U.S. court allows suits on NSA Doval, RAW ex-chief

Order issued in civil plea by Khalistani separatist Pannun linked to an alleged assassination plot against him in New York in 2023; External Affairs Ministry rejects charges, calls lawsuit 'frivolous'

Suhasini Haidar
NEW DELHI

A U.S. court on Monday allowed Khalistani separatist and lawyer Gurpatwant Singh Pannun to serve his civil plea on National Security Adviser (NSA) Ajit Doval and former Research and Analysis Wing (RAW) chief Samant Goel through Indian judicial channels, after the State Department submitted that it had served the notice on the two officials at the Indian Embassy in Washington.

The External Affairs Ministry rejected the move, calling the lawsuit "frivolous" and saying such judicial documents must be sent to the Law and Justice Ministry in India. "We reject the fabricated and malicious attacks on our high officials, as also we reject the frivolous lawsuits. Request for serving of judicial documents in India can only be routed through India's designated central authority, that is the Ministry of Law and Justice," Ministry spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said.

High-profile summons

The U.S. court order comes after its State Department served notice on the two officials at Indian Embassy in Washington

- Gurpatwant Singh Pannun, a U.S.-based lawyer, is wanted in India on terror charges
- Court asks him to prepare documents and the route by which the summons will be issued by November 30
- Notice delivered to Embassy only a 'legal obligation' and not 'taking a position', says U.S. State Department



The lawsuit filed by Mr. Pannun, wanted in India on terror charges, is separate but linked to the U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI)'s findings of alleged Indian links to an assassination plot against him in June 2023.

Granting permission for the summons on Monday, U.S. District Judge Katherine Polk Failla directed Mr. Pannun to prepare documents on or before November 30, including the summons addressed to Mr. Doval and Mr. Goel, details of Indian law and procedure, and the route by which the summons would be issued, as well as records of previous attempts at serving the two officials under the Hague Convention. The certificate of submission delivered to the Indian Embassy by the State Department was signed by an official and dated October 9. The State Department said in a footnote that the delivery did not mean it was taking a "position" on the case and it was a "legal obligation".

An undercover Drug Enforcement Agency informant had pointed the FBI investigation into the lawyer's assassination plot to Indian businessman Nikhil Gupta, and to conversations with senior Indian intelligence officials, including Vikash Yadav, regarding a conspiracy to hire a hitman to kill Mr. Pannun in New York.

Mr. Gupta pleaded guilty to the charges, and the U.S. courts have scheduled the sentencing for November 20. Mr. Yadav was arrested in Delhi in December 2023 on separate charges by Indian authorities and was given bail in April 2024.

The FBI and Canadian officials, who are investigating a similar case involving the killing of separatist Harjeet Singh Nijjar in Vancouver in June 2023, appear to have dropped earlier claims of the involvement of more senior officials, including Mr. Doval, Mr. Goel, and Union Home Minister Amit Shah.

In February 2025, when Mr. Doval accompanied Prime Minister Narendra Modi to Washington for a bilateral visit and meeting with U.S. President Donald Trump, Mr. Pannun had tried to serve the NSA with a notice and failed.

SHAURYA SBI TRC 6810520

Mist sprinklers being activated at ITO in New Delhi, Tuesday. At 299, the AQI was in the 'poor' category. PRAVEEN KHANNA

Crackers account for 71% of Delhi's PM2.5 on Diwali night: Data

Sophiya Mathew
New Delhi, November 10

FIRECRACKERS ACCOUNTED for 71% of fine particulate pollution in Delhi on Diwali night, shows a first-of-its-kind assessment by the country's premier atmospheric sciences research institute.

The assessment by the Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology (IITM), Pune, based on real-time scientific data, shows that firecrackers contributed to 71.1% of PM2.5 pollution in Delhi's air between 1 am and 9 am on November 9 (Monday), immediately after the Diwali celebrations wound down.

The share of firecracker emissions in the PM2.5 concentration was much lower at 43.4% during the same hours on the night before Diwali, and even lower at 5.6% between 1 am and 9 am on November 7.

The IITM data corroborate the sharp spikes in actual ambient PM2.5 levels recorded at

»CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

THE CITY PAGE 4
WINTER ACTION PLAN: RS 11 CR PENALTIES SLAPPED SO FAR, MOST FOR PUCC VIOLATIONS

SHANKAR IAS ACADEMY (8368104529)

Crackers

several air pollution monitoring stations in the capital on Diwali (Sunday) night. Fine particulate matter concentrations peaked at 4,985 µg/m³ in Jahangirpuri and 2,808 µg/m³ in Nehru Nagar at 3 am on November 9.

The IITM assessment has provided a breakdown of the relative contributions of various sources to PM2.5, including vehicular emissions, biomass-burning, waste-burning, secondary aerosols, and dust. Before Diwali night, these sources accounted for a bigger share of PM2.5 than firecrackers.

On the night of November 7 leading up to 9 am on Diwali morning for example, the major contributors to PM2.5 were secondary organic aerosols (20.8%), mixed or unresolved biofuel burning (18.1%), waste-burning (11.6%), secondary inorganic aerosols (10.3%), and vehicles (8.8%).

