EDITORIAL HIGHLIGHTS

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GS 2 and 3: GOVERNANCE and SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

THE HINDU PAGE: 08

Why are social media takedowns in focus?

What triggered the latest wave of takedowns? How do the amended IT rules make takedowns faster? Are takedowns being driven by government orders? What can users do when their accounts get blocked?

Lavpreet Kaur

The story so far:

In recent weeks, social media users have reported a spate of posts, reels, and accounts being blocked or taken down across platforms, including Instagram, Facebook, and X. Screenshots shared online show notices stating, 'Your post is unavailable in India', while others say access to content has been restricted through an automated system implemented under India's Information Technology or IT (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules, 2021.

The restrictions have come amid protests against the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls and demands for Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar's resignation across the country. They have brought the government's content-blocking powers, shorter compliance deadlines for intermediaries, and role of platforms' own automated moderation systems into focus.

What triggered the latest wave of takedowns? What did the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) advisory to Meta say?

The latest wave follows two advisories issued by MeitY on October 8 and 10, amid anti-CEC protests. The October 8 advisory was addressed to social media platforms to exercise "enhanced diligence" over content relating to ongoing public events, contextualise misleading material, and prioritise complaints from authorised government agencies. It urged platforms to curb "manipulated or out-of-context content" on top of AI-generated deepfakes that are already liable for takedown notices under the amendments to the IT (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules.

Users can challenge restrictions imposed under Sections 69A and 79(3)(b) by questioning their legality, including through the courts where appropriate.

The October 10 advisory, issued by MeitY's Cyber Laws Division and addressed specifically to Meta, focused on how content was being distributed through feeds and recommendation systems. It said videos, images, statements, and graphics relating to public order and law-and-order situations were being prominently displayed and recommended to users. It advised Meta to identify and address content that could cause public disorder or incite violence or other unlawful activity; review its ranking and recommendation mechanisms; provide context for visuals whose authenticity, date, location, or circumstances were unclear; and ensure users were not disproportionately exposed to a single or limited set of narratives. It also asked Meta to cooperate with law-enforcement agencies within the timelines prescribed under the IT Rules.

The advisory called for immediate action and asked Meta to inform the Ministry of the measures taken. It also stated that lawful civic and public discourse should not be unnecessarily restricted.

How do the amended IT Rules make takedowns faster?

The IT (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Amendment Rules, 2026 tightened intermediary obligations, particularly in relation to synthetically generated information, including realistic AI-generated or altered audio-visual material.

Under amended Rule 3(1)(d), an intermediary that receives actual knowledge through a court order or a reasoned intimation from an authorised government officer or agency must remove or disable access to the specified unlawful information within three hours, down from 36 hours under the earlier framework. The amendments also shortened grievance-redressal timelines and introduced additional requirements for identifying and labelling permitted synthetic content. The changes leave platforms with considerably less time to assess a notice, determine its scope, and act on it.

Which laws allow the authorities to seek takedowns, and what safeguards apply?

Three provisions are central to understanding the restrictions: Section 69A of the IT Act, 2000; Rule 3(1)(d) of the IT Rules, 2021; and Section 79(3)(b) of the Act. Although all three can be relevant to the removal of online material, they serve different legal purposes.

Section 69A empowers the Central government or an officer specifically authorised by it to direct the blocking of public access to online information on specified grounds, including the sovereignty and integrity of India, defence, security of the State, friendly relations with foreign States, public order, and preventing incitement to certain offences.

Rule 3(1)(d), meanwhile, sets out the obligations of intermediaries after they receive a court order or a qualifying intimation from a relevant authorised authority concerning specified unlawful information.

Section 79 provides intermediaries with conditional protection from liability for third-party content. Under Section 79(3)(b), such protection may be affected if an intermediary fails to act after receiving the legally required notification concerning unlawful information.

Are the takedowns being driven by government orders?

