



MARCH 2025



The

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Table of Contents

2ND MARCH 2025	9
WHAT WERE THE OBJECTIONS TO NEW ADVOCATES BILL?: TH FAQ	9
EASY EXPLANATION: WHY THE ADVOCATES (AMENDMENT) BILL, 2025 WAS WITHDRAWN	9
WHY IS INDIA STARING AT AN OBESITY CHALLENGE?: TH FAQ	11
EASY EXPLANATION: RISING OBESITY IN INDIA AND ITS CONSEQUENCES	11
GENE THERAPY FOR MAPLE SYRUP URINE DISEASE SHOWS PROMISE: TH SCIENCE	12
EASY EXPLANATION: GENE THERAPY BREAKTHROUGH FOR MAPLE SYRUP URINE DISEASE (MSUD)	12
STUDY IDENTIFIES SOURCES OF PM2.5 IN NORTHERN INDIA: TH SCIENCE	13
EASY EXPLANATION: STUDY REVEALS MAJOR SOURCES OF AIR POLLUTION IN NORTHERN INDIA	13
3RD MARCH 2025	14
THE REPEALED LAW ON DRAMATIC PERFORMANCES, FLAGGED BY THE PM-INDIAN EXPRESS EXPLAINED	14
MAKING SENSE OF GDP DATA-INDIAN EXPRESS EXPLAINED	15
GIVING CITIES THEIR DUE-INDIAN EXPRESS EDITORIAL	16
THE WOMAN'S HOUR-INDIAN EXPRESS EDITORIAL	17
EUCLID SPACE TELESCOPE DISCOVERS NEW 'EINSTEIN RING' IN NEARBY GALAXY-THE HINDU SCIENCE	18
4TH MARCH 2025	19
AFTER SUCCESSFUL PRIVATE LANDING ON MOON, MORE MISSIONS TO FOLLOW-INDIAN EXPRESS EXPLAINED	19
INDIA'S AGRICULTURE EXPORTS-INDIAN EXPRESS EXPLAINED	20
WHY OLIVE RIDLEYS CAME TO ODISHA NESTING GROUND IN LARGER NUMBERS THIS YEAR-INDIAN EXPRESS EXPLAINED	21
MAPPING HER WORK-INDIAN EXPRESS EDITORIAL	21
NASA TO LAUNCH SPHEREx TO EXPLORE WHAT HAPPENED RIGHT AFTER BIG BANG-THE HINDU SCIENCE	22
HOW IS CHINA'S FOREIGN POLICY STRUCTURED?-THE HINDU TEXT AND CONTEXT	23
THE WAY TO PROTECT ORANS-THE HINDU EDITORIAL	24
5TH MARCH 2025	25
BEHIND THE UNPRECEDENTED COURT REVIEW OF MAHARASHTRA SLUMS ACT-INDIAN EXPRESS EXPLAINED	25
WHY SPACE AGENCIES WANT TO MAKE THE MOST OF 'SOLAR MAXIMUM'-INDIAN EXPRESS EXPLAINED	26
WHY US AID MATTERS TO UKRAINE-INDIAN EXPRESS EXPLAINED	27
DELIMITATION OF CONSTITUENCIES:A PRIMER ON THE EXERCISE AND THE PROCESS-INDIAN EXPRESS EXPLAINED	28
TERMS OF CO-EXISTENCE-INDIAN EXPRESS EDITORIAL	29
HOW THE WALLACE LINE EXPLAINS THE DIFFERENCE IN SPECIES ACROSS CONTINENTS-THE HINDU TEXT AND CONTEXT	30
6TH MARCH 2025	31
THE EGYPTIAN ALTERNATIVE TO TRUMP'S GAZA 'RIVIERA' PLAN-INDIAN EXPRESS EXPLAINED	31
COULD EUROPE'S EUTELSAT HELP TO REPLACE STARLINK IN UKRAINE?-INDIAN EXPRESS EXPLAINED	32



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WHAT THE FIRST-EVER COMPREHENSIVE SURVEY OF INDIA'S RIVER DOLPHINS FOUND-INDIAN EXPRESS EXPLAINED	33
TRUMP'S TARIFFS CHALLENGE-INDIAN EXPRESS EXPLAINED	34
OF BIG POWERS AND PAWNS-INDIAN EXPRESS EDITORIAL.....	35
WHEN DEBRIS FROM SPACE CRASHES TO THE EARTH, WHO IS RESPONSIBLE?-THE HINDU SCIENCE	36
WARRIORS OF HOPE-THE HINDU EDITORIAL.....	37

7TH MARCH 2025.....38

WHAT US AID GIVES,TO WHOM-INDIAN EXPRESS EXPLAINED	38
PASHU AUSHADHI INITIATIVE FOR HEALTH OF LIVESTOCK-INDIAN EXPRESS EXPLAINED.....	39
THE ACADEMIC LINK BETWEEN NEPAL AND INDIA-THE HINDU TEXT AND CONTEXT	40
MEDICAL WEARABLES TECH: AN EARLY WARNING SYSTEM FOR YOUR HEALTH-THE HINDU SCIENCE	41
BEYOND 'BEIJING', UNLOCKING A FEMINIST FUTURE IN INDIA-THE HINDU EDITORIAL	42
WOMEN IN CORPORATE LEADERSHIP, THE LIVED REALITY-THE HINDU EDITORIAL	43
IS ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE AFFECTING CRITICAL THINKING SKILLS?-THE HINDU EDITORIAL	44

8TH MARCH 2025.....45

STORY OF 26/11 ACCUSED TAHAWWUR RANA, SET TO BE EXTRADITED TO INDIA FROM US-INDIAN EXPRESS EXPLAINED	45
EMERGING FALLOUT OF TARIFFS-INDIAN EXPRESS EXPLAINED	46
WHY VANUATU BOASTS ONE OF THE MOST POPULAR 'GOLDEN PASSPORT' SCHEMES-INDIAN EXPRESS EXPLAINED	48
A NEW RULE BOOK-INDIAN EXPRESS EDITORIAL.....	49
INCLUSION IN PUBLIC SPACES — FROM FEAR TO FREEDOM-THE HINDU EDITORIAL.....	50
AN EQUITABLE FUTURE FOR WOMEN IN SCIENCE, IN INDIA-THE HINDU EDITORIAL	51
DIVERSIFY NOW-THE HINDU EDITORIAL	52

9TH MARCH 2025.....52

WHY HAS INDIA PROMISED TO BUY MORE U.S. OIL?: TH FAQ	52
EASY EXPLANATION: INDIA'S GROWING ENERGY TIES WITH THE U.S.....	52
WHY ARE INDIAN FIRMS RACING TO BUILD LOCAL AI?.....	53
EASY EXPLANATION: INDIAAI MISSION AND AI KOSHA.....	53
100-DAY TB ELIMINATION CAMPAIGN FAR FROM ACHIEVING MAIN OBJECTIVE: TH SCIENCE	54
EASY EXPLANATION: 100-DAY INTENSIFIED TB ELIMINATION CAMPAIGN	54
COUNTING OUR VULNERABLE DOLPHINS: TH SCIENCE.....	55
EASY EXPLANATION: INDIA'S RIVER DOLPHINS & THEIR CHALLENGES	55
KEY TAKEAWAYS: INDIA'S RIVER DOLPHINS	56

10TH MARCH 2025.....56

WHY TRUMP WANTS TO START TALKS ON IRAN N-DEAL HE WRECKED IN 2018-INDIAN EXPRESS EXPLAINED.....	56
INDIA'S OBESITY PROBLEM-INDIAN EXPRESS EXPLAINED	58
HOW,WHY APEX COURT LIMITED THE POWER OF ARREST UNDER GST, CUSTOMS ACTS-INDIAN EXPRESS EXPLAINED.....	59
INDIA & 'AMERICA FIRST'-INDIAN EXPRESS EDITORIAL.....	60
INDIAN TEAM MAKES DOUBLY SECURE INK TO THWART COUNTERFEITING-THE HINDU SCIENCE	61
1. NEW ANTI-COUNTERFEIT INK DEVELOPED	61
2. UNIQUE DUAL FLUORESCENCE.....	62
3. HOW THE INK IS MADE	62
4. WHY IT'S SECURE	62





5. PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS AND FUTURE STEPS	62
6. EXPERT OPINION	62
CLOSING THE GENDER GAP IN THE HIGHER JUDICIARY-THE HINDU EDITORIAL	62
1. CURRENT GENDER GAP IN HIGHER JUDICIARY	63
2. DELAYED AND LIMITED OPPORTUNITIES	63
3. SYSTEMIC INEQUALITY AND BIAS	63
4. OPAQUE COLLEGIUM SYSTEM	63
5. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CHANGE	63
6. BENEFITS OF GENDER EQUALITY	63
BUILDING CAPACITIES-THE HINDU EDITORIAL	64
1. ENHANCED DIPLOMACY WITH THE U.K. AND IRELAND	64
2. RENEWED PUSH FOR FTAS	64
3. INDIA'S FLEXIBLE TRADE STANCE	64
4. ECONOMIC BENEFITS FOR INDIA	64
5. OPPORTUNITIES FROM GEOPOLITICAL SHIFTS	64
6. STRATEGIC POSITIONING	64
INDIA, MAURITIUS AND A VISIT TO DEEPEN LONG-STANDING TIES-THE HINDU EDITORIAL	65
1. HISTORIC AND CULTURAL BONDS	65
2. CONSISTENT POLITICAL RELATIONS	65
2. ECONOMIC AND TRADE RELATIONS	65
3. STRATEGIC MARITIME IMPORTANCE	65
4. DIPLOMATIC ENGAGEMENT	66
5. OPPORTUNITY AMIDST GEOPOLITICAL CHALLENGES	66
THE EMPOWERMENT OF INDIA'S WOMEN WITH BOLD POLICIES-THE HINDU EDITORIAL	66
1. SANITATION AND WATER INITIATIVES EMPOWERING WOMEN	66
2. ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT THROUGH WOMEN-LED BUSINESSES	66
3. DIGITAL INCLUSION AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP	67
4. INCREASED WOMEN'S REPRESENTATION IN GOVERNANCE	67
4. TRANSFORMATIONAL GOVERNMENT POLICIES	67
5. COMMITMENT TO GENDER EQUALITY	67
11TH MARCH 2025	67
WHAT CHINESE STATE MEDIA IS SAYING ABOUT TRUMP FOREIGN POLICY-INDIAN EXPRESS EXPLAINED	67
WHY MAURITIUS MATTERS-INDIAN EXPRESS EXPLAINED	68
HOW A GENE-EDITED BANANA MAY HELP REDUCE FOOD WASTE-INDIAN EXPRESS EXPLAINED	69
THE DANGERS OF DELIMITATION-INDIAN EXPRESS EDITORIAL	69
CHALLENGE OF PEACE-INDIAN EXPRESS EDITORIAL	70
A FIELD OF HER OWN-INDIAN EXPRESS EDITORIAL	71
1. WOMEN'S ROLE IN AGRICULTURE AND FISHERIES:	71
2. CONSTRAINTS FACED BY WOMEN:	71
3. DIGITAL TECHNOLOGIES AS EMPOWERMENT:	71
4. REAL-WORLD IMPACT OF DIGITAL INCLUSION:	72
5. IMPORTANCE OF GENDER-RESPONSIVE TECHNOLOGIES:	72
6. STRUCTURAL CHALLENGES AND WIDER ECOSYSTEM:	72
7. NEED FOR LONG-TERM STRATEGIES:	72
AN INDIA-U.S. TRADE AGREEMENT AND THE TEST OF WTO LAWS-THE HINDU EDITORIAL	72
FLAWED FOOD REGULATIONS FUEL THE OBESITY CRISIS-THE HINDU EDITORIAL	73
14TH MARCH 2025	74





KIDNEY DISEASE NO LONGER JUST FOR THE ELDERLY, SAY EXPERTS: TH SCIENCE	74
EASY EXPLANATION.....	74
KEY TAKEAWAYS.....	75
HIGH RATES OF SELF-TREATMENT AMONG OLDER ADULTS: STUDY	76
EASY EXPLANATION.....	76
KEY TAKEAWAYS.....	77
WHAT IS HANTAVIRUS AND HOW DOES IT SPREAD?: TH SCIENCE	78
KEY TAKEAWAYS.....	78
ACCEPTABLE CONTRAST: TH EDITORIAL	79
EASY EXPLANATION.....	79
OLD TIES, NEW PRIORITIES: TH EDITORIAL	80
EASY EXPLANATION.....	80
THE GENDER BUDGET — BIGGER ALLOCATIONS, LITTLE IMPACT: TH EDITORIAL.....	82
EASY EXPLANATION.....	82
HOW CAN INDIA MEET ITS RISING POWER DEMAND?: TH TEXT&CONTEXT.....	83
EASY EXPLANATION.....	83
UNDERSTANDING THE NEUROBIOLOGICAL BASIS OF SUBSTANCE ABUSE ADDICTION: TH TEXT&CONTEXT	85
EASY EXPLANATION.....	85
KEY TAKEAWAYS.....	86
 15TH MARCH 2025	87
 MODERN DAY SUMMITRY, ITS PERILS AND ITS PROSPECTS: TH EDITORIAL	87
EASY EXPLANATION.....	87
A VOLUNTARY MANDATE: TH EDITORIAL.....	88
EASY EXPLANATION.....	88
 16TH MARCH 2025	90
 WHY HAS INDIA GOT ANOTHER TIGER RESERVE?: TH FAQ.....	90
EASY EXPLANATION.....	90
WHAT IS THE REACH OF AN ICC WARRANT?:TH FAQ.....	91
EASY EXPLANATION.....	91
KEY TAKEAWAYS.....	92
WHAT'S ON THE AGENDA OF THE RAISINA DIALOGUE?: TH FAQ	93
EASY EXPLANATION.....	93
KEY TAKEAWAYS.....	94
THE REBELS WHO SHOOK PAKISTAN: TH PROFILES	94
EASY EXPLANATION.....	95
KEY TAKEAWAYS.....	96
ENTER INDIA: TH PROFILES	96
EASY EXPLANATION.....	96
HOW DO THESE SATELLITES WORK?.....	97
CHALLENGES STARLINK HAS FACED IN INDIA	97
WHAT'S NEXT?	97
INCREASING GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS MAY THREATEN SATELLITES: TH SCIENCE	98
EASY EXPLANATION.....	98
ENVIRONMENTAL MAPPING REVEALS MELIOIDOSIS PEAK DURING MONSOON: TH SCIENCE.....	99
EASY EXPLANATION.....	99
TREATING CHIKUNGUNYA USING HIV/AIDS DRUG EFAVIRENZ: TH SCIENCE.....	100





EASY EXPLANATION.....	100
17TH MARCH 2025	102
ONE MORE TIGER RESERVE:WHY INDIA NEEDS THEM,THE CHALLENGES SOME FACE-INDIAN EXPRESS EXPLAINED	102
THE FIVE EYES FRACTURE-INDIAN EXPRESS EDITORIAL.....	103
BREAKING THROUGH-INDIAN EXPRESS EDITORIAL.....	104
AIR POLLUTION WILL LOWER INDIA'S SOLAR GENERATION CAPACITY: STUDY-THE HINDU SCIENCE	105
WHAT IS ELON MUSK'S STARLINK ALL ABOUT?-THE HINDU TEXT AND CONTEXT	106
IS SYRIA HEADING TOWARD PEACE OR MORE CHAOS?-THE HINDU TEXT AND CONTEXT.....	107
18TH MARCH 2025	108
EUROPE AND THE NEW AMERICA-INDIAN EXPRESS EXPLAINED	108
WHY DOCKING-UNDOCKING CAPABILITY IS CRUCIAL FOR INDIA'S SPACE AMBITIONS-INDIAN EXPRESS EXPLAINED	109
A NOTE OF HOPE-INDIAN EXPRESS EDITORIAL.....	110
PI DAY WAS ON MARCH 14. WHY IS IT CELEBRATED?-THE HINDU SCIENCE	111
WHY ARE ELECTORAL REFORMS NECESSARY?-THE HINDU TEXT AND CONTEXT	112
ALAND WHERE AMBITION GROWS MINUS AN OUTBOUND TICKET-THE HINDU EDITORIAL.....	113
19TH MARCH 2025	113
ASTRONAUTS TO RETURN:WHAT DELAYED THEM,WHAT WE WILL LEARN-INDIAN EXPRESS EXPLAINED	113
THE MAGA EFFECT OUTSIDE US-INDIAN EXPRESS EXPLAINED	115
LIVELIHOODS AND ECOLOGY:BEHIND KERALA PROTESTS OVER OFF SHORE MINING PLAN-INDIAN EXPRESS EXPLAINED	116
THE OCEAN FRONT-INDIAN EXPRESS EDITORIAL	118
TRUST AND PUNISHMENT-INDIAN EXPRESS EDITORIAL	119
WHAT IS HAPPENING IN BALUCHISTAN?-THE HINDU TEXT AND CONTEXT	121
WHAT FACTORS INFLUENCE WOMEN'S POLITICAL PARTICIPATION?-THE HINDU TEXT AND CONTEXT	123
20TH MARCH 2025	124
IN FRESH ATTACKS ON YEMEN'S HOUTHIS,WHAT IS US SEEKING?-INDIAN EXPRESS EXPLAINED	124
WHY EURO IS RISING AGAINST DOLLAR-INDIAN EXPRESS EXPLAINED	125
SONIC WEAPON-INDIAN EXPRESS EXPLAINED	127
CLOSER TO CARE-INDIAN EXPRESS EDITORIAL	127
IS THE APAAR ID FOR STUDENTS MANDATORY?-THE HINDU TEXT AND CONTEXT	128
A DELIMITATION RED FLAG — THE LESSONS FROM J&K, ASSAM-THE HINDU EDITORIAL	129
21ST MARCH 2025	131
RAJASTHAN'S COACHING CENTRE BILL,WHY IT HAS BEEN CRITICISED-INDIAN EXPRESS EXPLAINED	131
THE LOOMING POWER SHORTAGE-INDIAN EXPRESS EXPLAINED	132
FOR THOSE WITHOUT A VOICE-INDIAN EXPRESS EDITORIAL	133
THE TB CRISIS AND WOMEN: WHY GENDER ISSUES MATTERS MORE THAN EVER-THE HINDU SCIENCE.....	134
THE CHALLENGE OF POLICING DIGITAL GIANTS-THE HINDU EDITORIAL	135
THE ASSAULT ON MULTILATERALISM AND INTERNATIONAL LAW-THE HINDU EDITORIAL.....	136
SHOULD IMMIGRANTS HAVE THE SAME RIGHT TO PROTEST AS CITIZENS?-THE HINDU TEXT AND CONTEXT	137





22ND MARCH 2025	138
WHY X HAS CHALLENGED GOVT'S USE OF SECTION 79 OF THE IT ACT-INDIAN EXPRESS EXPLAINED	138
WHY SCIENTISTS WERE SURPRISED TO FIND LIFE UNDER ANTARCTIC ICE SHELF-INDIAN EXPRESS EXPLAINED	140
TRUMP AND A WEAKER DOLLAR-INDIAN EXPRESS EXPLAINED.....	141
THE TIGER'S TALE-INDIAN EXPRESS EDITORIAL.....	143
ALL-AMERICAN DEPORTATIONS-INDIAN EXPRESS EDITORIAL	144
CHARTING A ROUTE FOR IORA UNDER INDIA'S CHAIRSHIP-THE HINDU EDITORIAL	146
NAVIGATING DIFFERENCES-THE HINDU EDITORIAL	147
23RD MARCH 2025	148
WHY IS UPLOADING VOTING DATA A CHALLENGE?: TH FAQ	148
EASY EXPLANATION:.....	148
WHAT DOES A TERROR GROUP BRANDING ENTAIL?: TH FAQ	150
EASY EXPLANATION:.....	150
HOW DO ASTRONAUTS RECOUP AFTER SPACE STAY?: TH FAQ	152
EASY EXPLANATION:.....	152
RETURN OF THE SPACEWALKERS: TH PROFILES	154
EASY EXPLANATION:.....	154
NO MISMATCH BETWEEN CIRCULATING FLU STRAINS AND VACCINE STRAINS: TH SCIENCE	156
EASY EXPLANATION:.....	156
HEALTH BENEFITS OF JACKFRUIT: TH SCIENCE	158
EASY EXPLANATION:.....	158
24TH MARCH 2025	160
CROPS US HOPES TO SELL TO INDIA-INDIAN EXPRESS EXPLAINED	160
WHY SOME IN MEGHALAYA OPPOSE RAIL CONNECTIVITY TO STATE-INDIAN EXPRESS EXPLAINED	161
AN OPEN JUSTICE-INDIAN EXPRESS EDITORIAL	163
MIGRATION,AFTER COVID-INDIAN EXPRESS EDITORIAL.....	164
THE NEED FOR UNIVERSAL AND EQUITABLE HEALTH COVERAGE-THE HINDU EDITORIAL	165
NOT THE ONLY PATH-THE HINDU EDITORIAL	167
25TH MARCH 2025	167
JUDICIARY'S IN-HOUSE INQUIRY-INDIAN EXPRESS EXPLAINED	168
FIVE CONTENTIOUS CHANGES PROPOSED BY THE WAQF BILL, 2024-INDIAN EXPRESS EXPLAINED	169
REIMAGINING RESERVATION-INDIAN EXPRESS EDITORIAL.....	170
1. BOLD QUOTA REFORMS.....	171
2. LEGAL AND CONSTITUTIONAL CHALLENGES	171
3. IMPORTANCE OF DATA AND METHODOLOGY	171
4. POLITICAL CALCULATIONS.....	171
5. NATIONAL IMPLICATIONS	171
6. RISKS AND OPPOSITION.....	171
7. NEW PHASE IN RESERVATION POLICY.....	171
8. THE ROAD AHEAD.....	172
CHINA TIES — BEWARE CONCILIATION WITHOUT DETERRENCE-THE HINDU EDITORIAL	172





