



6th Sept 2025

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Role of teachers in a student's life is paramount: President

Like food, clothing, and shelter, education is essential for dignity and security, says Droupadi Murmu; she urges teachers to pay special attention to all students, including girls, who are relatively shy or come from less privileged backgrounds

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

President Droupadi Murmu had a message for educators on Teachers' Day – technology is necessary in a classroom, but a “smart teacher is the most important thing” for a student.

While conferring National Awards on 81 teachers from across the country here on Friday, the President said that smart boards, smart classrooms and other modern facilities have importance, but the



Honouring educators: President Droupadi Murmu presents an award during the National Teachers Awards, 2025 ceremony at the Vigyan Bhavan in New Delhi on Friday. PTI

cost aids. He has internationalised structured sports training, which students to achieve success in chess and badminton. Recognising innovation and STEM promotion, tesh Kumar Bhundiya, the Shri Swaminarayankul Vidyalaya in R who established an Tinkering Lab, got One of his students received a research paper for a cotton spinning machine prototype.

Narinder Singh from Government Pr School in Ludhiana w

External Affairs Minister to join Brazil-led BRICS virtual summit on U.S. tariffs: MEA

Sahasini Haidar
NEW DELHI

External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar will represent India at a virtual summit of BRICS nations on Monday, the Ministry of External Affairs said here on Friday, announcing India's participation in the meeting convened by Brazil President Lula da Silva to discuss tariffs imposed by the U.S.

The summit, which is bound to irk the U.S. government, comes days after Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to China for the SCO summit and conversation with Chinese President Xi Jinping and Russian President Vladimir Putin, which U.S. officials criticised.

Countries taking part

Brazilian officials have not confirmed how many of the 11-member BRICS grouping of emerging economies will participate in the summit and at what level. Shortly after U.S. tariffs were imposed on August 6, Mr. Lula had called the Mr. Modi and said he would speak to each of the BRICS members to rally support

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S. Jaishankar

towards forming a "common" plan to deal with the move.

On Friday, the Kremlin's spokesperson confirmed that Mr. Putin would take part in the summit, and sources said they expected other confirmations over the weekend.

"From [India's] side, it will be the External Affairs Minister [S. Jaishankar] who will be participating in it," said MEA spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal when asked at a weekly briefing. "This BRICS summit is at the leaders' level," he added, but did not clarify why Mr. Modi would not attend the meeting.

India is the next Chair of the BRICS grouping, and will host the summit of

countries including Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa and new members Egypt, Ethiopia, Indonesia, Iran, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates.

The Brazilian Ministry of Foreign Affairs has not yet announced the specific agenda of the meeting to be held on Monday. However, local media reported that the summit would discuss the impact of U.S. tariffs on global trade, and measures to strengthen multilateralism in order to counter the effects of unilateral economic measures.

The U.S. has imposed 50% tariffs on goods from Brazil, like India, the two countries with the highest levies worldwide. China and South Africa also face high 30% tariffs, and Indonesian goods are levied 19% tariffs, with a waiver for its most important agricultural exports such as palm oil, cocoa and rubber.

All other BRICS nations including Russia and Iran, which are among the most heavily sanctioned countries, are on the lowest rung of 10% tariffs.

India's Prime Minister took part in the **17th BRICS Summit** held in **Rio de Janeiro, Brazil**, under the theme **"Strengthening Global South Cooperation for More Inclusive and Sustainable Governance,"** and signed the **Rio de Janeiro Declaration.**

Indonesia officially joined **BRICS**, while **Belarus, Bolivia, Kazakhstan, Cuba, Nigeria, Malaysia, Thailand, Vietnam, Uganda,** and **Uzbekistan** were welcomed as **BRICS partner countries.**

India will assume the **BRICS Chairship** and host the **18th BRICS Summit** in **2026.**

Chhattisgarh Cong. moves HC, says Cabinet breaches constitutional limit of 15%

The Hindu Bureau

RAIPUR

The Chhattisgarh unit of the Congress has approached the High Court challenging the constitutional validity of the size of the Cabinet of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) government following its expansion last month.

