

Mohammed Yunus sworn in as Chief Advisor

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS



President Mohammed Shahabuddin administered the oath to Nobel laureate Muhammad Yunus, sworn on Thursday as the Chief Advisor of the interim government at a ceremony held in Bangabhaban, the official residence of the President. After Mr. Yunus, 13 out of the 16 advisers of the interim government were sworn in.

Military officers, Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) Secretary-General Mirza Fakhrul Islam, Jamaat-e-Islami Amir Shafiqur Rahman, Jatiya Party Chairman Ghulam Muhammed Quader as well as foreign diplomats from the U.K., Japan, China, the Philippines, Iran, Argentina, Qatar, the UAE and the Netherlands were present at the ceremony.

Restoring stability and stopping anarchy have become immediate priorities as attacks, looting and destructive activities persisted on Thursday in many parts of the country, in the absence of government and enforcement agencies. The Bangladesh Army, alongside other law enforcement agencies, said they would take strict action to stop the ongoing attacks across the country.

The High Commission of India in Dhaka has been operating emergency helpline services to evacuate Indian nationals, including some Indians working on various projects with IRCON Khulna, L&T, RITES, Tata Projects, Afcons, and Transrail Sirajganj. The High Commission's visa services have been suspended in view of the prevailing situation, and expressed the hope that the newly appointed government would act soon to contain the law-and-order situation in Bangladesh.

“My best wishes to Professor Muhammad Yunus on the assumption of his new responsibilities. We hope for an early return to normalcy, ensuring the safety and protection of Hindus and all other minority communities. India remains committed to working with Bangladesh to fulfil the shared aspirations of both our peoples for peace, security and development.”

Narendra Modi,
Prime Minister.



“the U.S. believes the interim government should respect democratic principles, the rule of law, and the will of the Bangladeshi people the interim government will play a vital role in establishing long-term peace and political stability in Bangladesh.”

Matthew Miller
U.S. State Department Spokesperson



“India has its own share of security challenges, we have a proxy war waged by Pakistan in Jammu and Kashmir, whose sudden escalation we are now seeing south of Pir Panjal. The prolonged border dispute with China is yet to abate. These are two major security challenges that we face. The instability in our neighbourhood is another cause of concern for us.”

General Anil Chauhan.
Chief of Defence Staff (CDS)

Former Bengal Chief Minister Buddhadeb Bhattacharjee dies

PERSONALITY



Former West Bengal Chief Minister and veteran Communist leader Buddhadeb Bhattacharjee, 80, passed away in Kolkata on Thursday. Mr. Bhattacharjee became Chief Minister of the State in 2000 and led the CPI(M)-led Left Front to power for two terms in 2001 and 2006. He is survived by his wife Meera and daughter Suchetana. Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee expressed her condolences on the sudden demise of the former Chief Minister and visited his residence.

Union Govt. amends CAA guidelines on documents to prove foreign origin

POLITY & GOVERNANCE

The Union Home Ministry has amended provisions of the rules of the Citizenship (Amendment) Act (CAA), 2019 to expand the scope to documents to include any document issued by the State or the Union government or any quasi-judicial authority in India. Earlier, applicants seeking citizenship were required to submit a document by any government authority in Afghanistan, Bangladesh or Pakistan establishing their roots in these countries.

The CAA rules also enable local priests or a “locally reputed community institution” to issue the mandatory certificates certifying the faith of an applicant. CAA facilitates citizenship to six non-Muslim communities from the three countries that entered India before December 31, 2014.

Schedule 1A has not been a problem for Hindu migrants from Pakistan as most entered India on valid documents such as passports and visas. In December 2019, the Citizenship Act, 1955 was amended to facilitate citizenship through registration and naturalisation to undocumented migrants belonging to six non-Muslim communities.

“Doing nothing is very hard to do. You never know when you’re finished.”—Leslie Nielsen

RBI holds repo rate at 6.5% for ninth time in a row

ECONOMICS & DEVELOPMENT

Dash of reality

High inflation pressures persisted across major food items, RBI's Das says in monetary policy statement

■ Impact of milk price, mobile tariff revisions needs to be watched, says Das

■ There is considerable divergence between headline and core inflation, RBI notes

■ 'Any delinking of food inflation from inflation-targeting framework will depend on NSO survey'



The Reserve Bank of India's Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) in its first meeting after the Union Budget by a 4-2 majority decided to keep the policy repo rate unchanged at 6.50 % for the ninth consecutive time to remain focused on the withdrawal of accommodation to ensure that inflation progressively aligns to the target, while supporting growth. The standing deposit facility rate remains at 6.25 %, while the Marginal Standing Facility rate and the bank rate stand at 6.75 %.

