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**INDIAN EXPRESS UPSC IAS EDITION HD 08~11~2025
-:FOR UPSC IAS ASPIRANTS:-**

**"AVOID POLITICAL & IRRELEVANT ARTICLES"
Please Try To Read This Completely in 40 Minutes If You
Can't So Then You Have To Increase Your Efforts
All the topics of this UPSC IAS Edition are directly or
indirectly important for the prelims & main examination.
There are some topics which can be coded in answer
writing of other topics in the main exam.**

Vande Mataram: Key stanzas dropped, still face divisive mindset

Divya A
New Delhi, November 7

TARGETING THE Congress, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said Friday that "important stanzas" of the national song Vande Mataram were dropped in 1937 which "sowed the seeds of Partition", and that "divisive mindset" is still a challenge for the country.

Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay's Vande Mataram was composed in 1875 and published as part of his novel Anan-



Prime Minister Narendra Modi at an event in New Delhi. PTI

damath in 1882. In October 1937, the Congress decided to adopt only the first two stanzas

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SAYS INDIA HAS LARGELY STOPPED BUYING RUSSIAN OIL

Trump hints at India visit next year, Quad summit has to wait

Calls Modi a great man and friend: He wants me to visit, I will be going there

Shubhajit Roy
New Delhi, November 7

IN THE first confirmation of the Quad leaders' summit, which was to be hosted by India this year, being pushed to 2026, US President Donald Trump has said he could travel to the country next year.

Responding to questions at the Oval Office, Trump said Prime Minister Narendra Modi "wants" him to visit. He called Modi a "great man" and a friend. "He's a friend of mine,

and we speak... He wants me to go there. We'll figure that out. I'll go. I will have a great trip there with Prime Minister Modi, he's a great man. And I'll be going," Trump said.

Asked if he is planning to go to India next year, he said, "It could be, yes."

In New Delhi, responding to questions on Trump's visit to India, Randhir Jaiswal, spokesperson for the Ministry of External Affairs, said, "I do not have anything on this to share. I will let you know when I have."

E. EXPLAINED

Trade deal talks key

All eyes are now on the on-going talks for a trade deal between India and the US. It will also resolve the issue of US penalty tariffs over India's purchase of Russian oil. If a deal is sealed later this year or early next year, scheduling of Trump's visit to India can be planned.

After Modi's visit to the White House this February, the

»CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

Remove stray dogs from public places, shift them to shelters: SC

Flags public safety, country's image

Ananthkrishnan G
New Delhi, November 7

NOTING THAT "incidents of dog-bite attacks continue to be reported with alarming frequency", the Supreme Court directed Friday that stray dogs be removed "forthwith" from the

premises of educational institutions, hospitals, sports complexes, bus stands and depots, and railway stations to "a designated shelter, after due sterilization and vaccination in accordance with the animal birth control rules".

Stating that its directions be

"implemented uniformly across India" with "status compliance certificates within a period of eight weeks", a three-judge bench of Justices Vikram Nath, Sandeep Mehta and N V Anjaria said "the stray dogs so picked up shall not be released back to the same location from which they were picked up".

"We have consciously

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Trump hints at India visit next year

two sides had agreed to hold the Quad leaders' summit in India later in the year.

But ties dived after Trump imposed 50 per cent tariffs on India, including 25 per cent over its purchase of Russian oil, and bilateral talks for a trade deal were also derailed. Now, the trade negotiations have revived and teams are working overtime to bridge the gap.

New Delhi feels that the trade deal will be key to resolving the issue of tariffs since India has also been reducing oil imports from Russia.

New Delhi believes that this trade deal will ultimately smoothen the path for India to

host the US President, and the Quad summit with leaders from Japan and Australia.

Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese had said they were looking at the "first quarter of next year", but the Indian side has not yet committed to any such timeframe.

Sources said if the trade deal is sealed later this year or early next year, then the scheduling of the US President's visit can be planned.

The issue of Trump claiming to have brokered the India-Pakistan ceasefire this May is still a sore point. New Delhi maintains it was negotiated bilaterally between Indian and

Pakistani military officers. It has also stopped issuing rebuttals to Trump's statements.

On Thursday, Trump again claimed that India had stopped buying oil from Russia. "It's great, going good. He (Modi) stopped... Largely he stopped buying oil from Russia," he said, responding to a question on talks with Modi and the trade discussions.

Trump also reiterated his claim that he stopped the war between India and Pakistan in May using trade.

"Of the eight wars I ended, I would say five or six ended because of tariffs. I'll give you an example. If you take a look at

India and Pakistan, they started to fight, they are two nuclear nations... They were shooting each other. Eight planes were shot down. It was seven. Now it is eight, because the one that was sort of shot down is now abandoned. Eight planes were shot down," he said.

"And I said, 'Listen, if you guys are going to fight, I'm gonna put tariffs on you'. And they both went, you know, they were not happy about that. And within 24 hours, I settled the war. If I didn't have tariffs, I wouldn't have been able to settle that war," he said, adding that tariffs were a "great national defence".

Stray dogs

directed the non-release of such stray dogs to the same location from which they were picked up as permitting the same would frustrate the very effect of the directions issued to liberate such institutional areas from the presence of stray dogs," the bench said, putting the onus on removal of strays on the respective jurisdictional municipal body or authority.

It said it had come to know from news reports about dog-bite incidents within institutional areas. "The recurrence of such incidents, particularly within institutional spaces meant for learning, and recreation, reflects not only administrative apathy but also a systemic failure to secure these premises from preventable hazards. The situation calls for immediate judicial intervention to safeguard the fundamental right to life and safety of citizens, especially children, patients, and sportspersons, under Article 21 of the Constitution of India," it said.

Noting that "after Independence, despite significant advances in public health, India continues to report one of the world's highest statistics of rabies-related mortality," it said that despite the Animal Birth

Control Rules, which "established the Capture-Sterilize-Vaccinate-Release (CSV) model as the principal method for controlling the stray dog population", the "implementation of these Rules has been ineffective, to say the least, across jurisdictions and the persistence of stray dog population has continued to imperil public safety in many parts of the country".

Citing news reports about a Welsh entrepreneur in Bengaluru being bitten by a stray dog during a morning run, the bench said it "underscores that the menace is neither confined to rural or densely populated localities nor limited to vulnerable citizens, but has assumed proportions that affect public safety, tourism, and image of the country in the global perspective". It said "data emerging from several States and Union Territories reveal a year-on-year increase in reported dog-bite cases, many occurring within or near public institutions".

Directing state governments and Union Territories to identify these vulnerable institutional areas within a period of two weeks, it said "administrative heads of the efforts and institutions shall, through their respective local or municipal authorities under the overall supervision of the district magistrate concerned, ensure that the premises are secured by ad-

equating fencing, boundary walls, gates, and such other structural or administrative measures as may be necessary to prevent the ingress of stray dogs".

It asked the "management of every educational institution, hospital, sports complex, bus stand, railway stations identified under direction" to "designate a nodal officer responsible for the upkeep and cleanliness of the premises and for ensuring that the stray dogs do not enter or inhabit the campus".

Details of the officer, it said, "shall be displayed permanently at the entrance and notified to the jurisdiction municipal body or authority" and "local municipal authorities and the panchayats shall carry out regular inspections at least once in every three months" to ensure that there are "no stray dog habitats within or in the immediate vicinity of these institutions".

The bench warned that "any lapse in this regard shall be viewed seriously".

It directed "the municipal authorities, the road and transport department, the public works department of all the states, and the UTs and the National Highways Authority of India (NHAI)" to "take a joint co-ordinated drive to identify stretches of highways and expressways where stray cattle or animals are frequently found and shall take immediate steps

for their removal and relocation to designated shelters".

It said "the cattle and other stray animals so picked up shall be kept in appropriate shelters or Gaushalas or cattle pounds as the case may be and provided with all necessary food, water, and veterinary care in accordance with the provisions of the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act and the Animal Birth Control Rules 2023".

It said "each authority shall constitute dedicated highway patrol teams and assign existing road safety units for continuous surveillance and immediate response to reports of stray cattle or other animals obstructing the roadways".

It said the "directions shall be implemented uniformly across India and chief secretaries of all states, UTs, chairpersons of the NHAI, and the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways, Union of India shall file status compliance certificates within a period of eight weeks from indicating the mechanism established for removal and sheltering of the stray animals from highways, the constitution and functioning of patrol teams, and the operational status of the helpline facilities and installation of sign boards displaying the helpline numbers".