As per the civil writ petition filed on behalf of the party, the induction of three Ministers following the expansion on August 20 takes the size of the Cabinet to 14 in the 90-member Assembly, which “breaches the constitutional limit of 15%”. The petition has also sought the removal of one Minister.

The State Congress unit’s communications head, Sushil Anand Shukla, confirmed the development.

“We have filed a writ petition and the matter will be heard by the High Court next week,” he said.

In a letter to the Governor earlier, Leader of the Opposition Charandas Mahant had stated that the total number of Ministers in the Cabinet exceeded 15% of the total number of members of the Legislative Assembly, in violation of Article 164 (1A) of the Constitution.

No violation, says BJP

The BJP, however, maintained that due constitutional process was followed during the Cabinet expansion, citing the example of Haryana, where 14 members of the 90-member Assembly [same as Chhattisgarh], including the Chief Minister, serve in the Cabinet.

- The 91st Amendment Act of 2003 in India limits the **size of the Council of Ministers** (including the cabinet) to 15% of the total number of members of the Lok Sabha at the Center,
- similar 15% limit applies to the **Council of Ministers in each state**, relative to the **state's Legislative Assembly**.
- This amendment, introduced to curb the abnormal growth of councils of ministers, also strengthened anti-defection laws and ensured that disqualified defectors could not be appointed as ministers.

Maharashtra appoints members to three-language policy panel

Vinaya Deshpande Pandit
MUMBAI

The Maharashtra government on Friday appointed six members to the committee set up to study the implementation of the three-language policy in State-run schools.

The government had named economist and educationist Narendra Jadhav as the chairperson of the panel following widespread opposition against the introduction of Hindi as the third language in primary education.

Members appointed on Friday include academics, a theatre personality, a linguist, education experts and a child psychologist. The committee has three months to submit a report on the implementation of the three-language policy as per the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020.

Laxmikant Deshmukh, the Maharashtra govern-



Shiv Sena (UBT) protesting against the mandatory Hindi plan in primary schools.
FILE PHOTO

ment's language consultation committee chief, said they will continue to oppose the Narendra Jadhav panel as it has been formed on the premise of "forcibly introducing Hindi" in primary education, in contravention of the NEP 2020 provisions.

'Oppose the panel'

"We have opposed the [constitution of the] Narendra Jadhav panel itself. The National Education Policy

2020 clearly states that Hindi must be introduced after Class 5. Despite this, the government has appointed a committee. This is meaningless," he said.

Earlier this year, the State government had made Hindi compulsory as the third language from Classes 1 to 5 in Marathi and English-medium State-run schools. Students were given the option of choosing any other Indian language as the third option if at least 20 of them were in agreement. The decision met stiff opposition from several prominent linguistic bodies, parents' groups, and sociopolitical organisations, forcing the government to scrap the rule.

The State government then constituted the Jadhav committee to study the implementation of the three-language policy. However, no other members had been appointed to the panel until now.

The 3-language policy is an Indian education initiative, most recently reinforced by the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, that promotes multilingualism by requiring students to learn three languages.

The policy aims for students to learn their mother tongue or regional language, another Indian language (often Hindi in non-Hindi states or English in Hindi states), and English or another modern language.

States and students have flexibility in choosing specific languages, with a focus on promoting national unity and respecting linguistic diversity without imposing any single language.