The number of takedown notices issued by the unit declined during October as automated takedowns rose, according to an official from the Delhi Police's Intelligence Fusion and Strategic Operations unit. The Delhi Police have issued around 300 takedown requests in the past three months, with most acted upon by the platforms, according to sources. Law-enforcement agencies identify posts through routine monitoring, assess their content, and provide reasons when seeking their removal.

"The recent takedowns are a direct consequence of the advisory issued to Meta. The advisory seems to have been incorporated into Meta's community standards, contributing to restrictions imposed under the company's own policies," advocate Rishav Ranjan said.

What recourse do users have when their posts or accounts are blocked?

Users can challenge restrictions imposed under Sections 69A and 79(3)(b) by questioning their legality, including through the courts where appropriate. However, where content is restricted under a platform's own community standards, users are expected to approach the platform's grievance officer first and, if dissatisfied with the decision, appeal to the government's Grievance Appellate Committee.

Legal experts said this shift towards platform-level enforcement had made it more difficult for users to obtain timely relief.

"Now, users do not have the remedy in constitutional courts as Meta has taken up the exercise," Mr. Ranjan said. "Writing to a grievance officer often results in an automated acknowledgement, which can then be taken to the committee. The user is then required to wait for 30 days for a result. This adds 60-90 days before the appeal results in a solution. Meanwhile, the user's account remains blocked, in some cases impacting their livelihood and credibility."



The logo of Meta seen at the entrance of the company's temporary stand ahead of the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland in 2025. REUTERS

GS 3: SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY
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Why is the NVS-03 satellite launch significant?

What is NavIC? What is its operational status? What does the NVS-03 satellite, which was launched on board the GSLV on October 30, carry? What corrective measures is ISRO attempting? Did recent launch failures affect the NVS-03 mission?

Jacob Koshy

The story so far:

The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) successfully launched the NVS-03 satellite from the Satish Dhawan Space Centre in Sriharikota on board the Geosynchronous Satellite Launch Vehicle (GSLV) on October 30. The launch will restore base-level functionality to India's indigenous 'GPS' system, called NavIC.

What is NavIC?

India launched the first-generation Indian Regional Navigation Satellite System (IRNSS) satellites between 2013 and 2018. They were designed to provide positioning, navigation and timing (PNT) services over India, to an area extending approximately 1,500 km beyond its boundaries. IRNSS was subsequently renamed NavIC, for 'Navigation with Indian Constellation'. Unlike the U.S. GPS, which has global coverage, NavIC was conceived as a regional system.

Satellite navigation systems generally provide two categories of signals: an open signal for civilian applications like navigation, transportation, disaster management, and telecommunications, and a restricted signal for authorised users, including the armed forces. The latter offers greater accuracy. For the armed forces, NavIC would offer a degree of operational independence.

However even with NVS-03, it will be a while before these loftier goals are realised.

NVS-03, followed by NVS-04 and NVS-05 — purportedly to be launched by December — are expected to help restore NavIC



The GSLV-F18 rocket carrying the NVS-03 satellite stands on the launch pad at the Satish Dhawan Space Centre ahead of liftoff, in Sriharikota. ANI

What is the operational status of NavIC?

Of the satellites launched under the original IRNSS programme, several have either been decommissioned, failed to reach their intended orbits, or have suffered failures of their onboard clocks. In July 2025, ISRO disclosed that five satellites were completely defunct, with all three clocks aboard each no longer functioning.

The situation deteriorated further in March, when the last functioning atomic clock aboard IRNSS-1F stopped working. The satellite, launched in 2016, had completed its designed mission life of 10 years three days prior. This left only three satellites able to provide PNT services. At least four are required for NavIC to function as intended.

There was also a setback in January 2025, when ISRO successfully placed the NVS-02 satellite in a geosynchronous transfer orbit, but the satellite's thrusters failed to move it into its intended final orbit.

