# 24 Delhi seats now have fewer electors than 2025 turnout

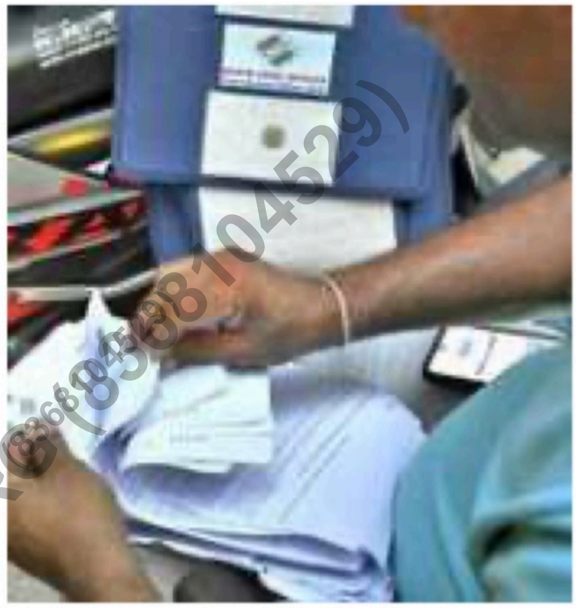
**Pon Vasanth B.A.**
**Devyanshi Bihani**
**Srinivasan Ramani**
CHENNAI

Amid concerns over high rate of deletions in Delhi during the ongoing special intensive revision (SIR) of electoral rolls, an analysis has revealed that 24 of the 70 Assembly constituencies (ACs) in the National Capital Territory have fewer voters than the number of people who voted in the 2025 Assembly election.

These 24 ACs together had 49.1 lakh voters when Delhi went to the polls, of which 28.9 lakh (58.9%) voted.

However, they now have only 27.7 lakh voters, which is 1.23 lakh fewer than those who voted in 2025. The Tughlakabad constituency is where the SIR process has made the deepest cut.

In the draft rolls now, there are only 1,00,386 electors, which is 14,575 fewer than the 1,14,961 who actually turned out to vote in 2025.



A booth-level officer inspects papers during the SIR exercise in New Delhi. FILE PHOTO

**DATA POINT ON**
**» PAGE 7**

# PM decided to prostrate before Trump, says Rahul on UPI fee

**Modi govt. gave in to U.S. demand to get rid of zero MDR for UPI, says Jairam, questions if move intends to benefit U.S. card companies; Kharge terms U.S. threat of higher tariffs on countries buying oil from Russia a failure of India's foreign policy**

**The Hindu Bureau**
NEW DELHI

Mounting a sharp attack on the Narendra Modi government over the introduction of a charge on certain UPI transactions, Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi on Wednesday accused the Prime Minister of "prostrating" before U.S. President Donald Trump, and demanded an immediate rollback of the decision.

In a video posted on X, Mr. Gandhi said Mr. Modi had "decided to lie down straight and prostrate himself in front of Donald Trump", and accused the government of imposing a "UPI tax" on Indians to give "a huge amount of money" to the United States.

> Indira Gandhi *ji* was once asked whether she leans left or right and her response was, 'I don't lean left, I don't lean right, I stand straight'. Modi *ji* has a completely different concept. He is neither left nor right, he has decided to lie down straight and prostrate himself in front of Donald Trump
>
> **RAHUL GANDHI**
> Congress leader

"Indira Gandhi*ji* was once asked whether she leans left or right and her response was, 'I don't lean left, I don't lean right, I stand straight.' Modi*ji* has a completely different concept. He is neither left nor right, he has decided to lie down straight and prostrate himself in front of Donald Trump," Mr. Gandhi said. "Modi*ji*, stop lying down in front of the U.S., have a spine, stand up and rollback the UPI tax," Mr. Gandhi added.

The Congress has sought to link the UPI decision to what it describes as growing U.S. pressure on India, including demands for changes to the zero merchant discount rate (MDR) regime for UPI. The party has also stepped up its attack following moves in the U.S. Congress to impose tariffs on countries buying oil and gas from Russia.

Congress general secretary in charge of communications Jairam Ramesh said the U.S. Trade Representative had earlier criticised UPI for being free and for having displaced card companies such as Visa and Mastercard.

