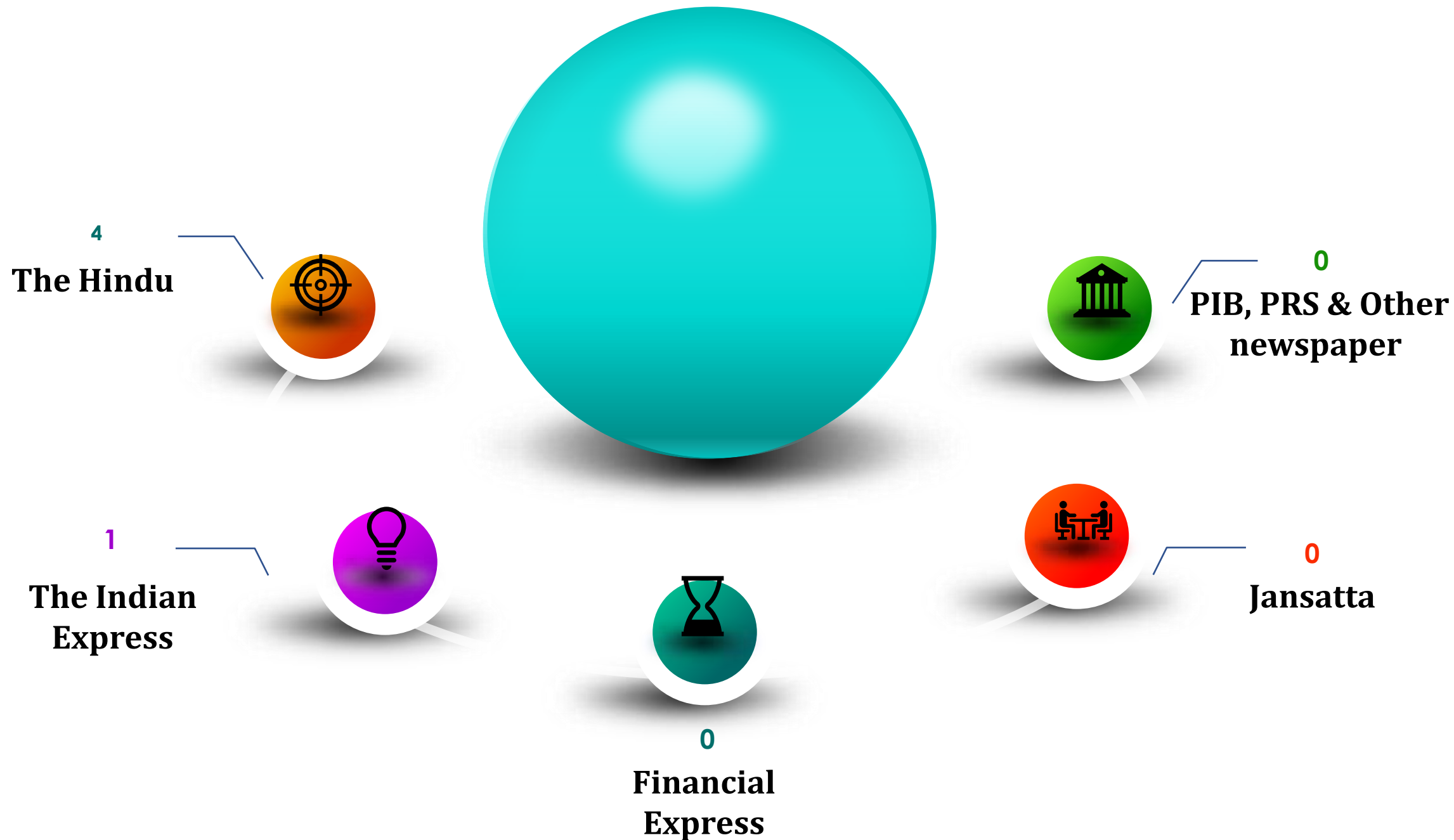


Daily Current Affairs





“When you start realizing
that you’re the creator
of your own suffering,
this is the first step
towards maturity.”

— Osho

than 500 TMC of surplus floodwaters through the Godavari-Krishna-Pennar-Cauvery linkage, saying the project could benefit Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu.

He also called for the Cauvery link to be taken up as a national project and suggested a dedicated coordination mechanism for southern river basins to ensure timely preparation of DPRs and statutory clearances.

Mr. Vijay, Mr. Shivankumar and Mr. Satishnan took part during the meeting.

SHRI HAIL & SOUTH'S ROSE
PAGE 4

New code voids 1978 definition of 'industry': SC

Under Industrial Relations Code, the interpretation will be on its 'own text and context', says the top court; 1978 verdict, authored by Justice V.R. Krishna Iyer, enabled workers to have legal recourse against unfair labour practices by employers; Justice B.V. Nagarathna writes separate opinion, calls reference against the previous verdict 'unwarranted'

Krishnadas Rajagopal
NEW DELHI

In a verdict in which judges varyingly differed on issues, a nine-member Bench of the Supreme Court on Thursday held that a nearly half-century-old expansive interpretation of 'industry', which previously granted workers stronger labour rights and protection, will not apply under the new Industrial Relations Code, 2020.

The reference before the Constitution Bench headed by Chief Justice of India Surya Kant was centred around a broad definition given to 'industry' in a 1978 seven-judge Constitution Bench judgment, authored by Justice V.R. Krishna Iyer, in the *Bangalore Water Supply and Sewerage Board v. R. Rajappa* case.

The 48-year-old verdict had enabled workers em-

ployed in a wide range of jobs to have a legal recourse, including collective bargaining, against unfair labour practices by employers. It had exempted only core sovereign activities such as the judiciary, law and order, defence, etc. from the purview of 'industry', as defined under Section 2(j) of the Industrial Disputes Act, 1947, in order to protect the state's functional autonomy.

The 1978 judgment had further introduced a 'triple test' which laid down conditions that any activity which was systematic or organised, operated on the basis of employer-employee cooperation and dealt in the production of goods and services to satisfy human wants came within the ambit of 'industry'. The judgment had brought even hospitals, educational institutions and municipalities within



the fold of 'industry'.

On Thursday, the majority on the Bench held that 'industry' under Section 2(p) of the IRC would not be "burdened" by the interpretation in the 1978 judgment of Section 2(j) of the 1947 Act. This means the interpretation of the term 'industry' under IRC would be done on a clean slate.

Chief Justice Kant said the 1978 judgment and its conclusion would not act as the "sheet anchor" or

the foundation for any future interpretation of Section 2(p) of the Industrial Relations Code (IRC), which came into force in November 2025.