Headline inflation, after remaining steady at 4.8 % during April and May, had increased to 5.1 % in June, primarily driven by food inflation with a weightage of about 46 % in the CPI basket, contributing to more than 75 % of the headline inflation in May and June. Core inflation moderated, while the fuel group remained in deflation. The expected moderation in headline inflation during the second quarter of 2024-25 on account of favourable base effects is likely to reverse in the third quarter.

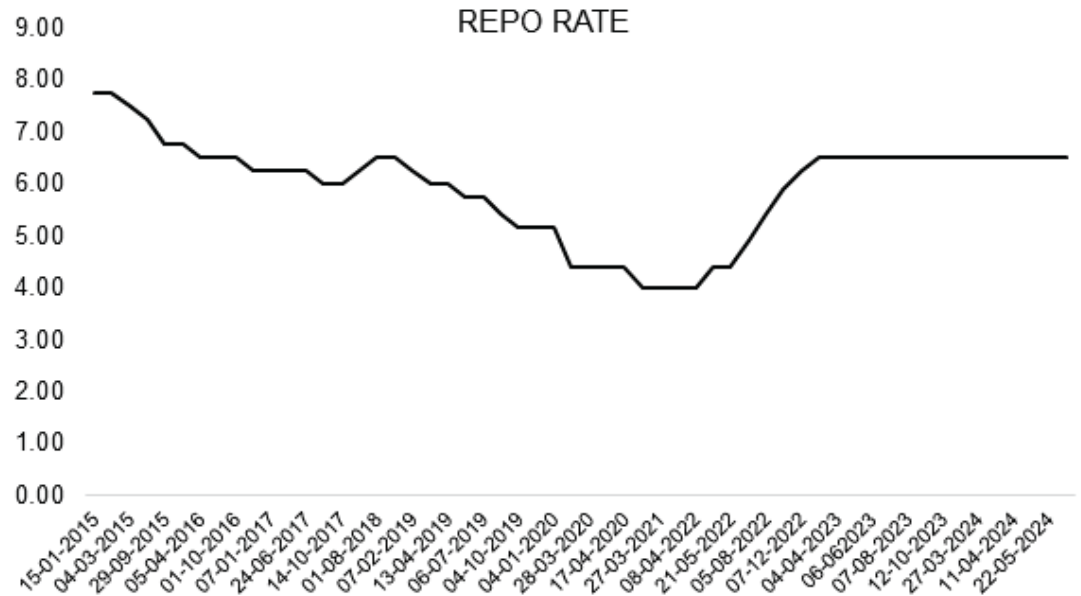


FIGURE: Line chart representation of repo rates announced by the RBI Monetary Policy Committee.

The MPC has reiterated the need to continue with the disinflationary stance of withdrawal of accommodation, to ensure that inflation progressively aligns to the target, while supporting growth.

India's retail inflation hovered around 5 % in the quarter, mostly due to high food prices, forcing consumers in the world's most populous country to cut back wherever possible to make ends meet. Indian consumer products' sales slowed sharply to a more-than-one-year low from April to June due to softening

demand for personal care products and packaged wheat flour, especially in urban areas. The overall sales volume growth slowed to 3.8 % in the second quarter, compared with growth rates of 6.4 % to 8.6 % in the past four quarters, “largely due to macroeconomic headwinds. The sales volume growth in rural areas slowed to 5.2 %, from 7.6 % in the previous quarter, but fared better than urban markets, where growth slowed even more sharply to 2.8 % from 5.7 %.



“High inflation pressures persisted across other major food items also. On the other hand, the softening in core inflation continues to be broad-based, with core services inflation touching a new low in the current CPI series during May-June”

Shaktikanta Das

Reserve Bank of India (RBI) Governor Shaktikanta Das stressed the importance of food inflation while formulating monetary policy given the risk of spill overs which could undermine policy credibility. High food price momentum might have continued in July, he said large favourable base effects might have pushed headline inflation downwards in July.

The impact of the revision in milk prices and mobile tariffs needs to be watched. Continuing food price shocks slowed the process of disinflation in Q1. There is also considerable divergence between headline and core inflation. This has brought to the fore the issue of how much importance should the MPC give to food inflation. The MPC has to remain vigilant to prevent spill overs or second round effects from persistent food inflation and preserve the gains made so far in monetary policy credibility. On a suggestion in the Economic Survey to delink food inflation from inflation-targeting framework, he said the NSO was undertaking a survey on food-price inflation and based on the findings a decision would be taken at the appropriate time by the government and the RBI.

