

Air Force veteran appointed first Ram Temple Trust CEO

Air Vice-Marshal Jitendra Mishra (retd) served in IAF for 31 years; Mahesh Bhagchandka, Madan Mohan Pandey, Nirmala Yadav named trustees; move comes amid allegation of donation theft

Ishita Mishra

NEW DELHI

The Shri Ram Janmabhoomi Teerth Kshetra Trust on Wednesday appointed Air Vice-Marshal Jitendra Mishra (retd) as its first chief executive officer.

The appointment came at a time when the Trust is strengthening its administrative structure amid allegations of theft of donations at the Ram Temple in Ayodhya.

The appointment was announced after a meeting of the Trust at the Maniram Das Chawani in Ayodhya, where the trustees also filled three vacant positions on the Board.

The vacancies arose following the resignations of senior Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP) leader and general secretary Champat Rai, and trustee Anil Mishra. They quit in July after the embezzlement allegations surfaced.

The third vacancy arose after the death of trustee Vimlendra Pratap Mishra, a member of Ayodhya's erstwhile royal family.

According to a commu-



Air Vice-Marshal Jitendra Mishra (retd) was awarded the Sarvottam Yudh Seva Medal and was also a part of Operation Sindoor. PTI

nique issued by the Trust, Air Vice-Marshal Mishra was appointed following the recommendations of a committee constituted to select the CEO.

The process involved scrutinising about 5,585 applications, and interviewing hundreds of candidates over a period of nearly two months.

Air Vice-Marshal Mishra served in the Indian Air Force for 31 years, holding positions across different departments and gaining extensive leadership experience, the Trust said.

It added that the new CEO was also awarded the Sarvottam Yudh Seva Me-

dal, one of the highest military decorations for distinguished service in wartime. He was also part of Operation Sindoor.

'Unaware of selection'

He had not been aware of his selection prior to the announcement made to the media on Wednesday, Air Vice-Marshal Mishra told *The Hindu*.

"I also got to know about my selection through television. I am elated," he said.

The trustees also appointed three new members – Mahesh Bhagchandka, Madan Mohan Pandey, and Nirmala Yadav – to fill

the vacant positions. Mr. Bhagchandka is associated with Ashok Singhla Foundation, while Mr. Pandey is an advocate.

Ms. Yadav will be the first woman to hold a trusteeship in the Trust.

Swami Govind Dev Giri will continue as the Trust's general secretary, while Mr. Bhagchandka will take charge as treasurer. The Trust's annual accounts for 2025-26 have also been approved.

Financial details

The Trust recorded a total income of about ₹237 crore, and expenditure of about ₹99 crore during the financial year. It also incurred about ₹425 crore in capital expenditure on construction and related works. As of March 31, the Trust had total funds of about ₹1,882 crore.

The VHP hailed the appointment of the CEO. VHP president Alok Kumar described Air Vice-Marshal Mishra as a senior and respected personality, adding that his extensive experience would help the Trust function more effectively and transparently.

SC orders oversight of Bar Council's policy decisions

Manan Kumar Mishra is only 'pro tem' chief of the lawyers' body, says the top court; it directs the council to consult Attorney-General, Solicitor-General for all major decisions until fresh elections

Krishnadas Rajagopal
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Wednesday made it clear that senior advocate Manan Kumar Mishra is serving only as the "pro tem" chairperson of the Bar Council of India (BCI) until fresh elections are held and directed the apex lawyers' body to consult the Attorney-General and the Solicitor-General before taking any major policy decisions in the interim.

