

'QUESTION OF TRUST CONFRONTS WORLD AMID UNCERTAINTY'

India global growth partner, reform our conviction, not compulsion: PM

Flags tech, supply chains, energy, minerals as new tools of pressure and dominance

Aanchal Magazine
New Delhi, October 13

POSITIONING INDIA as a "steady pillar" carrying everyone along in a world roiled by conflicts and uncertainty, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said Tuesday that the country's confidence is at an "unprecedented



Prime Minister Narendra Modi at the Bloomberg New Economy Forum in New Delhi, Tuesday. PTI

ented high" and reforms are being pursued with a clear policy direction born out of "con-

viction" and not "compulsion".

Speaking at the Bloomberg New Economy Forum 2026 in

New Delhi, Modi said, "We do not grow at anyone's cost. We grow with the world, and for the world."

He said India offers the "assurance of reliability and stability" in a world filled with uncertainty. The country's growth, recorded at 7.8% in April-June, "rests on a strong foundation," he said.

His remarks came a day after the International Monetary Fund (IMF) raised its GDP growth forecast for India to 7% for 2026-27, up from 6.4% in July, on the back of "stronger-than-expected momentum, supported by resilient domestic demand and robust services ac-

tivity". Last week, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) also raised its projection for India's GDP growth to 7.1%.

Modi said the world is confronted with the fundamental question of "trust" in these times, and that India is extending its hand in support and recognising its responsibility.

"Twelve to thirteen years ago, India's current account deficit was more than four per cent of GDP. Last year, it declined to approximately half a per cent, standing at 0.61 per cent. Today, our foreign exchange reserves exceed 700 billion dollars. Our banking

»CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

Modi

system is in its strongest position in many decades. It is because of this strength that India's sovereign ratings are being upgraded. Today, India's confidence is at an unprecedented high. We are pursuing reforms with a clear policy direction," he said.

Listing reforms such as GST, Insolvency Law, consolidation of 29 labour laws into four labour codes, decriminalisation of hundreds of minor business-related offences, he said India's Reform Express continues to move ahead at high speed. "For us, reforms are not a compulsion. Reforms are our conviction."

Underlining the unprecedented global challenges, he spoke on the importance of maintaining trust amid disruptions in trade and supply

chains, saying "things that once connected the world are now being turned into weapons".

"Supply chains, energy, minerals, payment systems, and technology are increasingly becoming instruments of pressure and dominance. The routes created by globalisation over past decades have, in many cases, become chokepoints. Amid all this, Artificial Intelligence is transforming the way every sector functions. At the same time, many countries are facing rapidly growing challenges related to ageing populations. In such circumstances, the world is confronted with a fundamental question: Trust."

The question of trust, he said, relates to whether supplies will continue during times of need or whether promises made will also be fulfilled.

"Trust — that a partner country will stand by you during

moments of crisis. And it is here that India stands before you with a different outlook and a different way of thinking," he said.

Citing examples of affordable medicines, generic medicines, solutions for digital identity and payments, skilled youth, and more than 2,000 global capability centres providing services to companies across the world, Modi listed the ways in which the world looks towards India. "It is clear that whenever the world needs a steady pillar, India extends its hand in support, recognising its responsibility. We do not grow at anyone's cost. We grow with the world, and for the world," he said.

He said the philosophy of "power to empower" has been visible in India's global engagement. Mentioning the Covid pandemic, he said vaccine manufacturing capacity became extremely important and the

question at that time was whether the benefits of this capability would remain limited to only a few countries, or whether vaccines would also reach those nations and people who lacked such facilities and capabilities.

"India chose the path of empowering humanity. We supplied vaccines to more than one hundred countries. Our manufacturing capability became a source of assistance for other nations as well," he said.

"... The government possesses authority, but its purpose should not be to make citizens dependent on the system. Rather, its objective should be to ensure that citizens become capable and empowered. India is moving along this very path. Following this path, India has lifted 250 million people out of poverty over the past decade, a number greater than the population of many countries in the world."