THE NEED FOR A LOCALISED URBAN AGENDA-THE HINDU TEXT AND CONTEXT	173
WHAT ARE DNA POLYMORPHISMS AND HOW DO THEY DIFFERENTIATE BETWEEN PEOPLE?-THE HINDU SCIENCE.....	174
GLACIERS LOSING ICE AT RECORD LEVELS AROUND THE GLOBE: UN-THE HINDU SCIENCE.....	176
26TH MARCH 2025	177
HOW GLOBAL WARMING IS AFFECTING MOUNTAIN REGIONS ACROSS THE WORLD-INDIAN EXPRESS EXPLAINED	177
WHY KERALA HAS FINALLY OPENED THE DOOR FOR PRIVATE UNIVERSITIES IN THE STATE-INDIAN EXPRESS EXPLAINED.....	178
EUROPE WITHOUT AMERICA-INDIAN EXPRESS EDITORIAL.....	179
AI, UBI, IN BETWEEN-INDIAN EXPRESS EDITORIAL.....	180
THE CANADIAN ELECTION, SHAPED BY TRUDEAU AND TRUMP-THE HINDU EDITORIAL	180
THE 'GREAT ABANDONMENT' OF AFGHANISTAN-THE HINDU EDITORIAL	181
WHAT IS INDIA'S APPROACH TO CITIZENS ON DEATH ROW ABROAD?-THE HINDU TEXT AND CONTEXT	182
27TH MARCH 2025	183
STATUS OF INDIA'S BIOECONOMY, HOW TO SUSTAIN FURTHER GROWTH-INDIAN EXPRESS EXPLAINED.....	183
WHY ACTIVISTS ARE WORRIED ABOUT SECTION 44(3) OF NEW DATA PROTECTION LAW-INDIAN EXPRESS EXPLAINED.....	184
NJAC AND THE VETO QUESTION-INDIAN EXPRESS EXPLAINED	186
WHITTILING DOWN SOURCES OF U.S. SOFT POWER-THE HINDU TEXT AND CONTEXT.....	188
THE ROLE OF COMMUNITIES IN CONSERVING WATER-THE HINDU EDITORIAL.....	189
GOING ELECTRIC-THE HINDU EDITORIAL	191
28TH MARCH 2025	192
'PREPARATION' FOR RAPE VS 'ATTEMPT' TO COMMIT RAPE: WHAT LAW SAYS-INDIAN EXPRESS EXPLAINED.....	192
INDIA'S DEEP SEA CHALLENGE-INDIAN EXPRESS EXPLAINED	193
A TAX IN OUR INTEREST-INDIAN EXPRESS EDITORIAL.....	195
SHOULD THE FREE MOVEMENT REGIME BETWEEN INDIA AND MYANMAR REMAIN?-THE HINDU TEXT AND CONTEXT.....	196
WOMEN UNBOUND-THE HINDU EDITORIAL	197
ACCESS TO ABORTION, FOETAL VIABILITY, AND LAWS THEREOF: WOMEN ARE CAUGHT IN THE CROSSFIRE-THE HINDU SCIENCE	198
29TH MARCH 2025	200
JUDGES' ASSETS: DISCLOSURE NORMS, DIFFERENCE WITH POLITICIANS-INDIAN EXPRESS EXPLAINED.....	200
SAGAING FAULT: WHAT CAUSED THE MASSIVE EARTHQUAKE IN MYANMAR-INDIAN EXPRESS EXPLAINED.....	200
ERDOGAN'S NEW GAMBIT-INDIAN EXPRESS EXPLAINED.....	201
LOSING THE THREAD-INDIAN EXPRESS EDITORIAL.....	202
ADVANTAGE CHINA IN AFRICA'S NUCLEAR ENERGY MARKET RACE-THE HINDU EDITORIAL	203
INDIA'S GEOPOLITICAL VISION SHOULD BE LARGER-THE HINDU EDITORIAL	204
30TH MARCH 2025	205
WHAT ARE THE RULES ON JUDICIAL TRANSFERS?: TH FAQ.....	205
EASY EXPLANATION.....	205
IS A REVAMPED GST 2.0 ON THE CARDS?: TH FAQ.....	206
EASY EXPLANATION (LAYMAN'S LANGUAGE).....	206





WHY HAS X SUED THE GOVERNMENT OVER SAHYOG?: TH FAQ	208
EASY EXPLANATION.....	208
AN INTEL SNAFU: TH PROFILES.....	209
EASY EXPLANATION.....	209
TRANSPLANTATION OF A GENE-MODIFIED PIG LIVER SHOWS PROMISE: TH SCIENCE.....	210
EASY EXPLANATION.....	210
U.S. MEASLES CASES TILL MARCH SURPASSES ALL OF 2024: TH SCIENCE	211
EASY EXPLANATION.....	211

31ST MARCH 2025 **212**

KATHMANDU PROTESTS:WHY SOME NEPALIS WANT KING'S RETURN-INDIAN EXPRESS EXPLAINED	212
WHAT A NEW STUDY FOUND ON LASTING IMPACT OF DEEP-SEA MINING-INDIAN EXPRESS EXPLAINED.....	213
TRUMP'S GLOBAL TARIFFS-INDIAN EXPRESS EXPLAINED.....	214
THE NUCLEAR LEAP-INDIAN EXPRESS EDITORIAL.....	215
WHAT IS THE CONTROVERSY OVER THE BODH GAYA TEMPLE?-THE HINDU TEXT AND CONTEXT	216
WHAT IS STATUS OF THE SPACEX MARS MISSION?-THE HINDU TEXT AND CONTEXT	217
WHY THE PARKER SOLAR PROBE IS TRYING TO 'TOUCH' THE SUN-THE HINDU SCIENCE	217
AN IJS IS AN IDEA WHOSE TIME HAS COME-THE HINDU EDITORIAL.....	218



2nd March 2025

[What were the objections to new Advocates Bill?: TH FAQ](#)

Easy Explanation: Why the Advocates (Amendment) Bill, 2025 Was Withdrawn

The **Advocates (Amendment) Bill, 2025**, aimed at making changes to the **Advocates Act, 1961**, was withdrawn by the **Central Government** on **February 22, 2025** due to strong opposition from the **legal community**. The **Bar Council of India (BCI)**, the main regulatory body for lawyers, raised concerns that the **proposed amendments** could harm the independence of the legal profession. The government has promised to introduce a **revised version** after considering **public feedback**.

The Bill included several **controversial provisions**, such as:

- **Banning strikes and boycotts by lawyers**, making them punishable under the **Bar Council of India Rules**.
- **Allowing the Central Government to nominate members to the BCI**, raising fears of **government interference**.
- **Expanding the powers of the BCI**, potentially reducing the role of **State Bar Councils**.
- **Recognizing corporate lawyers and foreign law firms**, which faced opposition from sections of the legal community.



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Many lawyers **protested against the Bill**, arguing that it would **undermine their autonomy** and **affect the federal structure of the legal profession**. The government's **decision to withdraw the Bill** was welcomed, and legal experts hope that **any future reforms will be made in consultation with all stakeholders**.

Key Takeaways: What the Advocates (Amendment) Bill, 2025 Proposed and Why It Was Withdrawn

1. The Purpose of the Bill

- The **Advocates (Amendment) Bill, 2025** was introduced to **update the Advocates Act, 1961** to address **modern challenges**.
- It aimed to **align Indian legal practices with international standards**.
- The Bill came after the **Advocates Bill, 2023**, which aimed to remove **touts and outdated legal provisions**.

2. Controversial Ban on Strikes by Lawyers

- The Bill **prohibited lawyers from going on strike or boycotting courts**, citing disruption of **judicial proceedings**.
- **Violations** would be treated as **"misconduct"**, leading to disciplinary action.
- However, **lawyers opposed this**, arguing that strikes have historically been used to **protest against state excesses**.
- Example: **Dr. Saifuddin Kitchlew** led a boycott of **British courts** against the **Rowlatt Act in 1919**.

3. Concerns Over Government Control

- The Bill allowed the **Central Government to nominate up to three members** to the **Bar Council of India (BCI)**.
- It gave the Centre the **power to issue binding directions to the BCI**.
- Critics argued that **this would compromise the independence of lawyers**, as the government is the **largest litigant in India**.

4. Reduced Role of State Bar Councils

- The BCI was given **more power** to hear complaints against lawyers and suspend them.
- **Section 48B** allowed the **BCI to dissolve State Bar Councils**, making them weaker.
- Lawyers argued that **this undermined the federal structure**, where **State Bar Councils have an important role** in handling lawyer misconduct cases.

5. Impact on Corporate and Foreign Lawyers

- The Bill **expanded the definition of "legal practitioner"** to include **corporate lawyers and foreign law firms**.
- **Corporate lawyers and in-house counsel** would receive **statutory recognition**.
- The **entry of foreign law firms** into India was a contentious issue, as some lawyers felt it could **impact Indian law firms**.
- However, **experts said structured foreign entry, like in Singapore, could be beneficial if done properly**.

6. Why the Bill Was Withdrawn

- **The Bar Council of India (BCI) and lawyers strongly opposed the Bill**.
- Concerns over **government interference, restrictions on strikes, and reduced State Bar Council powers** led to protests.
- The **government withdrew the Bill** and promised a **revised version** after public consultation.

7. The Way Forward



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- Experts say **any reforms should be made in consultation with all stakeholders**, including **lawyers, bar councils, and courts**.
- The **autonomy of the legal profession and judicial independence** must be protected.
- High Courts should also be **consulted before making changes**, as they have the power to **regulate lawyer practices**.

[Why is India staring at an obesity challenge?: TH FAQ](#)

-Science

Easy Explanation: Rising Obesity in India and Its Consequences

Prime Minister Narendra Modi, in his 'Mann Ki Baat' radio address, recently highlighted the growing obesity crisis in India, particularly among children. He mentioned that 1 in 8 Indians is affected by obesity and urged people to reduce oil consumption by 10% each month to build a healthier nation.

Obesity is when the body stores excessive fat, which can increase health risks like heart disease, diabetes, and cancer. India has seen a rise in obesity rates, as shown by data from the National Family Health Surveys (NFHS). The percentage of obese women rose from 20.6% in 2015-16 to 24% in 2019-21, while for men, it increased from 18.9% to 22.9%.

Children are also affected. The percentage of overweight children under five increased from 2.1% to 3.4% between 2015 and 2021. By 2030, India is projected to have over 10% of children aged 5-9 years affected by obesity.

Experts link obesity to multiple factors:

- Unhealthy diets (processed foods, excess sugar, and refined carbs).
- Lack of physical activity (due to sedentary lifestyles, work culture, and limited access to safe outdoor spaces).
- Air pollution, which causes inflammation and increases fat storage in the body.
- Economic factors, as healthy foods like proteins, fruits, and vegetables are costly, making it difficult for low-income families to maintain a balanced diet.

Traditionally, Body Mass Index (BMI) was used to measure obesity, but new guidelines now recommend measuring waist size and body fat distribution, as Indians are genetically prone to storing fat around the abdomen, which increases the risk of heart disease and diabetes.

India needs urgent lifestyle changes, better urban planning, and affordable nutritious food to tackle this public health crisis.

Key Takeaways: Understanding Obesity in India

1. The Growing Obesity Crisis in India

- PM Modi highlighted obesity as a major health issue in his 'Mann Ki Baat' speech.
- 1 in 8 Indians is affected by obesity, which is rising, especially among children.
- India is expected to have over 10% child obesity prevalence by 2030.

2. Health Risks Associated with Obesity



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- Obesity increases the risk of:
 - Heart disease (a major cause of death in India).
 - Diabetes (India has 101 million diabetics, the highest in the world).
 - Cancer (expected to rise from 14.6 lakh cases in 2022 to 15.7 lakh by 2025).
 - Psychosocial issues (low self-esteem, bullying, and depression, especially in children).

3. Why Is Obesity Increasing in India?

- Unhealthy diet: High consumption of processed foods, sugar, and refined carbs.
- Lack of physical activity:
 - More desk jobs and digital devices leading to sedentary lifestyles.
 - Unsafe public spaces discouraging walking and cycling.
- Air pollution: Causes inflammation, which leads to fat storage in the body.
- Economic challenges:
 - Nutritious foods like proteins, vegetables, and fruits are expensive.
 - Low-income families rely on carbohydrate-heavy diets (rice & wheat) from the Public Distribution System (PDS).

4. Measuring Obesity: Beyond BMI

- Traditional BMI is not enough because it does not account for fat distribution.
- Indians tend to store fat in the abdomen, which increases the risk of:
 - Heart disease
 - Diabetes
 - Stroke
- New guidelines suggest measuring waist size, waist-to-height ratio, and body fat percentage along with BMI.

5. The Way Forward

- Encouraging healthier eating habits and making nutritious food more affordable.
- Increasing public awareness about obesity risks.
- Improving urban infrastructure with safe cycling paths, pedestrian-friendly streets, and green spaces.
- Promoting physical activity in schools and workplaces.
- Strict regulations on processed foods to limit sugar and unhealthy fats.

[Gene therapy for maple syrup urine disease shows promise: TH Science](#)

Science

Easy Explanation: Gene Therapy Breakthrough for Maple Syrup Urine Disease (MSUD)

Scientists have developed a **new gene therapy** that could **cure** a severe **genetic disorder** called **Maple Syrup Urine Disease (MSUD)**. This disease **prevents the body from breaking down certain amino acids**, leading to **severe brain damage and neurological symptoms**. Until now, the only ways to **manage MSUD** were through a **strict low-protein diet** or a **liver transplant**.

Researchers at the **University of Massachusetts Chan Medical School** have created a **gene replacement therapy** that uses a **viral vector** to deliver **functional copies of the defective genes** responsible for MSUD. This therapy has **successfully prevented death in mice and a cow-calf suffering from the disease**.



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The scientists visited a **farm where newborn calves had died from MSUD**. They treated a newly born **calf with a single dose of the therapy**, modifying it to **carry bovine (cow) genes**. The calf **grew normally for two years** and could eventually **eat a regular protein-rich diet**, showing that the therapy was effective.

While this breakthrough is **not yet available for humans**, the researchers plan to **study its long-term effects on brain function and behavior**, which could eventually lead to a **human treatment** for MSUD.

Key Takeaways: New Gene Therapy for MSUD

1. What is Maple Syrup Urine Disease (MSUD)?

- **MSUD is a severe genetic disorder** caused by mutations in genes responsible for breaking down amino acids.
- **Symptoms include:**
 - Neurological damage
 - Brain swelling
 - Life-threatening complications
- **Current treatment options are limited to a strict low-protein diet or a liver transplant.**

2. The Breakthrough Gene Therapy

- Researchers developed a **gene replacement therapy** using an **adeno-associated viral vector** to deliver **functional copies of the missing genes**.
- The therapy was **tested on mice and a cow-calf** suffering from MSUD.

3. Success in Animal Trials

- **In Mice:** The therapy prevented **death and severe symptoms**.
- **In a Calf:** A newborn **received a single dose** of the therapy and:
 - **Grew normally over two years.**
 - **Transitioned to a normal protein-rich diet**, proving the treatment worked.

4. Future Research and Human Applications

- Scientists will **study the long-term impact of the therapy on brain function and behavior**.
- If successful, this **could lead to a human treatment** for MSUD, offering a **potential cure for patients** with the disease.

[Study identifies sources of PM2.5 in northern India: TH Science](#)

Science

Easy Explanation: Study Reveals Major Sources of Air Pollution in Northern India

A new study published in **Nature Communications** has analyzed **PM2.5 pollution in Northern India**, particularly in the **Indo-Gangetic Plain**. The study focuses on the **composition and health risks** of **PM2.5**, a harmful fine particulate matter, using data from **Delhi, Kanpur, and surrounding areas**.

The study found that **local pollution sources**—such as **vehicular emissions, biomass burning, and fossil fuel combustion**—are the **main contributors to PM2.5 pollution**. In **Delhi**, PM2.5 pollution comes mainly from **traffic emissions, heating, and fossil fuel burning**, while areas **outside Delhi** are more affected by **biomass burning and industrial pollution**.



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A key finding is that **PM2.5 pollution in India is far more toxic** than in **China and Europe**, being **up to five times more harmful**. This is because **organic aerosols** from **incomplete combustion**—such as traffic pollution and burning of cow dung—greatly increase health risks. The study suggests that **reducing inefficient local combustion is essential to controlling PM2.5 pollution** and improving public health.

Key Takeaways: Major Findings on PM2.5 Pollution in Northern India

1. What is PM2.5 and Why is it Dangerous?

- **PM2.5** refers to **fine particulate matter** that can enter deep into the lungs and cause serious health issues.
- High levels of PM2.5 **increase the risk of respiratory diseases, heart problems, and other serious health conditions**.

2. Major Sources of PM2.5 in Delhi vs. Outside Delhi

- **Delhi:**
 - **Vehicular emissions** (traffic pollution)
 - **Fossil fuel combustion** (factories, power plants)
 - **Residential heating and cooking**
- **Outside Delhi:**
 - **Biomass burning** (stubble, wood, cow dung)
 - **Industrial pollution**
 - **Agricultural emissions**

3. What Did the Study Find?

- **Traffic emissions** are a major contributor to PM2.5 pollution in urban areas.
- **Biomass burning** (wood and cow dung) causes a **huge increase in pollution during winter**, especially at night.
- **Incomplete combustion of fuels** creates harmful **organic aerosols**, which are a key cause of high PM2.5 toxicity.
- The oxidative potential (toxicity) of PM2.5 in Indian cities is **up to 5 times higher than in China and Europe**.

4. What Needs to Be Done?

- **Reduce local pollution sources**, especially **inefficient fuel burning and traffic emissions**.
- **Improve air quality policies** by focusing on **controlling incomplete combustion** from industries, vehicles, and household heating.
- **Encourage cleaner energy sources**, such as electric transport and improved fuel efficiency in industries and households.

3rd March 2025

[The Repealed Law On Dramatic Performances, flagged by the PM-Indian Express Explained](#)

Polity

Easy Explanation

The **Dramatic Performances Act, 1876**, was a law made by the British to ban public plays and performances that were critical of their rule. It allowed authorities to **arrest people, stop performances, and shut down venues** if they felt a play was **scandalous, seditious, or defamatory**. After India gained independence, this law **conflicted with the**



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Constitution, which protects **freedom of speech and expression**. The **Allahabad High Court** declared it **unconstitutional in 1956**, but it **remained officially listed** until **2018**, when the Modi government **finally repealed it** as part of an effort to remove outdated colonial laws.

Key Takeaways

1. **Why Was the Law Made?**
 - Enacted by the British in 1876 to **suppress plays that criticized their rule** or promoted nationalism.
2. **What Did the Law Allow?**
 - Gave the government power to **ban public performances**.
 - Allowed police to **search and seize performance venues**.
 - Imposed **jail time (up to 3 months) and fines** for violations.
3. **What Happened After Independence?**
 - **Allahabad High Court struck it down in 1956**, calling it unconstitutional.
 - Still, the law **remained on paper** for decades due to Article 372, which kept colonial-era laws until repealed.
4. **When and Why Was It Repealed?**
 - **Formally repealed in 2018** under the Modi government's initiative to remove obsolete laws.
5. **What Does This Show?**
 - Many **colonial-era laws still exist**, and repealing them takes time.
 - Highlights the need to **update legal frameworks** to align with modern democratic values.

Making sense of GDP data-Indian Express Explained

Economics

Easy Explanation

GDP (Gross Domestic Product) is the total value of goods and services produced in India within a specific period. It is measured quarterly and annually, with adjustments made over time as better data becomes available.

Recent GDP updates show that **India's Q3 (Oct-Dec) GDP grew by 6.2%**, and the previously estimated **Q2 (Jul-Sep) growth was revised from 5.4% to 5.6%**. Additionally, **GDP for the 2023-24 financial year was revised from 8.2% to 9.2%**, marking a significant upward correction.

Such large revisions, particularly the **sharp jump in past growth estimates**, indicate that India's economy was performing better than earlier thought. However, the current year's economic slowdown (growth rate dropping from 9.2% to 6.5%) is now seen as **sharper than expected**. These revisions impact economic planning, investor confidence, and government policy decisions.

Key Takeaways

1. **GDP Data Revisions**
 - Initial GDP figures are based on early estimates and get revised as more accurate data becomes available.
 - Five rounds of GDP estimates occur for each financial year, from First Advance Estimates (FAE) to Final Estimates.
2. **Latest GDP Growth Trends**
 - **Q3 FY25 GDP grew by 6.2%**, showing economic recovery.