"The future of 'industry' in Section 2(p) of IRC is not burdened by the interpretation of 2(j) in the Industrial Disputes Act," the CJI summed up at the end of an hour-long judgment pronouncement session on Thursday.

The 48-year-old judgment had further intro-

duced a 'triple test' which laid down conditions that any activity which was systematic or organised, operated on the basis of employer-employee cooperation and dealt in the production of goods and services to satisfy human wants came within the ambit of 'industry'. The judgment had brought even hospitals, educational institutions and municipalities within the fold of 'industry'.

'Not be burdened'

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The majority opinion on this particular point was

authored by Chief Justice Surya Kant, and supported by Justices Satish Chandra Sharma, Alok Aradhe, Vipul M. Pancholi, with Justices P.S. Narasimha and Joymalya Bagchi expressing agreement in their separate opinions.

In fact, the CJI's opinion even suggested a "refinement" of the 1978 triple test. While acknowledging that the core principles of the test had stood the test of time in deciding industrial disputes, the CJI said its elements could have been "articulated differently so that the scope and contours of 2(j) could have been better reflected". However, the CJI clarified that this was only a "considered opinion", and should not be used to displace the governing legal position on pending proceedings or dig up decided cases.

"Consequently, any pending proceedings before courts, Tribunals, la-

bour authorities or any fora under the 1947 Act should be decided as per the interpretation of Section 2(j) in the *Bangalore Water Supply and Sewerage Board (BWSSB)* judgment," the CJI said.

Justice Narasimha agreed, saying an authoritative interpretation of 2(j) had lost its immediacy with the coming into force of the IRC.

In her separate opinion, Justice B.V. Nagarathna, seconded by Justices Dipankar Datta, who wrote an independent opinion shared with Justice Ujjal Bhuyan, found the reference against the 1978 verdict "unwarranted" and not maintainable. She said it was important, now more than ever, to retain the inclusive definition of industry to safeguard workers' rights.

JUDGE DIFFERS IN VIEW
» PAGE 4

Why is it in the news?

A nine-judge Constitution Bench of the Supreme Court has examined whether the broad definition of "Industry" laid down in the 1978 **Bangalore Water Supply and Sewerage Board v. A. Rajappa** judgment should continue to govern labour disputes.

The Court distinguished between:

- Pending disputes under the Industrial Disputes Act, 1947; and
- Future interpretation under the Industrial Relations Code, 2020.

The 1978 Triple Test will continue to govern pending old disputes. However, the definition of Industry in the 2020 Code must be interpreted independently from its own language and statutory context.

Important clarification

The Court has not completely erased or invalidated the 1978 judgment.

Situation	Applicable position
Pending dispute under the 1947 Act	Original 1978 Triple Test
Future application of any refined test under the old law	Prospective operation
Interpretation under the 2020 Code	Independent interpretation of Section 2(p)
Already concluded cases	Generally not reopened merely because of refinement

Particular

Current case

Original case

Original judgment

Author of leading opinion

Old provision

New provision

Current Bench

Bench headed by

Main question

Details

State of Uttar Pradesh v. Jai Bir Singh

Bangalore Water Supply and Sewerage Board v. A.
Rajappa

1978

Justice V.R. Krishna Iyer

Section 2(j), Industrial Disputes Act, 1947

Section 2(p), Industrial Relations Code, 2020

Nine-judge Constitution Bench

Chief Justice Surya Kant

Meaning and scope of “Industry”

1978 Triple Test

An organisation was considered an Industry when it involved:

- A systematic or organised activity.
- Cooperation between employer and employees.
- Production or distribution of goods or services intended to satisfy human wants or wishes.

Dominant-nature test

Where an organisation performed multiple activities, its dominant or principal activity was examined.

If the dominant activity satisfied the Triple Test, the organisation could be treated as an Industry. Certain departments or units performing separable non-industrial or sovereign functions could be excluded.

Profit motive was not essential

Under Bangalore Water Supply:

- Profit motive was not essential.
- Capital investment was not essential.
- A government body could be an Industry.
- A charitable character did not automatically provide exemption.
- Hospitals, municipalities and educational institutions could potentially fall within the definition.
- Core sovereign functions remained outside it.

Sovereign-function exception

Core sovereign activities generally include:

- Legislation
- Administration of justice
- Defence
- Maintenance of law and order
- Certain inalienable constitutional functions

Merely being operated by the government does not automatically make an activity sovereign. The nature of the function must be examined.

Why did the issue reach nine judges?

The dispute originated from conflicting views concerning government welfare departments, particularly the Social Forestry Department.

The principal issues included:

- Whether welfare schemes are Industries.
- Whether hospitals and educational institutions should be covered.
- How broadly sovereign functions should be understood.
- Whether the 1982 amendment affected the 1978 interpretation.
- Whether the Industrial Relations Code, 2020 made reconsideration unnecessary.
- Whether an individual industrial unit can be separated from a predominantly sovereign department.

Industrial Disputes Act, 1947	Industrial Relations Code, 2020
Section 2(j) defined Industry	Section 2(p) defines Industry
Interpreted broadly in 1978	Contains a freshly enacted statutory definition
Old Triple Test became controlling precedent	Must be interpreted from its own text and exclusions
Narrow sovereign-function exemption	Specifies excluded activities more clearly
Pending cases remain governed by old interpretation	Governs disputes arising under the new framework

Major exclusions under the new Code

The definition under the Industrial Relations Code excludes specified activities, including:

- Institutions owned or managed by organisations wholly or substantially engaged in charitable, social or philanthropic services.
- Sovereign functions of the appropriate government.
- Activities connected with atomic energy.
- Activities connected with space.
- Defence research.
- Domestic service.
- Other activities notified by the Central Government.

Why does classification as an Industry matter?