The hearing before a three-judge Bench headed by Chief Justice of India Surya Kant saw petitioners, including young lawyers, raise allegations, including the formation of the BCI Pearl First Trust in 2020 in which Mr. Mishra, also a BJP Rajya Sabha member,

Under scrutiny

The BCI chief, Manan Kumar Mishra, recently earned public ire with an attempt to ban the enrolment of NALSAR graduates

Allegations raised by petitioners in SC:

- Extension of the tenure of the BCI chairperson and vice-chairperson to five years
- Formation of the BCI Pearl First Trust in which Mr. Mishra and other BCI office-bearers are 'permanent managing trustees'
- A tie-up between the Trust and the Goa government to set up a university on 56 acres of land in the State
- 'Jolting' expenditures on felicitations 'running into crores'



and other BCI office-bearers are "permanent managing trustees"; a 'tie-up' between the Trust and the Goa government to set up a university on 56 acres of land in the State; "jolting" expenditures on felicitations "running into crores"; and an extension

of the tenure of BCI chairperson/vice-chairperson to five years.

Justice Joymalya Bagchi, part of the Bench, said the top court did not want to encourage "shadow-boxing" around these allegations, but would certainly intervene to "maintain the

institutional integrity and credibility" of the BCI till the next bar body elections.

Meanwhile, Mr. Mishra and the current office-bearers would continue pro tem to ensure the BCI's day-to-day functioning.

"You are a pro tem chairperson. Your term is co-terminus with the elections. The Attorney-General and the Solicitor-General, as permanent ex-officio members of the BCI, would be given prior notice by you and invited to participate in any decision-making process having a policy impact... After all, the Attorney-General is as much a member of the BCI as the chairperson is," Justice Bagchi observed.

CONTINUED ON
» PAGE 10

Private players seek 'green energy' status for N-power to raise funds

Pratyush Deep

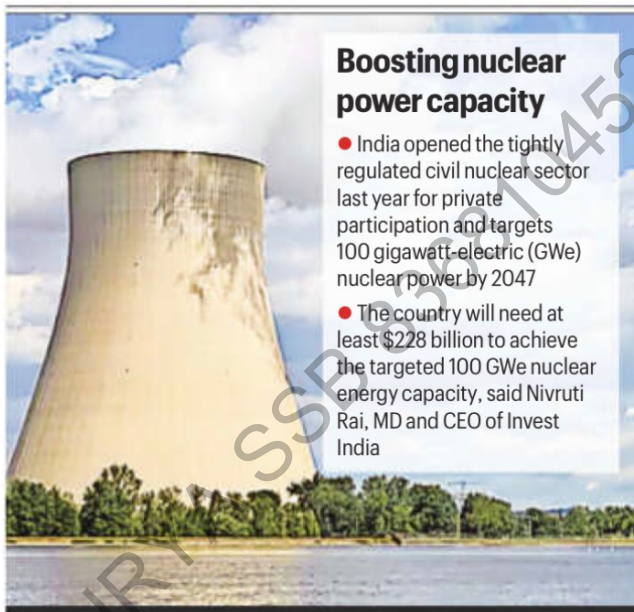
New Delhi, September 2

PRIVATE PLAYERS are seeking green energy status for nuclear power to enable access to green bonds, green loans and blended financing for nuclear projects.

During a recent stakeholder consultation by NITI Aayog, they sought review of existing green finance frameworks, including the Ministry of Finance's Sovereign Green Bond Framework, the RBI's framework for acceptance of green deposits and SEBI's framework for green debt securities.

"Currently for example Ministry of Finance sovereign green bond framework does not include the nuclear energy and there was a suggestion from many of the industry participants to review these frameworks.....whether it is the Ministry of Finance sovereign green energy bond framework or RBI's framework for acceptance of green deposits or even SEBI's green debt securities framework.

"So I think there is a need for review of these frameworks to allow access to green bonds and green loans and blended financing schemes," Abhay Karandikar, member NITI Aayog said during the inaugural



Boosting nuclear power capacity

- India opened the tightly regulated civil nuclear sector last year for private participation and targets 100 gigawatt-electric (GWe) nuclear power by 2047
- The country will need at least \$228 billion to achieve the targeted 100 GWe nuclear energy capacity, said Nivruti Rai, MD and CEO of Invest India

session of POWERGEN India's Nuclear X event.

"The world over ... I think even including the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank are reviewing these restrictions on the nuclear investments and similar things perhaps I think may be needed," he added.

