

Glacial collapse unlikely to halt China's plan to build mega dam

Dubbed 'project of the century' by Beijing, the dam that is set to come up in a seismically active region in Tibet has been included in China's 15th Five-Year Plan for renewable energy; the impact it could have downstream is of concern to India

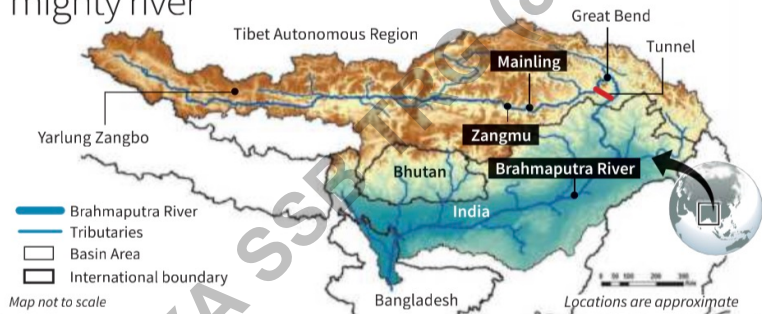
Ananth Krishnan
BEIJING

Fresh concerns triggered by the devastating glacial collapse along the Nepal-China border are unlikely to sway Beijing's plans to go ahead with the construction of a mega dam on the lower reaches of the Yarlung Zangbo, or the Brahmaputra river, in a seismically active region in Tibet near the border with India.

On July 23, a month before the August 26 flash flood and mudslides, China released its 15th Five-Year Plan for renewable energy, which called for advancing the construction of major projects, including the Yarlung Zangbo Lower Reaches Hydropower Project, as

Taming the mighty river

Map shows the flow of the Brahmaputra that originates as the Yarlung Zangbo in Tibet, China, besides key locations



the mega dam project is referred to in China.

Underscoring the importance accorded to the plan, China's Vice Premier Zhang Guoqing visited Nyingchi in Tibet, near the border, in April. "We must shoulder the principal responsibility for project-building and build this

landmark mega project of the new era," he was quoted as saying, adding that the government would "put quality first, safety as the foundation, strictly enforce construction standards and ecological-environmental-protection requirements, and keep construction progress sub-

ordinate to quality and safety."

At a groundbreaking ceremony in July 2025, China's second-ranked leader and Premier Li Qiang, who travelled to Nyingchi, announced the start of construction of what he called "the project of the century". A total investment of

1.2 trillion Yuan (around ₹14 lakh crore) was announced for the construction of five power stations.

Since then, there has been little public information about the project, although Mr. Zhang's visit this year shed some light on how the project will go forward, including the setting up of the new State-run China Yajiang Group to run the entire project, which he inspected.

Of concern to India is how much water is likely to be stored in the reservoir and how the tunnel will affect downstream flows, as well as possible broader ecological impacts. The lack of information has posed an obstacle in assessing the possible impact.

CONTINUED ON
» PAGE 9

Glacial collapse unlikely to halt China's dam plan

China has already opened one major dam on the middle reaches of the Yarlung Zangbo at Zangmu. A state media report earlier this month lauded the construction of the dam, saying it had “provided a solution to nearly 26% of electricity demand in Southwest China’s Xizang [Tibet] Autonomous Region”, the report said, detailing an elaborate “fish-way” designed to help fish move between upstream and downstream sections. The report quoted design engineer Zhang Lianming as saying the fishway would likely be used for future projects.

In June, a “final acceptance meeting” of the Zangmu project was held, declaring that the dam, which started construction in 2010, had generated 22.2 billion kilowatt-hours of energy “equivalent to saving approximately 7.4 million tonnes of standard coal and cutting carbon dioxide emissions by around 22.2 million tonnes”.

The energy generation of the new project near the India border, where the course of the Yarlung Zangbo stunningly falls over the “great bend” and turns towards India, is expected to easily dwarf Zangmu.

While there have been no official projections, Chinese analysts project 60 GW installed capacity and 300 billion kilowatt-hours of power a year, more than three times the Three Gorges.

While the project has been described as a “run-of-the-river” dam, it will also involve the construction of a reservoir. This is likely to be located in the town of Mainling, upstream of Nyingchi, a prefecture-level city that is also home to a key airport, according to an analysis published on Wednesday by David Fishman, a Shanghai-based analyst writing on energy who looked at reports of relocations to ascertain the likely location. The water will be diverted at the top of the great bend into an approximately 40-km-long tunnel, Mr. Fishman wrote on his Substack, “Crossing the River”, as its descending force powers five 12-GW powerhouses before rejoining the river.

India, China meeting

Later this month, India and China will hold a meeting of the Expert-Level Mechanism on Trans-border Rivers. However, the sharing of hydrological data, officials say, has not been regular and has on occasion been suspended during difficult periods in relations.

Asked about the project, China’s Foreign Ministry spokesperson Guo Jiakun said last year that Beijing “always maintained a highly responsible attitude toward transboundary river development and has rich experience in hydropower project development”. He said the “construction of the project is beneficial for disaster prevention and mitigation throughout the entire river basin and will not have adverse effects on downstream areas”.

“China has conducted hydrological reporting, flood control, and disaster reduction cooperation with relevant downstream countries and has also engaged in necessary communication regarding the project,” he said.