"Here, the Modi government has given in to a U.S. demand to get rid of zero MDR and charge for UPI," Mr. Ramesh said, questioning why the rate had been fixed at 0.4% and whether the move was intended to enable U.S. card companies to compete with UPI.

"The PM has redefined NOTA – Narendra's Ongoing Trump Appeasement," he said.

Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge, reacting to the U.S. tariff legislation, said the threat of higher tariffs showed that the government's foreign and trade policies had "miserably failed".

"From tariffs and trade to H1B1 immigration, visas and digital payments, the pressure from Washington keeps mounting, and you, 'Howdy Modi*ji*' keep surrendering!" Mr. Kharge said on X.

Earlier, Congress media and publicity department head Pawan Khera said: "We are not playing ball with America and China. We are the ball."

The government, however, said the new MDR is not a charge on consumers.

Congress spokesperson Supriya Shrinate rejected the government's position, saying the move would ultimately increase costs for ordinary users.

# Oman pitches new port that could expand India's access to Gulf energy

**Kallol Bhattacherjee**
NEW DELHI

With the Strait of Hormuz in a chokehold due to Iran-U.S. hostilities, Oman has pitched investment opportunities to India in a new port that could provide uninterrupted access to energy resources from the Persian Gulf.

Speaking here on Wednesday, a high-level representative of the Sohar Port of Oman welcomed Indian investments into the port and said it would serve as a platform to connect businesses in regional and global markets.

"India represents an important and growing dimension of Sohar's international investment landscape, with established Indian businesses already contributing to our industrial ecosystem. There is significant potential to deepen this relationship through investments that complement our industrial clusters, strengthen value chains and create new opportunities for growth," said Raid Al Rubaiey, CEO of Sohar Freezone and Deputy CEO of Sohar Port. The port is located on the Omani coast on the Gulf of Oman, and ships can access hubs in the Gulf through this port as it sits far from the Strait of Hormuz.

The Sohar Port is located on the Omani coast on the Gulf of Oman, far from the Strait of Hormuz. FILE PHOTO

Mr. Rubaiey said that Sohar Port has received investments of over $30 billion and that it is capable of handling 72 million tonnes of cargo annually. "Sohar provides an established industrial and logistics platform connecting businesses to regional and global markets," he said.

The remarks came at the end of a two-day promotional event organised by the Embassy of Oman, during which the Ambassador of Oman, Issa Saleh Al Shibani, introduced the port and the Freezone to Indian businesses, manufacturers and exporters to increase Indian participation in the port.

Earlier, Oman had offered Duqm and Salalah ports to India, but the Sohar Port has the advantage of being located in the northeast of Oman, close to vital energy pipelines of the United Arab Emirates and eastern Saudi Arabia.

# In post-BRICS outreach, Jaishankar reaches Bhutan; Nepal Minister to visit Delhi today

**Suhasini Haidar**
NEW DELHI

External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar arrived in Thimphu on Wednesday for a two-day visit to discuss India's development assistance, while Nepal Finance Minister Swarnim Wagle will arrive in Delhi on Thursday for talks that are expected to discuss India's support for Nepal's reconstruction post-floods, as the government intensifies its outreach in the neighbourhood.

Last week, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh travelled to Colombo, in the first such visit by an Indian Defence Minister in nearly four decades, to strengthen strategic ties.

External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar with his Bhutanese counterpart, Lyonpo D. N. Dhungyel, on Wednesday. PTI

Mr. Jaishankar met with Bhutan Foreign Minister Lyonpo D.N. Dhungyel for bilateral discussions at Bumthang in central Bhutan. "Our conversation focused on advancing our multifaceted engagement in development partnership, energy, trade, connectivity, culture, and people-to-people ties," Mr. Jaishankar said in a post.

The Ministers also laid the foundation stone for a hydropower project, and inaugurated a bridge and a hospital. On Thursday, he will meet Bhutan's fifth King Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck and call on Prime Minister Tshering Tobgay, the Ministry of External Affairs said in a release.

Meanwhile, Mr. Wagle will land in Delhi on Thursday for talks with Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman and other Ministers. He will also meet a number of diplomatic and economic experts and academics during his two-day visit.