Universities need to be headed by distinguished academicians

The recent submission by Kerala Governor Rajendra Vishwanath Arlekar to the Supreme Court of India, contending that the Chief Minister of Kerala has no role in the appointment of the Vice-Chancellors (V-C) of A.P.J. Abdul Kalam Technological University and Digital University Kerala, is another instance of how recent Governors are the political and ideological adversaries of an elected State government – as seen in Kerala, Tamil Nadu, and, to some extent, West Bengal. Mr. Arlekar had appealed against an attempt by the Court to break the long-standing impasse over V-C appointments to these universities by guiding the creation of search-cum-selection committees and laying down rules. The Governor submitted that the 2018 UGC rules for search-cum-selection committees mandate persons of eminence in higher education and must not be connected in any manner with the university or its colleges. Thus, according to his submission, the Chief Minister, as someone intimately connected to all such institutions in the State, had no role. The draft 2025 UGC Regulations take this further by divesting State governments of a role in appointing V-Cs and bringing it under the Chancellor's purview. While the Court will rule on the merit of Mr. Arlekar's position, it is worth noting that Governors in States ruled by the BJP or its allies do not seem to have such problems with the governments they nominally head.

Governors were originally instruments of colonial power and were retained by independent India. From the very beginning, however, they have often acted as political agents of the ruling party at the Centre. Over time, central and State legislation defined and restricted the discretionary powers of Governors which were vested in them by the Constitution. After Independence, State governments retained the colonial-era practice of having Governors as heads of universities – to continue the stated intention of ensuring independent higher education as well as to have a “father figure” or a wise elder. The Acts passed by State legislatures, such as those for A.P.J. Abdul Kalam University, specifically define who the Chancellor will be. The Governor owes his or her position as Chancellor of a university to the respective State government. Even as the Court circumscribes the gubernatorial powers regarding the signing of Bills into law, State governments are acting decisively against having Governors as Chancellors of State universities – one of the few other domains where Governors have a strong say. Punjab and West Bengal, for instance, have passed a law making the Chief Minister the Chancellor. University heads need to be hands-on, distinguished academicians with a broader profile and vision, and strong managerial skills, rather than political appointees, State or Union.

India's strategic autonomy in a multipolar world

In the lexicon of international relations, few concepts have evolved as dynamically as “strategic autonomy”. Once a term confined to academic debate, it now sits at the heart of India's foreign policy discourse, shaping decisions in an increasingly multipolar and volatile world. As global power shifts accelerate and traditional alliances fray, India finds itself navigating a delicate path between competing giants: the United States, China and Russia. The pursuit of strategic autonomy is no longer a theoretical aspiration. It is a daily diplomatic practice, fraught with complexity and consequence.

Strategic autonomy refers to a nation's ability to make sovereign decisions in foreign policy and defence without being constrained by external pressures or alliance obligations. It is not synonymous with isolationism or neutrality. Rather, it implies flexibility, independence and the capacity to engage with multiple powers on one's own terms. For India, the concept has deep historical roots, going back to colonial subjugation and free India's determination never to let anybody else decide our place in the world for us. From Nehru's non-alignment during the Cold War to the Modi government's “multi-alignment” in the current era, successive governments have sought to preserve India's freedom of action while adapting to changing geopolitical realities. In theory, strategic



Shashi Tharoor

is a fourth-term Member of Parliament, Congress (Lok Sabha) from Thiruvananthapuram, is chairman of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on External Affairs, and the author of ‘Pax Indica: India and the world of the 21st century’

cemented ties. Yet, the relationship is not without friction. The Trump administration's erratic trade policies, followed by stinging tariffs and sanctions in his second term, have strained economic ties. Washington's pressure on India to reduce its energy and defence dealings with Russia, and to align more closely with western positions, has tested New Delhi's resolve.

India's response has been measured. It continues to engage with the U.S., maintains independent positions on global conflicts, and insists on the primacy of national interest over ideological alignment. This is strategic autonomy in action, not anti-Americanism, but a refusal to be subsumed by American priorities.

