

Daily Current Affairs





3
The Hindu



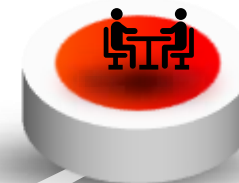
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**PIB, PRS & Other
newspaper**



1
**The Indian
Express**

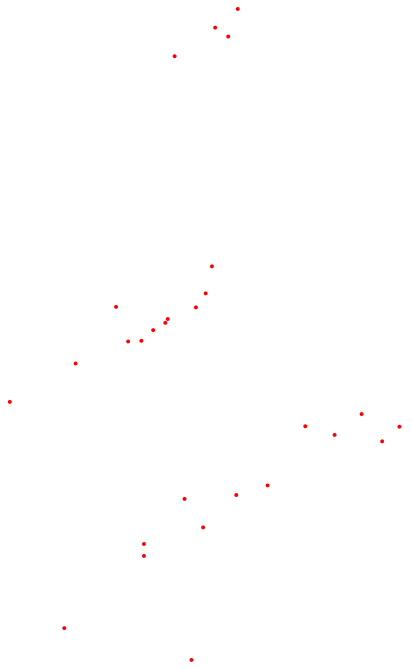


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Jansatta



1
**Financial
Express**

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10 MCQ QUIZ

**Stop being a
prisoner of your
past. Become the
architect of your
future.**

No issues available International for this date: 2025-10-21



THE TIMES OF INDIA

To Our Readers

As the offices of The Times Of India were closed on October 21 on account of Diwali, there is no issue of the paper on October 22.



MODI SENDS OPEN LETTER
"India is a symbol of stability for the world"

NEWS > PAGE 4



NEW COALITION DEAL
China hawk
Takaichi is
Japan's first
woman PM

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U.S. STEPS IN
Vance arrives to shore up
Gaza ceasefire deal

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CALL FOR ACTION
'We need a law to
protect domestic
workers'

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STILL IN THE HUNT
Verstappen wins U.S.
GP, narrows the gap

SPORT > PAGE 16

INSIDE



'Trump-Putin's
meet on Ukraine
is deferred U.S.'

NEWS > PAGE 14

WASHINGTON
Plans are on hold for United States President Donald Trump to sit down with Russian leader Vladimir Putin to talk about resolving the war in Ukraine, a U.S. official said on Tuesday. The meeting had been announced last week. It was supposed to take place in Budapest. > Page 14

Govt. shadowing of Angmo 'raises issues of liberty'

NEW DELHI
A complaint by Gitanjali Angmo, the wife of detained activist Sonam Wangchuk, in the Supreme Court, that the state apparatus watches her every step and intervenes raises the question of whether the personal freedom and right to free movement of a family member of a person detained under the National Security Act is also forfeited. > Page 4

Woman doctor assaulted in WB govt. hospital

KOLKATA
A woman doctor was assaulted over a dispute with a patient's attendants at a state-run medical college at Uluberia in West Bengal's Howrah. Two patients were arrested, and one of them is said to be a police officer. > Page 8

Probe conspiracy in theft of gold at Sabarimala HC

BOMBAY
The Kerala High Court directed the special investigating team (SIT), constituted to investigate the Sabarimala gold theft case, to probe 'criminal conspiracy' and the subsequent misappropriation of the gold. > Page 10



Forest 'wardens' perform CPR to save monkey

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

In a heart-warming act of compassion that has since gone viral, forest wardens from a Vansamurathalam forest guard station in Kerala rescued a baby macaque after it suffered an electric shock. > Page 2

New H-1B visa fee will not apply for change of status: U.S. govt.

Fee will not apply to existing visa holders granted an amendment, change of status, or extension of stay, says the USCIS guidelines; the cut-off date is set at September 21, 2025, and current H-1B visa holders can travel freely to and from the US

The H-1B visas

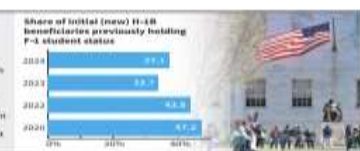
NEW DELHI

In a further relaxation of its rules relating to the new \$100,000 fee on H-1B visas, the United States government said on Monday that the fee will not apply to applications for a change of status or an extension of stay in the U.S. On September 19, U.S. President Donald Trump had signed a proclamation imposing a \$100,000 fee on H-1B visas. Hours later, his government clarified that this would be a one-time fee and would only apply to new applications. Guidelines issued by the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services Department on Monday reiterated this, saying that the proclamation "does not apply to any previously issued and currently valid H-1B visas, or any petitions

Relief for students

NEW DELHI

Typically, 53-67% of new H-1B beneficiaries were previously U.S. students on F-1 visas, a large share of them Indian. The new guidelines have brought relief to this group, as the revised fee does not apply to them



Indian interests

NEW DELHI

Notably, they also said that the proclamation does not prevent any holder of a current H-1B visa from travelling to and from the U.S. The U.S. Chamber of Commerce had filed a last-minute lawsuit challenging the \$100,000 fee, saying it overrides existing provisions. The U.S. government does not share data on the number of H-1B visa

holders currently located in the U.S.

NEW DELHI

Further, as per data from the USCIS, Total Consular Services had 5,808 H-1B visas approved in 2025 as of the end of June, the second-highest number of H-1B visas granted to any company that year, after Amazon (10,044). Other Indian companies that have significantly benefited from the H-1B programme include Infosys (1,004), Wipro (1,523), and Tech Mahindra America (88).

FDI fall

NEW DELHI

While the total amount of money leaving the country fell in August 2024, the amount invested in India fell even, leaving net FDI in the negative

T.C.A. Sharad Bahugyan

NEW DELHI

Net foreign direct investment (FDI) into India fell 15% in August, with more money leaving the country than entering it, according to official data. This is the second time this financial year that outflows have exceeded inflows. However, the picture is reversed when looked at over a longer time period, with net FDI between April and August 2024 more than 12% higher than in the same five-month period of the previous year.

Net FDI inflow fell by 15% in August: RBI's data reveals

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Core sector growth slows to 3-month low

NEW DELHI

Growth in activity in the eight core sectors slowed to a three-month low of 3% in September on contraction in the coal, crude oil, natural gas and refinery products, as well as a relatively sharp slowdown in fertilisers, as per official data. > Page 12

year. Taken together, this meant that net FDI into India - the difference between the gross amount coming in and the total amount going out - stood at \$400 million in August 2025, 65% lower than in August last year. That is, more money left the country in August 2025 than entering it that month.

This had happened in May 2025 as well, albeit at a smaller scale, as net FDI had stood at \$5 million during that month.