What does NVS-03 carry?

NVS-03 is part of the second generation of satellites ISRO is developing to modernise NavIC. Each NVS satellite carries at least one indigenous rubidium atomic clock. Developed by the ISRO Space Applications Centre, these clocks are intended to replace the imported clocks made by Swiss company SpectraTime, used in the first generation IRNSS satellites.

The payload in Friday's launch consisted of imported and indigenous clocks, but ISRO has not shared more details.

Atomic clocks provide precise timing signals that allow receivers on the ground to calculate their position by measuring the time taken by signals to travel from satellites. Even a small timing error can translate into a significant positioning error.

What corrective measures is ISRO attempting?

NVS-01, launched in May 2023, was successfully placed in orbit and carries an indigenous rubidium atomic clock. NVS-02 was the second satellite in this series, but this mission's failure delayed subsequent launches. NVS-03, followed by NVS-04 and NVS-05 – purportedly to be launched by December – are expected to help restore NavIC.

ISRO's move towards indigenous clocks is also a corrective measure. It has also proposed increasing the number of clocks onboard each satellite to five, providing additional redundancy.

However, the indigenous clocks face procurement challenges. A March editorial in *The Hindu* argued that the transition to domestic manufacturing has not ensured a dependable supply of flight-ready equipment. ISRO also continues to function as both designer and operator of NavIC and, unlike the U.S. GPS Directorate or the European Union Agency for the Space Programme, lacks a dedicated counterpart to manage its navigation constellation.

Did recent launch failures affect the NVS-03 mission?

The NVS-03 launch comes against the backdrop of an unusually difficult period for ISRO. Two successive failures of the Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle (PSLV) forced the space agency to pause launches while a failure analysis committee investigated the causes.

The PSLV and GSLV are different rocket families but share aspects of their first-stage solid motor lineage, avionics, guidance systems, and manufacturing infrastructure. The government has said it has identified and resolved the causes of the failures but has declined to publish the committee's findings. ISRO has had only two successful launches this year, the other being the GSLV-F17 mission that launched the EOS-05 satellite.

The NVS-03 launch also departed from the usual spacecraft configuration, with ISRO having cleared a plan to fly it with its pyrotechnic valves already open, in a bid to avoid a recurrence of a problem that prevented NVS-02 from manoeuvring into its intended orbit.

GS 3: ENERGY

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What do the new E100 vehicle rules mean?

What has changed? Should existing vehicles switch to E85 or E100? What are the concerns over ethanol blending?

Jagriti Chandra

The story so far:

The Ministry of Road Transport and Highways has amended the Central Motor Vehicles Rules, 1989, to permit the use of ethanol-based fuels containing up to 100% ethanol (E100) in vehicles. The move paves the way for flex-fuel (flexible fuel) vehicles, which can run on petrol, ethanol blends of varying proportions, or pure ethanol.

While petrol is refined from crude oil extracted from the earth, ethanol is a type of alcohol that can be produced by fermenting plant biomass (such as sugarcane, maize, or broken rice). The two fuels can be mixed.

What has the government changed?

One of the key changes is the inclusion of E100, or fuel comprising 100% ethanol, alongside E85 in several tables under Rule 115, which deals with emission standards and related requirements for motor vehicles. E85 is a fuel containing up to 85% ethanol, while E100 consists entirely of ethanol, subject to applicable fuel specifications. The amendments include an explanatory note stating that E85 or E100 may be used only in flex-fuel vehicles designed by original equipment manufacturers.

Should existing vehicles switch to E85 or E100?

No. In a press statement, the Ministry clarified that a vehicle's compatibility with E10 or E20 does not establish its suitability for E85. The notification does not require owners of existing vehicles to switch to E85 or modify their vehicles, either now or later. Motorists should check the fuel-compatibility sticker on their vehicle and follow the manufacturer's guidance in the owner's manual when choosing fuel at a filling station, the Ministry's statement added.

