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The Hindu & The Indian express

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India, U.S. sign pact to boost defence ties

Framework outlines a 10-year roadmap for strategic collaboration; both sides reaffirm commitment to advance cooperation in defence industry

Saurabh Trivedi
NEW DELHI

India and the United States have unveiled a 10-year defence framework, marking a new phase in their strategic cooperation aimed at “advancing peace, security, and stability in the Indo-Pacific”.

The “Framework for the U.S.-India Major Defence Partnership” was signed by Defence Minister Rajnath Singh and U.S. Secretary of War Pete Hegseth on the sidelines of the 12th ASEAN Defence Ministers’ Meeting-Plus (ADMM-Plus) in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, on Friday. The development came amid strained ties due to Washington’s slapping of 50% tariffs on Indian goods.

According to the Ministry of Defence, both sides



Rajnath Singh and Pete Hegseth shake hands after signing a 10-year defence partnership framework in Kuala Lumpur on Friday. ANI

appreciated the continuing momentum in bilateral defence cooperation and reaffirmed their commitment to further strengthening the partnership.

They reviewed ongoing defence engagements, addressed emerging challenges, and discussed progress in defence industry and technology collabora-

tions, the Ministry said.

Mr. Singh posted on X: “Defence will remain the major pillar of our bilateral relations. Our partnership is critical for ensuring a free, open and rules-bound Indo-Pacific region.”

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India, U.S. sign pact to boost defence ties

The Hindu, Page 1

Subject: India-U.S. Relations — GS Paper 2 (International Relations)

Why in News:

India and the U.S. unveiled a 10-year defence framework during the 12th ASEAN Defence Ministers’ Meeting-Plus (ADMM-Plus) in Kuala Lumpur, marking a new phase in strategic cooperation to advance peace, security, and stability in the Indo-Pacific.

Key Aspects of the 10-year Roadmap:

- **Strategic Defence Collaboration:** Institutionalises long-term cooperation rather than short-term deals.
- **Defence Trade & Co-production:** Expands joint manufacturing, technology transfer, and industrial collaboration under “Make in India”.
- **Joint Exercises & Interoperability:** Deepens operational coordination across land, air, sea, space, and cyber domains.
- **Technology & Innovation:** Focus on AI, unmanned systems, autonomous platforms, and space technologies.
- **Regulatory Alignment:** Review of export control laws and move towards a Reciprocal Defence Procurement (RDP) agreement for smoother equipment exchange.
- **Indo-Pacific Stability:** Strengthens a rules-based, free, and open Indo-Pacific — central to both nations’ strategic goals.

Investigating agencies cannot force lawyers to reveal client info, says SC

Krishnadas Rajagopal
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court in a judgment on Friday held that investigating agencies cannot summon lawyers and coerce them to disclose any professional communication made in confidence with their clients.

A three-judge Bench headed by Chief Justice of India B.R. Gavai said compelling a lawyer to prejudice his or her own client, without the latter's consent or knowledge, amounted to an "outrageous" infringement of the client's constitutional right against self-incrimination under Article 20(3) of the Constitution.

"The facts and circumstances of a crime committed, or an FIR registered, is not to be elicited from

The position of trust the advocate occupies vis-à-vis his client cannot be put to test by an attempt to breach the professional confidence, under Section 132 [of Bharatiya Sakshya Adhiniyam], which has reflections of the constitutional protection against self-incrimination

SUPREME COURT JUDGMENT



the advocate who represents the accused, which again is a reflection of the abject failure of the investigating agency. It is for the investigator to obtain independent evidence of the culpability of the accused. The position of trust the advocate occupies vis-à-vis his client cannot be put to test by an attempt to breach the professional confidence, conferred with a solemn privilege

under Section 132; which has reflections of the constitutional protection against self-incrimination," Justice K. Vinod Chandran, who authored the judgment for the Bench also comprising Justice N.V. Anjaria, observed.

Lawyer-client privilege
The judgment recorded that lawyers were not at the beck-and-call of probe

agencies. Their ability to protect their clients without fear was part of their fundamental rights under Article 19(1)(g) and Article 21 of the Constitution, coupled with the provisions of the Advocates Act, 1961.

