India to push for predictable climate finance, equitable transition at key UN summit

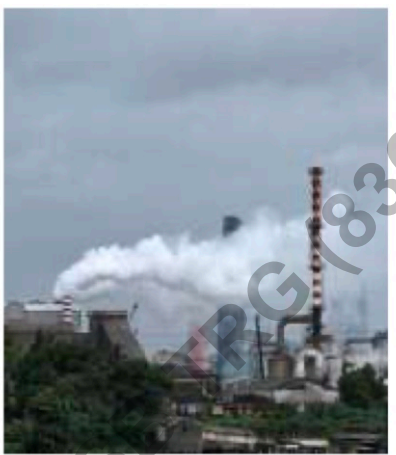
Jacob Koshy
NEW DELHI

Predictable climate finance, technology transfer, and nationally determined approaches to climate mitigation and adaptation will be India's key demands at the UN Climate Change Conference (COP31) in Antalya, Turkiye, from November 9 to 20.

Underlining a long-standing position, India will reiterate that developed countries must fulfil their financial obligations to developing nations.

India is not inclined towards language suggesting "fossil fuel cuts or phase-out" or restrictions, as it is already on a pathway to ramp up its share of renewable energy, increasing forest cover, and improving energy efficiency.

These emerged at a press conference convened by Union Environment Minister Bhupender Yadav on Tuesday, outlining India's priorities ahead of the conference.



India will seek a decision to commence the Climate Finance Work Programme at COP31. AP

India will seek continuation of the Just Transition Work Programme (JWT) and "oppose attempts" to impose new, top-down mitigation targets on developing countries.

Climate finance will be a central negotiating issue, with India seeking a decision to begin a Climate Finance Work Programme.

Voluntary indicators

Mr. Yadav said finance provided by developed countries under Article 9.1 of the Paris Agreement must be "predictable, largely public and concessional", and must not add to the debt burden of developing countries.

India will argue that indicators being developed under the Global Goal on Adaptation (GGA) should remain voluntary and should not become conditions for accessing climate finance. "Among the successes that we have had is reducing the number of parameters down to 59 from the nearly thousand," Mr. Yadav said.

SHAURYA SINGH (8368104529)

Drone strike on commercial vessel off Oman kills Indian

New Delhi expresses concern as Indian seafarer deaths in West Asia rise to 23; calls for diplomacy to end crisis; seeks free, unimpeded navigation and commerce through international waterways

Suhasini Haidar
NEW DELHI

An Indian national was killed in a drone strike on an Indian commercial vessel off the Coast of Oman on Tuesday, after which New Delhi made an appeal for "dialogue and diplomacy" and for freedom of navigation in the Strait of Hormuz.

The death of Gandhar Nahim Ajij from Gujarat took the number of Indian seafarers killed since the conflict in West Asia began in February this year to 23.

"The continuing incidents of attacks on commercial shipping in the region are deeply concerning," the External Affairs Ministry said in a statement, reiterating its call for de-escalation of tensions and a diplomatic solution.

"The targeting of commercial shipping and civilian infrastructure in the region must end, and free and unimpeded navigation and commerce through the international waterways in the region, in keeping with international law, must be restored at the earliest," the statement added.



Caught in the crossfire: The vessel that was hit by a drone off the coast of Oman. @MARINETRAFFIC.COM

The drone strike came on a day when the United States carried out airstrikes on the Iranian island of Qeshm, according to officials.

The developments indicated the volatility of the situation in the Indian Ocean and the Strait of Hormuz. The situation has been particularly tense over threats issued by U.S. President Donald Trump that if peace talks fail, there would be more penetrating attacks on Iran once the U.S. mid-term elections are over.

'Heavy toll'

The U.S. strikes on Qeshm Island at the mouth of the Hormuz Strait sent oil prices up on Tuesday. Asked about the U.S. action, which is believed to have been retaliation for Iranian strikes on a U.S. fighter jet over the island a few days ago, External Affairs Ministry spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said India is keeping a close watch on the developments. "The conflict has already taken a very heavy toll in terms of casualties and has been disrupting people's lives across the world. It has had a debilitating impact on global food, fuel, fertilizer, and financial flows, and we urge cessation of hostility so that normalcy can be restored," Mr. Jaiswal said in response to a question from *The Hindu*.

The Indian seafarer, Gandhar Nahim Ajij, died after a weaponised drone of unidentified origin attacked the vessel, *MSV AL JUSUFI*. Thirteen Indians aboard the vessel were rescued by Omani naval personnel.