Voter lists shrink over 15% since 2024 elections in States, U.T.s where SIR third-phase draft lists are out

Sreeparna Chakrabarty
NEW DELHI

Since the 2024 Lok Sabha elections, voter lists of 17 States and Union Territories, where Special Intensive Revision (SIR) is under way in its third phase, have shrunk by 15.7% as per the draft rolls published by the Election Commission.

The cumulative total of voters in these States and U.T.s fell from 35,50,50,008 during the Lok Sabha polls to 29,93,00,115 in the draft rolls published after the SIR. Maharashtra recorded the largest drop in absolute

numbers, losing 15,896,198 electors or 17.08% in the draft phase, while Delhi and Chandigarh registered the sharpest dips in percentage at 35.89% and 31.84% respectively.

Since the polls and till the cut-off date for the enumeration phase, these States/U.T.s had added around 57.75 lakh voters, which took the cumulative total of voters to 36,08,07,394. Out of it, 6.15 crore voters have been deleted as per the draft rolls.

The additions after the polls were heavily driven by Maharashtra which added 47.92 lakh voters,

while 10 other States, including Haryana added about 9.83 lakh.

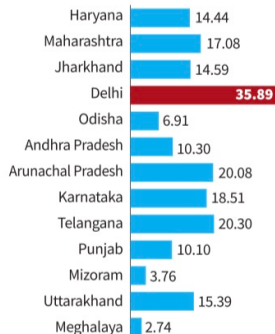
Delhi was among the remaining Six States/U.T.s which saw a decrease in the number of voters after the polls. While it had 1,52,14,638 voters during polls, its pre-SIR rolls had 1,45,10,299 electors, a drop of more than 7 lakh.

It was followed by Uttarakhand (4.7 lakh), Odisha (3.17 lakh), Chandigarh (1.44 lakh), Punjab (1.1 lakh) and Arunachal Pradesh (10,937).

CONTINUED ON
» PAGE 9

SIR phase 3 cut rates

The table shows the State/U.T.-wise number of deletions in draft electoral rolls for the third phase of the SIR exercise as a share (%) of the number of electors registered for the 2024 Lok Sabha election



Thorough check:
BLOs issuing notices to residents in Bengaluru.
ALLEN EGENUSE

■ The voter lists of 17 States and U.T.s in the third phase till now have **shrunk by 15.70%** as per the draft rolls

'Voter lists cut by over 15% since 2024 polls'

The third phase of SIR is being carried out in 16 States and three Union Territories. Of these, draft rolls have been published for 17 States/Union Territories, barring those for Nagaland and Tripura which would be out on September 20 and October 21 respectively. The numbers in the final voter lists could increase as the Election Commission provides a window for people to submit claims and objections for additions and deletions from the draft as well as registration of new voters.

The rollout of final lists will start in States soon, with Mizoram, Sikkim and Manipur taking the lead on September 6. Interestingly, out of these 6.15 crore voters deleted in this phase of SIR, only 1.11 crore are marked dead. Among the rest, 4.52 crore are marked "absent" and 49.58 crore as "having multiple enrolments" and around 3 lakh in the "others" category.

More '*dimagi* Naxals' emerging after Red Fort speech, says PM

The Hindu Bureau

NEW DELHI

Thirteen years after his last visit, Prime Minister Narendra Modi returned to Shri Ram College of Commerce (SRCC) here on Saturday, where he said more "*dimagi* Naxals" have started coming out one after another since he coined the term in his Independence Day speech at the Red Fort. Mr. Modi also said some people "oppose everything".

"You may have heard my speech from the Red Fort. I gave a homeopathic pill from the Red Fort: '*dimagi* Naxal'. As soon as I gave the pill, all the '*dimagi* Naxals' started coming out one after another," he said in his address.

The Prime Minister marked SRCC's centenary celebrations with Gen Z lingo, Bollywood references and a message to students that they can have bigger aspirations because they have "the ecosystem to support them".

Mr. Modi took the metro to the venue, interacting with children and young people along the way, before arriving at the college. The event began at 7 p.m., with Union Education Minister Prahlad Joshi, Delhi University Vice-Chancellor Yogesh Singh and SRCC principal Simrit Kaur among those present. Mr. Modi also released a commemorative ₹100 coin to mark the centenary year.

Lauding the college's alumni, he said, "In its 100-year journey, SRCC has shaped generations, connecting them to a bright future. Those who came, they studied; those who left, they left sculpted. SRCC alumni have been very special. In your language, they are OGs."

He added, "*Dhurandhar na ho, lekin dhoom toh macha hi hai.*"

He ended his address by saying he was happy that young people were ambitious and could dream of innovations, start-ups and fresh ideas.



Over 1,000 Bangladeshi nationals deported from Mumbai in first eight months of 2026

Yohaán Varghese

MUMBAI

Mumbai Police deported 1,066 Bangladeshi nationals allegedly staying illegally in India by the end of August 2026, more than six times the 164 deported in 2024, according to police data.

The figure has already surpassed the 1,061 deportations recorded in 2025. Since 2024, 2,291 Bangladeshi nationals have been deported from Mumbai, while the police have regis-

Since 2024, 2,291 Bangladeshi nationals have been deported from Mumbai, while the police have arrested 995 such immigrants

tered 658 offences against such immigrants and arrested 995 people.