The court said lawyer-client privilege was protected in Section 132 of the Bharatiya Sakshya Adhiniyam (BSA) of 2023, which mandates that an advocate cannot be coerced into revealing any information with respect to the client he represents or the cause he is engaged to prosecute or defend. The exceptions to this rule are clear. The confidentiality of the lawyer-client communication can be waived only with the consent of the client or if it was in furtherance of an illegal purpose or a crime or fraud is committed as a result.

Investigating agencies cannot force lawyers to reveal client info, says SC

The Hindu, Page 1

Subject: Judiciary — GS Paper 2

Why in News:

The Supreme Court held that investigating agencies cannot compel lawyers to disclose any confidential communication with clients, terming it a violation of constitutional rights and professional ethics.

Key Points:

- **Section 132, Bharatiya Sakshya Adhiniyam (2023):** Protects lawyer-client privilege — advocates cannot be forced to reveal information shared in confidence by their clients. Exceptions:
 1. When the client consents to disclosure.
 2. When the communication is made in furtherance of an illegal purpose.
 3. When the advocate becomes aware of a crime or fraud committed as a result of such communication.

Article 19(1)(g): Protects lawyers' freedom to practise profession independently. **Article 20(3):** Guards against self-incrimination of the accused through coerced disclosures.

Sikh pilgrims get visa to travel to Pakistan as Centre revokes ban

Pakistan High Commission issues visa to 2,100 pilgrims to visit Sikh shrines; confusion prevails within the government over whose decision it was to stop and then restart the pilgrimages now; the **Kartarpur Sahib corridor** still remains shut

Suhasini Haidar
Vikas Vasudeva
NEW DELHI/CHANDIGARH

Weeks after he was told his pilgrimage to Sikh shrines in Pakistan, including **Nankana Sahib**, had been cancelled, Harjindar Singh's disappointment turned to unbridled joy on Friday as he received his passport and Pakistani visa. The Hoshiarpur resident is one of 2,100 Sikh pilgrims who were issued visas by the Pakistan High Commission in Delhi after the Indian government reversed its stand, allowing the groups to travel.

"In September, when I received the news that our government was not allowing pilgrims to Nankana Sahib, I was taken aback and disappointed. I had been preparing for this journey for months," the 50-year-old devotee told *The Hindu*. "This pilgrimage means everything to me. It's not just a trip – it's a spiritual calling," he said.

Mr. Singh, who collect-



Sikh pilgrims bound for Pakistan on a 10-day pilgrimage to Nankana Sahib collecting their passports after visa processing on Friday. ANI

ed his passport with the visa from the Shiromani Gurdwara Parbhandak Committee (SGPC) office in Amritsar, is part of the group that will leave on November 4 crossing the border at Wagah, and return on November 13. These groups, **planning to commemorate Sikh-founder Guru Nanak's birth anniversary at his birthplace in Pakistan, will be the first to be allowed to travel to Pakistan since Operation Sindoor.**

SGPC secretary Partap Singh thanked both the Indian and Pakistani governments for facilitating the "smooth issuance of visas to the pilgrims". Of the 2,100 pilgrims issued visas, 1,796 pilgrims are from Punjab, while others are from Haryana, Delhi, Uttarakhand, Jammu, and Uttar Pradesh, an SGPC official said.

Meanwhile, confusion prevails within the Centre over whose decision it was to stop and then restart the

pilgrimages now, with the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) and the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) refusing to comment publicly on the issue. MEA officials said the decision was taken by the MHA, while an MHA official said the applications were processed on the basis of recommendation by the State governments, but added that "it is MEA which decides if the *jathas* could be given clearance."

On September 12, just as the *jathas* (Sikh groups) were planning their visit to Pakistan, normally timed around Prakash Purb, or Guru Nanak's birthday in November, the MHA sent notices to the State governments involved, to suspend all arrangements for the pilgrims.

