

WILL COME TO INDIA LATER THIS YEAR TO SET UP VISIT: U.S. SECY OF STATE

Trump could visit India early next year: Rubio

On visa curbs, Gor refers to Modi: 'He talks about no illegal migrants. We 100% agree with that'



US Secy of State Marco Rubio

Divya A

New Delhi, June 27

US PRESIDENT Donald Trump could travel to India early next year, US Secretary of State Marco Rubio said in an interview to news agency IANS in Washington Friday. He added he would himself make another trip to India later this year to set the ground for the President's visit.

Rubio was in India last month for four days for bilateral talks as well as the Quad Foreign Ministers meeting.

If the visit comes through, this will be Trump's first visit to
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Prime Minister Narendra Modi with Seychelles President Patrick Herminie at a ceremony to hand over Fast Patrol Vessel Lespwar to the Seychelles Coast Guard, in Victoria, Saturday. PTI

PM arrives in Seychelles, to mark 50 years of relations, chart future

Three-day visit: 50th independence day of island nation, address to Assembly

Divya A

New Delhi, June 27

PRIME MINISTER Narendra Modi landed in Victoria Saturday to start his three-day state

visit to Seychelles, during which he will hold talks with President Patrick Herminie and attend the golden jubilee celebrations of the archipelago nation's National Day celebra-

tions as Guest of Honour.

At Seychelles International Airport, Modi was welcomed by Herminie and the two leaders drove together to Seychelles' National Botanical Garden. The PM received a ceremonial Guard of Honour, in the presence of Seychelles Cabinet ministers and senior dignitaries.

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Seychelles

"Seychelles is a valued maritime partner and a close friend in the Indian Ocean. Looking forward to a productive visit aimed at further strengthening our longstanding ties and enhancing cooperation for the benefit of the people of our nations," the PM said on X upon landing.

Ahead of his departure from New Delhi, Modi said Seychelles is a valued maritime neighbour and a key partner in the Vision Mahasagar (Mutual and Holistic Advancement for Security and Growth Across Regions) and India's shared commitment to the Global South.

Modi further said that he looks forward to the bilateral discussions aimed at further strengthening the enduring friendship. "Together, we will work to advance the progress of our peoples, and promote secur-

ity and prosperity in the Indian Ocean region," he said.

Later in the day, the PM handed over Fast Patrol Vessel *Lespwar*, ambulances and utility vehicles to the Seychelles Coast Guard. "The transfer of the Fast Patrol Vessel *Lespwar* to the Seychelles Coast Guard marks another important milestone in the growing India-Seychelles partnership in defence and maritime security. It is also the latest in a series of capability-building initiatives that reflect India's steadfast commitment to supporting the security priorities of Seychelles," Modi said in a post on X.

On Sunday evening, PM Modi will participate in the country's 50th national day celebrations as Guest of Honour. When Seychelles attained freedom on June 29, 1976, a contingent from the Indian Naval Ship, *INS Nilgiri*, took part in the Independence Day celebrations. This year as well, an Indian

Armed Forces contingent and two Indian Navy ships are participating in the event.

During the talks between two leaders Sunday, the two sides are expected to review the full spectrum of bilateral cooperation and exchange views on regional and international issues of mutual interest. Modi will also address the National Assembly of Seychelles and interact with members of the Indian diaspora.

PM Modi last visited Seychelles in 2015, while President Herminie visited India earlier this year. "Prime Minister Modi's visit reflects the longstanding friendship and enduring partnership between Seychelles and India, which have enjoyed diplomatic relations since Seychelles attained Independence in 1976," the office of the President of Seychelles said in a statement.

Seychelles is a cornerstone of India's Global South strategy,

serving as a critical maritime partner in the Western Indian Ocean. The island nation also helps India combat seaborne terrorism, piracy, and illegal fishing. Situated close to Africa, Middle East, and Asia, Seychelles serves as a vital counterweight against expanding influence in the Indian Ocean.

Seychelles's recent full membership in the Colombo Security Conclave further strengthens this shared commitment to a stable, secure Indo-Pacific. India is also a security provider in the Indian Ocean.

Around 5 percent of the Seychelles population comprises people of Indian origin (about 6,000); while another 9,000 non-resident Indians work in Seychelles, mostly in the construction sector, as shop assistants and professionals, according to government statistics. A majority of them belong to the Gujarati and the Tamil communities.

Gaganyaan uncrewed test flight may be pushed, likely to impact launch of human space flight

Express News Service
Bengaluru, June 27

THE WAIT for Gaganyaan mission's manned flight may just get a little longer.

The first uncrewed test flight for the Gaganyaan mission — ahead of the proposed maiden Indian human space flight launch — could be pushed back up to the third quarter of 2027, ISRO chairman V Narayanan indicated on Saturday even as he stressed that efforts were on for a launch by the end of 2026.