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- **Q2 GDP was revised upward from 5.4% to 5.6%**, suggesting a slightly milder slowdown than earlier thought.
- **FY24 growth was revised sharply from 8.2% to 9.2%**, meaning last year's economy was stronger than believed.

3. Why These Revisions Matter

- GDP growth impacts tax revenue, corporate profits, and overall economic policy.
- The revised data shows that **private consumption (individual spending) was stronger than earlier believed**, driving economic growth.
- **However, the current slowdown (FY25) looks sharper than before, with GDP growth falling from 9.2% to 6.5%.**

4. Concerns About GDP Revisions

- **Big changes in past GDP figures** raise doubts about the accuracy of early estimates.
- **Foreign investors react to such revisions**, influencing stock markets and business confidence.

5. Overall Conclusion

- **India's economy was stronger last year than earlier thought.**
- **The current slowdown in growth is steeper than expected.**
- **Frequent and large GDP revisions create uncertainty in economic planning and credibility issues in official data.**

Giving cities their due-Indian Express Editorial

Sociology

Easy Explanation

India's cities are facing major challenges, including **pollution, climate change, overcrowding, and poor infrastructure**. Delhi's air quality becomes hazardous every winter, and many other cities suffer from **water pollution, waste mismanagement, and extreme weather** like floods and heatwaves.

Despite rapid urbanization, many towns remain **governed as rural areas**, lacking proper infrastructure and funding. By 2036, over **600 million people** will live in Indian cities, yet most are unprepared for this growth.

Countries like **Singapore, London, and Dubai** have transformed their urban spaces with **efficient public transport, clean governance, and smart city initiatives**. India needs similar reforms. The **Urban Challenge Fund** announced in the 2025-26 Union Budget aims to improve **sustainability, infrastructure, and governance**.

With proper planning, **Indian cities can become global destinations** instead of struggling with pollution, congestion, and unlivable conditions.

Key Takeaways

1. India's Urban Crisis

- Air pollution in **Delhi and other cities** is among the worst globally.
- Poor infrastructure, overcrowding, and weak public services make cities unlivable.
- **Climate change worsens conditions**, with extreme heatwaves and flooding becoming common.

2. Pollution and Health Impacts

- **42 Indian towns rank among the world's 50 most polluted.**
- **Nearly 50% of India's rivers are polluted**, affecting drinking water and marine life.
- Waste mismanagement leads to **overflowing landfills, methane emissions, and disease outbreaks.**

3. The Urban Governance Gap



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- **Census towns (not officially urban areas)** lack proper governance and funding.
- These areas are **rapidly growing** but still function under rural administration, leading to **poor planning and infrastructure delays**.

4. Lessons from Global Cities

- **Bangkok**: Efficient metro system and vibrant street life.
- **London**: Green spaces and seamless public transport.
- **Dubai**: Strong urban planning and investment-friendly policies.
- **Singapore**: Smart city initiatives, sustainable development, and affordable housing.

5. The Urban Challenge Fund (2025-26)

- **₹1 lakh crore fund** to improve Indian cities.
- Focus areas: **sustainability, public transport, sanitation, and urban redevelopment**.
- Incentivizing cities to adopt **clean energy, waste management, and pollution control** measures.

6. The Path Forward

- Recognize and upgrade **census towns into fully urban areas**.
- Improve **public transport, water supply, and waste management**.
- Strengthen **early warning systems** for extreme weather events.
- Encourage **green infrastructure** like parks and urban forests to combat heat and pollution.

7. Conclusion

- India's cities are at a **crossroads**—they can become **smart, green, and livable**, or continue struggling with **pollution, congestion, and poor governance**.
- The next **decade is crucial** in determining the future of urban India.

[THE WOMAN'S HOUR-Indian Express Editorial](#)

Sociology

Easy Explanation

Women in India spend a **disproportionate amount of time on unpaid domestic and caregiving work**, limiting their ability to participate in the workforce. The **Time Use Survey 2024** shows that women spend **289 minutes daily on unpaid domestic work**, which is **201 minutes more than men**. They also **spend more time on caregiving**, affecting their chances of pursuing education, skills training, and full-time paid jobs.

This **gendered division of labor** worsens economic inequality, with **women earning less and being more likely to work in low-paid or informal jobs**. The **International Labour Organization (ILO)** has recommended **investing in childcare and early education** to help more women enter the workforce. While **women's workforce participation has grown to 41.7%**, it remains far lower than **men's 78%**.

To achieve **gender equality and economic growth**, India must **redefine household roles, challenge stereotypes, and promote shared responsibilities** at home.

Key Takeaways

1. Women Do More Unpaid Work

- **289 minutes/day on housework** (201 minutes more than men).
- **137 minutes/day on caregiving**, compared to **75 minutes for men**.

2. Economic Impact

- Women's unpaid work is **valued at 15%-17% of India's GDP** (if monetized).
- Lack of time for education and upskilling leads to **low-paid and insecure jobs**.



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- Women's **labor force participation is only 41.7%**, compared to men's **78%**.

3. Need for Systemic Changes

- **Investment in childcare and early education** to reduce the caregiving burden.
- **Workplace policies** supporting women's employment and flexible work options.
- **Challenging gender stereotypes**, promoting shared household responsibilities.

4. Conclusion

- **Achieving gender equality requires rethinking household roles and recognizing unpaid labor.**
- India's vision for "**Viksit Bharat**" (**Developed India**) must include **women-led development**.

[Euclid space telescope discovers new 'Einstein ring' in nearby galaxy-The Hindu Science](#)

Science and technology

Easy Explanation

The **Euclid space telescope**, launched by the **European Space Agency (ESA)**, has discovered a rare **Einstein ring** in a nearby galaxy, **NGC 6505** (590 million light-years away). The ring, named **Altieri's Ring**, was first spotted by astronomer **Bruno Altieri** in September 2023 in a blurry test image.

Einstein rings occur due to **gravitational lensing**, a phenomenon predicted by **Albert Einstein's theory of general relativity**. When a massive object (like a galaxy) is perfectly aligned with a distant light source, it **bends and magnifies the light**, creating a **circular ring-like shape** around the foreground galaxy.

Altieri's ring is **special** because it is one of only **six known Einstein rings at such close distances**. This discovery helps astronomers **study dark matter, test general relativity, and learn more about the universe's expansion**. The **Euclid telescope aims to find 100,000 more gravitational lenses**, but such close discoveries are rare.

Key Takeaways

1. What is an Einstein Ring?

- A **rare gravitational lensing effect** where light from a distant galaxy is **bent into a ring shape** by a massive foreground galaxy.
- First predicted by **Einstein's general theory of relativity** and first observed in **1998**.

2. Discovery of Altieri's Ring

- Found by the **Euclid telescope** in **September 2023** in **NGC 6505**, just **590 million light-years from Earth**.
- The **ring is actually distorted light from a galaxy 4.5 billion light-years away**.

3. Why is This Important?

- **Only six such nearby gravitational lenses have ever been found**.
- Helps scientists **test Einstein's relativity**, understand **dark matter**, and study the **expansion of the universe**.

4. Euclid's Role in Space Exploration

- Officially started scanning in **February 2024**.
- Aims to **discover 100,000 gravitational lenses** in the coming years.
- However, finding another **Einstein ring this close to Earth is highly unlikely**.

5. Final Thought

- The discovery of **Altieri's Ring highlights Euclid's potential** in uncovering new cosmic phenomena and deepening our knowledge of the **universe's mysteries**.



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4th March 2025

[After successful private landing on Moon, more missions to follow-Indian Express Explained](#)

Science and technology

Easy Explanation

Firefly Aerospace, a private American space company, successfully landed its spacecraft, Blue Ghost, on the Moon. This is the second time a private company has landed on the lunar surface, following Intuitive Machines' Odysseus mission last year. NASA is encouraging private companies to conduct Moon missions under its **Commercial Lunar Payload Services (CLPS)** program to build a larger ecosystem for future space travel.

The **Blue Ghost mission** carried ten scientific instruments to study the Moon's surface, test drilling technologies, and explore dust mitigation. It will also attempt to capture a high-definition solar eclipse image from the Moon on March 14.

With multiple private space companies participating, Moon landings are becoming more frequent. More missions from **Intuitive Machines, Japan's ispace Inc., and Astrobotic Technologies** are expected this year, bringing **rovers, return modules, and advanced exploration technologies**.

Key Takeaways

1. Firefly Aerospace's Successful Moon Landing

- Blue Ghost landed on the Moon, making Firefly Aerospace the second private company to achieve this feat after Intuitive Machines.
- The landing was almost flawless, making it one of the most successful private lunar missions.

2. NASA's CLPS Program & Private Sector Involvement

- CLPS (Commercial Lunar Payload Services) supports private companies in lunar exploration.
- More than a dozen space companies have contracts to send scientific instruments to the Moon.

3. Scientific Goals of Blue Ghost

- It carried ten instruments for testing robotic drilling, studying the Moon's surface, and dust mitigation.
- The mission will last about 14 Earth days (one lunar day).
- It aims to capture a solar eclipse image from the Moon on March 14.

4. Increasing Moon Missions

- Intuitive Machines' **Athena spacecraft** launched on February 26, aiming to land on the Moon's south pole on March 6.
- Japan's **Hakuto-R Mission 2** is en route and expected to land by May or June.
- More missions, including those from Astrobotic Technologies and Intuitive Machines, may follow later in 2025.

5. Future of Lunar Exploration

- Future missions will bring more advanced technology, including **rovers and return modules** for sample collection.



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- These efforts support NASA's **Artemis program**, which aims for a **long-term human presence on the Moon** and further deep-space exploration.

[India's agriculture exports-Indian Express Explained](#)

Economy

Easy Explanation

India's agriculture exports have grown by **6.5%**, reaching **\$37.5 billion** from April to December 2024, exceeding the country's overall merchandise export growth. However, **agriculture imports have surged by 18.7%**, reducing India's trade surplus from **\$10.6 billion to \$8.2 billion** over the same period.

Key export drivers include **basmati rice, spices, coffee, and tobacco**, with record highs expected in 2024-25 due to weather-related crop failures in competing countries. Meanwhile, **exports of sugar and wheat have fallen** due to government restrictions to protect domestic supply. **Marine exports, especially shrimp, have also declined** due to weaker global demand.

Key imports include **pulses and edible oils**, which have risen sharply due to poor domestic crop yields. India, once a cotton exporter, is now a **net importer of cotton** due to declining production.

Key Takeaways

1. Agriculture Trade Growth and Shrinking Surplus

- Exports grew by **6.5%**, reaching **\$37.5 billion** (April-Dec 2024).
- Imports rose by **18.7%**, reaching **\$29.3 billion**, reducing the trade surplus from **\$10.6 billion to \$8.2 billion**.

2. Major Export Trends

- **Basmati rice, spices, coffee, and tobacco** are set to reach record highs in 2024-25.
- **Marine exports (shrimp) declined** due to weaker demand from the US, China, and the EU.
- **Sugar and wheat exports fell sharply** due to government-imposed restrictions to control food inflation.
- **Non-basmati rice exports remained strong**, despite earlier restrictions.

3. Key Import Trends

- **Pulses imports surged past \$5 billion**, reversing a previous decline, due to a poor domestic harvest.
- **Edible oil imports are rising**, with 2024-25 expected to be one of the highest import years.
- **India is now a net importer of cotton**, shifting from being the world's second-largest exporter.

4. Global and Domestic Impact on Agriculture Trade

- **Droughts in Brazil and Vietnam boosted India's coffee exports.**
- **International food price fluctuations influence India's exports and imports.**
- **Government policies on food security** impact export availability, as seen with sugar and wheat.

With imports growing faster than exports, India's **agricultural trade surplus is narrowing**, raising concerns about long-term self-sufficiency.



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[Why olive ridleys came to Odisha nesting ground in larger numbers this year-Indian Express Explained](#)

Environment

Easy Explanation

The **Olive Ridley turtles** have returned to Odisha's **Rushikulya rookery** for mass nesting after skipping last year. Between **February 16 and 25**, around **7 lakh turtles** laid eggs on the beach, a rise from 6.37 lakh in 2023.

These turtles, known for their **heart-shaped olive-green shells**, weigh about 50 kg and reach maturity at 14 years. They exhibit **arribada**, a mass nesting behavior where thousands of females lay eggs together on the same beach.

Odisha's **Rushikulya and Gahirmatha beaches** are among the world's largest nesting sites, with ideal sand and weather conditions. The **higher number of turtles this year** is linked to **less beach erosion and better nesting conditions**. Experts believe the **timing of nesting in mid-February** will lead to better hatching success as fewer eggs will be lost due to **April's rising temperatures and erosion**.

Key Takeaways

1. Mass Nesting Event in Odisha

- **7 lakh Olive Ridley turtles** laid eggs at Rushikulya from **Feb 16-25, 2025**.
- This is **more than last year's** count of **6.37 lakh turtles**.

2. Unique Arribada Nesting Behavior

- Olive Ridleys nest in **large groups** on the same beach, digging conical nests in the sand.
- Major arribada sites include **Rushikulya, Gahirmatha (Odisha), Mexico, and Costa Rica**.

3. Why More Turtles Nested This Year

- **Less erosion due to no rain in February** created more beach space.
- **A lower beach slope** made nesting easier.
- **Favorable coastal conditions** such as moderate waves and mild wind speeds.

4. Positive Impact on Hatching Success

- Nesting in **mid-February improves egg survival** as they will hatch in **April**, before high temperatures and erosion intensify.

5. Uncertainty About Skipped Nesting in 2024

- Experts aren't sure why turtles **skipped mass nesting last year**.
- Some turtles **naturally skip nesting in certain years**, but the exact reasons remain unknown.

[Mapping her work-Indian Express Editorial](#)

Sociology

Easy Explanation



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Recent **labour force surveys** show a **rise in self-employment among rural women** since **2017-18**, mainly as **helpers in home-based businesses**. However, it is unclear **why** this shift is happening.

A key factor affecting women's work time is **domestic duties, especially cooking and cleaning**, which take up **over 40 hours per week**. The **Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana (PMUY)** provided **LPG access**, which reduces cooking time by **30 minutes per day**, but this has **not led to higher participation in income-generating work**. Instead, women are using this saved time for **leisure**.

This is because **job opportunities in rural areas are mostly low-paid, manual, and inflexible**. Additionally, **LPG adoption remains low** as many households still rely on **firewood and cow dung**, partly due to **male decision-making over LPG refills**. More data is needed to understand the **actual impact** of self-employment growth among rural women.

Key Takeaways

1. Increase in Rural Women's Self-Employment

- **More rural women** are now self-employed, but **reasons are unclear**.
- Most work as **helpers in home-based businesses**, not in formal jobs.

2. Domestic Work and Time Constraints

- Women spend **over 40 hours per week** on cooking and cleaning.
- **Cooking takes nearly 4 hours per day**, equivalent to a **part-time job**.

3. LPG Access and Time Savings

- **PMUY has provided LPG connections**, reducing cooking time by **30 minutes/day**.
- However, most rural households **still use a mix of LPG and solid fuels**, limiting its impact.

4. Why LPG Time-Saving Doesn't Lead to More Work

- **Saved time is too small (30 minutes/day) for full-time employment**.
- **Rural jobs are mostly low-paid, manual, and inflexible**.
- **Women have low decision-making power over LPG refills**, affecting adoption.

5. Need for Better Job Opportunities

- **Manufacturing and service-sector jobs are almost absent in rural areas**.
- **Higher-wage and flexible jobs are needed** to incentivize women's workforce participation.

[NASA to launch SPHEREx to explore what happened right after Big Bang-The Hindu Science](#)

Science and technology

Easy Explanation

NASA is set to launch **SPHEREx**, a **space telescope**, on **March 4** using a **SpaceX Falcon 9 rocket**. The mission aims to **study what happened immediately after the Big Bang** and **map water reservoirs in the Milky Way** that could support life.



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SPHEREx will **scan the entire sky**, collecting data from **450 million galaxies and 100 million stars** over two years. It will also create a **3D cosmic map in 102 colors**, helping scientists understand **cosmic inflation**, the rapid expansion of the universe **a fraction of a second after the Big Bang**.

The telescope will also examine **interstellar dust clouds** to look for frozen water, a key ingredient for life. Alongside SPHEREx, NASA is launching the **PUNCH mission**, which will study the **Sun's outer atmosphere (corona) and solar wind** to better understand space weather.

Key Takeaways

1. SPHEREx Mission Overview

- **Launch Date:** March 4, 2025, on a **SpaceX Falcon 9 rocket**.
- **Goal:** Study the **origins of the universe** and map **water reservoirs** in the Milky Way.
- **Mission Duration:** Two years.

2. Investigating Cosmic Inflation

- Cosmic inflation refers to the **rapid expansion of the universe** right after the Big Bang.
- SPHEREx will **map the sky in 3D** to study galaxy distribution and understand inflation physics.

3. Mapping the Universe

- It will collect data from **450 million galaxies** and **100 million Milky Way stars**.
- The telescope will create a **detailed cosmic map using 102 colors**.
- It will split light into its components to **analyze composition and distances of galaxies**.

4. Searching for Water in Space

- SPHEREx will **search for frozen water on interstellar dust grains**.
- This helps understand **how planets and stars form** and the **potential for life** in space.

5. NASA's PUNCH Mission Launched Alongside

- The **PUNCH mission** will study the **Sun's corona (outer atmosphere)**.
- It will analyze the **solar wind**, which affects space weather and planetary environments.

SPHEREx's findings could **revolutionize our understanding of the universe's beginnings** and help uncover **new insights into galaxy formation and cosmic history**.

[How is China's foreign policy structured?-The Hindu Text and Context](#)

International relations

Easy Explanation

China's foreign policy is controlled by both the **Communist Party of China (CPC)** and the **Chinese government**, with the **Party having ultimate authority**. Unlike in democratic systems, China's foreign policy decisions are made by **high-ranking party bodies rather than just the government**.

The **two main decision-making bodies** for foreign policy are:



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1. **Politburo Standing Committee (PBSC)**: Sets the broad policy direction.
2. **CPC's Foreign Affairs Commission (FAC)**: Led by **President Xi Jinping**, this body handles actual decision-making, coordination, and agenda setting.

The **International Department of the CPC (IDCPC)** manages **party-to-party diplomacy** with foreign political parties to boost CPC's global influence.

Although historically less powerful, **China's Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA)** has gained **importance under Xi Jinping**, who frequently interacts with diplomats. However, it remains a **mid-level entity responsible for implementing foreign policy** rather than shaping it.

Key Takeaways

1. China's Foreign Policy Structure

- The **Communist Party of China (CPC)** controls foreign policy, unlike democracies where governments lead.
- The **Party and the State are deeply interlinked** in decision-making.

2. Main Decision-Making Bodies

- **Politburo Standing Committee (PBSC)**: Sets overall policy direction.
- **Foreign Affairs Commission (FAC)**: Handles policy decisions, coordination, and execution, led by **Xi Jinping**.

3. Role of the International Department of the CPC (IDCPC)

- **Handles diplomacy with political parties** worldwide.
- Works to **boost CPC's global legitimacy** and influence international narratives.
- Oversees **regional bureaus** that study politics and maintain foreign relations.

4. Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) and Its Role

- Implements **state-to-state diplomacy** and represents China internationally.
- Historically had **limited power**, but **gained importance under Xi Jinping**.
- Issues official statements and press releases on foreign policy.

5. Other Key Organizations in Foreign Policy

- **United Front Work Department (UFW)**: Influences overseas Chinese communities, **Hong Kong, Taiwan, Tibet, and Xinjiang** affairs.
- **National Security Commission & People's Congress**: Have some diplomatic functions.

China's **foreign policy is multi-layered** and involves engagement at **both party and government levels**. Understanding the **CPC's priorities** is crucial for countries engaging with China.

[The way to protect orans-The Hindu Editorial](#)

Environment

Easy Explanation

In **December 2024**, the **Supreme Court of India** ruled to protect **orans** (sacred forests) in **Rajasthan**, recognizing their **socio-ecological and cultural significance**. The Court suggested **bringing orans under biodiversity laws** to formalize



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their governance. However, this move has sparked concerns among **local communities**, as formalization might restrict their traditional access and management practices.

Orans are **community-managed sacred groves**, serving as **natural water reservoirs** and supporting **local flora and fauna**. They are protected by religious beliefs, as cutting trees is seen as **disrespectful to local deities**.

However, declaring **orans as forests** under the **Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980** could lead to **government control, exemptions for commercial use (zoos, safaris, ecotourism), and reduced community participation**. A better approach would be to **empower existing informal governance models** rather than impose rigid formal structures that could **disrupt traditional conservation practices**.

Key Takeaways

1. Supreme Court's Protection Order for Orans

- Recognized **orans as culturally and ecologically vital** for Rajasthan.
- Suggested **formalizing** their governance under **biodiversity laws**.

2. Importance of Orans

- **Sacred forests** managed by **local communities** for generations.
- Serve as **water reservoirs** by increasing **groundwater levels**.
- Home to **rich biodiversity** and protected by **religious beliefs**.