The notification does not require owners of existing vehicles to switch to E85 or modify their vehicles, either now or later

How will the amendments support the roll-out of E100 vehicles?

The amendments are expected to facilitate homologation, the official certification process through which authorised agencies, such as the Automotive Research Association of India, verify that vehicles and components comply with technical, safety, and environmental standards before they can be approved for sale or use on public roads. This will help secure type approvals for E100-powered vehicles, supporting their roll-out and wider consumer adoption. Corrections have also been incorporated into fuel classifications, including a reference to gasoline blended with 20% ethanol, or E20, in place of an earlier notation referring to E10.

What is the status of the Ethanol Blended Petrol Programme now?

India achieved its 20% ethanol-blending (E20) target in 2025, five years ahead of the original 2030 deadline set under the National Policy on Biofuels, 2018. From April 2026, all Bharat Stage-VI (BS-VI) vehicles are required to fully meet E20 emission standards, and all petrol sold across India is mandated to contain 20% ethanol (E20). The policy focus is now widening beyond E20; the government has enabled the regulatory pathway for E85 and E100 vehicles, though these will require compatible flex-fuel vehicles and dedicated dispensing infrastructure.

What are consumers' concerns?

The main concern is vehicle compatibility. Owners of older or non-E20-compliant vehicles question whether E20 could damage components, raise maintenance costs, or leave them without access to lower-ethanol petrol.

Consumers also question E20's effect on fuel economy. Ethanol has a lower energy density than petrol; while the government estimates a 5% decline in mileage, some consumers say the loss is greater. Dealers, meanwhile, warn that ethanol's affinity for water could raise contamination risks during the monsoon, strengthening the case for separate storage and dispensing systems for higher blends.

Users have also questioned why blending of ethanol has not reduced retail fuel prices. The government has responded by saying that procurement of raw materials such as maize at ₹71.86 per litre is higher than $70 per barrel of crude oil (or ₹37 to ₹40 per litre).

Experts argue that the focus on ethanol blending risks distracting from electrification, which they say offers a clearer long-term path to deep emissions cuts. "The future is electric. Other technologies are interim solutions. Electrification is cleaner, avoids the lifecycle emissions associated with ethanol production, and offers public health and climate benefits," said Amit Bhatt, managing director, International Council on Clean Transportation.

There are also concerns about the land and water required for large-scale ethanol production, the choice of crops used as feedstock, and the potential competition between fuel and food production.

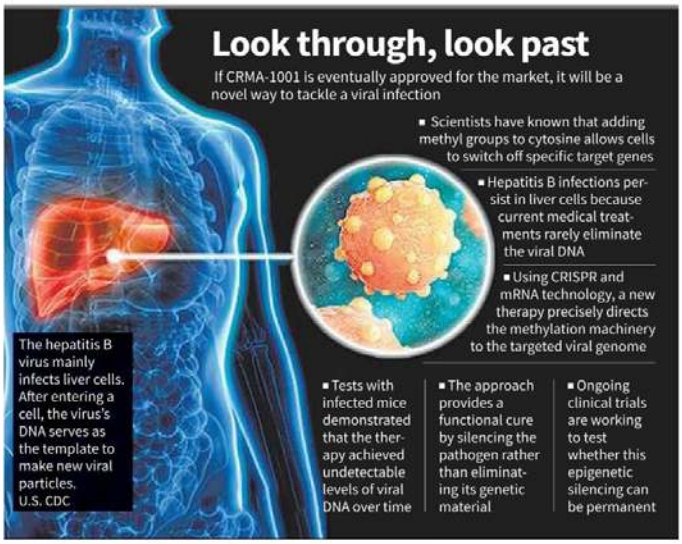
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Gene therapy aims for a cure by silencing hepatitis B DNA

An experimental therapy called CRMA-1001 is a remarkable development because, instead of targeting the virus directly, it silences the viral DNA; this is promising because treatments rarely eliminate the DNA, which allows the virus to rebound

Arun Panchapakesan

According to new work reported in *Nature Biomedical Engineering*, scientists have used epigenetic control to treat a hepatitis B infection. The development is remarkable because, instead of targeting the virus directly, the work silenced the viral DNA. This is promising because current treatments rarely eliminate the DNA, which allows the virus to rebound. By silencing this residue, the treatment could offer a path to a lasting functional cure for hepatitis B.