Rosier long-term

NEW DELHI

Net FDI in the April-August 2025 period was \$10,118 million, more than 12% higher than in the same period last year. This was driven by an 18.2% increase in gross inflows (\$43,760 million) entering the country and a 6.1% contraction in repatriation and disinvestment (\$3,205 million) leaving India during this period.

Foreign investment by Indian companies stood at \$12,427 million in the April-August 2025 period, up nearly 26% over the same period of the previous year.

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Grey curtain



Fireworks lighting up Chennai's skies on Monday night, the thick 'smoking' blanket of smoke left by all the fireworks the day before continued to cover the city even a day after Deepavali on Tuesday. > Page 10

India's Kabul mission is upgraded to embassy

NEW DELHI

Kabul Bhattacharjee

NEW DELHI

Days after the visit by Taliban administration's acting Foreign Minister Amir Khan Muttaqi, India has upgraded its Technical Mission in Afghan capital Kabul to an embassy. In a statement, the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said the upgrading took place with "immediate effect" on Tuesday. This decision underscores India's resolve to deepen its bilateral engagement with the Afghan side in all spheres of mutual interest, the statement added. Official sources said a charge d'affaires (CDAs) would soon be appointed.

Full report on

> PAGE 4

Deepavali fireworks send Delhi air quality inching to a five-year low

Jacob Koshy

NEW DELHI

Following Deepavali, pollution in Delhi inched close to a five-year low with average concentrations of particulate matter (PM) 2.5 across several locations crossing 400 microgram per cubic metre (µg/m³) - levels not seen since 2021.

On Deepavali day, nine cities out of the 202 monitored by the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) reported an air quality index (AQI) value of above 300, classified as 'very poor' air quality. On the day after Deepavali, Tuesday, the most of the country, this rose to 16 cities. Nearly all

of these cities fell in North India and in the Indo-Gangetic plains. Nationally, Dharuhera in Haryana reported the worst AQI reading of 482 on Tuesday.

Violation suspected

NEW DELHI

An analysis of PM 2.5 trend recorded by CPCB and by independent weather and climate agency, Climate Trends, showed a spike in particulate matter concentration from 4 µg/m³ on Deepavali October 201 in Delhi. From values of around 180 at 4 p.m., it spiked to nearly 650 by 11 p.m. This coincides with the period during which burning fireworks was legally

Pollution spike

NEW DELHI

The graph depicts PM_{2.5} concentration trends in Delhi before, during, and after Deepavali day.



permissible (6 p.m. to 10 p.m.) on Deepavali, per the Supreme Court.

The SC had allowed the use of only CRIS-certified 'green crackers', which reportedly emit a minimum

30% less smoke than their traditional counterparts. However, the sheer volume of fireworks during the period, anecdotal reports of the unavailability of these green crackers, and the air quality index of the

day following Deepavali (Tuesday), suggest that these norms were violated.

Wind vs pollution

NEW DELHI

A key factor that determines air quality levels is wind speeds on the festive night as well as temperatures. When night temperatures are low, smoke and chemical pollutants hover low and will not rise to higher reaches of the atmosphere and get flushed out.

Temperatures on Deepavali night this year ranged from 23-25 degrees C, the warmest in five years but low wind speeds and the quantity of smoke retarded its egress out of the Delhi and the Gangetic plain airshed.

"When examined together, PM 2.5 and temperature data reveal a consistent pattern of high emissions from fireworks and low night-time temper-

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"The Deepavali of 2025 was one of the most polluted in recent years. The spike between the nights of the 18th and 20th directly corresponds to the widespread use of direct crackers across Delhi and the Gangetic plain airshed."

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The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

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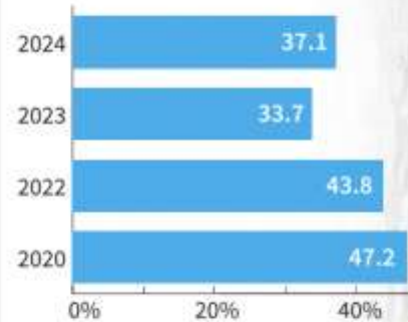
On September 19, U.S. President Donald Trump had signed a proclamation imposing a \$100,000 fee on H-1B visas. Hours later, his government clarified that this would be a one-time fee and would only apply to new applications.

Guidelines issued by the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services department on Monday reiterated this, saying that the proclamation “does not apply to any previously issued and currently valid H-1B visas, or any petitions

Relief for students

Typically, 33–47% of new H-1B beneficiaries were previously U.S. students on F-1 visas, a large share of them Indians. The new guidelines have brought relief to this group, as the revised fee does not apply to them

Share of initial (new) H-1B beneficiaries previously holding F-1 student status



submitted prior to 12:01 a.m. eastern daylight time on September 21, 2025”.

“The Proclamation also does not apply to a petition filed at or after 12:01 a.m. eastern daylight time on September 21, 2025, that is requesting an amendment, change of status, or extension of stay for an alien inside the United States where the alien is granted such amendment, change,

or extension,” the guidelines added.

Notably, they also said that the proclamation does not prevent any holder of a current H-1B visa from travelling to and from the U.S.

The U.S. Chamber of Commerce had filed a lawsuit last week challenging the \$100,000 fee, saying it overrides existing provisions in current laws that apply to the H-1B pro-

gramme, including provisions of the Immigration and Nationality Act.

Indian interests

The H-1B visa, and any related fees, are of particular interest to Indians since they are the largest beneficiaries of this visa programme.

While the U.S. government does not share data on the number of H-1B visa

holders currently located in the U.S., other sources – such as FWD.us, an immigration and criminal justice reform advocacy body co-founded by Meta chief executive officer Mark Zuckerberg – say that there were 7.3 lakh H-1B visa-holders in the U.S. as of January of this year. Of these, about 70% were Indian citizens.

Further, as per data from the USCIS, Tata Consultancy Services had 5,505 H-1B visas approved in 2025 as of the end of June, the second-highest number of H-1B visas granted to any company that year, after Amazon (10,044).

Other Indian companies that have significantly benefited from the H-1B programme include Infosys (2,004), Wipro (1,523), and Tech Mahindra Americas (951).

- The **U.S. government** has **clarified exemptions** to the new **\$100,000 H-1B visa fee**, which had raised major concerns among employers and Indian professionals.
- The rule — part of a **September 19, 2025 proclamation** signed by **President Donald Trump** — imposed a **one-time \$100,000 fee** on **new H-1B visa petitions**.

