

US firms gear up for India's nuclear sector opening

US nuclear players examine licensing, liability and investment opportunities under SHANTI

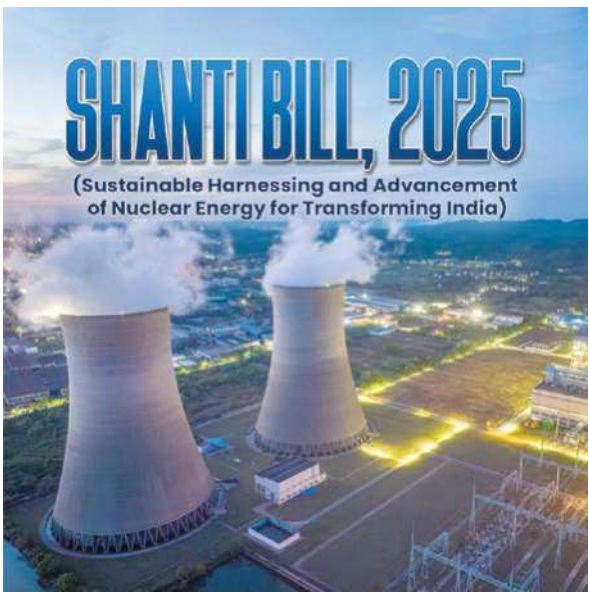
WASHINGTON

THE US nuclear industry is set to make a comprehensive submission to India on the draft rules and regulations to implement the SHANTI Act, which has opened up the atomic energy sector for private participation.

Last week, the Department of Atomic Energy released the draft rules and regulations of the Sustainable Harnessing and Advancement of Nuclear Energy for Transforming India (SHANTI) Act and sought comments by September 4.

The US-India Strategic Partnership Forum (USISPF), which led a delegation of US nuclear industry representatives to India earlier this year to explore opportunities in the civil nuclear sector, held discussions on Thursday with legal experts in India and the Nuclear Energy Institute based here.

"USISPF is coordinating a comprehensive industry submission to the Department of Atomic Energy (DAE), Government of India (GOI) by the September 4 deadline," the USISPF said in a social media post. USISPF also held a virtual briefing for its Nuclear Industry Committee on the recently released draft SHANTI rules and regulations. "The virtual session convened senior industry leaders from across the nuclear value chain and covered: key provisions of the Draft SHANTI Rules and Draft SHANTI Regulations - what they mean for industry; implications for private sector entry, licensing, liability, and project structuring; and areas requiring industry attention and potential feedback to the gov-



The SHANTI Act opens the civil nuclear sector in India to private companies and joint ventures, allowing them to build, own and operate nuclear plants, decommission them, and take up nuclear research and development. It also allows private players to manufacture nuclear fuel and use ionising radiation for non-electricity-related work with medicines, agriculture, and other industries

ernment," the USISPF said. It said expert guest speakers Suhaan Mukerji of Delhi-based PLR Chambers and Ted Jones, Senior Director for National Security and International Programmes

at Nuclear Energy Institute, addressed the virtual session. The draft rules are the first detailed steps taken by India to open up the nuclear sector to private players, laying down licensing, insurance, and approval-related procedures while retaining government control over sensitive activities. The SHANTI Act opens the civil nuclear sector in India to private companies and joint ventures, allowing them to build, own and operate nuclear plants, decommission them, and take up nuclear research and development. It also allows private players to manufacture nuclear fuel and use ionising radiation for non-electricity-related work with medicines, agriculture, and other industries.

India has set a target to generate 100 GW of nuclear power by 2047 and set up at least five indigenous Small Modular Reactors (SMR), which are advanced nuclear fission plants that can produce up to 300 megawatts of electricity by 2033.

Indian Green Card aspirants face key form change from September 18

Change likely to affect Indian professionals awaiting employment and family-based permanent residence

WASHINGTON

THE US Citizenship and Immigration Services will introduce a revised application form for permanent residence next month, warning that older editions submitted after the change takes effect will be rejected.