With this, the launch of Gaganyaan mission's manned flight could be pushed back to 2028, as against 2027-end that the ISRO had indicated earlier this year.

“The Gaganyaan programme is a very important technology intensive mission and human safety is very important. We are already working on this programme for the launch of a human-rated rocket and keeping the people in a safe environment because in case there is any problem with the rocket, we have to save the crew...” the ISRO chairman said.

Delivering the Air Marshal L M Katre Memorial Lecture organised by the Air Force Association in Bengaluru, the ISRO chairman, indicated on a slide in his presentation that the first uncrewed flight for the Gaganyaan mission would be launched in the third quarter of 2027.

Narayanan said the uncrewed mission could happen in 2026 as well.

“We are supposed to do three uncrewed missions: We are working for the first uncrewed mission this year and once we get the results, we will get back to the crewed mission. The Gaganyaan continuation programme has been approved

by the government. Earlier, only the uncrewed missions and one crewed mission were approved,” the ISRO chief said.

Asked about the two differing timelines — one indicated in his presentation and the other during the talk itself — for the first unmanned flight, Narayanan said, “The Gaganyaan programme is undergoing constant review and the first unmanned flight will be launched on the basis of the progress.”

In February, Narayanan had indicated that the first Indian manned mission to space could be launched by end of 2027.

During the talk, the ISRO chairman said Indian scientists played a key role in the safe flight of the Axiom Mission 4 launched in June 2025 on a SpaceX rocket, which took Indian astronaut Shubhanshu Shukla to the ISS in 2025.

“We had a big role in the safe journey... The SpaceX rocket was set to launch (on June 11) and on June 10, we came to know there was a minor leakage problem with the rocket. We discussed the issue and they (American scientists) said it is only a minor problem and that the rocket can take off. It was Indian scientists, including myself and my team, and the director of Human Space Flight Centre D K Singh was also there at the Kennedy Space Centre, who insisted that the launch should be stopped and it was stopped,” he said.

On Operation Sindoor, he said, “In terms of strategic applications during Op Sindoor, I cannot make open statements, but I can say all our satellites worked perfectly well and we did whatever small work we could contribute for Operation Sindoor... In the success of Op Sindoor, we had a key role to play.”

EFFORTS TO SECURE CONCESSION FOR SMALL INDUSTRIES WITH DEVELOPED COUNTRIES DIDN'T WORK

EU carbon tax: Govt to shoulder 90% compliance bill of MSMEs

The impact is likely to be felt the most by the iron and steel sector, where extent of decline in EU imports could be 24%

Ravi Dutta Mishra
New Delhi, June 27

THE CENTRE is working on a scheme to absorb 90% of the compliance cost borne by micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) to help soften the disproportionate impact of the Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM) compliance burden imposed by the European Union. *The Indian Express* has learnt.

India's efforts to secure a concession for its small industries in negotiations with developed countries have not worked, and the industry has been seeking assistance to meet the steep annual compliance costs due to the imposition of the EU's carbon tax since January 1, 2026.

The UK too has plans to impose its version of CBAM from 2027. CBAM is an EU policy designed to put a price on the carbon emitted during the production of carbon-intensive goods that are entering the EU.

Complying with the regulation is seen as a major global challenge, as declarants must track the embedded emissions of their goods, including direct emissions and, for certain sectors such as cement and fertilisers, indirect emissions. Industry sources said that the compliance cost for each

MSME unit to meet the requirement under carbon tax alone is Rs 15 lakh to 20 lakh and that they do not have the wherewithal to report the number of data points sought under the regulation by the EU.

India is the world's second-largest producer of both crude steel and primary aluminium.

Steeper challenge for MSMEs

An Indian exporter is required to submit CBAM certificates that correspond to the total embedded emissions. The regulation becomes a major challenge for MSMEs as the EU says that if exporters are unable to provide actual data, importers must use "default values" provided by the European Commission. The default values for CBAM goods have to be increased by a proportionately designed percentage 'mark-up' in their value.

"These mark-ups are 10% in 2026, 20% in 2027, and 30% from 2028 onwards. Default values, including mark-up, have been determined to ensure that embedded emissions are not underestimated when applying default values," the regulation said.

"For MSMEs, the principal challenge under CBAM is not necessarily the carbon levy



The UK too has plans to impose its version of CBAM from 2027. REUTERS

itself, but the cost of compliance. Unlike large corporations, MSMEs often lack the technical expertise, systems and financial resources to measure, verify and report embedded emissions in accordance with CBAM requirements. They may have to incur significant upfront expenditure on carbon accounting, third-party verification, digital reporting systems and capacity building," Ayush A Mehrotra, Partner, Khaitan & Co said.

"These are largely fixed compliance costs, which means they do not reduce in proportion to the size of the business or export volumes.