India may need additional coal power by 2035: CEA chairman

Pratyush Deep

New Delhi, October 13

INDIA MAY need to add 105-150 gigawatts (GW) of coal-based power capacity by 2035, significantly more than the 97 GW currently planned, to meet rising electricity demand and ensure a stable power supply, Ghanshyam Prasad, chairperson of the country's top power planner Central Electricity Authority (CEA), said on Tuesday.

Speaking at the 20th India Energy Summit organised by the Indian Chamber of Commerce, Prasad stressed the need to maintain adequate baseload capacity to address the challenges posed by the intermittency of renewable energy sources. Solar and wind power generation fluctuates depending on weather conditions, while the limited availability of energy storage restricts the ability to use surplus renewable power to meet evening and night-time demand.

Prasad's remarks signal the need for a reassessment of India's planned coal-based capacity additions, even as the country continues to expand its renewable energy capacity.

The country has witnessed an unusual surge in electricity demand this year, putting additional pressure on coal-based

power plants amid deficient monsoon rainfall and lower hydropower generation.

Coal-based sources generated nearly 10% higher electricity between April and August compared to the same period last year.

Between April and August, coal-based sources generated 579,869.38 million (MU) against 527,542.87 MU in the corresponding period last year.

Generation from coal-based sources was also the highest recorded for the April-August period in the past three years.

In contrast, hydropower generation fell by over 11% to 75,304.58 MU during April-August period this year, from 84,767.77 MU in the corresponding period last year.

Stress on coal-based plants are also reflected in depleting coal stocks in these plants.

Fuel stocks at domestic coal-based power plants have declined by around 66% by the end of September this year, compared with a decline of around 23% during the same period last year, when stocks fell from 55.2 million tonnes at the beginning of April to 42.6 million tonnes by the end of September.

Prasad said electricity demand was running 45-50 GW higher than last year, adding to concerns over coal supplies and the availability of power plants

for scheduled maintenance.

"The stock is depleting almost every day. We need to put these plants under maintenance as well. We are not finding time to put them on the maintenance cycle," he said, highlighting the challenges facing the power sector.

The situation, he said, underscored the need for a judicious mix of energy sources rather than relying on one or two resources.

"We need to have a good amount of baseload stations," Prasad said.

"It was good that 4 to 5 years back we reverted our policy and said that we need a huge addition of coal-based generation," he added. The emphasis on additional coal capacity marks a shift from the position outlined in the National Electricity Plan in 2018, which said India would not require any new coal-based capacity beyond projects already planned.

However, Prasad said a greater focus on baseload power did not mean renewable energy would take a back seat. The country would continue adding around 50 GW of renewable energy capacity annually, with nuclear power and pumped-hydro storage also contributing to the electricity mix, he said.

FULL REPORT ON

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Waqf Board takes U-turn on uniform Friday sermons in J&K mosques after facing flak

Peerzada Ashiq

SRINAGAR

In the face of opposition by Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Omar Abdullah, Kashmir chief cleric Mirwaiz Umar Farooq, and Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) president Mehbooba Mufti to the J&K Waqf Board's move to introduce uniform Friday sermons in mosques, senior BJP leader and chairperson of the board Darakshan Andrabi on Tuesday took a U-turn and said "such decisions will be taken by preachers and not politicians".

"There is no order to have uniform sermons. In a meeting on Sunday, religious scholars and preachers suggested to fight social evils collectively. *Ulemas* (scholars) and *khateeb*s



This is an unacceptable attempt by the BJP to interfere in the religious affairs of Muslims and won't be accepted under any circumstances

OMAR ABDULLAH

Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister

(preachers) will decide the topics for Friday sermons through a board. It's them (preachers) and not politicians who get to decide on such matters," she said.

Ms. Andrabi said the idea was to "forcefully and unitedly raise voice over social issues like drugs, late marriages, waywardness, and recent cases of damaging of orchards".

The U-turn came two days after Ms. Andrabi pro-

posed to have a core committee of preachers to pre-decide topics for sermons in J&K mosques.