In July this year, the Bombay High Court, while hearing cases involving foreign nationals allegedly using bogus or fabricated

Aadhaar documents, called for greater coordination between Maharashtra and Central agencies to identify, trace and deport them. In separate cases, it dealt with allegations of Bangladeshi nationals entering India illegally and obtaining forged Aadhaar, PAN and voter identity cards.

In July 2025, Revenue Minister Chandrashekhar Bawankule said more than 42,000 birth certificates issued to Bangladeshis allegedly staying illegally in the

State had been cancelled.

The government had also launched a special drive to identify and cancel more such certificates. Maharashtra has also set up a task force and a Special Investigation Team to investigate the alleged issuance of fraudulent birth and death certificates.

Police said that enforcement against illegal immigrants would continue and appealed to citizens to report information on illegal Bangladeshi immigrants by dialling 100 or 112.

TCS to establish ₹70,000-cr. AI data centre in Hyderabad

TCS subsidiary HyperVault will develop a large-scale data centre with a capacity of 1 gigawatt; Telangana CM calls it 'largest AI data centre in the country', seeks completion before June 2028

R. Ravikanth Reddy

HYDERABAD

Telangana Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy on Saturday announced ₹70,000-crore investment by the Tata Group, TCS and HyperVault in Hyderabad, Telangana, that would create the largest data centre in the country, creating direct employment to 7,000 people.

The Chief Minister has set a deadline of June 2, 2028, the Telangana Formation Day, for the inauguration of what he described as India's largest AI data centre. "From groundbreaking to inauguration, exactly 21 months from today, on June 2, 2028, we want to inaugu-



Tech ties: TCS CEO K. Krithivasan with Telangana Chief Minister Revanth Reddy in Hyderabad on Saturday. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

rate India's largest AI data centre," he said.

As per the announcement, TCS subsidiary HyperVault will develop a large-scale AI data centre campus with capacity of up to 1 gigawatt. TCS CEO and Managing Director K.

Krithivasan said AI was not a technology disruption but a civilisational shift. It will change everything we do today, and societies that transition would be at the forefront, while India has a great opportunity to catch up.

'Vizag hub to use air-cooling tech'

VISAKHAPATANAM

Amid concerns over high water consumption of the Google data centre coming up in Visakhapatnam, M. Sriharat, MP, said the facility would use air-cooling and not water. "Google has confirmed it will use air-cooling technology... there is no question of impact to water supply," he said.

The Chief Minister assured investors that Telangana would maintain continuity in its investment policies despite changes in governments. "Political and ideological differences will not affect the investment policy," he said.

'U.S. LPG is not a silver bullet for India'

Saptaparno Ghosh

NEW DELHI

India's move to diversify LPG procurement by sourcing more supplies from the U.S. may not be the silver bullet that helps it weather the current crisis despite the U.S. being a major LPG producer and expanding its export terminal capacity, James Rockall, CEO and MD, World Liquid Gas Association (WLGA), told *The Hindu*.

Separately, he said India should also focus on expanding LPG storage capacity and managing freight costs to boost its position in the global market.

Diversification vital

Mr. Rockall emphasised diversifying sources was imperative for India to respond to West Asia supply crisis, with the U.S. emerging as an "obvious choice".

India now sources 67% of LPG imports from the U.S., Union Oil Minister Hardeep Puri had said.

"The obvious choice was the U.S. as they are a big producer, a growing producer and are investing in export terminals," Mr. Rockall said. However, he cautioned, "It is not the magic solution that is going to lead you out of the crisis as India is not alone in trying to procure from the U.S. It already has a lot of its product tied up in term deals," he said.

"Getting access to that product in the short term is never going to be easy, but I have been very impressed with the way India has responded to this proactively," he said.

He also pointed to other



James Rockall

potential sources of LPG that India could explore, including Canada, Algeria, Argentina, Australia and West Africa.

Shipping, storage

He also said Indian refiners should actively manage freight costs to take advantage of lower free-on-board prices when they arise.

"[These could be either through] looking at short-term charters, working with shipping fleets, owning vessels or whatever," he said. Such strategies "would allow Indian companies to capture the shipping economics themselves rather than leave them to suppliers and gives guarantee of availability."

This would also help Indian oil marketing companies avoid competing in the open freight market where premiums have risen amid West Asia issue

India must expand LPG storage capacity to better manage market volatility.

"Having storage gives you a little bit more time to fix the issues. I think greater storage is something India should look at to manage the volatility of the market," he said.

Why is BRICS exploring cross-border payments?

How do cross-border payments work? What are the instructions between banks and costs involved in each step? How have transaction times reduced? Why does BRICS want to change the system? What alternatives are being explored? What does India propose?

Srinivasan Ramani

The story so far:

The 18th BRICS summit in New Delhi to be held in September, with India as the Chair, is expected to push for mechanisms to facilitate cross-border payments between members, including links between digital payment systems and central bank digital currencies (CBDCs), according to a report in *The Hindu businessLine*. Ahead of the summit, finance ministries' and central bank representatives from BRICS countries met in Jaipur on August 12-13 to discuss financial cooperation, payments, and the wider use of national currencies in settling trade between members.

How do current cross-border payments work?