Ties with Beijing and Moscow

China presents a more complex challenge. The border clashes with India of 2020 shattered illusions of benign coexistence, and tensions remain high despite diplomatic overtures. Yet, China is also one of India's largest trading partners, a key player in regional institutions, and a competitor whose actions shape the strategic environment. India's approach is one of cautious engagement and firm deterrence. It strengthens border infrastructure, deepens ties with Indo-Pacific partners, and invests in indigenous defence capabilities. At the same time, it participates in multilateral forums such as BRICS and the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation,

plural and potent. Its democracy, he said, was not just a system but a “bouquet of hope”, nourished by the strength of its multilingual, multicultural fabric. External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar argues that partnerships must be shaped by interest, not sentiment or inherited bias. This is diplomacy with a spine – assertive, pragmatic, and unapologetically Indian, seeking to be “non-West” without being “anti-West”. This stance resonates across the Global South, where many rising and middle powers concerned with peace and stability in their own regions, are choosing to safeguard their geopolitical and economic interests rather than be swept into the vortex of great-power rivalries. They seek agency, not alignment; voice, not vassalage.

What emerges is a vision of India as a sovereign pole in a rebalancing world – a nation that neither aligns blindly nor isolates itself. India's rise, then, is civilisational, plural and deeply political. While India's pursuit of strategic autonomy is principled, it faces headwinds as it walks the tightrope among the major powers. The global economy is increasingly interdependent, and technological ecosystems are dominated by a few players. Defence modernisation requires partnerships and climate diplomacy demands coordination. In such a world, autonomy must be redefined – not as isolation, but as resilience and adaptability.

Domestic factors also play a role. Political

Fixing problems, unlocking India's growth potential

India's economic journey has always been shaped by bold reforms, and the latest set of Goods and Services Tax (GST) measures announced at the 56th GST Council meeting on September 3, 2025, may well prove to be one of the most consequential yet. For years, businesses and policymakers alike have called for simplification, predictability, and fairness in India's indirect tax regime. With the latest decisions – streamlining rates, correcting anomalies, easing compliance and strengthening dispute resolution – the government has delivered a package that balances ambition with pragmatism.

What makes this moment special is not just the scope of the changes but also the collaborative spirit behind them. The result is what many are calling GST 2.0 – a reform designed not merely to fix today's problems but also to unlock India's growth potential for the decade ahead.

Relief for many income groups

Essentials such as soap, toothpaste, hair oil, shampoo, kitchenware and packaged foods now fall under lower tax brackets, immediately easing household budgets and boosting demand in sectors that employ millions. For housing, reduced GST on cement and construction materials will bring homes within reach for more families, supporting the government's 'Housing for All' mission while stimulating allied industries such as steel, tiles, sanitaryware and paints.



Harsha Vardhan Agarwal

is President, Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI)

boost as now more affordable small cars, motorcycles, buses and trucks will encourage demand and investment in auto-manufacturing hubs.

Helping exporters and MSMEs

The rationalisation of rates would also help exporters. Long-standing distortions created by inverted duty structures in textiles, fertilizers and renewables are finally being corrected. This will make Indian products more competitive globally while reducing import dependence. Export-heavy sectors such as handicrafts, leather, and engineering goods – most driven by micro, small and medium enterprises (MSME) – are well placed to gain benefits. Lower duties on capital goods and intermediates will also promote local value addition, directly supporting the 'Make in India' initiative.

One of GST's biggest challenges has always been litigation. Interpretational disputes, classification complexities and uncertainty over tax treatment have burdened businesses and clogged up the system. Rationalisation addresses this by simplifying slabs and harmonising rates for similar goods. Clarifications on intermediary services and post-sale discounts further reduce ambiguity, bringing long-awaited relief to service exporters and aligning tax rules with commercial practices.

Small exporters will welcome the decision to remove thresholds for refunds on low-value

innovation – the significance of this step cannot be overstated.

Institutional reform has also received a boost with the operationalisation of the Goods and Services Tax Appellate Tribunal (GSTAT). By enabling faster and fairer resolution of disputes, GSTAT will strengthen confidence in the system and reduce case backlogs. This signals that GST is not just about revenue collection but also about building a fair and predictable tax framework that businesses can trust.