Meanwhile, the Indian Embassy in Tehran announced that in an operation on Monday, the Indian Navy, supported by the Indian Air Force, rescued 20 Iranian crew members of the fishing vessel, *Azini*, about 3,000 km from Mumbai, where they had been held by pirates. The statement said the operation "highlighted the commitment of the Indian Navy to thwart the resurgence of piracy in the region", and India's role as first responder in the Indian Ocean.

SHAURYA SSB IRC (8810459991)



A photograph posted by Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on X shows Indian Navy personnel on board the rescued fishing vessel *Azini* and its Iranian crew. @RAJNATHSINGH

SHAURYA SSB TRG (83[illegible]152

Navy rescues hijacked vessel with Iran crew, IAF lends helping hand

Testament to friendship, cooperation between two countries: Iran Embassy

Amrita Nayak Dutta
New Delhi, November 3

THE INDIAN Navy said on Tuesday that it carried out a successful operation to rescue a fishing vessel with 20 Iranian crew members that was hijacked by armed pirates off the coast of Somalia last month.

The operation, which lasted over 48 hours and ended on Monday night, involved the deployment of Marine Commandos through a precision airdrop by an Indian Air Force (IAF) C-17 aircraft, it said.

In a statement, the Iran Embassy in New Delhi expressed its "sincere appreciation to the Government of India, the Indian Navy and the Indian Air

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Navy

Force for their successful operation to rescue the 20 Iranian crew members of the fishing vessel Azini from pirates".

The Navy, in its statement, said the hijacking presented a "significant maritime security threat", with the possibility of the vessel being employed as a "mother ship" for launching pirate attacks against merchant shipping in the region.

It said it tasked a mission-deployed warship to intervene, supported by a maritime reconnaissance aircraft. "Working in close coordination, these platforms located the vessel after persistent surveillance, tracked its movements and employed calibrated non-kinetic measures to contain its movement and prevent its escape," the Navy said.

"Executing a swift and well-coordinated tactical intervention, the Indian Navy secured the vessel, overcame the pirate threat and ensured the release of all 20 crew members," it said.

The Navy said the successful operation is testament to its high operational preparedness and ability to undertake complex maritime security operations through seamless inter-service coordination, while underscoring India's unwavering commitment to remaining first responder and preferred security partner in Indian Ocean Region.

The Iran Embassy commended "the professionalism, courage and effective coordination demonstrated by the Indian Armed Forces, reflecting India's strong commitment to Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief and its role in saving lives beyond borders". "This humanitarian operation stands as a testament to the spirit of friendship, solidarity and cooperation between Iran and India. We extend our sincere gratitude to all those involved in... the safe rescue of the Iranian crew," it said.

SHAURYA SSB TRG (8368104520)

AQI hits 287-day high as Punjab farm fires spike; Sirsa targets AAP

Express News Service
New Delhi, November 3

DELHI'S AIR quality deteriorated to its worst level in 287 days on Tuesday, with the overall Air Quality Index reaching 350 in the 'Very Poor' category, amid a sharp rise in stubble burning incidents in Punjab and unfavourable weather conditions.

Delhi Environment Minister Manjinder Singh Sirsa accused the AAP-led Punjab government of deliberately facilitating stubble burning, alleging that Punjab Police personnel were themselves helping set crop residue on fire.

According to the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB), 57 of Delhi's 59 monitoring stations recorded data on Tuesday, with PM2.5 emerging as the dominant pollutant.

The impact was heavily visible across neighbouring cities. Gurugram recorded an AQI of 305 (Very Poor), Noida 291 (Poor) and Ghaziabad 235 (Poor). Greater Noida recorded 189 (Moderate), while Faridabad was at 106 (Moderate), as per CPCB. On Monday, the Commission for Air Quality Management (CAQM) invoked Stage II of the Graded Response Action Plan (GRAP) after Delhi's air quality entered the 'Very Poor' category.

The CAQM attributed the deterioration to unfavourable meteorological conditions. Farm fires across the border, including in Pakistan's Punjab, are also adding to the pollution load, data analysed by *The Indian Express* showed.



Manjinder Singh Sirsa. FILE

As per satellite data from the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR), 798 paddy residue burning incidents were detected across six states on Tuesday. Punjab accounted for 584, followed by Rajasthan (100) and Madhya Pradesh (94). UP reported 10 incidents, Haryana eight and Uttarakhand two. Delhi recorded none.

Between September 15 and November 3, 4,333 stubble burning incidents were detected across the six states, including 2,196 in Punjab.