Sending money from one country to another requires a chain of transactions. Let's say, an importer in Cape Town is buying passenger cars from an exporter in Chennai. The payment does not travel directly from the South African bank to the Indian one. It travels via a series of intermediaries called correspondent banks that hold accounts with each other. Since the South African bank does not hold an account with the Indian one (and vice versa), the payment is routed through a larger international bank that deals with both and is typically headquartered in London or New York. Because very few banks hold both rupees and rand, the payment involves converting rand to dollars and dollars to rupees where, in essence, the dollar acts like a vehicle currency, even though no American is involved in the trade.

What is SWIFT?

Now, apart from the money, there are also instructions that travel between the banks. This is handled by SWIFT (Society for Worldwide Interbank Financial Telecommunication), which

The 2024 BRICS report under Russia's chairmanship argued that this part of the financial system is monopolised by a single institution, raising transaction costs

is a Belgium-based cooperative and overseen by the National Bank of Belgium along with the G-10 central banks, including the U.S. Federal Reserve. SWIFT is a messaging network, like a secure post-office. It enables institutions to exchange payment instructions through it and settle amounts separately. It is used directly by more than 11,000 institutions in over 200 countries. Smaller banks reach it indirectly through larger banks that are part of the SWIFT network, which is why it has become crucial and hard to displace.

What are the costs involved in each step?

Every intermediary charges a fee and the currencies are converted twice (rand to dollar and dollar to rupees). So the foreign exchange margins are paid twice. A 2019 BRICS survey of cross-border payment systems, conducted by Brazil, found that Brazilian respondents reported foreign exchange margins of 2.5% with the figure rising to 8.5% for payments in Africa and, in some cases, as high as 20%.

While speed of transactions used to be a major issue, SWIFT claims that its SWIFT Global Payments Innovation has helped reduce transaction times significantly. Some structural delays remain even as the transaction chain has also become thinner. The Bank for International Settlements (BIS) found that active correspondent banking relationships fell by 20% between 2011 and 2018 with regional declines varying from 12% to 30% and Latin America being the worst affected. The reasons for this decline were largely commercial. Payment volumes kept growing during this period, even as they travelled through a smaller network.

Why does BRICS want to change this system?

For developing economies, though, payments in a handful of dominant currencies such as the U.S. dollar, the euro and the Japanese yen expose countries to the monetary policies of the countries that issue them. The 2024 BRICS report under Russia's chairmanship argued that this part of the financial system is monopolised by a single institution, raising transaction costs. Alternatives to the system suffer from the fact that they have to convince a large number of banks and regulators to join before being useful. A bank that uses an alternative system to deal with sanctioned entities – several Russian banks were cut off from SWIFT in 2022, following Russia's invasion of Ukraine – also risks sanctions, which deters others from joining. A sanctions-hit Russia has pushed hardest for an alternative and is also the reason why others are wary of joining one.

What changes can be envisaged in the BRICS discussions?

The idea being explored is a payment system where, instead of payments moving through several correspondent banks with dollar conversions, national payment systems would connect to each other directly. This could be done in pairs as India and Singapore have already done for remittances by linking the former's Unified Payments Interface (UPI) and the latter's PayNow systems. But building bilateral systems individually will not scale appropriately.

An alternative could be via a shared hub that each country joins. One such effort is Project Nexus, designed by the BIS and handed over to a company set up by six central banks, including India's Reserve Bank of India. It is set to go live only in 2027. **Notably, it is not a BRICS initiative.**

The BRICS discussions would extend this idea to the use of central bank digital currencies.

Here, central banks issue digital versions of their currencies for use between banks – a settlement asset, not the retail digital rupee held by individuals – and exchange them on a common platform. Both legs of a currency swap would occur at the same instant or not at all, removing the risk of paying out before the other side pays, which speeds up settlement and reduces the capital banks must set aside against such transactions.

The 2024 BRICS report claims transactions settled this way would yield significant cost savings. Only one such platform runs today – mBridge, built by the BIS with the central banks of China, Thailand, Hong Kong, and the UAE, which the BIS handed to its participants and left in October 2024. Over 95% of its settlement volume is in China's digital yuan, according to People's Bank of China figures reported by Reuters.

The Kazan declaration of BRICS in 2024 agreed to "discuss and study the feasibility" of an independent settlement system called BRICS Clear, but the Rio declaration the following year did not mention it.

What is India's position?

India's own proposal, reported in January, is that members link their CBDCs for trade and tourism payments. Indian officials have been careful to frame the payment systems as a means of cutting transaction costs and speeding up settlement rather than as initiatives to displace the dollar – even as Russian proposals, and those of some Brazilian economists, have gone further, towards alternative financial systems that would reduce dependence on the dollar.

U.S. President Donald Trump, in November 2024, had threatened to impose 100% tariffs on BRICS countries if they moved away from the dollar and a further 10% tariff on countries aligning with vaguely defined "anti-American" BRICS policies during last year's Rio summit. The threats were not carried out. But even though they were not targeted at payment systems, this could perhaps be a reason why Indian officials have framed discussions only as a matter of reducing transaction costs.



PM Narendra Modi, Brazilian President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva and South African President Cyril Ramaphosa at the BRICS Summit in Brazil in 2025. PTI

Why is the Centre opposed to totalisers?

What are totalisers and how do they prevent candidates from determining the voting pattern of individual polling booths? What has been the Centre's position? What does the Election Commission of India believe? What has the Supreme Court said?