3. Problems with Formalization

- **Declaring orans as 'forests' under the Forest (Conservation) Act** could open them to **commercial activities** like **safaris and ecotourism**.
- **Loss of community control** as the **government would oversee decision-making**.
- **Restrictive eligibility criteria** under the **Forest Rights Act, 2006** may exclude traditional community institutions from claiming rights.

4. Better Approach for Conservation

- **Encourage existing informal governance** instead of imposing formal structures.
- **Develop a policy that supports local communities** rather than replacing them with government-controlled bodies.
- **Identify and replicate successful community-led conservation models** with state and civil society support.

The Court's **intentions are positive**, but **community-driven conservation is the best way forward** for protecting **orans** without harming **traditional rights and ecological balance**.

5th March 2025

[Behind the unprecedented court review of Maharashtra slums Act-Indian Express Explained](#)

Sociology

Easy Explanation



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The Supreme Court has initiated an unprecedented review of Maharashtra's Slum Areas (Improvement, Clearance and Redevelopment) Act of 1971. This review isn't just about determining if the law is constitutional—it also aims to pinpoint the flaws and gaps in the law that have led to severe delays in redeveloping slum areas, particularly in Mumbai.

Historically, the Act was designed to help redevelop slums by allowing the state to designate land as a slum and have it redeveloped through the Slum Rehabilitation Authority (SRA). However, over the years, these projects have often favored profit for developers over the rights and needs of slum dwellers. In a notable case involving Yash Developers in Borivali, delays in providing transit rent and proper housing for slum residents brought these issues to the forefront.

The Supreme Court identified six critical areas needing improvement—from how slum areas and their residents are identified to how developers are chosen and how land is divided between redevelopment and saleable areas. The court has also expanded its authority to review legislation proactively, even if no affected party has approached the court directly.

Key Takeaways

- **Unprecedented Review:**
 - The Supreme Court ordered a review of the 1971 Act to identify gaps and delays that have harmed slum redevelopment and affected slum dwellers' rights.
- **Background of the Act:**
 - The Act empowers the state to designate land as slum areas and enable redevelopment via the SRA.
 - It was meant to balance the need for urban improvement with protecting the rights of the urban poor.
- **Triggering Incident:**
 - A case involving Yash Developers in Borivali highlighted prolonged delays and inadequate transit accommodations for slum dwellers, sparking the review.
- **Six Key Areas for Review:**
 - **Land Identification:** Ensuring the process of declaring an area as a slum is free from builder influence.
 - **Resident Identification:** Accurately identifying who qualifies as a slum dweller, amid competing claims.
 - **Developer Selection:** Improving the process that often sees cooperatives manipulated by rival developers.
 - **Land Apportionment:** Balancing the division of land for redevelopment versus making areas saleable, to protect residents' interests.
 - **Transit Accommodation:** Guaranteeing that transit housing for displaced residents is adequate and acceptable.
 - **Authority Functioning:** Addressing the lack of independence and potential regulatory capture by statutory authorities.
- **Judicial Empowerment:**
 - The review expands the court's power to examine legislation without a direct case, setting a precedent for proactive judicial oversight.
 - It directs the Bombay High Court to form a bench for a performance audit of the Act and consider forming a committee for further review.

This review is a significant step toward ensuring that slum redevelopment serves its intended public purpose, protecting the rights of the urban poor while addressing long-standing administrative and legal shortcomings.

[WHY SPACE AGENCIES WANT TO MAKE THE MOST OF 'SOLAR MAXIMUM'-Indian Express Explained](#)





Easy Explanation

Space agencies are launching multiple solar missions now to take advantage of the Sun's active phase known as the **solar maximum**. Every 11 years, the Sun's magnetic field flips, leading to increased sunspots, solar flares, and other energetic events. These events not only make the Sun an exciting object to study but also have real effects on Earth—like disrupting satellite communications and power grids.

NASA's upcoming **PUNCH mission**, launching on March 6 from Vandenberg Space Force Base, is designed to study the Sun's outer atmosphere (the corona) using a set of four small satellites. This mission is part of a broader push, as other agencies, including ISRO with its Aditya L1 mission and ESA with Proba-3, have already sent missions to monitor solar activity.

Scientists are racing to observe these phenomena because if they miss this solar maximum window, the next opportunity for intense solar activity won't come until around 2035–2036.

Key Takeaways

- **Solar Cycle and Solar Maximum:**
 - The Sun undergoes an 11-year cycle where its magnetic field flips.
 - **Solar maximum** is the period of highest activity, marked by many sunspots, solar flares, and coronal mass ejections.
- **Impacts on Earth:**
 - High solar activity can disrupt satellite communications and power grids.
 - Monitoring these effects is crucial for mitigating potential damage.
- **Current Solar Missions:**
 - **NASA's PUNCH Mission:** Launching on March 6 to study the Sun's corona with four small satellites.
 - **ISRO's Aditya L1:** Launched in September 2023 to study solar flares, solar winds, and magnetic fields.
 - **ESA's Proba-3:** Launched in December 2024, focusing on solar winds and storms.
- **Why Now?**
 - The current phase of solar maximum is the best window to study intense solar activity.
 - Missing this opportunity means waiting until the next solar maximum around 2035–2036.

These missions are part of a global effort to better understand our star and protect our technology and infrastructure from the effects of solar activity.

[Why US aid matters to Ukraine-Indian Express Explained](#)

International relations

Easy Explanation

The suspension of U.S. military aid to Ukraine represents a major risk for Ukraine's ability to resist Russian advances. U.S. aid—including weapons like HIMARS, air defense systems, training, intelligence support, and even Starlink connectivity—has been a lifeline for Ukrainian forces. Without this steady flow of support, Ukraine could face significant challenges on the battlefield, even though European allies also contribute aid. The decision by the Trump administration, following a public clash with President Zelenskyy, is seen as a tool to pressure Ukraine into concessions, and it could delay or disrupt the delivery of critical equipment already in the pipeline.

Key Takeaways



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- **Crucial Lifeline:**
 - U.S. military aid provides essential weapons, training, and intelligence that have enabled Ukraine to counter Russian forces effectively.
- **Impact of Suspension:**
 - The halt in U.S. aid risks reducing Ukraine's combat capabilities and could slow down the delivery of vital equipment already committed by the U.S.
- **Political Leverage:**
 - The suspension is being used as leverage in a broader political dispute, with the Trump administration aiming to pressure Ukraine into negotiating terms with Russia.
- **Complementary Support:**
 - While European military assistance is significant—sometimes matching U.S. aid—Ukraine still relies heavily on the unique capabilities provided by American support, including advanced systems like HIMARS and Starlink for communications.
- **Aid Delivery Pipeline:**
 - Past experience shows that the process from announcing aid to its delivery can take around eight months on average. Disruptions now could leave Ukraine vulnerable in the short to medium term.

This situation underscores how intertwined geopolitics and military support are, and highlights the potentially dire consequences for Ukraine if U.S. aid remains suspended.

[Delimitation of constituencies: a primer on the exercise and the process-Indian Express Explained](#)

Polity

Easy Explanation

Delimitation is the process of redrawing the boundaries of electoral constituencies to ensure fair representation in government based on the latest population data. In India, this exercise is especially important because it helps balance the number of people each elected representative (MP or MLA) serves, ensuring the principle of “one citizen, one vote, one value.”

The process is driven by data from the national Census, which is the main tool used to adjust constituency boundaries. After each Census, a Delimitation Commission—an independent body appointed by the President and led by a retired Supreme Court judge—is set up. This commission, which also includes top election officials and sometimes sitting MPs/MLAs as advisors (without voting rights), uses the Census data along with factors like geographical contiguity, population density, and socio-economic conditions to redraw the boundaries.

Historically, the number of constituencies was fixed based on older Census data (e.g., the 1971 Census for the Lok Sabha) and has been frozen for decades. This freeze was extended by successive governments to control population growth and manage political representation, leading to concerns among states—especially in the South—that their share of parliamentary seats might be reduced if the delimitation is based solely on current population figures.

Key Takeaways

- **Purpose of Delimitation:**
 - Ensures equitable representation by adjusting constituency boundaries based on the latest Census data.
 - Maintains the principle of “one citizen, one vote, one value.”
- **Constitutional Basis:**
 - Articles 81, 82, and 170 of the Constitution guide the allocation of seats and adjustment of constituencies after each Census.



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- **Process:**

- A Delimitation Commission is appointed by the President and headed by a retired Supreme Court judge.
- The Commission operates independently and its boundaries cannot be challenged in court.
- It considers factors such as geographical continuity, population density, and socio-economic realities, including the distribution of Scheduled Caste (SC) and Scheduled Tribe (ST) populations.

- **Historical Context:**

- Previous delimitation exercises were conducted following the 1951, 1961, 1971, and 2001 Censuses.
- The number of seats in the Lok Sabha has remained unchanged since the delimitation based on the 1971 Census, with a freeze extended by the 2002 amendment until at least 2026.

- **Political Sensitivity:**

- Southern states, which have been more successful in population control compared to some northern states, fear that basing constituencies solely on current population data could reduce their parliamentary representation.
- Home Minister Amit Shah recently assured southern states that they wouldn't lose even a single seat in the upcoming delimitation exercise.

- **Public Involvement:**

- After drafting the new boundaries, the Delimitation Commission invites feedback from the public, political parties, and other stakeholders before finalizing the recommendations.

This review and redrawing of constituency boundaries are crucial for maintaining a fair and balanced democratic process in India.

[TERMS OF CO-EXISTENCE-Indian Express Editorial](#)

Environment

Easy Explanation

India's efforts to protect wildlife have been quite successful in boosting the numbers of species like lions, tigers, elephants, and leopards. However, as these populations grow, they often spill out of their protected habitats and come into conflict with humans. In particular, conservation policies haven't adequately addressed how to manage larger numbers of animals when their habitats are fragmented or become overcrowded. Recognizing this, Prime Minister Narendra Modi has proposed establishing a center focused on managing human-wildlife conflict.

An example comes from **Gir National Park** in Gujarat, home to the Asiatic lion. Over **300** of the park's lions now live outside the protected area. They sometimes kill livestock for prey or venture into human settlements, occasionally colliding with vehicles and trains. Instead of prioritizing state pride or other narrow considerations, experts argue that policies should follow scientific guidance to determine the best ways to balance the needs of both wildlife and local communities.

Key Takeaways

1. **Human-Wildlife Conflict:**

- As protected species populations grow, animals (like lions and tigers) leave parks in search of resources, leading to conflicts with humans (livestock predation, crop damage, accidents, etc.).

2. **Need for a Dedicated Center:**

- PM Modi proposed setting up a specialized center to effectively manage this conflict.
- This center is expected to use scientific methods (e.g., AI-based monitoring) and craft evidence-based policies.



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3. Case Study – Gir Lions:

- Gir National Park's lion population has recovered impressively (from fewer than 20 individuals in the early 20th century to over 670 today).
- More than half these lions live outside protected boundaries, leading to close encounters with humans.
- Gujarat authorities have resisted relocating some lions to other suitable habitats, underscoring the tension between scientific recommendations and regional pride.

4. Role of Science:

- Managing growing wild populations requires understanding carrying capacity, habitat connectivity, and species' ecological needs.
- Experts emphasize the importance of scientific decision-making (over politics or state pride) to ensure both conservation success and public safety.

5. Way Forward:

- In addition to species-focused conservation (like Project Lion), Indian wildlife policy must also address habitat fragmentation and competition for resources.
- Local community engagement, scientific research, habitat connectivity, and relocation (where necessary) can help minimize human–wildlife conflict in the long term.

The proposed center could fill a crucial gap: once animal populations are saved from extinction, there must be a clear plan to deal with their increased numbers, especially when they spill over into human domains.

How the Wallace line explains the difference in species across continents-The Hindu Text and Context

Geography

Easy Explanation

The Wallace Line is a concept introduced by 19th-century naturalist Alfred Russel Wallace to explain why the animal species in Asia differ dramatically from those in Australia—even though the two regions are geographically close. Wallace noticed that as he traveled from Asia to Australia, there was a clear change in the types of animals you encountered. For example, you see tigers and orangutans in Asia, while kangaroos and cockatoos are found in Australia.

Wallace proposed that an invisible barrier—or a “line”—divides the two regions. This line roughly runs between Bali and Lombok, then between Borneo and Sulawesi, and finally curves south of Mindanao. The idea is that over millions of years, geological events like continental drift, sea-level changes, and variations in climate (such as monsoons and aridity) created physical and environmental separations. These factors prevented many species from crossing over, so they evolved independently on either side of the line.

Interestingly, some places like Sulawesi exhibit a mix of species from both sides. This is because the island's complex geological history and its past connections with larger landmasses allowed both Asian and Australian species to migrate and evolve there, though the process was far from straightforward.

Key Takeaways

- **Distinct Faunas:**
 - The Wallace Line marks the boundary between Asian species (e.g., tigers, orangutans) and Australian species (e.g., kangaroos, cockatoos).
- **Alfred Wallace's Discovery:**



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- Noticed a dramatic shift in species composition during his travels, leading him to propose an invisible dividing line.
- **Geological and Climatic Factors:**
 - Continental drift, sea-level changes, and climate variations (like monsoons) have shaped the evolution and distribution of species over millions of years.
 - As continents and islands separated, species became isolated and evolved differently.
- **Complex Case of Sulawesi:**
 - Sulawesi contains a mix of Asian and Australian species, highlighting the complex migration and evolution patterns due to its unique geological history.
- **Modern Research:**
 - Advanced evolutionary modeling and computer simulations continue to refine our understanding of the Wallace Line.
 - Researchers agree that the boundaries are fuzzy and that focusing on how species adapt to environmental changes is more valuable than trying to redraw strict borders.
- **Conservation Implications:**
 - Understanding the history and distribution of species in the Indo-Malayan archipelago is crucial for predicting how they will cope with ongoing habitat destruction and climate change.

The Wallace Line remains a powerful illustration of how physical geography and long-term environmental changes have driven the evolution of life on Earth, creating distinct biological realms even over relatively short distances.

6th March 2025

[The Egyptian alternative to Trump's Gaza 'Riviera' plan-Indian Express Explained](#)

International relations

Easy Explanation

On **March 4, 2025**, the **Arab League** held an emergency summit in Cairo and approved a **\$53-billion Egyptian plan** for rebuilding Gaza. This plan is called the **Cairo Declaration** and is the first collective Arab proposal for Gaza's future. It aims to **rebuild Gaza** and establish a **temporary administration** led by local Gazans, eventually transitioning governance to the Palestinian Authority (PA).

The plan **rejects forced displacement of Palestinians**, directly countering a previous proposal by **Donald Trump**, who suggested turning Gaza into a tourist hub and removing its Palestinian population.

The Cairo Declaration also supports a **two-state solution**, meaning a **Palestinian state alongside Israel**, based on borders from **before 1967**. However, Israel and the U.S. **criticized** the plan, partly because it does not call for Hamas's removal. Israel's continued settlement expansion in the **West Bank** makes the future of a **Palestinian state uncertain**.

Key Takeaways

1. The Cairo Declaration: A New Plan for Gaza

- The **Arab League** approved a **\$53-billion** reconstruction plan for Gaza.
- The plan is **dependent on a ceasefire**, mainly from **Israel**.
- A **temporary Gaza administration** will be formed, transitioning to the **Palestinian Authority**.



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2. Contrast to Trump's Proposal

- **Trump suggested** evicting Palestinians and turning Gaza into a **tourist destination**.
- The **Cairo Declaration rejects forced displacement** and states that **Palestinians must stay**.

3. Political and Security Issues

- Israel and the U.S. **criticized** the plan, mainly because it does **not demand Hamas's removal**.
- Hamas **welcomes** the plan because it includes elections (which they won in 2006).
- **Israel does not want the Palestinian Authority to govern Gaza**.

4. The Two-State Solution

- The plan supports a **Palestinian state based on 1967 borders**.
- **Israeli settlement expansion in the West Bank** makes this difficult.
- The **UN** has warned that continued settlements **block the possibility** of a Palestinian state.

5. Challenges to Implementation

- The plan **requires Israeli cooperation**, which is unlikely as long as Netanyahu insists on eliminating Hamas.
- There are **two competing visions for Gaza**—the Arab states' plan vs. **Israel and the U.S.'s stance**.
- Without a solution, **Gaza's future remains uncertain**.

[COULD EUROPE'S EUTELSAT HELP TO REPLACE STARLINK IN UKRAINE?-Indian Express Explained](#)

International relations

Easy Explanation

Ukraine's military relies heavily on Starlink to keep its communications running—especially since its traditional networks have been damaged by the ongoing conflict. Starlink works by bouncing internet signals off thousands of low-earth orbit (LEO) satellites, allowing real-time communication even in conflict zones.

However, there are concerns that Ukraine might lose access to Starlink. In this context, Europe's Eutelsat is being considered as a potential alternative. Unlike Starlink, which has more than 7,000 LEO satellites ensuring fast, high-capacity data transmission, Eutelsat (especially after its merger with OneWeb) operates a smaller constellation of around 630 LEO satellites, backed by 35 geostationary satellites. While this setup may offer similar performance for users in Europe, the overall network might not match Starlink's global coverage or data speeds in every scenario.

Other options like Luxembourg-based SES also exist, but they are primarily targeted at government and corporate clients rather than individual users.

Key Takeaways

- **Starlink's Role in Ukraine:**
 - Vital for military communications, overcoming damage to fixed-line and mobile networks.
 - Used by both armed forces and civilians (for personal communication).
- **Eutelsat as a European Alternative:**
 - Considered as a potential replacement if Ukraine loses Starlink access.
 - Merged with OneWeb to offer the only operational LEO satellite constellation in Europe besides Starlink.



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- Offers similar capabilities in Europe with a mix of 630 LEO and 35 geostationary satellites, though with potentially lower speeds (up to 150 Mbps compared to Starlink's 200 Mbps).
- **Cost and Availability:**
 - Starlink charges involve a one-time fee plus a monthly subscription, whereas alternative systems may come with higher upfront costs (e.g., OneWeb terminals costing around \$10,000).
- **Other Alternatives:**
 - SES provides satellite services via its medium-earth orbit constellation but focuses on corporate, government, and military customers, not directly on consumers.

What the first-ever comprehensive survey of India's river dolphins found-Indian Express Explained

Environment

Easy Explanation

The first comprehensive survey of India's river dolphins, carried out between 2021 and 2023 by the Wildlife Institute of India, estimated that there are about **6,327 dolphins** in the country's rivers. There are two species:

- **Ganges River Dolphin (*Platanista gangetica*):** The more numerous of the two, mainly found in the Ganga and Brahmaputra river systems.
- **Indus River Dolphin (*Platanista minor*):** Only three were found, all in the Beas river in Punjab.

Because river dolphins live in murky waters and only briefly surface, researchers combined **visual surveys** (using boats and double observers) with **acoustic surveys** (using underwater microphones to capture their echolocation clicks) to ensure more accurate counts.

Key Takeaways

- **Population Distribution:**
 - **Total Dolphins:** Approximately 6,327.
 - **Ganges River Dolphins:** 6,324 dolphins were found in the Ganga and Brahmaputra systems.
 - **Indus River Dolphins:** Only 3 were identified in the Beas river.
- **Survey Coverage and Methods:**
 - **Geographic Coverage:** The survey covered major channels and tributaries of the Ganga, Brahmaputra, and a small part of the Beas.
 - **Techniques Used:** Both visual observations (using boats with double observers) and acoustic surveys (using hydrophones to capture echolocation clicks) were employed to overcome the challenges of counting these elusive mammals.
- **Regional Insights:**
 - **Ganga River:** The main channel had an estimated 3,275 dolphins, while tributaries held about 2,414.
 - **Brahmaputra River:** Approximately 584 dolphins in the main channel and 51 in its tributaries.
 - **State-wise Distribution:** Uttar Pradesh (2,397 dolphins) and Bihar (2,220 dolphins) host the largest populations, with West Bengal, Assam, Jharkhand, Rajasthan, and Madhya Pradesh having smaller numbers.
- **Hotspots and Coldspots:**
 - **High-Density Areas:** Some river stretches, like parts of Bihar and Jharkhand, showed high encounter rates.
 - **Low-Density Areas:** Other stretches, such as a 366 km segment from Narora to Kanpur in Uttar Pradesh and areas along the Yamuna, were nearly devoid of dolphins.



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- **Environmental Factors:** The survey noted that river depth, particularly in Bihar, may help sustain higher dolphin densities.
- **Conservation Concerns:**
 - The dolphins face multiple threats including **pollution, riverbed mining, excessive damming, reduced water depth, habitat damage, prey decline, and climate change.**
 - Both dolphin species are classified as **endangered** and receive the highest level of protection under India's Wildlife Protection Act, 1972.

[Trump's tariffs challenge-Indian Express Explained](#)

Economy

Easy Explanation

Former President Donald Trump announced a policy to impose **reciprocal tariffs** on trade partners regardless of their economic development. This means that countries—even those still developing, like India—could face steep tariffs if they impose higher tariffs on U.S. goods. Trump argued that for decades, nations like the European Union, China, Brazil, India, Mexico, and Canada have unfairly levied higher tariffs on U.S. products than the U.S. does on theirs.

