points to close at a fresh record high of 85,836.12 on Thursday as investors buying in auto banking shares amid gains in Ayanti Bera. However, the PFI halving for the sixth day in a row, the Dow Jones closed at 42,119.90 points, or 0.81% to close at a record high of 26,216.05. ■ PAGE 6

## Listing time cut to T+3 for debt securities issue

SEBI HAS REDUCED the timeline for listing of public issue of debt securities to three working days from six days at present, to facilitate faster access to funds, reports PTL. This new timeline will be optional for the first year and mandatory thereafter. The listing timeline of T+3 working days will be applicable on a voluntary basis. ■ PAGE 6

# INDIA IMPROVES RANK IN GLOBAL INNOVATION INDEX

INDIA CLIMBED ONE place to 39th rank out of 133 economies in the Global Innovation Index (GII) 2024, according to a report by the Geneva-based World Intellectual Property Organization. Commerce and industry minister Piyush Goyal said India's innovation landscape continues to flourish, powered by our innovators and entrepreneurs.





The index highlighted that India currently leads the lower-middle-income group, having outperformed on innovation for the 14th consecutive year. According to WIPO's Global Innovation Index (GII) 2024, the world's most innovative economies include Switzerland, Sweden, the United States, Singapore, and the United Kingdom. Meanwhile, China, Türkiye, India, Vietnam, and the Philippines are the fastest climbers over the past decade.

In the GII ranking of over 130 economies, China reached the 11th position and remains the only middle-income economy in the top 30.

# **AUSTRALIA TO GIVE 1,000 WORK & TOUR VISAS TO INDIANS**

AUSTRALIA WILL BEGIN offering up to 1,000 work and holiday visas each year to Indian citizens from October 1 which will allow eligible persons to have an extended holiday in Australia and work there to help fund their trip, commerce and industry minister Piyush Goyal said on the conclusion of his three-day trip to Australia.

● DEVELOPED INDIGENOUSLY AT COST OF ₹130 CR

# PM unveils 3 supercomputers to pioneer scientific research

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
Pune, September 26

**PRIME MINISTER NARENDRA** Modi on Thursday said a country can aim for high achievements only if it has a big vision and asserted that technology upgradation should be to empower the poor.

Speaking after launching via video link three PARAM Rudra supercomputers, developed indigenously under National Supercomputing Mission, Modi asserted that today's India is carving new opportunities in the infinite sky of possibilities.

Modi said his government has taken steps to ensure research in technology benefits the common man.

"We started the national supercomputing mission in 2015 and now quantum computing technology has taken a lead which will help improve IT, manufacturing, MSMEs



PM Modi unveils three Param Rudra Supercomputing Systems and High-Performance Computing Systems, via video conferencing, in New Delhi on Thursday

ANI

and startups," he said.

Modi said his government is giving priority to science, technology and research.

"Mission Gaganyaan preparations have begun and by 2035 we will have our own space station," he said, adding that the first phase of the project has been approved.

"Science for self-reliance is our mission," Modi said.

The three supercomputers, built at a cost of ₹130 crore, have been deployed in Pune, Delhi and Kolkata to facilitate pioneering scientific research, he said.

Modi also inaugurated the ₹850 crore High-Performance Computing system tailored for

weather and climate research, and described the day as one of a "very big achievement" in science and technology sector.

"There is no sector which does not rely on technology and computing capability," Modi said. "In this revolution, our share should not be in bits and bytes but in terabytes and petabytes. Therefore, this achievement proves that we are moving in the right direction at the right pace," he said.

The significance of science is not only in invention and development, but also in fulfilling aspirations of the last person, Modi said.

India is building its own semiconductor ecosystem which will be a key part of the global supply chain, Modi said.

The Giant Metre Radio Telescope (GMRT) in Pune will leverage the supercomputer to explore Fast Radio Bursts (FRBs) and other astronomical phenomena.

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A computer with a high level of computing performance compared to a general purpose computer and performance measured in FLOPS (floating point operations per second).

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Great speed and great memory are the two prerequisites of a super computer.

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The performance is generally evaluated in petaflops (1 followed by 15 zeros).

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Memory is averaged around 250000 times of the normal computer we use on a daily basis.

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Housed in large clean rooms with high air flow to permit cooling.