Public outcry

Ishtiyaq Mohi-ud-Din, an executive magistrate on the board, had informed the preachers about the board's directive that "only one topic will be highlighted [in the sermons]".

The move, however, evoked public outcry and

drew criticism from the regional parties. "This is an unacceptable attempt by the BJP to interfere in the religious affairs of Muslims and will not be accepted under any circumstances. The BJP-appointed chairperson must immediately halt this misplaced attempt to please her masters," Mr. Abdullah said.

Mr. Farooq, who also heads a pan-J&K conglomerate of religious bodies, Mutahida Majlis-e-Ulema, said, "Even the suggestion that a statutory body could determine or regulate what is to be preached from the pulpit is ridiculous, and will never be accepted by the Muslims of Jammu and Kashmir."

PDP president Mehbooba Mufti termed the move "totally unacceptable".

Rollout of fee on UPI transactions put off beyond Deepavali on appeal by traders

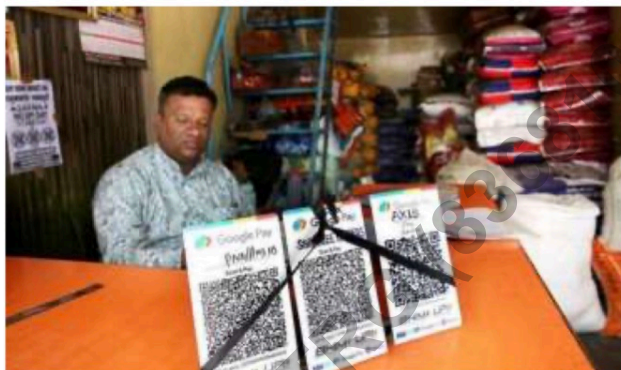
T.C.A. Sharad Raghavan

NEW DELHI

The National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) has postponed the implementation of the Merchant Discount Rate (MDR) on UPI transactions, originally scheduled for Thursday, to a date “immediately after Deepavali”, without specifying an exact date.

The MDR was to be levied at 0.4% on UPI transactions exceeding ₹2,000 at medium and large merchant establishments. Transactions related to the capital market and those done in strategic sectors will face different MDR rates. According to government sources, the decision to delay the implementation of MDR on UPI was made in the Prime Minister's Office following strong appeals from traders.

The Confederation of



Black ribbon seen across payment codes at a shop in Bhopal last week as traders protested the proposed fee for UPI transactions. ANI

All India Traders (CAIT) described the decision to delay the rollout as “timely and pragmatic”, particularly during the festive and wedding season, when millions of traders and MSMEs depend on higher business volumes.

Move welcomed

Praveen Khandelwal, founder and secretary-general of CAIT and a Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) MP, welcomed the deci-

sion to postpone the MDR roll-out, saying that it would protect traders' interests and sustain digital payment momentum during the festive season.

“The UPI and Services Steering Committee today decided that, keeping in mind the festive season, Merchant Discount Rate (MDR) on select Person-to-Merchant (P2M) UPI transactions shall be implemented immediately post Deepavali at a date to be

notified separately,” read a statement issued by the NPCI on Tuesday.

The Supreme Court has directed the NPCI, the Union government, and the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) to file affidavits by late October explaining the rationale for imposing MDR on specified UPI transactions.

CAIT said the decision followed a meeting on September 30, when a delegation of around 20 trade leaders led by Mr. Khandelwal met Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman and “highlighted the implications of the proposed 0.40% MDR on UPI transactions exceeding ₹2,000”. “Additional transaction costs [during the festive season] could have placed an avoidable burden on merchants operating on thin margins and discouraged the wider acceptance of digital payments,” it stated.

Use of Form 6 to re-enlist voters is an anomaly, says plea

The Hindu Bureau

NEW DELHI

A petition has been filed in the Supreme Court over a “fundamental anomaly” in requiring people whose names were deleted from electoral rolls during the special intensive revision to fill Form 6 if they want re-inclusion in voters’ list.