During the consultation, the private players also suggested that nuclear power projects be accorded infrastructure status, he said, while adding that in

NITI Aayog's view nuclear power is already covered under the infrastructure framework, as the Harmonised Master List of Infrastructure Sub-sectors maintained by the Department of Economic Affairs includes electricity generation. "Perhaps a clarification in this regard may be needed," he added.

Around 150 participants from 60 organisations took part in the NITI Aayog's consultation. India opened the tightly regulated civil nuclear sector

last year for private participation and targets 100 gigawatt-electric (GWe) nuclear power by 2047. Nivruti Rai, MD and CEO of Invest India, said India will require at least \$228 billion in investment to achieve the target 100 GWe nuclear energy capacity.

Final SHANTI rules to be ready in 2-3 months

Speaking at the event, Ghanashyam Prasad, Chairperson of the Central Electricity Authority (CEA), said the final rules under the SHANTI Act are likely to be ready in the next two to three months, with stakeholder consultations on the draft rules currently underway.

He also stressed the need to reduce the gestation period of nuclear power projects in India. Prasad said site selection would be another major challenge as India scales up its nuclear capacity. "A lot of efforts are supposed to be made in identification of sites. We are all working with the states. Teams are there, site selection committees are there," he said. On nuclear fuel, Prasad stressed the need to develop thorium-based technologies to strengthen India's long-term energy security.

FULL REPORT ON

WWW.INDIANEXPRESS.COM

Nepal PM thanks India for aid after minister's 'compensation' claim

India sends fifth instalment of 5-tonne relief material to Nepal

Divya A
New Delhi, September 2

INDIA ON Wednesday dispatched the fifth tranche of over 5 tonnes of essential medicines to flood-ravaged Nepal, alongside an 11-member rescue team. Nepalese Prime Minister Balen Shah thanked India for rapid assistance, also stating in Parliament that around 4,000 people remain missing a week after flash floods struck Rasuwa district. PM Shah's statement comes after Nepal Foreign Minister Shisir Khanal had said that Nepal should not view post-disaster assistance simply as charity, but as an issue of "justice and compensation".

"The fifth Indian aircraft has departed for Nepal. It is carrying an 11-member rescue team with specialised equipment, and 5.5 tonnes of essential medicines," External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar said in a post on X on Wednesday morning.

India has already delivered 68.5 tonnes of relief materials to Nepal, along with a team of doctors and paramedics, a technical



India has already delivered 68.5 tonnes of relief materials to Nepal, along with a team of doctors and paramedics. X/DRAJSHANKAR

contingent and equipment for search and rescue operations.

The first tranche of relief material was sent by India hours after Prime Minister Narendra Modi spoke to Shah on August 26, the day flash floods struck the Himalayan nation. The floods

have damaged 35 motorable bridges, 45 suspension bridges, and 40 km of black-topped roads, mainly in central Nepal, according to local authorities.

In a statement in Parliament on the flood situation on Wednesday, Balen Shah formally

thanked India and China for their rapid emergency assistance, highlighting the role of both neighbours in the ongoing rescue and relief operation.

However, his acknowledgement comes after Nepal's Foreign Affairs Minister Shisir Khanal called for a shift from conventional humanitarian aid towards "climate compensation" from major emitters, including India, China and the US.

Indian teams have been involved in efforts around hydropower tunnels and in forensic work linked to the large number of casualties and search for the missing. Shah said as many as 11,993 people have been rescued so far, while 3,916 people are still missing.

In an interview with a Nepalese media outlet, Khanal argued that Nepal's contribution to global greenhouse gas emissions is negligible but the country faces severe consequences from a changing Himalayan environment. He has said Nepal should not view post-disaster assistance simply as charity, but as an issue of "justice and compensation".

"We are shifting our diplomatic framework from 'aid to justice and compensation'. This is not a matter of charity; it is a matter of legal and moral liability," the Foreign Minister was cited as saying by Nepali media.

In the interview, Khanal said India, China, and the US have a "historical responsibility to compensate vulnerable nations like Nepal".