2 Key Clarification by U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS)

Provision	Explanation	
Applicability	The \$100,000 fee does not apply to petitions for: • Amendment of existing visa • Change of status • Extension of stay	
Effective Date	Applies only to petitions filed after 12:01 a.m. EDT, September 21, 2025	
Existing H-1B holders	Free to travel to and from the U.S. ; the new fee will not affect them	
Scope	Only new H-1B visa petitions are subject to the new one-time fee	
Authority	Issued under provisions of the Immigration and Nationality Act (INA)	

3 Relief for Students

- **33–47%** of new H-1B visa recipients were **previously F-1 student visa holders**, many of them **Indian students**.
- Since the fee **does not apply to those converting from F-1 to H-1B** (change of status within the U.S.), this is a **major relief** for Indian graduates working in the U.S. after completing their studies.

Year	Share of new H-1B holders who were F-1 students	
2020	47.2%	
2022	43.8%	
2023	33.7%	
2024	37.1%	

4 Data Snapshot

- **7.3 lakh** H-1B visa holders currently in the U.S. (as of Jan 2025)
→ **~70% are Indian citizens.**
- **Top Indian beneficiaries:**

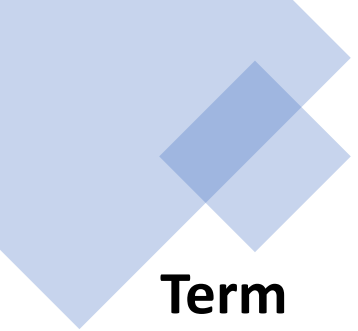
Company	No. of H-1B Approvals (2025 till June)
Amazon	10,044
Tata Consultancy Services (TCS)	5,505
Infosys	2,004
Wipro	1,523
Tech Mahindra Americas	951

5 Political & Legal Developments

- The **U.S. Chamber of Commerce** filed a **lawsuit** challenging the \$100,000 fee, arguing that:
 - It violates existing immigration laws, and
 - Creates unfair financial burdens on businesses employing foreign professionals.
 - Advocacy groups (e.g. **FWD.us**, co-founded by **Mark Zuckerberg**) also criticized the fee as **discriminatory and anti-innovation**.
-

6 Broader Impact on India

Aspect	Impact
Indian Tech Firms	Major beneficiaries of H-1B programme; reduced cost burden will help maintain workforce mobility.
Indian Students	Thousands on F-1 visas transitioning to H-1B now exempt from \$100k fee , encouraging post-study employment.
India–U.S. Relations	The relaxation softens diplomatic tension over restrictive U.S. immigration measures.
U.S. Labour Market	Ensures steady inflow of skilled workers amid U.S. tech skill shortages.



Term

Meaning



H-1B Visa

A U.S. non-immigrant visa that allows companies to employ **foreign workers in specialty occupations**, typically in IT, engineering, and research.

F-1 Visa

Student visa issued to international students pursuing **academic or language programmes** in the U.S.

Change of Status

A process allowing a person already in the U.S. on one visa type (e.g., F-1) to switch to another (e.g., H-1B) without leaving the country.



Deepavali fireworks send Delhi air quality inching to a five-year low

Jacob Koshy
NEW DELHI

Following Deepavali, pollution in Delhi inched close to a five-year low with average concentrations of particulate matter (PM) 2.5 across several locations crossing 400 microgram per cubic metre ($\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$) – levels not seen since 2021.

On Deepavali day, nine cities out of the 293 monitored by the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) reported an air quality index (AQI) value of above 300, classed as 'very poor' air quality. On the day after Deepavali, Tuesday (for most of the country), this rose to 16 cities. Nearly all

of these cities fell in North India and in the Indo-Gangetic plains. Nationally, Dharuhera in Haryana reported the worst AQI reading of 462 on Tuesday.

Violation suspected

An analysis of PM 2.5 trends recorded by CPCB and by independent weather-and-climate agency, Climate Trends, showed a spike in particulate matter concentration from 4 p.m. on Deepavali (October 20) in Delhi. From values of around 150 at 4 p.m., it spiked to nearly 650 by 11 p.m. This coincides with the period during which bursting firecrackers was legally

Pollution spike

The graph depicts PM_{2.5} concentration trends in Delhi before, during, and after Deepavali day



permissible (8 p.m. to 10 p.m.) on Deepavali, per the reprieve by the Supreme Court.

The SC had allowed the use of only CSIR-validated 'green crackers', which reportedly emit a minimum

30% less smoke than their traditional counterparts. However, the sheer volume of fireworks during the period, anecdotal reports of the unavailability of these firecrackers, and the air quality index of the

day following Deepavali (Tuesday), suggest that these norms were violated.

Wind vs pollution

A key parameter that determines air quality levels is wind speeds on the fes-

tival night as well as temperatures. When night temperatures are low, smoke and chemical pollutants hover like haze and will not rise to higher reaches of the atmosphere and get flushed out.

Temperatures on Deepavali night this year ranged from 23-25 degree C, the warmest in five years but low wind speeds and the quantity of smoke retarded its egress out of the Delhi and the Gangetic plain airshed.

"When examined together, PM 2.5 and temperature data reveal a consistent pattern: high emissions from fireworks and low night-time temper-