It will consider the compliance reports on January 13, 2026.

PM targets Congress

of the song.

Speaking in the Capital at an event to kick off the year-long commemoration of Vande Mataram, marking its 150 years, Modi said, "Azadi ki ladai mei Vande Mataram ki bhavna ne poore rashtra ko prakashit kiya thha. Lekin durbhagya se, 1937 mei, Vande Mataram ke mahatvapooran padon ko, uski aatma keek hisse ko alag kar diya gaya thha. Vande Mataram ko tod diya gaya thha, uske tukde kiye gaye thhe. Vande Mataram ke iss vibhajan ne desh ke vibhajan ke beej bhi bo diye thhe... wahi vibhajakari soch desh ke liye aaj bhi chunauti bani hui hai," he said.

("The spirit of Vande Mataram illuminated the entire nation during the freedom struggle. But unfortunately, in 1937, important stanzas of Vande Mataram, a part of its soul, were severed. Vande Mataram was broken, it was torn into pieces. This division of Vande Mataram also sowed the seeds of division of the country... that same divisive mindset remains a challenge for the country even today.")

Noting that Vande Mataram is relevant in every era, the Prime Minister, in an apparent reference to Operation Sindoor, said, "When the enemy dared to attack our security and honour using terrorism, the world saw that India knows how to take the form of Durga."

"Just a few centuries ago, India accounted for nearly one-fourth of the global GDP. When Bankim Babu composed Vande Mataram, India had drifted far from that golden era. Foreign invasions, plunder, and exploitative colonial policies had left the country suffering with poverty and hunger," he said.

"Yet, Bankim Babu invoked the vision of a prosperous India, driven by his belief that no matter how great the challenges, India could revive its golden age. And thus, he gave the clarion call: Vande Mataram," he said.

Modi said that during the colonial era, the British sought to justify their rule by portraying India as inferior and back-

ward. The very first line of Vande Mataram, he said, dismantled this false propaganda.

Noting that in recent years, the world has witnessed the emergence of India in its true form, he highlighted progress in the fields of science and technology and its rise as the fifth-largest economy in the world.

Organised by the Ministry of Culture, the programme marked the formal launch of the year-long nationwide commemoration — November 7, 2025 to November 7, 2026 — celebrating 150 years of Vande Mataram.

Union Minister Gajendra Singh Shekhawat, Delhi Lieutenant Governor Vinai Kumar Saxena, Delhi Chief Minister Rekha Gupta were among those present at the event. A special commemorative coin and postage stamp dedicated to Vande Mataram were released.

Earlier in the day, the BJP accused the Congress of "brazenly pandering to its communal agenda under the presidency of Jawaharlal Nehru" by adopting only a truncated Vande Mataram in 1937.

"The Congress committed the historic sin and blunder of linking the song with religion. Congress under Nehru citing religious grounds deliberately removed stanzas of Vande Mataram which hailed Goddess Maa Durga," BJP spokesperson C R Kesavan said in a post on X.

Sharing his message on the 150th anniversary of the national song, Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge said, "The Indian National Congress has been the proud flagbearer of Vande Mataram. It was during the 1896 session of the Congress in Calcutta, under the leadership of the then Congress president, Rahmatullah Sayani, that Vande Mataram was sung publicly for the first time by Gurdudev Rabindranath Tagore."

"It is deeply ironic that those who today claim to be the self-proclaimed guardians of nationalism, the RSS and the BJP, have never sung Vande Mataram or our national anthem Jana Gana Mana in their shakhas or offices," he said.

PM Bhutan visit likely soon; energy, connectivity on table

Divya A
New Delhi, November 7

PRIME MINISTER Narendra Modi is likely to visit Bhutan next week for his fourth trip to the Himalayan nation since 2014. Though the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) has yet to announce the visit, the two-day trip is expected to focus on energy cooperation and connectivity, according to sources.

The visit will coincide with the 70th birthday celebrations of former King Jigme Singye Wangchuck, the father of the current monarch, and feature the inauguration of the 1,020 megawatt Punatsangchhu-II Hydropower Project, which has been financed through a mix of Indian grants and loans.

PM Modi is also expected to review progress on two new India-Bhutan railway projects: the Kokrajhar-Gelephu link connecting Assam to southern Bhutan, and the Banarhat-Samtse line connecting West Bengal to southwestern Bhutan.

The Kokrajhar-Gelephu and Banarhat-Samtse projects will cost Rs 3,456 crore and Rs 577 crore, respectively. The Kokrajhar-Gelephu line will

have six stations, two important bridges, 29 major bridges, 65 minor bridges, two goods sheds, one flyover and 39 underpasses, with a construction period of four years. Meanwhile, the Banarhat-Samtse line will have two stations, one major bridge, 24 minor bridges, one overpass and 37 underpasses, and is set to be completed in three years.

Announcing the projects, Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri had said that they would enhance the overall connectivity between the two countries.

"The two areas that have been picked are significant. Gelephu is the centrepiece of The Gelephu Mindfulness City. It is a strategic and visionary project conceived by the King of Bhutan, and we have expressed our support for this. And this is a project which is envisaged as an economic hub for that part of Bhutan. Since Assam is on its border, the project will have a spinoff effect for the entire region," said Misri.

On the second project connecting Samtse, a town which is being developed as a major industrial hub, Misri said, "Some of the potential exports

from this area to India will be dolomite, ferro-silicon, quartzite and stone chips. It is an accepted principle of transport economics that railway movement of cargo is far more economic than roads."

Both projects were initiated after PM Modi's visit to Bhutan in March 2024, during which a memorandum of understanding was inked between the two countries.

India has been Bhutan's largest provider of developmental assistance. Under Bhutan's 13th Five Year Plan (2024-29), India has committed Rs 10,000 crore towards community development projects and a programme grant. India is also Bhutan's top trading partner.

Bhutanese PM Tshering Tobgay has visited India twice this year. In February, he attended the inaugural Leadership Conclave of the School of Ultimate Leadership, inaugurated by Modi. Ahead of his second visit in September, the MEA had said that these back-to-back visits underscore the close cooperation and ties between India and Bhutan, built on trust, goodwill, and regular high-level exchanges.

The Editorial Page

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 8, 2025

COP 30 must address the most vulnerable

THE UNFCCC'S 30TH Conference of Parties (COP 30) that begins in Belem, Brazil, on November 10 will mark a decade since the Paris Climate Pact came into force. A lot has changed since the landmark treaty was adopted, and at the same time, the needle hasn't moved much on several longstanding climate issues. Renewables have edged out fossil fuels as the biggest source of energy. Yet, there has scarcely been a slowdown in the trajectory of global greenhouse gas emissions. Policies now in place are expected to shave off warming by 2100 by nearly one full degree — from 3.6 degrees Celsius pre-Paris to around 2.7 degrees Celsius. That's still way short of the 1.5 degrees Celsius threshold set in Paris. In the run-up to COP 30, more than 60 countries have submitted revised climate action plans. Many more, including India, are expected to do so at Belem. However, by all accounts, collective ambition will not be enough to keep global warming below the threshold set at Paris.

The large deficits in global-warming mitigation mean that countries have to invest more in shielding people from extreme weather events. The spiralling effects of climate change are already evident in the record-breaking heatwaves of 2024, the toll taken by floods, typhoons and cyclones over the past 10 years, and the forest fires that have raged in different parts of the world in the last three years. According to a World Meteorological Organisation Report, released in October, "millions of people lack the protection against dangerous weather, which is also inflicting a dangerous toll on vital economic assets". The report underlined the importance of investing in early warning systems. Another analysis of global efforts to make people resilient to climate-change impacts, the UNEP's Adaptation Gap Report 2025 released in the run-up to COP 30, shows that developing countries will need \$310 billion annually between now and 2035 to protect people from searing heat, rising seas, rivers in spate and deadly storms — this is nearly 12 times the finances currently allocated for adaptation.

One of the priorities at COP 30 will be to create a roadmap to track global adaptation progress. Unlike mitigation, adaptation has no single global metric. The roadmap will also need to be sensitive to the fact that social inequalities make some people more vulnerable than others. In other words, while the Belem meet will need to find ways to scale up climate finances, it will also need to create mechanisms to ensure that the funds reach those who need them the most. The negotiators will have their task cut out in the next fortnight.