Mr. Wagle will also be expected to clarify Nepal Foreign Minister Shishir Khanal's remark that India, China and the U.S., as "climate polluters", should pay "compensation" to "countries like Nepal that have faced the impact of global warming, which is now a regional threat.

## Missed opportunity

The visits come within days of the BRICS Summit, where the government hosted leaders from more than 20 countries, but none from India's neighbourhood. The lone South Asian invitee, Bangladesh Prime Minister Tarique Rahman, declined the invitation due to tensions between the two countries.

Experts said not inviting more leaders from neighbouring countries was a missed opportunity. "India's neighbours should have been called for the 'party'," said former High Commissioner to Pakistan and Canada Ajay Bisaria, speaking at *The Hindu's* weekly 'Parley' discussion. "I think it would have been a much better situation if the BIMSTEC neighbours, if not the SAARC neighbours, were present," he said.

Academic and commentator Happymon Jacob said that it was a "shame" that India had not convened a regional mechanism on the sidelines of the BRICS Summit.

# New Delhi rejects Pak.-China Boundary Joint Commission

**Press Trust of India**
NEW DELHI

India on Wednesday rejected the Boundary Joint Commission set up by Pakistan and China, saying that the body has no legal basis to decide on arrangements related to Indian territory under illegal occupation.

New Delhi's reaction came following the first meeting of the Pakistan-China Boundary Joint Commission in Islamabad. India has been maintaining that Pakistan's handing over of certain territories such as Shaksgam Valley to China in 1963 is illegal and unacceptable.

It has also opposed the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor as part of it passes through Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK).

"Our position on this matter is clear and consistent. There is no boundary between Pakistan and China. We reject the so-called Joint Commission, which is without any legal basis," External Affairs Ministry spokesman Randhir Jaiswal said on the Pakistan-China Boundary Joint Commission. The entire Union Territories of Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh "have been, are and will always remain integral and inalienable parts of India", he said. He said that India has never recognised the so-called 'China-Pakistan Boundary Agreement' of 1963.

# Pakistan corvette collides with Indian Navy warship

**India summons Pakistan envoy, lodges strong protest over 'unprofessional conduct'; *PNS Hunain* approached Indian ship at high speed and suffered damage in collision; no casualties reported**

**Saurabh Trivedi**
NEW DELHI

A Pakistan Navy corvette collided with a frontline Indian Navy warship after approaching it at high speed and manoeuvring in an "unsafe and unprofessional" manner in the North Arabian Sea on Tuesday evening. The incident prompted India to summon Pakistan's Chargé d'affaires and lodge a strong diplomatic protest.

Defence Ministry sources said the incident took place in international waters while the Indian warship was on a routine surveillance mission. *PNS Hunain* (F-273) approached the Indian vessel while attempting to intercept or follow it. The close-range manoeuvre caused the two vessels to graze each other.

A similar incident happened in 2011 involving the Pakistani vessel *PNS Babur* and the Indian ship *INS Godavari*. FILE PHOTO

Sources said *PNS Hunain* sustained damage in the collision and returned to the harbour. The Indian naval vessel suffered minor damage and continued on its mission. No casualties or major damage were reported from the incident.

"The Chargé d'Affaires of the High Commission for the Islamic Republic of Pakistan in New Delhi was summoned to the Ministry of External Affairs today and a strong protest was lodged with him over the unacceptable and unprofessional conduct of Pakistani naval units at sea that led to a collision with a unit of the Indian Navy," the External Affairs Ministry said.

"While the incident, which took place in international waters, did not cause any major damage, the conduct of the Pakistani naval ship was in direct contravention of Article 10 of the Agreement between India and Pakistan on Advance Notice on Military Exercises, Manoeuvres and Troops Movements of April 1991," it said.

Later, Pakistan summoned the Chargé d'affaires of the Indian High Commission in Islamabad and lodged a strong protest over what it termed a "highly provocative and unacceptable" action by an Indian Navy vessel in Pakistan's EEZ.

**CONTINUED ON**
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# Pak. corvette collides with Indian Navy ship

The Pakistani diplomat was advised to convey to the authorities in Pakistan the need for all military units to exercise due care and respect the provisions of relevant bilateral agreements to prevent a recurrence of such incidents. The Indian Chargé d'affaires in Islamabad has been instructed to lodge a similar protest with Pakistan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the government said.