The new edition of Form I-485, Application to Register Permanent Residence or Adjust Status, will be published on September 18, USCIS said in an official notification.

Form I-485 is used by eligible applicants already present in the United States to seek lawful permanent resident status, commonly known as a Green Card.

The change is expected to be closely watched by Indian nationals pursuing employment- and family-based permanent residence, including applicants who have waited years for an immigrant visa number to become available. USCIS said the revised form carries an edition date of September 18, 2026, and will replace the edition dated January 20, 2025.

The agency has provided applicants and immigration lawyers with a preview of the new form and its accompanying instructions. It stressed that there will be no grace period during which both editions will be accepted.

Applicants must therefore determine which edition to use according to the date on which their application is postmarked or submitted electronically.

USCIS will continue accepting the January 20, 2025, edition when it is postmarked or electronically submitted before September 18.

However, the agency will

reject that edition if it is postmarked or electronically submitted on or after September 18. Conversely, applicants should not submit the new edition before the effective date. USCIS will accept the September 18, 2026, edition only when it is postmarked or electronically filed on or after that date.

The narrow transition makes the filing date particularly important for applicants and their lawyers. Using the wrong edition could result in rejection of the application before USCIS considers its merits.

The revised Form I-485 has been prepared to align the adjustment-of-status process with the recently announced final rule concerning the public-charge ground of inadmissibility, USCIS said.

The public-charge provision is used to assess whether an applicant is likely to become primarily dependent on the government for subsistence. Its application has changed under successive US administrations and has frequently become a contested element of immigration policy.

USCIS did not announce a separate change in the filing date or fee in the notification. It directed applicants to consult the Form I-485 webpage for the preview edition and detailed instructions.

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Applicants filing Form



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An earlier rule only considered two types of public benefits as grounds for denying a green card application: cash assistance for income maintenance and long-term institutionalisation at the government's expense.

To make public charge inadmissibility determinations, USCIS officers will consider the five statutory factors and any other factor relevant to assessing the alien's likelihood at any time of becoming a public charge, including the alien's receipt of means-tested public benefits, such as cash assistance for income maintenance, housing assistance, food stamps, financial aid for col-

lege, or any other similar benefit," an official statement said.

The guidance follows the Department of Homeland Security's decision to rescind the 2022 Biden-era public charge regulations. The final rule was announced on July 16 and published in the Federal Register on July 20. It will apply to Forms I-485 seeking permanent residence or adjustment of status that are postmarked or electronically submitted on or after September 18. The new rule allows USCIS officers to count age, health, family status, finances, educational background, and even the use of public benefits by an applicant's dependents, regardless of that dependent's status, against that applicant's chances for approval. If a USCIS officer

finds that an alien applying for adjustment of status to that of a lawful permanent resident in the United States is inadmissible only because they are likely at any time to become a public charge, the USCIS officer may invite the alien to post a public charge bond.

"The public charge rule would provide even more discretion to officers to deny adjustment of status applications in light of the USCIS memo that indicates that adjustment of status requires extraordinary discretion," according to an analysis by immigration attorneys Cyrus Mehta and Damira Zhana-tova. According to the Kaiser Family Foundation, a non-profit organisation working in healthcare, about 13.5 million Medicaid or CHIP enrollees live with at least one non-citizen, including 5.6 million citizen children, who may be at risk for decreased enrollment. The analysis found that between 1.4 million and 4.1 million Medicaid and CHIP enrollees living with a noncitizen might quit the programme due to the new public charge rule. However, a large number of applicants are exempt from the new public charge rule. The exemptions include refugees and asylees, certain Afghan and Iraqi nationals who worked with or for the US government, certain Cuban and Haitian entrants, special immigrant juveniles, victims of human trafficking, victims of qualifying criminal activity, certain Violence Against Women Act self-petitioners and applicants for Temporary Protected Status, among others. Of the nearly 1.2 million people who received a green card in 2023, about 78,100 (7 per cent) were from India.