Virus in hiding

The hepatitis B virus mainly infects liver cells. After entering a cell, the virus's DNA serves as the template to make new viral particles. In many people, the immune system clears the infection, but if it does not, the viral DNA can persist for years or even decades in the host's liver.

In this time, the virus can remain silent, meaning the viral DNA is still present in the cell but its genes are not active to produce new viruses. This allows the virus to 'hide' from the immune system. Then, at a later point, the virus can activate again and produce new virus particles.

Studies have shown that one of the mechanisms by which the virus stays silent is by methylating cytosines.

DNA is segmented into genes, and each gene contains the information necessary to make a particular protein. These proteins essay their roles in the cells. Since every cell in the body has two copies – one from each parent – of all human DNA, all cells technically have the blueprint to make a whole organism. However, cells also have specialised functions: a brain cell does not need the genes for the proteins used to digest food.

One of DNA's four building blocks is cytosine. Cells can attach a chemical tag, like the methyl group ($-CH_3$), to cytosine to silence the corresponding gene. This prevents the cell's protein factory from reading the gene and the cell from making that protein. Problems in this epigenetic system can lead to diseases like cancers.

The new study has reported a new experimental therapy called CRMA-1001 that can reportedly silence the DNA of the hepatitis B virus by selectively methylating the virus's genome.

The study's authors combined two molecular components to achieve this, called a 'locator' and an 'effector'. The locator used the CRISPR-Cas9 gene-editing tool to find and bind to a specific DNA sequence: in this case, a sequence within the viral DNA. This allowed the CRISPR system to take the 'effector', the methylation machinery, to the correct location. The effector had proteins that could add methyl groups to nearby cytosines in the viral DNA and proteins that help switch off genes. Finally, the researchers packed the entire system and delivered it on an mRNA platform. Once a cell had read the instructions to make the required proteins, it degraded them, stopping the production of those proteins too.

The researchers gave mice infected with hepatitis B virus either a single dose of CRMA-1001 or three doses, one month apart, and regularly tested them for six months for the signs of infection. They reported that after one dose, the levels of several hepatitis B virus markers, including the viral DNA and two viral proteins called HBsAg and HBeAg, dropped significantly. When they tested the viral DNA, they found new methyl groups, suggesting the treatment was working as intended. The effect was even stronger after three doses: six months after the first dose, as many as 90% of the animals had less viral DNA than could be detected.

CRMA-1001 is not a cure in the traditional sense of the word. The hepatitis B virus DNA is still present in the liver cells. Instead, the study demonstrated a functional cure: when the virus is not necessarily eliminated but is kept so thoroughly suppressed that, for all intents and purposes, the patient has no active signs of disease. In this study, the team followed up with the mice for six months after treatment, and the researchers found sustained suppression of the virus in that period. However, the study did not establish whether the virus could eventually become active again after those six months, since the viral DNA was still present.

Further studies are needed to examine the long-term effects of CRMA-1001, including whether the silencing effect can persist over many years and whether the virus can ever become active again after treatment. An ongoing phase I/II clinical trial includes these among other questions. Nonetheless, CRMA-1001 represents a novel way to tackle a viral infection: instead of fighting the threat, the cell simply ignores it.