Sreeparna Chakrabarty

The story so far:

In September 1, a Supreme Court Bench of Chief Justice of India Surya Kant and justices Joymaiya Bagchi and V. Mohana asked the Central government to examine the possibility of introducing totaliser machines for counting votes recorded in Electronic Voting Machines (EVM) in order to protect the secrecy of booth-wise voting patterns and prevent electors at individual booths from being identified and potentially victimised.

The case dates back to 2014, when two individuals, Yogesh Gupta and Imran Khan, moved a public interest petition (PIL) seeking a direction to the poll panel to mix votes cast at various polling stations in a constituency to prevent candidates from intimidating voters in places that had rebuffed them.

What is a totaliser?

A totaliser is a proposal aimed at preventing candidates from determining the voting pattern of individual polling booths. A totaliser allows the votes cast in about 14 polling booths to be

The Centre has argued that knowledge of booth-wise vote shares allowed the candidates to work harder in areas where support for them was low

counted together. At present, the votes are tallied booth by booth. It was developed by Bharat Electronics Limited, Bengaluru, and Electronics Corporation of India Limited, Hyderabad.

A totaliser is an interface connected to the main control unit of a cluster of 14 EVMs. Pressing the result button on the totaliser gives the consolidated votes polled by each candidate across the 14 EVMs, without revealing the voting pattern of individual polling areas.

Why was the petition seeking totalisers filed in the Supreme Court?

Gupta and Khan had moved a PIL seeking a direction to the poll panel to mix up the votes cast in the various polling stations in a constituency. They said that it was necessary to prevent the candidates from intimidating voters in areas that had rebuffed them.

As part of their arguments, the duo gave the example of the alleged intimidation by late former Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister, Ajit Pawar, in the Baramati constituency during the last general election. Pawar had allegedly threatened the voters that his party, the Nationalist Congress Party, would be able to detect voting patterns from the EVM readings and cut off their water supply if they snubbed it.

Booths in India are generally marked geographically. If there are social groups that are segregated or living in clusters, which is the case in many parts of rural India (and increasingly in urban slums as well), it is possible to roughly identify if a particular community that is numerically large in an area with a specific polling booth or station has voted in a certain direction. With the advent of advanced geospatial tools, it is even easier today to not only correlate polling booth trends and social settings but also draw causal insights. This was the fear expressed by the petitioners in 2014.

What has been the stand of the Central government?

The Centre has always opposed totalisers. In 2017, the Centre had told the apex court that

identifying booth-wise voting patterns did not lead to voter intimidation and that there was no need to stop the disclosure of booth-wise results. It argued that knowledge of booth-wise vote shares allowed the candidates to work harder in areas where support for them was low, thus producing better results for everyone involved.

In 2018, Additional Solicitor General Maninder Singh told the Bench, which was led by then CJI Dipak Misra, that installing a totaliser could lead to data breach even before vote counting began.

More recently, the Centre again raised the same apprehension. This prompted the Court to give the Election Commission two weeks to respond to this fear.

A Law Ministry affidavit told the Court that a group of ministers headed by the then Home Minister Rajnath Singh had decided last September that "intimidation/victimisation of voters as apprehended may not occur on a larger scale in this era of media activism".

What has been the Election Commission's stand?

The Election Commission has been consistently supportive of introducing totalisers. It first suggested the measure to the United Progressive Alliance government in 2008. In a 2018 submission before the Supreme Court, the poll body stated that "a time has come for introduction of totaliser for counting of the votes." That support has continued into the current round of hearings. The poll body informed the Court that it had earlier recommended the totaliser system to the Union government. The senior advocate representing the Election Commission backed the goal of protecting voter anonymity, while also flagging some practical and legal challenges in actually implementing the proposal, including concerns around booth-wise verification and VVPAT.

What has the Supreme Court said now?

The Supreme Court asked the Central government to state its position on introducing a totaliser system for counting votes recorded through EVMs. The Court specifically sought to know if there are any impediments to introducing such a mechanism and if there would be any negative impact because of it. The Election Commission has also been asked to submit its proposal to the government.



File photo of women waiting in queue to exercise their franchise for the local body election at a polling booth in Erode, Tamil Nadu. M. GOVARTHAN

An icon of modern warfare

Javelin

The anti-tank system India is planning to acquire is a mainstay brigade combat team weapon for the U.S. Army and Marine Corps

Murali N. Krishnaswamy

“BIG news! India plans to buy the battle-tested Javelin anti-tank system”, U.S. Ambassador to India Sergio Goro posted on X on August 28. This is “a great step forward in the U.S.-India defense relationship, opening the door to co-production possibilities”, he wrote. The significance of the announcement lies not merely in the planned purchase, but in what the Javelin brings to India’s defence arsenal.

Developed and made by the Javelin Joint Venture (JJV) between Raytheon and Lockheed Martin, the Javelin has been described as a versatile, portable and multi-purpose weapon system that can handle a spectrum of threats. More precisely, it is a “fire-and-forget” anti-tank guided missile (ATGM) system that comprises a Command Launch Unit (CLU) and the missile. The CLU has the day/night sighting system, the electronics and the controls while the missile’s imaging infrared seeker guides it after the launch. Locking onto its target before launch, it allows the operator to move away after firing.

A peek into the company’s production literature uncovers the following list: with over 20 years of performance, the Javelin has



LOCKHEED MARTIN

been in action in operations across a range of theatres. After classroom training of only 72 hours, a soldier can take advantage of the missile’s ‘low-signature’ launch (or minimal detectability) to carry out a variety of attack modes; these range from top-attack targets such as tanks to direct-attack capability for caves, bunkers or soft targets.

