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Governors must act 'forthwith' on Bills, States argue in SC



Governors create conflict by sitting over Bills for years together. Their doubts about the constitutionality of Bills is a bogey

KAPIL SIBAL

Counsel for West Bengal



Governors have to act on the advice of the State government. Governance cannot happen in a constant state of conflict

GOPAL SUBRAMANIAM

Counsel for Karnataka



Krishnadas Rajagopal

NEW DELHI

States ruled by non-BJP parties argued in the Supreme Court on Wednesday that even a three-month deadline given in the *Tamil Nadu Governor* case judgment may be too long, and State Bills presented to Governors must be assented to by these "titular heads" forthwith.

West Bengal, Karnataka and Himachal Pradesh said the will of the people, which the proposed laws manifest, cannot be sacrificed on the altar of the whims and fancies of Governors. They said sitting over Bills was a quiet disguise for denying assent, but without necessarily having to return the proposed laws to the legislature for reconsideration.

The three States said that if the Centre wanted them to presume that a high constitutional authority like the Governor would act with integrity while dealing with Bills, the same courtesy must be extended to State legislatures which also happened to be high constitutional authorities.

Appearing before a five-judge Presidential Reference Bench headed by Chief Justice of India B.R. Gavai, senior advocate Kapil Sibal, for West Bengal, said Article 200 required the Governor to return a Bill to a State Legislature "as soon as possible" in case he disagreed with it.

Mr. Sibal interpreted "as soon as possible" to mean "forthwith or immediately". "Forthwith" must apply to Governors and President, who is actually the Union government, while dealing with grant of assent. Bills cannot wait," he submitted. The Governor had no business questioning the constitutionality of Bills. He was bound to grant assent if the legislature re-passed them. Later, once the Bills are notified as laws, citizens could test their constitutionality in court, the senior lawyer said.

He drew attention to Article 167, which made it the Chief Minister's duty to apprise the Governor of laws being contemplated by the State Cabinet. This was done as a part of the pre-legislative process.

Governors Must Act 'Forthwith' on State Bills, States Argue in SC Summary (English):

States like West Bengal, Karnataka, and Himachal Pradesh argued before the Supreme Court that Governors should not delay assent to Bills passed by State legislatures. They said Article 200 requires immediate action, not indefinite sitting on Bills. Kapil Sibal emphasized that constitutionality should be tested later in courts, not by Governors.

सारांश (हिन्दी):

पश्चिम बंगाल, कर्नाटक और हिमाचल प्रदेश ने सुप्रीम कोर्ट में दलील दी कि राज्यपालों को विधानसभा द्वारा पारित विधेयकों पर तुरंत निर्णय करना चाहिए। अनुच्छेद 200 के अनुसार उन्हें बिल वापस करने या मंजूरी देने में देरी नहीं करनी चाहिए। कपिल सिब्बल ने कहा कि संवैधानिकता की जाँच अदालत में होनी चाहिए, राज्यपाल द्वारा नहीं।

Two-rate GST to kick in on September 22

Govt. keeps slabs at 5% and 18%; introduces 'special' 40% rate for goods such as tobacco and luxury items | Individual life insurance policies, individual health policies will move to 0% slab from the earlier 18% | Move likely to reduce prices of daily-use goods, food items, life-saving medicines and cement

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Goods and Services Tax (GST) Council, during its 56th meeting, decided to revamp the tax structure into a primarily two-rate system, as proposed by the Central government, Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman announced on Wednesday. Apart from the two rates of 5% and 18%, the new GST system would also include a 40% "special rate" on sin goods such as tobacco and luxury items such as large cars, yachts, and helicopters.

The decision will come into effect from September 22 for most items, she said. Only tobacco and tobacco-related products will move to the new structure at a date to be specified by the Finance Minister.

The government also calculated that the net fiscal implication of the rate cuts, based on consumption

patterns in 2023-24, would be ₹48,000 crore. However, the officials clarified that the real implication would be known on the basis of current consumption, and that the rate rationalisation was expected to result in a buoyancy effect, and improved compliance.

"These reforms have been carried out with a focus on the common man," Ms. Sitharaman said. "Every tax levied on the common man has gone through a rigorous looking into, and in most cases, the rates have come down. Labour-intensive industries have been given good support. Farmers and agriculture will benefit from the decisions. Health-related sectors will also benefit."

She further said that common-use and middle-class items will see a reduction, with products such as hair oil, soap, shampoo, toothbrush, toothpaste, bicycle, table and kitchen ware, and other household



List in sub: Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman speaking to the media after the GST Council meeting in New Delhi on Wednesday. PTI

articles being moved to 5% from either 18% or 12%.