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Used to solve problems that are too complex and huge for standard computers.

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Unit	Flops	Example	Decade(s)
Hundred FLOPS	$10^2$	Eniac	1940
KFLOPS (kilo flops)	$10^3$	IBM 704	1950
MFLOPS (mega flops)	$10^6$	CDC 6600	1960
GFLOPS (giga flops)	$10^9$	Cray-2	1980
TFLOPS (teraflops)	$10^{12}$	ASCI Red	1990
PFLOPS (petaflops)	$10^{15}$	Jaguar	2010
EFLOPS (exa flops)	$10^{18}$	under development	2020

# Super-computers

## National Supercomputers Mission:



Launched in:  
**2015**



Cost:  
**Rs. 4500 Crore**



Duration:  
**7 Year mission**  
(2015-2022)



Aim: To increase India's  
supercomputing  
capability to **45 petaflops**

### Top 500 list of supercomputers across the globe (November 2021):

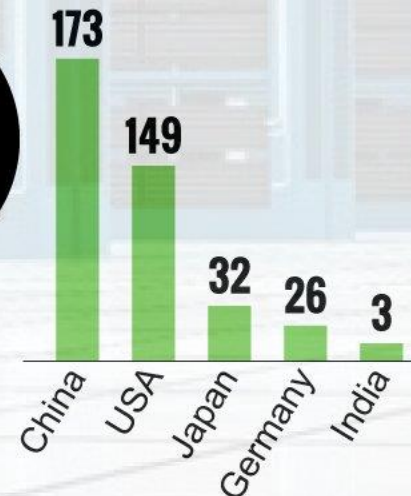
Japan's Fugaku	Rank-1	442	petaflops
USA's Summit	Rank-2	148.8	petaflops
USA's Sierra	Rank-3	94.6	petaflops

### Ranks of Indian Supercomputer in top 500 List:

PARAM Siddhi-AI	Rank-102	4.6	petaflops
Pratyush (Cray XC40)	Rank-121	3.7	petaflops
Mihir (Cray XC40)	Rank-228	2.5	petaflops

1 petaflop  
equals a  
quadrillion or  
**1015**  
operations per  
second

### The largest number of Supercomputers in top 500 list:





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- **PM Unveils Three Supercomputers**

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi unveiled three PARAM Rudra supercomputers, developed indigenously at a cost of ₹130 crore, under the National Supercomputing Mission.

- प्रधानमंत्री नरेंद्र मोदी ने राष्ट्रीय सुपरकंप्यूटिंग मिशन के तहत ₹130 करोड़ की लागत से स्वदेशी रूप से विकसित तीन पैरम रुद्र सुपरकंप्यूटर का अनावरण किया।



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- **Focus on Scientific Research and Empowering the Poor**

- These supercomputers will facilitate pioneering scientific research, particularly in weather and climate studies, and contribute to technological advancements that empower the common man.

- ये सुपरकंप्यूटर अग्रणी वैज्ञानिक अनुसंधान में सहायक होंगे, विशेष रूप से मौसम और जलवायु अध्ययन में, और आम आदमी को सशक्त बनाने के लिए तकनीकी उन्नति में योगदान देंगे।

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- **India's Semiconductor and Space Goals**

- India is building its own semiconductor ecosystem and preparing for its space station by 2035 as part of the Mission Gaganyaan preparations.
- भारत अपना सेमीकंडक्टर इकोसिस्टम बना रहा है और मिशन गगनयान के तहत 2035 तक अपना अंतरिक्ष स्टेशन तैयार करने की योजना बना रहा है।

- 
- **What is the primary objective of the three PARAM Rudra supercomputers launched by PM Modi?**

**प्रधानमंत्री मोदी द्वारा लॉन्च किए गए तीन परम रुद्र सुपरकंप्यूटर का मुख्य उद्देश्य क्या है?**

- 1.To improve government services
- 2.To enhance weather and climate research
- 3.To boost India's manufacturing sector
- 4.To develop India's space station

● CAN DISPLAY TEXTS, PLAY VIDEOS

# Meta debuts Orion glasses as eventual smartphone rival

KURT WAGNER  
& AISHA COUNTS  
September 26

**META PLATFORMS DEBUTED** its first pair of augmented reality glasses — devices that show a combined view of the digital and physical worlds, a key step in CEO Mark Zuckerberg's goal of one day offering a hands-free alternative to the smartphone.