Operational readiness

And, with an operational readiness rate of 99% and an engagement success rate of 94%, the armament has established itself as a mainstay brigade combat team weapon for the U.S. Army and U.S. Marine Corps. It is expected to be in the U.S. military’s operational inventory until 2050. The company has also highlighted its economic impact, covering 63 domestic suppliers in 18 states and 22 international suppliers. But it is one point that stands out: the detail of “5,000 combat fir-

ings (Prior to Ukraine)”.

In service since 1996, the Javelin has been used in the invasion of Iraq in 2003 and also in Afghanistan. Yet, it is in Ukraine that the Javelin acquired its reputation as a weapon that could take on Russian might. The Javelin also has an interesting imagery. In a 2022 article, journalist Matthew Gault, who writes on conflict and culture, highlighted the popularity of “St. Javelin, a symbol of the conflict in Ukraine”. Surrounded by a bright red halo and the golden trident coat-of-arms of Ukraine, this creation of ‘meme-mythology’, clad in green robes, carries an FGM-148 Javelin anti-tank missile launcher in her arms, portraying a defiant symbol of resistance.

For India, the nitty-gritty of the August 2026 announcement lies in the proposed assembly of the ATGMs; in the memorandum of understanding between JJV and Tata Advanced Systems Ltd

(TASL), Javelin All Up Rounds (AURs) are to be co-produced domestically. Much of the component production would be in the U.S. where the Lockheed Martin plant in Alabama will produce the Javelin’s “sub-assembly kits”, while Raytheon’s facility in Arizona will manufacture its “guidance electronics units”. Both systems will then be shipped to TASL for final assembly and incorporation into the ATGM. In essence, the U.S. will hold the reins.

The development also marks the difficulty that India has faced in overcoming a hurdle: it has taken it over 15 years to resolve differences with the U.S. over technology transfer and local production. During this time, India has maintained a diverse anti-tank inventory, including limited supplies of the Israeli Spike, while pursuing the Defence Research and Development Organisation’s “Third Generation” Fire and Forget Man Portable Anti-Tank Guided Missile.

However, to a few established defence commentators, such as Rahul Bedi, the subtext of Mr. Goro’s “big news” is the path that India has chosen for its anti-tank missile programme – either as a looming shadow over its indigenous missile efforts or a pragmatic response to a pressing military requirement.

ISRO staff question trajectory of space privatisation, want chief to clarify

IN-SPACE head Pawan Goenka's remarks that ISRO will not manufacture launch vehicles spark concerns, employees say

Anonna Dutt

New Delhi, September 5

KEY EMPLOYEE associations at the Indian Space Research Organisation have written to ISRO chairperson V Narayanan, questioning the direction of the agency's privatisation drive and its implications for the existing workforce and the agency's future role.

The letter, obtained by *The Indian Express*, was sent Friday, just hours after ISRO successfully launched an earth observation satellite aboard a GSLV rocket following a months-long hiatus.

Even as ISRO continues to deliver on its core missions, the letter showed that questions are

mounting within about what role it will play as private players take on a growing share of the country's space activities.

At the centre of the controversy are remarks made on August 21, at a Business Today event, by Pawan Goenka, chairperson of the Indian National Space Promotion and Authorization Centre (IN-SPACE), the nodal body, under the Department of Space, announced by the Prime Minister in 2020 to open India's space sector to private participation.

Said Goenka, who also chairs the board of governors at IIT Madras: "Eventually, ISRO will not manufacture any launch vehicles, that will be

»CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

ISRO staff

done by the private sector or PSU. They will not do any day in day out kind of satellites. They will do the satellites that are for special purpose, for orbits for scientific research or to develop new technology that will then get transferred to the private sector."

The employee associations argue that these statements were never followed by any formal communication from the Department of Space explaining the policy, its legal basis, its timeline, or its impact on current staff and future recruitment.

Signed by representatives from across ISRO's centres, including the Space Applications Centre and the Liquid Propulsion Systems Centre, the letter asks the chairperson to issue a "written clarification" on whether Goenka's statements

represent an "approved decision" of the government of India, space commission, or the department of space.

The letter raises several specific concerns: what ISRO's future role as a public organisation will look like, whether PSUs will also be excluded from manufacturing work, what safeguards exist for current employees, and how publicly funded technologies are being transferred to private companies. It also asks whether employee associations will be consulted before any "irreversible decision" affecting the agency's structure, mandate, or staffing is finalised.

Despite calls and messages, neither Goenka nor Narayanan were available for comment.

The associations describe the activities referenced by Goenka as ISRO's "core competence," warning that withdrawing from them threatens the organisation's long-term viability. Em-

ployees who built their careers around ISRO's stability and public character, the letter says, now face uncertainty, and shrinking recruitment — already limited by vacancies and attrition — will discourage talented young professionals who see ISRO as a respected public-sector career path.

Since the space sector was opened to private participation in 2020, the government's stated approach has been for ISRO to mentor emerging companies, gradually shifting routine work to them while ISRO focuses on missions of scientific and strategic significance. The letter notes that ISRO has already transferred around 120 technologies to industry, including the Small Satellite Launch Vehicle and the PSLV. Separately, the new spaceport being developed at Kulasekharapatnam is expected to focus on small satellite launches, a segment where private capabil-

ity is already fairly advanced.