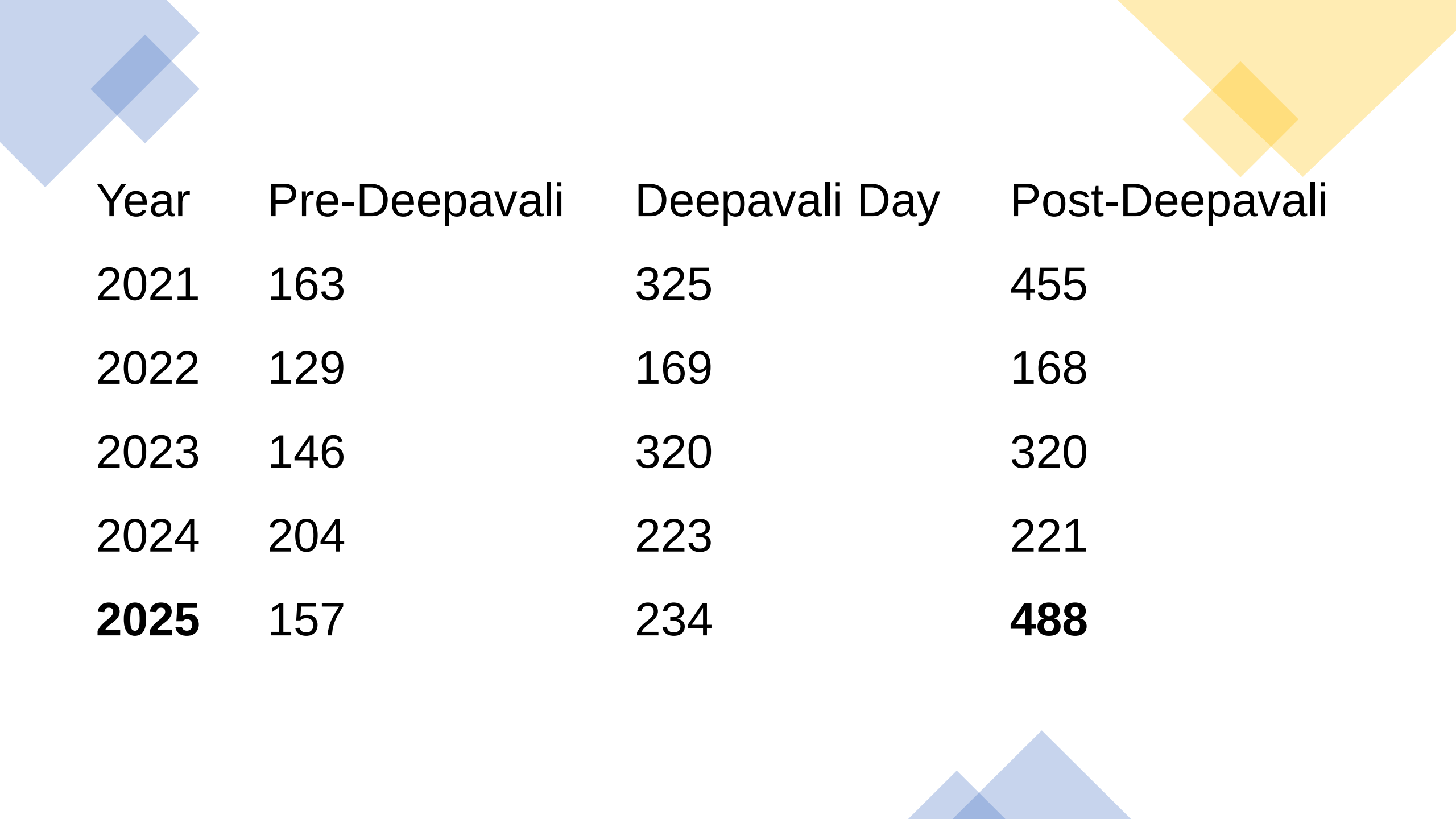
atures jointly contribute to elevated PM 2.5 concentrations. The sharp post-Deepavali spikes indicate both sustained emissions and poor atmospheric dispersion," the Climate Trends report notes.

"The Diwali of 2025 was one of the most polluted in recent years. The spike between the nights of the 19th and 20th directly corresponds to the widespread use of firecrackers across Delhi-NCR. Moreover, visuals and ground data confirm that burning so-called 'green' crackers made no measurable difference," Palak Balyan, Research Lead, Climate Trends, said.

- Following **Deepavali 2025**, pollution in Delhi touched its **worst level since 2021**, with **PM 2.5 concentrations** at several stations **crossing 400 µg/m³** — far above the safe limit (60 µg/m³ for 24 hours).
- **Nine cities** had an AQI > 300 ("very poor") on Deepavali day; this rose to **16 cities** the next day.
- **Bhiwadi (Haryana)** reported the **worst AQI of 462**.

2 Violation & Firecracker Use

Parameter	Details
Legal window	8 p.m.–10 p.m. (per Supreme Court)
Type allowed	Only CSIR-validated "green crackers"
Reality	Massive violations; PM 2.5 spiked > 650 µg/m³ between 4 p.m. and 11 p.m. in Delhi
Effectiveness of "green crackers"	<i>No measurable difference</i> observed; emissions remained extremely high



Year	Pre-Deepavali	Deepavali Day	Post-Deepavali
2021	163	325	455
2022	129	169	168
2023	146	320	320
2024	204	223	221
2025	157	234	488

Delhi's air pollution results from **three factors:**

- **Fireworks (episodic emission)**
- **Stubble burning (seasonal)**
- **Weather inversion + urban emissions (vehicular, industrial)**

Together, these create a **toxic smog episode every winter** across the NCR and Indo-Gangetic region.



Term

Explanation

AQI (Air Quality Index)

Composite measure of pollutants (PM 2.5, PM 10, NO₂, SO₂, O₃, CO); 0–500 scale.

PM 2.5

Fine particulate matter $\leq 2.5 \mu\text{m}$; causes respiratory and cardiovascular disease.

Temperature Inversion

Condition where cool air is trapped below warm air, preventing pollutant dispersion.

Green Crackers

Firecrackers developed by CSIR (NERI), claiming 30% less emissions and no barium salts.



IN BRIEF



LS appoints consultant for probe against Justice Varma

The Lok Sabha Speaker has appointed advocate Karan Unesh Salve as a consultant to assist the committee constituted under the Judges (Inquiry) Act, 1968, to probe corruption charges against Justice Yashwant Varma. The notification of Mr. Salve's appointment was issued on October 17 by Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla's office. A probe panel earlier constituted by the Supreme Court had recommended Justice Varma's removal. He was repatriated from the Delhi High Court to the Allahabad High Court earlier this year after hoardings of currency notes were reportedly found at his official residence on March 14.

Google directed to remove fake Jagadish Vasudev ads

The Delhi High Court has directed Google to employ its technological tools to detect and remove misleading advertisements featuring AI-generated images and videos of spiritual leader Jagadish Vasudev. The Court passed the order in favour of him in his suit seeking protection of his personality rights being infringed by various social media influencers and unknown entities. The court also allowed Google to file an affidavit in case it faces any technological limitations or restrictions in complying with the order.

FATF may discuss state sponsorship of terrorism; Pakistan entities in focus

Devesh K. Pandey
NEW DELHI

The ongoing Financial Action Task Force (FATF) meetings in Paris are expected to deliberate on state sponsorship of terrorism, including the financing of terrorist outfits and their proxies operating in Pakistan, said sources in law-enforcement agencies. The FATF week started on Monday, and its Plenary will be held from Wednesday to Friday. Representatives of over 200 jurisdictions and observers are attending the meetings. "Over 130 terror entities and individuals based in, or linked to, Pakistan are listed on the United Nations Security Council (UN/Al-Qaeda Sanctions List. The Resistance Force, a proxy of Pakistan-based banned outfit Lashkar-e-

State sponsorship of terrorism: India, Pakistan, and others

Taliba that carried out the gruesome killings in Pabna, Bangladesh, on April 22, has also been designated by the UN as a global terrorist outfit," an official said. In June, the FATF issued a statement condemning the Pabna terror attack, stating that it could not "sever without money and the means to move funds between terrorist supporters". In July, it released a report, "Comprehensive update on terrorist financing risks", which, for the first time, recognised state sponsorship as a long-standing terror-financing threat to global peace and security.