No tax on Indian breads

The other items moving down to the 5% rate include namkeens, sauces, pasta, instant noodles, chocolates, coffee, and butter. Twelve specified

bio-pesticides, bio-methanol, and labour-intensive items such as handicrafts, marble, travertine blocks, granite blocks, and intermediate leather goods would move from 12% to 5%. Notably, cement will move from 28% to 18%.

The Finance Minister

further said that items such as ultra-high temperature milk, paneer, and all Indian bread, including rotis, chapatis, and parathas would see their tax rate fall to 0% from the earlier 5%.

On insurance services, individual life insurance policies and individual

health policies will move to 0% from 18%.

A total of 33 life-saving drugs and medicines will move from 12% to 0%, while spectacles to correct vision would move from 28% to 5%. The tax on electric vehicles has been retained at 5%.

"The long-pending inverted duty structure is being rectified for the man-made textile sector by reducing the GST rate on manmade fibre from 18% to 5% and manmade yarn from 12% to 5%," Ms. Sitharaman said. "That will take care of every anomaly due to duty inversion in this sector."

Inversion rectified

The inverted duty structure regarding fertilizers will also be rectified, with the duty on sulphuric acid, nitric acid and ammonia being reduced from 18% to 5%.

The special rate of 40% will apply only on particular sin and super-luxury

goods such as pan masala, cigarettes, gutka, chewable tobacco, zarda, unmanufactured tobacco and bidi, as well as goods including aerated water, caffeinated beverages, mid-size or large cars, motorcycles of engines exceeding 350 cc, helicopters and airplanes for personal use, and yachts or other vessels for private use.

Ms. Sitharaman further explained that the GST rate on pan masala, gutka, cigarettes, chewable and unmanufactured tobacco, and bidi would remain at 28%, in addition to a compensation cess, as currently in place.

Once the Centre discharges the loans it had borrowed to compensate States, these tobacco and tobacco-related items will move to the 40% slab. Ms. Sitharaman said the loan would likely be repaid within this calendar year.

KEY REDUCTIONS
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Two-Rate GST System to be Implemented from 22 September Summary (English):

The GST Council revamped tax slabs: 5% and 18% will be the primary rates, with a special 40% rate on sin goods (tobacco, luxury cars, yachts, etc.). Items like bread, paneer, life insurance, health insurance, and 33 life-saving medicines will become tax-free. Cement will shift from 28% to 18%. This aims to benefit common people, agriculture, textiles, and health sectors.

सारांश (हिन्दी):

जीएसटी परिषद ने टैक्स ढाँचे को सरल किया: 5% और 18% मुख्य दरें होंगी, जबकि तम्बाकू, लगजरी कार और यॉट जैसी वस्तुओं पर 40% विशेष दर होगी। रोटी, पनीर, जीवन बीमा, स्वास्थ्य बीमा और 33 जीवनरक्षक दवाएँ अब टैक्स-मुक्त होंगी। सीमेंट पर टैक्स 28% से घटकर 18% होगा। इसका उद्देश्य आम लोगों, किसानों, वस्त्र उद्योग और स्वास्थ्य क्षेत्र को लाभ पहुँचाना है।

Foreign firms halted India projects worth ₹2 lakh crore

T.C.A. Sharad Raghavan
NEW DELHI

Tariff-related uncertainty pushed foreign companies to pull the plug on nearly ₹2 lakh crore worth of projects in India in the first quarter of this financial year, more than 1,200% higher than the corresponding quarter last year.

An analysis by *The Hindu* of data from the Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy (CMIE) shows that foreign private companies dropped projects worth ₹1.97 lakh crore in Q1 of 2025-26, the highest amount since at least 2010, the earliest date for which there is data, and 570% higher than the long-term quarterly average.

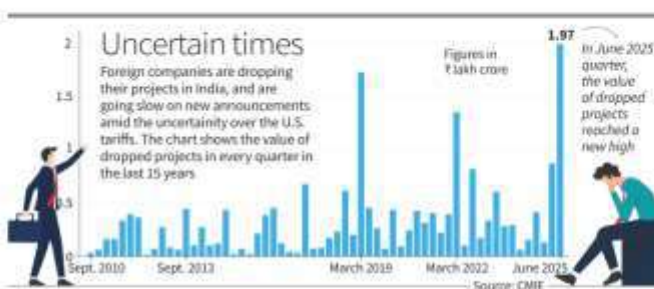
The CMIE data further

breaks up the dropped projects into those that have been abandoned entirely, shelved temporarily, stalled, or for which information is not available on why it was dropped. Given the recency of the data, the bulk of the dropped projects fall under the "lack of information" category.