The form, the petition pointed out, requires every applicant to affirm they are applying for inclusion in the rolls for the first time.

During the enumeration phase of the SIR in Delhi, 47,56,722 electors were excluded from the draft roll under the ‘absent, shifted, dead or duplicate entry’ (ASDD) category. For them, the only mechanism to have their name restored is through Form 6.

The plea says this creates a fundamental anomaly as they were earlier enrolled, but are now required to submit Form 6 and declare they are seeking inclusion in the electoral roll for the first time,

‘It requires people to state that they are applying to be voters for the first time, even for re-inclusion’

which is factually incorrect and wholly inapplicable to their circumstances.

Further, such persons also become liable to face a fine or even imprisonment for giving a false declaration under Section 31 of the Representation of the People Act (RPA), 1950.

It also points out that an additional declaration that maps a voter’s links with the previous SIR rolls, and which is required to be submitted along with the form, is without the force of law and should be struck down.

The petition was filed by transparency activists Anjali Bhardwaj and Amrita Johri, who also have another petition challenging the procedures on discrepancies in the Delhi SIR, pending before the court.

India and Canada together contributing to prosperous, stable world: Modi to Carney

Suhasini Haidar

NEW DELHI

India and Canada are together contributing to a “more stable and prosperous world”, said Prime Minister Narendra Modi after a call with Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney, during which they agreed to conclude a trade agreement soon.

The phone call on Tuesday night came even as senior Canadian Ministers, including Foreign Minister Anita Anand and Minister of International Trade Maninder Sidhu, are in Delhi for talks with their counterparts – External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar and Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal – and to firm up plans for Mr. Modi’s visit to Ottawa in December.

Last week, National Security Advisor Ajit Doval also hosted Canadian Senior Diplomatic and International Affairs Advisor David Morrison, during which the two sides discussed cooperation on “security



Narendra Modi and Mark Carney shake hands during the 2025 G20 Summit. FILE PHOTO

and law enforcement”, without mentioning the Nijjar killing case that had led to the suspension of relations between the two nations from 2023 to 2025.

On Wednesday morning, Ms. Anand and Mr. Jaishankar will be part of a panel discussion to discuss the “Middle Power Moment”, along with former British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak and former Australian Prime Minister Kevin Rudd.

‘Warm talks’

Mr. Modi said his conversation with Mr. Carney had been “warm and produc-

tive”. “We agreed to build on the positive momentum in India-Canada ties and work towards concrete outcomes across key areas of our Strategic Partnership, including trade, energy, technology, security and people-to-people ties,” Mr. Modi said in a post on social media.

The Canadian Prime Minister’s office put out a more detailed readout of the conversation, adding that the two leaders had discussed defence and security as well as reaffirmed their commitment to conclude negotiations on the Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) at the “earliest opportunity,” and to double two-way trade, at about \$23 billion in 2025, by 2030.

According to officials, the two sides are expected to announce the trade agreement in mid-December, when Mr. Modi will travel to Canada for his first bilateral visit in more than a decade.

China says 'never recognised' U.T. of Ladakh; India hits back

Beijing opposes Survey of India move to standardise names of specific features in Ladakh, calls it 'illegal and void'; New Delhi says 'no amount of denial by Chinese side' can change established fact

Suhasini Haidar
Ananth Krishnan
NEW DELHI/BEIJING

India and China on Tuesday sparred over New Delhi's decision to standardise the names of 28 features in Ladakh, including some along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) that had seen skirmishes between the Indian Army and the People's Liberation Army during a four-year stand-off.

The Chinese Foreign Ministry on Tuesday said it has "never recognised" the Union Territory (U.T.) of Ladakh, which was created in 2019, and called the naming of the areas by the Survey of India as "illegal and void", a charge that New Delhi rejected.

"The U.T. of Ladakh is an integral and inalienable part of India. No amount of denial by the Chinese side can change this established fact," said External Affairs Ministry spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal. "Identifying these [28] places formally on the Survey of India map of the U.T. of Ladakh is aimed at facilitating their accurate recognition and better awareness among the public at large," he explained.