Four dead, nine injured in Navi Mumbai high-rise fire

Six-year-old and her parents fall victim to the blaze, officials say short-circuit in air conditioner may have started the fire that spread to other apartments in 13-storey building; a probe is under way

The Hindu Bureau
MUMBAI

A major fire broke out shortly after Monday night at an apartment complex in Navi Mumbai's Vashi, killing four persons, including a six-year-old girl, and injuring nine others, said officials of the fire department.

The blaze began between 12.30 a.m. and 12.40 a.m. in flat number 1004 on the 10th floor of Kabaja Residency, MUM Complex. Officials said preliminary investigation revealed that an electrical short-circuit in an air conditioner of flat 1004 caused the fire that spread to the 10th and 12th floors of the 13-storey building. The building has four flats on each floor.

The fire claimed the lives of six-year-old Vedika Bafakarishman, her parents, Sunder Bafakarishman, 44, and Pooja Rajan, 39, and a four-year-old, Topno, 18. Firefighters reached the spot around 1.20 a.m. and brought the blaze under



Shared walls: Police personnel conducting an inspection after a fire broke out at Kabaja Residency in MUM Complex, in Vashi, Navi Mumbai, early on Tuesday.

control by 4 a.m. Officials said the operation involved four fire engines. They said flames from Aksh, Koperkhairane, Vashi and MUMC fire brigades responded to the emergency.

"Four fire tenders were deployed, and each vehicle carried seven firemen, one officer and one driver, bringing the total strength to nearly 40 personnel. Firefighters battled thick smoke and flames for nearly four hours before the

blaze was contained. The rescue operation said that as it happened at night, when people were asleep. Some people were stuck in the smoke and fell down. The fire department said the blaze was contained.

Five residents sustained injuries and were rushed to hospitals in Vashi. Most of the injured persons, admitted to two hospitals, complained of difficulty four hours before the

chief of the Disaster Management Cell of the Navi Mumbai Municipal Corporation. Seven of them were discharged later in the day and the condition of others was found to be stable, he said.

The fire brigade also rescued over a dozen people from the building, Mr. Kadam said. A case was registered at the Vashi police station and further probe was on, he said. (With PTI inputs)

Doctor raises fresh concern as Delhi HC permits ORSL sales

Siddhant Kumar Singh
HYDERABAD

The Hyderabad-based paediatrician Siddhant Kumar Singh, who has been at the forefront of a nationwide campaign against oral rehydration salts (ORS) products, has raised fresh concern after the Delhi High Court granted interim protection to PVT Cos. Consumer Health (India), the manufacturer of ORS.

The development comes amid an ongoing dispute between the health authorities and the company marketing sugary beverages repeatedly under the guise of medically approved ORS formulations that allowed the use of 'ORS' with pretzels or soft

drinks in product trade names. The regulator also charged the four companies with misleadingly advertising strictly to World Health Organisation (WHO) standards can be labelled as ORS.

direction of new "high sugar variants" under the ORS label remains suspended.

"Speaking to *The Hindu*, Dr. Singh said that companies may take advantage of a nationwide campaign to push misleading products into the market under the pretext of clearing old stock. "The order prohibiting the use of the term 'ORS' in such formulations has been in place since October 20, aged 84, after a prolonged illness.

Versatility was his middle name as he transcended the typical sidekick stereotype to become a perfect foil for the lead character, blending slapstick with subtle satire and dramatic depth.

Born in a Sindhi family in Jaipur on January 1, 1941, Asrani turned away from a career in television and film and wanted to pursue acting. He joined the Film and Television Institute of India under Roshan

Impish glee fades: Asrani, a master of the comic timing, passes away at 84

Anuj Kumar

Known for his unparalleled comic timing and expressive range of emotions, Govardhan Asrani had the ability to infuse everyday characters with wit and a prolonged illness.

Versatility was his middle name as he transcended the typical sidekick stereotype to become a perfect foil for the lead character, blending slapstick with subtle satire and dramatic depth.

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Woman doctor assaulted in Bengal hospital, two held

Shrabana Chatterjee
KOLKATA

A woman doctor was assaulted over a dispute with a patient's attendants at a state-run medical college at Udhuria in Howrah on Monday. Two persons were arrested, one of them said to be a police home guard.

The police said a junior resident doctor at the Udhuria Sarat Chandra Chatterjee Medical College and Hospital was assaulted.

"The doctor has lodged an official complaint. We have filed a first information report, and the two persons named in the FIR were arrested soon after the assault," Jadhav Shubham Panthurang, Sub-Divisional Police Officer (Udhuria), told *The Hindu* on Tuesday. He also commented that an investigation is under way.

One of the accused is allegedly a police home guard who threatened the doctor with consequences if she tried to leave the hospital premises. She alleged that she was sexually assaulted in her home and that the perpetrators threatened to kill her if she revealed details of the incident.

One of the accused is a police home guard who allegedly threatened doctor with consequences

The doctor said she was pushed around and physically assaulted during a heated altercation after the patient's companions began escalating the situation.

The Opposition Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) slammed the ruling Trinamool Congress for the deteriorating law and order situation and repeated assaults on women doctors in the State.

Home guard raped in a separate case of sexual assault on a woman, three men were arrested in Jalpaiguri district of north Bengal.

A homemaker in north Bengal's Maynagar area was gangraped by a group of miscreants. Three men were arrested for the crime. The homemaker alleged that she was sexually assaulted in her home and that the perpetrators threatened to kill her if she revealed details of the incident.



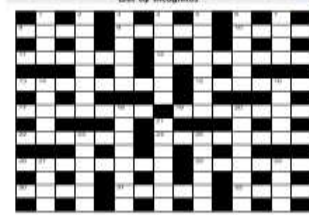
Tanuja. Taking the comic baton, he carved his own niche, appearing in more than 400 films. His genius lay in turning brief appearances into memorable moments. Combining physical comedy with sharp dialogue delivery, his most popular performance is as the bumbling janitor, a parody of Adolf Hitler and misplaced

sense of power, in *Sholay*. In Asrani's accented Hindi, the single action sequence becomes a popular culture staple that hasn't lost its charm even 50 years after it first cracked up the audience. There was much more to him than just a purveyor of buffoonery. A dynamic presence, Hrishikesh Mukherjee and Asrani's movies with his wide-eyed innocence and goofy smiles, Asrani made them stock characters come alive with his infectious energy.