Speaking to mediapersons, Sirsa cited 271 FIRs registered in Punjab. Citing official figures, he said Punjab recorded more than 900 incidents between October 26 and November 1. "During the same period, Haryana reported only 18 stubble burning incidents and UP 59 while Punjab recorded over 900 incidents," he said. Delhi, he added, reported only one such incident. "Farmers did not set the fields on fire. Punjab Police personnel did," he alleged.

Sirsa questioned the appointment of Reena Gupta, whom he described as a close relative of AAP national convener Arvind Kejriwal, as chairperson of the Punjab Pollution Control Board. Gupta was earlier an AAP spokesperson in Delhi. "In Punjab's history, this has happened for the first time that a non-technical person has been appointed chairperson of the PPCB. She will fudge the data. The Punjab government has spent Rs 20-25 crore on ad to claim that no stubble burning is taking place in the state. On the other hand, it is registering FIRs against farmers," he alleged, adding that the Centre had provided Rs 5,000 crore to address the problem.

AAP Punjab media incharge Baltej Pannu, meanwhile, said that BJP leaders are making Punjab's farmers scapegoats. "Even before the paddy harvesting season had properly begun, certain leaders had started running a campaign to defame Punjab for Delhi's pollution. How can smoke from Punjab supposedly cross Haryana and reach Delhi through some imaginary pipeline so quickly?"

The IMD said shallow fog was observed at a few places in Delhi. The maximum temperature on Tuesday settled at 29.1 degrees Celsius, and the minimum at 16.4 degrees Celsius.

Trump says US will stop $4-bn funding to Israel at end of 2026

Humeyra Pamuk & Susan Heavey
Washington, November 3

US PRESIDENT Donald Trump on Tuesday said he made a deal with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu that Washington would stop $4 billion in funding to Israel after the end of this year.

Speaking to Fox News' Fox and Friends, Trump said Israel no longer needed the funding and that some Democrats and left-wing politicians were using the US financial support to Israel as a talking point to criticize Republicans.

"Now, as far as paying Israel, Bibi Netanyahu and I have made a deal that we give Israel $4 billion a year, and we made a deal months ago that we're stopping," Trump told Fox News' Fox and Friends.

"We've already agreed that by the end of this year we won't be paying Israel. Now we'll help Israel if they need it," he said.

There was no immediate comment from Netanyahu's office on Trump's remarks.

It was not immediately clear which exact funding Trump meant. A memorandum of understanding that provides $3.8 billion annual US military aid to Israel is approaching its expiration date in 2028 and conversations have been under way on how Washington's assistance to Israel would evolve beyond that date.

"They can buy whatever they want. They can buy whatever they want. So can Europe. We make the greatest weapons in the world," Trump added on Tuesday.



US President Donald Trump with Israeli PM Benjamin Netanyahu. FILE/REUTERS

Netanyahu said ☒in a May interview with CBS that he hoped to wean Israel off US military support within a decade. In a June letter to a US congressman he wrote that the time had come for Israel "to move from aid recipient to partner."

US public support for Israel has fallen since the Gaza war began in 2023, particularly among Democrats. A June Quinnipiac University poll found 48% of voters and 66% of Democrats believe the United States is too supportive of Israel, up from 16% and 20% when the question was first asked in 2017.

Support for Israel among Democratic voters has plummeted, candidates critical of Israel are winning Democratic primaries and even moderate lawmakers are increasingly willing to challenge decades of US support for Israel. REUTERS

U.S. votes with control of Congress at stake

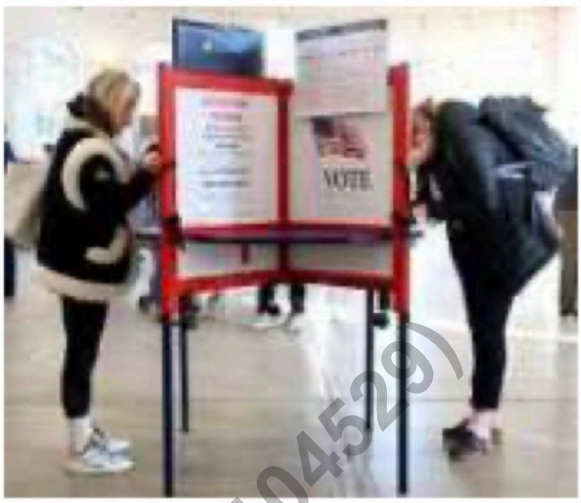
Agence France-Presse
WASHINGTON

Americans voted on Tuesday in pivotal midterm elections with the Democrats hoping to seize control of Congress and shatter President Donald Trump's grip on Washington for the remainder of his term.