The new glasses, introduced on Wednesday and called Orion, look like thick, black reading glasses, but have lenses that can display text messages, video calls, and even YouTube videos onto the user's field of vision. They are prototypes that aren't for sale, but will be used internally at Meta for testing and improving the product.

An accompanying wristband that detects nerve stimulation and cameras built into the frames that track eye movement allow Orion wearers to "click" or "scroll" on the display using just their hands.

Chief technology officer Andrew Bosworth said he expects the glasses will become a consumer product within the next decade, adding that the next two models are in the works. Meta wants to price the glasses so "not just consumers use it, but developers want to build for it," Bosworth said.

The glasses represent nearly a decade of technological advancement and significant financial investment at Meta. They also offer a glimpse into Zuckerberg's vision for the future of technology, which has cost the company tens of billions of dollars over the past four years alone. Meta is already selling Ray-Ban branded smart glasses equipped with cameras and speakers, but Zuckerberg believes that AR glasses

## Going hands-free

■ Key step in CEO Mark Zuckerberg's goal of one day offering a hands-free alternative to the smartphone



■ Orion AR glasses are prototypes that are not for sale; used internally at Meta for testing and improving the product

■ These glasses will become a consumer product within the next decade

■ Meta is already selling Ray-Ban branded smart glasses equipped with cameras and speakers

will become a kind of mobile, hands-free computer that could one day rival smartphones as the preferred way to communicate and interact online. If smart glasses eventually become mainstream, Meta hopes to be a major player in that new industry, which would also help it reduce its reliance on competitors like Apple and Alphabet's Google to deliver its products to consumers.

"These things happen slowly and then kind of all at once," Bosworth said. "When you can replace an existing use case, people can switch very quickly. Things like using augmented reality glasses to replace your phone, that's going to take a lot longer."

That goal is still years away despite the Orion prototype, which debuted at Meta's annual Connect conference in Menlo Park, California. The company had hoped to make this version of the device available to the public, but executives said it's not yet small enough or stylish

enough. Those same challenges

have plagued similar efforts by other tech companies over the years, including Google and Microsoft. Snap unveiled its own pair of AR glasses earlier this month, but is only releasing them to developers.

Eventually, Meta executives believe they will be able to make the glasses thin and powerful enough that general consumers will buy them. The goal is to bring Orion to market in the "next few years" for the price of a "high-end laptop or smartphone," said Rahul Prasad, a senior director of product management at Meta.

"Any kind of prior attempt at AR has been a headset, goggles, helmets," he said. "We want to get to glasses." For now, Meta will continue to build and refine the glasses internally until they are ready for public sale. Hundreds of Meta employees have been testing the Orion glasses.

—BLOOMBERG

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- **Meta Debuts Orion Glasses**

- Meta Platforms has introduced its first pair of augmented reality (AR) glasses called Orion, aimed at offering a hands-free alternative to smartphones.

- मेटा प्लेटफार्म्स ने ऑरियन नामक अपने पहले ऑगमेंटेड रियलिटी (एआर) चश्मे का अनावरण किया है, जिसका उद्देश्य स्मार्टफोन का एक हैंड्स-फ्री विकल्प प्रदान करना है।

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- **Prototype for Testing**

- These glasses, which can display text messages, video calls, and YouTube videos, are still in the prototype phase and are being used internally for testing.

- ये चश्मे, जो टेक्स्ट संदेश, वीडियो कॉल और यूट्यूब वीडियो दिखा सकते हैं, अभी भी प्रोटोटाइप चरण में हैं और आंतरिक रूप से परीक्षण के लिए उपयोग किए जा रहे हैं।

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- **Accompanying Wristband**

- An accompanying wristband detects nerve stimulation, allowing the user to interact with the glasses via hand gestures.

- एक साथ आने वाला कलाई बैंड तंत्रिका उत्तेजना का पता लगाता है, जिससे उपयोगकर्ता हाथ के इशारों से चश्मे के साथ बातचीत कर सकते हैं।

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- **Vision for Future**

- Meta's CEO, Mark Zuckerberg, envisions these glasses as a major shift in how people interact with digital devices, potentially replacing smartphones in the future.