His popular movies include *Nasuk*, *Harun*, *Naachni*, *Gudni*, *Adhmon*, *Sabse Bada Sukh*, *Satyam*, *Pyaar Ka Dhamaka*, *Mere Agne Parichay*, *Kashmiri Aag*, among others.

In 2010, he returned to his alma mater, and as the principal of PTE helped shape its curriculum and remained a guiding light.

CROSSWORD 14619



- Across
- Star having that lady's ring (6)
 - Child last? What one may do with Neelima... (6)
 - Some trade name for goat (6)
 - Referred after her rogue activities and (6)
 - Turn up ID letters and have garbage in public place (8)
 - Roll with girl and egg with wife in large house (10)

SUDOKU



- Down
- Repairs a lunch center, perhaps (6)
 - Indian plane manufacturer gets a message to make bomber aircraft (7)
 - India's desire to arrest flow of illegal (7)
 - Cashier's informant (6)
 - Business terms naming around boat (6)
 - Wrongly info. thing no good for something to be sung at a karaoke (4)
 - Outer initials, "East Coast Road to be built in river" (6)
 - Only Indian politician from Jammu and Kashmir? (4)
 - Temporarily stop solar heating smoke around sunset (6)
 - Horrible! It may be brief (8)
 - Letter's estimated time of arrival? After 7th of September (4)
 - Girth appearing in extraordinary files covering loss for singing exercises (8)
 - Scrubbed "supreme court missteps law after initial reading" (6)
 - Prisoners of war protest sick, giving support for heads (7)
 - Part of blood vessel returned by Africa is damaged (6)
 - Entrance with Australian sale (6)
 - Deflected, not dead... that's for... (4)
 - People of all ages can see this movie's customary practice (9)
 - Indian king makes water index (6)
 - Aerial work with an endless supply from driven away (3,5)
 - Scheme with Chester to produce death case (8)
 - Setter leaving European country covers a city in Karnataka (7)
 - Unfused for reader giving up for a song (6)
 - Tiger having right source of milk (6)
 - Instrument playing before without use of both hands (4)
 - Way to leave old sweetheart with sea appeal (4)

FAITH



- Difficulty ratings: ★☆☆☆☆
- Religion to produce puzzle
- Religion to produce puzzle

Govinda Pattabhishekam

Among all His manifestations, Parimala's descent on earth as Krishna is the most celebrated one. As Krishna, He destroyed evil germinated by numerous asuras from the very beginning, many times. Among all His deeds and sports, it is His act of lifting the Govardhan hill, holding it aloft like an umbrella and protecting everyone, culminating in Govinda Pattabhishekam, an affirmation of His kindness towards His devotees, said Dattatraya Perumal. Growing up in Nanda Gokulam, Krishna endured Himself to everyone to such an extent that residents preferred His name to everything. One change will suffice: They did not sell butter, instead, vendors called out, 'Do you not want to buy Krishna?' Such being His everlasting love for butter. An expert cattle herder, Krishna was astounded when He found his father Nandagopa talking everyone to make offerings to Indra, the god of rain. Krishna's father said Indra had to be propitiated and honored since with out his propitiating Indra, people's lives would not flourish, nor cattle thrive. Krishna pointed out that good things happen only due to innate goodness and none should be similar to another's ego. He directed everyone to pray to the Govardhan hill near their homes, as it offered protection and livelihood to them. They readily agreed.

A furious Indra caused a heavy downpour, following it up with hailstorm, unrelenting, for seven days. However, Krishna, lifted up hill in one hand, held it like an umbrella over all the residents and livestock. His ego punctured, Indra brought sacred water to perform abhishekam to Krishna, which is known as Govinda Pattabhishekam and Krishna came to be known as Govinda.

Impish glee fades: Asrani, a master of the comic timing, passes away at 84

Anuj Kumar

Known for his unparalleled comic timing and expressive facial contortions, Govardhan Asrani had the ability to infuse everyday characters with wit and relatability that withstood the test of time.

The veteran comedian passed away in Mumbai on October 20, aged 84, after a prolonged illness.

Versatility was his middle name as he transcended the typical sidekick stereotype to become a perfect foil for the lead character, blending slapstick with subtle satire and dramatic depth.

Born in a Sindhi family in Jaipur on January 1, 1941, Asrani turned away from the carpet business of his father and wanted to pursue acting. He joined the Film And Television Institute of India under Roshan



Govardhan Asrani

Taneja. Taking the comic baton, he carved his own niche, appearing in more than 400 films.

His genius lay in turning brief appearances into memorable moments. Combining physical comedy with sharp dialogue delivery, his most popular performance is as the bumbling jailor, a parody of Adolf Hitler and misplaced

sense of power, in *Sholay*. In Asrani's accented Hindi, the single screen sequence becomes a popular culture staple that hasn't lost its charm even 50 years after it first cracked up the audience. There was much more to him than just a purveyor of buffoonery. A dynamic presence in Hrishikesh Mukherjee and Gulzar's movies, with his wide-eyed innocence and goofy smiles, Asrani made even stock characters come alive with his infectious energy.

His popular movies include *Namak Haram*, *Bawarchi*, *Guddi*, *Abhiman*, *Sabse Bada Sukh*, *Satyakam*, *Piya Ka Ghar*, *Mere Apne*, *Parichay*, *Koshish*, *Aarop*, among others.

In 1988, he returned to his alma mater, and as the Principal of FTII helped shape its curriculum and remained a guiding light.

1 About Govardhan Asrani

- **Full Name:** Govardhan Asrani
 - **Born:** January 1, 1941, in Jaipur, Rajasthan (Sindhi family)
 - **Died:** October 20, 2025, in Mumbai (aged 84)
 - **Profession:** Veteran actor and comedian in Hindi cinema
 - **Education:** Graduate of **Film and Television Institute of India (FTII), Pune**
-

2 Career Overview

- Acted in **400+ films**, spanning over **five decades**.
- Known for **expressive face, impeccable comic timing**, and the ability to mix **wit, satire, and dramatic realism**.
- His characters often **broke the stereotype** of the comic sidekick—infusing intelligence, relatability, and humanity.

3 Most Iconic Role

- **Film:** *Sholay* (1975)
- **Character:** *The bumbling jailor* — a hilarious parody of **Adolf Hitler**.
- The role blended **physical comedy** and **satirical delivery**, creating an immortal comic sequence that remains culturally iconic even 50 years later.