SC draws a red line against arbitrary arrest

IN A CRUCIAL ruling, the Supreme Court has said that the police must communicate the grounds of arrest to a person in writing, in the language he understands, within a reasonable time, and in any case at least two hours before the arrested individual is produced for remand proceedings before the magistrate. A bench headed by Chief Justice B R Gavai said that this key procedural safeguard will extend to all offences and not just those under stringent special statutes like the Prevention of Money Laundering Act, 2002 (PMLA) and the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, 1967 (UAPA). In giving primacy to the personal liberty of an individual, the ruling sets a welcome precedent.

While this provision has existed on paper since the enactment of penal laws, it has mostly been ignored as an inconvenience by the police. The SC has repeatedly raised the bar in terms of protecting individuals from arbitrary arrest. In invalidating News-Click editor Prabir Purkayastha's arrest in 2024, it extended this procedural shield against arrest even to the stringent anti-terror legislation. The SC rightly acknowledged that the stigma attached to arrest undermines a person's social dignity and results in consequences that reverberate beyond the individual: "The arrest of an individual invariably impacts not only the person arrested himself, but also the persons associated with him, i.e. family, friends, relatives, etc, affecting their psychological balance and overall social well-being. This Court has on several occasions underscored that there is a stigma attached to arrest which impairs the reputation and the standing of an individual in society."

From prohibiting the police from taking custody of a woman after sunset or in the absence of female police officers, to requiring the police to mandatorily present an accused before a judge within 24 hours, procedural safeguards serve as a bulwark of individual rights and liberties, protecting citizens from state arbitrariness. With the SC standing guard, the police must comply with the law — in letter and spirit.

The Ideas Page

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 8, 2025

AI mania masks economic fissures and rising uncertainty



SAJJID Z CHINOY

THE TONE AND tenor in Washington, DC on the sidelines of the recent IMF-World Bank meetings revealed how divided and uncertain the policy, investor and analyst community remains. One would have presumed economic uncertainty would have peaked during the spring meetings in April, a few weeks after "Liberation Day". The uncertainty then was deep, but narrow, concentrated on the scale and scope of the Trump tariffs. Now it has broadened ominously. Is the US economy on the verge of a recession or has it bucked one? Are the Trump tariffs even legal? Will the breathless AI build-out become progressively unviable? Are we playing with fiscal fire globally? Is the cherished independence of some central banks under existential threat?

Start with US economic performance. The Atlanta Fed Nowcaster suggests US growth last quarter was tracking an eye-popping 3.9 per cent. Far from a tariff-induced recession, US growth is accelerating! Tempting as it may be, it's too early to claim victory. Below strong headline growth lie caveats and fissures. First, surging AI investment has been responsible for much of recent growth. Absent that, US growth would have averaged just 1 per cent in the first half of 2025. Second, the US labour market has come to a virtual stall, which is typically a precursor to a recession. Third, US inflation pressures continue to build as tariffs are slowly passed on to consumers, which, alongside slowing job growth, will put more pressure on households.

But, given the conflicting signals, which is the signal and which is the noise? Is the labour market about to break? Or are softer jobs numbers simply reflecting a much lower "breakeven rate" because of the anti-immigration efforts by the administration? Will the AI boom offset the tariff pressures and bail the economy out? And if so, will policymakers draw the wrong conclusion that tariffs were not harmful, prompting

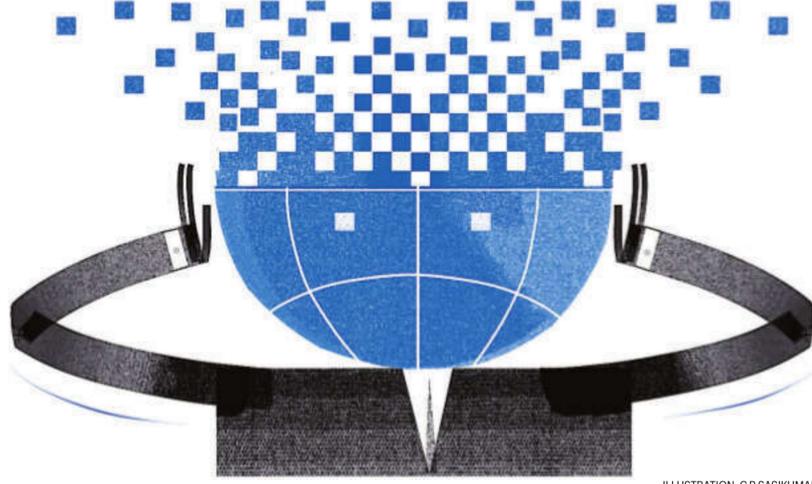


ILLUSTRATION: C.R SASIKUMAR

more to be rolled out?

Meanwhile, AI mania continues to grip the world. Global investments in "data centres" have jumped from \$400 billion in 2024 to an estimated \$600 billion in 2025 and are projected to rise to \$3-4 trillion a year by 2030. It's understandable why mania will drive more mania. Some, like Nouriel Roubini, believe AI will result in exponential productivity growth, which, if true, will result in a winner-takes-all outcome. So, the first-mover advantage becomes crucial. Further, as the Richmond Fed notes, current AI investment — when compared to the telecom boom of the 1990s — suggests it's early days yet. We may only be in the second inning of a nine-inning baseball game. Recognising this, the frenzy in the stock market is giddy. Just 30 AI-related stocks now account for 44 per cent of the S&P's market capitalisation.

But is the exuberance getting irrational? Eventually, AI investments of the kind envisaged will necessitate meaningful leverage. Will the use-cases be enough to justify these investment levels? Will the use-cases be sufficiently monetisable? And then the elephant-in-the-room question. To what extent will AI be labour-substituting ver-

US tariffs are the highest since the 1930s and an inexorable descent towards deglobalisation is on. The promise of AI (on productivity) is matched only by its peril (on unemployment)

sus labour-augmenting? If it's the former, will the distribution of income become even more skewed in favour of capital at the expense of labour? What will this imply for future employment, consumption and demand? Are we setting ourselves up for the classic fallacy of composition that Keynes warned of? Is the recent wave of AI-related layoffs just the canary in the coalmine? Omnipresent uncertainties abound.

The case of Taiwan is instructive. Taiwan has been at the epicentre of the AI boom, exporting servers, GPUs and high-end chips that populate US data centres. Taiwan's exports to the US are growing at a sizzling 50 per cent pace, pushing GDP growth up to 7 per cent. Yet, because the AI buildout is so capital intensive, there has been no positive spillover to jobs and consumption. Even as AI exports have boomed, consumption growth is averaging less than 1 per cent and consumer confidence is falling! So much so that Taiwan's government had to roll out a 2 per cent of GDP fiscal package in September in spite of the AI mania. A sign of things to come globally?

If these contradictions were to slowly pervade the global economy, where will the fiscal space come from? Unsustainable fiscal

deficits in advanced economies are proving to be a key source of global instability. G7 public debt is already at 125 per cent of GDP and expected to rise to 140 per cent by 2030. The US fiscal deficit is running at almost 8 per cent of GDP for an economy above its pre-pandemic path! Exorbitant procyclicality, anyone? Japan's public debt is 230 per cent of GDP but that is unlikely to stop the new PM from announcing another fiscal package. Bond markets are growing increasingly nervous, but the politics everywhere seems incapable of orchestrating much-needed fiscal adjustment. The gamble with fiscal fire is well and truly on.

Finally, the US Supreme Court has just begun to hear whether President Donald Trump's invoking of the IEEPA (International Emergency Economic Powers Act) to impose tariffs — both reciprocal and fentanyl — is legal. If it is deemed illegal, the US treasury will have to refund Rs \$100 billion of tariff revenues, putting more pressure on the US fiscal. The administration is likely to respond by invoking other statutes of the law (sections 122, 232, 301) to impose country-specific and sectoral tariffs. But all this will simply compound confusion and uncertainty. And what happens to the legality of trade agreements based on IEEPA tariffs?

Five years after the pandemic and a year into Trump's presidency, underlying macro fissures have only widened and uncertainties have only grown. US tariffs are the highest since the 1930s and an inexorable descent towards deglobalisation is on. Emerging markets are still grappling with pandemic-induced scarring and now confront a China Shock 2.0 — an avalanche of cheap Chinese imports. The promise of AI (on productivity) is matched only by its peril (on unemployment) at a time when countries lack the fiscal space to backstop labour markets.