If an establishment is classified as an Industry, eligible workers may receive protection relating to:

- Retrenchment
- Lay-off
- Closure
- Collective bargaining
- Trade-union activities
- Industrial-dispute adjudication
- Unfair labour practices
- Access to labour courts and industrial tribunals

Institution

Traditional factories

Commercial enterprises

Government department

Hospital

Educational institution

NGO

Municipality

Judiciary and legislature

Domestic service

Possible position

Normally covered

Normally covered

Depends on whether the activity is sovereign or industrial

Position depends on applicable law, dominant activity and exclusions

Requires examination under the applicable statutory framework

Charitable or philanthropic exclusion may be relevant under the new Code

Service activity may have been covered under the old Triple Test

Core sovereign functions; excluded

Specifically excluded under the new Code

- 
- Consider the following statements:
 - A. The Bangalore Water Supply judgment was delivered in 1978.
 - B. It held that profit motive was essential for an activity to qualify as an Industry.
 - C. The original Triple Test continues to govern pending disputes under the 1947 Act.
 - D. Section 2(p) of the Industrial Relations Code, 2020 must be interpreted solely through the 1978 judgment.
 - Which are correct?
 - (a) A and C only
 - (b) A, B and C only
 - (c) B and D only
 - (d) A, C and D only
- 
- 
- 
- 

through the will of Sri Mahalakshmi, expressed through the red lac dye from Her feet adorning the chest of Perumal, where She has resided since the time Vishnu married Her on the banks of the Milky Ocean. He could do everything because He is Srinivasa, the place where Sri resides. In the Ramayana, Kamini says one needs a L000 eyes to see Rama, but to look at She an incarnation of Mahalakshmi.

Ease three-language rule for Class 6, SC tells CBSE

Three-language scheme will eventually have to be implemented, but CBSE has to streamline its implementation better, says top court; questions categorisation of English as a foreign language

Krishnadas Rajagopal
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Thursday asked the Central Board of School Education (CBSE) to grant current Class 6 students a one-time reprieve from a mandatory third-language Board exam.

The court urged the Board to return to the drawing board to consider easing the policy into the curriculum, starting from earlier classes, giving students, families, and schools "some elbow space".

"Why don't you give the Class 6 students reprieve from writing the third language exam in Class 10 exam," Justice Joymalya Bagchi asked Additional Solicitor-General Aishwarya Bhati.

Under CBSE guidelines, students in Classes 7 to 9 were exempted, while the present Class 6 batch was slated to face full implementation, including a mandatory Class 10 Board exam in the third language by 2031.

The court said the three-



language scheme would eventually have to be implemented, but the CBSE has to streamline its implementation better.

'Give time to adapt'

"You would have to give some time for not only students but also for infrastructure to come on par, across the various education Boards. It is a good policy to start with the mother tongue, then an indigenous language, and then another indigenous or foreign language. But all this should be started when the children are a little younger, in a lower class, giving them time to adapt," Justice Bagchi said.

The court asked Ms. Bhati, appearing for the CBSE, to get instructions on three issues - whether a one-time reprieve could be given to the current batch

of Class 6 students, how to build human resources to meet the demands of the three-language scheme, and whether the scheme should ideally be started in earlier classes.

Foreign language

Lawyers for petitioners opposing the three-language policy said it explicitly categorised English as a foreign language along with popular foreign language options among students like French, Japanese, and Spanish.

"Because the policy mandates that students must study at least two native Indian languages, students are restricted to only one foreign language slot. Since nearly all students choose English for that single slot, other foreign languages like French or Japanese are effectively pushed

out of the main curriculum. A large number of students already studying French and Japanese have to choose a native language now... Another foreign language increases employment opportunities... These are children from middle- and lower-class homes we are talking about," senior advocate Anand Grover explained.

Mr. Grover submitted that textbooks found online under the three-language scheme start with compound sentences. "If I have to learn Sanskrit, for example, I have to learn from the first letter. The textbooks on the website have compounded sentences. How will I learn?" he asked.

Chief Justice Surya Kant said English could hardly be considered a foreign language.

On the issue of treating English as a foreign language, Ms. Bhati said, "English is an official language under the Constitution, and though it is not treated like a foreign language, it is also not a native language. Language is the vehicle of a culture".

Why is it in the news?

The Supreme Court has asked the Central Board of Secondary Education—CBSE—to reconsider the immediate implementation of the compulsory third-language requirement for students currently studying in Class 6.

The Court suggested that the present Class 6 batch may be granted a **one-time transitional exemption**, so these students are not suddenly required to take a compulsory third-language paper when they reach Class 10 in 2031.

This is not a final judgment cancelling the three-language policy. It is a judicial direction asking CBSE to review how the policy is being implemented.

What did the Supreme Court observe?

Justice Joymalya Bagchi questioned why students currently in Class 6 could not be exempted from writing the third-language examination in Class 10.

The Court observed that:

- The three-language policy may eventually have to be implemented.
- Students, parents, schools and teachers need sufficient time to adapt.
- CBSE must first ensure the availability of qualified language teachers and textbooks.
- Implementation should ideally begin in lower classes rather than being imposed suddenly at a later stage.
- Existing students should not be academically disadvantaged because of a change introduced during their schooling.
- CBSE should protect existing foreign-language combinations during the transition.

CBSE reportedly stated that transitional students would initially face internal assessment and would not be detained merely for failing the third language

What is the Three-Language Formula?

The three-language formula seeks to promote multilingual education by requiring students to learn three languages.

Under the National Education Policy, 2020:

- Students are expected to study three languages.
- At least two of the three should be languages native to India.
- No particular language should be imposed on a State or student.
- States, regions and students should have flexibility in choosing languages.
- Multilingual learning should begin from the foundational and preparatory stages.
- The mother tongue or home language should, wherever possible, be used as the medium of instruction until at least Grade 5 and preferably Grade 8.

Language category	Example
Mother tongue/regional language	Hindi, Tamil, Bengali, Marathi, Gujarati
Another Indian language	Sanskrit, Hindi, Tamil, Telugu, Assamese
Third language	Another Indian language or, subject to the rules, a foreign language

Development

University Education Commission, 1948–49

Secondary Education Commission, 1952–53

Official Language Commission, 1955

National Education Policy, 1968

National Education Policy, 1986

Programme of Action, 1992

NEP 2020

NCF for School Education, 2023

CBSE implementation, 2026 onwards

Significance

Emphasised Indian languages in higher education

Supported diversified language education

Examined the use of Hindi, English and regional languages

Formally promoted the three-language formula

Reaffirmed multilingual education

Sought more effective implementation

Retained the formula with flexibility and no compulsory imposition of a specific language

Provided curricular guidance for multilingual learning

Triggered concerns about teachers, textbooks and transitional students

Is English a foreign language under the policy?

This was specifically questioned during the hearing.

English is not included among the 22 languages listed in the Eighth Schedule. However:

- English continues to be used for the official purposes of the Union under the Official Languages Act, 1963.
- It is extensively used in courts, Parliament, administration and higher education.
- Therefore, treating English exactly like French, Japanese or Spanish may be legally and practically questionable.
- At the same time, English is generally not regarded as an indigenous Indian language for satisfying the requirement that at least two languages should be Indian languages.