 The U.T. of Ladakh is an integral and inalienable part of India. No amount of denial by the Chinese side can change this established fact

RANDHIR JAISWAL
Spokesperson,
External
Affairs
Ministry



The spokesperson was responding to comments made by the Chinese Foreign Ministry earlier in the day. To a question at the Chinese Foreign Ministry briefing, spokesperson Mao Ning said that China has "never recognised the so-called 'Union Territory of Ladakh' unilaterally and illegally established by India, and firmly opposes the so-called 'standardised names' publicised by India."

"This move by India is illegal and void, and does not change the fact that the western sector of the China-India boundary belongs to China," she added, referring to the August 5, 2019 decision by the Indian go-

 This move by India is illegal and void, and does not change the fact that the western sector of the China-India boundary belongs to China

MAO NING
Spokesperson,
Chinese
Foreign
Ministry



vernment to bifurcate the State of Jammu and Kashmir into two Union Territories and dilute Article 370 of the Constitution.

At the time, Beijing had issued a sharp statement accusing India of undermining "China's territorial sovereignty by unilaterally changing its domestic law." Beijing had also made such a claim in September 2020 reacting strongly to an Indian project to construct high-altitude roads in eastern Ladakh

A first in two years

This is the first such spat in the past two years, however, since the two sides re-established diplomatic and travel links between the

two countries in an effort to normalise relations after the meeting between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Chinese President Xi Jinping in 2024, indicating that the map remains a major point of contention.

The comments came 10 days after the Survey of India announced the standardisation of the names of specific relief features in Ladakh, including 11 peaks, five mountains, six land areas, two glaciers, two passes, one valley, one river, one lake, and one other waterbody.

Both features about Patrolling Point 15 (PP-15), which had seen heavy mobilisation during the India-China tensions at the LAC after the deadly clashes at Galwan in June 2020. The two armies agreed to stand down from the PP-15 point in September 2022, as part of a series of disengagement negotiations.

Both India and China have been reinforcing their territorial claims in both the Western and Eastern sectors by naming features in official maps and creating administrative jurisdictions in a series of cartographic tit-for-tat measures going back many years.

BIMSTEC adopts 'Delhi Declaration' on terrorism

Vijaita Singh

NEW DELHI

India hosted the first-ever meeting of the Home Ministers of the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC) countries on Tuesday, where the regional bloc adopted a declaration to counter radicalisation, violent extremism conducive to terrorism, prevent the misuse of new and emerging technologies for terrorist purposes, and tackle terrorist recruitment.

Bangladesh, the chair of BIMSTEC, was represented by Manzur Morshed Chowdhury, Senior Secretary in its Home Ministry, instead of Home Minister Salahuddin Ahmed, a key member in Prime Minister Tarique Rahman's Cabinet.

The "Delhi Declaration" signed by Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Myanmar, Nepal, Sri Lanka, and Thailand, also called for curb-



Diplomatic mission: Amit Shah with other delegates during the first meeting of Home Ministers of the BIMSTEC countries. PTI

ing terror financing through adherence to internationally agreed counter-terror financing and anti-money laundering standards, consistent with domestic and international laws.

The declaration said the member states "strongly condemn terrorism and violent extremism in all its forms and manifestations, including cross-border terrorism, wherever, by whomsoever and for whatever purposes committed; reiterate our determination to prevent, combat

and eliminate terrorism and violent extremism conducive to terrorism in a comprehensive and sustained manner, in accordance with the UN Charter and international law; and in this context, call for effective implementation of the sanctions measures of the UN Security Council, including of the 1267 Sanctions Committee".

The grouping expressed condolences and solidarity with victims of terrorist attacks in member states and their families, as well as the governments of the af-

fected states. It called for those responsible to be brought to justice in accordance with applicable domestic and international law and relevant UN Security Council resolutions.