Sri Lankan Navy arrests 32 Tamil Nadu fishers on poaching charge International Relations

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

On Thursday, 32 fishermen from Pamban in Tamil Nadu's Ramanathapuram district were arrested by the Sri Lankan Navy for allegedly poaching in Sri Lankan waters. The Navy also seized their four country boats. The incident occurred in Palk Bay, where the fishermen had ventured on August 6. Upon hearing the news around 5 p.m., the local fishing community expressed their disappointment. The detained fishermen are expected to be taken to Puthalam district in Sri Lanka for court proceedings.

The arrest has caused significant concern among the local fishermen's associations, especially since tensions were already high after a Rameswaram fisherman drowned last week when his boat was allegedly struck by the Sri Lankan Navy. As a result, mechanized boat fishermen in Rameswaram have initiated an indefinite strike.

In response to these incidents, a delegation led by local leaders travelled to New Delhi to seek government intervention. On the initiative of Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M.K. Stalin, MPs and state officials, including Union External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar, were approached to address the issue. The fishermen leaders also staged a demonstration at Jantar Mantar in New Delhi on Thursday.

Waqf Bill goes to JPC after an acrimonious debate in Lok Sabha

POLITY & GOVERNANCE

The Waqf (Amendment) Bill, 2024 introduced by Union Minority Affairs Minister Kiren Rijiju in the Lok Sabha has been referred to a Joint Parliamentary Committee (JPC) on Thursday, amid strong objections from the Opposition parties which alleged that the legislation was targeted at the Muslim community. Speaker Om Birla informed the House that he would constitute the committee after consulting the leaders of all parties.

Under the definition clause

Under **Section 3(r)**: “Waqf” means the permanent dedication by any person [practicing Islam for at least five years, of any movable or immovable property, having ownership of such property] for any purpose recognised by the Muslim law as pious, religious or charitable.

- **Section 3(r)(iv)**: Waqf-alal-aulad (An endowment for the family of the donor) to the extent to which the property is dedicated to any purpose recognised by Muslim law as pious, religious or charitable, provided when the line of succession fails, the income of the waqf shall be spent for education, development, welfare [maintenance of widow, divorced woman and orphan in such manner, as may be prescribed by the Central Government] and such other purposes as recognised by Muslim law.
- **Section 3(da)** introduces the position of **Collector** who would exercise powers some of which were once vested with the Auqaf Board.

Insertion of Sections 3A, 3B and 3C for regulating waqf properties

Section 3A: Certain conditions of waqf- 1. Only a person lawful owner of the property and competent to transfer or dedicate such property can create waqf; 2. Creation of waqf-alal-aulad shall not result in denial of inheritance rights of heirs, including women heirs, of the waqif (person making such dedication)

Section 3B: Filing of details of waqf on portal and database: 1. Every waqf registered before the 2024 Amendment shall file details of the waqf and properties dedicated to the waqf to the portal and database within 1 month; 2. Details including deed, gross annual income from waqf properties, pending court cases, salary of mutawalli, taxes annually payable, name and address of creator of waqf etc and any other particulars prescribed by Central Government.

Portal and database have been defined under **Section 3(ka)** inserted as: “*waqf asset management system or any other system set up by the Central Government for the registration, accounts, audit and any other detail of waqf and the Board, as may be prescribed by the Central Government*”.

Section 3C: Wrongful declaration of waqf-1. Any government property 'identified' or 'declared' as waqf, before or after the Amendment, shall not be deemed to be waqf property; 2. In case of dispute whether such property belongs to government, a Collector shall make inquiry and submit report to State Government. The property in question shall not be treated as waqf until the collector submits his report.

Position of Survey Commissioner omitted

In **Section 4(preliminary survey of auqaf)** of the 1995 Act, it was stated that the State government must appoint a **Survey Commissioner** to conduct a survey of auqaf in the State. In the 2024 Amendment, the position of Survey Commissioner is replaced by Collector who shall exercise the jurisdiction. Further,

the nature of waqf apart from Shia or Sunni now also includes 'Aghakhani waqf' or 'Bohra waqf'.

As per **Section 5 (publication of list of auqaf)** of the 1995 Act, once the report of the Survey Commissioner on the list of auqaf under Section 4 is given to the State government, the same shall be examined by Waqf Board. Within six months, the Waqf Board shall forward the report to the Government for publishing in the official gazette. The revenue authorities shall accordingly update the land records. Now, revenue authorities before updating the land revenue records will mandatorily have to issue public notice of 90 days, in two daily newspaper circulating in the localities of such areas where the waqf properties are located. One of the notices shall be in regional language. This is to give the affected persons opportunity to be heard.