- मेटा के सीईओ मार्क ज़ुकरबर्ग का मानना है कि ये चश्मे भविष्य में स्मार्टफोन को बदल सकते हैं और डिजिटल उपकरणों के साथ बातचीत करने के तरीके में एक बड़ा बदलाव ला सकते हैं।



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## 1.Challenges and Development

1. The Orion glasses are still in the development stage, and Meta acknowledges that it will take years for them to be fully ready and available to consumers.
2. ऑरियन चश्मे अभी विकास के चरण में हैं, और मेटा मानता है कि इन्हें पूरी तरह से तैयार होने और उपभोक्ताओं के लिए उपलब्ध होने में कई साल लगेंगे।

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• : What is the primary purpose of Meta's Orion glasses?  
मेटा के ऑरियन चश्मों का मुख्य उद्देश्य क्या है?

1.To improve gaming experience

2.To provide hands-free smartphone alternatives

3.To enhance virtual meetings

4.To compete with other AR gadgets

# More Indians now holidaying abroad, but foreign arrivals still below pre-Covid high

Post-Pandemic Domestic Travel Up Too, But Country Losing Out To Cheaper Destinations When It Comes To Visitors From Overseas. Travel Firms Want Govt To Take Steps To Woo Them To India

Saurabh.Sinha

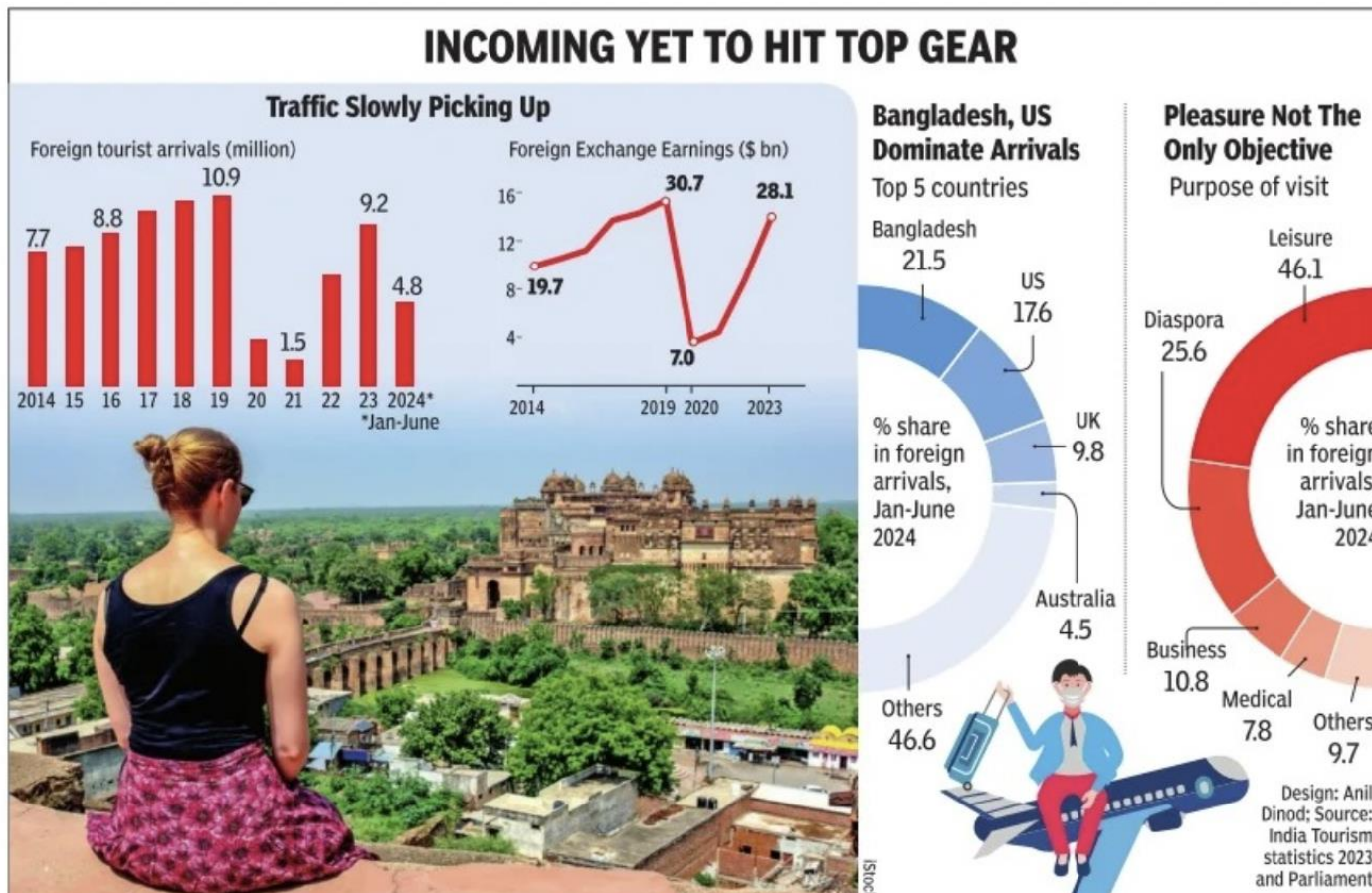
@timesofindia.com

More Indians are travelling to foreign shores than they did pre-Covid, but the number of foreign tourist arrivals (FTA) is yet to return to 2019 levels. Outside of the West, countries — especially those in Southeast Asia — are going all out to woo the high-spending desi globetrotter by simplifying visa processes. The travel industry in India is requesting the govt to also take steps to help boost inbound numbers, something that they say will create much-needed jobs and bring in forex.

According to Union tourism ministry, over 1.5 crore Indians went abroad between Jan and June 2024, 12% more than the 1.3 crore

## World Tourism Day

who did so during the same period in 2019. Inbound for-