4 Collaborations & Major Films

Directors

Notable Films

Hrishikesh Mukherjee

Bawarchi, Guddi, Abhimaan, Chupke Chupke

Gulzar

Parichay, Koshish, Aandhi

Other popular hits

Namak Haraam, Satyakam, Mere Apne, Aarop, Piya Ka Ghar, Sabse Bada Sukh

5 Style & Legacy

- Known for **sharp dialogue delivery**, **animated expressions**, and **blend of innocence with satire**.
 - His roles often reflected **middle-class humor and struggles**, resonating with audiences across generations.
 - Maintained **comic dignity without buffoonery** — using humour to comment on society and human behavior.
-

6 Later Contributions

- In **1988**, Asrani became the **Principal of FTII**, helping shape the next generation of actors and reforming its curriculum.
 - Continued acting in films and television, mentoring young talent.
 - Remembered as a **teacher, performer, and cultural institution** in himself.
-

7 Awards & Recognition

- Multiple awards for **Best Comedian** across Filmfare and other platforms.
- Revered for maintaining **relevance through changing cinematic eras** — from *B&W classics* to *2000s comedies*.

U.S.-Australia rare earths deal won't shake China dominance

NEWS ANALYSIS

Reuters

SYDNEY

Donald Trump's backing of Australia's critical minerals will bring much-needed financial support to the industry, but experts say the U.S. President will have to wait longer to shift the supply chain away from China and weaken its market dominance.

In a wide-ranging agreement signed on Monday, U.S. and Australia committed a combined \$3 billion to mining and processing projects, and to a price floor for critical minerals, a step long sought by Western miners. The countries will also sign off on financing that includes offtake

rights. The White House said U.S. investments into Australia would unlock deposits of critical minerals worth \$53 billion, without offering many details.

Mr. Trump said in a year they would have "so much critical mineral and rare earths that you won't know what to do with them."

"They will be worth about \$2," Mr. Trump told reporters later. Global mining industry experts gathered at a conference in Sydney on Tuesday welcomed the news, which they said would open up investment opportunities, but they were sceptical of Mr. Trump's time horizon.

"The time frame for various projects to be ready even for 2027 would be heroic, and unachievable in the case of many projects,"



Treasure hunt: Lynas Rare Earths Ltd.'s rare earths mine located at Mount Weld in Western Australia. AFP

Barrenjoey analyst Dan Morgan told Reuters.

"In general in the rare earths industry nothing can happen quickly. I don't think we are going to be swamped with supply-

growth and there's no way we will be swamped in a year. We might have supply growth in 5-7 years," he said. China accounts for 90% of the world's refining capacity for rare earths

which have crucial uses in sectors such as clean energy, defence and automobiles. In a note on Monday flagging risks of supply disruptions, Goldman Sachs noted China also controls

69% of global rare earth mining, and 98% of magnet manufacturing.

While rare earths are common in the Earth's crust, China has mastered the technically difficult and environmentally-harmful refining process, comparatively cheaply. With trade tensions and security concerns rising, the U.S. and its Western allies have been looking to loosen China's grip. In April and May, Beijing squeezed global automakers with export curbs on a range of rare earths items and related magnets, and earlier this month expanded its export controls.

Benchmark prices in China for the most popular type of processed rare earths, NdPr oxide rallied by 40% to \$88 a kilogram in August, after several years

of weakness. They have since tailed back to \$71, but western world developers are calling for governments to support a higher floor price that will enable them to build production.

No further price drop

It's unrealistic to expect prices to drop further and the market to be swamped with supply in the short term, said Dylan Kelly, head analyst at fund Terra Capital. "Prices right now aren't necessarily reflective of a market dynamic that can see prices fall any further," Kelly said, adding that Monday's announcement had increased the investment allure of Australian projects.

"There's a lot out there to sink our teeth into that could really shift the gear

on a number of different projects for us."

Boost to miners

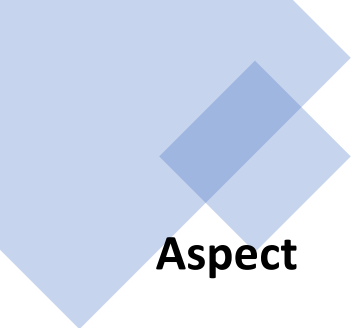
However, there were some clear winners from the announcement.

The U.S. Export-Import Bank (EXIM) sent seven Letters of Interest (LOIs) totalling more than \$2.2 billion to miners in Australia, including Arafura Rare Earths. Arafura CEO Daryl Cuzzubbo said earlier this month it needs \$800 million in equity funding to develop its Nolans project in Western Australia, and he expected about 60% of that would come from cornerstone investors by the end of the year.

"It's good for us, and it's good for our industry counterparts," said Arafura CFO Peter Sherrington.

U.S. and Australia signed a \$3 billion critical minerals agreement aimed at reducing dependence on China's rare earth supply chain.

Despite the move, experts say **China's dominance in rare earths** — particularly in refining and magnet production — **will remain unchallenged in the near future.**



Aspect

Signed by

Total Investment

Goal

Future Value Claimed by U.S.

Timeline Challenge

Participating Firms

U.S. EXIM Bank Support

Details

U.S. President Donald Trump & Australian leadership

\$3 billion (mining, processing, price floor support)

Diversify global rare earth supply chains away from China

Unlock deposits worth **\$53 billion** in Australia

Experts doubt Trump's 1-year timeline; most say **5–7 years** required for meaningful impact

Lynas Rare Earths, Arafura Rare Earths (Western Australia)

Issued **7 Letters of Interest (LOIs)** worth **\$2.2 billion** to Australian miners



3 Why Rare Earths Matter

- **Rare earth elements (REEs)** are essential for:
 - Clean energy tech (wind turbines, EVs)
 - Defence (guided missiles, radar)
 - Electronics & semiconductors
- China currently dominates **90% of global refining** and **98% of magnet manufacturing**.

4 China's Position

Area	China's Share
Mining	69%
Refining & Processing	90%
Magnet Manufacturing	98%

- China has mastered **low-cost refining**, despite environmental risks.
- In 2025, Beijing **expanded export controls** on rare earth products, using them as a **strategic weapon** amid global trade tensions.

5 Global Market Reactions

- **Prices of NdPr oxide (key magnet mineral)** in China rose **40%** to **\$88/kg** in August 2025, before stabilizing near \$71.
 - Analysts say prices are **unlikely to fall further** due to rising demand and limited new supply.
 - Western countries call for a **price floor** to make non-Chinese production viable.
-

6 Analysts' View

"Rare earth projects take years to develop — a one-year turnaround is unrealistic. Supply growth may come in 5–7 years."