Security scenario

"Considering the prevailing security scenario with Pakistan, it would not be possible to send Sikh pilgrims' *jathas* (groups) to Pakistan," said the MHA's notice to States govern-

ments said, prompting calls from the Punjab government and SGPC leaders to reconsider the decision.

Sources said the notice was rescinded in early October, but did not explain the reason for the U-turn.

Both MEA and MHA officials declined to respond to questions from *The Hindu* about whether the security situation in Pakistan has now improved sufficiently for the groups to be allowed to cross the border. In addition, while the Pakistan government said that the groups would be facilitated to travel to Kartarpur Sahib as well, the Kartarpur Sahib corridor remains closed. This indicates that they will have to take a longer route to reach the shrines. **The MHA website for the Kartarpur Corridor states that, "considering the extant security scenario, the services of Sri Kartarpur Sahib Corridor is suspended till further directions".**

(With inputs from Vijaita Singh)

Sikh pilgrims get visa to travel to Pakistan as Centre revokes ban

The Hindu, Page 1 & 8

Subject: Art & Culture | India-Pakistan Relations — GS2

Why in News:

India allowed 2,100 Sikh pilgrims to visit shrines in Pakistan, including Nankana Sahib, for Guru Nanak's birth anniversary, after revoking a temporary ban. The Kartarpur Sahib Corridor remains closed due to security concerns.

- Located in Punjab, Pakistan; birthplace of Guru Nanak Dev Ji.
- Home to Gurdwara Janam Asthan, a major Sikh pilgrimage site.
- Central to Guru Nanak Jayanti celebrations and cultural exchange.

Kartarpur Corridor:

- Connects Dera Baba Nanak (India) to Gurdwara Darbar Sahib (Pakistan).
- Opened in 2019 for visa-free pilgrimage.
- Currently suspended by MHA citing security reasons in Pakistan.



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Indian Railways to patronise 'Aabhar' online store in a bid to encourage local artisans

S. Vijay Kumar
CHENNAI

In a bid to promote local talent, the Indian Railways will patronise the newly launched 'Aabhar' online store that will showcase a range of exquisite gift items manufactured by indigenous tribes, handloom weavers and others coming under the ambit of One District One Product (ODOP) and Geographical Indication (GI) products.

The online store hosted by the Government e-Marketplace (GeM) sources gift items exclusively from the Central Cottage Industries Emporium (CCIE), Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC), and various Central and State Handicraft and Handloom Emporiums.

Promoted with the 'Vocal for Local' campaign, the store would offer a va-



The store would offer a variety of traditional crafts that could be used in official events.

riety of articles and hampers that could be used in official events, ceremonies, and functions. The objective is to promote social inclusion and encourage local artisans and traditional industries.

Promote rich heritage

Sharing details of the website and liaison officers to facilitate the purchase, the Railway Board referred to a

note issued by the Chief Executive Officer, GeM, which stated that the purpose of the initiative was also to promote India's rich heritage through handlooms, handicrafts, artisanal goods, etc., by providing market access to local artisans, rural entrepreneurs and women-led enterprises. The GeM is aimed at supporting a sustainable and inclusive economic development.

To provide a market for local/ indigenous products and create additional income opportunities for the marginalised sections of society, the railways launched 'One Station One Product' (OSOP) scheme over its network a few years ago where articles, like artefacts made by indigenous tribes, handlooms by local weavers, and handicrafts like chikankari were showcased.

Indian Railways to patronise 'Aabhar' online store in a bid to encourage local artisans

The Hindu, Page 8

Why in News:

- Indian Railways will promote the 'Aabhar' online store to encourage local artisans, tribal craftspersons, and handloom weavers by purchasing official gifts and hampers from the platform.

Key points:

- **Platform:** 'Aabhar' is hosted on the Government e-Marketplace (GeM).
- **Purpose:** To promote 'Vocal for Local' and support indigenous, GI-tagged, and ODOP (One District One Product) items.
- **Sources:** Products will be procured from CCIE (Central Cottage Industries Emporium), KVIC, and State Handicraft & Handloom Emporiums.
- **Goal:** To ensure social inclusion, promote India's rich heritage, and provide market access to rural artisans and women-led enterprises.
- **Linked Initiative:** Complements the 'One Station One Product (OSOP)' scheme of Railways that showcases local crafts at railway stations.