The broader message is equally important. The streamlined two-rate GST structure (a standard rate of 18% and a merit rate of 5% with a special de-merit rate of 40% for a select few goods and services) aligns India more closely with global best practices, moving it to the kind of tax regime that advanced economies employ. For international investors, the reforms send a strong signal of policy stability, predictability and ease of doing business. In a world where global supply chains are being reconfigured, India is positioning itself not just as a vast market but also as a reliable and competitive investment destination.

A pathway to economic expansion

Of course, reforms are never the end of the road. Implementation will be key, and challenges such as delays and procedural complexities still need attention. But what stands out is the intent. The government has shown that it is listening to

A new leaf

Environmental compliance needs to be monitored at all levels

The Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change has brought into effect a set of rules called the Environment Audit Rules, 2025, that allows the vital activity of environmental monitoring and auditing to go beyond the remit of State Pollution Control Boards. The rules will largely scrutinise whether industrial units are compliant with environmental regulation. The overall framework for monitoring and compliance within the existing environmental framework is presently supported by the Central Pollution Control Board, the Regional Offices of the Environment Ministry, and the State Pollution Control Boards/Pollution Control Committees. They have, however, been facing significant constraints in terms of manpower, resources, capacity and infrastructure. “These limitations have hampered their ability to comprehensively monitor and enforce environmental compliance across the vast number of projects and industries operating nationwide,” said a press statement by the Environment Ministry. This scheme aims to bridge the manpower and infrastructure deficits faced by regulatory authorities, thereby strengthening the effective implementation of environmental compliance mechanisms.

Under the new rules, private agencies can get themselves accredited as auditors. Much like chartered accountants, environment auditors can get themselves licensed and be authorised to evaluate the compliance of projects with environmental laws and their adherence with best practices in the prevention, control and abatement of pollution. Environmental regulation has, in recent years, transcended policing and bookkeeping. Given that human-caused climate change is seen as a problem that nations must collectively fix, new dimensions to environmental regulations have emerged. Thus, audits undertaken by these agencies can also be used for compliance with ‘Green Credit Rules’, under which individuals and organisations can gain tradeable ‘credits’ for afforestation, sustainable water management and waste management among other activities. Beyond industrial units, nearly every company in India will have to account for its direct and indirect carbon emissions. This will entail fairly complex accounting practices, which are beyond what Pollution Control Board officials can handle. However, preparing for the future should not be at the expense of compromising core responsibilities. It is usually at the district, block and panchayat levels that the most flagrant environmental travesties abound, which escape notice usually because of the lack of trained staff. The new regime must seek to empower them too.

Will ensure GST benefit reaches consumers: govt.

Commerce Minister says the new structure will lower prices, boost demand, and facilitate ease of doing business; revamp a result of long consultations and has nothing to do with U.S. tariff, he says

The Hindu Bureau

NEW DELHI

Union Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal on Friday said the government would keep a watch to ensure that the benefit of the substantial reductions in Goods and Services Tax (GST) rates was passed on to consumers. All sections of industry had already given assurance in this regard, he said.

“The government will fulfil its responsibility, and the State governments should also keep a watch that this GST is passed on. All sections of industry have already given me assurance...,” Mr. Goyal said during a press conference at the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) headquarters here.

Thanking Prime Minister Narendra Modi for bringing “a historic and comprehensive reform that will transform the country’s economy to new heights”, Mr. Goyal said it was the first time since In-



Big leap: Union Minister Piyush Goyal addresses a press conference at the BJP headquarters in New Delhi on Friday. ANI

dependence that such a major change had been made in the tax structure, and a big relief was given to the consumers, farmers, and industries. The simplification would facilitate ease of doing business, he said.

In the coming days, the new GST structure would lead to an increase in demand, and the prices of a wide range of consumer goods would go down after September 22, he said.

The GST rationalisation was an outcome of about a year-long consultations among the stakeholders and had nothing to do with the U.S.’s decision to impose 50% tariff on Indian goods, Mr. Goyal said. In reply to a question, he said the Union government’s decisions were not guided by any election.