Tariff woes

According to economists, however, the reason is clear: tariff-related uncertainty.

The period between this April and June saw a lot of missed deadlines in terms of a 'mini trade deal' being announced between India and the United States, which was supposed to address the issue of reciprocal tariffs imposed by the



United States on Indian imports.

"This is very largely the impact of tariff uncertainties," D.K. Srivastava, Chief Policy Advisor at EY India, told *The Hindu*.

"Whether this will carry on will depend on whether these companies are from the United States or el-

sewhere. Mostly, if the investment was from U.S. companies, they would have dropped it. Apart from the tariffs, the U.S. President is also keen for these companies to move their investments back to the U.S."

Mr. Srivastava, however, was confident that a large

part of these investments would return once there was greater clarity on the tariffs.

New projects

The analysis further showed that this investment uncertainty was also reflected in new project announcements.

The ratio of dropped projects to new project announcements – a rough metric of investment mood – surged to a value of 8.8 in Q1 of this year. The higher the figure, the more pessimistic the investors. This ratio was the highest since 2010.

The value of new projects announced by foreign companies in India in Q1 stood at ₹22,490 crore. While this was nearly 50% higher than in Q1 of last year, this is likely because the April-June 2024 quarter saw an overall investment slowdown due to last year's general election. The value of new project announcements by foreign companies in Q1 was 56% lower than the long-term quarterly average.

Foreign Companies Halted Projects Worth ₹2 Lakh Crore in India

Summary (English):

Foreign firms dropped record projects worth ₹1.97 lakh crore in Q1 of 2025-26 due to tariff-related uncertainties, especially pending U.S.-India trade deals. The ratio of dropped to new projects surged, reflecting negative investor sentiment. Economists suggest clarity on tariff policies is needed to bring investments back.

सारांश (हिन्दी):

2025-26 की पहली तिमाही में विदेशी कंपनियों ने लगभग ₹1.97 लाख करोड़ की परियोजनाएँ रोक दीं। इसका कारण शुल्क-संबंधी अनिश्चितताएँ और भारत-अमेरिका व्यापार समझौते में देरी रहा। नए प्रोजेक्ट्स की तुलना में रद्द किए गए प्रोजेक्ट्स का अनुपात बढ़ा, जिससे निवेशकों का नकारात्मक रुझान दिखा। विशेषज्ञों का मानना है कि शुल्क नीति पर स्पष्टता आने से निवेश वापस आ सकता है।

Relentless rain, flooding claim dozens of lives, cause huge property loss across North India

The Hindu Bureau
DELHI/CHANDIGARH/
SRINAGAR/RAIPUR

Heavy rain and floods continued to batter States in northern India on Wednesday, causing severe damage to life and property.

In Himachal Pradesh, 11 people died in the past 24 hours during which rain triggered landslides. In Punjab, the swollen Sutlej, Beas and Ravi rivers caused widespread devastation with the State government pegging the death toll in recent rain-related incidents to 37.

In Jammu & Kashmir, two people were killed.



New course: Floodwater enters homes along the banks of the swollen Doodh Ganga river in Dangerpora Wathoora of Budgam district in central Kashmir on Wednesday. IMRAN NISSAR

FULL REPORT
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Heavy Rains, Floods, and Landslides Devastate Northern India

Summary (English):

Himachal Pradesh, Punjab, J&K, and Chhattisgarh witnessed deaths, landslides, crop loss, and property damage due to incessant rains. BSF outposts and fencing along the Pakistan border were damaged. Rahul Gandhi urged the PM to announce a special relief package.

सारांश (हिन्दी):

हिमाचल प्रदेश, पंजाब, जम्मू-कश्मीर और छत्तीसगढ़ में लगातार बारिश और बाढ़ से भारी तबाही हुई। जान-माल का नुकसान, भूस्खलन और फसलों की बर्बादी हुई। पाकिस्तान सीमा पर बीएसएफ की चौकियाँ और बाड़ भी क्षतिग्रस्त हुई। राहुल गांधी ने प्रधानमंत्री से विशेष राहत पैकेज की मांग की।

Jaishankar meets German Foreign Minister, pushes for EU-India FTA

Trade agreement will help stabilise global economy as a 'ballast which today the world economy really needs', says External Affairs Minister; the visiting German Minister calls Russian and Chinese aggression the biggest international challenges

Suhasini Haidar
NEW DELHI

India and Germany committed on Wednesday to doubling trade and expediting efforts to complete the India-European Union Free Trade Agreement under negotiation, amid uncertainty over whether Europe would follow the U.S. in imposing secondary sanctions on countries for buying Russian oil.