'Navy monitors every Chinese ship entering Indian Ocean Region'

Saurabh Trivedi
NEW DELHI

The Indian Navy is keeping a close and continuous watch on every Chinese vessel that enters the Indian Ocean Region, including naval and research ships, Vice-Chief of the Naval Staff Vice-Admiral Sanjay Vatsayan said on Friday.

"We are aware of what they are doing, when they come in, and when they go out," he said, underscoring the Navy's continuous surveillance of extra-regional powers operating in the region.

In September, reports emerged of the Chinese tracking vessel *Yuan Wang-5* operating in the Indian Ocean Region. The officer emphasised that the Navy remains fully alert and operationally prepared to meet any contingency.

"At any given point of time, there are between 40 and 50 foreign ships operating in the Indian Ocean. We are aware of what they are doing, what they are likely to do, when do they come in, when they go out, etc. Challenges remain but the bottom line remains that the Indian Ocean is the main source of transit



Vice-Admiral Sanjay Vatsayan

of goods and oil as far as the world is concerned," he said.

Vice-Admiral Vatsayan was speaking at a curtain raiser for three major international maritime events – the International Fleet Review 2026, Exercise MILAN 2026, and the Indian Ocean Naval Symposium Conclave of Chiefs – to be held at Visakhapatnam from February 17 to 25.

He said 55 countries, including the U.S. and Russia, have confirmed their attendance, making it one of the largest maritime gatherings in the region. "These events align with the MAHASAGAR vision of inclusive maritime growth," he noted.

He said the Navy continues to operate under Operation Sindoor and maintains flexible deployment based on threat assessment and operational needs.

Navy monitors every Chinese ship entering Indian Ocean Region'

The Hindu, Page 10

Why in News:

The Indian Navy is maintaining round-the-clock surveillance on all Chinese vessels, including naval and research ships like the tracking vessel *Yuan Wang-5*, entering the Indian Ocean Region (IOR).

Vice-Admiral Sanjay Vatsayan stated that the Navy is fully alert and operationally prepared, closely tracking when such vessels enter, operate, and exit Indian waters. At any time, 40-50 foreign ships, many of them Chinese, operate in the IOR.



New IIP unit to play a vital role, says Goyal

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Indian Institute of Packaging (IIP), an autonomous body under the Ministry of Commerce and Industry (MoCI), opened its Bengaluru Centre on Friday.

The new facility would play a vital role in packaging education, research, testing, and certification, said Piyush Goyal, Minister of Commerce and Industry, while inaugurating the centre here.

IIP Bengaluru, would integrate AI-enabled testing, data analytics and smart packaging demonstrations – building capacity for innovation, skill development, and industry collaboration in next-generation packaging technologies.

Built on a four-acre patch of land, the institute in Bengaluru was designed



Piyush Goyal

to serve as a hub for testing, training, research and technology transfer. Equipped with advanced material testing, chemical analysis and transport testing laboratories, the centre would cater to diverse industrial sector needs.

IIP officials said a special highlight of the new facility is its dedicated food packaging line developed to provide hands-on training, live demonstrations and skill development.

New IIP unit to play a vital role, says Goyal

The Hindu, Page 10

Why in News:

The Indian Institute of Packaging (IIP), an autonomous body under the Ministry of Commerce and Industry (MoCI), inaugurated its new Bengaluru centre to boost innovation in packaging education, research, testing, and certification.

The facility will integrate AI-enabled testing, data analytics, and smart packaging demonstrations, promoting skill development and industry collaboration in next-generation packaging.

A dedicated food packaging line has been set up to provide hands-on training, live demonstrations, and skill development, making the centre a key hub for technology transfer and industrial testing.



'H1 fiscal deficit stands at 36.5% of full-year goal'

Press Trust of India
NEW DELHI

The Centre's **fiscal deficit** stood at **36.5%** of the **full-year target at the end of the first half of FY26**, according to data released by the **Controller General of Accounts (CGA)** on Friday.