(Arun Panchapakesan is an assistant professor at the Y.R. Gaitonde Centre for AIDS Research and Education, Chennai)

GS 3: ECONOMY

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Rupee slide: Panic is no policy



OFF THE RECORD

BY P VAIDYANATHAN IYER

THERE IS some panic about the falling rupee in a section of Delhi, the country's capital, which makes policy. Such nervousness generally gets amplified when transmitted to Mumbai, the city which makes and regulates financial markets. A week or ten days back, a discussion paper by the Reserve Bank of India captured this phenomenon just perfectly: to address Delhi's anxieties, the RBI proposed ideas to control dollar outflows, which did well only to alarm everyone.

The RBI is learnt to have proposed disallowing resident individuals from sending money abroad for buying real estate and shares, overseas direct investment, opening bank accounts, and giving loans to NRI relatives under the Liberalised Remittance Scheme (LRS). Further, the LRS limit for all current account transactions, including overseas travel, but excluding health and education, may be reduced to $50,000 a year from $2,50,000 a year, it has suggested.

It is a drastic measure, and a typical bureaucratic response to a situation when there are no easy and quick solutions. Put very simply, a fall in rupee can be stemmed either by strong dollar inflows or by rationing dollar outflows. Given the flux in the global financial markets, foreign investors are not necessarily queueing up to invest in India. And strong macroeconomic fundamentals alone do not guarantee robust FDI or FPI inflows. So, RBI thinks restricting dollar outflows, which is under its control, can help – after all, LRS remittances in 2025-26 stood at roughly $29 billion dollars.

First things first: What is the panic all about?

The rupee is depreciating, and fast. In the last 12 months, it has fallen by almost 7 per cent to 94.95 from 88.84 against the US dollar. This matters because it makes imports expensive. So, a barrel of crude oil valued at $100 will now cost Rs 9,495 compared with Rs 8,884 a year ago. Similarly, gold. It makes foreign travel and education too expensive.

To save dollars and arrest the rupee fall, the PM exhorted people to cut fuel consumption, avoid gold purchases, and postpone overseas travel to save dollars. Dampening the demand for dollars bodes well for the rupee. On its part, the RBI sold dollars, or bought rupees, to shore up its value. It also hiked the key policy rate; higher interest rates make rupee assets like bonds attractive for foreign investors, and facilitate its appreciation. But nothing really helped. The market continues to bet the rupee will fall.

> Mumbai is getting to hear two confusing messages from Delhi. One is of panic over the depreciating rupee – what is RBI doing with such huge reserves. The other is – no need to intervene, let the rupee find its floor. Both are fraught with risks

The global storm: Why India finds itself in a tight spot

Crude oil prices have topped $115 a barrel, and there is no respite from the two wars — Russia-Ukraine and Israel/US-Iran. US President Donald Trump is difficult, and China strategically leverages its dominance in manufacturing, rare earths, electric vehicle batteries, solar panels, etc, while dealing with India and others. All this has kept most countries on tenterhooks, and markets hate uncertainty.

Meanwhile, the US government continues to borrow, leading to rising yields, making the greenback attractive relative to other currencies. The difference in yields between 10-year US bonds (about 5 per cent) and Government of India bonds (about 7.5 per cent) is probably at its two-decade low of 2-2.5 per cent. What this means is foreign investors would rather invest in US bonds since they do not have to worry about rupee depreciation or inflation.

Further, US companies in the Artificial Intelligence space and building large language models are attracting whatever remaining dollar is available. India, unfortunately, does not really have any AI play. So, along with other emerging markets, it finds itself in a difficult situation.

What's lacking: Conveying a coherent strategy

India's macro fundamentals are good. Growth is robust, inflation is under control, and the government is fiscally prudent. Lacklustre private sector investment, stagnant wages and lack of enough jobs continue to be sentiment dampeners.

RBI is estimated to have sold $75-80 billion during June-October defending the rupee. Its outstanding net forward sales (contracts to sell dollars on a future date at an exchange rate agreed upon today) stood at $239 billion in September end. At $720 billion, foreign exchange reserves are comfortable. More cushion is always better.