Areas of cooperation

Union Home Minister Amit Shah highlighted five key areas of cooperation: drug control, counter-terrorism and legal cooperation, repatriation of fugitive criminals, cybersecurity and cybercrime investigations, and institutional cooperation and capacity building. He called for a coordinated regional approach to combating illicit financial transactions and terror financing and stressed the need to strengthen cooperation among law enforcement, intelligence, and border management agencies.

"India has always believed in sovereignty and peaceful resolutions to any dispute. We are committed to cooperating to face challenges emanating from In-

ternational terrorism, organised crime and narco-trade," Mr. Shah said.

He said criminal networks run their operations beyond international borders and take advantage of regional lacunae.

"This is why regional cooperation is a must. Their strategy is changing; they are using encrypted communication, social media, drones, cryptocurrency and the dark web to recruit and propagate illegal activities. This is why real-time intelligence-sharing and cooperation is required to check these crimes. None of the member countries should shelter such criminals. We should cooperate in the extradition of such criminals," he added.

Mr. Shah flagged "human trafficking and cyber slavery" as grave concerns". "Sharing of actionable intelligence should be a priority among BIMSTEC countries," he said.

OPEC cuts India's 2026 oil demand growth forecast to 40,000 bpd

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Organisation of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) has lowered its forecast for India's oil demand growth in 2026 to 40,000 barrels per day (bpd), from 60,000 bpd projected in its September

report. On a year-on-year (YoY) basis, India's oil demand is expected to rise by around 40,000 b/d to 5.7 million barrels per day (mbpd) in 2026, according to OPEC's latest monthly oil market report.

OPEC has also trimmed its global oil demand growth forecast for 2026 to

Transportation fuels, particularly gasoline and diesel, are expected to remain the primary drivers

0.2 mbpd, down from 0.4 mbpd estimated in its previous assessment. However,

it has raised its projection for global oil demand growth in 2027 to 2.6 mb/d, from 2.4 mb/d forecast last month.

Its outlook for India's oil demand growth in 2027 remains unchanged.

Transportation fuels, particularly gasoline and diesel, are expected to re-

main the primary drivers of India's oil demand growth in 2026.

"Gasoline is expected to be supported by heightened road mobility amid robust vehicle sales. Diesel demand is anticipated to gain additional support from strong manufacturing and agricultural activity,"

OPEC said.

The report also projects an increase in demand for residual fuel during the year, while jet fuel consumption is expected to register marginal growth.

In contrast, demand for liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) and naphtha is expected to ease, OPEC said.

India-U.S. ties and the hurdle of American unilateralism

Have ties between India and the United States reached a breaking point? Where do they go from here? These and many other questions are being intensely debated following the U.S.'s announcement on October 8 that it had suspended the Permanent Labour Certification (PERM) programme for eight global IT companies, including some Indian-headquartered companies, accusing them of misusing immigration and labour-certification systems. The Indian companies named were Infosys, Tata Consultancy Services, Wipro, Cognizant and HCL.

The PERM programme allows tech companies to hire non-U.S. professionals to work in the U.S. and is a step in a employer-sponsored green-card application. According to the U.S. government, the companies had received more than 2,30,000 H-1B visa approvals and over 1,00,000 permanent labour certifications since 2009. Indian professionals account for more than 70% of approved H-1B petitions annually.

This episode, however, is not an isolated incident but part of a series of actions and decisions taken by the U.S. in recent years, including the ill-treatment of Indians and racist attacks against them that are placing bilateral ties under severe strain.

Trade ties, visible discord

Trade has emerged as a visible source of discord and asymmetry for three main reasons. First, India recorded a trade surplus of \$33.8 billion in bilateral trade exceeding \$140 billion in FY 2025-26. Second, the U.S. is seeking access to India's dairy and agriculture sectors in ongoing trade negotiations, which India cannot afford to concede. Third, India has refused to halt Russian oil imports despite additional U.S. tariffs and sanctions.

Despite a framework for an interim agreement on reciprocal and mutually beneficial trade



Rajeev Agarwal

A retired colonel and a strategic affairs expert. He is the author of the book, 'Between Tehran and Tel Aviv – Gaza's Story of Unending War'

Washington wants a subservient India, but New Delhi must draw the line

announced in February 2026, the strain in trade ties persists. Last week, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said that trade talk negotiations had "plateaued", with little scope for give-and-take.