This changed dramatically on Diwali night leading up to 9 am on Monday. Firecrackers became the dominant contributor, while the shares of vehicles, secondary inorganic aerosols, secondary organic aerosols, and waste-burning fell to 6.9%, 5%, 4.5%, and 1.1% respectively.

Firecrackers continued to be the dominant contributor to Delhi's PM2.5 during the study hours of Tuesday as well, at 29.8%, the IITM study said. Secondary organic aerosols and transport sector emissions were the two next biggest contributors. Delhi's AQI was reported at 299 in the 'Poor' category on Tuesday.

Firecracker emissions are by nature episodic, unlike relatively continuous sources such as vehicular emissions. Their concentrations can change sharply depending on the timing and intensity of their bursting, wind speed, atmospheric mixing, and the height of the planetary boundary layer, which influences whether pollutants disperse or accumulate close to the ground.

The researchers flagged the uncertainties inherently associated with atmospheric processes, source characteristics, and observational limitations, and also the fact that their estimates take into consideration only the 1 am-to-9 am window for each date, and not full-day contributions.

Identifying firecracker emissions presents scientific challenges also because some of their chemical constituents overlap with those released by other combustion sources. Potassium, for instance, is a commonly used tracer for fireworks but is also released during biomass-burning, including crop-residue and wood-burning.

The challenges arising out of this overlap can increase as pollutants age in the atmosphere. A study published this year in the journal 'Environmental Science & Technology' found that fireworks-derived particles in Delhi's Diwali haze became internally mixed with biomass-burning aerosols, resulting in a "complex, chemically evolved haze".

Another study, published in 2022, which examined PM2.5 at two locations approximately 15 km apart in Delhi, found substantial variations in the concentrations of elements associated with fireworks. The study highlighted that the impact of firecrackers can vary across locations depending on the intensity of bursting, the movement of pollutants, and local atmospheric conditions.

"The source-apportionment estimates are derived using the best available source profiles, scientifically established methodologies, and practices accepted by the scientific community," IITM said.

Last month, the Advanced Atmospheric Chemistry and Aerosol Toxicity Analysis Laboratory (AATAL) was inaugurated at IITM's Delhi branch. The lab is equipped with instruments to analyse the chemical composition of atmospheric gases and aerosols, including PM2.5, metals, and toxic elements. It is integrated with IITM's Air Quality Warning and Integrated Decision Support System for Emissions (AIRWISE), which combines air-quality forecasts, observations, and source-apportionment information.

After the inauguration of AATAL on October 24, Dr Sachin Ghude, Project Director of the Metro Air Quality and Weather Service (MAQWS) of the Union Ministry of Earth Sciences, which is implemented by IITM, had said that the integrated system would provide early warnings and detailed information on sources contributing to deteriorating air quality, including stubble-burning, vehicular emissions, and construction and road dust, which would help identify the major sources of air pollution and plan targeted interventions.

Dr Ghude told *The Indian Express* Tuesday that the new IITM report marks the first time that firecracker emissions have been specifically included in an official source-apportionment estimate. In the absence of real-time measurements of firecracker-related aerosols, their impact has to be estimated indirectly.

SURYA SSB TEC 9368104530

Supreme Court goes beyond Deepavali AQI, flags vehicular emissions polluting Delhi air

Krishnadas Rajagopal
NEW DELHI

Forty-eight hours before Deepavali, amidst the rising crescendo of crackers heralding the festivities, a Supreme Court Bench headed by Chief Justice of India Surya Kant said the people, and not the judiciary, must strike a blow against air pollution in the national capital.

The court went beyond Deepavali to highlight a consistent danger that sustains and would worsen the toxic air: vehicular emissions. On November 6, the court detected a sharp increase in issues attributable to vehicular emissions.

"It must be borne in mind that Delhi and the National Capital Region (NCR), by virtue of their geographical and economic interconnectedness, bear the cumulative burden of



The Court said it had detected sharp increase in vehicular emissions. FILE PHOTO

vehicular traffic originating not merely within their own boundaries but also from the neighbouring States of Uttar Pradesh, Haryana and Rajasthan," the Supreme Court reminded the authorities in its latest order. The issue warranted urgent intervention, the court said, directing the Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD), the Delhi government, the Delhi Police (Traffic department), as well as the neighbouring States of Haryana, Rajasthan, and Uttar Pradesh to file their responses on what they have done to regulate the plying of commercial and non-commercial vehicles. The court wanted to know about measures to regulate traffic originating from outside the national capital.

These include steps taken to identify, monitor, and regulate vehicles that do not conform to prescribed emission standards, and measures to prevent the entry and operation of overage, end-of-life, or non-compliant vehicles.

The Bench has specifically sought information on the measures undertaken against violations, including the number of vehicles inspected, challaned, denied entry, and the coordination mechanisms between the authorities of Delhi and the neighbouring States for regulating inter-State vehicular movement.

No compliance

Incidentally, two separate orders passed several months ago, on January 21 and February 23 this year, had contained detailed long-term and short-term measures recommended by the Commission for Air Quality Management (CAQM) to mitigate air pollution, especially caused by vehicular emissions, in Delhi.

The January 21 order had listed various CAQM recommendations, including phasing out polluting vehicles from Delhi-NCR, fortifying the pollution-under-check regime, augmentation of rail transport and metro models, revised electric vehicle policy, among others.