"As a result, MSMEs bear a disproportionately higher compliance burden than larger

exporters, potentially eroding their price competitiveness in the EU market. If these costs are not addressed through targeted policy support, smaller exporters may find continued access to the EU market commercially unviable despite having competitive products," Mehrotra said.

CBAM impact on India

Imports from India would decline for all CBAM commodities, and the impact of the CBAM is likely to be felt the most by the iron and steel (I&S) sector, where the extent of the decline in imports by the EU could be about 24%, and the Indian Council for Research on International Economic Rela-

• TAXING CARBON

CARBON BORDER Adjustment Mechanism is an EU policy designed to put a price on the carbon emitted during the production of carbon-intensive goods that are entering the block

COMPLYING WITH the regulation is seen as a major global challenge, as declarants must track the embedded emissions of their goods, including direct emissions and, for certain sectors such as cement and fertilisers, indirect emissions.

COMPLIANCE COST for each MSME unit to meet the requirement under carbon tax is Rs 15 lakh-20 lakh.

tions (ICRIER) working paper released this month. The fertilisers and aluminium products, followed by metal products, are next in line. India's global export of I&S will decline by 5.7%; for China, the corresponding estimate is 1.2%.

This reduction is primarily due to a reduction in exports to the European Union.

The report said that CBAM shall adversely impact India's trade with the EU and will have a negligible effect on carbon emissions, adding that the impact level on carbon emissions is hard to determine and depends on the type of inputs used to produce the finished goods in the sector.

FULL REPORT ON
WWW.INDIANEXPRESS.COM

Ram Temple row: Trust general secretary quits

Trust promises fair investigation into the donation embezzlement case as its general secretary and another member submit resignation; it assures devotees that offerings made by them are safe

Mayank Kumar

LUCKNOW

Amid the uproar over the Ram Temple donation embezzlement case, the Shri Ram Janmabhoomi Teerth Kshetra Trust on Saturday announced that its general secretary Champat Rai and member Anil Mishra had submitted their resignations.

“At its next meeting, the trust will take a decision on their resignations,” Trust treasurer Govind Dev Giri said in a statement on Saturday.

The statement comes a day after the Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP) denied reports of Mr. Rai’s resignation. Mr. Rai is also the vice-president of the VHP.

In its first public statement amid the controver-



The Ram temple Trust general secretary, Champat Rai, and other members are facing criticism over an embezzlement case. FILE PHOTO

sy, the Trust, which administers the Ram Temple in Ayodhya, said it would ensure a fair investigation into the incident. “We are deeply pained, shocked, and extremely saddened by the incidents that have come to light in recent days at the Ram Temple in Ayodhya. As agents of all

Ram devotees and Ram sevak serving the lord, we are committed to ensuring a fair investigation and restoring the confidence of devotees,” the statement added.

Mr. Rai and other Trust members are facing criticism over the donation theft case in which eight

people have been arrested on charges of embezzlement, criminal conspiracy, fraud and breach of trust.

In the statement, the Trust said silver bricks, jewellery, and other offerings that the devotees had personally handed over to its officials are “safe and fully accounted for”.

“As regards the alleged embezzlement of money from the temple’s donation boxes, an FIR has been filed, based on the interim report submitted by the Special Investigation Team. Legal proceedings are under way, truth will come out and the guilty will be punished,” reads the statement.

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DISSOLUTION DEMAND

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Cong. demands dissolution of Ram temple trust over donation 'embezzlement' case

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Congress on Saturday stepped up its attack on the Union government and the Uttar Pradesh government over the alleged embezzlement of donations made to the Ram temple in Ayodhya, questioning Prime Minister Narendra Modi's silence on the issue.

The party reiterated its demand to dissolve the Shri Ram Janmabhoomi Teerth Kshetra Trust.

The Prime Minister owed an explanation to devotees across the country as the Trust had been constituted by the Union government, and its members had been appointed under its watch, senior Congress leader Akhilesh Prasad Singh said, addressing a press conference in New Delhi.

"The entire nation, par-



Congress workers stage a protest against the alleged theft of donations from the Ram Temple, in Kanpur. FILE PHOTO

ticularly those who have faith in Sanatan Dharma, wants to know who stole donations worth thousands of crores of rupees," Mr. Singh said. Despite serious accusations against members of the Trust, no action had been taken against them, he alleged.

The Congress demanded that the Trust be disbanded and all those fac-

ing *prima facie* allegations be arrested to ensure an impartial investigation.

Mr. Singh also called for a probe under the supervision of a sitting judge of the Supreme Court.

Reports of irregularities had surfaced since the temple's construction began, he alleged, referring to the controversy over land acquisitions in Ayod-

hya as well as the alleged diversion of donations.

The internal inquiries commissioned by the Trust into earlier allegations were ignored, he said, questioning the removal of cash-counting agent Mahipal Singh after he reportedly flagged irregularities.

CCTV cameras had been removed and their footage deleted, Mr. Singh alleged.