The global community that descends on Washington remains divided and uncertain on both the prognosis and the policy response. But equity markets will have none of this. The AI frenzy is propelling markets to ever-new highs. The pressures and problems of the present are being ignored for the (yet untested) promise of the future. Markets may be priced to perfection. But reality rarely follows suit.

The writer is head of Asia Economics at J P Morgan

Vande Mataram: The national song with a tragic journey

RAMRAJYA
BY RAM MADHAV

PRIME MINISTER NARENDRA Modi on Friday inaugurated year-long celebrations commemorating 150 years of the stirring national song, 'Vande Mataram'. He described the song as "an enduring symbol of devotion to the nation". 'Vande Mataram' was the war cry of thousands of freedom fighters. It first appeared in 1875. As the Indian National Congress movement turned into a mass movement in the early 1900s, 'Vande Mataram' became the main slogan and inspiration for millions. "The partition (of Bengal) took effect on October 16, 1905... streets of Calcutta were full of the cries of 'Bande Mataram', which overnight became the national song of Bengal and which was soon to become the theme song of the national movement," historian Bipan Chandra writes.

It was declared the national song on January 24, 1950. However, it also endured a tragic journey, from being an inspiration to becoming a victim of communal politics.

The rise of the Muslim League in the early 1900s posed a serious challenge to the Congress leadership's belief in "one nation — one people". Gandhi sought to cajole the League leadership into supporting the unity of the nation, a tactic that many latter-day commentators thought naive. The more Gandhi and the Congress offered concessions, the harder the League's position became. An early victim of this stridency was 'Vande Mataram'. It had been a regular practice since 1905 to sing 'Vande Mataram'

at all important Congress events. In December 1923, the annual Congress session was held in Kakinada. Gandhi was in Yerwada prison. Maulana Mohammad Ali, who was elected president of the session, was present along with senior leaders like Motilal Nehru, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, Sarojini Naidu, Sardar Patel and Kasturba Gandhi.

As per convention, Vishnu Digambar Paluskar, a renowned Hindustani musician from Maharashtra, was there to sing 'Vande Mataram' at the inaugural. When Paluskar climbed the dais, Mohammad Ali raised an objection, saying it would hurt the sentiments of religious Muslims. Seeing the silence of the leaders, Paluskar took it upon himself to challenge Mohammad Ali. According to a biography of Paluskar, "Digambar was incensed and hit back: 'This is a national forum, not the platform of any single community. This is no mosque to object to music. There is no justification for a ban on music here. When the president could put up with the music in the presidential procession, why does he object to it here?' Having silenced the president, without waiting for his reply, he proceeded to sing 'Vande Mataram' and completed it."

To placate the League, Congress introduced Muhammad Iqbal's 'Saare Jahan se Acchha' in its sessions. Yet, the opposition to 'Vande Mataram' continued. It became part of the so-called "Muslim grievances" against Congress. In July 1939, Gandhi wrote of 'Vande Mataram' in *Harizan*, "No matter what its source was, and how and when it was composed, it had become a most powerful battle cry among Hindus and Muslims of Bengal during the Partition days. As a lad, when I knew nothing of 'Anand Math' or even Bankim, its immortal author, 'Vande Mataram' had gripped me... It never occurred to me that it was a Hindu song or meant only for Hindus. Unfortunately, now we have fallen on evil days."

In 1937, elections were held for the provincial councils. The Congress needed the League's support to form governments in some of them. When the dialogue was initiated, Muhammad Ali Jinnah invoked the grievance about 'Vande Mataram'. A "committee" was formed to review 'Vande Mataram'. Rabindranath Tagore, Subhas Chandra Bose and Jawaharlal Nehru were its members. It recommended that only the first two stanzas be sung. Just a month before, in October 1937, the Congress had declared 'Vande Mataram' the national song.

The national song was partitioned in 1937 to appease the Muslim League. Ten years later, the nation was partitioned.

The writer, president, India Foundation, is with the BJP

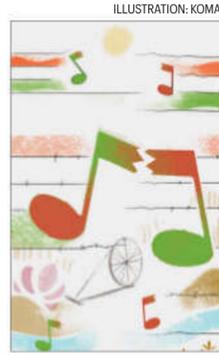


ILLUSTRATION: KOMAL

To placate the League, Congress introduced Muhammad Iqbal's 'Saare Jahan se Acchha' in its sessions. Yet, the opposition to 'Vande Mataram' continued. It became part of the so-called 'Muslim grievances' against Congress

Panel seeks higher protection for Rhesus Macaque under Wildlife Act

Nikhil Ghanekar
New Delhi, November 7

THE STANDING committee of the National Board for Wildlife (SC-NBWL), chaired by Union Environment Minister Bhupendra Yadav, has recommended reinstating Rhesus Macaque species of monkeys under Schedule II of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972, to restore statutory protection, enforcement against illegal capture, cruelty and to regulate its scientific management.

The panel's recommendation came on the back of internal deliberations and views from states where the simian species is well-distributed.

The Chairman of Animal Welfare Board of India and Federation of Indian Animal Protection Organisations had requested restoration of protection to Rhesus Macaque under Schedule II of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, to prevent cruelty, exploitation and illegal trade, the minutes of the panel's October 29 meeting stated.

Senior officials of the Environment Ministry said reinstating the species under Schedule II of the Act may be considered since under Section 11 of the law, the power to deal with wildlife species in conflict is given to states.

Yadav emphasised that all divisional forest officers and deputy conservator of forests should

prepare site-specific management and conservation plans for the species and directed developing appropriate rescue and rehabilitation centres.

The panel's recommendation was backed by Member Secretary, Central Zoo Authority and Member Secretary, National Tiger Conservation Authority. State governments have been directed to prepare detailed, site-specific mitigation plans identifying and categorising areas of conflict. "A baseline study is to be developed based on studies carried out by the Wildlife Institute of India," the minutes stated.

The matter of reinstating protection for the species was placed in the previous 85th meeting of the SC-NBWL for advice on policy framing. Subsequently, the ministry circulated a detailed questionnaire to Chief Wildlife Wardens of all states and Union Territories seeking reasoned statements.

Six states — Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat, Uttarakhand, West Bengal, Himachal Pradesh, Arunachal Pradesh — supported reinstating the species in Schedule II of the Act for protection, prevention of cruelty, and ecological reasons. Assam, Rajasthan, Meghalaya, Uttar Pradesh, Punjab, Jammu and Kashmir, and Andhra Pradesh opposed the proposal due to its non-threatened status and for conflict management reasons.

PLANS ACROSS CHANGTHANG COLD DESERT SANCTUARY AND KARAKORAM WILDLIFE SANCTUARY

Wildlife board panel clears 12 key defence projects in Ladakh

Nikhil Ghanekar
New Delhi, November 7

THE STANDING committee of the National Board for Wildlife (SC-NBWL) has recommended approval for 12 key defence projects in Ladakh, of which, Defence Ministry has said, some are necessary for "high level of operational preparedness" in the context of "increasing assertiveness of People's Liberation Army (PLA)". The panel is chaired by Union Environment Minister Bhupendra Yadav.

The projects, including a training node at Tara, an artillery battery in Leh, two formation ammunition storage facilities (FASF), a brigade HQ at Chushul, Leh and border outposts of Indo-Tibetan at Qazi Langar near Depsang, have been approved across Changthang Cold Desert Sanctuary and Karakoram Wildlife Sanctuary, according to the minutes of the panel's October 29 meeting.

Additionally, it also approved construction of an Army camp in Leh and a proposal to construct a 158-m span permanent Pinjoli bridge on the Balpara-Charduar-Tawang Road in Arunachal Pradesh's Eagle-nest Wildlife Sanctuary.

For establishing a training node area at Tara in Ladakh, the Defence Ministry submitted

Infrastructure necessitated by 'increasing PLA assertiveness' in region, says Defence Ministry



An Army convoy heading to Ladakh in 2020. The new projects are aimed at facilitating quick movement of patrol teams, as well as facilities for troops and ammunition. SHUAIB MASOODI/FILE

that the responsibility of a CIF (U) — Counter Insurgency Force — extends from Pangong Tso to Mount Gya, while formation headquarters are located at second stage and majority units are deployed at an altitude of 15,000 feet and above.