*PNS Hunain* is a Yarmook-class offshore patrol vessel built by Damen Shipyards in Romania and commissioned into the Pakistan Navy in July 2024. It is about 98 metres long and is designed for maritime security, surveillance, and patrol missions. It has a flight deck and can transport a helicopter and an unmanned aerial vehicle, besides carrying two rigid-hull inflatable boats for maritime-security tasks. The latest incident comes amid the continued deployment of Indian and Pakistani naval assets in the Arabian Sea.

# Saudi Arabia accuses Houthis of targeting Mecca with a drone

**Agence France-Presse**
RIYADH

Saudi Arabia accused Yemen's Houthis on Wednesday of launching a "cowardly" attack targeting Islam's holy city of Mecca, sparking outrage across the Muslim world.

The Houthis swiftly rejected the Saudi claim that it had shot down a drone heading towards Mecca as a "lie". New fighting between the Iran-backed Houthis and Yemen's Saudi-backed government has dragged in the kingdom, after the Houthis declared a maritime blockade on Saudi ships in the Red Sea.

Last week, the Houthis seized control of the entirety of Yemen's Red Sea coast and the Bab el-Mandeb Strait, a vital artery for Saudi oil exports as the wider war chokes off the Strait of Hormuz shipping route.

**'Cowardly attack'**

Saudi Arabia's Foreign Ministry condemned the targeting of Mecca as a "cowardly terrorist attack" and reaffirmed the kingdom's right to "defend the security of the two holy mosques, the pilgrims, and the entire Saudi territory".

Houthi politburo member Hazem al-Assad, however, dismissed the accusation as "a worn-out lie that has been used before and no longer fools anyone".

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SAUDI PLANES POUND YEMEN
» PAGE 14

# Saudi Arabia says Houthis targeted Mecca

The Saudi-led coalition battling the Houthis vowed retaliation, saying “the security of the Two Holy Mosques and the pilgrims is a red line”.

“The coalition will not hesitate to take the necessary and deterrent measures against the Terrorist Houthi Militia.”

Houthi military spokesperson Yahya Saree said Saudi Arabia had launched more than 450 strikes on Yemen this week, and that in response, the group had targeted a Saudi air base in the south and a state oil company facility in the Red Sea port city of Yanbu.

The Organisation of Islamic Cooperation – a bloc of 57 Muslim countries – condemned the “heinous attacks”, while Arab League chief Nabil Fahmy called it “a matter of extreme gravity”.

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**CONTINUED ON**
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**SAUDI PLANES POUND YEMEN**
**» PAGE 14**

# Saudi warplanes pound Yemen as Houthis claim shooting down a jet

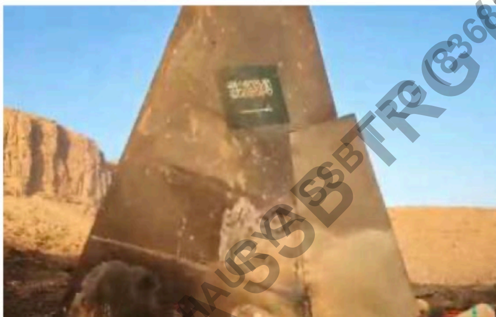
Saudi Arabia has carried out as many as 450 air strikes on Yemen this week, says militant group; Houthis claim that a locally made munition was used to target the warplane; U.S. bans its employees from travelling within 20 miles of Yemen border

**Reuters**
RIYADH

Saudi warplanes pounded Yemen, the Houthis said on Wednesday, as the Iran-backed fighters solidified their gains after a lightning advance that has extended Tehran's reach in the West Asia war and further disrupted global oil supplies.

In a sign of the worsening conflict in a new theatre, the United States tightened its travel warning for Saudi Arabia, banning government employees from travelling within 20 miles of the Yemen border.

The Houthis, who since last week have swept through Yemeni towns along the Red Sea coast and seized islands in the Bab el-Mandeb strait at its mouth, released battlefield video overnight of fighters seizing armoured vehicles from Saudi-backed forces. Warplanes flew overhead and huge explosions billowed into the sky from desert dunes.