"The Trust has lost the trust of the people. Daily donations have reportedly fallen from ₹10 lakh-₹15 lakh to about ₹8,00,000 following reports of the alleged theft," he said.

Speaking to journalists in Kerala's Wayanad, Congress general secretary and Lok Sabha member Priyanka Gandhi Vadra described the allegations as "tragic" and "shameful".

"People from all over the country, those who believe and those who have

faith, gave donations, and now those donations have been stolen. It is tragic, it is shameful, and the government needs to inquire into what has happened, how it has happened, and why it has happened," she said.

"Women gave from their savings, poor people contributed from their homes. These are not just funds from big corporates; they were collected from ordinary citizens. If you collected them, it is your responsibility to keep them safe," she said.

The Congress also accused the government of applying different standards, alleging that while Opposition leaders were subjected to investigations by Central agencies on "minor suspicions", no comparable action had been taken against those facing allegations in the Ram temple donation case.

Two BJP-ruled States question VB-G RAM G financial burden

Sobhana K. Nair


NEW DELHI

At least three States, two of them with BJP-led governments, have raised concerns over the increased financial burden on them under the new rural employment programme, the **Viksit Bharat-Guarantee for Rozgar and Aajeevika Mission (Gramin) (VB-G RAM G)**, which comes into effect on July 1.

Under the scheme, a majority of the States have to bear 40% of the total expenditure, in contrast to its predecessor legislation,

Budget concern

States are required to bear **40% of the total expenditure** under the VB-G RAM G scheme

	Current share*	For 125 days of work
Bihar	₹4,477 cr.	₹15,939 cr.
M.P.	₹4,168 cr.	₹20,037 cr.
Jharkhand	₹1,804 cr.	₹9,293 cr.

The new scheme is set to come into effect on July 1

*As per interim fund allocation

the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA). Under MGNREGA, the Centre bore 100% of the

wage bill and the States had to pay only a part of the material bill, which accounted for only 10% of the total budget.

As per a Right to Information reply, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh – both ruled by the BJP – and Jharkhand have explicitly asked for a reconsideration of the funding pattern with analysis showing that the 40% share of interim allocation under the scheme will be inadequate to keep the promise of 125 work days.

STATES SEEK REVIEW

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States seek review of wages, funding pattern for new rural job scheme

Four States objected to the scheme's blackout period during peak agricultural season; Jharkhand and Punjab demanded wages in line with market conditions, shows Centre's response to RTI plea seeking records of consultations on VB-G RAM G

Sobhana K. Nair

NEW DELHI

With the Viksit Bharat-Guarantee for Rozgar and Aajeevika Mission (Gramin) (VB-G RAM G) for rural employment set to come into effect on July 1, at least five States have sought a revision of wage rates and four had flagged reservations over the provision of 60 non-working days during the peak agricultural season. Three States, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh – both ruled by the BJP – and Jharkhand have explicitly asked for a reconsideration of the proposed change in the funding pattern.

The Union Rural Development Ministry shared this information on a Right to Information (RTI) application filed by Chakradhar Buddha of the National Campaign for People's Right to Information (NCPRI). Mr. Buddha had asked for records relating to meetings and consultations organised by the Union Government with the States regarding VB-G RAM G and the transition from the preceding Mahatma



Cause for concern: At least five States sought a revision of wage rates and four flagged reservations over the provision of 60 non-working days during the peak agricultural season. ARUN KULKARNI

Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) to the new scheme.

In its reply, the government shared responses of only 13 States. Of them, almost all States had pointed to delays in wage and related payments, seeking early clearance of dues.

As per the interim allocation made under VB-G RAM G, Bihar will have to pay ₹4,477 crore. As per an analysis done by NREGA Sangharsh Morcha, this

amount is inadequate to keep the government's promise of providing 125 days of work. The analysis estimates that Bihar would have to pay ₹15,939 crore to achieve this goal. Similarly, in the case of Madhya Pradesh, the burden on the State is ₹4,168 crore, which would suffice only to provide 43 days of work. For 125 days, the financial liability on the State will be ₹20,037 crore. Jharkhand, to meet the 40% share, will have to shell out ₹1,804

crore as per the current allocation, which only suffices for 41 days. It will have to pay ₹9,293 crore to meet the 125-day commitment. Unlike Bihar and Madhya Pradesh, the two BJP-ruled States, Jharkhand explicitly said during the post-legislative consultation that bearing the 40% share will be difficult for the State.

Even States such as Sikkim and Uttarakhand, which fall under the 90:10 Centre-State sharing pattern [applicable to the

northeastern and Himalayan States], had sought a review of the clause. Uttarakhand, citing its terrain-related challenges, argued that the Centre should continue bearing 100% of the wage bill.

Of the 13 States, five demanded a hike in the wages of workers. MGNREGA wages were far below the market rate. Bihar sought a hike in the wages from the present ₹255 to ₹413, while Jammu & Kashmir sought an increase in the wages from ₹272 to ₹311. Both Jharkhand and Punjab argued that the wages should be competitive and in line with market conditions.

