Delhi HC calls for audit of hostels; collapse toll hits 7

Building owner arrested, along with spouse and son; five MCD officials suspended; Delhi govt. mulling policy to govern buildings used for different purposes, including PG accommodations

Shrimansi Kaushik
Soibam Rocky Singh
NEW DELHI

The death toll in the collapse of a building housing students in the Satya Niketan area rose to seven on Monday, even as the Delhi High Court expressed deep concern over the safety of students living in similar paying guest (PG) accommodations across the national capital.

It directed the Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) to inspect all PG hostels under its jurisdiction within a week.

The police arrested Hariram Gupta, 82, a retired Indian Air Force sergeant; his wife Urmila Gupta, 75; and their son Mahesh Gupta, 52. While the property was registered in Ms. Gupta's name, the men's PG accommodation was allegedly being run by her husband and son, the police said. A search is on for those operating it and the labour contractors that were carrying out repairs in the building's basement.

Search on: Rescue operations under way at the site of the building collapse in New Delhi on Monday. SHASHI SHEKHAR KASHYAP

"Their role will also be examined in the case and accordingly action will be taken," said Amit Goel, Deputy Commissioner of Police, South West.

Five officials of the MCD – the civic body responsible for issuing PG licences and enforcing building norms – were suspended. Chief Minister Rekha Gupta said the government is exploring a policy to govern buildings used for several purposes, including PG accommodations.

Over the course of the 28-hour rescue operation, at least 12 people were brought to the AIIMS Trauma Centre while three were taken to the Safdarjung hospital for treatment. At AIIMS, six persons were brought dead while one person later died of injuries. At least three are said to be in critical condition. One person is stable while another was discharged on Sunday. The patients at Safdarjung are also stable.

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DAC approves acquisition proposals worth Rs 1.1 L cr

Armed Forces to get CBRN recce vehicles, advanced light helicopters & Arudhra Radars

Amrita Nayak Dutta
New Delhi, September 7

THE DEFENCE Acquisition Council (DAC), India's key defence body for approving major military procurements, on Monday gave the green signal for acquisitions worth about Rs 1,10,000 crore for the armed forces.

The approved procurements include Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear (CBRN) Recce Vehicles, High Mobility Vehicles (HMVs), Advanced Light Helicopters (ALHs), Arudhra Radars, Marine Gas Turbines (MGT) and Ground-Based Multi-Purpose Jammers, among others.

In a brief statement, the Ministry of Defence said that the DAC has accorded the Acceptance of Necessity (AoN) for procuring CBRN Recce Vehicles, High Mobility Vehicles (HMV), Self-Propelled Mechanical Mine Layers (MML), Advanced Light Helicopters (ALHs), Trawl Tanks and Sarvatra Bridge System for the Indian Army.

Of the total AoNs accorded, approximately 98% of procurements will be made from the Indian Industry, the statement added.

Of the total Acceptance of Necessity (AoNs) accorded, approximately 98% of procurements will be made in India. FILE

Grant of AoNs or an in-principle administrative approval to proposed acquisitions is the first step in the defence procurement process. However, obtaining an AoN does not always lead to a final order.

The Defence Ministry statement noted that the CBRN recce vehicles will be capable of detecting, identifying, monitoring and marking areas contaminated with CBRN agents.

The HMVs will enhance operational capabilities, logistic support and mobility in challenging terrains, while the MMLs will achieve the desired operational capability in terms of fast and responsive minelaying in difficult terrains.

It added that the indigenous ALHs will execute complex missions across all terrains and operational situations for the Indian Army and the Indian Air Force, and the Trawl Tanks and Bridge System will be utilised to provide composite crossings to fighting formations during operations in varied terrains.

The procurement of Arudhra Radars, Design & Development and subsequent acquisition of Marine Gas Turbines (MGT) have been cleared for the Indian Navy.

The Arudhra Radar is an indigenous 4D multi-function phased array radar developed by India's DRDO and manufactured by Bharat Electronics Limited (BEL). It has electronic steering in both azimuth and elevation for surveillance, detection and tracking of aerial targets. The system will have target identification based on interrogations from a co-located Identification Friend or Foe system. Its successful trials have already been conducted by the Indian Air Force.