The reported wreckage of a Saudi F-15 fighter jet that was shot down by Houthi militants in Marib province of Yemen. AFP

Houthi military spokesperson Yahya Saree said the Houthis had shot down a Saudi F-15 fighter jet, claiming a locally made munition was used to target the warplane.

"The Yemeni Armed Forces, with Allah's aid and grace, succeeded in shooting down a Saudi F-15 fighter jet while it was carrying out hostile operations in support of its military mobilisations in the airspace of Marib province," Mr. Saree said on social media.

Mr. Saree said the Saudis had carried out as many as 450 air strikes on Yemen this week. Officials in the Saudi-backed government that controls southern Yemen have acknowledged that their forces and those of Saudi Arabia were conducting air strikes on Houthi positions, though Riyadh itself has not confirmed them.

The Houthis have fired repeatedly into Saudi Arabia over the past week causing alarms over cities in the south and west. An attack blamed on Iran-aligned fighters in Iraq last week also knocked out Saudi Arabia's East-West Pipeline, the main route used to divert exports away from the blockaded Strait of Hormuz.

The number of Yemenis fleeing the fighting soared once again to over one lakh people, the International Organisation for Migration said, as fears grow over a return to civil war.

# China tech giant: Billions of 'agents' in AI traffic by 2035

**Reuters**
*Beijing, September 16*

CHINA'S HUAWEI expects autonomous agents to account for more than 90% of global AI token traffic by 2035, requiring huge increases in computing power alongside new systems to keep independent software secure and controllable.

Annual consumption of AI tokens, the units models process when receiving and generating information, will skyrocket over next decade as agents continuously perceive their surroundings, reason, make decisions and call external tools, the Chinese tech giant said Wednesday.

Huawei's *Intelligent World 2035: Turning Vision into Action* report makes no call to slow development. Instead, it assumes agent capabilities and deployment will expand dramatically and lists security and privacy protection for autonomous agents among 10 technologies needed to support this.

The approach reflects a wider divide over AI pacing.

While parts of the US technology industry are debating coordinated limits on how quickly frontier capabilities improve, China has generally sought to accelerate AI adoption across its economy, while building technical standards around emerging risks.

Huawei said moving AI into the physical world would be essential to achieving Artificial General Intelligence, or AGI, which generally refers to systems able to perform a broad range of tasks at or beyond human levels The Huawei report builds on its earlier forecast that 900 billion AI agents could be active globally by 2035, roughly 100 times the projected human population. Huawei is also deploying agents as part of a security response.

# EU chief bats for European Security Council; open to entry of Canada

**Reuters**
*Brussels, September 16*

EUROPEAN COMMISSION President Ursula von der Leyen on Wednesday backed the creation of a European Security Council, bringing together leaders from the EU, Britain, Norway, Ukraine and Canada, as she warned threats to peace on the continent were growing.

Von der Leyen also proposed a new system to coordinate responses to so-called hybrid incidents, often attributed to Russia, that fall below the threshold of conventional military attacks but undermine European security - such as sabotage, arson and drone incursions.

Her initiatives reflect a growing desire by European officials to take more responsibility for the continent's security, amid doubts over whether they can rely on US President Donald Trump to come to their aid through NATO alliance.

European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen. AP

"Russia's war of aggression on Ukraine rages on. And threats are mounting on our soil," von der Leyen, said in her annual State of Union speech to European Parliament in Strasbourg.

Citing incidents such as an attempted drone attack on Leipzig airport last month that German authorities have attributed to Russia, von der Leyen said Europe's doctrine, institutions and decision-making had not kept pace with a new reality.

"Europe needs its own counter-hybrid playbook," she said, proposing an "emergency security protocol" that any EU member could trigger to coordinate a European response.

Von der Leyen said the Commission would set out ideas to make a European Security Council a reality. She mentioned Canada could be involved. In the same speech, she stressed the EU's close links to Canada and said she wanted to open the door to an "associate membership" of the bloc.

# India sets terms to advance talks on WTO plurilateral agreements

**Ravi Dutta Mishra**
*New Delhi, September 16*

AFTER STAUNCH opposition to plurilateral pacts at the World Trade Organisation's (WTO) 14th Ministerial Conference in Cameroon earlier this year, India on Wednesday offered its proposal on WTO reforms which could help insert plurilateral agreements within the WTO framework, India's submission to the WTO's General Council showed.