find good hotels in Thailand available for Rs 10,000 (for a room) while the same in India comes for Rs 17,000-18,000. Return airfares to India are 20-25% higher than Bangkok," said IATO's Mehra.

A leading hotelier, who did not want to be named, blamed high taxes for the high costs. "People may feel they are paying hotels a lot, but a large part of that goes as taxes to govt. Having a drink in an Indian 5-star costs five times more than in many key destinations abroad," the hotelier said.

While domestic tourism — which kept the industry alive globally during Covid travel restrictions — is still strong, it's common to find those who once used to holiday in India going for short-duration trips abroad to destinations where visa is not a hassle. After all, Thailand is a cheaper option than Goa and Sri Lanka can be less expensive than Kerala, many travel agents point out.

## World Tourism Day

who did so during the same period in 2019. Inbound foreign traffic in the first six months of 2024 stood at 47.8 lakh, 10% less than the almost 53 lakh that visited India during the same period in 2019.

But the FTA numbers include members of the large Indian diaspora who keep coming home for various reasons. And there's also the growing expat community that now works in the country. "Bangladesh is traditionally the largest source country for foreign arrivals and a vast majority of them come to India to work. So, in reality, the foreign tourist numbers are only a fraction of FTA numbers," said Rajiv Mehra, president of Indian Association of Tour Operators (IATO).

### Untapped Potential

The travel industry is calling for India to be promoted abroad as a tourist destination through efforts akin to



Stock

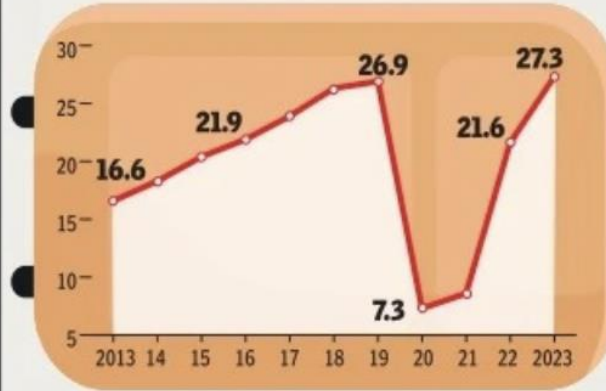


Design: Anil Dinod; Source: India Tourism statistics 2023 and Parliament

## OUTGOING MOVING IN FAST LANE

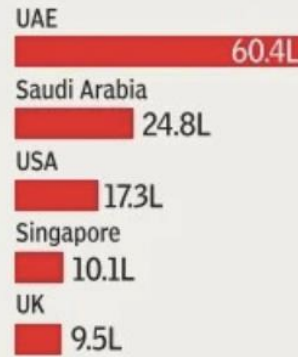
### Big Jump In Foreign-Bound Indians

Indians international departures (million)