The dispute is likely to fuel broader debate over ISRO's future direction.

Ajay Lele, Deputy Director General at the Manohar Parrikar Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses, said the sector's opening up was overdue and could have helped India capture a larger share of the global market sooner. With ISRO now focused on major undertakings like Gaganyaan, the Bharatiya Antariksh Station, and a crewed lunar mission, he said some functions would naturally shift to private players — but cautioned that launch services and vehicle development remain core to ISRO's mandate.

"The situation should not be like NASA, where they are completely dependent on SpaceX for their launches," he said. "ISRO should remain capable of launching some of its own satellites, especially the strategic ones."

U.S. military hits 3 Iranian tankers after saying 2 Navy ships targeted

The U.S. describes the tankers as part of a shadow fleet used to fund the IRGC and its regional proxies; 'we will not hesitate to defend American forces, and if necessary, destroy Iran's limited and exposed oil fleet,' says head of U.S. Central Command

Associated Press

CAIRO

U.S. forces struck three Iranian oil tankers after Navy warships were targeted with missiles, the American military said on Saturday, warning that it would "if necessary, destroy Iran's limited and exposed oil fleet".

The strikes – a day after U.S. President Donald Trump sought to minimise the conflict as "small potatoes" – keep up a new tilt back toward fighting after six months of on-again, off-again war that began with U.S. and Israeli attacks on the country on February 28. Both sides have sought



Critical hit: U.S. military forces reportedly striking an Iranian crude oil tanker off the coast of Kharg Island on Saturday. AFP

to inflict both military and economic pain, and negotiations have collapsed.

The military's statement said that an American aircraft carrier and a destroyer evaded "multiple

unprovoked Iranian attacks" while patrolling in the region and no U.S. personnel were hurt. It said that two Iranian oil carriers were "permanently disabled" and the third,

unladen one, was destroyed.

The U.S. statement said that the tankers were part of a shadow network helping to fund Iran's powerful Revolutionary Guard and its armed proxies in the region. There was no immediate Iranian response.

Repeatedly targeted

Earlier, Iranian state television had said that four U.S. missiles struck a tanker about 10 km from Kharg Island, home to a terminal through which the country exports most of its oil. Kharg Island has been repeatedly targeted during the war, including U.S. strikes on military sites there in March.

The U.S. said that one tanker was struck off Kharg Island and another was struck near Jask, east of the Strait of Hormuz. The unladen tanker was hit in the Gulf of Oman, and the U.S. said its crew had been "directed to abandon ship". The statement shared what it called video footage of the strikes.

After the U.S. statement, Iran's state broadcaster reported the two other tankers attacked, saying their crews had evacuated.

"We will not hesitate to defend American forces, and if necessary, destroy Iran's limited and exposed oil fleet," said Admiral Brad Cooper, the head of U.S. Central Command.

60 killed in clashes between Houthis, Yemen govt. forces

Agence France-Presse

DUBAI

Fighting between Yemen's Saudi-backed government forces and the country's Houthi rebels killed more than 60 people on Saturday, including civilians, medical and military sources said.

The renewed clashes in Yemen's southwest over control of a gateway to the Red Sea came after Friday saw some of the deadliest fighting in years, following the collapse in July of a

2022 ceasefire.

According to three Yemeni military sources, 26 government troops were killed during several hours of fighting in the country's southwest, while medical and military sources from the Iran-backed Houthis said 31 rebel fighters were killed.

One medical source Taiz said a missile strike also killed six civilians and wounded seven others.

A government official blamed the killing of civilians on the Houthis.

Putin, Zelenskyy agree to pause strikes amid talks with US envoys

Associated Press

Moscow, September 5

THE LEADERS of Russia and Ukraine on Saturday agreed to pause strikes on each other's capitals while US envoys Steve Witkoff and Jared Kushner hold talks to try to revive a stalled push to end Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine.

“(Russian President Vladimir) Putin has ordered that no strikes be carried out against Kyiv for three days, starting at midnight today,” presidential spokesperson Dmitry Peskov told Russia's *Tass* news agency.

He said the decision was tied to Witkoff and Kushner's planned visit to the Ukrainian capital, which Kyiv has said will take place on Sunday.

Peskov also confirmed that Kushner and Witkoff would meet Putin during their Moscow visit on Saturday, but said there was “no talk of new ideas” to end the conflict.

The envoys' trip comes as both sides escalate aerial attacks, some 4 1/2 years after the Kremlin's invasion of its neighbour. Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said that Ukraine was prepared to halt strikes on Moscow until Monday.

He said he spoke on Saturday afternoon with the US delegation after their arrival in Moscow.

“From now through the end of Saturday, as well as on Sunday



US ambassadors Steve Witkoff and Jared Kushner with Russian envoy Kirill Dmitriev in Moscow on Sunday. @KADMITRIEV

and Monday, Ukraine is ready to refrain from strikes on Moscow, and we expect the Russians to do the same regarding Kyiv,” he said. He had urged Russia Friday to reciprocate halt in airstrikes.

The envoys were met at the airport in Moscow by Russian envoy Kirill Dmitriev, *Tass* reported. Dmitriev shared photos of him meeting the US delegation as they disembarked, alongside the caption, “Welcome to Moscow Peacemakers.”