Suit can be filed to challenge the decision of Waqf Tribunal

Under **Section 6 (disputes regarding auqaf)** of the 1995 Act, whether a property specified as waqf in the list of auqaf is waqf or not or whether it is Shia or Sunni waqf shall be decided by a Tribunal instituted under Section 83 consisting of one person from State Judicial Service holding rank of civil judge or district judge, one person from State Civil Services equivalent to Additional District Magistrate, and one person renowned in Muslim law and jurisprudence. The decision of Tribunal shall be final. Moreover, no suit to the Tribunal shall not be instituted one year after publication of the list of auqaf. This is read with **Section 40** (Decision if a property waqf property) where the Board may itself collect information regarding any property which it has reason to believe to be waqf property.

However, as per 2024 proposed amendment, decision of the Tribunal is **not final** and suit can be constituted within a **period of two years** from the publication of the list of auqaf. An application can be constituted **even after two years** if the applicant satisfies that it had sufficient cause for not making an application within time. Moreover, Section 40 is **omitted**.

Constitution of Board and Council

Under **Section 9**, which specifies the **Constitution of Central Waqf Council**, the composition is more or less the same except the members appointed by the Central Government under the 1995 Act include '**at least two members to be women**'. Now, only two women members could be appointed amongst the list specified and **two non-Muslim members** shall also be appointed.

As per **Section 14** which specifies the **Composition of Board of Auqaf**, the composition is more or less the same except only **two members** shall be **women**, and now **two member** shall be **non-Muslim**, "**at least**" one member each from **Shia, Sunni** and **other backward classes** among Muslim Communities and one member from **Bohra** and **Aghakhani** shall be nominated if they have functional auqaf in State.

No registration of Auqaf without execution deed

Now, under **Section 36 (Registration of Auqaf)**, no waqf shall be created without execution of a **waqf deed**. Earlier, the registration was prescribed by the regulation provided by Auqaf Board, now it is provided through the online portal and database.

Now, an **inquiry** into the genuineness of the application by the Collector is **mandatory**. If the Collector reports that the waqf property to be registered is in dispute or is a Government property, no registration shall be done unless the competent court has resolved the dispute.

Audit of accounts of auqaf

As per **Section 47(audit of accounts of auqaf)** under the 1995, the accounts of auqaf shall be audited by an auditor appointed by the Auqaf Board but could also be audited by the State Government. Now, under the proposed amendment, auditors appointed by the Auqaf Board shall be from the panel of auditors prepared by the State Government. Moreover, the **Central Government** shall have the powers to direct the audit at any time by an auditor appointed by the Comptroller and Auditor-General of India. The

Central Government can order publication of the audit report in a manner it may prescribe. In the Rajya Sabha, the Opposition objected to the withdrawing of the Waqf Properties (Eviction of Unauthorised Occupants) Bill of 2014. CPI(M) MP John Brittas and Indian Union Muslim League MP Abdul Wahab gave notices against Mr. Rijju's motion to withdraw the Bill to "provide for the eviction of unauthorised occupants from waqf properties".

No clinical trial for drugs approved in select nations

POLITY & GOVERNANCE



The Union Government has decided to waive the requirement for clinical trials in India for a set of five categories for new drugs approved in the U.S., the U.K., Japan, Australia, Canada, or the European Union making drugs manufactured outside India more accessible and affordable in the local market. Drugs for rare diseases, gene and cellular therapy products, new drugs used in pandemic situations, new drugs used for special defence purposes, and new drugs having significant therapeutic advances over the current standard care will be considered for waiver. The order issued by India's drug regulatory agency, Central Drugs Standard Control

Organisation, on Wednesday said the Union government had authorised the exemption of local clinical trials for approval of new drugs under Rule 101.

"the Central licensing authority, with approval of the Union government, may specify by an order, the name of the countries from time to time for considering waiver of local clinical trial for approval of new drugs under Chapter X and for grant of permission for conduct of clinical trial under Chapter V of the said rules"

Rule 101, New Drugs and Clinical Trial Rules, 2019

The waiver is expected to significantly benefit both domestic and foreign drug manufacturers by expediting the approval process and facilitating faster access to essential medications for Indian patients. The OPPI has been advocating for this notification, recognising its potential to transform both the pharmaceuticals, and the healthcare landscape in India. The inclusion of specific categories such as orphan drugs for rare diseases, gene and cellular therapy products, new drugs used in pandemic situations, those for special defence purposes and new drugs with significant therapeutic advance over the current standard care would address critical and unmet medical needs. This strategic alignment is particularly crucial for accelerating access to innovative therapies to the patients in India.

The group has, however, maintained that extending these waivers to a broader range of therapeutic categories will further enhance access to cutting-edge treatments. It has asked the Centre to consider additional therapeutic areas where similar waivers could significantly impact patient access.



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New Delhi, Delhi-110022

Regional office
Vedhik IAS Academy
202, Raheja Chambers, 12,
Museum Road. Bangalore -
560001. Karnataka, India.

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