"The increasing assertiveness of the People's Liberation Army (PLA) in the region necessitates a high level of operational preparedness," the Defence Ministry submitted.

"In this context, the availabil-

ity of dedicated training infrastructure, encompassing both indoor and outdoor facilities at Super High Altitude Areas — i.e. around 15,000 feet elevation — is essential to facilitate regular and realistic training for troops while maintaining their operational presence in the AoR (area of responsibility)," it said. The proposed training site is located adjacent to Tara Battalion and is part of Chushul sub-sector.

The latest round of approvals is in line with a push to

E. EXPLAINED

Lessons learnt from previous conflict

The Centre has ramped up construction of strategically important defence projects in Ladakh's eastern sector since the 2020 Galwan clashes. Earlier, the SC-NBWL cleared projects such as a forward aviation base, facilities to house missiles, five key road stretches, including one on the alternate road to Daulat Beg Oldie. The objective of these projects is to improve operational readiness and speed up troop mobilisation.

ramp up infrastructure near the LAC in the aftermath of the 2020 Galwan clash with China that claimed the lives of 20 Indian Army personnel.

The ministry noted that even as the Deputy Conservator of Forest and Chief Wildlife Warden recommended the training node proposal, the conditions prescribed were general in nature and no specific wildlife mitigation plan was provided. The cold desert ecosystem, it noted, supported

rare and endangered species.

The two FASF at Tsogtsalu in Changthang sanctuary and in Karakoram sanctuary will require 24.2 hectares and 47.1 hectares of sanctuary land. The Changthang Wildlife Sanctuary is home to Tibetan wolf, wild yak, bharal, wild dog, snow leopard, brown bear and marmot while the Karakoram Wildlife Sanctuary is home to Tibetan antelope, shapo, wild yak, bharal, leopards, Himalayan mouse and lynx.

The Union Environment Ministry said in its comments on the FASF proposals that utmost caution must be exercised to minimise ecological impacts in the fragile cold desert ecosystem in Changthang sanctuary.

Another key proposal that received a nod was use of 40 hectares of Changthang sanctuary for establishment of a brigade headquarters at Chushul.

"Since the units under command of Headquarters 142 Infantry Brigade are already deployed along the LAC, it is crucial for the Brigade Headquarters to be deployed in the vicinity of the LAC for better command and control. Therefore, it is essential to acquire land at Chushul for construction of assets for deployment of Headquarters 142 Infantry brigade," the Ministry said.

SC flags issues in property registration, says examine blockchain tech

Express News Service
New Delhi, November 7

NOTING THAT the existing "legal framework for purchase and sale of immovable properties suffer from several systemic deficiencies that undermine "transparency and efficiency", the Supreme Court Friday called for a study to examine how the adoption of blockchain technology can help tide over this.

A bench of Justices PS Narasimha and Joymalya Bagchi pointed out that "the legal architecture for property transactions in India continues the colonial construct of real property and operates on the basis of three primary legislations, the Transfer of Property Act, 1882, the Indian Stamp Act, 1899 and the Registration Act, 1908". The court noted that the Registration Act, "mandates registration of documents, not the title".

"Thus, registration of a document recording purchase of immovable property does not confer guaranteed title of ownership... it is never a conclusive proof of ownership... This system has therefore placed a significant burden... on a prospective buyer..." On the way out, the court said, "It is suggested that adoption of blockchain technology would ensure immutability, transparency and traceability, thereby minimising fraud..."

The court urged the Law Commission "to examine this issue in detail, consult the Union, the states and all other stakeholders..."

FULL REPORT ON WWW.INDIANEXPRESS.COM

HAL, GE ink deal for supply of engines to power Tejas

Amrita Nayak Dutta
New Delhi, November 7

THE STATE-OWNED Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) and American defence major General Electric on Friday signed an agreement for the supply of 113 F404-GE-IN20 engines, which will power the indigenously-built Light Combat Aircraft (LCA) Tejas Mk 1A.

In a post on X, HAL said that the agreement has been signed

for the supply of 113 engines and support package for the execution of the 97 LCA Mk 1A programme. The order for the 113 engines is worth over \$1 billion.

Over the last several months, HAL and GE have been negotiating on the procurement of the 113 F404 engines that will power its LCA Mk 1As. HAL has also been talking with GE on finalising the finer details of the joint production of the F414 engines, which

will power the Light Combat Aircraft Mk2 jets for the IAF.

In all, HAL will supply 180 LCA Mk 1A to the IAF. The initial ₹48,000-crore order of 83 aircraft was signed in 2021, and deliveries were scheduled to begin last year. The order for an additional 97 aircraft was signed in September. HAL bagged an order 97 LCA Tejas Mk 1A. HAL is, however, yet to begin deliveries of the 83 LCA Mk 1As to the IAF for which it

bagged an order in 2021.

So far, it has received four F404 engines from GE, and it is learnt that the deliveries can start only after the aircraft completes final certification, which includes weapon integration and firing tests. HAL has constructed 10 aircraft so far.

In an interview with *The Indian Express* in September, HAL Chairman and Managing Director DK Sunil said if orders (for the LCA Mk 1As) do not

flow continuously to keep global aerospace companies engaged, supply chains can face bottlenecks. He had also described the GE F404 engines that power the LCA Mk 1A as "wonderful" and "proven to be reliable".

Last month, the LCA Tejas Mk 1A undertook its first public sortie at the Hindustan Aeronautics Facility in Nashik, marking a key milestone in its production journey.

Maldives to acquire military aircraft next year: Muizzu

Associated Press
Washington, November 7

MALDIVES WILL acquire a military aircraft next year, President Mohamed Muizzu said as he inaugurated the national defence force's first dedicated air station.

"The landmark event formalises a key component of the island nation's defence strategy, significantly expanding the capabilities of the newly constituted Air Corps," state-run Public Service Media (PSM News) said.

The Maldives National Defence Force's (MNDF) Gan Air Station, commissioned on Wednesday, is located at the southernmost Addu city.

"The Maldivian army has made progress in all areas," Muizzu was quoted as saying by news portal Adhadhu. "Hopefully this coming year will be more progressive. We have already decided to get military aircraft for the Air Corps," he added. Muizzu, however, did not provide any details.

Adhadhu news portal said the Maldives government has increased its military expenditures, but keeps the details confidential due to "national security reasons." The proposed state

budget for 2026 includes MVR 2.8 billion for military spending, which, it said, is "four percent of the total budget." The government's biggest military expenditure so far is a USD 37 million (MVR 570 million) contract to buy six military drones from Turkey, the news portal added.

Next year's budget also includes a large expenditure on insurance for the drones. The government will spend MVR 99 million on private insurance next year, it added.

The commissioning of Gan Air Station follows a Presidential Decree issued on November 3, which established the core mission for the MNDF's air wing, PSM News said.

Under the Decree, the MNDF Air Corps had been directed to establish and operationalise the air station to support airspace surveillance, monitoring of the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ), and the execution of Air Corps operations.

The Decree further mandates the implementation of 24-hour continuous airspace surveillance over the EEZ to ensure the Air Corps effectively fulfils its operational and national security responsibilities, it added.

'FUJIAN' IS COUNTRY'S THIRD AIRCRAFT CARRIER

China commissions its most advanced carrier

Equipped with electromagnetic catapults, so far used only by US carrier Ford

K J M Varma
Beijing, November 7

CHINA HAS commissioned its third aircraft carrier, the Fujian, stated to be the most modern warship equipped with electromagnetic catapults, at a ceremony attended by Chinese President Xi Jinping, wrapped in secrecy.

While the official media reported its commissioning on Friday, a report by state-run Xinhua news agency said that Xi attended the commissioning and flag-presentation ceremony of the Fujian on Wednesday at Sanya port in south China's Hainan Province.

The Fujian is equipped with an Electromagnetic Aircraft Launch System (EMALS), used only by the American aircraft carrier USS Gerald R. Ford.

US President Donald



China's third conventionally powered aircraft carrier, the Fujian. AP

Trump last week said he wanted to abandon EMALS technology and go back to steam power, calling the advanced launch system expensive, unreliable and difficult to repair, the Hong Kong-based South China Morning Post reported.

While all three Chinese carriers are conventionally powered, recent reports said China is reportedly building its fourth aircraft carrier in Dalian, which could be powered by nuclear propulsion to increase its endurance and global reach

and provide significantly more power to run advanced systems.