According to the statement, the Arudhra Radar will replace the existing Air Route Surveillance Radars at various Naval Air Stations. The Marine Gas Turbine, a warship propulsion system, will reduce dependency on foreign vendors.

Indian warships have traditionally been fitted with marine gas turbine generators imported from Russia. However, over the last three years, the Navy has been working to indigenise gas turbine parts and the compressor to reduce dependence on imports of spare parts for their maintenance and has been in talks with Indian firms.

In June this year, the Ministry of Defence on Friday signed a contract with Bharat Forge Limited for the acquisition of 12 sets of 1.25 MW Marine Gas Turbine Generators at a cost of around Rs 425 crore for onboard power generation on Kolkata-class ships of the Indian Navy. These marine gas turbine generators will have a minimum of 60% indigenous content.

The Ministry of Defence statement noted that for the IAF, approval was granted to various proposals to enhance the war-fighting capability of fighters, transports and helicopters. Approval was also accorded for procuring Ground-Based Multi-Purpose Jammer (GBMPJ) and installing Defence Forces Secure Access Card (DEFSAC) System.

Arunachal and Aksai Chin shown between claim lines

World map endorsed at UN depicts the two places as distinct regions between claims by India and China; in the case of the LoC, there is a note stating that it is agreed upon by India and Pakistan

Kallol Bhattacherjee
NEW DELHI

A new world map that was endorsed at the UN during the India-backed "Correct the map" resolution of September 4 in the UN General Assembly has projected India's Arunachal Pradesh and Aksai Chin, which India has maintained is a part of Ladakh, as distinct regions caught between Indian and Chinese "claim lines".

The map, which came up on July 1 during the months-long discussion for the UNGA resolution, shows Arunachal's southern State border with Assam, indicating the "Chinese line" while eliminating the State's border with Nagaland. It shows the State's northern border, indicating the "Indian line". Similarly, the map shows Aksai Chin's eastern borders, indicating the "Indian line" while presenting the western borders of Aksai Chin in what appears to be the "Chinese line". These "claim lines" appear to be a continuation of previous similar maps of the UN. But unlike in the 2011 map of the UN, these lines are not specified as "claim lines" in the July 1 map.

Fine lines: A section of the world map published by the United Nations in July 2026. UN.ORG

The map depicts Jammu and Kashmir with a dotted line indicating the Line of Control (LoC) between India and Pakistan. However, the issue of the LoC is clearly mentioned in a brief note on the map, explaining the "dotted line represents approximately the Line of Control in Jammu and Kashmir agreed upon by India and Pakistan. The final status of J&K has not yet been agreed upon by the parties."

But, there is no note on why the "Map of the World" issued by the UN during the consultation process and endorsed by the "Correct the Map" resolution sponsored by Togo and supported by the African Union depicted Arunachal and Aksai Chin as territories caught between Indian and Chinese claim lines. The map is non-binding, but it will be used by multilateral institutions worldwide.

Discussions on the map began in March 2026 when the African Union supported the "Equal Earth cartographic projection to more accurately represent Africa". African Union called this approach "cognitive justice". Subsequently, Togo prompted UNGA consultations on the map in April 2026, and the UNGA started informal consultations in July, when the draft map authored by the UN Geospatial on July 1 was taken up.

The External Affairs Ministry had reiterated India's support for the "Correct the Map" resolution on Sunday but declared that "India voted in favour of the resolution" and explained its position as a vote on the "underlying principle of promoting equal-area cartographic representation". "We also highlighted that the resolution does not constitute endorsement of any specific map, projection or depiction of national boundaries," the Ministry had said.

"India's sovereign territory, including Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh, must be depicted in accordance with India's official map. Any inaccurate or misleading depiction is unacceptable," said spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal. The Ministry is yet to respond to *The Hindu*'s query on the separate demarcation of Arunachal and Aksai Chin with contesting claim lines from India and China.

SC refuses extension for Aravali panel to submit final report

Aaratrika Bhaumik
NEW DELHI

While rejecting a six-month extension sought by a Supreme Court-appointed high-powered committee tasked with defining the Aravali hills and range, Chief Justice of India Surya Kant on Monday questioned whether it was "waiting for his retirement". The court directed the panel to submit its final report by November 30.