“During the 10 years of Congress rule, there was corruption, and no effective measures or transfor-

mational reforms were undertaken. Atalji (the late Atal Bihari Vajpayee) had imagined a single tax. All 30-35 different types of taxes, duties, and levies should be combined to form a single tax. Atalji did not get elected in 2004. Then, the UPA (United Progressive Alliance) government just kept making promises...,” Mr. Goyal said, responding to claims by the Congress and its allies on “delayed” rationalisation.

During the Congress-led rule, no State government had the confidence that the Centre would help them in case there was a loss or reduction in revenues due to the change, he said. Under Prime Minister Modi, the government had the courage to decide that after the introduction of the GST, if the revenue of any State dipped or the revenue growth was less than 14%, the Union government would compensate it for the first five years, he said.

New technology, innovation conclave to 'replace' Science Congress to be held in Nov.

Jacob Koshy

NEW DELHI

Signalling a break from the past, the Department of Science and Technology (DST) is set to organise the first-ever Emerging Science, Technology and Innovation Conclave (ESTIC) in November.

The ESTIC may 'replace' the Indian Science Congress, the oldest congregation of scientists in India, with a rich history predating Independence. Over the years, it has gone into oblivion, with the last being held in 2023.

"You could see it as a replacement of the Indian Science Congress," a senior official told *The Hindu*.

Abhay Karandikar, Se-



The IISF is meant to popularise science among students and young people.

science, technology and innovation," said the official.

This year, the IISF is expected to be held at the Panjab University, Chandigarh.

The IISF does not usually see participation by international Nobel Laureates, nor does Prime

Minister Narendra Modi, in the last two years, the event was not held, citing the pandemic.

In 2023, Mr. Modi made an appearance, but only online, at the 108th edition. In 2024 and this year, the Science Congress was not held due to a spat between the DST and the ISCA's executive body over the organisation of the event. The DST has said that it would no longer fund the ISCA.

The inaugural ESTIC will be held at the Bharat Mandapam here from November 3-4. All the science-related Ministries, ranging from atomic energy to space and information technology, will be involved in it. According to the ESTIC website, there

India plans to strengthen nuclear deterrence, drone warfare capabilities

Saurabh Trivedi

NEW DELHI

India has set out an ambitious plan to reinforce its nuclear deterrence and expand drone warfare capabilities under the Technology Perspective and Capability Roadmap (TPCR-2025), a 15-year blueprint for military preparedness.

The document highlights measures to sustain credible nuclear deterrence through survivability systems and advanced delivery platforms. While it avoids reference to specific warhead technologies, it outlines future acquisitions such as nuclear command-and-control infrastructure, radiation detection tools, and mobile decontamination units. Unmanned ground vehicles for chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear (CBRN) reconnaissance



Ready for action: TPCR-2025 envisages adaptive jamming systems, electronic denial bubbles to neutralise attacks by hostile drones. PTI
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sance are also on the agenda, aimed at strengthening protection against potential nuclear or chemical fallout.

On the aerial front, the Army has projected requirements for stealth remotely piloted aircraft with ranges of up to 1,500 km and altitudes of 60,000 feet. These drones would carry electronic warfare payloads; nuclear, biological

cal, and chemical detection equipment, and even guide artillery fire.

Loitering munition

The road map also places emphasis on loitering munitions, designed to carry out precision strikes with artificial intelligence-enabled targeting and reusable warhead systems. In addition, integrated surveillance and targeting drones

are expected to boost the battlefield capabilities of mechanised forces.

India is also preparing for the emerging threat of hostile drone swarms.

The TPCR-2025 envisages adaptive jamming systems and electronic denial bubbles with a 15 km radius to neutralise such attacks, underscoring the rising importance of electronic warfare in modern combat.

Officials said the initiatives were closely aligned with the government's self-reliance push in defence production by reducing dependence on foreign imports.