Subsequently, on February 23, the court directed the Delhi government and three Ministries - Environment, Petroleum and Natural Gas, and Commerce and Industry - to submit a joint proposal for shifting coal-based industries out of Delhi NCR. This direction was based on a CAQM recommendation to ban the establishment of new coal-based thermal power plants within a 300 km radius from Delhi.

However, on November 6, the court was told by its *amici curiae* that the compliance of its orders was "yet to be properly reported to this court".

The court has listed four *suo moto* cases - vehicular emissions, enhancement of green cover, construction activities/power plants, waste management/stubble-burning /firecrackers - from November 23 to November 30.

SHARE A SSR (8336102420)

Opposition builds over third mega dam project in Arunachal Pradesh

The Hindu Bureau
GUWAHATI

Communities living downstream of a hydropower project on the Dibang river have stepped up the heat on the governments of Assam and Arunachal Pradesh, with the latter already burning due to opposition to two other proposed mega dams.

The 2,880-megawatt Dibang Multipurpose Project on the Dibang river, one of three that form the Brahmaputra in adjoining Assam, is located in Arunachal Pradesh's Lower Dibang Valley. Developed by NHPC Limited at an estimated cost of ₹31,875 crore, the project had been hanging fire until a renewed push for its completion commenced in March 2024.



The under-construction 2,880 MW Dibang Multipurpose Project on Dibang river is located in Lower Dibang Valley district. FILE PHOTO

10-day deadline

An alliance representing downstream communities in Arunachal Pradesh and Assam on Monday set a 10-day deadline for the two State governments to fulfil their demands.

These include rehabilitation, flood protection and other safeguards linked to the mega dam, scheduled to be commissioned by February 2032.

Seeking immediate intervention by both governments, the Dibang Dam Assam-Arunachal Downstream Action Alliance wants Project Affected Family status for each family living downstream of the dam.

The alliance also demanded public hearings in Assam, specifically in Dibrugarh and Tinsukia districts, and construction of guide walls, embankments and protection walls from the dam site along the Dibang river.

It cited an August 2024 communication from the Arunachal Pradesh government to underline its demand for the downstream protection measures.

The alliance said the government should fulfil the demands before it commissions the project. "The demands are justified as Assam is exposed to downstream flooding and potential dam-break risks. Assam's territory is also used to transport construction materials and machinery to the project site," an alliance spokesperson said.

The alliance threatened to block the movement of construction material, tools, machinery and plant equipment to the Dibang dam site if its demands are ignored. At 278 metres, this dam is set to become India's tallest.

Meanwhile, people in the Mepsoro area of Arunachal Pradesh's Papum Pare district have opposed a proposal to establish an Indian Army field ammunition depot on 1,200 acres of land. A joint land survey, involving the district authorities, Army officials, police and local leaders, scheduled for Tuesday, triggered the protest.

Officials said efforts to resolve local issues were ongoing.

SHAURYA SE TIME 20452

Ladakh announces hill council polls, but civil society groups don't budge

Peerzada Ashiq
SRINAGAR

The Ladakh administration's move on Tuesday to announce hill council elections in the Union Territory, in addition to panchayat and municipal elections, failed to assuage the growing anxiety over the Centre's handling of the region, which has witnessed frequent protests over demands for Statehood and Sixth Schedule status.

The announcement came even as a shutdown was observed in Kargil to protest the timing of the elections, given the harsh winter conditions in the region.

"Elections to all eight Ladakh Autonomous Hill Development Councils (LAHDCs), covering 100 constituencies across Ladakh, will be held on December 4. Following the creation of eight districts from the erstwhile two districts of Kargil and Leh, the number of LAHDC constituencies has increased from 26 each in Leh and Kargil to 100 for whole Ladakh," Ladakh Chief Secretary Ashish Kundra said.


Ashish Kundra

He said November 17 was the last date for filing nominations, November 18 for scrutiny, and November 20 for the withdrawal of candidature. The entire election process is scheduled to be completed before December 8, he added.

"For the first time, 36 out of the 100 LAHDC seats have been reserved for women, marking a significant step towards strengthening women's representation in grassroots democratic institutions," Mr. Kundra said.

Putting all speculation to rest, Mr. Kundra clarified that the newly elected LAHDCs "would retain all powers vested in them under the existing law".

Against polls in winter

Mr. Kundra's announcement on the hill council elections coincided with a shutdown in Kargil to protest the delimitation and demand that panchayat and municipal elections be postponed to next year due to the approach of winter in the region.

"Protests and shutdowns are symbolic. People in a democracy have the right to express themselves through such protests," Mr. Kundra said.

The shutdown call was issued by the Kargil Democratic Alliance (KDA), a socio-politico-religious grouping which has been holding talks with the Union government on the demands for Statehood and Sixth Schedule status. However, this process hit a wall on October 22 after the Centre decided not to resume talks with the KDA and the Leh Apex Body for unknown reasons.