India to help rebuild Trishuli school

India will rebuild the school that was washed away in Bidur town of Nepal. The principal of the school had evacuated around 900 students to a higher area minutes before the raging currents obliterated the campus. On Tuesday, India's Ambassador to Nepal, Naveen Srivastava, met with Rajendra Dawadi, the principal of Tribhuvan Trishuli Secondary School in Bidur, Nuwakot.

During the meeting, Srivastava conveyed that India will support the complete reconstruction of the school. Originally established in the 1950s with Indian assistance and designed by an engineer involved in the construction of the Trishuli hydropower plant, the school's newer building was constructed in 2022 through grant funding under the High Impact Community Development Programme (HICDP).

In a post on X, Srivastava commended Principal Dawadi's swift decision to ring the school bell and clear the premises on August 26 averted a massive human tragedy.

Taliban defend ban on protests, saying it 'does not exist in Islamic law system'

Agence France-Presse

KABUL

The Taliban defended on Wednesday its ban on protests that has drawn condemnation from rights groups, saying the order complies with Islamic law.

Demonstrations in Afghanistan have been rare since the Taliban returned to power just over five years ago, but the government last month introduced a rule holding that "all types of protests are banned".

International organisations have decried the law



Zabihullah Mujahid

as "ruthless" and a move to suppress any dissent in the country.

Taliban regime spokesperson Zabihullah Mujahid said during a news conference that the "law fully

complies with Islamic law", adding that "protests don't exist in Islamic law".

"Protests belong to societies where there are different laws established, for example a democracy or a republic," he said.

Under the Islamic system, he said, people can approach the government with concerns rather than hold demonstrations.

Mr. Mujahid argued the ban "will also protect people from wasting time" and prevent the destruction of private property.

Human Rights Watch late last month slammed

the ban as "another step in the Taliban's ruthless effort to suppress all dissent".

Amnesty International described the Taliban's broader series of changes to law enforcement as "another sweeping assault on human rights in Afghanistan", calling the protest ban "among its most egregious provisions".

While demonstrations are rare, at least two persons were killed in June when security forces reportedly opened fire on a women's rights protest in the western city of Herat, a group of UN experts said.

Iran fires on its Gulf neighbours in retaliation for renewed U.S. strikes

Tehran says four members of Revolutionary Guard and 10 of the Basij forces killed in U.S. attacks; Israel's Defence Minister warns of 'strong independent response' if attacked; U.S. President suggests Strait of Hormuz be renamed "Trump Strait"

Associated Press

DUBAI

Iran fired on U.S. allies in the Gulf early Wednesday following a night of American bombardment that Iranian officials say included a deadly strike on a wedding party.

Fighting has escalated since the American military hit Iranian rocket launchers on an island in the Strait of Hormuz over the weekend. Iran retaliated by firing missiles at American bases in Jordan that were intercepted.

Kuwait and Bahrain said they had also come under attack, without reporting any casualties.



The aftermath of a U.S. strike on a wedding ceremony in southern Sirik county in Hormozgan province in Iran on Wednesday. AFP

"You will soon see that Iran's new strategy on the battlefield, in diplomacy, and in confronting the economic blockade will shatter your foundations," the

recently appointed head of Iran's powerful Supreme National Security Council, Mohsen Rezaei, said on X.

Separately, Iran has said four members of its para-

military Revolutionary Guard and 10 members of the Guard's volunteer Basij forces died in the U.S. attacks.

In Iraq, where Iranian-backed forces are active, Kurdish authorities said they had intercepted 10 drones laden with explosives in the Erbil area. Iranian television reported that American bases in Erbil had been targeted.

Israel's military also said that Iran-backed Hezbollah fired two explosive drones at its soldiers in southern Lebanon, without causing casualties.

Israel's Defence Minister Israel Katz said on Wednesday his country was pre-

pared to "respond with great force, independently of anyone else" if attacked by Iran, adding "our planes are ready to take off".