With the road map, India has signalled a strategic shift towards integrated deterrence – combining nuclear resilience, electronic warfare, and unmanned strike platforms – to strengthen national security in the coming decades.

'REITs, InvITs AUM crossed ₹9 lakh cr.'

Press Trust of India

NEW DELHI

Real Estate Investment Trusts (REITs) and Infrastructure Investment Trusts (InvITs) instruments are becoming popular in India as their combined assets under management have crossed ₹9 lakh crore in the last nine years, as per industry bodies IRA and BIA.

The combined AUM of REITs and InvITs are expected to touch ₹25 lakh crore by 2030, as per the projections of The Indian REITs Association (IRA) and Bharat InvITs Association (BIA).

At present, there are five listed REITs in India - Brookfield India Real Es-

tate Trust, Embassy Office Parks REIT, Mindspace Business Parks REIT, Nexus Select Trust, and Knowledge Realty Trust.

Currently, there are 27 Sebi-registered InvITs, and out of these, five are publicly listed on the stock exchanges, while 23 are privately listed.

The first InvIT was registered in 2016, while the first REIT got listed in 2019.

On Friday, IRA and BIA, which jointly hosted the first product awareness programme in the national capital, highlighted assets under management (AUM) of InvITs and REITs currently stand at around ₹7 lakh crore and ₹2.25 lakh crore, respectively.

'GST rate rejig to reduce cost of construction by 3.5-4.5%'

The Hindu Bureau

MUMBAI

The rationalisation of tax rates on construction material by the GST Council is expected to provide the real estate sector some relief but since the rates applicable on property stay unchanged, there would be stability in taxation, Crisil Intelligence said.

Since the rates applicable on affordable housing (1%), under-construction properties (5%) and completed properties (exempt) remain unchanged, the status quo offers stability for both developers and homebuyers, it said.

The reduction in GST rate for construction materials is also expected to improve developer margins and lower project costs as



The GST rate reduction on construction materials may improve developer margins.

construction materials typically account for 50-60% of the overall construction cost for builders.

"The 10 percentage point reduction in GST on cement is estimated to result in a 3.0-3.5% savings on overall construction costs and the rate revision on marble, granite and re-

lated inputs an additional 0.5-1.0% (depending on the project segment and material mix)," Crisil said.

"Overall, the construction cost is estimated to decline by 3.5-4.5%. This will improve project viability, support developer margins, and—if partially passed on—enhance affordability of home-buyers," it said in a report.

With no change in property GST rates, buyer sentiment remains unaffected, avoiding confusion or deferment of purchase decisions, it said adding improved margin outlook may encourage developers to launch new projects, especially in affordable and mid-income segments.

"Overall, the reforms are marginally positive for the housing sector."

Conservative Thai tycoon wins parliament vote to become PM

Agence France-Presse

BANGKOK

Right-wing Thai tycoon Anutin Charnvirakul was confirmed on Friday by parliament as the nation's next Prime Minister, ousting the dominant populist Shinawatra dynasty.

Their Pheu Thai party has monopolised the top office since 2023 elections, but they have been bedevilled by a series of setbacks and a court ruling that resulted in dynasty heiress Paetongtarn Shinawatra's sacking as prime minister last week.

Construction magnate Anutin Charnvirakul rushed into the power vacuum, forming a coalition



Anutin Charnvirakul

of opposition blocs to shut out Pheu Thai.

Thaksin Shinawatra, the dynasty patriarch, fled out of the kingdom in the hours ahead of Friday's vote and was bound for Dubai, where he said he would visit friends and seek medical treatment.

Mr. Anutin won 311 votes, securing a comfortable majority of the 492 MPs in the National Assembly's lower house, official final results showed – comfortably outstripping Pheu Thai's candidate.

Mr. Anutin's elevation still needs to be endorsed by Thailand's king to become official.

Brief stint

He won crucial backing in Friday's vote from the largest parliamentary bloc, the 143-seat People's Party.

However, their support was given only on the condition that parliament is dissolved within four months in order to hold fresh polls.