SHAURYA SSB TRG (8826104399)

Caste and class

Exclusion of creamy layer is essential, but must be done consistently

If public resources are to dismantle both caste hierarchy and class inequality, OBC reservation should resist the notion that caste disadvantage makes economic differences among OBC families irrelevant. The 'creamy layer' rules are responsible for identifying those OBC members who have advanced sufficiently to no longer require affirmative action. However, the government has implemented them inconsistently. The Supreme Court in March corrected one inconsistency, that the government cannot hold the salary alone of an OBC candidate's parent as evidence of social advancement. In *Indra Sawhney* (1992), the Court upheld the government's 27% reservation for OBC candidates in central government services if it also excluded economically advanced sections, i.e., the creamy layer, among OBCs. Following the equivalence requirement issued in 1993, the Department of Personnel & Training (DoPT) issued a "clarification" in 2004 that the government used, from around 2015, to deny dozens of OBC candidates who had cleared the Civil Services Examination their benefits because their parents' salaries exceeded the official threshold due to pay revisions that did not always reflect changes in occupational status. The Cabinet also approved equivalence guidelines in 2017 but a parliamentary committee criticised it over a number of issues.

In *Rohith Nathan* (2026), the Court rightly rejected the government's use of the 2004 "clarification" to arbitrarily exclude OBC candidates based on their parents' salaries alone. However, the government stalled service allocations following the 2025 examination and appealed that retrospectively applying the ruling would create administrative chaos. On November 6, the Court conceded that it had not asked the government to reopen completed selections, as it could set workers against one another while leaving government misapplication unaddressed. A proactive policy is essential now as the government must create supernumerary posts for legitimate claimants and apply the 1993 rules to pending allocations without vouchsafing these remedies for only those who can afford litigation. Access to public employment continues to be grossly unequal: per the 2024-25 DoPT Annual Report, OBC representation in central government employment was 26.3% but declined steadily towards higher positions. As the Justice G. Rohini Commission also indicated, the benefits of reservation are distributed unevenly among OBC communities. However, the report, submitted in 2023, is still not in the public domain. The coming Census includes caste enumeration but policymakers also need data on each caste's education, occupations, assets, and landholdings. Defending redistribution among caste groups while ignoring major inequalities within them, and constraining OBC reservation assuming relatively more high-income families capture the benefits without first establishing the extent and the causes are equally difficult to justify.

SHAURYA S IAS (8368104520)

Van Dyke threatens to 'reveal shocking details' of jail time

Govt. declines comment on the U.S. national's online posts, says courts still hearing case; Van Dyke was arrested in March along with six Ukrainians, who illegally crossed from Myanmar to Mizoram

Suhasini Haidar
Devesh K. Pandey
NEW DELHI

The matter of United States citizen Mathew Aaron Van Dyke, who was arrested along with six Ukrainians for travelling from Myanmar to India without valid documents, is still in the courts, the External Affairs Ministry said on Tuesday.

Ministry spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal refused to comment on Mr. Van Dyke's claim that he had been arrested at Russia's behest, or his threat to "reveal shocking details" about his incarceration in Delhi's Tihar jail for six months.

Mr. Van Dyke, who was granted bail along with the others arrested with him, was allowed to leave the country last month. According to his mother Sharon Van Dyke, who campaigned for his release, U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio and U.S. Ambassador to India Sergio Gor had raised the issue with the Indian government.

"India threw me and several Ukrainians in prison for over six months. This was part of Russia's war against Ukraine," Mr. Van Dyke said in a post, without giving more details. He said he would "reveal shocking details about this story over the next few months in both posts and media interviews".



To a question by *The Hindu*, Mathew Aaron Van Dyke said he would return to India in February 2027 to appear in court. GETTY IMAGES

'Wait for court verdict'

Asked about Mr. Van Dyke's comments, Mr. Jaiswal said that the case was presently in the courts, adding that the government would "have to wait for what the courts have to say".

The government had come under criticism from Opposition parties for diluting the charges against Mr. Van Dyke and for allowing the National Investigation Agency (NIA) to say it had no objection to those accused of suspected mercenary activities leaving the country.

'No anti-Indian agenda'

In a series of responses to Indian social media users on Tuesday, Mr. Van Dyke said he was "innocent" of any "anti-Indian" agenda, accepting however that he had wrongly crossed over from Myanmar to Mizoram without valid permissions.

"Everyone going to non-junta areas in northwestern Myanmar goes through India. It happens every day," he claimed, calling for the case against him to be closed. Responding to a question on social media posed by *The Hindu*, Mr. Van Dyke said he would return to India in February 2027 to appear in court in person, although the court suggested that he could attend the hearing via video from the U.S.

The NIA had arrested Mr. Van Dyke and six Ukrainian nationals on March 13, 2026 at different Indian airports, in connection with an alleged cross-border conspiracy involving Myanmar-based ethnic armed groups.

The accused had entered India on tourist visas and travelled to the northeastern region without obtaining mandatory permits.

They crossed illegally from Mizoram into Myanmar, where they allegedly trained ethnic armed organisations in drone warfare, drone operations, and jamming technology.

Initially, the NIA also invoked provisions of the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA). However, its chargesheet dated September 8 did not include terror charges.

SHARMA GOR TEL 8368104529

Hasina will be executed if she returns: prosecutor

Agence France-Presse
DHAKA

The Bangladeshi prosecutor who secured the death sentence against ousted leader Sheikh Hasina said on Tuesday she will be executed if she returns home.

Ms. Hasina, whose 15-year rule was ended by a mass uprising she tried to crush, has vowed to return in December to Bangladesh, where she was convicted of crimes against humanity over the 2024 crackdown on protesters.