China, which was the last among the major countries to opt for aircraft carriers for its navy, currently has two of them: the Liaoning, a refit of the Soviet-era ship commissioned in 2012, and Shandong, an indigenously built 2nd aircraft carrier operationalised in 2019.

Fujian has been commissioned after the military said carrier-based aircraft J-15T, J-35 and KongJing-600 have successfully completed catapult-

E. EXPLAINED

Electromagnetic catapults' function

Electromagnetic catapults, part of the Electromagnetic Aircraft Launch System (EMALS), use electric power to launch aircraft from a carrier's deck. Unlike traditional steam catapults, EMALS provides smoother acceleration, enabling the launch of heavier and advanced aircraft.

assisted take-off and arrested landing training on its flat deck.

All three carriers are conventionally powered. Fujian is the largest among them with a displacement of 80,000 tonnes.

Analysts say that with tensions on the rise with the US, China may build more aircraft carriers to operate in various global maritime routes.

The Indian Navy is also catching up by commissioning more naval ships to maintain its dominance in the Indian Ocean. PTI

• BRIEFLY



A shrimp farmer cleans debris caused by Typhoon Kalmaegi in Phu My, Gia Lai Province, Vietnam. REUTERS

VIETNAM

Typhoon Kalmaegi brings rain and destruction in Vietnam

At LEAST five people died in Vietnam after Typhoon Kalmaegi pummelled coastal regions with destructive winds and heavy rain, officials said on Friday, following the storm's deadly passage through the Philippines where it killed at least 188 people. The typhoon made landfall in central Vietnam late on Thursday, uprooting trees, damaging homes, and triggering power outages, before weakening as it moved inland. Authorities have warned of more heavy rainfall of up to 200 millimetres (8 inches) in central provinces from Thanh Hoa to Quang Tri, and said rising river levels from Hue to Dak Lak could trigger flooding and landslides. REUTERS

• THAILAND IS NOW WORKING WITH INDIA AND OTHER FOREIGN GOVERNMENTS TO REPATRIATE THEIR CITIZENS

Scam centres in southeast Asia are on rise despite continuous crackdowns

Huizhong Wu
Bangkok November 7

IT OFTEN starts with a text message asking if you are available on weekends, looking for a part-time job or you get a simple "hello" from an unknown number. Halfway across the world, a laborer is usually pulling in 12-16 hour days, sending non-stop messages, hoping someone will take the bait.

The ultimate goal is always to take your money — victims have lost tens of billions to scams and hundreds of thousands of people are in forced labor to keep the schemes going. These workers are often housed in massive complexes scattered

across southeast Asia, where the industry has flourished.

The Myanmar military last month went into one of the most well-known scam compounds — the massive KK Park, along the border with Thailand — and announced its shutdown, though civil society groups later said parts of the compound are still operating.

The workers fled, with about 1,500 labourers — hundreds of them from India but also Chinese, Filipinos, Vietnamese, Ethiopians and Kenyans, among other nationalities — crossing into Thailand. Troops then demolished several structures within the massive complex, according to

Thai military officials.

Thailand is now working with India and other foreign governments to repatriate their citizens. On Thursday, one of the largest groups of workers was flown home aboard Indian air force transport planes and more are to return next week.

However, KK Park was just one of dozens such centres along the Thai-Myanmar border and hundreds across Southeast Asia.

Scam compounds are often located in rural areas, sprawling complexes with sleeping quarters, shops and entertainment venues for the staff.

They are constructed on a model where developers may



Smoke billows from KK Park centre in Karen State, Myanmar. FILE

build out a single property and then lease out the space inside to various companies.

They often operate with the protection of local elites. Smaller operations also exist —

housed in one floor of legitimate office buildings, or even a rented house in an urban area.

The centres originated from casinos — both online and physical casinos that mushroomed across Southeast Asia. The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime counted more than 340 licensed and non-licensed casinos in 2021 alone.

The casinos and attached junket tours attracted high-rollers from China, where gambling is outlawed and are operated by Chinese criminal groups.

During the pandemic, visiting such locations became difficult amid strict travel restrictions. Lacking customers, some online casinos shifted their

work model to a criminal operation: defrauding targets from all over the world through digital schemes.

It's estimated that at least 120,000 people across Myanmar may be held in situations where they are forced to work on online scams, with another 100,000 people in Cambodia, according to a 2023 Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights report.

The numbers are estimates at best, but scam centers rely on a mix of trafficked and willing labourers, lured by false promises of relatively high salaries and an easy office job.

Early on, workers came from China and Chinese speak-

ing countries, but now the U.N. drugs and crime office says laborers are drawn from 56 countries, from Indonesia to Liberia.

The reality is a stark contrast from their expectations — their passports are often confiscated to keep them from leaving the complex. Only very senior managers and trusted lieutenants are able to have freedom of movement, workers have said. Workers who don't perform are beaten or face other physical punishments.

Scammers don't discriminate — they target people across the world, aided by translation tools that are powered by artificial intelligence. AP

'FORWARD-LOOKING ECL PROVISIONING WILL HELP EARLY RECOGNITION OF DETERIORATION IN ASSET QUALITY'

End of curbs on acquisition financing by banks to aid real growth: RBI Gov

Hitesh Vyas

Mumbai, November 7

RESERVE BANK of India Governor Sanjay Malhotra on Friday said the central bank's proposal to allow banks to finance acquisitions will boost the real economy and will come with guardrails to ensure safety of the banking system.

"It (acquisition finance) is acknowledged as an integral element of an evolved financial system that helps in better allocation of financial resources," Malhotra said. Recognising its need, non-bank players such as NBFCs and bond markets are already allowed to provide such funding, he said at the SBI Banking and Economic Conclave. The RBI had announced easing of acquisition financing and several other measures to boost credit flow and economy last month.

"Removal of the restriction on banks will benefit the real economy," he said. The proposed guardrails like limiting bank funding to 70 per cent of deal value, limits on debt-to-equity ratio, aggregate exposure limits relative to Tier-1



Reserve Bank of India Governor Sanjay Malhotra at the SBI Banking and Economics Conclave 2025 in Mumbai on Friday. PTI

capital, and eligibility criteria will contain concentration and credit risks, thereby ensuring safety while allowing banks and their stakeholders to reap benefits of additional business, the RBI Governor said.

Malhotra said the proposals to enhance the limits for lending to individuals against securities and rationalise the norms for lending to capital market intermediaries are part of the normal process of review,

seeking to reset the limits, set way back in 1999. "Importantly, the revision in limits has been accompanied by a more structured Loan to Value (LTV) framework, sensitive to the risks of the underlying securities," he said.

He said the proposed removal of limits on loans against debt instruments, while retaining the regulatory limits for equity instruments, recognises the fundamental difference be-

tween the two instruments from a risk perspective. "The key risk a debt instrument carries is credit risk, and just like loans, credit risk is expected to be managed as part of the broader credit risk management framework," Malhotra said.

An additional comforting factor is that only listed and investment grade debt securities are proposed to be permitted as collateral. This rationalisation

is also expected to foster a virtuous positive feedback loop for the development of the bond market, Malhotra said.

On the withdrawal of the Specified Borrower Framework, RBI Governor said the large exposure framework, which is aligned with international best practices, is now well-established and the supervisory tool kit is vastly improved. This framework was instituted almost a decade ago, in a very different financial environment.

"This is a unique measure, which perhaps no other country that has implemented the Large Exposure framework (LEF), at the bank level, has. At that time, the banking system was grappling with elevated levels of stress, which is no longer the case," he said.

He said the recent past has also seen structural transformation of financial intermediation into a sophisticated and layered system. Nimble FinTechs and NBFCs now assume a greater role in sourcing and origination. Development of capital markets and credit risk transfer channels such as

securitisation now provide a conduit for risk transfers. The Project Finance Directions issued recently, address risks arising from regulatory approvals and availability of land," Malhotra said.

The proposed forward-looking ECL provisioning will help early recognition of deterioration in asset quality, he said.

All these measures are balanced and appropriate, built on the bedrock of a banking system that has been systematically fortified over the last decade, with financial stability remaining the unwavering cornerstone of our policy architecture. "All the changes are incremental in nature," he said.

Moreover, no regulatory measure can be understood in isolation, he said. Each measure has to be seen in the continuum of regulatory evolution and not in isolation.

"These proposals must be read against the broader regulatory scaffolding, which mitigates the risks. Together, the regulations create a multi-layered defence, to keep systemic risk in check," the RBI governor added.