India opens defence co-development door to Japanese firms, start-ups

NEW DELHI

PRIME Minister Narendra Modi outlined his vision for further strengthening the Special Strategic and Global Partnership between India and Japan as Japanese Defence Minister Shinjiro Koizumi, who is on an official visit to India, called on him.

During the meeting, Prime Minister Modi recalled his detailed discussions with his Japanese counterpart Sanae Takaichi when she visited India recently for the 16th India-Japan Annual Summit in July, and appreciated the steady momentum in defence collaboration between India and Japan. "Pleased to receive Defence Minister of Japan Shinjiro Koizumi. Had an excellent conversation on deepening defence and security ties between India and Japan. Our Special Strategic and Global Partnership is an important anchor for peace, stability and prosperity in the Indo-Pacific and beyond," PM Modi posted on X.

Prime Minister Modi also



Modi pitches Make in India opportunities as New Delhi and Tokyo deepen strategic and maritime security ties

outlined his vision for further strengthening the Special Strategic and Global Partnership between India and Japan and highlighted the importance of India-Japan defence and security cooperation in furthering peace, stability and prosperity in the Indo-Pacific and beyond.

"Prime Minister outlined opportunities for Japan to partner with Indian companies and start-ups in the

defence sector, particularly for co-development and co-production under the aegis of 'Make in India.' Defence Minister Koizumi briefed the Prime Minister about the progress in bilateral defence cooperation and reaffirmed the Government of Japan's continued commitment towards deepening ties with India," read a statement issued by the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) after the meeting.

Koizumi, who met Defence Minister Rajnath Singh earlier in the day, said that he will devote all his efforts to turning discussions into concrete outcomes.

"When the meeting concluded, Minister of Defence

Singh put his arm around me and expressed his delight, saying, 'It was a very fruitful meeting.' We were able to make a new start in accelerating Japan-India defence co-operation. Moving forward, I will devote all my efforts to turning today's discussions into concrete outcomes in order to further strengthen our personal trust relationship. Minister of Defence Singh, thank you very much," noted Koizumi.

In a joint statement after the meeting, the two sides stressed the importance of sharing assessments of the regional and international security environment amid heightened global tensions.

They also expressed their strong opposition to any unilateral actions that impede freedom and safety of navigation and overflight, as well as to any attempts to change the status quo by force or coercion.

Recalling the Japan-India Joint Statement issued in July 2026, both Singh and Koizumi affirmed their commit-

ment, under their leadership, to further deepen defence co-operation to realise a free and open Indo-Pacific.

The two ministers agreed to deepen operational cooperation in the field of maritime security in a practical and effective manner. They accordingly affirmed their commitment to strengthening Maritime Security Cooperation and signed the Memorandum of Arrangement on Maritime Security Cooperation.

"The Memorandum provides a framework for further advancing cooperation between the two countries in the field of maritime security. Specifically, it includes the strengthening of cooperation between the Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force and the Indian Navy, including information sharing in the field of Maritime Domain Awareness (MDA), as well as enhanced cooperation in areas such as Search and Rescue (SAR) and Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADRR)," read the Joint Statement.

India, Singapore ink pacts to bolster trade and economic cooperation

Bilateral trade rises to \$36.1 billion; Singapore remains India's largest ASEAN trade partner

NEW DELHI

INDIA and Singapore signed two memorandums of understanding (MoUs) and one Letter of Intent (LoI) to strengthen bilateral maritime heritage cooperation, closer ties in the area of food safety and cooperation in the fields of telecommunications and broadcasting regulations.

The agreements were signed during the 4th India-Singapore Ministerial Roundtable which was attended in Singapore by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, Union External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar, Union Minister of Commerce and Industry Piyush Goyal, and Minister of State for Electronics and IT, and Commerce and Industry Jitin Prasada.