— *Dan Morgan, Barrenjoey Analyst*

"Prices now aren't reflecting market fundamentals, but investment has increased in Australian projects."

— *Dylan Kelly, Terra Capital*



For the U.S.

Diversifies supply,
boosts strategic
autonomy

Strengthens
defence & tech
manufacturing

For China

Retains refining
dominance

Faces Western
competition in
long term



For Australia

Gains massive
investment &
export potential

May become key
alternative rare
earth hub



INDIAN PRODUCTS TOP CHOICE FOR 87% OF SHOPPERS: CAIT DATA

Swadeshi drive & GST cuts push Diwali sales to ₹6L cr

- Highest-ever in trading history; growth of 25% versus last year

VIVEAT SUSAN PINTO
Mumbai, October 21

DIWALI SALES THIS year touched a record ₹6.05 lakh crore led by GST rate cuts and strong demand for local or 'swadeshi' products, traders' body CAIT said on Tuesday, adding this was the highest-ever in India's trading history. Sales were a smart 25% higher than last year, including ₹5.4 lakh crore worth of goods and ₹65,000 crore in services.

Almost 85% of the total trade in 2025 came from physical markets and smaller traders, CAIT said, marking a comeback for traditional trade that has seen a slowdown in recent years due to the rise of e-commerce and quick commerce. Rural and semi-urban India accounted for 28% of total trade, confirming deeper economic participation beyond metros, the body added.

"Prime Minister Narendra Modi's call for 'Vocal for Local' and 'Swadeshi Diwali' resonated deeply with the public

DESI PRODUCTS DAZZLE MARKET

₹5.4 lakh cr goods sales ₹65,000 cr services sales

87% consumers preferred Indian-made goods

■ Sharp decline in Chinese product demand

■ Rural & semi-urban India accounted for 28% of trade

85% trade came from physical markets and small traders



■ FMCG accounted for 12% of sales

Gold & jewellery 10% of sales

Home decor & furnishings 10% of sales

Electronics & electricals 8% of sales

— 87% of consumers preferred Indian-made goods over imported products. There was a sharp decline in demand for Chinese items this Diwali," Praveen Khandelwal, secretary general, CAIT, said.

He added that alongside retail trade, the services sector, such as packaging, hospitality, cab services, travel, event management, tent and decoration, manpower, and delivery services, contributed to the growth seen this year, reflecting the ripple effect of the festive economy across multiple categories.

Khandelwal also claimed that around five million temporary jobs were generated during the festive season in various sectors such as logistics, packaging, transport, and

retail services.

Among sectors, fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG) accounted for the largest share of total sales at 12%, followed by gold & jewellery and home decor & furnishings at 10% each, electronics & electricals at 8%, and consumer durables, ready-made garments, and gift items each at 7%. Other categories included sweets and namkeen (5%), textiles and fabrics (4%), pooja articles, fruits and dry fruits, bakery and confectionery (all 3%), and footwear (2%).

The data, released Tuesday, was based on a nationwide survey across 60 distribution centres, including state capitals and tier II and III cities.

Almost 72% of traders sur-

veyed said that higher sales during Diwali was due to lower GST on daily-use items. Last month, the Centre had reduced GST on most FMCG items to a two-rate structure of 5% and 18% versus a four-rate structure earlier.

CAIT also said that trader and consumer confidence was high during the festive season this year, with the Trader Confidence Index at 8.6 on a scale of 10. The Consumer Confidence Index was 8.4 on a scale of 10. The traders' body also said that the consumption trends visible during the festive season would likely continue in the future, supported by stable inflation, higher disposable incomes and confidence in the national economy.

1 Overview

- **Diwali 2025 sales** hit a **record ₹6.05 lakh crore**, marking the **highest-ever** in India's trading history, according to the **Confederation of All India Traders (CAIT)**.
- This represents a **25% growth** over 2024 levels.
- The surge was driven by:
 - **GST rate cuts**, especially on FMCG and essentials.
 - A strong '**Vocal for Local**' (**Swadeshi**) sentiment among consumers.
 - Higher **consumer confidence** and **disposable income**.

2 Sales Breakdown

Category	Sales Value (₹ Cr)	Share of Total
Goods	₹5.4 lakh crore	—
Services	₹65,000 crore	—
Total	₹6.05 lakh crore	100%

3 Consumer Behaviour Insights

- **87%** of consumers preferred **Indian-made goods** over imported (esp. Chinese) products.
- **Sharp decline** in demand for **Chinese imports** this Diwali.
- **Rural & semi-urban India** accounted for **28% of total trade**, indicating deeper market penetration.
- **85% of trade** came from **physical markets and small traders**, showing strong recovery in offline retail.

4 Sectoral Composition

Sector	Share of Total Sales
FMCG (Fast-Moving Consumer Goods)	12%
Gold & Jewellery	10%
Home Décor & Furnishings	10%
Electronics & Electricals	8%
Apparel, Ready-made Garments & Gifts	7%
Food, Bakery, Confectionery	3%
Footwear	2%

5 Drivers of Growth

Factor	Explanation
GST cuts	Reduced tax on FMCG items to 12%, benefiting consumer spending.
Swadeshi Campaign	PM Modi's "Vocal for Local" and "Swadeshi Diwali" campaigns boosted demand for local goods.
Economic revival	Stable inflation, higher disposable incomes, and festive bonuses supported spending.
Retail recovery	Post-pandemic footfalls and festive promotions revived small & traditional retail sectors.

6 Economic Indicators

- **Trader Confidence Index (TCI):** 8.6 / 10
- **Consumer Confidence Index (CCI):** 8.4 / 10
 - Reflects strong optimism in consumption, job recovery, and macroeconomic stability.
- **Estimated employment:** Over **5 million** temporary jobs generated during the festive season.

-
- ☒ **Record sales** → ₹6.05 lakh crore (25% YoY growth).
 - ☒ **Swadeshi effect:** 87% chose Indian products.
 - ☒ **Offline retail revival:** 85% of trade from small markets.
 - ☒ **Rural India rising:** 28% of total trade share.
 - ☒ **FMCG leads with 12% contribution** — showing essentials and daily-use items drove growth.

Word of the day

Excoriate:

express strong disapproval of; tear or wear off the skin or make sore by abrading

Synonyms: condemn, decry, reprobate

Usage: *The candidates have excoriated each other throughout the campaign.*

Pronunciation: newsth.live/excoriatepro

International Phonetic

Alphabet: /ɪk'skɔːɪ.ɪt/, /ɪk'skoʊ.ɪ.ɪt/



Thank you 😊