The fiscal deficit was **29%** of the **Budget Estimates (BE) of 2024-25** in the **first six months of the previous financial year**.

In absolute terms, the fiscal deficit, or gap between the government's expenditure and revenue, was ₹5,73,123 crore in the April-September period of 2025-26. The Centre estimates the **fiscal deficit during 2025-26** at **4.4% of GDP**, or ₹15.69 lakh crore.

The government has received ₹17.3 lakh crore, or 49.5% of the corresponding BE 2025-26, of total receipts up to September.

According to the CGA data, more than ₹6.31 lakh crore has been transferred to State governments as devolution of share of taxes by the Central government during the period. The total expenditure incurred by the Central government stood at about ₹23 lakh crore (45.5% of the corresponding BE 2025-26).

Spike in capex

Aditi Nayar, chief economist at Icra, said a welcome **40% spike in capital expenditure** widened the Government of India's **fiscal deficit to ₹5.7 lakh crore** or about **37%** of the BE during the **first half of the fiscal** from **₹4.7 lakh crore in the year-ago period**.

'H1 fiscal deficit stands at 36.5% of full-year goal'

The Hindu, Page 11

Subject: Economy — Prelims (Fiscal Policy)

Why in News

As per CGA data, India's fiscal deficit reached 36.5% of the FY26 target by end-September, amounting to ₹5.73 lakh crore. The government aims to keep the deficit at 4.4% of GDP for FY26. A 40% rise in capital expenditure led to higher spending, widening the deficit from ₹4.7 lakh crore last year to ₹5.7 lakh crore this year.

After 3 month outflows, FPIs net buy ₹14,610-cr. equities

While FPIs' equity buying was a marginal increase compared with the overall selling in the calendar year, they bought debt securities worth ₹3,507 crore in the month of October

Ashokamithran T.
MUMBAI

Foreign Portfolio Investors (FPIs) net bought equities worth ₹14,610 crore in October after three consecutive months of selling, the strongest inflow since July this year.

As of October 31, FPIs sold Indian equities worth ₹1.39 lakh crore, the worst number in three years. FPIs sold about ₹1.68 lakh crore in the 10-month period in calendar year (CY) 2022. The current year



In focus: The pressure on India dedicated flows continues from long-only funds, says Jain of Elara Capital. ANI

continues to be worse than CY2024, when global funds still net bought a marginal ₹6,593 crore. On

a year-on-year basis, however, October 2025, is better than the same month last year when FPIs

sold record ₹94,017 crore.

While FPIs' equity buying was a marginal rise vis a vis overall selling in the calendar year, they bought debt securities worth ₹3,507 crore in October, making it the third consecutive month of buying.

"The pressure on India dedicated flows continues from long-only funds, which saw a euphoric rise in flows and AUM in 2023-24. This week, long-only funds saw outflows of \$260 million and ETFs inflows of \$98 million," said Sunil Jain, VP, Elara Capital.

After 3-month outflows, FPIs net buy ₹14,610-cr equities

The Hindu, Page 11

Subject: Economy — Prelims (External Sector)

Why in News

After three months of selling, Foreign Portfolio Investors (FPIs) made a net equity purchase of ₹14,610 crore in October 2025, the strongest inflow since July. FPIs also invested ₹3,507 crore in debt securities, reflecting improved market sentiment.

What is FPI:

Investment by foreign entities in Indian financial assets like stocks, bonds, and mutual funds without management control.

- Short-term, volatile capital flow.
- Regulated by SEBI.
- Unlike FDI, it doesn't involve ownership or control of companies.



Opposition says poll protests in Tanzania left 'hundreds dead'

Agence France-Presse
NAIROBI

Around 700 people have been killed in three days of election protests in Tanzania, the main Opposition party said on Friday, with protesters still on the streets in the midst of an Internet blackout.

President Samia Suluhu Hassan had sought to cement her position and silence critics in her party with an emphatic win in Wednesday's election, in which her main challengers were either jailed or barred from standing.