"They should have clearly asked for a date after my retirement... It appears they are waiting for my retirement. We are not going to allow this," the CJI told Additional Solicitor-General Aishwarya Bhati, appearing for the Centre.

CJI Kant is due to demit office on February 9, 2027.

The Bench, also comprising Justices Joymalya Bagchi and V. Mohana, made it clear that no further extension would be granted, and directed the five-member panel, headed by Indian Council of Forestry Research and Education Director General Kanchan Devi, to "work day and night" to finalise its recommendations. The committee has been tasked with evolving a uniform definition of the ecologically fragile Aravali hills and range, and recommending measures to regulate future mining.

The committee has been tasked with evolving a uniform definition of the Aravali hills.

The court asked the committee to submit interim reports on specific issues requiring immediate consideration, without waiting for the entire exercise to be completed. It also directed the panel to hear all stakeholders, including tribal communities in Rajasthan and Gujarat, before finalising its recommendations.

The matter will be heard next on December 2, by which time the committee is expected to have submitted its final report.

There are large inconsistencies between GDP and other economic indicators: says Garg

Kunal Shankar
Santosh V. Perumal

Former Finance Secretary Subhash Chandra Garg has questioned the credibility of India's latest GDP estimates. In an email response to *The Hindu,* he argued the sharp downward revisions to the size of the economy need a far more transparent explanation than the government's invocation of a new methodology, wider coverage and improved data.

At the centre of his concern is the absence of a transparent bridge between the 2011-12 base series and 2022-23 series. Mr. Garg said MoSPI must publish a back-series from 2011-12 to 2021-22 and set a timetable for doing so. "Perfectly valid demand," he said, arguing absence of such a programme suggested that the government was "not very serious" about resolving the issue.

He was particularly concerned about the reduction in the estimated nominal size of the economy. The revision in Q1 FY26, he said, was part of a much larger change with GDP for 2024-25 reduced by ₹12.70 lakh crore. The Centre did not adequately explain why the revisions resulted in a smaller economy.

Subhash Chandra Garg

The standard explanation – new series incorporates wider coverage, new data sources and indices – was, in his view, insufficient. "Any better coverage leads to nominal GDP getting increased, not decreased," he reasoned.

Mr. Garg offered two possibilities for the revisions: the earlier system overstated GDP on errors such as double counting or the GDP was deliberately overstated to produce stronger growth numbers, and later, written down under the cover of the new series. He gave no evidence of deliberate manipulation but said the scale of the revision made essential a detailed explanation.

He also questioned the price architecture underpinning the latest real-growth estimate. With consumer inflation over 4% and producer-price inflation about 9%, he said, the about 2.5% GDP deflator implied by the latest numbers appeared difficult to reconcile. "There is definitely a serious internal inconsistency," he said, calling for the underlying price data to be disclosed and explained.

Mr. Garg was equally sceptical of the application of double deflation to manufacturing, arguing international best practices cannot simply be transplanted without sufficiently granular Indian data. Until the new methodology stabilises, he suggested the older system be run in parallel.

His concerns extend beyond methodology to the independence of the statistical system. India's data infrastructure needs "massive modernisation," he said, but the statistical system could still produce reliable numbers if there was no "political interest to produce results in a certain direction." Statisticians needed greater freedom from political control.

No statistical noise

The broader problem, Mr. Garg argued, was the divergence between GDP and other indicators of economic well-being. Weakness in household incomes, employment, consumption and sentiment cannot always be dismissed as statistical noise, he said, particularly when particular data outcomes turn politically sensitive.

GDP itself, he stressed, was not a measure of welfare. India does not adequately publish the "income leg" of national accounts showing how value added is divided between labour, corporations and government. With per-capita GDP still low, he argued India must target 9-10% growth while redistributing income more effectively and reducing unproductive government expenditure.

For Mr. Garg, the government's technical responses have therefore failed to close the credibility gap. Its explanation for the reduction in GDP, he said, remained "officialese, obfuscatory" and "sheds no light."