With peace efforts stalled, Russia has intensified its attacks on Kyiv and other cities with relentless bombardments recently stretching into daylight hours, taking advantage of Ukraine's shortage of air defence systems.

In a social media post on Saturday, Zelenskyy said that Russia had carried out overnight strikes on Kyiv and Boryspil international airports, and linked the attack to the planned US visit. “Clearly, these Russian strikes on the airports are a reaction to the discussions and preparations for the possibility of the US side using an aircraft to travel to Ukraine,” he said.

“We have taken note of this Russian move, and next week we will adjust our operation accordingly regarding Russian airspace, which has become dangerous because of our drones and missiles. Of course, there are and will be no threats to diplomacy from our side.”

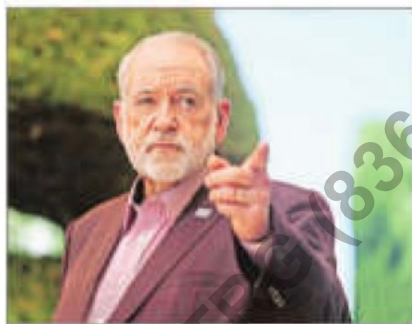
US envoy calls Israeli settlers 'terrorists' after weeks of violence in West Bank

Associated Press
Jerusalem, September 5

THE UNITED States ambassador to Israel condemned Israeli settler violence in the occupied West Bank again on Saturday, calling the behavior an "act of terror" as he visited with Palestinian American residents shaken by months of attacks.

Ambassador Mike Huckabee referred to such settlers as "terrorists," a word that US officials usually reserve for Palestinian militants.

"If there are squatters that come in and put up their own flags and take possession of something that does not belong to them, if they burn a car, if they torch a mosque, if they go



US ambassador Mike Huckabee during a press conference after he met with residents in a West Bank village on Saturday. REUTERS

into someone's home and vandalize it, paint graffiti on the walls, that's a criminal act. But it extends beyond a criminal act. It's an act of terror," Huckabee said during his visit to the village of Turmus Ayya, which

has reported frequent attacks by settlers over the past year.

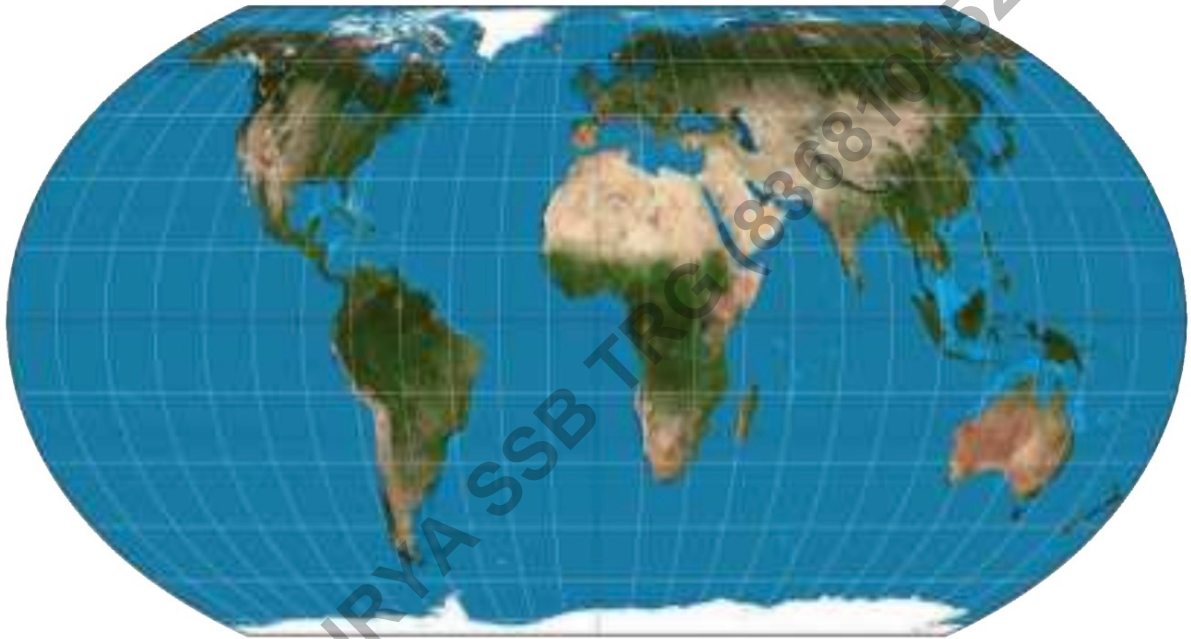
Such attacks have surged since the war in Gaza began with the Hamas-led attack on southern Israel on October 7, 2023, according to the United Nations humanitarian office.

Huckabee also used the term "terrorists" last month after weeks of unrest in the West Bank town of Qusra, where settlers surrounded several homes including one owned by a Palestinian American.

Days later, residents of the West Bank village of Bazariya said settlers burned a mosque and left a message on a wall in graffiti reading "Huckabee regards from the terrorists" in Hebrew.

NEW YORK

UN General Assembly endorses using Equal Earth projection map



▲ The United Nations General Assembly on Friday endorsed a new world map that represents Africa more accurately in its larger size. The resolution encourages governments and institutions around the world to replace the traditional Mercator map with the Equal Earth projection that “shows locations more accurately”. AP