But the vote descended into chaos as crowds took to the streets of Dar es Salaam and other cities, tear-

ing down her posters, attacking police and polling stations, triggering curfew and Internet shutdown.

The main Opposition party, Chadema, said clashes continued between protesters and security forces in the commercial hub on Friday.

"As we speak the figure for deaths in Dar [es Salaam] is around 350 and ② for Mwanza it is 200-plus. Added to figures from other places around the country, the overall figure is around 700," party spokesman John Kitoka told AFP.

The only official statement came from Army chief Jacob Mkunda who called the protesters "criminals".

Opposition says poll protests in Tanzania left 'hundreds dead'

The Hindu, Page 12

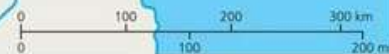
Subject: Places in News — International Affairs

Why in News

Around 700 people were reportedly killed during post-election protests in Tanzania, following violent clashes between protesters and security forces amid an Internet blackout.

Towns in News:

1. **Dar es Salaam** — Tanzania's largest city and main commercial hub, where about 350 deaths were reported.
2. **Mwanza** — Another major city, where over 200 deaths occurred during the unrest.



Xi takes centre stage at APEC meet, promises to defend global free trade

The Chinese leader asks nations to unite amid volatility, presses for supply chain stability and green energy as Trump snubs the summit; in a statement, Xi adds that his country is open for investment and will uphold the multilateral trading system

Associated Press
GYEONGJU

Chinese leader Xi Jinping told Asia-Pacific leaders on Friday that his country would help to defend global free trade at an annual economic regional forum snubbed by U.S. President Donald Trump.

Mr. Xi took centre stage at the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) summit that began on Friday in Gyeongju, as Mr. Trump left the country a day earlier after reaching deals with Mr. Xi meant to ease their escalating trade war.

Mr. Trump described his Thursday meeting with



All ears: South Korean President Lee Jae Myung (L) with Chinese President Xi Jinping at the Economic Leaders' Meeting on Friday. AFP

Mr. Xi as a roaring success, saying he would cut tariffs on China, while Beijing had agreed to allow the export of rare earth elements and start buying American soybeans.

Mr. Trump's blunt dis-

missal of APEC risks worsening America's reputation at a forum that represents nearly 40% of the world's population and more than half of global goods trade.

"The more turbulent

the times, the more we must work together," Mr. Xi said during APEC's opening session. "The world is undergoing a period of rapid change, with the international situation becoming increasingly complex and volatile."

Mr. Xi called for maintaining supply chain stability, in a riposte to U.S. efforts to decouple its supply chains from China. He also expressed hopes to work with other countries to expand cooperation in green industries and clean energy.

'Invest in the future'

In written remarks sent to a CEO summit held in conjunction with APEC, Mr. Xi

said China was open for investment and would uphold the multilateral trading system.

"Facts have proven that whoever gains a foothold in the Chinese market will be able to seize the critical opportunity in increasingly fierce international competition," Xi wrote. "Investing in China is investing in the future."

U.S. Secretary of the Treasury Scott Bessent, who attended the summit on Mr. Trump's behalf, said a U.S. move to rebalance its trade relationships would ensure that "each country operates on fair and reciprocal terms."

It's Mr. Xi's first visit to South Korea in 11 years.

Xi takes centre stage at APEC meet, promises to defend global free trade

The Hindu, Page 12

Subject: International Organizations in news

Why in News

At the APEC Summit in Gyeongju, South Korea, Chinese President Xi Jinping vowed that China would defend global free trade, maintain supply chain stability, and remain open for investment, as the U.S. President skipped the event, allowing China to take a prominent leadership role in regional economic affairs.

APEC (Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation):

- **Established:** 1989
- **Headquarters:** Singapore
- **Members:** 21 Pacific Rim economies — including China, U.S., Japan, South Korea, Australia, Russia, Indonesia, etc.
- **India:** Not a member of APEC (observer status)
- **Objective:** To promote free and open trade and investment, regional economic integration, and sustainable development in the Asia-Pacific region.
- **Significance:** Represents around 40% of the world's population and accounts for over half of global trade.