Blackout period

At least four of the 13 States objected to the scheme's 60-day blackout period, proposed during the peak agricultural season. The government had hailed this break as an important step to make labour easily available, while activists had criticised it, saying it will reduce the workers' bargaining power. Among the States critical of this clause was Punjab, which is heavily dependent on agriculture.

Manipur Naga body seeks PM's help in ending 'proxy war' by armed Kuki outfits

United Naga Council says such actions threaten frontier security of India, violate August 2015 Framework Agreement; it highlights 'rapidly deteriorating situation', calls for political intervention

The Hindu Bureau
GUWAHATI

The United Naga Council (UNC), the apex body of 21 Naga tribes in Manipur, has demanded Prime Minister Narendra Modi's immediate intervention in the "rapidly deteriorating situation" in the north-eastern State, especially in the Naga-inhabited areas.

Leaders of the UNC told journalists in New Delhi on Saturday that the council, along with the Naga Women's Union and the All Naga Students' Association, Manipur, had submitted a memorandum to the Prime Minister seeking action against what they described as a "proxy war" by armed Kuki groups against the Nagas.

Naga leaders Ng Lorho, Vareiyo Shatsang, Samson Remei, A.C. Thotso, K.S. Paul Leo and L. Adani addressed the press conference.

They said the memoran-



The United Naga Council leaders demanded a court-monitored probe into the abduction and killing of the six Naga civilians. PTI

dum called for a crackdown on Kuki extremist groups, which signed the Suspension of Operations agreements with the Centre in 2008, for waging the proxy war against the Nagas. This, they insisted, was a violation of the Framework Agreement of August 2015 (signed between the Centre and the National Socialist Council of Nagalim) and a serious threat to India's frontier security.

The UNC specifically referred to the armed Kuki National Front-Presidential faction and described the

Kuki National Army (Burma) as an "eternal aggressor" in Naga-inhabited areas along the India-Myanmar border.

The council added that its delegation has been meeting political leaders, civil society groups, women's organisations, peace workers and concerned citizens in Delhi to present the position of Manipur's Naga people and to seek immediate constitutional and political intervention.

They said the Nagas had been drawn into the recent cycle of violence in a State

yet to recover from the Kuki-Meitei conflict that erupted in May 2023.

'Deeper conspiracy'

"The threat to the Nagas and their land reflected a deeper conspiracy against the Naga people and their commitment to peace," the UNC stated in a release, underlining the "erosion of public trust" in the ability of the State and Union governments to protect life and civil order in Manipur.

The UNC also said that the Nagas had expected six members of their community to be released by their Kuki abductors after the UNC and the Naga People's Organisation facilitated the release of 14 Kuki hostages on June 9.

"Instead, on 10 June, the six Naga civilians were recovered as lifeless... remains," it said, demanding a time-bound, independent and court-monitored probe into the abduction and killing of the six Naga civilians.

Which document proves Indian citizenship?

Why is the Indian passport not considered a conclusive proof of Indian citizenship? What purpose does Aadhaar serve? Does presence on the electoral rolls or possession of an Electoral Photo Identity Card determine citizenship? What happens in case of a dispute?

**Rizmi Lia M.
Priscilla Jebaraj**

The story so far:

The Indian passport is not a “document of citizenship,” a senior official of the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said in response to a query from *The Hindu* this week. So, if a passport is not proof of citizenship, what is?

Is it a new development that a passport cannot be used as a document to prove Indian citizenship?

A passport by itself is not conclusive proof of Indian citizenship, and this is not a new development or announcement. Last week, the senior MEA official was responding to a question from *The Hindu* on whether the Indian passport can be used to challenge exclusion from the voters’ list through the special intensive revision (SIR) of electoral rolls that is currently underway in 16 States. The official said: “The passport is a travel document, not a document of citizenship, and theoretically speaking, that distinguishes the passport from other documents. Even though while travelling abroad, the passport attests to your nationality, it is not a document of citizenship.”

This stance is based on existing law. The government’s Passport Manual says that “a passport provides evidence of the holder’s nationality, but this is placed in the same category as any other evidence of the citizenship status of an individual”. In other words, a passport is strong evidence that its holder is an Indian citizen. However, in law, it is not treated as conclusive proof of citizenship. If a person’s citizenship is disputed, courts may examine it alongside other relevant evidence.

According to *Maneka Gandhi v Union Of India* (1978), issuance of passport is based on conclusive proof that the holder is an Indian

India does not prescribe one universal citizenship document. An effort to create such a document through the National Register of Citizens became politically contentious

national, and is “entitled by virtue of their Indian nationality and passports to the protection of the Indian Republic and assistance of its Diplomatic Missions abroad.”