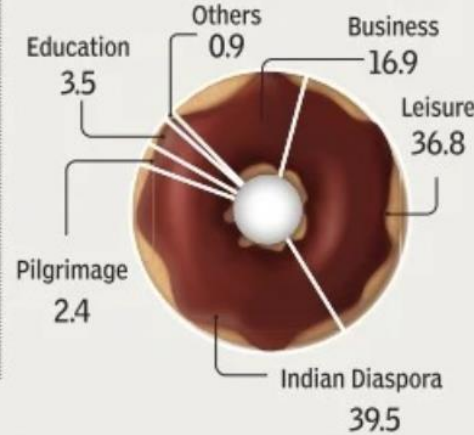
### Gulf Top Destination

Top 10 countries for Indian travellers, 2022



### More Than A Third Are Holidayers

Purpose of travel (% of total, 2022)



the Incredible India campaign that was launched over two decades back. While the travel industry acknowledges the govt's aim to make India one of the top destinations globally – PM Narendra Modi is seen as the biggest brand ambassador for India – they want such steps to be accelerated.

"India's economic growth has made it mandatory for big foreign companies to be present in the country. The pace of infra development, be it highways, airports, railway stations or ports, is amazing. All this will lead to an increase in arrivals of foreigners to the country for work,

but a concerted attempt to woo tourists is required," said a senior industry leader who did not wish to be named.

### Price Point Key

But despite its varied attractions, why is the potential of India inbound still untapped? "India has become an expen-

sive destination. Entry-level 5-star daily tariff used to be about Rs 5,000-5,500 pre-Covid, which is now double that range. Airfares, even of so-called low-cost carriers, are much higher now. Foreign tour operators planning MICE (meetings, incentives, conferences, and exhibitions)

hassle. After all, Thailand is a cheaper option than Goa and Sri Lanka can be less expensive than Kerala, many travel agents point out.

MakeMyTrip group CEO Rajesh Magow said: "Both domestic and outbound travel is on the rise. Domestic travel received a boost during Covid, and this growth has sustained. Enhanced flight connectivity, more airports, and easy visa regulations are powering a surge across leisure and corporate travel with a 25% year-on-year growth in the number of people taking at least three domestic trips annually, and 32% increase in people taking two or more international trips.

"In addition to popular hotspots, we are observing a sustained interest among travellers in exploring off-beat destinations in India and abroad. There's been a 30% growth in 16 emerging tourist destinations across India and a 70% increase in the combined search volume for the top 10 emerging international destinations."

Lokayukta:

## Background of Lokayukta

Concept Origin: Derived from the Scandinavian Ombudsman system, the Lokayukta was first recommended by the Administrative Reforms Commission (1966-70).

First Implementation: Maharashtra pioneered the institution of Lokayukta in **1971**.

- 
- **Lokpal and Lokayuktas Act (2013)**: Mandated all Indian states to establish a Lokayukta to investigate grievances and corruption allegations.
    - The **Lokayukta** typically consists of a **Lokayukta** and one or more **Upa-Lokayuktas**.
    - The number varies from state to state, and appointments are made by the **Governor**, usually in consultation with the state's Chief Justice and Leader of the Opposition.

## Powers of Lokayukta

**Investigation of Public Servants:** Probes allegations of corruption and misconduct against state officials, including ministers and public servants.

**Suo Motu Powers:** Can act on its own without a formal complaint, based on media reports or personal information.

**Recommendations:** Though its decisions are not binding, it can recommend corrective measures and prosecutions.

**Autonomy:** Independent of government interference, yet often faces challenges due to state dependence on resources.



A dark, high-contrast photograph of a wooden floor. The floor has a grid pattern of light-colored lines and circular markings. The text "DF-41" is overlaid in the center in a white, sans-serif font. The lighting is dramatic, with deep shadows and bright highlights on the wood grain and the grid lines.

DF-41

- China says it successfully fired an intercontinental ballistic missile into the Pacific Ocean on Wednesday, a rare public test that analysts said was meant to send a message to the United States and its allies amid heightened regional tensions.

- 

- **About DF-41:**

- **Origin:** In 1980, China test-fired its first ICBM, the DF-5.