Plurilateral trade agreements are negotiated and implemented by exclusive groups rather than by all WTO members, and India has been concerned that such pacts would act against the interests of developing nations, including India, as a bunch of developed nations have been opposing India's public stockholding programme on grounds that they are distorting trade.

Significantly softening its position on plurilateral pacts, India said that a "common understanding" of safeguards for plurilateral initiatives can serve all members and provide predictability.

"A common understanding on safeguards can provide greater predictability to proponents; enable non-participants to understand and protect their rights and interests; preserve attention to existing mandates; and support confidence in the WTO as a member-driven, inclusive and development-oriented multilateral institution," India's submission said. Stressing on preserving the rights, interests and agency of non-participants, India said: "Depending on their subject matter, design and intended institutional relationship with the WTO, plurilateral initiatives may have implications for existing rights and obligations of the members, the conduct of WTO work, the negotiating interests of Members, or the operation of the multilateral trading system," the India's statement read.

"While non-participation should remain a legitimate exercise of a member's rights, it should not prejudice the rights or interests of non-participating members in matters concerning the WTO framework," India told WTO.

India stressed that "special and differential treatment" should remain central to WTO rule-making and that the pursuit of plurilateral initiatives should not result in the "marginalisation of development priorities or divert attention and negotiating resources from issues of particular interest to developing and least-developed members.

"Without procedural safeguards, proliferation of plurilateral initiatives and agreements could put a strain on WTO resources and limited budget. Members may face challenges in authorising the allocation of WTO budget and other resources to service these initiatives and any resulting agreements. Scarce resources would be diverted from required mandated uses, including technical assistance and capacity building," India's proposal flagged.

The change in India's position came after the BRICS summit and its recent bilateral with China.


**• CHANGING STANCE**

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FULL REPORT ON
WWW.INDIANEXPRESS.COM

## NITI AAYOG'S EV ADOPTION INDEX

# Delhi ranks first, only 2 large states among top performers in EV list

**Dheeraj Mishra**
*New Delhi, September 16*

DELHI HAS topped NITI Aayog's India Electric Mobility Index (IEMI) 2025 for the development of the e-mobility ecosystem and the adoption of electric vehicles (EVs) on Indian roads.

It is followed by Maharashtra and Karnataka, the only two of the 17 large states to feature among the top performers in EV implementation, according to the report released on Wednesday.

IEMI is a composite Index, which assesses the policy framework and implementation outcomes for e-mobility at the state-level. NITI Aayog developed the index in collaboration with WRI India. The report covers three themes: transport electrification progress, charging infrastructure readiness, and EV research and innovation status.

According to the index, the composite scores on performance across all 36 states and Union Territories (UTs) ranges from 10 to 84, and a median score of 40.

Delhi bagged the highest score of 84, followed by Maharashtra (78), Karnataka (73), Chandigarh (71), and Goa (65). When compared to the 2024 index, Delhi and Maharashtra maintained the top two positions, while Karnataka moved to the third place after overtaking Chandigarh, while Goa climbed ten spots to secure fifth position.

Notably, Madhya Pradesh recorded a substantial improvement, moving from the 23rd to seventh rank.

The index further shows that eight large states — Tamil Nadu, Madhya Pradesh, Odisha, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Haryana, Rajasthan, and Uttar Pradesh — have qualified as frontrunners, meaning they scored 50-64 out of 100. The other seven large states such as Chhattisgarh, West Bengal, Bihar, Kerala, Jharkhand, Punjab, and Gujarat were emerging performers with a score of 35-49.

### *EV progress and gaps*

The report also shows that Delhi, Chandigarh, and Maharashtra were the only UTs and states to qualify as top performers in transport electrification progress, which is assigned the highest weightage of 50% in index calculation. It evaluates market absorption, consumer acceptance, and demand-side momentum by measuring how effectively EVs are being adopted and supported across the states.

In the Charging Infrastructure Readiness (30% weightage), Karnataka recorded the highest score nationwide at 97, closely followed by Goa (92) and Maharashtra (91).