Provision	Subject
Article 29	Protection of language, script and culture of sections of citizens
Article 30	Minority institutions' educational rights
Article 343	Hindi in Devanagari script as the official language of the Union
Article 345	State legislature may adopt one or more languages for official purposes
Article 346	Language for communication between States and the Union
Article 350	Right to submit grievances in any language used in the Union or State
Article 350A	Facilities for primary education in the mother tongue for linguistic-minority children
Article 350B	Special Officer for linguistic minorities
Article 351	Directive for the development of Hindi
Eighth Schedule	Recognises 22 scheduled languages

- Consider the following statements:
- A. NEP 2020 requires Hindi to be compulsory throughout India.
- B. Under the three-language formula, at least two languages should ordinarily be native to India.
- C. Article 350A concerns mother-tongue instruction at the primary stage for linguistic minorities.
- D. The Supreme Court has completely invalidated the three-language formula.
- Which are correct?
- (a) A and B only
- (b) B and C only
- (c) A, C and D only
- (d) B, C and D only



Govt. allows duty-free import of 10 lakh tonnes of raw sugar

The government on Thursday allowed duty-free imports of 10 lakh tonnes of raw sugar under a Tariff Rate Quota till October 31 amid rising prices of the sweetener in local markets. The move is aimed at enhancing domestic availability and capping price rises. To control prices, the government also imposed a stockholding limit on bulk consumers using more than 10 tonnes of sugar a month. This comes after sharp rise in sugar prices, with ex-mill rates hitting record levels due to a lower opening stock ahead of the 2026-27 season. The all-India average ex-mill price rose to ₹5,400-₹5,500 per quintal on Tuesday, up from ₹3,900 a year earlier. PTI

The Government of India has permitted the duty-free import of **10 lakh metric tonnes—one million tonnes**—of raw sugar under a Tariff Rate Quota up to **31 October 2026**.

The decision aims to:

- Increase domestic sugar availability.
- Control the sharp rise in sugar prices.
- Strengthen supplies before the festival season.
- Compensate for lower opening stocks for the 2026–27 sugar season.
- Discourage hoarding and speculative price increases.

The measure has been issued through the Directorate General of Foreign Trade.

Parameter	Details
Commodity	Raw sugar
Quantity permitted	10 lakh metric tonnes
Equivalent quantity	One million metric tonnes
Import duty	Nil within the approved quota
Mechanism	Tariff Rate Quota
Import deadline	31 October 2026
Implementing authority	Directorate General of Foreign Trade
Ministry	Ministry of Commerce and Industry
Primary objective	Increase supply and contain prices
Normal import duty	Generally around 100% before this special concession
Wider significance	India's first major sugar-import opening in nearly a decade

Raw sugar

Partially processed

Brownish colour

Contains molasses and impurities

Imported mainly for refining

Processed by sugar refineries

Refined/white sugar

Fully processed

White crystals

High degree of purity

Generally ready for consumption

Sold directly to consumers and industries

- 
- **Why did sugar prices increase?**
 - The reported all-India average ex-mill price rose to approximately **₹5,400–₹5,500 per quintal**, compared with about ₹3,900 per quintal a year earlier.
 - Probable causes include:
 - Lower opening stocks before the 2026–27 season.
 - Reduced domestic sugar production.
 - Weather-related impact on sugarcane.
 - Diversion of sugarcane or sugar for ethanol production.
 - Higher festival-season demand.
 - Stock accumulation by dealers and bulk consumers.
 - International and domestic supply uncertainty.

Positive impact

Greater domestic availability

Moderation in retail prices

Reduced hoarding

Relief for food-processing industries

Inflation control before festivals

Better use of port-based refineries

Possible concern

Lower prices may affect domestic mills

Farmers may fear downward pressure on cane economics

Dependence on international supplies

International prices may rise because of Indian demand

Imports may arrive with a time lag

Currency depreciation can raise import cost

- **Connection with ethanol policy**
- Sugarcane can be used to produce:
 - Sugar
 - Molasses
 - Ethanol
 - Bagasse-based energy
- Greater diversion towards ethanol may reduce the amount of sugar available in the market. The government must therefore balance:
 - Sugar-price stability
 - Farmers' income
 - Ethanol Blended Petrol programme
 - Energy security
 - Sugar-mill liquidity
 - Consumer interest



- Consider the following statements regarding a Tariff Rate Quota:

- A. It permits a specified quantity of imports at a lower tariff.

B. Imports beyond the quota must necessarily be completely prohibited.

C. It combines tariff regulation with a quantitative threshold.

D. India's 2026 sugar measure applies to raw sugar.

- Which are correct?

- (a) A, C and D only

(b) A and B only

(c) B, C and D only

(d) A, B, C and D

ANKARA Turkey denies military presence at Syrian airbase struck by Israel



Turkey on Thursday denied having any military presence at an airbase in north Syria struck by Israel earlier this week, and vowed to continue "resolutely" supporting Syrian sovereignty. The denial came two days after Syria accused Israel of hitting a suspected military airbase that was damaged during the attack. **AP**

GAZA CITY Hind Rajab's family says Israel's probe attempt to 'justify' killing



The grandmother of Hind Rajab said that her family had no faith in a criminal probe into the five-year-old's death in Gaza in 2023, calling it an attempt by the Israeli military to "justify" her killing. Hind Rajab's body was recovered from a car riddled with bullets days after she was last heard in a phone call for help. **AP**

GUSAE Overloaded boat capsizes in Nigeria, 40 children's bodies found



An overloaded boat capsized in Nigeria's northwest Sokoto state, with around 40 bodies of children recovered so far, a local official at the inland waterways authority said on Thursday. The accident occurred in the morning when people were heading either to plant or to harvest rice, said Gaskin Daji, a traditional leader. **AP**

LONDON Prince Harry, Meghan decide to return to U.K. with their children



Prince Harry and his wife Meghan plan to move back to Britain this month, six years after they quit royal duties and relocated to U.S., from where they repeatedly criticised the royal family. They would move from California to somewhere outside London, reportedly with their children, Prince Archie, and Princess Lilibet. **AP**

Trump pledges 'economic warfare' on Iran, prompting Tehran derision

Any country providing any type of lifeline to Iran would face 'tremendous economic consequences', warns U.S. President. Iran dismisses the move as a continuation of 'failed policies', maintaining economic pressure by keeping Hormuz closed.

Agence France-Presse
TEHRAN

U.S. President Donald Trump pledged "economic warfare" against Iran and threatened any country that trades with it, promising Thursday to dismantle the plan on Thursday as a continuation of failed policies.