'Positive news on Indo-US FTA by November-end'

New Delhi: NITI Aayog CEO BVR Subrahmanyam on Friday expressed confidence that some positive news on India's proposed Bilateral Trade Agreement (BTA) with the US will come out by the end of November. Speaking at an event here, he said: "I think things have been a bit difficult with the United States, and I think a reset is being tried. The trade negotiations are on... Hopefully, by end of the month, we may hear some news on that front," he said. PTI

IN STARTUP'S FIRST PUBLIC APPEARANCE SINCE SUCCESS

DeepSeek researcher pessimistic over AI's impact on jobs

Reuters

Wuzhen, November 7

CHINESE ARTIFICIAL intelligence (AI) developer DeepSeek made its first public appearance in almost a year after it became a global sensation, fielding a senior researcher who told a government-organised internet conference that he was pessimistic about AI's future impact on humanity.

Chen Deli took the stage alongside the chief executives of five other companies including Unitree and BrainCo at the World Internet Conference in the city of Wuzhen, in the eastern province of Zhejiang. The six companies together are known in China as "six little dragons" for AI.

Asked about DeepSeek's global success and how its open-source approach would encourage the progress of AI, Chen said he believed that AI could be a great aid to humans as it improved over the short term, but that it could threaten job losses in 5-10 years as it becomes good enough to take over some of the work humans perform. AI firms needed to be aware of these risks, he said.

"In the next 10-20 years, AI could take over the rest of work (humans perform) and society could face a massive challenge, so at the time tech companies need to take the role of 'defender'," he said.

"I'm extremely positive about the technology but I view the impact it could have on so-



DeepSeek Senior Researcher Victor Chen speaks next to founder and CEO of Game Science Feng Ji during the Six Little Dragons Wuzhen Dialogue, at the World Internet Conference, in China on Friday. REUTERS

ciety negatively."

Since it made global headlines in January after releasing a low-cost AI model that out-

performed leading U.S. models, DeepSeek representatives have only made one public appearance when its founder and CEO

Liang Wenfeng met Chinese President Xi Jinping at a televised meeting with local entrepreneurs in February.

Neither Liang or the company have commented publicly on their success and they have skipped major Chinese technology conferences in the country in the months since.

Since the company's stunning breakout, the Chinese government has positioned DeepSeek as a symbol of the country's technological capabilities and resilience against U.S. sanctions, as the technology rivalry between the two nations intensifies.

While DeepSeek has not released a major model upgrade since January, the company's subsequent announcements

have continued to draw significant attention.

In September, it unveiled an upgrade to its V3 model, which it described as its latest "experimental" version that is more efficient to train and better at processing long sequences of text than previous iterations.

The company has also emerged as a key player in China's efforts to build its own AI ecosystem and advance the domestic chip sector.

Chinese AI chip companies including Cambricon and Huawei have developed hardware compatible with DeepSeek's models. In August, DeepSeek's announcement of an upgraded model optimized for Chinese-made chips prompted a surge in domestic chip stock prices.

● GLOBAL

How Trump's 'G-2' framing for US-China relations could impact allies



SHUBHAJIT ROY

MINUTES BEFORE US President Donald Trump met with Chinese President Xi Jinping last week in South Korea, he said in a post on his website, Truth Social, that "THE G2 WILL BE CONVENING SHORTLY".

While foreign policy analysts have come to expect the unexpected from Trump, this was unusual even within that context. It was, after all, a US President acknowledging China's great power status, treating it as somewhat equal to the US in the global power hierarchy.

Not a new term

"G-2" was first coined in 2005 by economist and author C. Fred Bergsten, then Director of the Peterson Institute for International Economics, in his book *The United States and the World Economy*. He wrote that amid changing power equations, the US needed to focus on cultivating some key bilateral relationships, calling them the "G-2". These included the "European Union (for macroeconomic, monetary, and some other issues), China (inter alia for global growth, exchange rates, and energy), Japan (for trade and to counter China's rise), and Saudi Arabia (for energy)".

It became part of policy debates in the wake of the international financial crisis of 2008. Bergsten later defended the concept, writing in *Foreign Affairs* magazine that it was never meant to replace any other relationships, or groups like the G-20 (which includes India) or institutions like the International Monetary Fund and the World Trade Organisation.

"Its chief purpose is to supplement the existing institutions and make them work better by promoting prior agreement between the two countries whose cooperation has become a sine qua non for making progress on virtually any international economic issue," he wrote.

Bergsten argued that "There will be no sustained recovery from the current global economic crisis unless the United States and China lead it." Similarly, as the largest polluters globally, "There will be no international compact on global warming unless they embrace it".

Top foreign policy and security experts, such as Zbigniew Brzezinski (former US President Jimmy Carter's National Security Advisor) and Niall Ferguson (of the Hoover Institution think tank), joined the chorus. Bergsten noted that at the time, the Barack Obama-led administration and China under Hu Jintao "also seem to be moving in this direction".

KEY POINTS

- The term "G-2" was first used for bilateral ties between the US and its key partners.
- Trump's usage is being read as equating the two countries' power status — something no US President has ever done.

However, nearly two decades later, geopolitical realities have changed dramatically. China is no longer reticent, unlike when "Hide your strength and bide your time" was the motto of a nation beginning the journey towards modernisation.

Changing China

Since 2013, when Xi came to power, China has increasingly asserted itself in various domains, including military muscle-flexing in the Indo-Pacific.

The US, under Trump 1.0 from 2017 to 2021, played a pivotal role in pushing back against China. In fact, it was the Trump administration which framed China as a strategic threat and rival for the first time in 2017, defining China's belligerent actions as a threat to the US and the West-led rules-based global order.

That led to the revival of the Quad grouping — comprising India, Japan, Australia and the US — in November 2017, on the sidelines of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and East Asia leaders' summit in the Philippines. Having experienced Chinese aggression in the South China Sea and the Indo-Pacific firsthand, ASEAN nations were relieved at the US's presence and renewed focus in the region.

G-2 today

The new framing, indicating parity between the countries, has worried US partners about how Washington would now treat them after years of committing to cooperating against Chinese actions, with a potential softening on China. The tariff saga under Trump 2.0 had already cast a shadow on the earlier certainties and assumptions about US policy.

For New Delhi, the strained ties after the US's 50% tariffs on India led to Trump's planned November visit for the Quad leaders' summit being postponed to next year. There is some conversation in diplomatic circles of a new Quad-like grouping, where the Philippines might replace India, especially after a meeting of the four countries' leaders last week. A more optimistic view is that India is a far bigger economy and a leading regional power, which necessitates its inclusion.

There is also a sense of disquiet in Tokyo and Canberra about how far Trump will go with the G-2 engagement. Whether the Trump-Xi bonhomie sours, like in the case of Trump and Russian President Vladimir Putin, is the key question now. For New Delhi and many others, that might be the best-case scenario.

● CLIMATE

'Climate change is driven by human need & greed'



EXPLAINED INTERVIEW

WITH SUNIL AMRITH

THE ASSOCIATION of climate change with industrialisation is well known. What is less understood are the connections between global warming and environmental shifts over the last 500 years. Environmental historian Sunil Amrith, the Renu and Anand Dhawan Professor of History at Yale University, joins the dots in *The Burning Earth*. He spoke to Kaushik Das Gupta about his book, and many things climate change.

What is the central message of your book?

While writing, I often thought of Mahatma Gandhi's statement: "the world has enough for everyone's need but not enough for everyone's greed". To understand how we arrived at this point of the planetary crisis, we need to look at the story of human need as well as of human greed.

Our quest to feed ourselves has been fundamental in transforming the planet. Maldistribution is a particular challenge: the greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions from food waste alone are estimated to amount to more than the emissions of any single country, with the exception of the US and China. Then there is the other side of the story: the pursuit of luxuries by a small elite has had, and still has, a disproportionate role in driving environmental harm.

Could the industrial age have been less antagonistic to the environment?

There were of course paths for the development of industrial technologies that could have been more socially beneficial and less ecologically costly — this might have involved deploying them on a smaller scale, with more local control, less concentration of power.

There is a long-running "what if" here, especially in the Global South: what if industrial technologies had been developed autonomously or circulated more freely, without the distorting effects of the colonial structures?

In what ways were the attitudes of post-colonial regimes, and their scientists similar and dissimilar to that of their colonial forebears?