He was unequivocal about the central issue: the downward revision in GDP was real and, in his assessment, must ultimately be explained either by an earlier overstatement or by acknowledging earlier growth was artificially inflated. "Nothing can falsify my argument," he said.

'50% of Indian firms say macro growth isn't fully translating'

T.C.A. Sharad Raghavan
NEW DELHI

Half of Indian businesses reported the country's strong macroeconomic performance either has not translated into improved business performance or has done so partially, as per the latest Confederation of Indian Industry's (CII) Business Outlook Survey.

This finding comes at a time when questions have been raised about whether the Centre's GDP growth numbers are reflective of the ground situation.

However, the composite business confidence score in the CII Business Outlook Survey for July-September 2026, looking at the current situation as well as future expectations, rose to 66 in Q2 from 60.8 in the first quarter of FY27. The score in Q2 of this year was the same as in Q2 last year.

"The sharp improvement reflects strengthening in business sentiments, primarily supported by the easing of disruptions stemming from the West Asia conflict," the survey stated.

A sizeable number of firms saw higher demand.

The survey covered 238 public sector and private firms from "all industry sectors", including micro, small, medium and large enterprises, from different regions, the CII said.

The data shows 13.4% of the respondents said "on ground conditions were subdued despite strong macro data" while 36.6% said they saw some improvement in business conditions "but weaker than indicators suggest".

However, 11.3% of the respondents said business growth "matches or exceeds macro momentum".

Another 29.4% said they saw "clear benefits, though somewhat below headline growth". The survey does not mention how the balance 9.3% voted.

The demand aspect of the survey showed 29.4% of the respondents expect no change in local demand in Q2 vis a vis Q1. Also, another 3.5% expect demand to be more than 20% lower than in Q1 while 6.1% expect demand to be 5-20% lower than in Q1.

The other side of this data is a sizeable number of firms saw higher demand.

"For Q2FY27, 61% of respondents expect demand to rise, while only 9.6% foresee a moderation, a widening of the positive margin over Q1 that signals sustained confidence in end-market conditions," the survey showed.

"The share expecting demand growth above 20% rises from 12.9% in Q1FY27 to 16% in Q2FY27, indicating that optimism is not just holding but intensifying at the upper end."

Former bureaucrat Ashish Joshi moves court for FIR copy after nine hours of police questioning

Sohini Ghosh
New Delhi, September 7

DAYS AFTER former civil servant Ashish Joshi was questioned for nearly nine hours by the Delhi Police Special Cell over his social media posts, he moved an application before a magistrate court on Monday seeking a copy of the FIR based on which he was detained and interrogated.

Chief Judicial Magistrate Mridul Gupta of Patiala House Courts is due to take up the application on Tuesday.

According to Joshi's lawyer, Aadil Singh Boparai, the FIR copy had not yet been supplied as of 2 pm on Monday.

Joshi, a former Controller of Communications in the Department of Telecommunications, was picked up from Chanakyapuri for questioning on September 2 in connection with a case purportedly registered in August.

Police had said that Joshi was questioned regarding the case that was registered by the Special Cell's Counter Intelligence (CI) unit under Section 192 of the BNS, which deals with provocation with the intent, or knowledge, that it is likely to cause a riot.

According to Joshi's application before the court, he was returning from his morning walk from the vicinity of Nehru Park at 8.45 am on September 2 when two persons, who said they were Special Cell officials, had "accosted" him and "compelled him to accompany them for...interrogation/investigation with regard to an alleged tweet..."

This was done, however,

Ashish Joshi

without furnishing him with a copy of the FIR, according to Joshi.

Joshi stated in his application that despite repeated requests during the interrogation for a copy of the FIR, it was not provided. Subsequently, he made a representation to the Deputy Commissioner of Police, Special Cell, on September 3, seeking a copy.

"The continued and unexplained denial of a copy of the FIR... despite specific and repeated requests... is contrary to the settled position of law and has caused serious prejudice, uncertainty and hardship to (Joshi) who remains wholly unaware of the precise nature of the allegations, if any, against him," Joshi has stated.