For India, this announcement could have significant implications. Currently, India maintains much higher tariffs on several sectors—especially agriculture—compared to the U.S. A bilateral trade agreement between India and the U.S. is under discussion, but Trump's new policy could complicate these talks. The agriculture sector is particularly vulnerable due to a large tariff gap, and other industries like automobiles and pharmaceuticals could also be hit, potentially increasing their prices in the U.S. market.

Trade experts argue that such tariffs might pressure India to lower its protectionist measures or force industries to find new export markets beyond the U.S. or even set up production units in the U.S. to bypass the tariffs. The announcement also reflects broader skepticism about the effectiveness of the World Trade Organization (WTO), with critics noting that its principles may no longer be adequate in today's global economy.

Key Takeaways

- **Reciprocal Tariffs Announcement:**
 - Trump declared that reciprocal tariffs will be imposed on trade partners starting April 2, affecting countries regardless of their economic status.
 - He claimed that countries have long used higher tariffs against the U.S., naming the EU, China, Brazil, India, Mexico, and Canada.
- **Impact on India:**
 - **High Tariffs:** India has much higher tariffs on many products, particularly in agriculture, where tariffs can reach 39–65% compared to U.S. tariffs of about 3–5%.
 - **Vulnerable Sectors:** Agriculture, automobiles, pharmaceuticals, electronics, chemicals, and textiles could face price hikes in the U.S. market.
 - **Trade Negotiations:** A bilateral trade agreement between India and the U.S. is in progress, but these new tariffs could complicate negotiations and demand significant tariff concessions from India.
- **Strategic Responses:**
 - **Diversification:** Experts recommend that Indian industries expand export markets to regions with lower tariffs such as Europe, Southeast Asia, and Africa.
 - **Investment Strategies:** Forming joint ventures with American firms or establishing assembly units in the U.S. could be a way to circumvent the tariffs.



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- **WTO and Global Trade Rules:**

- The policy reflects a broader critique of the WTO, questioning its ability to enforce market-oriented policies and accommodate the needs of both developed and developing nations.
- Trump's approach challenges the concessions provided to developing countries under the WTO's special and differential treatment provisions, highlighting growing tensions in global trade norms.

[Of big powers and pawns-Indian Express Editorial](#)

International relations

Easy Explanation

This text explores the chaotic and rapidly changing state of global politics, where traditional rules and alliances seem to be upended. It uses the image of trying to "join the dots" in a game where the dots keep moving, symbolizing how unstable and unpredictable the world has become. Key points include:

- **Shifting Global Order:**

The world is no longer defined by the familiar order of international institutions and alliances. Former U.S. leadership under Donald Trump has transformed the country's approach, moving from being a pillar of global stability to aggressively reshaping the international scene.

- **Trump's New Playbook:**

Trump's transformation—often called Trump 2.0—introduces a more radical, transactional, and nationalistic policy. His administration is replacing established bureaucracies with loyalists and pursuing a strategy that aligns with an old-school, 19th-century view of power, where territorial control is a key marker of strength.

- **Realignment of Global Powers:**

The text argues that the United States, Russia, and China are the major players based on their size and influence. Other nations, including Ukraine, Europe, and India, risk becoming mere pawns in their power struggles. For example, Ukraine's resistance has disrupted traditional alliances and showcased the shifting dynamics.

- **Europe and India's Role:**

The emerging global order challenges Europe to unite and gain independent agency outside of traditional U.S. influence. Meanwhile, India must navigate its relationships carefully. While it has a friendly connection with Trump's America—exemplified by an affinity between Trump and India's Prime Minister Modi—India should also work to build closer ties with Europe, East Asia, and its own region to avoid being used as a bargaining chip.

Key Takeaways

- **Unstable Global Environment:**

The world is like a "moving dots" game—traditional patterns are disappearing, making it hard to find steady ground in geopolitics.

- **Transformation of U.S. Foreign Policy:**

Under Trump 2.0, the U.S. has shifted from a global stabilizer to a more unilateral, transactional power, favoring deals with like-minded regimes over the old liberal international order.

- **Emerging Multipolarity:**

Instead of a clear "West" led by the U.S., the global stage is now dominated by large powers like the U.S., Russia, and China, with other countries at risk of becoming pawns in their strategic contests.

- **Implications for Europe:**

European leaders, like Germany's new chancellor Friedrich Merz, are increasingly calling for Europe to strengthen its own independent capabilities and reduce reliance on U.S. support.



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- **India's Strategic Challenge:**

While India benefits from a connection with Trump's America (bolstered by Modi's relationship with Trump), it must avoid being seen as a pawn. India should pursue a balanced, multipolar foreign policy by deepening ties with Europe, East and Southeast Asia, and its own region.

- **Old vs. New Imperialism:**

The text suggests that Trump's policies echo a 19th-century form of imperialism focused on land and territorial influence, a perspective that contrasts with India's vision for a multipolar world order.

[When debris from space crashes to the earth, who is responsible?-The Hindu Science](#)

Science

Easy Explanation

Imagine going about your day when suddenly a large, hot piece of metal crashes nearby. This isn't a scene from a movie—it happened in Kenya in December 2024 when a 500 kg fragment, likely part of a rocket, fell from space. As space activities increase with more rockets and satellites launching every year, space debris becomes an urgent problem. Pieces of defunct satellites and rocket parts are falling back to Earth uncontrollably, creating risks and legal challenges.

Currently, international treaties like the Outer Space Treaty (1967) and the Liability Convention (1972) assign responsibility for space objects. However, these laws struggle to address debris because:

- **There's no clear legal definition:** What exactly counts as "space debris" is still debated.
- **Enforcement is tricky:** Even if damage occurs, holding a country accountable is complicated.
- **Tracking challenges:** Modern tracking works for recent debris, but older or fragmented pieces are hard to trace.

The increasing number of satellites, including mega-constellations like Starlink and Amazon Kuiper, further heightens the risk of debris causing damage. Experts argue that new, binding international regulations are urgently needed to control reentries, mandate debris mitigation measures, and establish a stronger enforcement mechanism.

Key Takeaways

- **Rising Space Debris Issue:**
 - A heavy metal fragment (500 kg) fell in Kenya in December 2024, highlighting the dangers of uncontrolled space debris.
 - Increased space activity (more rockets and satellites) is exacerbating the debris problem.
- **Legal and Accountability Challenges:**
 - Existing treaties (Outer Space Treaty 1967, Liability Convention 1972) hold states responsible for space objects, but they lack a clear definition and enforceability for debris.
 - Enforcement relies on diplomatic negotiations, which often result in settlements that don't fully cover damages.
- **Tracking and Attribution Difficulties:**
 - Advanced tracking can identify recent debris, but older or highly fragmented pieces are difficult to trace.
- **Urgent Need for Regulation:**
 - Binding global regulations are needed to mandate controlled reentries, debris mitigation, and clear penalties for non-compliance.
 - National policies should require companies to implement debris reduction strategies as a condition for launching satellites.



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- Modernizing the Liability Convention and establishing an international tribunal could strengthen accountability.
- **Future Risks:**
 - The rapid growth of satellite mega-constellations could add over 100,000 satellites by 2030, significantly increasing the risk of uncontrolled reentries.
 - Without decisive global action, the safety of space—and the communities on Earth—will continue to be at risk.

Warriors of hope-The Hindu Editorial

Governance

Easy Explanation

Accredited Social Health Activists (ASHAs), known as the "warriors of hope," are vital frontline health workers in rural India. Launched under the National Rural Health Mission in 2005, ASHAs serve as a bridge between communities and the public healthcare system. They perform a wide range of tasks—from recording vital statistics to promoting maternal and child health, and even tackling diseases. Their work gained global recognition during the COVID-19 pandemic, with the World Health Organization honoring them as Global Health Leaders in 2022.

Despite their crucial role and significant contributions to community health, ASHAs are still classified as volunteers. This designation means they receive only a modest fixed salary (ranging between ₹5,000 and ₹15,000 per month) and performance-based incentives, rather than the full benefits and compensation of permanent government employees. Given their heavy workload, long hours, and personal sacrifices, there is a growing call for the government to recognize them as permanent employees and provide them with fair wages and better working conditions.

Key Takeaways

- **Essential Role:**
 - ASHAs are crucial in delivering healthcare services in rural India, covering areas like maternal and child health, disease intervention, and community sanitation.
- **Global Recognition:**
 - Their efforts during the COVID-19 pandemic earned international acclaim, including the WHO Global Health Leaders Award in 2022.
- **Current Compensation Issues:**
 - Despite their importance, ASHAs are treated as volunteers. They receive only a small fixed salary plus performance-based incentives.
 - Typical earnings range between ₹5,000 and ₹15,000 per month.
- **Working Conditions:**
 - They work long hours, travel long distances, often skip meals, and have little time for their own health needs.
- **Call for Change:**
 - There is a strong push for the government to treat ASHAs as permanent employees.
 - Adequate remuneration and improved employment conditions are needed to honor their role and ensure sustainable healthcare delivery in rural areas.

Treating ASHAs as permanent employees would not only fulfill their rightful expectations but also strengthen India's public health system by ensuring that these frontline workers are properly supported and valued.



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7th March 2025

What US AID gives, to whom-Indian Express Explained

International relations

Easy Explanation

Over the past two decades, the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) has provided significant financial assistance (over \$2.8 billion since 2001) to support various development and health projects in India. However, an executive order issued in January by the Trump administration sought to drastically cut or end most foreign aid. This would affect numerous ongoing USAID programs in India — from health initiatives targeting tuberculosis, HIV/AIDS, and maternal health to environmental, education, and technology projects. Although a U.S. federal court halted the immediate stop to foreign aid, the Trump administration appealed, creating uncertainty about future funding and leaving many critical programs in limbo.

Key Takeaways

1. Major Funding Source

- Since 2001, USAID has disbursed \$2.8 billion in Official Development Assistance (ODA) to India.
- USAID's support has spanned health, environment, education, energy, and technology sectors.

2. Recent Peak in Aid

- Aid to India soared in 2022 (\$228 million), 2023 (\$175 million), and 2024 (\$151 million so far).
- Much of the recent increase was driven by an "Economic Support Fund" after the COVID-19 pandemic.

3. Primary Focus on Health

- A large share of funding went to "Health and Population" programs, tackling polio, maternal and child health, TB, HIV/AIDS, and COVID-19.
- In 2024, nearly \$80 million of the total \$151 million supported health-related projects.

4. Programs Under Threat

- **TB Awareness (Breaking the Barriers):** Receives about \$7 million for tackling tuberculosis in poor regions (Karnataka, Telangana, Bihar, Assam).
- **HIV/AIDS Projects (PEPFAR & USAID):** Funding is crucial for prevention and treatment efforts.
- **Environmental Projects:** Initiatives on air pollution, biodiversity conservation, and sustainable water/sanitation may be cut.
- **Education and Women's Entrepreneurship:** Early learning and women micro-entrepreneur resilience programs face uncertainty.

5. Policy Shift & Legal Battle

- A January 20 Executive Order from the Trump administration called for reevaluating and possibly ending foreign aid, putting USAID's work at risk.
- A U.S. federal court paused the order, but the administration appealed to the Supreme Court. The legal tussle continues, creating an uncertain future for these initiatives.

6. Global Impact

- India is one of many countries that could lose critical assistance for health and social services.



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- Experts warn that cuts in USAID funding could lead to lives lost, especially in underfunded healthcare areas like HIV/AIDS and TB.

[Pashu Aushadhi Initiative For Health Of Livestock-Indian Express Explained](#)

governance

Easy Explanation

The Indian government has launched the “Pashu Aushadhi” initiative to provide affordable generic veterinary medicines for livestock. Modeled on the Janaushadhi scheme for humans, these stores will offer low-cost, quality medicines so that farmers spend less on treating their animals. It is part of a broader Livestock Health and Disease Control Program (LHDCP), which aims to prevent and control common livestock diseases, improving overall productivity and reducing losses for farmers.

Key Takeaways

1. What is Pashu Aushadhi?

- It is a new initiative to open veterinary medicine stores across India.
- The goal is to supply affordable, good-quality generic medicines for livestock care.

2. Part of a Bigger Program

- Pashu Aushadhi is included in the revised Livestock Health and Disease Control Program (LHDCP).
- The LHDCP has a total budget of ₹3,880 crore for 2024–25 and 2025–26; ₹75 crore is specifically allocated for Pashu Aushadhi.

3. Inspired by Janaushadhi Kendras

- Just like human generic medicine stores (“Pradhan Mantri Bharatiya Janaushadhi Kendras”), Pashu Aushadhi will help lower costs, especially benefiting small farmers.

4. Why It Matters

- India’s livestock population is huge (over 535 million).
- Diseases like Foot and Mouth Disease, Brucellosis, and Lumpy Skin Disease hurt productivity and incomes.
- Reducing out-of-pocket expenditures for medicines is crucial for rural livelihoods.

5. How It Will Work

- The stores will be operated by cooperative societies and Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samriddhi Kendras.
- They will offer both generic medicines and ethnoveterinary formulations (traditional remedies based on local practices).

6. Expected Benefits

- More accessible treatment options for common livestock ailments.
- Potential increase in livestock productivity.
- Reduced financial burden on farmers by keeping medicine costs in check.

Overall, the Pashu Aushadhi initiative is designed to bolster India’s animal husbandry and dairy sectors by making veterinary care more affordable and accessible, thereby improving animal health and farmer incomes.



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International relations

Easy Explanation

Nepal and India share long-standing and extensive academic ties that go back to the days when Nepal's first colleges were affiliated with Indian universities, well before Nepal established its own robust higher education system. Even today, Nepalese students make up the largest proportion of foreign enrolments in India's higher educational institutions. Recent events, such as the tragic suicide of a Nepalese student at an Indian university and the subsequent fallout, highlight the challenges many foreign students (particularly Nepalese) face. These incidents also underscore the importance of fulfilling mutual commitments under the 1950 Indo-Nepal Peace Treaty, which grants Nepalese nationals certain rights in India. Overall, this relationship reminds us that higher education is more than just classrooms and degrees; it also involves institutional culture, student welfare, and the broader socio-political ties between two neighboring countries.

Key Takeaways

1. High Enrollment from Nepal

- In 2021-22, **46,878 foreign students** from 170 nations enrolled in Indian higher education institutes.
- Nepalese students formed the **largest chunk** (28%) of these foreign enrollments — reflecting a long-term trend.

2. Historical Roots of Nepal's Education

- Nepal's modern formal education system is **not very old** and was heavily influenced by **Indian universities**.
- **Tri-Chandra College** in Kathmandu (established 1918) was initially affiliated to Calcutta University and later Patna University.
- Until the 1950s, instructors and curricula were closely tied to the **colonial education model** inherited through India.

3. Shift to Independent Higher Education

- Nepal set up **Tribhuvan University** in 1959, finally allowing some autonomy over local curricula and higher education.
- The **New Education System Plan (NESP)** in 1971 restructured the entire education framework in Nepal, yet many students continued seeking advanced degrees in India.

4. Recent Controversy

- The **KIIT incident** (suicide of a Nepalese student, subsequent protests, and an eviction order temporarily issued against Nepalese students) revealed **systemic issues** in how foreign students are treated.
- This highlights the **duty of host institutions** to ensure welfare, safety, and **non-discriminatory** treatment of foreign nationals.

5. Cultural Capital & Responsibilities

- When Nepalese students study in India, they accumulate **"cultural capital"**—experiences and relationships that shape both societies.





- Institutions must **uphold inclusive policies** and avoid any form of institutional bias or harassment, especially given **Indo-Nepal Peace Treaty (1950)** guarantees of reciprocal privileges.

6. Implications for Bilateral Ties

- Education has always been a major part of **Indo-Nepal relations**.
- Incidents of discrimination or harassment can **strain bilateral ties** and undermine the benefits gained from student exchange and collaboration in higher education.

In essence, the Nepal-India academic relationship is deeply rooted historically and remains pivotal today. Safeguarding this connection requires consistent efforts from educational institutions to provide an environment of mutual respect and support for all students, especially those from Nepal.

Medical wearables tech: an early warning system for your health-The Hindu Science

Science and technology

Easy Explanation

Wearable medical devices, such as smartwatches, fitness trackers, and continuous glucose monitors (CGMs), are transforming how people manage chronic illnesses (like diabetes and heart disease). These devices provide real-time health data — heart rate, blood glucose levels, oxygen saturation, etc. — that both patients and doctors can track. This allows users to spot problems early, practice healthier habits, and make more informed treatment decisions. The COVID-19 pandemic greatly accelerated the adoption of these devices. While the future holds even more integrated monitoring solutions (e.g., smart textiles, non-invasive glucose monitoring), challenges such as high cost and occasional false readings still limit widespread use.

Key Takeaways

1. Wearables as Health Allies

- Originally seen as lifestyle accessories, wearables are now indispensable tools to monitor vital health parameters (e.g., heart rate, glucose levels).
- Devices such as the Apple Watch can detect potentially serious conditions (e.g., atrial fibrillation).

2. Real-Time Data for Early Detection

- Users see immediate data on heart rate, blood glucose spikes, or oxygen levels and can change their routines or seek prompt medical advice.
- This proactive approach reduces disease risks and improves day-to-day health management.

3. Better Patient-Doctor Collaboration

- Remote patient monitoring allows doctors to adjust treatments based on real-time updates from CGMs and other wearables.
- This has raised treatment compliance and given patients more control of their recovery or health goals.

4. Post-Pandemic Boom

- The COVID-19 pandemic made people aware of the importance of tracking vitals like oxygen saturation, leading to a spike in wearable usage.
- Many in their 40s-50s now rely on fitness trackers or smartwatches to track blood pressure and heart rate.



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5. Future Innovations

- Ongoing research into non-invasive glucose monitors, smart textiles, and other novel tools will enhance ease and accuracy of health monitoring.
- As technology evolves, wearables will blend seamlessly into daily life.

6. Affordability & Accuracy

- High costs remain a barrier for many (e.g., CGM sensors can cost thousands of rupees per month), limiting long-term usage.
- Occasional false readings require users to follow up with medical professionals rather than self-diagnosing.

Overall, the rise of medical wearables is reshaping healthcare from reactive to proactive, enabling people to keep closer tabs on their health and intervene earlier when problems arise. While issues of cost and data accuracy remain, the trend toward personalized, real-time monitoring seems here to stay.

[Beyond 'Beijing', unlocking a feminist future in India-The Hindu Editorial](#)

Sociology

Easy Explanation

In 1995, representatives of 189 countries, including India, gathered in Beijing and agreed on a powerful roadmap for advancing women's rights, called the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. This document listed 12 key areas — including health, education, economic empowerment, and ending violence — through which governments could foster gender equality. Over the last three decades, India has used this framework to achieve major milestones: improving women's healthcare, encouraging education for girls, boosting financial inclusion, and strengthening laws to protect women from violence. However, challenges remain (particularly regarding gender-based violence and social barriers). Looking ahead, India aims to maintain and accelerate its momentum by investing in young women's leadership, bridging digital gaps, and expanding women's political representation.

Key Takeaways

1. Healthcare Gains

- **Maternal Health:** Institutional deliveries now stand at 95%, and maternal mortality has dropped significantly.
- **Universal Health Access:** Schemes like Ayushman Bharat provide free treatment to millions of women.

2. Educational Improvements

- **Beti Bachao Beti Padhao:** Helped improve the child sex ratio and increased girls' school enrollment.
- **National Education Policy (NEP) 2020:** Focuses on higher retention rates and STEM opportunities for girls, encouraging flexible and inclusive learning.

3. Economic Empowerment

- **Financial Inclusion:** Over 100 million women connected to financial networks and self-help groups.
- **Digital Literacy:** Pradhan Mantri Gramin Digital Saksharta Abhiyan has trained over 35 million rural women in digital skills, improving their economic participation.



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4. Addressing Gender-Based Violence

- **One Stop Centres:** 770 centres provide medical, legal, and psychological support to survivors of violence.
- **Legal Reforms:** The Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita 2023 aims to bolster protections for women and facilitate justice.

5. Women in Leadership

- **Political Representation:** The Women's Reservation Bill ensures 33% of seats in legislative bodies. At the local level, 1.5 million women hold leadership positions.
- **Youth Action:** Young women leaders spearhead efforts in areas like climate change, technology, and entrepreneurship.

6. Ongoing Challenges

- **Violence & Harmful Practices:** Violence against women persists; new digital innovations and policing reforms aim to strengthen prevention and response.
- **Systemic Barriers:** Economic and social inequalities still exist. Continuous collaboration among government, civil society, and international partners is crucial.

7. The Path Forward

- **Beijing's Legacy:** Even 30 years later, the Beijing Declaration remains a core guide to achieving gender equality.
- **Sustaining Momentum:** Ongoing efforts in financial inclusion, youth leadership, digital empowerment, and strengthened laws will help India move closer to a truly gender-equal future.

[Women in corporate leadership, the lived reality-The Hindu Editorial](#)

Sociology

Easy Explanation

Despite corporate and legal efforts to include women in leadership positions, genuine gender diversity in senior management often remains elusive. Mandates such as requiring at least one female director on company boards have boosted women's representation — yet many women still face tokenism, wage gaps, and limited authority in decision-making. Research consistently shows that organizations benefit from having more women leaders (through stronger corporate governance, inclusive decision-making, and enhanced stakeholder trust). However, without real power, equal pay, and meaningful roles for women in C-suite positions and board committees, formal inclusion efforts can end up as mere window dressing. To ensure women's long-term and impactful participation in the corporate world, both corporate policies and broader social efforts must continue to evolve.