- **Estimated range:** 12,000 to 15,000 kilometers

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## **About Intercontinental Ballistic Missile:**

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**Range:** ICBMs have a range greater than 5,500 km and are primarily designed to deliver nuclear warheads.

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**Countries:** 8 nations have operational ICBMs—US, Russia, China, France, UK, India, Israel, and North Korea.

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**India's ICBM:** Agni series

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Despite being nuclear-armed, **Pakistan does not possess** ICBMs

# Minerals Security Finance Network



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- India is now formally a part of the Minerals Security Finance Network, a US-led initiative aiming to strengthen cooperation among members to secure supply chains for critical minerals.

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- **About Mineral Security Finance Network:**

- **MSFN:** A US-led initiative, part of the Minerals Security Partnership (MSP), to secure global supply chains for critical minerals.

- **Global Focus:** Aims to reduce dependency on China for minerals like lithium, cobalt, nickel, and rare earths, crucial for clean energy and electronics.

-

Uniting Development Finance Institutions (DFIs) and Export Credit Agencies (ECAs) to fund critical mineral projects.



Promoting public-private cooperation to meet global mineral demand.



India's Role: India's inclusion aligns with its EV, electronics, and semiconductor push, ensuring a steady mineral supply.



China's Dominance: China controls 70% of rare earth production, with a robust processing infrastructure for minerals like cobalt from Africa.

Periodic Labour Force  
Survey (PLFS) Report 2023-  
24  
PB

- 
- Recently, the National Statistical Office (NSO) released the annual Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) report 2023-24, showing the unemployment rate stagnated at 3.2% that raises concerns about the inability to generate enough formal jobs.



- 
- What are the Key Highlights of the PLFS report 2023-24?
  - **Stagnant Unemployment Rate:** The **unemployment rate for 2023-24** remained unchanged at **3.2%**, the same as in 2022-23.
    - This marks the **first time** since the inception of the PLFS in **2017-18** that the unemployment rate has **not shown a year-on-year decline**.

## Labour Force Participation Rate (LFPR):



It showed a **significant increase** in LFPR to **60.1%** in **2023-24** from **57.9%** in **2022-23** at national level.

The **rural LFPR** rose to **63.7%**, while the **urban LFPR** increased to **52%**.

It suggests more people are seeking work in rural areas, possibly due to **reverse migration** or limited urban job opportunities during and after the pandemic.

A photograph of two astronauts in white space suits standing on a dark, rocky surface, looking out over a vast, orange and yellow sky filled with clouds. The scene is backlit by a bright sun, creating a silhouette effect on the astronauts and the ground. The overall mood is contemplative and hopeful.

# International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons

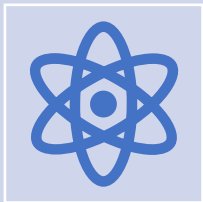
The International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons is celebrated on September 26th every year to raise awareness about the threat of nuclear weapons and to promote their elimination.



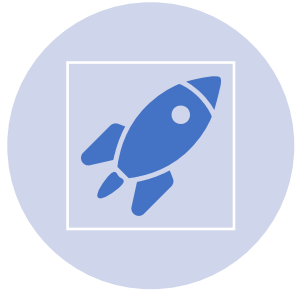
It was declared by the UN General Assembly (UNGA) in 2013.



The first Special Session of the UNGA devoted to disarmament, held in 1978, reaffirmed the preeminence of nuclear disarmament.



The Atomic Energy Commission (1946) to propose measures for controlling nuclear energy and eliminating weapons of mass destruction.



Other Initiatives of  
UNGA:



Comprehensive  
disarmament in 1959



Special Session on  
Disarmament in 1978



Supported the Treaty on  
the Prohibition of Nuclear  
Weapons (TPNW)

India is part of various groups to control the transfer of technology, materials, or components to entities that threaten international security and stability.