"Sheikh Hasina has no option but to face the execution of the verdict," Md Aminul Islam told pressmen, responding to reports she planned to return from self-imposed exile in neighbouring India.

He added that the 79-year-old fugitive had missed the deadline to appeal against her conviction, leaving her with no further legal recourse.



Sheikh Hasina

"The statutory appeal period has expired, and no appeal can now be filed," he said.

The daughter of a revolutionary who led Bangladesh to independence in 1971, Ms. Hasina presided over breakneck economic growth, helping transform the South Asian nation of 170 million people from a largely agricultural economy into a global manufacturing hub.

Critics have accused Ms. Hasina of jailing political rivals, enacting harsh anti-press laws and overseeing widespread human rights abuses, including the killing of Opposition activists.

She left to neighbouring India by helicopter in August 2024 as angry crowds stormed her palace. She has remained there ever since, hidden from public view. Only occasionally has she addressed news conferences by telephone, her voice sounding frail.

Ms. Hasina has repeatedly said she intends to return to Bangladesh in December, saying she is "fully aware" she faces being hanged if she returns.

SHAURYA SSB TRG (8366010529)

Bangladesh: 1 killed as violence flares over Hasina's return plan

Press Trust of India
Dhaka, November 10

ONE PERSON was killed and at least eight vehicles were set ablaze in separate incidents across Bangladesh overnight amid escalating tensions over ousted prime minister Sheikh Hasina's planned return next month, police said on Tuesday.

Unidentified people torched the vehicles, including several buses, and set off crude bombs at multiple locations. A bus driver died of smoke inhalation after a parked bus was set ablaze in southwestern Faridpur while he was sleeping inside it, police said.

Police blamed activists of the Awami League, whose activities have been banned, and its affiliated organisations for several of the incidents.

The incidents came after Bangladesh's government said it was examining reports that Hasina had applied for a new passport and national identity card. Minister for Foreign Affairs Humaiun Kobir on Monday ruled out issuing her a passport.

Police said hundreds of activists of the Awami League and its affiliates staged a demonstration at the southern toll plaza of the Padma Bridge in Shariatpur district early Tuesday. They exploded crude bombs and vandalised several vehicles, temporarily disrupting traffic on the bridge.

SHAURYA SSB TRG (8560104523)

FBI probing Jensen Huang's affair with alleged Chinese agent: Trump

U.S. President says he spoke to the Nvidia CEO who told him that 'he had absolutely no idea that the person in question was a spy'; Huang earlier acknowledged he had an affair, issuing an apology to his wife and to the company in an open letter

Associated Press
WASHINGTON

U.S. President Donald Trump said on Monday the FBI is investigating Nvidia CEO Jensen Huang's affair with an alleged Chinese government agent, but said he doesn't think the executive who has helped to develop artificial intelligence has a reason to worry.

"I know the FBI is looking into it in terms of something else, and I think that he'll be in good shape," Mr. Trump said at a White House briefing.

The sudden emergence of Huang's infidelity has rocked the political class and America's tech sector, creating new concerns about whether China has been able to access the cutting-edge chips designed by Nvidia that are powering the development of artificial intelligence.



Donald Trump stands with Jensen Huang after presenting him with the National Medal of Science in Washington on October 8. REUTERS

Mr. Trump suggested the extraordinary step of directly involving himself in a counterintelligence investigation, a sign of his friendly relationship with Mr. Huang and the possible geopolitical stakes.

"I did speak to him today just to see if he's feeling all right, how you're doing," Mr. Trump said. "He said he had absolutely no idea that the person in question was a spy."

Mr. Huang – a singular figure in the technology landscape and one of the world's wealthiest people – has acknowledged he had an affair, issuing an apology to his wife and to the company in an open letter posted on Nvidia's website. The *New York Times* reported that U.S. intelligence determined that the woman was gathering information for Beijing.

"I support the investigation and will cooperate fully. I love our country and our company. I am committed to protecting NVIDIA and supporting America's national security," Mr. Huang said in his letter.

Nvidia announced Sunday it was conducting an independent investigation into reports that Mr. Huang was the "target of a foreign intelligence effort." The episode also is attracting congressional scrutiny, with top Democrats Sen. Mark Warner and Rep. Hakeem Jeffries saying they are interested in investigating it further.

SHANEYAR RG (8358145599)

U.S. draws criticism as it boycotts UN Human Rights Council review, again

Agence France-Presse
GENEVA

The United States boycotted on Tuesday a United Nations review of its human rights record for a second time, in an unprecedented snub of a process that all countries traditionally submit to.

U.S. seats were left empty at the world body's European headquarters in Geneva for the so-called Universal Periodic Review (UPR), which all 193 UN member states undergo every four to five years.

As the review was set to begin, UN Human Rights Council president Sidharto Reza Suryodipuro, of Indonesia, looked at the empty seats behind the U.S. nameplate and noted that "the delegation of the U.S. is not present in the room".



Empty seat of the U.S. delegation during the 60th session of the council, at the UN European base in Geneva, in 2025. AP

President Donald Trump's administration decided shortly after his return to power in 2025 to halt cooperation with the rights council, and had already boycotted the UPR process last November.