"Trump Strait"

U.S. President Donald Trump on Wednesday suggested renaming the Strait of Hormuz as "Trump Strait" despite the fact that the crucial waterway remains contested.

"Now that we have it under U.S.A. control, should we change the name Hormuz Strait to TRUMP STRAIT??? Like America itself, it would be 'hotter' than ever before!" Mr. Trump said on his Truth Social network.

UN charts course to manage global warming-limit breach

Jacob Koshy
NEW DELHI

Warning that a possible breach of the 1.5 degrees Celsius global warming limit will bring irreversible ecological losses that no adaptation initiatives could undo, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) on Wednesday, for the first time, set out a detailed “overshoot, peak, and decline” pathway.

The pathway projects a trajectory where the world overshoots the 2015 Paris Agreement’s central goal of limiting the rise in average global temperatures to 1.5 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels – which a UNEP report said was now unavoidable. The pathway seeks to hold peak temperatures after the overshoot as low as possible and then bring it back down below the limit by 2100.

The report, *Limiting Overshoot*, said global warming would cross 1.5 degrees Celsius “in the

Climate concerns

The UN report proposes a pathway to hold peak global temperature as low as possible in the coming years and bring it back within the accepted limit by 2100

- The report says global warming will cross **1.5°C** ‘in the next few years’ and that this is **no longer avoidable**
- A scenario in which every country delivers on its national climate plan and its net-zero target still puts peak global warming at **1.8°C**
- Current policies point to about **2.6°C** global warming by 2100, with a range of 1.9–3.6°C
- ‘Overshoot, peak, and decline’ is simply **‘the best remaining option’**, the report says



next few years”. Even a scenario in which every country delivers on its national climate plan and net-zero target puts peak warming at 1.8 degrees Celsius, it said. According to the report, current policies point to a rise of about 2.6 degrees Celsius by 2100.

“Overshoot, peak, and decline”, the report said, “is by no means an acceptable or preferred path-

way; it is simply the best remaining option”. “This summer’s scorching heat, raging wildfires, and deadly floods are a warning of what lies ahead. We must make the overshoot as small and short as possible,” UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said in a statement.

CONTINUED ON
» PAGE 10

UN charts course on warming-limit breach

The diplomatic grounds for that framing were laid at the 30th UN Climate Change Conference, COP30, held in 2025 in Brazil's Belém, where the consensus "Global *Mutirão* (collective effort)" decision became the first COP text to concede that a temporary overshoot of the 1.5 degrees Celsius limit was likely. Countries also committed, for the first time, to limiting the size and duration of the overshoot and to closing adaptation gaps, which would require deep, rapid and sustained emission cuts.

Given that cuts alone will no longer suffice, a steep scaling up of nature-based removals such as large reforestation programmes was needed, COP30 CEO Ana Toni said in a statement.

Compounding costs

The UNEP report, released in Nairobi, said that time spent above 1.5 degrees Celsius carries compounding costs such as faster sea-level rise, coral reef collapse, glacier loss exceeding a quarter of global mass by 2100, declines of up to 14% in global food production by 2050 without effective adaptation, and rising odds of irreversible tipping points in the West Antarctic and Greenland ice sheets, the Atlantic Meridional Overturning Circulation and the Amazon.

The report arrives at a moment of uncertainty over whether countries will cut emissions at all. The United States, the world's largest historical emitter, formally exited the Paris Agreement earlier this year and has also announced its withdrawal from the U.N. Framework Convention on Climate Change, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change and the Green Climate Fund.

Reducing India's exposure to U.S. tariff risks

The U.S. Senate recently passed the Lindsey O. Graham Sanctioning Russia and Iran Act of 2026, imposing sanctions and authorising additional tariffs and other restrictions related to Russia. Most concerning is a provision authorising tariffs of up to 100% on countries among the five largest importers of Russian crude oil or natural gas if they knowingly make new purchases after enactment. Though it still awaits House approval, enactment could have serious implications for India's economic interests.