This captures charger-to-vehicle ratio, subsidies for charging infrastructure, building bye laws for charging, power availability among other metrics. Delhi also achieved the top score of 94 in the EV Research and Innovation Status (20% weightage) category.

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**WWW.INDIANEXPRESS.COM**

# What India's growth really means

**Gourav Vallabh**

Professor of Finance, XLRI and Part Time Member, Economic Advisory Council to the Prime Minister. Views are personal

India's 7.8% real GDP growth in April to June 2026 is an extension of a strong economic journey – real GDP grew 7.2% in 2023-24, 7.1% in 2024-25, and 7.7% in 2025-26. The latest rate exceeds the RBI's 7% forecast despite the West Asian conflict, high energy prices, and uncertain trade. Its real significance, however, lies in the breadth of production and demand.

Real GDP, which is the value of goods and services after adjusting for inflation, rose to ₹81.36 lakh crore, while real GVA, the value added by farms, factories and services before adjusting for product taxes and subsidies, grew by 8.2% to ₹73.82 lakh crore. Manufacturing rose by 9.2%, utilities 8.9% and construction 7.7%, lifting the secondary sector by 8.6%. Services grew by 10%, led by finance, real estate, IT and professional services at 12.1%. Agriculture grew by 3.6%, although mining contracted by 2.4%. This is broad-based growth with identifiable weak spots.

This strength is reinforced by demand. Gross fixed capital formation grew by 11.9%, private consumption by 7.1% and real exports 12%. Using the same gross fixed capital formation measure for 2023-24, investments by private corporations were 10.3% of GDP. While the general government invested 4.2%, total public sector investment was 7.8% when adding in investments by public corporations. Moreover, when adding in household investments, mainly housing and unincorporated businesses, total non-public investment was 24.1% of GDP. That is, while public capital expenditure has built the platform, the next acceleration requires more private investment.

India should counter energy risks through diversified suppliers, long term contracts, strategic reserves, renewables, domestic exploration and efficiency

**Fast growing economy**

The base year change is simple. A base year removes inflation and reflects the economy's structure. Updating it from 2011-12 to 2022-23 replaces an outdated market basket with today's products, services and prices. Some estimates may rise and others fall, but changing the ruler does not shrink the economy. On comparable year-on-year data, India's 7.8% exceeded Malaysia's 6%, Singapore's 5.9%, Indonesia's 5.29%, and China's 4.3%.

India is therefore among the fastest growing major economies. Its expanding market supports global demand for energy, technology, machinery and services, while offering a trusted location for diversified supply chains. This advances India's path to becoming the world's third largest economy in nominal terms. Since rankings also reflect prices and exchange rates, the milestone will endure only if real growth leads to higher productivity, stronger firms, and better household incomes. Employment is the decisive test. India added 17.19 crore jobs between 2014-15 and 2023-24, according to RBI KLEMS-based data. The next employment revolution must improve job quality through productivity, wages, formalisation, social security and skilling. While women's labour force participation reached 41.7% in 2023-24, safe transport, affordable childcare, flexible work, credit and market access are essential to bring many more women into productive employment.

Manufacturing must move from assembly to design, components, machinery, electronics and clean technology, while services must spread beyond metros into tourism, health, education, logistics, finance and Indian language digital businesses. AI preparedness must move from adoption to original capability through domestic compute, Indian language data, research talent, and trusted applications. India must also make proper use of Free Trade Agreements (FTAs). An FTA utilisation mission should guide firms on rules of tariffs and markets. MSMEs need hand-holding on non-tariff barriers through shared testing, affordable certification, standards, customs support and buyer discovery. Moreover, external ambition requires domestic resilience. India should counter energy risks through diversified suppliers, long term contracts, strategic reserves, renewables, domestic exploration and efficiency. Timely infrastructure, predictable regulation, easier credit, and stable taxation can crowd in private investment.

The 7.8% quarter warrants confidence, not complacency. India must convert public capital expenditure into private investment, job numbers into quality employment, and FTAs into opportunities for MSMEs. If energy and macroeconomic stability accompany inclusion, productivity, and transparent measurement, becoming the third largest economy will be more than a statistical milestone. It will become a foundation for broad-based prosperity.