These agreements will further strengthen bilateral cooperation across diverse areas of mutual interest, according to a Finance Ministry statement issued after the meeting.

The Singapore delegation was led by Gan Kim Yong, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Trade and Industry.

K. Shanmugam, Senior Minister and Coordinating Minister for National Security; Vivian Balakrishnan, Minister for Foreign Affairs; Josephine Teo, Minister for Digital Development and Information; and Jeffrey Siow, Minister for Transport and Second Minister for Finance, also participated in the Roundtable.

The 4th India-Singapore Ministerial Roundtable reviewed progress and explored new opportunities for cooperation across six key pillars -- Advanced Manufacturing, Connectivity, Digitalisation, Healthcare and Medicine, Skills Development and Sustainability.



Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, Union External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar, Union Minister of Commerce and Industry Piyush Goyal, and Minister of State for Electronics and IT, and Commerce and Industry Jitin Prasada during the 4th India-Singapore Ministerial Roundtable in Singapore

In FY 2025-26, Singapore was the largest source of FDI into India, with FDI flows of \$19.8 billion. The cumulative FDI inflows from Singapore to India stood at \$194.68 billion (April 2000-March 2026), which is around 1/4th of total FDI inflows in India

from \$6.7 billion in FY 2004-05 to \$36.1 billion in 2025-26.

Singapore is India's sixth largest trade partner with a share of around 2.96 per cent of India's overall trade.

India's imports from Singapore in FY 2025-26 were \$24.24 billion, exports to Singapore totaled \$11.86 billion with trade deficit of \$12.38 billion.

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Top sectors attracting FDI Equity inflows from Singapore are: Services Sector, Computer Software and Hardware, Trading, Telecommunications, and Drugs and Pharmaceuticals. About 9,000 Indian companies are registered in Singapore. Six PSUs, 10 banks, CII, FICCI have their offices in Singapore. During the Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to Singapore in September 2024, it was announced that 'Invest India' will open an office in Singapore to facilitate investments from the South-east Asian country.

Starlink would help least-served parts of India, says Elon Musk

WASHINGTON

SPACEX founder Elon Musk has pitched Starlink's satellite internet services as a way to connect underserved parts of India, particularly rural areas. "Starlink would help the least served in India, especially in rural areas," Musk said in a social media post on Thursday local time.

He was responding to a post by X account DogeDesigner, which also pushed for Starlink Services in India to connect remote villages. "11,256 of India's listed villages still had no 4G coverage as of May 2026," DogeDesigner said. "India had 1.093 billion internet subscriptions in March 2026, but only 440.87 million were rural. Rural subscription density was 48.31 per 100 people, compared with 126.80 in urban India," it said.

Musk's comments came amid reports that Starlink has made a fresh application to offer satellite communication services in India. The Indian National Space Promotion and Authorisation Centre had earlier rejected Starlink's application for its Gen 2 satellite network, saying some of its features and the radio frequencies it planned to use did not meet Indian requirements

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satellite network, saying some of its features and the radio frequencies it planned to use did not meet Indian requirements. The Gen 2 system includes direct-to-device connectivity capabilities. Starlink, operated by Musk's SpaceX, provides internet connectivity through a constellation of low-Earth orbit satellites and has been seeking regulatory approvals to launch its services in India. The post said BharatNet had laid more than 850,000 route-km

of fibre and made around 221,000 Gram Panchayats service-ready. However, only 80,472 Gram Panchayat Points of Presence were reported operational as of June 2026. It further stated that satellite connectivity could help bridge gaps in remote villages, mountainous regions, islands and areas affected by disasters, where conventional telecom infrastructure faces challenges related to terrain, commercial viability and infrastructure constraints. The post also called for the completion of regulatory clearances, spectrum allocation and approval for Starlink's commercial launch in India. Earlier in August, a government official said that Elon Musk's X will have to follow the law when it comes to the social media platform's new rule that makes content takedown requests by any public government.