Defence and security cooperation has emerged as a key pillar of relations. Over the past two decades, India and the U.S. have expanded military exercises, logistics arrangements and intelligence-sharing. American weapons platforms have also become increasingly important to India's military modernisation.

Since 2002, India has acquired over \$22 billion worth of American military hardware, but meaningful co-production and technology transfer remain elusive. During Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to Washington in February 2025, the U.S. agreed to expand defence sales and co-production in India, including Javelin anti-tank guided missiles and Stryker infantry combat vehicles. The two countries subsequently signed a 10-year Framework for the U.S.-India Major Defence Partnership on October 31, 2025.

However, a strategic defence partnership of this magnitude must be assessed by what it delivers, not merely the number of agreements signed. Prolonged delays in the supply of GE F404 engines for India's Tejas fighter aircraft highlight the risks of relying on foreign suppliers for critical military components and the strategic cost of supply-chain vulnerabilities. Despite initiatives such as the India-U.S. Defence Acceleration Ecosystem (INDUS-X), launched in 2023, co-development and technology transfer remain an issue.

The Pakistan factor

Pakistan has always been a politically sensitive source of friction between India and the U.S., particularly since Operation Sindoor (May 2025). U.S. President Donald Trump's repeated claims that he ended the conflict have irked India, although New Delhi has refrained from direct

confrontation. The U.S.'s courting of Pakistan's top leadership, especially its Chief of Defence Forces, Asim Munir, has also been a major irritant. The signing of the Mecca Pact between Saudi Arabia, Pakistan and Türkiye, reportedly with Washington's blessings, has raised further security concerns for India.

High-end technology is another area in which India has often been forced to look to the U.S. – a situation that Washington has sought to exploit. Although the 2008 India-U.S. civil nuclear agreement was a historic breakthrough, its commercial promise of American-designed nuclear reactors in India remains largely unrealised. The Initiative on Critical and Emerging Technology (iCET), launched in 2023, was cited as an attempt to deepen cooperation in artificial intelligence, semiconductors, defence innovation, space and other advanced technologies, but much remains on paper. The India-U.S. Transforming the Relationship Utilizing Strategic Technology (TRUST) Initiative, signed on February 13, 2025, also raised hopes of greater technology transfer and integration. The key challenge, however, remains translating declarations into measurable outcomes.

Need for mutual respect

India-U.S. relations are entering a phase in which India's strategic restraint and efforts at accommodation are increasingly met with American pressure, unilateralism and outright disregard for India's strategic interests. Whether this is a difficult phase or a deeper structural problem remains to be seen. The relationship between the world's oldest democracy and the world's largest democracy can flourish only through equality, respect and trust, not unilateral imposition of will. External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar's recent observation that the U.S. is "deliberately becoming a lonelier power" may convey more than what the words suggest.

Saudi Arabia strikes oil facility in Yemen's capital, say Houthis

The group threatens to target Riyadh International Airport, a refinery, and an Aramco facility in Dammam if Saudi Arabia proceeds with the strike; Trump accuses Houthis of trying to drive up the oil prices ahead of the U.S. midterm elections

Agence France-Presse
SANAA

Yemen's Houthis (Ansar Allah) said Saudi Arabia struck an oil facility in Sanaa on Tuesday, after the Riyadh-led coalition told civilians to leave the surrounding area in its first evacuation order for the Yemeni capital since the war flared up again.

After a series of strikes on the kingdom's airports and energy sites, the coalition's spokesperson said people should leave an oil facility belonging to the Yemen Petroleum Company on the western outskirts of Sanaa before it was attacked.



The Saudi-led coalition's warning was its first evacuation order for Yemen's capital, Sanaa, since the war escalated again. AFP

An AFP correspondent in Sanaa reported hearing an explosion, while a breaking news alert on the Houthi-affiliated *Al-Masirah* TV channel said "Saudi aggression targets the oil

company in Al-Sabaha, west of Sanaa".