Key Takeaways

1. DEI Under Threat

- Recent rollback of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) initiatives in the U.S. can have global ripple effects.
- Women's hiring and retention — especially in leadership — may decline if DEI programs are scaled back or abandoned.



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2. Mandates and Their Role

- Legal requirements in India, such as the Companies Act (2013) and Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) mandates, have *prompted* more women's appointments to boards.
- The proportion of women directors in India's top 500 listed companies grew from 5% in 2011 to 18% in 2023.

3. Why Women Leaders Matter

- **Expanded Talent Pool:** Boosts informational diversity, encourages innovative thinking, and strengthens problem-solving.
- **Robust Governance & Ethics:** Women's leadership correlates with better corporate governance, reduced risk, and deeper stakeholder engagement.
- **Positive Public Image:** Companies with more women in leadership often rank higher on "best companies" and ethics lists.

4. Tokenism vs. Real Inclusion

- True gender diversity requires more than appointing one woman to a board.
- Women need real authority, leadership of influential committees, **and** pay parity to fully shape corporate strategy and culture.

5. Action Steps

- **Beyond Quotas:** Companies must develop pathways that bring more women into executive and decision-making roles.
- **Close the Wage Gap:** Equal pay is a critical indicator of genuine inclusion.
- **Sustained Efforts:** Ongoing research (such as by Thought Arbitrage) and transparent reporting will help assess where and how women's leadership progresses—or stalls.

In short, legal mandates have helped raise women's presence in boardrooms, but deeper, sustained cultural and policy changes are required for women to gain *lasting, meaningful* leadership roles and ensure gender diversity remains more than just a symbolic gesture.

[Is Artificial Intelligence affecting critical thinking skills?-The Hindu Editorial](#)

Science and technology

Easy Explanation

Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools such as ChatGPT, Copilot, and AI-driven search engines are increasingly used in classrooms and by teachers worldwide. While some worry this might diminish students' ability to think critically (because students may rely too much on AI-generated answers), many educators see AI as an inevitable part of modern learning. They suggest a balanced approach that allows students and teachers to use AI meaningfully, but with ethical guidelines and oversight to protect data, ensure academic integrity, and foster deeper thinking skills. Ultimately, AI won't replace critical thinking if institutions set clear learning objectives, craft thoughtful curricula, and train students (and teachers) on how to evaluate AI outputs critically.

Key Takeaways

1. AI is Unstoppable in Education



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- It is almost impossible to ban AI in classrooms because it is already embedded in everyday applications such as Microsoft 365 and Adobe.
- Rather than prohibiting its use, educators must develop strategies for responsible implementation.

2. Needs Context & Clear Guidelines

- How much AI should be used depends on the **course objectives** (e.g., a coding class may benefit from AI-assisted code generation, but a course on critical thinking might restrict AI use).
- **Institutional policies** should specify acceptable AI usage, with faculty adapting guidelines to their individual classes.

3. Balancing Practical Skills & Critical Thinking

- AI can help students learn practical, in-demand skills (e.g., validating or editing code).
- Still, schools must also prioritize teaching critical thinking, originality, and in-depth problem-solving, ensuring students don't just accept AI responses blindly.

4. Need for Regulation & Audits

- There are **privacy and data** concerns, as many AI tools collect user data.
- Government bodies, schools, and universities should conduct **safety and bias audits** of AI tools, defining where AI fits ethically and securely into education.

5. Potential Over-Dependence

- Educators worry that relying solely on AI could erode deep thinking skills.
- The **solution** is thorough user training: teachers and students should learn both the **capabilities** and **limitations** of AI, maintaining a healthy skepticism toward AI-generated outputs.

6. Proactive, Not Reactive

- While AI's rapid evolution challenges educators, it's better to experiment with AI usage and gather real-world insights.
- Real-time discussions and course corrections will help integrate AI effectively without compromising learning goals.

Overall, AI can support and enhance education, but mindful implementation, clear guidelines, and an unwavering commitment to critical thinking are vital for ensuring its positive impact.

8th March 2025

[Story of 26/11 accused Tahawwur Rana, set to be extradited to India from US-Indian Express Explained](#)

International relation

Easy Explanation

Tahawwur Hussain Rana, a Pakistani-born Canadian, was charged in relation to the 2008 Mumbai terror attacks (commonly referred to as 26/11) for helping David Headley gather information used in the attacks. Rana was arrested in the United States in 2009 and later convicted of supporting terrorism in Denmark and providing material support to the Lashkar-e-Taiba terror group (but *not* convicted for support to the 26/11 attack in India). He served a prison term in the U.S. and was released on compassionate grounds in 2020.



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Since then, India requested his extradition under the India-U.S. Extradition Treaty. Rana argued that sending him to India would amount to “double jeopardy” (being tried twice for the same crime), but U.S. courts rejected this. Eventually, President Trump approved his extradition after a meeting with India’s Prime Minister Modi. Rana tried appealing all the way to the U.S. Supreme Court, but his appeals were turned down.

Key Takeaways

1. Charges Against Rana

- He allegedly aided David Headley in scouting targets for the 26/11 attacks in Mumbai.
- Although acquitted of conspiracy to support the Mumbai attacks in a U.S. court, he was found guilty of supporting terror plots in Denmark and assisting Lashkar-e-Taiba.

2. Legal Proceedings and Extradition

- India requested his extradition in December 2019 under the 1997 India-U.S. Extradition Treaty.
- Rana’s principal defense was “double jeopardy” — he claimed he had already been tried for this conduct in the U.S.
- Multiple U.S. courts (a magistrate judge, district court, court of appeals, and finally the Supreme Court) all rejected his pleas.

3. India-U.S. Extradition Treaty

- Signed in 1997, it allows the extradition of individuals for offenses punishable by more than one year of imprisonment in both countries.
- Political offenses typically are excluded, but murder, hijacking, and major terror crimes are not treated as political offenses.

4. Outcome

- U.S. authorities found there was “probable cause” to believe Rana committed the offenses alleged by India.
- Now that the Supreme Court has rejected his appeal, Rana is set to be extradited to India to face charges related to the 26/11 Mumbai attacks.

5. Other Extradition Examples

- The U.S. has sent very few fugitives back to India.
- Extradition requests for David Headley and other high-profile individuals have been turned down before.
- Only two alleged Khalistani militants have been extradited to India from the U.S. so far, illustrating how rare extraditions are between the two countries.

Overall, the courts decided that Rana still has to face specific terror-related charges in India, and these charges are different enough from his U.S. conviction that there is no “double jeopardy.”

[Emerging Fallout Of Tariffs-Indian Express explained](#)

Economy

Easy Explanation

Over the past few weeks of Donald Trump’s second term, he has threatened and imposed tariffs not only on rival economies like China but also on traditional US allies such as Europe and Canada. Trump believes that the US has long



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been “exploited” in global trade, and by imposing or threatening tariffs, he can force other countries either to pay more to the US or to relocate their manufacturing to the US.

However, this approach is causing significant turmoil:

- **US allies**, especially in **Europe**, are gearing up to rebuild their own economies and **reduce dependence** on the US. They are also retaliating with **their own tariffs**.
- This has created significant **uncertainty** for businesses and consumers, because it’s hard to tell when or where Trump might strike next with tariffs.
- As a result, **US stock markets have lagged** behind their European counterparts, and the **US dollar** has weakened somewhat against other major currencies.
- European countries are likely to issue new government bonds (to finance their planned economic boost), leading to **rising bond yields** and suggesting higher growth prospects in the short term.

Key Takeaways

1. Trump’s Rationale

- He thinks the US economy is strong enough (often called “US exceptionalism”) to withstand any trade friction.
- He wants manufacturing to move into the US, reducing trade deficits and creating American jobs.

2. Allies’ Response

- Europe, led by Germany and France, is planning to **rebuild and re-arm**, with greater defence and infrastructure spending.
- Allies such as Canada are **retaliating** with counter-tariffs, while others look to **diversify away** from the US market and currency.

3. Market Reactions

- **Heightened Uncertainty:** Firms on both sides of the Atlantic face unpredictable changes in trade and costs, making it difficult to plan.
- **Stocks:** US indices (like the S&P 500) have fallen or stagnated, while European indices (e.g., Stoxx 600) have outperformed them so far this year.
- **Currencies:** The US dollar has started to **lose ground** against other major currencies.

4. Potential Consequences

- **Global Leadership:** If allies feel betrayed, the US risks losing trust and its traditional leadership role.
- **Economic Impact:** If allies trade more among themselves and move away from the US dollar, the US could face weaker demand for its exports and less influence in global finance.
- **Unintended Risks:** Tariffs may hurt American businesses too, as higher costs and uncertainty could slow growth in the US as well.

5. Bottom Line

- By threatening everyone with tariffs, the US risks isolating itself just as other countries look for alternatives and strengthen their own capabilities.
- For a truly stable global system — and a thriving US economy — it may help if the US avoids relying solely on punitive trade measures.



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Why Vanuatu boasts one of the most popular 'golden passport' schemes-Indian Express Explained

International relations

Easy Explanation

Vanuatu is a small island nation in the South Pacific that offers a “golden passport” or citizenship-by-investment (CBI) program. Essentially, wealthy foreigners can acquire Vanuatu citizenship by paying a certain amount to the government, often without having to live in or even visit the country. In return, new citizens gain a passport that grants fairly broad visa-free travel (including entry to over 100 countries) and provides access to a zero-tax system — no personal income, capital gains, inheritance, or wealth tax. Because Vanuatu’s economy is relatively small, these passport sales contribute significantly to its national revenue, making it one of the nation’s main sources of income.

However, this scheme has come under scrutiny. Some foreign nationals who have faced sanctions or are suspected of illicit activities have reportedly acquired Vanuatu passports, raising concerns about security and the misuse of Vanuatu's tax haven status for money laundering.

Key Takeaways

1. Citizenship by Investment (CBI)

- Vanuatu sells its passports for around \$135,000 to \$155,000, which can also cover a family of four.
- The application process is quick (30–60 days) and minimal in documentation — applicants rarely, if ever, need to visit Vanuatu.

2. Passport Strength

- Provides **visa-free access** to 113 countries, although the EU recently **revoked** visa-free travel for Vanuatu due to security concerns.
- Still ranks 51st globally in passport strength, ahead of countries like China and Saudi Arabia.

3. Tax Haven

- **No** personal income tax, capital gains tax, or inheritance tax, making it an attractive destination for global investors or those seeking tax advantages.
- Lax reporting requirements further enhance its appeal for storing or transferring wealth.

4. Big Revenue for a Small Nation

- Vanuatu’s per capita GDP is quite low, so selling passports and hosting offshore finance is a significant economic lifeline.
- Estimates suggest passport sales alone account for **roughly 30%** of government revenue.

5. Risks and Controversies

- Allegations suggest that criminals and sanctioned individuals have misused the program.
- High-profile investigations found people with questionable histories acquiring Vanuatu citizenship, raising concerns about **money laundering** and national security in other countries.

In short, Vanuatu’s CBI program is popular because it’s fast, relatively inexpensive compared to other programs, and offers extensive tax and travel benefits. However, weak oversight has led to global scrutiny and criticism.



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Environment

Easy Explanation

In 2015, world leaders agreed on the Paris Climate Pact, aimed at holding global temperature rise below 1.5°C by cutting greenhouse gas emissions. While this pact boosted optimism and got countries to set national climate goals, it has struggled to enforce these commitments effectively. Many nations aren't transitioning away from fossil fuels quickly enough, and global temperatures could overshoot safe limits.

Brazil's Climate Action Minister, Marina Silva, has proposed creating **additional, complementary mechanisms** to the existing UNFCCC framework so that countries do not simply agree on paper but actually follow through on their promises. She also suggests that reviewing national climate commitments every five years might be insufficient.

The core challenge is that the UNFCCC, as the main UN body overseeing climate negotiations, lacks strong enforcement powers. Some experts think the UNFCCC should shift from negotiating new treaties to focusing more on enforcing and helping implement existing ones. In addition, regional alliances and stronger roles for groups like the IPCC (which provides scientific climate research) and other stakeholders (civil society, businesses) could help push faster, more effective climate action.

Key Takeaways

1. Paris Pact's Struggle

- The 2015 Paris Agreement raised hope but hasn't lived up to its ambition, as many countries' plans aren't bold enough to keep warming below 1.5°C.
- Fossil fuel reliance still differs across developed and developing nations, creating disagreements.

2. Brazil's Proposal

- Marina Silva, Brazil's Climate Minister, suggests establishing *additional international mechanisms* beyond the Paris framework to ensure countries follow through.
- She also questions whether the current five-year cycle for reviewing national commitments is too slow.

3. Limitations of the UNFCCC

- The main UN climate body (UNFCCC) isn't strong on enforcement.
- It oversees numerous sub-agencies, but lack of compliance suggests these structures need reform or more authority.

4. IPCC's Potential Role

- The IPCC is widely respected for its climate science.
- A stronger diplomatic or enforcement role for the IPCC could help push countries toward meeting emissions targets.

5. Need for Broader Alliances

- Climate change is too complex for any single agency or treaty.
- Cooperation among neighboring countries, businesses, civil society, and other international groups will be crucial for meaningful progress.

6. New Directions in Climate Diplomacy





- Brazil's proposals could mark a more collaborative, flexible approach.
- This shift might bring more accountability and practical support for countries to meet — or exceed — climate goals.

Inclusion in public spaces — from fear to freedom-The Hindu Editorial

Sociology

Easy Explanation

In India, women still struggle to feel safe and welcome in public areas like streets, parks, or bus stands. Despite some progress in women's education and employment, patriarchal norms—where men have more freedom and power—continue to limit women's everyday mobility. Often, women move through public spaces quickly and purposefully (for example, going to work) instead of simply enjoying these areas for leisure. This situation is partly due to safety fears and a social attitude that places the responsibility on women to keep themselves safe, rather than holding offenders accountable.

The article argues that if we truly want women to experience freedom and equality, society must do more than just ensure safety—women should feel able to simply **exist** and spend time in open spaces without fear. Achieving this includes changing both people's mindsets and making physical improvements (like better lighting, safe and clean toilets, seating areas) to public spaces.

Key Takeaways

1. Patriarchal Norms Restrict Women's Freedom

- Societal attitudes often confine women to the home, resulting in less visibility in public areas.
- Even when women do step out, they tend to do so for specific tasks—rarely for leisure or relaxation.

2. Safety Concerns Are a Major Barrier

- Fear of harassment or violence discourages women from spending time in open spaces.
- Women are more likely to socialize or meet friends in “curated” environments (malls, cafes) than on sidewalks or parks, reflecting the lack of trust in general public areas.

3. Public Spaces Are Key to Participation

- Being present in community areas helps people engage with social and economic life.
- Women's visible participation in streets, parks, and bus stops fosters confidence and normalizes their presence.

4. Designing Inclusive Public Spaces

- Infrastructure improvements—such as better street lighting, more benches, clean toilets—can make women feel safer.
- Governments must back this with stronger enforcement of laws against gender-based harassment, including real consequences for offenders.

5. Cultural Shift and Collective Effort

- Families and communities must support women's autonomy to be in public without undue restrictions.
- More women venturing out and talking openly about their experiences helps normalize their presence.
- Encouraging women to hang out, relax, and take up space in public areas helps challenge patriarchal ideas and promote gender equality.





By combining thoughtful urban planning with a change in social attitudes and stricter enforcement of laws, India can gradually become a place where women feel free and safe to walk, gather, and simply exist in all kinds of public spaces.

[An equitable future for women in science, in India-The Hindu Editorial](#)

Sociology

Easy Explanation

Even though more women in India are entering science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) fields than before, they face numerous hurdles at every stage of their careers. These obstacles include societal pressure to prioritize family, stereotypes that undermine their contributions, and work environments that often exclude or discriminate against them. All of this leads to high dropout rates (the so-called “leaky pipeline”), meaning many women leave science before reaching senior or leadership positions.

India’s government has made strides — such as funding special programs for women returning after career breaks and offering flexible work options. Still, more reforms are needed to ensure that women can progress in their scientific careers. Increasing visibility for female role models and addressing workplace barriers at an institutional level could go a long way in encouraging the next generation of women in science.

Key Takeaways

1. Early Barriers

- Girls often face **limited access to quality STEM education** and rigid **cultural expectations** that make it difficult to pursue and stay in scientific fields.

2. Workplace Discrimination

- Women face **biased hiring and promotions**, as well as **harassment** in academic settings. These factors contribute to many dropping out of science early.

3. Importance of Retaining Women

- Diverse teams boost **creativity and innovation**. More women in STEM also means **more role models** for future generations and a **more inclusive** workforce.

4. Existing Government Initiatives

- **GATI (Gender Advancement for Transforming Institutions)**, **WISE-KIRAN**, **Women Scientists Scheme (WOS)**, and **BioCARE** are programs aimed at promoting women’s participation and helping them rejoin research after breaks.

5. Further Recommendations

- **Flexible work options and childcare support** to make balancing family and career easier.
- **Public recognition** of women’s achievements, alongside calling out gender bias through tools like **BiasWatchIndia**.
- **Mentorship networks and removing age barriers** on grants, so more women can advance later in their careers or return after time off.
- **Leadership and decision-making roles** for senior women, to reshape policies and workplace culture.

By implementing these measures and continuously challenging stereotypes, India can create a more level playing field in STEM, where women feel valued and can reach their full potential.



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Economy

Easy Explanation

India's economy is showing strong signs of expansion in both its services and manufacturing sectors, even as it faces global challenges. Recent reports indicate that key economic indicators, like the services Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI), have rebounded, suggesting growth. However, looming risks—such as potential reciprocal tariffs from the US and disruptions from the rapid adoption of artificial intelligence in the IT sector—pose serious challenges. To mitigate these risks and ensure long-term economic stability, experts argue that India needs to diversify its trading partners instead of relying heavily on a few, particularly the US.

Key Takeaways

1. Economic Resilience:

- Both the services and manufacturing sectors, which together make up about 80% of India's GDP, are expanding.
- Positive signals come from improved PMIs and strong quarterly earnings of major companies.

2. Sector-Specific Trends:

- The services sector, a major driver of growth, rebounded sharply, offsetting a slight decline in manufacturing.
- The IT sector is facing a slowdown partly due to the disruptive impact of AI, which is reshaping hiring, training, and earnings from new contracts.

3. Global Challenges:

- Potential US tariffs and rising protectionism create uncertainty, especially for the manufacturing sector.
- Geopolitical tensions and a possible US recession add to the global economic risks.

4. Need for Diversification:

- India must broaden its trading base to reduce overdependence on its largest partner, the US.
- Diversification can help the country better manage and mitigate global headwinds, ensuring a more secure economic future.

9th March 2025

[Why has India promised to buy more U.S. oil?: TH FAQ](#)

International Relations

Easy Explanation: India's Growing Energy Ties with the U.S.

India has agreed to **increase oil and natural gas imports from the U.S.**, with purchases expected to rise from **\$15 billion to \$25 billion**. This move aims to **diversify energy sources, strengthen bilateral trade, and ensure energy security**. India, the world's **third-largest oil importer**, relies on imports for over **85% of its crude oil needs**. While



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boosting U.S. energy imports, India is also **maintaining strong ties with Russia**, which supplies **40% of India's oil** at discounted rates.

India is focusing on **cleaner energy sources**, aiming to **increase natural gas use from 6% to 15%** of its total energy consumption. The U.S. is emerging as **one of India's largest LNG suppliers**, and India is working on **expanding its gas infrastructure** to meet growing demand. The government is also **investing in renewables, biofuels, and electric vehicle infrastructure** to reduce its dependence on crude oil.

Key Takeaways: India's Expanding Energy Strategy

1. India's Commitment to U.S. Energy Imports

- India aims to **increase oil and natural gas purchases** from the U.S. to **\$25 billion** in the near future.
- In February 2025, India imported **3,57,000 barrels per day (bpd)** from the U.S., up from **2,21,000 bpd** last year.
- The deal **strengthens Indo-U.S. energy ties** and helps in **balancing trade relations**.

2. India's Oil and Gas Needs

- India imported **234.26 million tonnes** of crude oil in **2023-24**, with import dependence reaching **87.8%**.
- Oil import costs **fell from \$157.53 billion in 2022-23 to \$133.37 billion in 2023-24** due to lower global prices.
- India **also imports LNG**—31.80 billion cubic meters in 2023-24, worth **\$13.4 billion**.

3. Diversification of Energy Sources

- **Russia has become India's biggest oil supplier**, making up **40% of total crude imports** at discounted prices.
- India also imports oil from **West Asia, the U.S., and other new suppliers like Brazil and Guyana**.
- Multiple sources help **reduce dependency on any single country** and **mitigate price fluctuations**.

4. India's Future Gas Market Growth

- **Gas consumption is set to reach 103 bcm by 2030**, driven by **domestic production, infrastructure expansion, and global LNG supply growth**.
- India aims to **increase natural gas usage from 6% to 15%** in its energy mix.
- **U.S. LNG exports to India have surged**, making it a **key supplier**.