The war between the two countries, started by the U.S. and Israel in February, appears stalled, with peace talks stalled, Tehran keeping the key Strait of Hormuz shut and Washington persisting with a naval counter-blockade of Iran.



The U.S. Navy's aircraft carrier USS Abraham Lincoln conducts a replenishment at sea on August 26. **REUTERS**

In a post on his Truth Social, the U.S. leader said he was announcing "the MOST CRUSHING ECONOMIC OPERATION EVER."

"ANY country that allows its financial institutions, businesses, airports, or government entities to provide any type of lifeline to Iran will itself face TREMENDOUS economic consequences," he said.

The U.S. has maintained punishing sanctions against Iran for decades, with Mr. Trump in his 2017 2021 first term ratcheting them up as part of a "maximum pressure" strategy in which he tore up a nuclear deal negotiated by his predecessor Barack Obama.

Tehran, though, continues to exert its own economic pressure campaign by keeping the Strait of Hormuz largely closed.

"The so-called 'Economic D-Day' is a diversion from America's real crisis: unprecedented debt, a surging interest rate, doubling down on failed policies will only bring further defeat — and enervate of Iran," Mr. Araghchi said in a post on X.

"U.S. economic terrorism threatens global economy and sovereignty worldwide."

Tehran, though, continues to exert its own economic pressure campaign by keeping the Strait of Hormuz largely closed.

BNP's Alamgir elected new President of Bangladesh

Press Trust of India
DHAKA

Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir, a long-time secretary general of the ruling Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) and a close ally of former premier Khalesha Zia, was on Thursday elected as the country's new President in the first contested poll for the post in 28 years.

The 78-year-old BNP stalwart defeated his lone rival, Colonel (retd) Oli Ahmed, the 84-year-old Liberal Democratic Party chairman and the nominee of the Jamaat-e-Islami-led Haparty Opposition alliance, Chief Election Commissioner and also Election Restraining Officer AMM Nasir Uddin announced after the counting.



Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir

Of the total 348 registered voters, 343 voted in the election. Six lawmakers did not vote, he said.

Mr. Alamgir secured 255 votes while Mr. Oli Ahmed bagged 89 votes.

He will take the oath as Bangladesh's 23rd President on Friday evening at the Darbar Hall of Bangladesh.

presidential election in Bangladesh since 1998, as the office had largely been filled through consensus and uncontested polls in recent decades.

Prime Minister Tarique Rahman congratulated Mr. Alamgir on his victory in the presidential poll. Lawmakers also congratulated the President-elect by thumping their desks.

The presidential election was necessitated after Mohammed Shahabuddin, a close aide of deposed Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, resigned last month on health grounds before completing his five-year tenure.

Under the Constitution, a new President is required to be elected within 90 days of the office falling vacant.

Romania destroys marine drone near offshore gas project

Agence France-Presse
BUCHAREST

A Romanian F-16 fighter jet on Thursday destroyed a marine drone near an offshore gas project, with Romania's President blaming Russia for the latest incident involving the NATO member bordering Ukraine.

Unauthorized drone activity has become increasingly frequent in recent months across eastern European countries, with Ukraine fights off a Russian invasion launched in 2022, with both countries increasingly relying on drone warfare.

In the latest incident, the drone that was destroyed was "loaded with explosives" and did not originate from Ukraine, Defence Minister Radu Mircea said on Facebook.

"I strongly condemn the escalation of such events possible incidents on the part of the Russian Federation," Romanian President Nicolae said on X.

European Commission chief Ursula von der Leyen also slammed "an escalating campaign of threats against the bloc, unsettling our citizens and seeking to divide our Union."

"This is hybrid warfare," she wrote on X.

The drone was spotted hundreds of metres from the offshore gas project Neptun Deep and 80 nautical miles east of the Black Sea city of Constanta.

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Solemn goodbye



Heavy hearts: Mourners gather around flag-draped body bags containing the remains of Palestinians killed in Israeli strikes during the war last Hamas and recently recovered from the rubble, during a mass funeral in Gaza City on Thursday. **AP**

China jails Evergrande founder for life, imposes fine of over \$2 billion on firm

Agence France-Presse
BEIJING

China on Thursday sentenced the founder of embattled property giant Evergrande to life in prison and fined the company and an affiliate more than \$2 billion after a high-profile default five years ago.

Evergrande Group was the face of China's real estate, surging a decade-long property boom as it peddled home-ownership dreams but its access to credit dramatically narrowed when the government introduced curbs on excessive borrowing and speculation.

The company defaulted in 2023 after struggling to repay creditors.



Life sentences: Evergrande founder Xu Jiajun during a trial in Shenzhen, southern China's Guangdong province. **AP**

On Thursday, a court in south China fined the firm and its real estate arm a total of 15.82 billion yuan (\$2.2 billion).

It sentenced founder Xu Jiajun, known as Hu Ji Yan in Cantonese, to life for a list of crimes including "large-scale financial fraud."

Intermediate People's Court in Guangdong province said in a post on its WeChat account.

Between 2016 and 2021, Evergrande and Mr. Xu as boss "violated national laws by engaging in counter-asset, large-scale financial fraud and other means to inflate assets and conceal liabilities", the court said.

It added that the parties "gained control of financial institutions" through bribery.

Mr. Xu pleaded guilty in April to charges that also included embezzlement and bribery. Five other senior executives of Evergrande Group were also sentenced to prison terms ranging up to 18 years for crimes including fraud.

Reuters
WASHINGTON

The United States on Thursday issued fresh sanctions targeting Lebanon's Hezbollah, including re-designating it over actions on behalf of the Iranian government, according to a statement seen by Reuters.

The Treasury Department redesignated the group "for service to the Iranian regime under the command of Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps-Quds Force," according to the statement.

Hezbollah was designated as a Foreign Terrorist Organisation in 1997 and a Specially Designated Global Terrorist in 2001.



U.S. Secretary of Treasury Scott Bessent speaks to the press on sanctions, outside the White House in Washington on Thursday. **AP**

The Iranian government, specifically Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps-Quds Force.

Hezbollah was designated as a Foreign Terrorist Organisation in 1997 and a Specially Designated Global Terrorist in 2001.

flow of goods, services and material support. The U.S. official said Thursday's move was not part of new actions the U.S. has vowed it will take against Iran.

The U.S. sanctions on Thursday also designated 10 people whom it accused of smuggling cash for Hezbollah, targeting a Turkish businessman who Washington said manages a network of couriers moving money between countries in the region and Hezbollah's base in Lebanon.

The businessman uses Turkey-based exchange houses as fronts and provided front companies and bank accounts for money transfers connected with the Quds Force, according to the statement.