In response, the council at the time had postponed the U.S. review for a year, in the hope that Washington would return to the fold, but to no avail.

But the U.S. State Department told AFP that the administration considers the council an "irredeemable body" that "makes a mockery of human rights", suggesting that it would not participate in any of its mechanisms, including the UPR.

Washington's complete non-compliance with the process is unprecedented.

Critics of the U.S. snub warn that the walkout could encourage other countries – many of which bristle about intense scrutiny from human rights monitors – to follow suit.

Jamil Dakwar, director of the American Civil Liberties Union's human rights program, said: "The administration is saying to the world, 'we don't care about whether you would review us or not, we're going to continue to violate human rights unabashed'."

(With inputs from AP)

SHAURYA SSBT.G(8104529)

U.S. DEFENCE SECRETARY IS ACCUSED OF VARIOUS ABUSES OF POWER IN OFFICE

Defiant Hegseth slams efforts to impeach him

He could be the first US defence secretary to be impeached

Phil Stewart
Washington, November 10

DEFENCE SECRETARY Pete Hegseth on Tuesday blasted efforts to impeach him as a farce that would embolden US adversaries, as he lashed out at his political opponents in Congress and the media in an unapologetic defence of his record.

Striking a defiant tone at a Pentagon news briefing, Hegseth thanked President Trump for his continued support as the House of Representatives scheduled a procedural vote for late Tuesday that will test support for his impeachment.

Hegseth said past impeachments of Trump had failed, and added: "Both times he came back stronger, and the American people sent him back to the White House. Now they're trying a third time. This time against a member of his cabinet."

US Representative Thomas Massie, a Kentucky Republican, introduced eight articles of impeachment against Hegseth on Monday.

Congressional sources say the resolution may have the votes to pass even with Trump's Republicans still controlling the House until Democrats take over on January 3. Conviction appears unlikely in the Senate, however, where a two-thirds majority is required and Republicans hold 53 of 100 seats.

Hegseth is accused of various abuses of power in office, including issuing orders to go to war with Iran without an imminent threat or approval from Congress. Vice President JD Vance has publicly questioned the war. Hegseth declined to be drawn into responding to Vance, but defended the conflict, calling Trump courageous and saying Iran's military has been left in ruins. "History will judge the Iran war quite differently than the conventional wisdom right now," he said.

Hegseth cited US Secretary of State Marco Rubio as saying of the war: "It's not necessarily popular, but it may have been necessary, and that's certainly how I feel. It was a necessary undertaking." REUTERS

IMPEACHMENT ARTICLES AGAINST PETE HEGSETH

Here are the "high crimes and misdemeanors" in the unusual Republican-led impeachment effort against a Republican official



HEGSETH DENIES wrongdoing, and Trump has criticised Rep. Massie and pledged to stand by his Secretary of Defence

IRAN
Three charges are related to Iran war. He is accused of allowing actions beyond a 60-day limit without approval by Congress

He is accused of ignoring laws requiring forces minimise civilian casualties

VENEZUELA
Hegseth is accused of directing the kidnapping of a sovereign foreign leader (Nicolas Maduro) and authorising lethal strikes in the Caribbean and Pacific that have resulted in more than 220 deaths

YEMEN
He is accused of directing and executing unlawful military strikes and operations in Yemen, specifically "Operation Rough Rider," a 2025 US and British air and naval campaign against Iran-aligned Houthis

FREE SPEECH
He is accused of retaliating against Democratic Senator Mark Kelly of Arizona, despite legal protection of his speech.

He sought to prosecute Kelly after he urged US troops to refuse illegal orders

SHAURYA ASSETS PTE LTD (8668104529)

Russia, Ukraine begin talks mediated by U.S. to end war

Associated Press
ABU DHABI



Key discussion: Members of the Russian and Ukrainian delegations meet in the presence of U.S. envoys in Abu Dhabi on Tuesday. AFP

Three-way talks between Russia, Ukraine, and the U.S. opened in the UAE on Tuesday, as Washington made another push to end the war in Europe which started nearly five years ago. The two-day session in Abu Dhabi is the first such meeting since February. It will focus on establishing future security guarantees for the warring countries, the White House said. While Russia sees the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation as a threat, Ukraine wants to prevent future Russian invasions.

The first day of talks concluded after nearly four hours, the RIA Novosti news agency said. They are expected to resume on Wednesday, according to the press office of the Foreign Intelligence Service of Ukraine.

U.S. President Donald Trump's son-in-law, Jared Kushner, who is trying to broker a settlement along with U.S. envoy Steve Witkoff, said he believed there were "some good ideas how to bridge" the differences between the two sides.

Rustem Umerov, the head of Ukraine's Foreign Intelligence Service who is leading Kyiv's delegation, thanked the U.S. for its efforts to end Russia's invasion. "Our people are waiting to end this war. And we hope that we will achieve the lasting peace for Ukraine," he said.

The head of the Russian delegation, Vladimir Medinsky, expressed hope the meeting "will allow us to advance on the path towards peace in the interests of the people of Russia and the people of Ukraine".

U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio called the meeting "very productive" while Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said the session was "constructive and quite substantive."