5. India's Energy Roadmap for the Future

- **Reducing oil imports** by focusing on **renewable energy, biofuels, and electric vehicles**.
- **Investing in infrastructure** to support **natural gas and LNG expansion**.
- **Exploring alternative fuels** like **ethanol, compressed biogas, and hydrogen** to shift away from fossil fuels.

[Why are Indian firms racing to build local AI?](#)

Science tech

Easy Explanation: IndiaAI Mission and AI Kosha

India has launched **AI Kosha**, a national dataset platform to **gather non-personal data from government departments** for developing AI models. It also introduced the **Common Compute Portal**, which allows startups and academic institutions to **access powerful computing resources (GPUs)** needed for AI development. This is part of the **IndiaAI Mission**, which aims to make **AI in India and AI work for India** with a **₹10,371 crore investment**.



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The mission focuses on **providing AI infrastructure, developing datasets for Indian languages, ensuring AI safety, and supporting AI startups**. By offering **local datasets and computing power**, India hopes to **reduce reliance on foreign AI models** and encourage **indigenous AI innovation**.

Key Takeaways: IndiaAI Mission and AI Kosha

1. What is the IndiaAI Mission?

- A government-led initiative to **boost AI development in India**, launched with a **₹10,371 crore budget**.
- It aims to **develop AI models, provide computing resources, and ensure AI safety**.
- Focuses on **"Making AI in India and Making AI Work for India."**

2. What is AI Kosha?

- A **national dataset platform** under IndiaAI Mission.
- Collects **non-personal government data** to train AI models.
- Helps overcome **language bias** in AI models by supporting **Indian languages**.

3. What is the Common Compute Portal?

- Provides **startups and researchers access to GPUs** (Graphics Processing Units).
- GPUs are **essential for AI model training but expensive**; IndiaAI **shares this resource**.
- **14,000 GPUs** already acquired, with more being added quarterly.

4. Why is AI Kosha Important?

- Most AI models today are **trained on Western data** (English-dominated).
- AI Kosha **provides Indian-language datasets to improve AI tools for India**.
- Helps Indian firms **develop their own AI models instead of relying on foreign companies**.

5. What Else Does the IndiaAI Mission Include?

- **AI Safety Institute**: Ensures AI tools do not pose risks (e.g., misinformation, security threats).
- **IndiaAI Innovation Centre**: Builds domain-specific AI models.
- **Startup Financing**: Supports AI-focused startups.
- **FutureSkills Initiative**: Develops AI research labs in smaller cities.
- **Indigenous AI Model Development**: 67 proposals received to build a **foundational Indian AI model**.

[100-day TB elimination campaign far from achieving main objective: TH Science](#)

Science Tech

Easy Explanation: 100-Day Intensified TB Elimination Campaign

India launched a **100-day TB elimination campaign** on **December 7, 2024**, covering **455 districts across 33 States**. The goal was to **screen high-risk individuals (diabetics, smokers, people with HIV, elderly, past TB patients, etc.)** using **chest X-rays and molecular tests** to detect hidden TB cases.



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The campaign detected **3.5 lakh TB cases**, but the **overall TB notifications across India did not increase significantly** compared to previous years. The **government's claim** that all these cases were found due to the campaign **may be exaggerated**. Also, **only 3.8 lakh people (just 3.8% of the targeted population)** were screened using X-rays, a key tool for detecting **asymptomatic TB cases**.

The campaign faced challenges like **limited portable X-ray machines (only 836 for 455 districts)** and **the use of an unapproved AI-assisted X-ray tool**. Experts believe that a **100-day effort is too short** to achieve **PM Modi's goal of TB elimination by 2025**.

Key Takeaways: 100-Day TB Elimination Campaign

1. What was the campaign's goal?

- Launched on **December 7, 2024**, across **455 districts** in **33 States & UTs**.
- Targeted **high-risk individuals** (diabetics, smokers, HIV patients, elderly, past TB patients).
- Used **chest X-rays & molecular tests** to detect **asymptomatic and subclinical TB cases**.

2. How many TB cases were detected?

- **3.5 lakh TB cases** were detected in intervention districts.
- However, **total TB notifications across India (6.35 lakh)** were almost the same as last year.
- This suggests that **not all detected cases were due to the campaign alone**.

3. Did the campaign effectively use chest X-rays?

- **Only 3.8 lakh people (3.8% of 10 crore screened)** got X-rays.
- Chest X-rays are **crucial for finding hidden TB cases**, but very few were used.
- Government claims of detecting "**several asymptomatic TB patients**" lack clear data.

4. What were the campaign's limitations?

- **Only 836 vans** with **portable X-ray machines** for **455 districts**.
- Limited use of **AI-assisted X-ray interpretation**, which **was not approved by experts**.
- **100 days is too short** to eliminate TB, as **TB notification rates have been rising yearly**.

5. Is India on track to eliminate TB by 2025?

- **No**. The campaign had **limited impact**, and **TB notifications have not seen a major increase**.
- India's **National TB Prevalence Survey (2019-21)** showed **42.6% of TB cases would be missed without X-rays**.
- **More long-term strategies and better resources** are needed to **truly eliminate TB**.

[Counting our vulnerable dolphins: TH Science](#)

Environment

Easy Explanation: India's River Dolphins & Their Challenges

India's **river dolphin population** has been estimated at **6,327**, as per a study by the **Ministry of Environment, Forests, and Climate Change**. These unique freshwater creatures, often seen as **playful and "cute"**, are an important part of



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India's aquatic ecosystem. However, their numbers remain critically low due to **human activities, habitat destruction, and pollution**.

There are **two types of river dolphins**:

- **Facultative river dolphins** (found in both marine and freshwater): Includes the **Irrawaddy dolphin**, which inhabits **Chilika Lake and the Sunderbans** in India.
- **Obligate river dolphins** (found only in freshwater): Includes the **Ganges and Indus river dolphins**, which navigate using **echolocation** due to their **poor eyesight**.

The **Indus river dolphin**, found in **Punjab's Beas River**, is at risk, with only **three spotted in the recent study**, while **Pakistan has around 1,800 left**.

Key Takeaways: India's River Dolphins

1. Where are river dolphins found?

- **Ganges river dolphins**: Found in the **Ganga, Brahmaputra, and some tributaries**.
- **Indus river dolphins**: Found in **Punjab's Beas River & Harike Wetlands**, but only **three were spotted** in the latest study.
- **Irrawaddy dolphins**: Found in **Chilika Lake (155 individuals) & Sunderbans**.

2. How do river dolphins navigate?

- **Have poor eyesight**, relying on **echolocation** (using sound waves to detect objects).
- Emit **distinctive clicks** and use a **fatty forehead mass (melon)** to sense echoes.
- **Swim sideways**, using their **side fins to feel the riverbed**.

3. What threats do they face?

- **Poaching**: Their oil is used in traditional medicine.
- **Overfishing**: Reduces their **food supply**.
- **Fishing nets**: Dolphins get **accidentally trapped as bycatch**.
- **Pollution**: Chemical pollutants harm river habitats.

4. Why is conservation urgent?

- The **Yangtze river dolphin (China)** is already extinct.
- **Indus river dolphins in India** are near extinction.
- Despite **improved counting methods**, dolphin **population trends remain unclear**.
- **Public awareness is crucial** to protect these **rare and remarkable creatures**.

10th March 2025

[Why Trump wants to start talks on Iran n-deal he wrecked in 2018-Indian Express Explained](#)

International relations

Easy Explanation



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In 2015, Iran and major world powers (including the US) agreed to the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), also called the Iran nuclear deal. Under this deal, Iran agreed to strictly limit its nuclear activities in exchange for relief from economic sanctions. However, in 2018, US President Donald Trump withdrew from this agreement, arguing that it was a bad deal and failed to address Iran's missile program or its support for regional proxies.

Since then, tough American sanctions have hurt Iran's economy, European attempts to keep the deal alive have largely failed, and Iran has gradually rolled back its commitments—producing more highly enriched uranium. Tensions have escalated in the broader Middle East, with incidents involving Iran, Israel, and Iranian-aligned groups adding fuel to the fire.

Despite the breakdown, the possibility of renewing talks keeps resurfacing. Trump recently indicated that he reached out to Iran's Supreme Leader, saying negotiations should happen to avoid a military confrontation. For Iran, a return to talks is tempting because its economy is struggling under sanctions, but deep distrust remains. Still, shifting alliances in the region and changes in both US and Iranian leadership have prompted new incentives to explore some form of dialogue.

Key Takeaways

1. What the Iran Nuclear Deal (JCPOA) Did

- Limited Iran's nuclear program to peaceful purposes (low-level uranium enrichment, tight monitoring by the IAEA).
- Lifted many Western sanctions in return for Iran's compliance.

2. Trump's Withdrawal in 2018

- Trump believed the deal was one-sided and didn't address Iran's ballistic missile program or Iran-backed groups in the region.
- The US pulled out and re-imposed sanctions, dealing a severe blow to Iran's economy.

3. Consequences of US Withdrawal

- European efforts to salvage the deal were largely unsuccessful as companies feared US penalties and cut ties with Iran.
- Iran began enriching uranium beyond the agreed limits.
- Tensions rose as Iran's economy deteriorated and US-Iran hostility grew.

4. Biden Administration and Renewed Talks

- Indirect talks began in 2021 to revive the JCPOA, but no decisive agreement was reached.
- Iran's growing uranium enrichment levels and its support for Russia in Ukraine further complicated matters.

5. Regional Shifts Affecting Talks

- Iran's economy remains in crisis, creating a strong reason to seek sanctions relief.
- The Middle East landscape has changed, with new rapprochement between Iran and some Gulf countries, and ongoing Israel-Iran rivalry.
- Recent conflicts and escalations (including attacks on Iranian nuclear sites, assassinations of Iranian scientists, and Israel's actions against Iranian-aligned groups) have kept tensions high.

6. Why Trump Is Talking About Negotiations Again





- Trump says he reached out to Iran's Supreme Leader to resume talks, implying military action could follow if diplomacy fails.
- An agreement with Iran could help the US manage regional tensions more effectively, especially given other conflicts and shifts in alliances.

7. Trust Deficit Remains High

- Iranian leaders (both conservative and reformist) directly blame Trump for dismantling the 2015 deal.
- Any new agreement would require bridging a major gap in trust on both sides.

India's obesity problem-Indian Express Explained

Science

Easy Explanation

Obesity is a growing problem in India, affecting both adults and children. Prime Minister Modi recently highlighted that as many as 44 crore Indians could become obese by 2050, citing studies published in *The Lancet*. These studies show that globally, the shift toward calorie-dense, processed foods—coupled with lifestyles that are more sedentary—has led to a rapid rise in people who are overweight or obese. Children face special risks because obesity at a young age can lead to serious health issues like type-2 diabetes and heart problems later on. Meanwhile, high-income countries have typically faced obesity for decades, but lower- and middle-income countries (like India) are now experiencing a faster surge thanks to an influx of processed, high-sugar foods. Addressing this epidemic requires multiple approaches, including public health policies, traditional food systems, taxes on unhealthy items, and better access to obesity treatment and drugs.

Key Takeaways

1. Growing Numbers

- By 2050, India could have 44 crore (440 million) obese individuals.
- Rates of overweight/obese adults and children are rising sharply; India may surpass China in certain obesity categories.

2. Obesity Definition

- Obesity is often measured using the Body Mass Index (BMI). A BMI above 30 is typically considered obese.
- New guidelines suggest also measuring waist circumference and checking related symptoms (like sleep apnoea) because BMI alone may overlook key risk factors.

3. Health Impacts

- Obesity increases the risk of lifestyle diseases such as diabetes, heart ailments, and some cancers.
- Older individuals with obesity may need more surgeries and have higher healthcare costs.
- During events like the Covid-19 pandemic, people with obesity were at higher risk for severe complications.

4. Reasons Behind the Trend

- Expansion of "big food distribution" systems providing ultra-processed, high-sugar, high-fat products.
- Multinational food and beverage companies increasingly invest in lower- and middle-income countries, where regulation is weaker.



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- Traditional local food systems are struggling to compete, leading to more consumption of unhealthy packaged foods.

5. What Can Be Done

- **Policy Measures:** National-level policies to manage and treat obesity (e.g., taxation on sugary drinks, better food labeling, promoting healthier local produce).
- **Clinical Intervention:** Invest in treatments for obesity and related conditions, which many countries have not yet done on a large scale.
- **Research in Low-Income Areas:** More studies needed on what works best in resource-limited settings, as existing interventions mostly target higher-income populations.
- **New Obesity Drugs:** Novel medications (like semaglutide) may help, though cost and access remain barriers. Generic versions could improve affordability soon.

[How, why apex court limited the power of arrest under GST, Customs Acts-Indian Express Explained](#)

Polity

Easy Explanation

Last month, the Supreme Court placed limits on the power of officers to arrest people under the Customs Act, 1962 and the Central GST Act, 2017. The Court said that while these laws do authorize certain arrests without a warrant (for more serious offenses, like evading customs duty over Rs 50 lakh), officers can't exercise this power arbitrarily. Arrests must follow procedures similar to those in the regular criminal process (i.e., the Code of Criminal Procedure). This means:

1. Officers need solid, written-down reasons (not mere suspicion) to believe someone has committed a serious offense.
2. They must present those reasons to the person being arrested so the arrestee can defend themselves or apply for bail.
3. The usual rights under the CrPC (like being produced before a magistrate within 24 hours, informing a family member, etc.) also apply.

Essentially, the Supreme Court is tightening the rules so that tax and customs officials cannot abuse their power to arrest and coerce taxpayers into payments. It directed the government's tax department to issue guidelines for officers and stated that if someone is forced to pay taxes under threat of arrest, they are entitled to approach the courts to recover that amount, with possible action taken against the officers who used such threats.

Key Takeaways

1. Supreme Court's Key Ruling:

- Customs and CGST officers' power of arrest is subject to the same principles and safeguards as police powers under the CrPC.
- The Court aims to prevent arbitrary arrests and protect constitutional rights (right to know the grounds of arrest, right to quick judicial oversight, etc.).

2. Requirements for a Valid Arrest (Adapted from the PMLA Kejriwal Case):

- **Material in Possession:** Officers must have solid evidence indicating the suspect is guilty, not just vague suspicion.





- **Reasons to Believe (in Writing):** Officers must write down their reasons for believing an offense has been committed.
- **Providing Grounds of Arrest to the Arrestee:** The person being arrested must be informed of these grounds, ensuring they can seek legal remedies like bail.

3. Prevention of Misuse:

- The Court said there is some evidence that taxpayers are sometimes coerced into paying due taxes (and even disputed taxes) by the threat of arrest.
- It held such coercion is illegal. If someone can show they paid solely because of such a threat, they can seek a court order to get a refund.
- The Court directed the Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs to form guidelines preventing misuse of arrest powers.

4. Impact on Enforcement Agencies:

- Officers must now follow stricter arrest protocols, document reasons, and inform suspects fully.
- Any violation can lead to legal consequences for the officers, plus potential refunds for coerced payments.

INDIA & 'AMERICA FIRST'-Indian Express Editorial

International relations

Easy Explanation

India views US President Donald Trump's "America First" policy positively because it aligns with India's desire for a multipolar world—where no single country dictates global affairs. Unlike previous American administrations, Trump's approach emphasizes US self-interest over promoting internal changes in other countries. India historically disliked US interventions judging other nations' democracy or internal politics. Thus, Trump's shift away from moralistic interventions suits Delhi.

India sees Trump's transactional approach as a practical way to engage the US, especially because India seeks balanced relations, not dependent alliances. Negotiations under Trump are tough but potentially beneficial. Modi's recent visit to the White House and plans for a US-India free trade agreement indicate willingness for meaningful engagement. However, India's leaders must stay pragmatic, keeping ideology and emotions aside, and clearly communicate with the Indian public to secure the best outcomes.

Key Takeaways

1. India's Comfort with "America First"

- India welcomes Trump's self-interest-driven policy, as it avoids imposing US standards on internal issues in India.

2. Rejection of US Interventionism

- India historically rejected America's attempts to judge or influence other nations internally, making Trump's less interventionist stance appealing.

3. Support for Multipolarity



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- Trump's rejection of a unipolar (US-dominated) world resonates with India's vision of a multipolar world with multiple influential countries.

4. Transactional Diplomacy

- India's independent foreign policy positions it well for pragmatic, transactional engagements rather than dependent alliances.

5. Challenges in Negotiating with Trump's US

- Negotiations with the Trump administration are difficult due to their hard-nosed approach, requiring Delhi to stay firm and focused.

6. Strategic Opportunity

- Trump's restructuring of global economic order offers India a chance to rejuvenate its own trade policy through a potential free trade deal.

7. Domestic Communication Crucial

- Modi's government needs transparent communication domestically to build public support for closer, practical US-India ties.

In essence, India sees Trump's "America First" not as a threat but as an opportunity to redefine and strengthen Indo-US relations pragmatically, provided India remains clear-eyed and strategic.

[Indian team makes doubly secure ink to thwart counterfeiting-The Hindu Science](#)

Internal security

Easy Explanation

Indian scientists from INST Mohali and BARC Mumbai have developed a special ink using tiny nanoparticles to prevent counterfeiting of banknotes, passports, and other sensitive documents. Traditional fluorescent inks typically glow only under ultraviolet (UV) or infrared (IR) light, making them easier to counterfeit. However, the new ink uses nanoparticles (made of strontium bismuth fluoride) doped with rare-earth elements, which uniquely glow under both UV and near-infrared light.

This dual fluorescence makes it extremely hard for counterfeiters to replicate because they would need to precisely match two types of light reactions instead of just one. The new ink is inexpensive to produce, stable under various conditions (brightness, temperature, humidity), and easy to scale up for wider usage.

The scientists plan further developments to adapt this ink for practical use in real-world printing methods, such as offset printing, which is commonly used for banknotes.

Key Takeaways

1. New Anti-Counterfeit Ink Developed

- Scientists from INST (Mohali) and BARC (Mumbai) developed an innovative fluorescent ink using nanoparticles (strontium bismuth fluoride).
- It can help secure sensitive documents like currency notes, passports, and official certificates from counterfeiting.



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2. Unique Dual Fluorescence

- Traditional inks glow under either ultraviolet or infrared light.
- This newly-developed ink fluoresces distinctly under both ultraviolet (UV) and near-infrared (IR) lights, significantly enhancing security.

3. How the Ink is Made

- Strontium bismuth fluoride nanoparticles doped (modified) with lanthanide elements erbium and ytterbium.
- A simple coprecipitation method (easy and cost-effective at room temperature) was used to produce the nanoparticles.
- The nanoparticles were blended with common PVC ink and screen-printed onto paper.

4. Why it's Secure

- Under different wavelengths of UV and near-IR lights, the ink emits different colors (blue, magenta, orange-red).
- This multi-colored response under dual lights makes replication difficult for counterfeiters.

5. Practical Applications and Future Steps

- Currently tested with screen printing, which isn't typically used for currency notes.
- Researchers aim to adapt the ink for offset printing, the preferred method for currency and detailed security printing.
- Further research and improvements are planned to enhance practical applicability.

6. Expert Opinion

- Although the ink's quantum yield (efficiency of fluorescence) wasn't explicitly detailed, experts say it's adequately bright for security purposes.
- Additional work is required to make this ink suitable for widespread commercial and official use.

[Closing the gender gap in the higher judiciary-The Hindu Editorial](#)

Polity

Easy Explanation

Women have made significant progress in India's legal system since the first woman lawyer, Cornelia Sorabji, began practicing law in 1924. Yet, a significant gender gap remains, especially in India's higher judiciary (High Courts and Supreme Court). Currently, only around 14% of High Court judges and just two Supreme Court judges are women. Women judges also tend to be appointed at later ages than men, affecting their seniority and chances to reach higher positions, like Chief Justice.

Several systemic reasons contribute to this inequality. Women often face higher scrutiny and must prove their merit more rigorously than men. The collegium system of appointing judges lacks transparency and is mostly male-dominated, making it harder for qualified women candidates to be selected. Even when women's names are recommended, they are disproportionately rejected by the government.



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To achieve gender equality, the appointment process needs clear, transparent guidelines emphasizing merit and diversity. Gender diversity must become a priority, aiming for at least one-third representation of women judges. Ultimately, normalizing women's appointments to higher judicial roles is crucial for fair representation and justice.

Key Takeaways:

1. Current Gender Gap in Higher Judiciary

- Women represent just 14.27% of High Court judges and only two judges in the Supreme Court.
- Some High Courts, including Uttarakhand, Meghalaya, and Tripura, have no female judges at all.

2. Delayed and Limited Opportunities

- Women judges are typically appointed later than men (average age of 53 years for women vs. 51.8 years for men), limiting their career growth and chances of becoming Chief Justice.
- The Supreme Court has only ever appointed one woman directly from the Bar compared to nine men.

3. Systemic Inequality and Bias

- Deep-rooted biases within the legal profession view women as less qualified, requiring them to demonstrate merit far more rigorously than their male counterparts.
- Women nominees often face heightened scrutiny and are disproportionately rejected even after recommendation.

4. Opaque Collegium System

- The current collegium system is non-transparent and mostly male-led, making it difficult for qualified women lawyers to be fairly considered.
- Since 2020, nine recommended women candidates were rejected by the government, highlighting systemic barriers.