The Saudi-led coalition is yet to confirm the reported strike.

Swiftly responding to the earlier coalition warn-

ing, the Houthis had issued a threat to target Riyadh's international airport, a refinery, and an Aramco facility in Dammam if the strike went ahead.

"The Yemeni Armed Forces urge all citizens to immediately evacuate and move away from targets that our forces will strike should the Saudi enemy target," military spokesperson Yahya Saree wrote on X, identifying the three targets.

Saudi Arabia was still weathering fresh attacks on Tuesday, with the coalition saying its forces intercepted three drones north of the kingdom's capital Riyadh.

Many countries have is-

sued travel warnings to their citizens in Saudi Arabia, most recently France, which told its citizens to avoid the airports in Riyadh, Jeddah and Dammam on Tuesday.

Meanwhile, U.S. President Donald Trump on Tuesday accused Houthi militants of deliberately trying to drive up oil prices ahead of the midterm elections and warned that he would "never forget" their attacks on Saudi Arabia.

"The Houthis are behaving very badly," Mr. Trump wrote in a Truth Social post, accusing the group of resuming attacks at Iran's behest after a period of relative quiet following U.S. strikes in Yemen last year.

Russia hits no energy targets in Ukraine for the first time since Trump's 'ceasefire'

Reuters

KYIV

Russia hit no Ukrainian energy targets on Tuesday for the first time since U.S. President Donald Trump's weekend announcement of an "energy ceasefire", while hammering cities' transport and logistics overnight with ballistic missiles and drones.

Russia's Defence Ministry, in its daily summary of overnight strikes, made no mention of Ukrainian energy facilities. A Kremlin spokesperson, asked about the energy ceasefire, would



A police officer inspects the engine of a Shahed drone in front of a residential building damaged in a Russian strike in Kyiv. AP

only say that contacts were ongoing, but declined to provide any further details. However, one missile came down just over a kilo-

metre from a plant providing heating to much of the city of Lviv, in the west.

Mr. Trump's ceasefire announcement on Sunday

came two days after his declaration of a deal that lifted U.S. sanctions on Russian diesel exports to allow Russia to supply almost 2 million metric tonnes of diesel, a bid to lower U.S. fuel prices.

President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said on Tuesday that Ukraine had not hit Russian refineries for two days, since Trump announced the ceasefire, but that Russia had continued attacks on energy and critical infrastructure during that time. Russia struck six Ukrainian energy sites on Monday.

Iran trying to hit military sites in U.K., says intel chief

Associated Press

LONDON

Iran is trying to hit military sites in Britain and the suspected plot to attack a U.S.-run military airbase in September is “not unique”, the head of the MI5 spy agency said on Tuesday, as he warned that both Tehran and Moscow are expanding their attacks against the United Kingdom.

Ken McCallum, who leads the U.K.’s domestic security service, said Tehran is seeking to intensify its attacks in Britain beyond the traditional targets of Iranians opposed to the country’s Islamic authorities. That has included arson and sabotage attacks on Jewish sites that Britain says were carried out by Iranian proxies.

Mr. McCallum said



Ken McCallum speaks at Thames House, the headquarters of the U.K.'s Security Service in London on Tuesday. REUTERS

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The incident at RAF Fairford “is not unique. There have been other examples, not just in the U.K. but around the world,” Mr. McCallum said.

He delivered his annual speech outlining major threats to the U.K. as coun-

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Prime Minister Andy Burnham said on Monday that the apparent plot was “almost certainly” directed by Iran’s Revolutionary Guard though Iran has denied involvement.

Iran trying to hit military sites in U.K., says intel chief

Associated Press

LONDON

Iran is trying to hit military sites in Britain and the suspected plot to attack a U.S.-run military airbase in September is “not unique”, the head of the MI5 spy agency said on Tuesday, as he warned that both Tehran and Moscow are expanding their attacks against the United Kingdom.

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