"It looks like the talks in Abu Dhabi were very productive," Mr. Rubio said in Paris at a G7 meeting. "There's a lot of work to be done in that regard. It's not like something that's on the verge of being solved in the next 24 hours or anything like that."

Mr. Zelenskyy said the talks were largely about humanitarian issues, including prisoner exchanges and returning Ukrainian civilians in captivity, as well as children taken from the country.

NATO commander U.S. Gen. Alexus Grynkewich-pointed to "some great progress in the past in a military-to-military dialogue in a trilateral format."

There are no signs the fighting is abating, and the talks come against a backdrop of new long-range strikes by both Russia and Ukraine.

SHAURYA SSP TRG (8368104529)

Will hold off on Iran strikes; blockade will continue, says Trump

Reuters
WASHINGTON/CAIRO/ABU DHABI

U.S. President Donald Trump has said he plans to hold off on new military strikes against Iran for the time being after appeals from countries in the region, including from Qatar's Prime Minister in White House talks.

"The United States of America is fully locked and loaded with the best equipment ever made, and we don't think there's going to be any reason to use it," Mr. Trump said on Monday. The President however, later said he plans to keep up a naval blockade in the Strait of Hormuz.



Donald Trump

'Fake news'

Iranian security council chief Mohsen Rezaei said on X the U.S. should "stop manufacturing fake news about imaginary talks" and that it was "time to surrender to the seven conditions Iran has repeatedly set out." Iran's proposal involves an end to the U.S. blockade and the lifting of some sanctions, with talks on its nuclear programme to follow. Foreign Ministry spokesperson Esmaeil Baghaei defended the plan as the most reasonable offer on the table.

The U.S. has repeatedly rejected Iran's plan, with Secretary of State Marco Rubio describing Tehran's conditions on Sunday as "outrageous and ridiculous and really not realistic."

Mr. Rubio said on Tuesday that he saw no need to attack Iran again as the U.S.'s squeezing of Iran's economy made further attacks unnecessary.

"The economic campaign (against Iran) is so devastating that right now there is no need for major combat operations," Mr. Rubio said after a G7 meeting in Paris. "That is what I told our allies here today."

Mr. Trump spoke on Monday after meeting with Qatari Prime Minister Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al-Thani, a key intermediary with Iran, as efforts to end the war ramped up following last week's U.S. midterm election.

He said he was acting "at the behest of countries that are their neighbours" and specifically cited Qatar, Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Bahrain, Kuwait, and others that prefer the U.S. not launch new attacks.

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DEATH OF 3 WORKERS AT TATA ELECTRONICS HOSUR PLANT

Why Apple's India supply chain challenges are back in focus

Soumyarendra Barik
New Delhi, November 10

THREE CONTRACT workers have died at a Tata Electronics factory in Tamil Nadu's Hosur, which manufactures critical components for Apple's iPhones, bringing renewed scrutiny on the safety and operational challenges facing the American technology giant's rapidly expanding manufacturing ecosystem in India.

The deaths come at a time when Apple has successfully diversified a major portion of its manufacturing away from China, with India now accounting for around a quarter of all iPhones produced globally.

However, the expansion has not been without setbacks. From fires and worker protests to allegations of environmental violations, employment discrimination and a major cybersecurity breach, Apple's contract manufacturers have faced a series of challenges over the last few years.

Why India has become important for Apple

Apple began assembling iPhones in India in 2017, with a focus on older models.

But its manufacturing operations have expanded in recent years, led by the company's efforts to reduce dependence on China amid growing geopolitical tensions and supply chain disruptions, and subsidies offered by the government under its Production Linked Incentive scheme for smartphone manufacturing.

India accounts for roughly 25% of global iPhone production, with its manufacturing ecosystem increasingly handling newer and sophisticated models. Taiwan's Foxconn and Tata Group are Apple's main manufacturing partners in India, with Tata accounting for around 40% of domestic iPhone assembly and Foxconn making up the remainder.

Tata has emerged as a crucial player after acquiring Indian operations of Taiwanese manufacturer Wistron in 2023 and later taking control of Pegatron's Indian iPhone manufacturing business. Its Hosur operations are significant because they manufacture precision-engineered metal casings and back panels used in iPhones, representing an attempt to deepen local value addition rather than merely assembling devices from imported components.

The challenges

The workers' deaths are the latest in a string of incidents that involve Tata's Hosur operations.

In June 2026, a ransomware attack on a Tata Electronics iPhone assembly facility in Hosur resulted in the leaking of over 200,000 files on the dark web. The stolen information included confidential supplier details, component specifications and photographs relating to the then-unreleased iPhone 18 Pro. The breach was concerning because Apple's supply chain operates under strict confidentiality arrangements, with information on unreleased products, suppliers and component designs closely guarded.

Following the incident, Tata restricted internal access to sensitive systems and engaged a global consultant to conduct a forensic investigation, *Reuters* reported.

Around the same time, Tata's Hosur components facility also faced regulatory scrutiny over allegations of groundwater contamination. The Tamil Nadu Pollution Control Board (TNPCB) warned the company that its factory could face closure over allegations that wastewater discharged from the facility had contaminated nearby agricultural land and wells. TNPCB had conducted multiple inspections after complaints from local farmers.

However, Tata later said the regulator had accepted its explanations, dropping further action. Disputing its findings, the company said fresh water sample analyses did not indicate contamination and the facility was compliant with applicable environmental standards.