As opinion polls pointed to a setback for the President, Mr. Trump made a final pitch to voters, saying he had rebuilt U.S. through his immigration crackdown, war on Iran, and tariff policy.

Polls predict the Democrats will win a majority in the House of Representatives and possibly seize the Senate on the back of voter resentment at a deeply unpopular President.

All 435 House seats and 35 of the 100 Senate seats are at stake, along with Governorships in 36 States. Democrats need only three House gains and a net four seats in the Senate to wrest the chambers from Republican hands.



Americans fill out ballots for the midterms at a polling station in Washington on Tuesday. AFP

Republicans losing the House in an election that amounts to a nationwide judgment on Mr. Trump would give Democrats the power to stall the 80-year-old President's legislative agenda and launch sweeping investigations of his administration. A Senate defeat would threaten the President's ability to appoint Supreme Court justices and senior officials.

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WILL STOP ISRAEL AID: TRUMP
» PAGE 14

SHAURYA SSB TRG (8568104529)

U.S. votes with control of Congress at stake

"We have to keep America great. We're great now. We were terrible two years ago," the U.S. President told "Fox & Friends" ahead of the polls on Tuesday.

Mr. Trump returned to office last year promising to bring down prices, but inflation, tariffs and fuel costs inflated by the West Asia conflict have squeezed Americans. The former real estate tycoon's approval rating has hovered near the low 30s. Republicans insist that Mr. Trump's tax cuts and anti-migrant stance will benefit Americans, and they are portraying Democratic candidates as left-wing radicals.

While Republicans hold a 53-47 Senate majority, the political battlefield is extending into conservative states like Kansas, Texas, Iowa, Ohio and Alaska.

Democrats must also defend competitive seats, including in Michigan, where a bitter internal dispute saw congresswoman Haley Stevens endorse Republican Mike Rogers rather than the Democratic nominee, Abdul El-Sayed.

SHAURYA SSB IRC (8368104529)

U.S. will stop $4 billion annual security assistance to Israel, announces Trump

Associated Press
WASHINGTON

The United States will stop providing $4 billion in aid each year to Israel in 2027 but will sell arms to its closest ally in the West Asia, President Donald Trump said on Tuesday.

The Republican President told *Fox News* channel during a phone call on Election Day for the midterms that Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu had approached him about the idea and that they have been talking about it for a couple of years.

Mr. Trump said Israel doesn't need the aid and it is a lot of money for the U.S. to spend. But Mr. Trump also said that U.S. aid to Israel has become a Democratic talking point for candidates such as Michigan U.S. Senate candidate Abdul El-Sayed, a vocal critic of Israel.



> You can consider it barter. You can consider military aid or cash... Look, we give them $4 billion of things and money, and they don't need it
>
> **DONALD TRUMP**

Even far-right conservatives, who have supported Mr. Trump in the past, have taken issue with U.S. support for Israel, with prominent commentators like Tucker Carlson openly questioning the value of the relationship.

Military hardware

"You can consider it barter. You can consider military aid or cash," Mr. Trump said. "Look, we give them $4 billion of things and money, and they don't need it. And I was approached by Bibi Netanyahu, and we've been talking about it for a couple of years because it's a lot of money."

But if Mr. Trump intended the announcement to make a last-ditch effort to sway midterm votes, analysts said it likely would not work.

In 2016, President Barack Obama, a Democrat, signed an unprecedented security agreement with Israel to give its military $38 billion over 10 years, amounting to $3.8 billion a year. Under the agreement, Israel's ability to spend part of the funds on Israeli military products was to be phased out and eventually all of the money would be spent on American military industries.

SHAURYA GSCB RC 8381045291

Students blockade dozens of high schools, universities across France

Agence France-Presse
PARIS

Students blockaded dozens of high schools and universities across France on Tuesday to maintain pressure on the government over education reforms as trade unions prepared for a nationwide strike.

After returning from a two-week autumn break, some students resumed their protest campaign on Monday, calling on the authorities to renovate dilapidated schools, reduce class sizes and create more university places.

Authorities said on Tuesday that 48 out of France's 3,700 high schools were blocked amid tight security, including in Paris, Rennes and Lyon. The USL student union said 500 schools were blocked.



Police officers stand in front of protestors holding banners during a demonstration by high school students in Paris on Tuesday. AFP

Fifty-one higher education institutions out of 184 were also disrupted, officials said.

The USL union denounced what it called heavy-handed tactics, with "young people pinned against walls and riot police units deployed" outside schools.

A union representative said the authorities appeared to want to blunt a new day of blockades on Thursday when trade unions have called a nationwide strike.