Post-colonial regimes and their sci-



GETTY IMAGES

tists were far more ambitious than their colonial forebears — they were more morally and technologically ambitious. Many of them were motivated by a genuine sense that technology would help bring about social liberation.

Engineering infrastructure and engineering society were seen as two sides of the same process. The great allure of both the US and the Soviet Union, for post-colonial leaders, was that they were witnessing change on a scale that made European colonial governments in Asia and Africa appear pathetic.

One idea in *The Burning Earth* is that an emphasis on haste was key sensibility that linked many post-colonial societies, including India and China. Despite fundamental differences in ideology and the form of government, their leaders shared a sense that, however fast change was happening, it was not happening fast enough. This opened the way to environmental recklessness.

In some ways, post-colonial societies too missed an opportunity to do things differently. Ramachandra Guha's book, *Speaking with Nature*, begins with an astonishingly prescient speech of Rabindranath Tagore, in 1922, that used a parable of a future race of beings laying waste to a distant planet to describe the irreparable harm humans were doing to Earth. From more sensitive urban planning to innovative methods of water conservation, we have a rich archive of ideas about how to do things differently. That archive is still open to us.

What are the shifts you have noticed in attitudes in academia, and among people, towards climate change?

Within academia, climate change has become an unavoidable question across almost

every discipline, including in the humanities. There is also a growing recognition that it can be understood by bringing together a multiplicity of perspectives — atmospheric chemistry, economics of carbon markets, anthropological work on how communities respond to environmental stress, the work of literary scholars on understanding alternative ways of imagining human relationship with the rest of nature. But the political context, especially in the US, has never been more hostile to climate action.

Why doesn't climate change get the same traction as economic challenges or identity politics?

Climate change is such an abstract and complex process that it can feel disconnected from lived experience. But we could also flip the question and say that, increasingly, identity politics and economic challenges are themselves bound up with the effects of climate change.

The fundamental challenge is one that the literary scholar Rob Nixon identified more than a decade ago in *Slow Violence and the Environmentalism of the Poor*. He said it was important to find new ways to tell stories about climate change and bring visibility to a variety of slow-onset environmental risks. Data alone will not make the emotional connection necessary to shift people's perceptions. The creative arts have an enormous role to play in making the links between climate change and questions of identity.

But the opposite tendency can also be a problem — to attribute everything to climate change. The anthropologist Camelia Dewan has written an important book, *Misreading the Bengal Delta*, about how NGOs in Bangladesh have felt pressure to frame all of their

work in relation to climate change in order to access international funding.

Developing countries often argue that the developed world should take greater responsibility for mitigating global warming. Does such a framing of climate justice let the rich in the Third World off the hook?

Both propositions are true. A big question I have been asking in my work is who gets left out if we frame climate justice entirely in nation-state terms? Where does that leave communities who are exceptionally vulnerable precisely because they have been marginalised in the countries where they live?

Bill Gates has said that we shouldn't worry too much about exceeding the 1.5 degrees Celsius threshold of the Paris Pact, and that technology will sooner or later resolve climate change. Meanwhile, the focus should be on human welfare. Your views.

Even if we reached net zero tomorrow, a significant amount of warming would already be locked in for centuries, even longer. In that sense, climate change is irreversible. But there is a range of possible trajectories in relation to how much and how fast: Strong mitigation measures still have the potential to keep warming within limits that can be adapted to.

The Global Tipping Points report shows how quickly things can escalate if we don't act to slow the pace of environmental destruction. But the report also shows that there are positive "tipping points," including in the affordability and accessibility of clean energy. The questions we must ask are: who will benefit from these technologies? Will it be more than a small minority? Who will control these technologies? Will they be weaponised to create new inequalities?

I agree that the focus should be on human welfare — but one of the key points I make in *The Burning Earth* is that we need to stop thinking of human welfare in isolation from the wellbeing of the ecosystems that sustain our lives.

I have no doubt that technological change will resolve some parts of the problem. But given the complexity of interrelated changes to the Earth system, any technical "fix" on a grand scale risks a cascade of unwanted consequences. My other reason for skepticism is the sheer concentration of power in the tech industry, which raises questions about how democratic, how accessible, and how just any technological "solutions" will be.

We should also think about what we mean by "sooner or later," given the real and escalating impact of climate change on human lives right now.

● GDP: GRAPHS, DATA, PERSPECTIVES

Where states stand on revenue collections, before and after GST

Udit Misra

New Delhi, November 7

EARLIER THIS week, the Central government released data for revenue collected through the Goods and Services Tax (GST) in October.

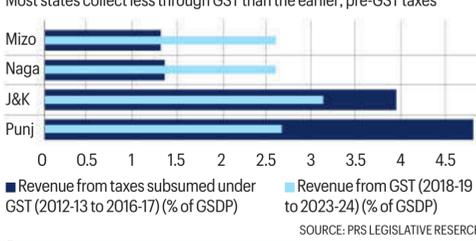
Introduced in 2017, the GST significantly altered India's indirect tax regime. Before 2017, governments imposed several indirect taxes and levies at the Central and state levels, such as the central sales tax and excise duty. The GST replaced all of them.

Monday's release said GST revenue "soared" in October 2025, which also saw festive spending on account of Diwali. A total of Rs 1,95,936 crores flowed into the government coffers last month — an increase of 4.6% over October 2024.

What was more noteworthy, however, was the state-wise distribution. The official release stated: "It is commendable that sev-

● GST revenues to states: A raw deal?

Most states collect less through GST than the earlier, pre-GST taxes



SOURCE: PRS LEGISLATIVE RESEARCH

eral industrial and service-oriented states have reported a significant growth in GST collections compared to October 2024... Maharashtra, Karnataka, Gujarat, Tamil Nadu, and Haryana together contributed

over 40% of the total GST revenue".

Data showed that as many as 20 states and Union Territories actually saw their GST revenues contract in October. In fact, since 2017, many states have complained about GST revenues, especially when compared to the pre-GST system.

A recent analysis of state-level finances by PRS Legislative Research, an independent not-for-profit organisation, shows that total GST revenues continue to be lower than those of the taxes subsumed under GST. "Since its introduction, aggregate revenue from subsumed taxes of the Centre and states has declined from 6.5% of GDP in 2015-16 (in the pre-GST regime) to 5.5% of GDP in 2023-24," it states. It is noteworthy that in 2020-21, the 15th Finance Commission had estimated a GST-to-GDP ratio of 7% over the medium term.

The gap also means that several states are now worse off. "In the four years to 2015-

16, states got an average of 2.8% of GDP from taxes that were later subsumed under GST... The average SGST (state GST) as a percentage of GDP over the seven years of GST (2.6%) has been below the average subsumed taxes in the four full years before GST," PRS finds.

But not all states were affected equally. While most saw their revenues decline, five states saw a rise. The chart alongside shows some of the biggest gains and losses. The northeastern states of Mizoram, Nagaland, Sikkim, Meghalaya and Manipur have seen an improvement in their subsumed tax-to-GSDP (Gross State Domestic Product) ratios as compared to the pre-GST regime. GSDP refers to a state's GDP or economic output. In contrast, Jammu and Kashmir, Punjab, Chhattisgarh, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, and Odisha have witnessed the biggest drop in revenue from the subsumed taxes as a percentage of GSDP.

'O KNOW

SC orders removal of stray dogs from public premises: What are ABC Rules?

THE SUPREME Court on Friday directed the removal of stray dogs from the premises of educational institutions, hospitals, sports complexes, bus stands and railway stations. The court said that these dogs should be shifted "to a designated shelter, after due sterilisation and vaccination in accordance with the Animal Birth Control (ABC) Rules".

The ABC Rules, 2023, were notified under the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act, 1960. They seek to control stray dog populations through sterilisation, and to curb the spread of rabies by vaccinating them.

Note that the Rules use the



Stray dogs roaming in the outer compound of the Supreme Court in New Delhi. AP

expression "community animals" instead of "stray dogs" — recognising that the animals are territorial beings that belong to their local environments.

Rule 20 states that "it shall be responsibility of the Resident Welfare Association or Apartment Owner Association or Local Body's

representative... to make necessary arrangement for feeding of community animals" if someone living in that area feeds or provides care to street animals. The rule also lays down a dispute resolution mechanism involving the chief veterinary officer, representatives of the police, the RWA, and others. ENS

{ LAW }