Mr. Zelenskyy called Thursday's strike one of the most "cynical, calculated, and large-scale" of the four-and-a-half-year-long war.

The Russian Defence Ministry said Moscow attacked Kyiv and the surrounding region, hitting facilities producing drone components, a military depot and a logistics hub.

Russian strikes kill 16 in Ukraine; Zelenskyy flags missile shortage

Reuters
KYIV

A major Russian air strike killed 16 people and injured more than 40 in Kyiv and the surrounding region on Thursday as President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said a failure by Ukraine's allies to replenish its stock of air defence missiles was costing lives.

Ukraine's air force said Russia launched dozens of cruise missiles, as well as ballistic and hypersonic ones, and 108 drones, in the massive overnight attack.

The air force said that nearly 95% of the drones and most of the cruise missiles were downed.

Mr. Zelenskyy called



Volodymyr Zelenskyy

Thursday's strike one of the most "cynical, calculated, and large-scale" of the four-and-a-half-year-long war.

The Russian Defence Ministry said Moscow attacked Kyiv and the surrounding region, hitting facilities producing drone components, a military depot and a logistics hub.

BNP's Alamgir elected new President of Bangladesh

Press Trust of India

DHAKA

Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir, a long-time secretary general of the ruling Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) and a close ally of former premier Khaleda Zia, was on Thursday elected as the country's new President in the first contested poll for the post in 35 years.

The 78-year-old BNP stalwart defeated his lone rival Colonel (retd) Oli Ahmed, the 84-year-old Liberal Democratic Party chairman and the nominee of the Jamaat-e-Islami-led 11-party Opposition alliance, Chief Election Commissioner and also Election Returning Officer AMM Nasir Uddin announced after the counting



Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir

of votes.

Of the total 349 registered voters, 343 voted in the election. Six lawmakers did not vote, he said.

Mr. Alamgir secured 255 votes while Mr. Oli Ahmad bagged 88 votes.

He will take the oath as Bangladesh's 23rd President on Friday evening at the Darbar Hall of Bangabhaban.

It is the first contested

presidential election in Bangladesh since 1991, as the office had largely been filled through consensus and uncontested polls in recent decades.

Prime Minister Tarique Rahman congratulated Mr. Alamgir on his victory in the presidential polls. Lawmakers also congratulated the President-elect by thumping their desks.

The presidential election was necessitated after Mohammed Shahabuddin, a close aide of deposed Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, resigned last month on health grounds before completing his five-year tenure.

Under the Constitution, a new President is required to be elected within 90 days of the office falling vacant.

Particular	Details
Elected President	Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir
Age	78 years
Political party	Bangladesh Nationalist Party
Position	23rd President of Bangladesh
Votes secured	255
Rival	Colonel (Retd.) Oli Ahmed
Rival's party	Liberal Democratic Party
Rival's votes	88
Registered voters	349
Votes cast	343
Type of election	Indirect election by members of Parliament
Historical importance	First contested presidential election since 1991
Presidential residence	Bangabhaban, Dhaka

Who is Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir?

- He is a long-serving senior leader of the BNP.
- He served as the BNP's secretary-general from 2016.
- He was a close political associate of former Prime Minister Khaleda Zia.
- He emerged as an important opposition figure during Sheikh Hasina's rule.
- His background includes teaching and service in ministerial positions.
- His election reflects the BNP's return to political dominance after the 2026 parliamentary election.

Why was a new President elected?

The presidential election became necessary after President Mohammed Shahabuddin resigned before completing his five-year term.

The Constitution requires a presidential vacancy to be filled within the prescribed period. Alamgir will succeed Shahabuddin as head of state.

How is Bangladesh's President elected?

Bangladesh follows an indirect presidential-election system.

Under **Article 48 of the Constitution of Bangladesh**, the President is elected by members of Parliament. The official constitutional text confirms that the President is elected by Parliament rather than directly by citizens. [Bangladesh Constitution, Article 48 ↗](#).

Feature	Bangladesh	
Electorate	Members of Jatiya Sangsad	
Election type	Indirect	
Head of State	President	
Head of Government	Prime Minister	
Term	Five years	
Maximum terms	Two terms, consecutive or otherwise	
System	Parliamentary	
Real executive authority	Prime Minister and Cabinet	
Armed forces	President is constitutional Commander-in-Chief	

-
- Bangladesh is strategically important to India because of:
 - A land boundary exceeding 4,000 kilometres.
 - Connectivity between mainland India and the Northeast.
 - Cooperation against terrorism and insurgency.
 - Sharing of 54 transboundary rivers.
 - Trade and transit arrangements.
 - Bay of Bengal security.
 - Energy-grid connectivity.
 - Migration and border-management issues.
 - Teesta water-sharing negotiations.
 - Competition involving China's growing influence.
 - India will closely observe the BNP government's position on border security, minority protection, connectivity, trade and China.

Area	Significance
Boundary	India shares its longest international land boundary with Bangladesh
Indian States bordering Bangladesh	West Bengal, Assam, Meghalaya, Tripura and Mizoram
Land Boundary Agreement	Implemented through India's 100th Constitutional Amendment Act, 2015
Major rivers	Ganga/Padma, Brahmaputra/Jamuna, Teesta
Regional organisations	SAARC, BIMSTEC, IORA
Subregional cooperation	BBIN—Bangladesh, Bhutan, India and Nepal
Maritime region	Bay of Bengal
Capital	Dhaka
Currency	Bangladeshi Taka
Parliament	Jatiya Sangsad

- Consider the following statements about the President of Bangladesh:

- A. The President is directly elected by the people.

B. The President is the head of state.

C. The presidential term is five years.

D. The President is elected by members of the Jatiya Sangsad.

- Which are correct?

- (a) A and B only

(b) B, C and D only

(c) A, C and D only

(d) A, B, C and D

China jails Evergrande founder for life, imposes fine of over \$2 billion on firm

Agence France-Presse

BEIJING

China on Thursday sentenced the founder of embattled property giant Evergrande to life in prison and fined the company and an affiliate more than \$2 billion after a high-profile default five years ago.

Evergrande Group was the face of Chinese real estate, surfing a decades-long property boom as it peddled home-ownership dreams but its access to credit dramatically narrowed when the government introduced curbs on excessive borrowing and speculation.

The company defaulted in 2021 after struggling to repay creditors.



Life sentence: Evergrande founder Xu Jiayin during a trial in Shenzhen, southern China's Guangdong province. AFP

On Thursday, a court in south China fined the firm and its real estate arm a total of 15.82 billion yuan (\$2.4 billion).