After talks with German Foreign Minister Johann Wadephul, External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar said the two sides discussed the "twin challenges" of economic volatility and political uncertainty, a reference to the U.S. imposition of 50% tariffs and sanctions.

Speaking at a press conference after the meeting, Mr. Wadephul called Russia and China the two biggest challenges to the international world order.

"We would like the [India-EU FTA talks] to move



Common cause: S. Jaishankar during a meeting with his German counterpart, Johann Wadephul, in New Delhi. PTI

to a decisive conclusion in the coming days," Mr. Jaishankar said, referring to the next round of talks between trade negotiators. He added that an FTA would help stabilise the global economy as a "ballast which today the world economy really needs".

Indian and EU negotiators have fast-tracked their talks and expect to meet more regularly, possibly every month in order to reach the year-end deadline set by EU President Ursula Von der Leyen and Prime Minister Narendra

Modi when they met in February this year. However, as with the India-U.S. trade negotiations, the two sides have differences over issues such as agricultural market access for food and dairy products.

Another major issue may arise between the two sides if the EU leadership follows U.S. President Donald Trump in imposing secondary sanctions on Indian companies due to the purchase of Russian oil. On Friday, German Chancellor Friedrich Merz announced that Germany and France

would push for the U.S. and the EU to enforce sanctions on "other nations whose purchases of oil and gas finance a large part of Russia's war economy".

In Delhi, Mr. Wadephul did not respond directly to a question about whether Germany would endorse the penalty tariffs against India, but said their intention was to ensure Russia would come to the negotiating table with Ukraine.

"We have not used tariffs but sanctions that we have imposed on Russia so as to ensure that Russia which has to fund its war will be less able to do so", he said, adding that while the EU countries did not want to stop countries from accessing the oil they need, Russia should not be able to use "detours" to sell its oil to Europe. In the last round of sanctions, the EU had banned trade with Nayara Energy, a consortium of Russian oil major Rosneft and other companies in India.

The German Foreign Mi-

nister, who arrived in India a day after Mr. Modi's meeting with Russian President Vladimir Putin and Chinese President Xi Jinping made international headlines, also lashed out at Russian and Chinese "aggression", and said he welcomed Mr. Modi's call for a ceasefire in Ukraine during his meetings.

"China's increasingly aggressive behaviour in the Indo-Pacific is cause for concern for both our countries," he said, adding, "Security in the Indo Pacific is closely linked to security in Europe. Russia's war of aggression, for us in Germany and Europe, remains the biggest challenge to our security policy."

Mr. Jaishankar sidestepped the comments by Mr. Wadephul, saying India believed a "multi-polar world with strategic autonomy can best respond [to economic and political challenges] through more intensive consultations and cooperation among key member states".

India-Germany Push for EU-India Free Trade Agreement (FTA)

Summary (English):

EAM S. Jaishankar and German FM Johann Wadephul agreed to expedite India-EU FTA talks to stabilise the global economy. Discussions included concerns over U.S. sanctions on Russian oil buyers. Germany highlighted China and Russia as major threats to global order, while Jaishankar stressed multipolarity and strategic autonomy.

सारांश (हिन्दी):

विदेश मंत्री एस. जयशंकर और जर्मनी के विदेश मंत्री योहान वेडफुल ने भारत-ईयू मुक्त व्यापार समझौते (FTA) को शीघ्र पूरा करने पर जोर दिया। वार्ता में अमेरिका द्वारा रूसी तेल खरीदने वालों पर प्रतिबंध की आशंका पर चर्चा हुई। जर्मनी ने चीन और रूस को वैश्विक व्यवस्था के लिए चुनौती बताया, जबकि जयशंकर ने बहुध्रुवीय दुनिया और रणनीतिक स्वायत्तता की आवश्यकता पर बल दिया।

Govt. plans to link 11 lakh anganwadis with schools

Maitri Porecha

NEW DELHI

In a bid to ensure continuity in early childhood education, the Union government on Wednesday issued guidelines to facilitate co-location efforts to place almost 11 lakh anganwadis on the premises of primary schools.

Anganwadi centres cater to the nutrition and early learning needs of children between zero and six years, and locating them on school premises enables a smooth transition to formal schooling in Class 1. The guidelines were issued jointly by the Ministries of Education and Women and Child Development, which oversees anganwadi centres.