In 2024, Foxconn faced allegations that it had systematically excluded married women from assembly-line jobs at its iPhone factory in Sriperumbudur, Tamil Nadu. A *Reuters* probe prompted scrutiny from Union Labour Ministry and the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC). In January 2025, NHRC criticised labour officials for inadequately investigating the allegations. However, a subsequent government investigation cleared Foxconn of wrongdoing.

Foxconn also instructed its recruitment agents to remove age, gender and marital-status criteria from job advertisements after the controversy.

Earlier, in September 2024, a major fire at Tata's Hosur facility, reportedly originating in an area used to store chemicals, had forced the temporary suspension of iPhone component manufacturing. The incident was significant because the facility was then a key domestic supplier of iPhone back panels.

In September 2023, Taiwan's Pegatron temporarily suspended iPhone assembly at its Chennai facility following a fire. Earlier that year, another Apple supplier, Foxlink, which manufactured iPhone chargers, halted production at its Andhra Pradesh factory after a fire caused part of the building to collapse.

In December 2021, Foxconn's factory near Chennai was shut for over three weeks after around 250 workers fell ill, triggering protests over living conditions and food safety. Apple subsequently found that the facility did not meet its required standards. FULL REPORT ON WWW.INDIANEXPRESS.COM

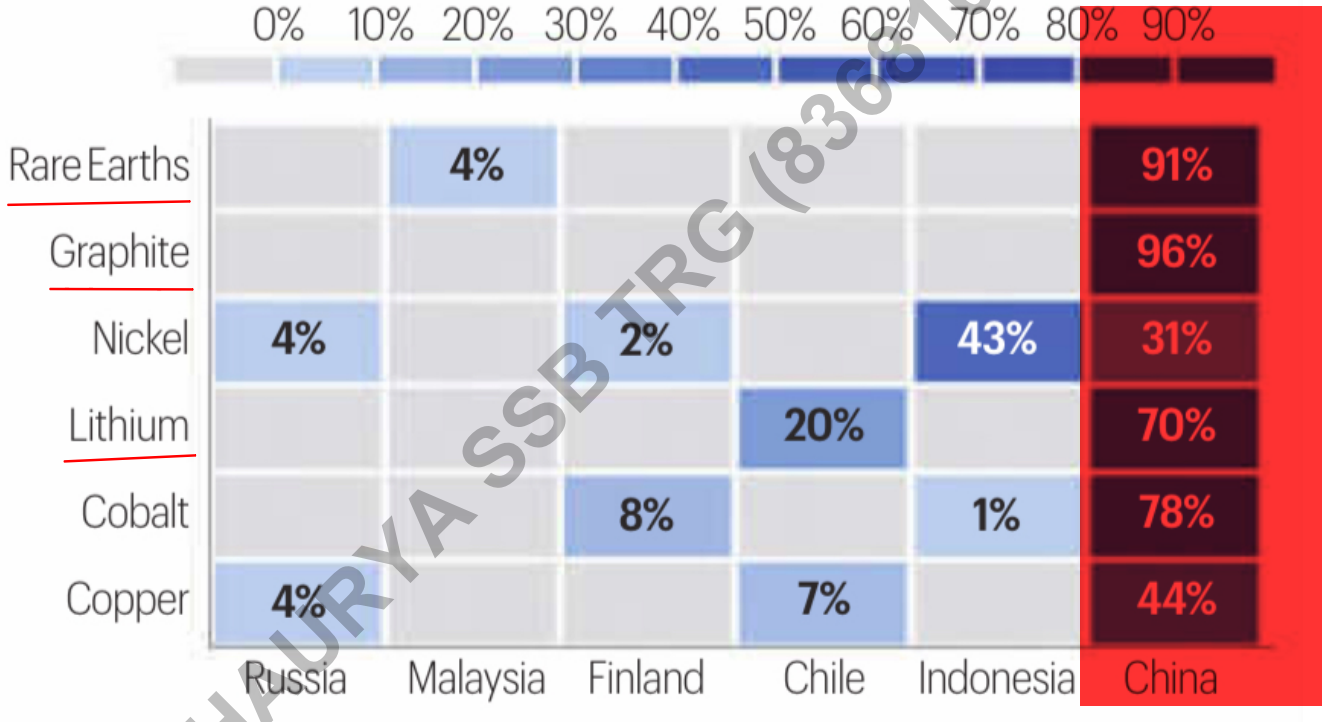
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China's critical minerals stranglehold

The battle for natural resources is not new. But in the age of electrification and artificial intelligence, the fight is decidedly one-sided and squarely in favour of China. And while the world's second-largest economy is not home to the required critical minerals, it is overwhelmingly dominant in processing them.



Country share (%) of global refining in each mineral (2024)



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Companies and governments, as per Moody's Ratings, are now more willing to balance costs against the benefits of resilience, as has been the case when it comes to critical minerals and other strategic inputs. Securing them "now comes with a growing price tag" which is putting pressure on profit margins, balance sheets, and public finances.

"Several developments in 2027 will test that balance, including the review of the US-Mexico-Canada Agreement, maturing export-control regimes covering critical minerals and rare earths, and energy trade routes reshaped by disruption in the Middle East," Moody's said.