It sentenced founder Xu Jiayin, known as Hui Ka Yan in Cantonese, to life for a list of crimes includ-

ing "large-scale financial fraud".

"Xu Jiayin was sentenced for multiple crimes and fined, received a life sentence, with political rights revoked for life and all his personal property confiscated," the Shenzhen

Intermediate People's Court in Guangdong province said in a post on its WeChat account.

Between 2016 and 2021, Evergrande and Mr. Xu as boss "violated national laws by engaging in continuous, large-scale financial fraud and other means to inflate assets and conceal liabilities", the court said. It added that the parties "gained control of financial institutions" through bribery.

Mr. Xu pleaded guilty in April to charges that also included embezzlement and bribery. Five other senior executives of Evergrande Group were also sentenced to prison terms ranging up to 18 years for crimes including fraud.

Why is it in the news?

A Chinese court has sentenced **Xu Jiayin**, founder of the heavily indebted property developer **China Evergrande Group**, to life imprisonment for multiple financial crimes.

Xu Jiayin is also known as:

- **Hui Ka Yan** in Cantonese
- **Xu Jiayin** in Mandarin

The Shenzhen Intermediate People's Court found that Evergrande and its founder engaged in large-scale and continuous financial fraud between 2016 and 2021. The company allegedly inflated assets, concealed liabilities, misused funds and obtained influence over financial institutions through bribery.

Particular	Details
Founder	Xu Jiayin, also known as Hui Ka Yan
Company	China Evergrande Group
Founded	1996
Headquarters/base	Shenzhen, Guangdong Province
Court	Shenzhen Intermediate People's Court
Sentence	Life imprisonment
Political rights	Revoked for life
Personal property	Ordered to be confiscated
Period of alleged fraud	2016–2021
Evergrande Group fine	8.82 billion yuan
Evergrande Real Estate Group fine	7 billion yuan
Total corporate fine	15.82 billion yuan
Approximate dollar value	\$2.3–\$2.4 billion
Liabilities at collapse	More than \$300 billion
Default	2021
Hong Kong liquidation order	January 2024
Other persons sentenced	More than 50
Senior executives' sentences	Up to 18 years

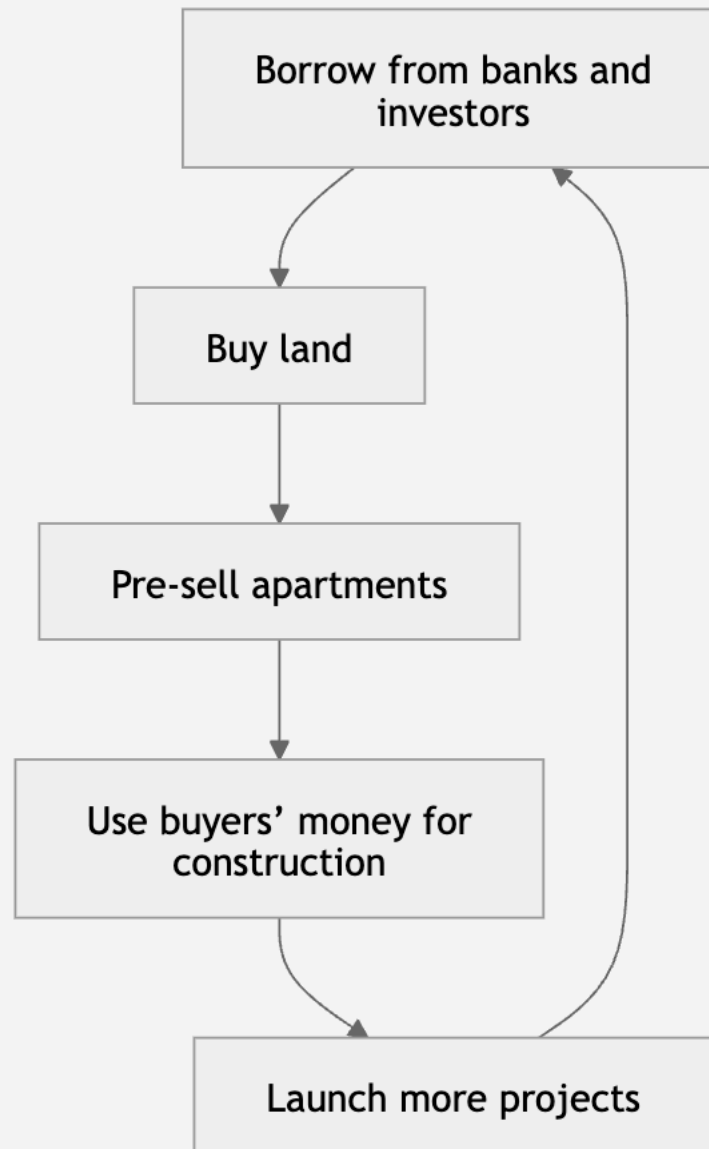
- **What were the charges?**

- Xu reportedly pleaded guilty to eight charges in April 2026.

The offences included:

- Large-scale financial fraud
- Fraudulent fundraising
- Illegal absorption of public deposits
- Misuse and misappropriation of funds
- Illegal lending
- Securities-related fraud
- Embezzlement
- Bribery
- The court concluded that the scale of the fraud caused enormous financial losses and serious social harm.

- 
- At the height of Evergrande's success:
 - Xu was among China's richest individuals.
 - His personal wealth reportedly reached approximately \$45 billion in 2017.
 - Evergrande became one of China's largest developers by contracted sales.
 - The company sold homes across hundreds of Chinese cities.
 - It expanded beyond property into electric vehicles, finance, healthcare, tourism and professional football.
 - His transformation from one of Asia's wealthiest businessmen to a life prisoner illustrates the collapse of China's debt-driven property model.