The Indian Express reported that Joshi claimed that he had been summoned in connection with his August 26 post on X on the West Bengal elections, but that a substantial part of the questioning was about an earlier post in which he had referred to a purported disagreement between the Union Home Minister and Home Secretary.

IN SIX MONTHS OF WEST ASIA WAR

US share in India's LPG imports surged to over 50% from under 10%

Sukalp Sharma
New Delhi, September 7

THE STIFLED supply of liquified petroleum gas (LPG) from West Asia due to the regional conflict there has led to a surge in US's share in India's LPG imports to over 50% in the six months since the conflict began, up from less than 10% in the preceding six months, as per an analysis of LPG shipping data of the past 12 months.

The West Asia war, which started with the US and Israel striking Iran late February, has upended India's LPG import pie, which was traditionally dominated by Gulf suppliers like the UAE, Qatar, Kuwait, and Saudi Arabia. Amid the supply crunch, India's overall LPG imports fell over 40% sequentially in the March-August period, while imports from the US nearly quadrupled as India scrambled to find alternative supply sources not constrained by geopolitical conflict.

The West Asia war led to an effective halt in vessel movements through the critical chokepoint of the Strait of Hormuz, which accounted for a fifth of global oil and liquefied natural gas (LNG) flows. The strait is a narrow waterway that connects the Persian Gulf with the Gulf of Oman and the Arabian Sea, and is the primary route to evacuate energy supplies from the broader Gulf region. The disruption in energy supplies through the strait has caused a headache for various energy importing countries, including India. While the country's crude oil and LNG supplies have also been impacted, LPG supplies have been hit the most.

Around 40% of India's crude oil imports, 60% of its LNG imports, and a whopping 90% of its LPG imports regularly came from West Asia through the Strait of Hormuz. The country's dependence on imports stands at over 88% for oil, 60% for LPG, and about 50% for natural gas. This means that the Strait of Hormuz effectively saw the movement of around 54% of India's LPG consumption.

An analysis of tanker data from commodity market analytics firm Kpler shows that India's overall LPG imports in the six months to August declined 43.1% from the previous six

• Top sources of LPG for India

	MARCH-AUGUST LPG IMPORTS		SEPTEMBER-FEBRUARY LPG IMPORTS	
Supplier	Volume (mn tn)	Share (%)	Volume (mn tn)	Share (%)
US	3.78	53	0.99	7.9
UAE	0.96	13.4	4.74	37.8
Saudi Arabia	0.42	5.9	1.77	14.1
Qatar	0.41	5.7	2.65	21.1
Kuwait	0.35	4.9	1.89	15.1

SOURCE: KPLER

months (September-February) to 7.14 million tonnes. Supplies from the US surged 281.1% to 3.78 million tonnes, accounting for 53% of India's LPG imports for March-August. In September-February, Washington supplied about 993,000 tonnes of LPG, making up 7.9% of New Delhi's LPG imports.

Share of the UAE, which was the biggest source of LPG for India before the war, contracted to 13.4% in the six months to August from 37.8% in September-February. Import volumes crashed 79.8% to about 958,000 tonnes. Similarly, import volumes from Qatar plummeted by 84.7% to about 405,000 tonnes in March-August; its share in India's LPG import pie shrunk to 5.7% from 21.1% in the previous six months.

Kuwait, which had a 15.1% share in India's LPG imports in September-February, saw it contract to 4.9% in March-August as volumes were down 81.7% to about 346,300 tonnes. LPG import volumes from Saudi Arabia in the six months to August were down 76.1% sequentially to about 423,700 tonnes. In September-February, Riyadh had a share of 14.1% in New Delhi's LPG import basket, which shrunk to a mere 5.9% in the following six months.

"This growth (in LPG imports from the US) is particularly due to the constrained supply from the Middle East. US is a major LPG supplier globally and became a readily available option for India. This LPG is accessible in this constrained supply environment. This is similar to Russian (oil) barrels flocking to India (amid the West Asia supply disruption)," said Nikhil Dubey, lead analyst-refining at Kpler.

According to experts, American LPG flows to India are expected to remain strong till the time West Asian supply normalises, on which there is no clarity at present.