Under Section 6(2)(a) of the Passports Act, 1967, the authorities can refuse a passport if the applicant is not a citizen of India. But under Section 20 of the Act, the Union government may issue a passport or travel document to a person who is not a citizen of India if it thinks that it is necessary to do so in public interest.

The MEA’s response distinguishes between evidence of citizenship and conclusive proof of citizenship. While citizenship is determined under the Citizenship Act, 1955, and passports are issued under the Passports Act, 1967, the existence of a passport cannot by itself be called a conclusive or definitive proof of citizenship in a dispute.

Can the Aadhaar card be used to prove Indian citizenship?

When the Aadhaar was introduced one and a half decades ago, it was promoted as a one-stop digital identification document which could replace the many documents that Indians had to furnish to avail themselves of benefits from multiple government schemes. However, from the beginning, the Unique Identification Authority of India has emphasised that Aadhaar can only be treated as proof of identity and address, not of citizenship. In fact, non-Indian citizens who are legally resident in India are eligible to get an Aadhaar, and often require the identity card to avail themselves of many basic services, from banking to cooking gas.

In its judgment of May 27 this year, when the Supreme Court upheld the constitutional validity of the SIR, it held that an Aadhaar card does not constitute proof of citizenship and, therefore, cannot be relied upon for that purpose. However, it is among the documents which may be produced for the limited purpose of establishing the identity of a person, it said.

Does a voter ID prove Indian citizenship?

Only Indian citizens are eligible to vote in Indian elections, but one’s presence on the electoral rolls or possession of an Electoral Photo Identity Card does not determine citizenship or conclusively prove it.

In the case of *Lal Babu Hussein v. Electoral Registration Officer* (1995), the Supreme Court unequivocally held that electors whose names appear on electoral roll are entitled to a presumption of citizenship, and that this presumption cannot be displaced except by following the procedure prescribed by law.

However, in this year’s SIR judgment, the Court emphasised that the Election Commission’s role is confined to determining

eligibility for electoral rolls. It cannot adjudicate citizenship, and the citizenship of an individual under the Citizenship Act will not cease on account of their ineligibility to register in the electoral rolls, pursuant to the SIR.

In fact, the passport was one of the 11 ‘indicative’ documents listed by the Election Commission as proof of citizenship. Some voters purged from the draft SIR in Uttar Pradesh, for instance, used their passports to prove that they are citizens of India and should be included in the final electoral roll. However, there have been reported cases of people in West Bengal who hold Indian passports, but who were still deleted from the draft electoral lists during the SIR.

So what document proves citizenship?

While responding to a question in the Lok Sabha on August 12, 2025, the Home Ministry did not specify the “categories of valid documents” required for people to prove citizenship in India. “The citizenship of India is governed under the provisions of the Citizenship Act, 1955, and rules made thereunder,” the Minister of State for Home, Nityanand Rai, said in a written reply.

Under the Citizenship Act, citizenship can be acquired by birth, by descent, by registration, by naturalisation and by incorporation of territory.

Citizenship certificates are generally issued to people who acquired citizenship by registration or naturalisation, and can act as a conclusive proof document. The majority of Indians, however, are citizens by birth or descent, and do not have a citizenship certificate. Instead, they rely on different evidence that prove their date of birth, place of birth, or their parentage, depending on the context of the dispute.

Anyone born in India between January 26, 1950 and July 1, 1987 is a citizen by birth, irrespective of their parents’ nationality. Such people would have to produce documents proving their place and date of birth to establish their citizenship. Given that mandatory birth certificates were not issued in this period, many people use a combination of other documents, including educational certificates and Aadhaar.

For those born between July 1, 1987 and December 3, 2004, proof of their own place and date of birth is insufficient as they must also prove that at least one parent was an Indian citizen. For those born on or after December 3, 2004, one parent must be an Indian citizen while the other should not be an illegal migrant, complicating the documentary proof required.

India does not prescribe one universal citizenship document. An effort to create such a document through the National Register of Citizens became politically contentious amid fears of a nationwide verification exercise that could exclude many due to incomplete documents. As former Foreign Secretary Nirupama Rao said in a post last week, the lesson is that “India needs stronger and more comprehensive civil registration, universal birth registration and reliable archival records so that citizenship can never become hostage to missing or inconsistent paperwork.”



An Indian passport. GETTY IMAGES

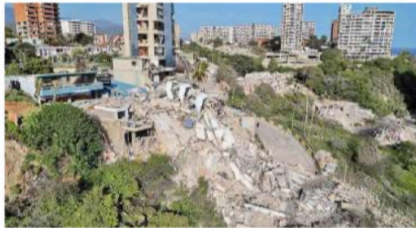
Desperation mounts in Venezuela as toll in twin earthquakes rises to 1,430

Associated Press

LA GUAIRA

Tensions flared on Saturday as desperation grew among anguished residents of the Venezuelan state of La Guaira, where rescuers and civilians searched for earthquake survivors amid a sharply rising death toll.