"We don't even have the right to vote, we can't do anything, so this is our only way of expressing ourselves," a high school student in northwestern Paris said.

Thousands of students also marched in Paris and several other cities.

Education Minister Edouard Geffray spoke out against the action, saying students needed to study and prepare for exams.

"Preventing them from entering their school deprives them of a fundamental right: the right to an education," he said.

SHAURYA SUSHIL 9910452

Bangladesh accuses Hasina of fuelling labour unrest

Press Trust of India
DHAKA

The Bangladesh government on Tuesday accused deposed Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina of fuelling labour unrest as violent garment workers' protests over higher wages entered the fourth day, forcing hundreds of factories to suspend operations and prompting authorities to deploy additional paramilitary forces.



Police officers stand next to a damaged vehicle following a clash with protesting garment workers in Gazipur, Bangladesh. REUTERS

According to the Bangladesh Garments Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA), new violence forced another 300 factories to shut down, taking the number of affected units to nearly 1,000 since the latest wave of protests began on October 31.

The unrest has spread across Dhaka and its industrial outskirts, including Gazipur, Ashulia, Mirpur and Narayanganj, and Mymensingh district with workers clashing with police, blocking roads and disrupting production.

The workers are demanding a minimum monthly wage of 30,000 taka (₹23,000), more than double the existing 12,500 taka, citing rising prices of food, housing, transport and healthcare that have eroded their purchasing power.

The remarks marked a shift from Rahman's earlier assertion that Ms. Hasina and her disbanded Awami League were politically irrelevant in Bangladesh.

SHAURYA SS (+918368104529)

Iran President says return to war benefits 'no one' after U.S. strikes

The Qeshm attack comes just hours after Trump signalled a deal with Iran 'could happen'; Tehran's Deputy Foreign Minister Gharibabadi says Iran retained the right to 'legitimate self-defence'; Qatar says it remained hopeful of an interim deal in war

Agence France-Presse
TEHRAN

Iran's President Masoud Pezeshkian said on Tuesday that a return to war would benefit "no one", hours after reported U.S. strikes on an Iranian island in the Strait of Hormuz.

It came as U.S. voters prepared to cast their ballots in midterm elections that threaten President Donald Trump's grip on power.

Iran's chief negotiator in talks with the U.S., Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf, said the Islamic republic was "ready for battle with its finger on the trigger",



Iranians wave flags during a gathering in front of an anti-U.S. billboard in Tehran's Enghelab Square on Tuesday. AFP

while Deputy Foreign Minister Kazem Gharibabadi said Iran retained the right to "legitimate self-defence" after the strikes.

But Mr. Pezeshkian said his government was still trying to resolve the crisis "through dialogue", adding that "no one will benefit from this war" if it reignited, and emphasising that the country's Supreme Leader had recently granted the government new powers to negotiate issues previously "off-limits".

'Defensive strikes'

The U.S. strikes, reported by *The Wall Street Journal*, *CNN*, *The New York Times* and other outlets, hit Qeshm island in the Hormuz waterway, a key flashpoint of the West Asia war that has upended global markets.

Unnamed U.S. officials cited by the outlets described the attacks as defensive in nature.

Asked if Israel was involved in the latest reported strikes, an Israeli military spokesperson told *AFP*, "No".

The reported Qeshm attack came just hours after Mr. Trump signalled a deal with Iran "could happen".

"Iran wants a settlement, as soon as possible," Mr. Trump posted on his Truth Social platform.

Iranian state news agency *IRNA* reported five explosions in rapid succession on Qeshm island, and that some residents reported seeing two aircraft flying in its skies.

Qatar, a mediator in protracted indirect negotiations between the U.S. and Iran, said it remained hopeful of an interim deal in the war.

SHIBRYA (8368104529)

SEOUL

South Korea, Turkiye to deepen nuclear energy, defence relations



AFP

South Korea and Turkiye agreed to deepen cooperation in nuclear energy and defence, during a summit between their leaders on Tuesday in Seoul. Turkiye's visiting President Recep Tayyip Erdogan told a joint news conference that the documents signed on nuclear energy "will take the cooperation even further". AFP

KATHMANDU

Indian killed as helicopters collide near Everest Base Camp in Nepal



PTI

A 47-year-old Indian national, Vasanth Kumar Balaramaramadu, was killed and another passenger injured when two helicopters collided while attempting to land near Nepal's Everest Base Camp on Tuesday, police said. The helicopters, operated by Fishtail Air and Air Dynasty, collided at around 8.11 a.m. local time. PTI

SHALINYA SSR TRG (9662104529)