- **Causes of the Evergrande Collapse**

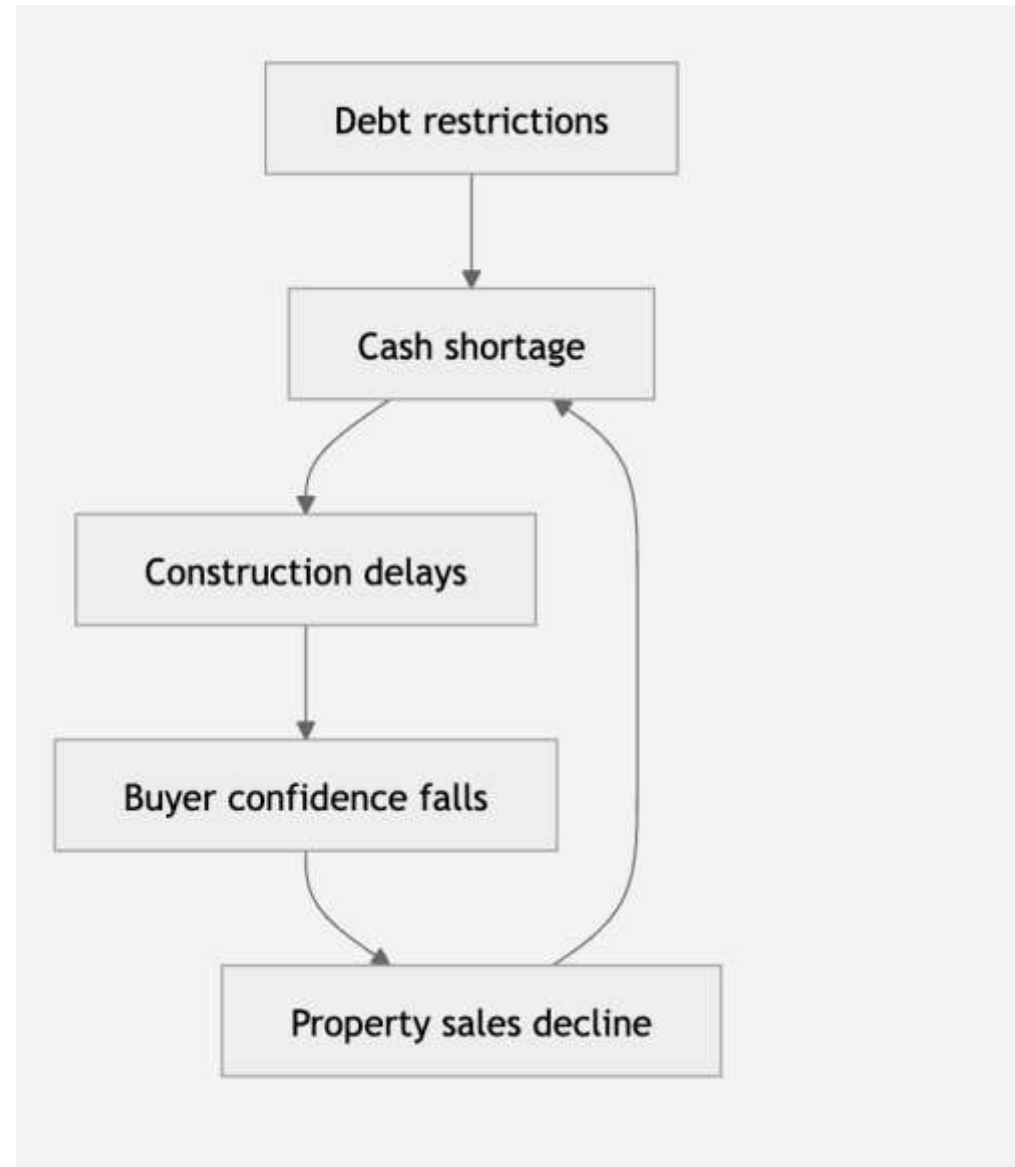
- **Excessive borrowing**

- Evergrande's expansion depended heavily on debt. Its liabilities eventually exceeded **\$300 billion**, making it the world's most indebted property developer.

- These liabilities included:

- Bank loans
- Domestic and offshore bonds
- Payments owed to suppliers
- Money owed to homebuyers
- Wealth-management products
- Unpaid construction expenses
- Commercial bills and other short-term obligations

Sector	Evergrande activity
Electric vehicles	Evergrande New Energy Vehicle
Football	Guangzhou football club
Healthcare	Health and medical ventures
Tourism	Theme parks and tourism complexes
Finance	Wealth-management and financial products
Food and beverages	Bottled water and other consumer products



China's "Three Red Lines" Policy

What was the policy?

China introduced the Three Red Lines in August 2020 to reduce excessive borrowing by property developers.

The policy evaluated developers using three financial ratios.

Red line	Required position
Liability-to-asset ratio	Below 70%, excluding advance receipts
Net debt-to-equity ratio	Below 100%
Cash-to-short-term-debt ratio	At least 1

Year	Development
1996	Xu Jiayin founded Evergrande
2009	Evergrande was listed in Hong Kong
2017	Xu became one of Asia's richest individuals
2018–2020	Company allegedly overstated revenue and financial position
2020	China introduced the Three Red Lines
2021	Evergrande faced a liquidity crisis and defaulted on offshore debt
2022	Construction delays and homebuyer protests intensified
2023	Xu Jiayin was placed under investigation/control
January 2024	Hong Kong High Court ordered Evergrande's liquidation
March 2024	Chinese securities regulator accused Hengda of fraudulent reporting
August 2025	Evergrande was delisted from the Hong Kong Stock Exchange
April 2026	Xu pleaded guilty to multiple financial offences
August 2026	Xu received life imprisonment; companies fined 15.82 billion yuan

Evergrande

Real-estate developer

Crisis centred on Chinese property

Large exposure to homebuyers and suppliers

Chinese state exercises extensive control over banks

Capital controls limit rapid cross-border outflows

Slow-moving property and debt crisis

Lehman Brothers

Investment bank

Crisis spread through global financial markets

Large exposure through complex financial derivatives

US financial system is more market-driven

Deep integration with global financial institutions

Sudden international financial panic

China/Evergrande problem	Indian safeguard under RERA
Diversion of buyers' funds	At least 70% of amounts collected must generally be deposited in a separate account
Delayed construction	Promoter is responsible for declared completion schedule
Lack of project information	Mandatory registration and disclosure
Misleading representations	Penalties and buyer remedies
Uncertain project status	Information published through State RERA portals
Buyer losses	Refund, interest or compensation may be available subject to law

- Consider the following statements regarding China's Three Red Lines policy:

- A. It was introduced to regulate borrowing by property developers.

- B. It required the adjusted liability-to-asset ratio to remain below 70%.

- C. It required net debt to be below 100% of equity.

- D. It required cash to be sufficient to cover short-term debt.

- Which of the statements are correct?

- (a) A and B only

- (b) A, B and C only

- (c) B, C and D only

- (d) A, B, C and D

Word of the day

Diatrobe:

thunderous verbal attack

Synonyms: tirade, attack, rant, criticism

Usage: *She went on a diatribe about bad customer service.*

Pronunciation: newsth.live/diatribe

International Phonetic Alphabet: /daɪətraɪb/



Thank you ☺