Venezuela's government said the number of people killed rose to 1,430 on Saturday morning and families reported at least 68,900 people missing, three days after the one-two punch of 7.2 and 7.5



Collapsed buildings in Catia La Mar, in La Guaira state, Venezuela, on Saturday, following earthquakes that struck the region. AFP

magnitude earthquakes that devastated the South American nation.

Most of those digging were civilians who took

search efforts into their own hands, and tensions peaked over inadequate response from the Venezuelan government, whose

soldiers, firefighters, police and military cadets were evidently underprepared to respond to the tragedy.

Acting President Delcy Rodríguez said on state television on Saturday that more than 14,000 members of the military and police are patrolling the area, where access is now blocked and special permits are required to enter.

Meanwhile, the United Nations estimated that close to seven million people in the country may have been affected by the twin earthquakes that struck the nation.

Seoul says Chinese military planes enter its air defence zone

Agence France-Presse

SEOUL

South Korea said it had sent up fighter jets as a precaution after more than 10 Chinese and Russian military aircraft entered its air defence zone on Saturday.

The Joint Chiefs of Staff in Seoul said the Chinese and Russian aircraft had entered and then left the Korea Air Defence Identification Zone (KADIZ) over the East Sea and the South Sea.

"South Korea's military

detected the Chinese and Russian aircraft before they entered the zone and deployed Air Force fighter jets to prepare for any contingency," it said in a statement, without giving more details.

The Chinese and Russian aircraft did not violate South Korean airspace, it said.

An air defence identification zone is not sovereign airspace but a buffer area where countries identify approaching aircraft for security purposes.

WILL MEET VIOLENCE WITH VIOLENCE: VANCE

Truce strained: Ship hit in Hormuz as US, Iran trade strikes

Bahrain, hosting US Navy's regional HQs, struck by Iranian drone

Jana Choukeir & Eman Abouhassira
Dubai, June 27

A TANKER reported being struck by a projectile in the Strait of Hormuz Saturday, Britain's maritime security agency said, after the US and Iran each launched strikes in the worst escalation since they signed their interim peace deal.

Washington said it hit Iranian targets overnight, while Iran said it had struck targets linked to US forces Saturday in response. Saturday's attack on a tanker in the strait followed an attack on a cargo ship Thursday that triggered the escalation. Iran has made a fresh bid to assert control over Strait.

US Vice President JD Vance said Iran was to blame for any return to conflict that might result from its actions. "Iran signed a ceasefire agreement. We have honored it. If they have disagreements about how the MOU is being applied, they can pick up the phone. But violence will be met with violence," he said on X.

Britain's UKMTO reported crew on the tanker were safe.

Iranian state television reported that the Revolutionary Guards had fired "warning shots" towards unspecified ships attempting to pass through channels not approved by Iran, and that this was now prompting other ships to seek Iranian permits before attempting to cross the strait.

Earlier, Iran's foreign ministry said it had launched "defensive" attacks on US-linked military targets, while Bahrain, which hosts the US Navy's regional headquarters, reported an Iranian drone attack. Bahrain said Iran's latest attacks violated the MoU. **REUTERS**



A security wall in northern Israel on Lebanon border. Deal calls for Israel to initially withdraw from two small areas or pilot zones. AP

Humiliation, won't give up arms: Hezbollah rejects Israel-Lebanon agreement

Bassem Mroue & Shlomo Mor
Beirut, June 27

HEZBOLLAH'S LEADER on Saturday criticised a framework agreement that Israel and Lebanon signed a day earlier in Washington to end months of conflict between the militant group and Israel. The deal was signed without Hezbollah. The agreement links Israel's withdrawal from Lebanon to the Iran-backed militant group's disarmament, something Hezbollah rejects.

In a statement Saturday, Hezbollah leader Naim Kasseem said his group will keep fighting until Israel is forced to leave Lebanon. The group's supporters protested in Beirut after the agreement's announcement.

From Hezbollah's point of view, the deal is nonexistent, Kasseem said Saturday, calling the agreement a "humiliation," adding that linking Israel's withdrawal to Hezbollah's disarmament as a "very dangerous suggestion."

The deal prompted one of Hezbollah's officials, Hassan Fadlallah, to warn it could result in civil war because Hezbollah won't give up its weapons and will resist any measures by Lebanese army.

Details of the deal that the US State Department released Saturday state that Lebanon and Israel aim to eventually end the state of war that began when Israel was created in 1948. The deal says Israel will withdraw from Lebanon provided Hezbollah disarms.

It calls for Israel to initially withdraw from two small areas — called pilot zones, but didn't say where those two initial zones will be. The Lebanese army will gradually assume full security over those areas. The two countries will agree to future pilot zones for Israel's withdrawal, the agreement says.