The Russian oil dilemma

India has diversified its energy supplies in recent years to reduce its crude import bill and gain strategic advantage amid global uncertainty, driving a sharp rise in Russian crude imports. Before the Russia-Ukraine conflict, Russian crude accounted for just 2% of India's imports; it is now roughly half.

In 2026 alone, imports nearly doubled from 4.54 MMT in January to 8.96 MMT in May. While



Himanshu Jaiswal

Consultant at the
Centre for Social and
Economic Progress,
New Delhi

The Lindsey O. Graham Act puts India under pressure, but export diversification and domestic reforms can cushion shocks

the strategy has helped secure supplies, it carries diplomatic costs, particularly in managing ties with the United States, which seeks to strongly discourage these imports. The U.S. Russia Sanctions Act reflects this pressure.

On July 24, before the bill's introduction, the U.S. imposed forced-labour tariffs on 60 countries, including India, under Section 301 of the Trade Act of 1974, imposing an additional 10% tariff, a replacement of the expired 10% duty under Section 122, on India. If the Russia Sanctions Act becomes law, India's cumulative tariff could reach 110%, making it one of the most heavily tariffed countries. Such high tariffs could affect India's price competitiveness in the U.S., a major export market, leading to economic losses. China's cumulative tariff could reach 112.5%, as both countries are major importers of Russian crude.

Trade simulations and results

To analyse the trade dynamics and possible way forward for India, two global trade simulations were conducted using the GTAP dataset and model, a global general equilibrium model that captures global linkages and country-level shocks. The first (sanction scenario) models a 110% U.S. tariff on India, with other countries facing forced-labour tariffs and China facing 112.5%. The second (diversification scenario) applies the same tariffs while India pursues export diversification, proxied by a full India-European Union free trade agreement (FTA).

The simulation results suggest that the proposed U.S. sanctions could have adverse consequences for the Indian economy. Under the sanction scenario, India's welfare declines by nearly \$47 billion, while GDP, output, domestic demand, exports, and imports all contract. Aggregate exports fall by 5.1% and imports by 5.2%, reflecting disrupted trade flows and weaker

economic activity. The results indicate that a prolonged tariff-based confrontation with the U.S. could impose substantial costs on India's growth and trade performance.

The picture changes considerably when India responds through export diversification. With a functional India-EU FTA, the economy turns around despite the same tariff environment. Welfare improves by \$26.3 billion, GDP turns positive, and sectoral output and domestic demand recover by around 1%. Aggregate exports increase by 3.1%, while imports rise by a moderate 2.6%, indicating stronger production and trade integration with alternative markets.

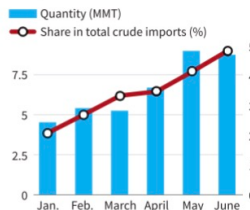
The findings suggest that even if India continues procuring crude from Russia to strengthen its energy security, the adverse economic effects of U.S. tariffs can be mitigated to a large extent through export diversification. The India-EU FTA, used here as a proxy for diversification, demonstrates that India must increasingly look beyond the U.S. and expand its presence in alternative markets, even as the U.S. remains one of its largest export destinations.

The strategy to pursue

However, diversification is not a panacea. It depends on the ability of other markets to absorb additional Indian exports. Without adequate external demand, diversification may remain limited.

Therefore, export diversification must be complemented by sustained domestic reforms, including trade facilitation, removal of non-tariff barriers, improved logistics and standards, and movement up the goods quality ladder. Such a strategy would not only enhance India's resilience to future geopolitical shocks but also strengthen its long-term export competitiveness.

India's crude import from Russia



Source: Department of Commerce, Govt. of India

Impact of tariffs and export diversification

	Sanction scenario	Diversification scenario
Welfare (\$ billion)	-46.6	26.3
Change in GDP (%)	-0.02	0.01
Sectoral output (%)	-1.9	1.2
Domestic demand (%)	-1.8	1
Aggregate export (%)	-5.1	3.1
Aggregate import (%)	-5.2	2.6

Source: Writer's analysis using GTAP