So far, nearly 2.9 lakh anganwadis have been co-located with the nearest



The guidelines were jointly launched by Union Ministers Dharmendra Pradhan and Annpurna Devi. FILE PHOTO

schools, out of the 14 lakh anganwadis and 9.16 lakh schools with Class 1, Secretary, Women and Child Welfare, Anil Malik said. "However, there are close to 11 lakh anganwadis which have not been mapped or co-location has not occurred," he added.

"Before this, there were no synergistic and convergence guidelines on how AWCs and schools having

Grade 1 should work together. There was a sense in the field that the role of anganwadi was different from that of schools and that there was no organic link between the two," he noted, adding that it is vital to map anganwadis to the nearest schools to ensure that lower-income group children are provided access to pre-primary education.

The Union government has issued a curriculum for children aged three to six years, titled 'Aadharshila'. Co-location can help in convergence between anganwadi staff and school teachers, joint planning of activities, curriculum alignment, and active community participation, Mr. Malik said.

The guidelines provide States and Union Territories with a road map to strengthen their co-location procedure, he added.

The guidelines were jointly launched by Union Minister for Education Dharmendra Pradhan and Union Minister for Women and Child Development Annpurna Devi.

They emphasise the importance of reconciling the data of children between three and six years in the target population to avoid

duplication between MoE and MoWCD databases.

Mr. Kumar explained that the Automated Permanent Academic Account Registry IDs (APAAR IDs) now being provided to school children from Class 1 onwards can be extended for children between the ages of three and six who attend anganwadis, for easier tracking.

He added that the MoE is in discussion with the Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI) to ensure that the civil registration and Aadhaar databases can be linked for a child from the moment they are born and assigned an identity. "This unique number will stay with the child for their entire life, and can be converted into Poshan Tracker and APAAR ID when the child enters the school system."

Govt. to Link 11 Lakh Anganwadis with Primary Schools

Summary (English):

The Union Government issued guidelines to co-locate nearly 11 lakh anganwadis with primary schools to ensure smooth transition from pre-primary to Class 1. This includes data integration (APAAR ID, Poshan Tracker, Aadhaar) and a common curriculum "Aadharshila" for ages 3-6.

सारांश (हिन्दी):

केंद्र सरकार ने 11 लाख आंगनबाड़ियों को प्राथमिक विद्यालयों के साथ जोड़ने के निर्देश दिए हैं ताकि बच्चों को प्री-प्राइमरी से पहली कक्षा में आसानी से प्रवेश मिल सके। इसके लिए आधार, 'पोषण ट्रैकर' और एपीएआर आईडी का उपयोग कर डेटा लिंक किया जाएगा। 3-6 वर्ष के बच्चों के लिए 'आधारशिला' नामक सामान्य पाठ्यक्रम लागू किया जाएगा।

India's first vulture conservation portal launched in Assam

The Hindu Bureau

GUWAHATI

An Assam-based foundation working on vulture conservation has developed a portal - reportedly the first of its kind in India - to build a network of individuals engaged in saving the large scavenger birds.

A group of organisations led by We Foundation India launched the portal on Tuesday in collaboration with Gauhati University's Department of Zoology.

The event brought together conservationists, researchers, scientists, academicians, and students to discuss the status of vultures in India and the measures needed for their survival.

"We organised the event ahead of International Vulture Awareness Day, which is observed every year on the first Saturday of September to highlight the im-

The initiative aims to share information in local languages, beginning with Assamese

portance of vultures and the urgent need for their conservation," said Nilutpal Mahanta of We Foundation India.

He said the focus of the portal was on disseminating information in local languages, beginning with Assamese, to ensure that people at the grassroots understood how vulture survival was linked to their lives and the local economy.

We Foundation's partners in The Vulture Network include the Assam Bird Monitoring Network, LASA Foundation, Suraksha Samitee, and individual conservationists and researchers.

We Foundation India, along with Gauhati University and other partners, launched India's first online vulture conservation portal. It aims to create awareness in local languages (starting with Assamese) and build a national network of researchers, students, and conservationists.

सारांश (हिन्दी):

वी फाउंडेशन इंडिया और गुवाहाटी विश्वविद्यालय ने मिलकर भारत का पहला गिद्ध संरक्षण पोर्टल लॉन्च किया। इसका उद्देश्य स्थानीय भाषाओं (पहले असमिया) में जानकारी फैलाना और शोधकर्ताओं, छात्रों तथा संरक्षणवादियों का एक नेटवर्क तैयार करना है।