The deal has a security annex that includes the details of deployment of the Lebanese army and redeployments of Israeli troops. The security annex was not made public.

As part of the deal, Israel stresses that the disarmament of Hezbollah and additional security measures to be agreed upon between the two countries will eliminate any future need for Israeli army's military action or presence in Lebanon. Judge Ahmed Rami al-Hajj, Lebanon's top public prosecutor, Saturday told heads of country's security agencies to take measures to prevent riots. AP

Iran says U.S. violated peace deal as both sides trade fire

Agence France-Presse

TEHRAN

Iran on Saturday accused the U.S. of violating their deal to end the war, after Washington launched strikes on Iranian territory and Tehran responded with attacks on U.S. targets in the Gulf.

The trading of fire, which came after Washington accused Tehran of attacking a cargo ship in the Strait of Hormuz, raised doubts about efforts to keep the crucial waterway open while both sides negotiate a final deal.

U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM) said the latest American strikes, which targeted Iranian missile and drone storage sites and coastal radar positions, were a response to “unwarranted aggression against commercial shipping by Iranian forces” that “clearly violated the cease-fire”. It described the latest strikes as “a powerful response” to the “attack on a



Vessels seen in the Strait of Hormuz near Bandar Abbas in Iran following the signing of the deal with U.S. to end the war. REUTERS

commercial ship that was transiting the Strait of Hormuz”. “Violence will be met with violence” if Iran carries out any further attacks, U.S. Vice-President J.D. Vance said.

Iran said “these brutal attacks... are a blatant violation” of the deal to end the war, which began with U.S.-Israeli strikes on Iran in late February. Its Revolutionary Guards said they had struck U.S. sites in the Gulf region and that “if the aggression is repeated, our response will be broader”.

Bahrain said it was tar-

geted by several Iranian drones early on Saturday and accused Tehran of “sabotaging peace efforts”.

On the U.S. strikes, Iranian media reported an explosion at a pier in the southern city of Sirik late on Friday. It quoted a military source saying a “projectile impact” caused the blast. “Sirik Port is operating normally,” Mehr news agency later said.

A SHIPWRECKED HEGEMON

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‘GRAVE BLUNDER’

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Hezbollah calls U.S.-Israel-Lebanon deal 'grave blunder', deems it void

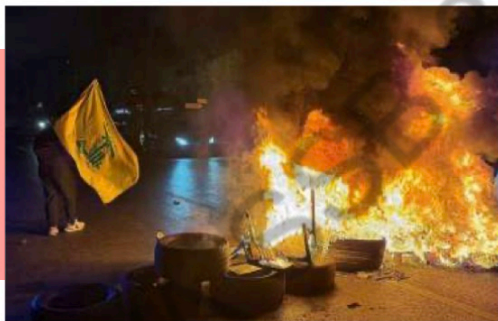
Naim Qassem condemns the trilateral framework agreement as 'humiliating' and a 'surrender of sovereignty'; the deal includes a pilot plan where Lebanese soldiers take control of two Israel-occupied areas, and a process to disarm Hezbollah

Agence France-Presse
BEIRUT

Hezbollah leader Naim Qassem condemned the U.S.-Israel-Lebanon framework agreement on Saturday, saying it is a major mistake by the government and that his group deems it null and void.

The agreement – which includes a pilot effort in which Lebanese soldiers take control of two areas currently occupied by Israel, as well as a process aimed at disarming Hezbollah – was signed in Washington on Friday after five rounds of talks.

“The framework agreement in Washington is hu-



Hezbollah supporters block the old airport road during a protest against the trilateral agreement, in Beirut on Saturday. AFP

milating, shameful, and a surrender of sovereignty. This agreement is null and void, and the provisions of the Iranian-American memorandum of understanding must be imple-

mented,” Mr. Qassem said in a statement, referring to the deal to end the broader West Asia war, which includes a ceasefire in Lebanon.

Mr. Qassem called on

the government to withdraw from “its sins that are ruining Lebanon”.

He accused Lebanese authorities of committing a “grave blunder” and “legitimising the continuation of the [Israeli] occupation for many years,” which “may even lead to the annexation of these lands”.

Hezbollah strongly rejects direct negotiations between Lebanon and Israel, which have been ongoing since April.

Meanwhile, Hezbollah supporters took to the streets of Beirut late Friday to protest the agreement between Israel and Lebanon, as a lawmaker from the Iran-backed group warned enforcing the deal

risked sparking civil war.

The state-run *National News Agency* reported that “Hezbollah supporters rode motorbikes through the streets of Beirut” including central areas and along a road leading to the airport “in protest at the framework agreement announced between Lebanon and Israel”.

Lebanese “authorities will be unable to impose the implementation of the agreement signed in Washington unless they go, with American support, to civil war,” Hezbollah lawmaker Hassan Fadlallah said.

Later, the Lebanese military vowed to maintain public order, urging citizens “to act responsibly”.