Mumbai is getting to hear two confusing messages from Delhi. One is of panic over the depreciating rupee – what is RBI doing with such huge reserves. The other is – no need to intervene, let the rupee find its floor. Both are fraught with risks. And, what is surprising is that the institution of RBI has reacted to Delhi in the most possible defensive manner. Curbing LRS outflows may result in spreading the panic further than stabilising the rupee.

What the market is looking for is probably credible communication that acknowledges the vulnerabilities – that, like many other countries, India is also caught in a global capital vortex. It would be happy with a near-term coherent strategy.

The writer is Managing Editor, The Indian Express. Off the Record is a fortnightly column

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• ELECTRICITY PRICES FOR AMERICAN HOMES HAVE RISEN MORE THAN 10% SINCE 2024 WHEN PRESIDENT DONALD TRUMP WAS ELECTED

Rising power bills, data centre boom put US utilities in spotlight ahead of midterms

Reuters
New York, October 31

US ELECTRICITY prices had flown under the radar in past national elections, but they have become a major political issue in this year's midterms as Americans grow angry over rising utility bills and deals for power-hungry data centres.

Nationwide, according to Energy Information Administration data, electricity prices for homes have risen more than 10% since 2024 when US President Donald Trump was elected along with Republican majorities in both houses of the US Congress. Higher electricity prices have outpaced the rise in costs for other goods and services.

Power bills have grown even faster in political battleground states of Ohio, Michigan and Pennsylvania, which are also hot spots for new data centres. In some cases, electricity bills have soared by triple the inflation rate.

Many politicians vying for top statehouse seats across the country this year have backed cracking down on utilities. Some have proposed freezing utility rate increases and slashing guaranteed returns, steps that could have sweeping consequences for the country's utility industry.

"It could be the first election to feature utilities and electricity, specifically, as a prominent issue in the midterms," said Charles Hua, executive director of PowerLines, a nonprofit that advocates reforming utility policy to favour consumers. "Part of that is because people's utility bills have gone up and up, and they don't see any end in sight."

Utilities are heavily regulated. State regulators generally must approve utilities' requests to spend on the grid and to recover those costs through rate increases. Regulators also set the return on equity utilities can earn on their grid investments.

This year, utilities are on track to match last year's record high $31 billion in rate increase requests to regulators, a PowerLines survey showed. Last year's spending was double the previous record.



Higher electricity prices have outpaced the rise in costs for other goods and services. REUTERS

The investor-owned companies are also expected to carry out a record of nearly $1.3 trillion in capital spending over the next five years, according to an analysis by S&P Global's Regulatory Research Associates.

Utilities spotlighted

Seats on nine state public utility commissions are up for election this year, nearly all the US states where voters elect their utility regulators. These include burgeoning data center hubs Arizona and Georgia.

Governors will be chosen in 36 US states this year, and governors appoint utility regulators in states where commissioners are not directly elected.

In Ohio, Democrat Amy Acton has promised to lower energy bills if she is elected governor. Her campaign said she will also appoint a public utilities commission that was "not beholden to utility companies" and work with the state attorney general to crack down on "excessive rate hikes and predatory practices."

Ohio's residential electricity bills have grown by more than 20% over the last two years, according to EIA data.

Acton has also said she supports a data centre moratorium. Her Republican opponent Vivek Ramaswamy said he would assure Ohioans living near data centres would not pay electricity bills at all.

Some governors who are up for reelection have used their political weight to pressure the power industry to keep prices down.

In April, Pennsylvania Governor Josh Shapiro announced that prominent utility, PECO Energy Company, had acceded to his demand that it withdraw its proposal with state regulators to increase rates. Shapiro, a Democrat running for reelection, said the move would reduce future utility bills by as much as $34 a month.

He followed up with a letter to more utility CEOs seeking changes in how utilities justify spending and returns on equity.

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