Such as Wassenaar Arrangement



Australia Group (AG)



Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR)

## Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT 1970)



- **Objective:**

- Prevent the spread of nuclear weapons and its technology
- Foster peaceful uses of nuclear energy
- Further the goal of nuclear disarmament

- **Member States:**

- 191 with **5 nuclear-weapon states (NWS)** (US, Russia, UK, France & China)

- **Nuclear-Weapon States:**

- Those who **manufactured & exploded** a nuclear weapon or nuclear explosive device **before 1st January 1967**

- **Significance:**

- **Only binding treaty** to the goal of disarmament by the NWS

- **India and NPT:**

- India (along with Pakistan, Israel, North Korea, and South Sudan) is **not a member**
- Opposes it as a **discriminative disarmament policy**
- India's policy - **No First Use against NWS** and **no use against non-NWS**

- **NPT Review Conference:**

- **Undertakes review** of the treaty's implementation **quinquennially**





# Asia Power Index, 2024





- India has become the third most powerful nation in Asia, surpassing Japan in the Asia Power Index.
  - USA and China have been ranked at 1st and 2nd place, respectively

-

## COMPREHENSIVE POWER

GROUPING RANK COUNTRY/TERRITORY SCORE TREND ■ UPWARD ■ DOWNWARD ■ NO CHANGE

GROUPING	RANK	COUNTRY/TERRITORY	SCORE	TREND	ANNUAL CHANGE IN RANKING		
<b>Superpowers</b> ≥ 70 points	1	United States	81.7	↗			
	2	China	72.7	↗			
<b>Middle powers</b> ≥ 10 points	+1	3	India	39.1	↗		
	-1	4	Japan	38.9	↗		
	+1	5	Australia	31.9	↗		
	-1	6	Russia	31.1	↘		
		7	South Korea	31.0	↗		
		8	Singapore	26.4	↗		
		9	Indonesia	22.3	↗		
		10	Thailand	19.8	↗		
		11	Malaysia	19.6	↗		
		12	Vietnam	18.7	↗		
		13	New Zealand	16.3	↘		
	+1	14	Taiwan	16.0	↗		
		15	Philippines	14.7	↗		
	-1	16	Pakistan	14.6	↗		
		17	North Korea	11.3	↗		
		18	Brunei	10.2	↗		
	<b>Minor powers</b> < 10 points	+1	19	Cambodia	9.5	↗	
		-1	20	Bangladesh	9.4	↗	
		21	Sri Lanka	7.7	↗		
+1		22	Laos	7.0	↗		
-1		23	Myanmar	6.7	↘		
		24	Mongolia	5.2	↗		
		25	Nepal	4.8	↗		
		26	Timor-Leste	4.3	NEW		
-1		27	Papua New Guinea	4.2	↗		

**GREATEST GAINS**  
Indonesia +2.9  
India +2.8  
Philippines +2.0

**GREATEST LOSSES**  
Myanmar -0.8  
New Zealand -0.6  
Russia -0.4

Annual change in ranking Trends track annual changes in scores above a minimum threshold (≥ 0.15)

# India Overtakes Japan, 3rd in Asia Power Index

India's score surged by 2.8 points in 2024

Country	Power score 2024	Change from 2023
U.S.	81.7	1.0
China	72.7	0.2
<b>India</b>	<b>39.1</b>	<b>2.8</b>
Japan	38.9	1.7
Australia	31.9	1.0
Russia	31.1	-0.5
South Korea	31.0	1.5
Singapore	26.4	1.3
Indonesia	22.3	2.9
Thailand	19.8	1.1

Source: Lowy Institute's Asia Power Index 2024  
Graphic: Samrat Sharma, Jaipal Sharma



- **About Asia Power Index**
- **Launched by:** Lowy Institute in 2018.
- **Scope:** It is an annual measure that examines power dynamics in the Asia-Pacific region.
- **Coverage:** The Index evaluates 27 countries across the region, analyzing their ability to shape and respond to their external environment.

## Objectives:



A country's overall power score is derived from a weighted average of 8 measures, which are divided into resource-based and influence-based determinants, encompassing 131 individual indicators.



- The Asia Power Index provides valuable insights into the geopolitical landscape of the Asia-Pacific region, highlighting the growing influence of countries like India.

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# Word of the day

## **Specious:**

Plausible but false

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**Synonyms:** deceptive, inaccurate, misguided

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**Usage:** *His argument is somewhat specious.*

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**Pronunciation:** [bit.ly/speciouspro](https://bit.ly/speciouspro)


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**International Phonetic Alphabet:** /spi:fəs/

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A group of people are clapping in a dimly lit room. In the foreground, a hand is reaching out towards the center. The background is dark, with some light coming from a window on the right. There are some red dots and an orange bar in the top left corner.

Thank you  
guys.

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