"Washington has been the biggest LPG exporter worldwide even before the crisis, and US propane was already cheaper than Asian supplies before the war. Once the shortage hit, and with no other option nearby, India was willing to pay more to bring it from further away because keeping cooking gas available was the priority," said Abu Dhabi-based energy analyst Natalia Katona.

FULL REPORT ON
WWW.INDIANEXPRESS.COM

BRICS meet: Focus on talks with China over tech import, investment curbs

Ravi Dutta Mishra & Pratyush Deep
New Delhi, September 7

AHEAD OF the 18th BRICS Summit in New Delhi on September 12-13, which Chinese President Xi Jinping is expected to attend with a sizeable business delegation, the Ministry of Commerce and Industry has reached out to consult with Indian industry groups. Indications are that the high-level talks with Chinese counterparts, on the sidelines of the BRICS Summit, could see the Indian side flag concerns over investment restrictions faced by companies in China and Customs roadblocks on import of high-tech items from the country, *The Indian Express* has learnt.

A government official said the China desk of the Commerce and Industry Ministry has been working on several restrictions on key tech-related items imposed by Chinese Customs, which was hurting Indian manufacturing. The Indian automobile industry had already been finding workarounds due to delays in exports of rare earth magnets from China. It is likely that the Indian side will push for some measure of reciprocity in easing procedural bottlenecks and restrictions on sourcing norms.

A senior executive in the renewable energy sector with

»CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

E. **EXPLAINED**

The thaw: FDI to border trade

India-China trade relations have seen a significant thaw in recent times -- from easing of restrictions on foreign direct investments from land-bordering countries, to reopening of India-China border trade via Nathu La, and resumption of direct flights.

Tech import curbs

sourcing exposure in China told *The Indian Express* that Beijing's growing restrictions on the export of critical technologies and raw materials across several sectors have become a high priority for the government ahead of the BRICS Summit.

"China has imposed restrictions on the export of ingot and wafer technology, battery cells and cell technology," the executive said. "For example, in the transmission sector, exports of High Voltage Direct Current (HVDC) and specialised components are also being restricted."

HVDCs are critical for long-distance power transmission with reduced transmission losses, and considered essential for integrating renewable energy sources and grid stability.

The executive said these restrictions could undermine India's efforts to build domestic manufacturing capabilities. "I think it is very critical that the government finds a way to tide over some of these issues because otherwise our entire backward integration, which makes India competitive, will unfortunately be stopped and won't be successful," the executive said, adding that most of these restrictions were imposed over the past 12-15 months.

"China's restrictions on the export of critical technologies and specialised components, including those required for HVDC and advanced transmission systems, underline the strategic vulnerabilities of global supply chains. For India, this is particularly significant as we undertake one of the world's most ambitious transmission build-outs to support growing electricity demand and renewable energy integration," said Pratik Agarwal, managing director, Sterlite Electric and Chairman-Serentica Renewables and Resonia.

However, official trade data showed that China has stepped up imports from India in recent months. India's exports to China jumped over 28% to $5.55 billion in April-June this financial year as compared to the same period last year. The export jump to China also helped cushion India's fishery exports hit by US tariffs.

Amid signs of easing trade ties, a top Commerce Ministry official was expected to visit Beijing this week. However, the talks were learnt to have been postponed due to border-related talks between India and China. A query emailed to the Commerce Ministry remained unanswered until press time.

The Indian Express reported on Monday that India and China conducted Corps Commander-level talks in Arunachal Pradesh on Sunday.

Trade talks with China

As per the Chinese Embassy in India, Chinese Ambassador to India Xu Feihong met Commerce Secretary Rajesh Agrawal on September 1, and the two sides exchanged views on economic and trade relations and other issues of mutual interest.

"Minister Guo Ce of the Chinese Embassy, Additional Secretary Darpan Jain of Trade Negotiation-Bilateral Division, and Joint Secretary Kapil Chaudhary of Foreign Trade (North East Asia) Division attended the meeting. Ambassador Xu said that under the strategic guidance of the leaders of both countries, China-India relations have maintained a good momentum of improvement and development with the resumption of direct flights and border trade as well as an increase in people-to-people exchanges," the Embassy said.