5. Recommendations for Change

- **Transparency:** Clearly defined, transparent criteria for judicial appointments.
- **Active Gender Diversity:** Explicitly making gender diversity a key criterion, aiming for at least one-third female representation.
- **Normalization of Women's Appointments:** Appointing women judges should become routine and not considered extraordinary.

6. Benefits of Gender Equality

- A gender-balanced judiciary strengthens the courts' legitimacy, ensuring better representation of society and fairer judgments.
- Promotes impartiality, enhances public confidence, and upholds constitutional values effectively.

Closing the gender gap in India's judiciary involves institutional reforms that explicitly emphasize merit-based, transparent, and inclusive processes, ultimately ensuring justice reflects the diversity of Indian society.



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International relations

Easy Explanation

External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar's recent visits to the United Kingdom and Ireland highlight India's growing push for better trade relations with Europe. Despite a brief security incident involving a Khalistani protester, India is actively pursuing deeper economic ties and aims to conclude long-delayed Free Trade Agreements (FTAs) with both the U.K. and the European Union (EU).

Trade between India and these European partners has significant room for improvement, especially in high-tech sectors. Recent decisions by India, including lowering import duties on wines, spirits, and vehicles (in response to the U.S.), show India's flexibility, which might smooth FTA negotiations with the U.K. and EU as well.

Global developments, like the shift in U.S. alliances under President Trump and Europe's efforts to find reliable partners amid geopolitical tensions (such as the Ukraine crisis), offer India new opportunities. By accelerating diplomacy in Europe, India can significantly boost trade and gain geopolitical influence.

Key Takeaways:

1. Enhanced Diplomacy with the U.K. and Ireland

- Despite recent security incidents, India's relations with the U.K. remain strong and promising.
- India is actively expanding diplomatic presence (consulates in Manchester and Belfast).

2. Renewed Push for FTAs

- India and the U.K. are attempting to finalize an overdue Free Trade Agreement post-Brexit.
- India and the EU have set a 2025 deadline to conclude their Bilateral Trade Agreement, stalled since 2007.

3. India's Flexible Trade Stance

- India recently reduced tariffs on wines, spirits, and vehicles to ease trade tensions, particularly with the U.S.
- Such flexibility helps India appear more conciliatory in ongoing negotiations with Europe.

4. Economic Benefits for India

- Existing trade (U.K.: \$52 billion; Ireland: \$17 billion) can significantly expand through FTAs, especially in high-tech and innovation-driven sectors.

5. Opportunities from Geopolitical Shifts

- Changing U.S. alliances and recent tensions (like those between Trump and Ukraine) push Europe to seek dependable partners like India.
- Accelerated Indian diplomacy can leverage these global shifts for greater economic and political gain.

6. Strategic Positioning

- By engaging both Europe and the U.S. positively, India positions itself strategically, enhancing both trade and diplomatic influence globally.





India's active diplomacy and flexibility in trade policy could significantly boost economic partnerships and geopolitical standing, especially as European countries look to diversify their relationships.

[India, Mauritius and a visit to deepen long-standing ties-The Hindu Editorial](#)

International relations

Easy Explanation

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's recent visit to Mauritius highlights the close historical, cultural, and strategic ties between India and Mauritius. Mauritius, celebrating its Independence Day on March 12, invited PM Modi as the guest of honour, signaling a special friendship.

Mauritius shares deep cultural ties with India, as around half its population descends from Indian workers brought by the British to work in sugar plantations. India also maintains strong diplomatic ties through cultural institutions, language promotion (especially Hindi), and active economic engagement.

Mauritius acts as a gateway for Indian businesses into Africa and is a major source of foreign investment into India, due to a beneficial tax agreement (DTAA). Strategically, Mauritius is key for India's maritime security, helping India counter China's growing presence in the Indian Ocean.

Overall, Modi's visit is aimed at reinforcing these ties, boosting economic cooperation, and strengthening maritime security cooperation in the region.

Key Takeaways:

1. Historic and Cultural Bonds

- India and Mauritius have deep historical and cultural connections, with around half of Mauritius' population tracing ancestry to Indian workers from Bihar and Uttar Pradesh.
- Mauritius continues to preserve Indian languages and traditions, making cultural diplomacy central to India's approach.

2. Consistent Political Relations

- India-Mauritius ties enjoy bipartisan support, unaffected by political changes in either country.
- The new Mauritian government led by Navinchandra Ramgoolam is supportive of closer ties with India.

2. Economic and Trade Relations

- Bilateral trade reached \$554 million in 2022-23.
- Mauritius acts as a significant gateway for foreign investment into India, boosted by the favorable Double Taxation Avoidance Agreement (DTAA).

3. Strategic Maritime Importance

- Mauritius occupies a crucial position in the western Indian Ocean, with an exclusive economic zone of 2.3 million sq km.
- India cooperates closely with Mauritius on maritime security, establishing radar stations and surveillance facilities to monitor the Indian Ocean, especially to counter China's growing influence.



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4. Diplomatic Engagement

- Indian diplomacy in Mauritius focuses on maintaining balanced relationships with all segments of Mauritian society, beyond just the India-origin community.
- PM Modi's visit aims at reinforcing strong diplomatic, economic, and security ties.

5. Opportunity Amidst Geopolitical Challenges

- Given rising Chinese influence in the Indian Ocean, deeper maritime cooperation between India and Mauritius is strategically important.
- Both countries benefit from a strong relationship to ensure regional stability and security.

In summary, India's relationship with Mauritius is deeply rooted and strategically significant, providing mutual cultural, economic, and security benefits in a complex geopolitical landscape. Modi's visit reaffirms these strong ties and aims at taking the partnership further.

[The empowerment of India's women with bold policies-The Hindu Editorial](#)

Governance

Easy Explanation

India has taken significant steps toward empowering women through bold and targeted government policies. Major initiatives like the **Swachh Bharat Mission** and **Jal Jeevan Mission** have greatly improved women's quality of life, dignity, and safety by providing better sanitation and drinking water, freeing them from daily chores to participate in education and work.

Women entrepreneurs are also thriving due to financial support through schemes like **Pradhan Mantri Mudra Yojana** and **Stand-Up India**, along with digital inclusion programs that connect rural women to banking services and e-commerce.

In politics, women are increasingly becoming decision-makers. At local governance levels, nearly half of elected representatives are women, positively influencing policy and community growth. While there remains room for improvement, these efforts collectively enhance India's social and economic landscape, setting a strong foundation for gender equality.

Key Takeaways:

1. Sanitation and Water Initiatives Empowering Women

- **Swachh Bharat Mission:** Improved women's safety and dignity by providing toilets and better sanitation.
- **Jal Jeevan Mission:** Brought tap water to over 150 million rural households, significantly boosting women's workforce participation (from 24.6% in 2017 to 41.5% in 2023).

2. Economic Empowerment through Women-Led Businesses

- Government schemes (**Stand-Up India, Mudra Yojana**) have provided substantial financial support to women entrepreneurs.
- Loans sanctioned: ₹53,609 crore under Stand-Up India, ₹32.36 lakh crore under Mudra Yojana.



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3. Digital Inclusion and Entrepreneurship

- Extensive digital infrastructure (Wi-Fi hotspots and digital banking) has enabled women's access to financial services and national markets.
- Women-led micro and small enterprises secured contracts worth ₹46,615 crore through digital platforms, significantly expanding their reach and influence.

4. Increased Women's Representation in Governance

- Women constitute approximately 46% of elected representatives at local levels (Panchayati Raj Institutions).
- Their leadership has promoted inclusive policies in healthcare, education, and social equity.

4. Transformational Government Policies

- Clear government actions and targeted schemes have boosted female labour-force participation from 24.6% (2017) to 41.5% (2023), largely credited to improved sanitation and water access.

5. Commitment to Gender Equality

- The 2023 G-20 Ministerial Conference highlighted India's vision: "When women prosper, the world prospers."
- The government continues to emphasize women's empowerment as essential for sustainable national and global progress.

India's bold policies are creating systemic change, empowering women economically, socially, and politically—ensuring lasting benefits for future generations.

11th March 2025

[What Chinese state media is saying about Trump foreign policy-Indian Express Explained](#)

International relations

Easy Explanation

Chinese state media are sharply critical of Donald Trump's foreign policy. They argue that his actions—especially his harsh treatment of Ukraine's President Zelenskyy and his proposal for the U.S. to control Gaza—undermine America's global influence. By humiliating a key ally in Ukraine, Trump is seen as weakening trust in U.S. security guarantees. His controversial approach to Gaza, where he suggested U.S. oversight rather than supporting Palestinian self-governance, further fuels the criticism. Chinese outlets portray these actions as evidence of a declining U.S. leadership role on the world stage, contrasting sharply with China's own emphasis on diplomacy and multilateral dialogue.

Key Takeaways

- **Weakening U.S. Influence:**
Trump's actions are seen as eroding America's credibility and reliability among its allies.
- **Ukraine Issue:**
Humiliating Ukraine's president signals that U.S. security promises may no longer be dependable.



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- **Gaza Controversy:**

Trump's proposal for U.S. control of Gaza is strongly opposed, with insistence on Palestinian self-governance.

- **China's Diplomatic Contrast:**

Chinese media promote dialogue and peaceful solutions, positioning China as a more stable and responsible global leader.

[Why Mauritius matters-Indian Express Explained](#)

International relations

Easy Explanation:

Mauritius is a strategically important island nation in the Indian Ocean, closely connected to India historically, culturally, and economically. Nearly 70% of Mauritius's population have Indian origins. Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit for Mauritius's National Day underlines the significance of bilateral ties. Historically, India has provided consistent development assistance, been the first responder during crises, and helped Mauritius with maritime security. Both nations have agreements on defence cooperation, trade, space collaboration, and capacity building. India's involvement also aims to counterbalance China's growing presence in the Indian Ocean.

Key Takeaways:

- **Historical and Cultural Connections:**

- Mauritius's National Day celebrates Gandhi's historic connection and messages of empowerment.
- Indian-origin population constitutes nearly 70%.

- **Strategic Importance:**

- Mauritius's location in the Indian Ocean is significant for India's maritime and defence interests.
- Agaléga Island infrastructure projects enhance Mauritius's maritime security.

- **Development & Economic Ties:**

- India provided over \$1 billion in recent aid, funding numerous infrastructure and social projects.
- Mauritius is India's second-largest FDI source and an essential trading partner in Africa.

- **Security and Defence Cooperation:**

- Agreements on maritime security, including information sharing and infrastructure.
- Joint management of maritime challenges like piracy and trafficking.

- **Space & Technology Cooperation:**

- Longstanding collaboration with ISRO, including joint satellite projects and satellite tracking facilities.

- **Capacity Building:**

- Extensive Indian support in education, technical training, and skill development.

- **China Factor:**

- India's enhanced cooperation counters China's growing influence in the region.



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HOW A GENE-EDITED BANANA MAY HELP REDUCE FOOD WASTE-Indian Express explained

Science and technology

Easy Explanation

A UK-based biotech company, Tropic, has developed a genetically engineered banana that stays fresh and doesn't brown as quickly. Bananas naturally produce a lot of ethylene, a ripening hormone, which activates the polyphenol oxidase (PPO) enzyme responsible for browning. By switching off the PPO gene, these new bananas still ripen normally but are less likely to develop those unappealing brown spots. This innovation aims to reduce the huge volume of edible bananas thrown away every year, helping both financially (less waste) and environmentally (lower greenhouse gas emissions).

Key Takeaways

- **Why Bananas Brown:**
High ethylene production triggers the PPO enzyme, which reacts with oxygen to turn bananas brown.
- **Gene Editing Method:**
Disabling the PPO gene slows browning, keeping bananas fresh-looking for a longer time.
- **Environmental & Economic Benefits:**
Fewer bananas get discarded, reducing greenhouse gas emissions associated with food waste.
- **Similar to Arctic Apples:**
The same genetic approach was used in apples, where shutting off PPO helps them resist browning.
- **Potential for Other Produce:**
Research has shown PPO silencing can also work in tomatoes, melons, kiwis, and mushrooms, hinting at broader applications for reducing food waste.

[The dangers of delimitation-Indian Express Editorial](#)

Polity

Easy Explanation:

The issue of delimitation—or adjusting the number of parliamentary seats according to population—has sparked significant debate in India. Currently, seats in the Lok Sabha are fixed based on older population figures, benefiting states that controlled population growth. If seats are redistributed based on updated population data, northern states (with higher population growth) would gain seats, while southern states would lose representation. This could intensify divisions already existing between Hindi-speaking northern states and non-Hindi southern states. Opponents argue that the current seat distribution should be permanently fixed to maintain national unity and preserve the delicate balance of power, protecting the spirit of unity in India's diversity.

Key Takeaways:

1. **What is Delimitation?**
 - Delimitation refers to changing the allocation of parliamentary seats in India's Lok Sabha based on updated state populations. The current distribution is based on population data from over 50 years ago, which benefits states that have effectively controlled their population growth.
2. **Potential Loss for Southern States:**



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- If delimitation happens based on current population data, southern states like Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, and Telangana would lose several parliamentary seats. This would significantly reduce their political influence.

3. Advantage for Northern States:

- Northern Hindi-speaking states such as Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Rajasthan, and Madhya Pradesh would gain more seats due to higher population growth rates, increasing their political dominance at the national level.

4. Threat to National Unity:

- Redrawing seats based purely on population risks deepening existing cultural, economic, and political divisions between Hindi-speaking northern states and non-Hindi southern states, possibly undermining India's unity.

5. Constitutional and Historical Context:

- India's unity depends on a careful balance of power among its diverse states. Revisiting seat distribution might go against the implicit understanding of equal respect and non-dominance embedded in India's constitutional structure.

6. Proposal to Maintain Status Quo:

- To protect national unity and stability, many argue for keeping the current distribution of seats unchanged, treating it as a foundational principle rather than revisiting it periodically based solely on population.

7. Strategic Importance:

- Preserving the existing seat distribution helps ensure that smaller states or states that successfully managed population growth continue to have meaningful political representation, respecting the principle of unity in diversity.

CHALLENGE OF PEACE-Indian Express Editorial

Sociology

Easy Explanation

Manipur has long experienced ethnic tensions between the Meitei (largely in the valley) and Kuki (largely in the hills) communities. This tension has escalated into violence, leading to a de facto segregation where members of each community avoid traveling into areas controlled by the other. India's Home Minister Amit Shah recently announced a "free movement" plan, arranging escorted bus services between the hills and the valley to restore normalcy and end economic blockades. Unfortunately, violence broke out on the first day of the plan, resulting in a death. This incident shows how deeply rooted the mistrust still is. Even though Chief Minister N Biren Singh has resigned, and the state is now under President's Rule, peace will require far more than escorting buses—it will demand genuine dialogue, outreach, and confidence-building initiatives that address the root causes of the conflict.

Key Takeaways

1. Deep Ethnic Division

- The violence in Manipur has cemented a clear divide between the Meitei-dominated valley and the Kuki-dominated hill regions, creating virtual "no-go zones" for each other.

2. Failed Free Movement Effort

- Despite government attempts to run bus services between conflict zones, the plan quickly turned violent, indicating that mistrust runs too deep for a quick fix.

3. Highways as Lifelines



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- National Highways 2 and 37 are critical for transporting goods. Past blockades and attacks have disrupted supplies, magnifying tension and hostility on both sides.

4. Deep-Rooted Mistrust

- The resistance to the movement initiative underscores how much both communities fear or distrust decisions imposed from above without thorough consultation.

5. Need for Broad Outreach

- While changing the political leadership (resignation of the Chief Minister and imposition of President's Rule) was a step, longer-term solutions hinge on engaging all stakeholders in dialogue, building trust, and ensuring local voices are heard.

6. Reconciliation & Disarmament

- Governor Ajay Kumar Bhalla's call for extremist groups to surrender weapons saw limited success. Continuing disarmament efforts and genuine confidence-building remain crucial for lasting peace.

[A FIELD OF HER OWN-Indian Express Editorial](#)

Sociology

Easy Explanation

Women play a major role in India's agriculture and fishing industries, yet they face many challenges due to limited access to resources, technology, and information. Traditionally, tasks assigned to women are physically demanding, poorly paid, and often overlooked. Recent efforts, like those by MSSRF in Tamil Nadu, have introduced digital tools (mobile phones, tablets, training) that help women work more efficiently, access markets, and manage their businesses better. While these interventions have shown impressive results, they also highlight that technology alone can't solve the problem. Societal attitudes, market conditions, and policies must also change to ensure that women are fully empowered and have equal opportunities.

Key Takeaways:

1. Women's Role in Agriculture and Fisheries:

- Women significantly contribute to India's agriculture and fisheries sectors but their labor remains undervalued, unpaid, or poorly paid.
- They typically handle tasks that are physically demanding and less recognized, reinforcing gender inequality.

2. Constraints Faced by Women:

- Women's productivity is limited due to restricted access to resources, information, technology, and financial support.
- Existing agricultural technology advancements have historically favored men, further marginalizing women's role and economic independence.

3. Digital Technologies as Empowerment:

- Digital tools have helped women break traditional barriers in farm and fishery work by providing better market access, enhancing business efficiency, and offering real-time information.
- MSS Swaminathan Research Foundation (MSSRF) initiatives in Tamil Nadu empowered women fish workers by providing mobile phones, tablets, digital training, and online marketing support.



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4. Real-world Impact of Digital Inclusion:

- Digital inclusion has boosted women's productivity, decision-making, and income-generation capacity.
- It helped women fish vendors overcome structural challenges, access broader markets, manage inventory effectively, and reduce vulnerability in a shifting economy.

5. Importance of Gender-responsive Technologies:

- Technologies specifically designed to reduce women's workload have a transformative impact, increasing productivity and breaking gender stereotypes.
- Small-scale interventions, such as machinery to ease manual labor, significantly improved women's economic status and autonomy.

6. Structural Challenges and Wider Ecosystem:

- Despite successes, broader societal structures—including patriarchal attitudes, market conditions, and policy frameworks—still pose substantial barriers.
- Real transformation requires a supportive ecosystem, holding men, communities, markets, and governments accountable for gender equality.

7. Need for Long-term Strategies:

- Sustainable change involves not only providing women with technology but also reshaping societal attitudes towards gender roles and responsibilities.
- Investments in gender-responsive technologies must be accompanied by efforts to transform power dynamics within households, communities, and institutions.

[An India-U.S. trade agreement and the test of WTO laws-The Hindu Editorial](#)

International relations

Easy Explanation

India and the United States plan to negotiate a Bilateral Trade Agreement (BTA). However, both countries are bound by World Trade Organization (WTO) rules that generally prohibit granting special trade advantages to specific partners (the “most favoured nation” or MFN principle). An exception is made for free trade agreements (FTAs) that cover “substantially all trade” between the signing countries. Therefore, **if** India and the U.S. selectively reduce tariffs for only a few products without covering the majority of bilateral trade, they could violate WTO law unless they follow certain conditions (e.g., an interim agreement that genuinely moves toward a full FTA). The idea of “enabling” developing countries to offer tariff benefits does not apply here because the U.S. (a developed country) also expects tariff reductions from India. Any notion of “reciprocal tariffs” that matches or raises U.S. tariffs to other countries’ levels also conflicts with core WTO principles. Ultimately, this BTA will test whether India (and the U.S.) will uphold or circumvent WTO rules.

Key Takeaways

1. MFN Principle

- WTO members generally must not discriminate among trading partners. Granting special tariff reductions to only one country (the U.S.) risks violating this principle.

2. FTAs as Exceptions



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- The WTO allows FTAs if they cover “substantially all trade” between the member countries. If India and the U.S. attempt a narrow sectoral deal, it may be WTO-incompatible.

3. Interim Agreements

- A partial agreement can be notified to the WTO as an “interim agreement” only if it genuinely lays the groundwork for a full FTA within a reasonable timeframe (usually not more than 10 years).

4. Enabling Clause Inapplicable

- The WTO’s “enabling clause” is meant for developed countries to provide extra market access to developing countries, not the other way around. Since India would also lower tariffs for U.S. goods, the clause likely does not apply.

5. Reciprocal Tariffs Debate

- Matching another country’s higher tariffs (so-called “reciprocal tariffs”) would violate the U.S.’s own commitments at the WTO and clash with special and differential treatment for developing countries.

6. WTO Compliance at Stake

- India, as a supporter of rule-based global trade, must ensure that any BTA does not undermine the WTO’s legal framework. Any partial deal that fails to meet the “substantially all trade” requirement or misuses an interim agreement could be legally challenged.

Flawed food regulations fuel the obesity crisis-The Hindu Editorial

Sociology

Easy Explanation:

India is facing a growing obesity and diabetes crisis, driven largely by the widespread consumption of ultra-processed foods (UPFs) high in sugar, salt, and fats. The government's current regulations, especially regarding food labelling and advertising, are inadequate and overly influenced by industry interests. The "star rating" system proposed by India's food regulator (FSSAI) is misleading, allowing unhealthy foods like sugary cereals and soft drinks to appear healthier than they are. Effective solutions, such as clear warning labels and stricter advertising rules, are being ignored. To truly address the obesity problem, India must immediately adopt mandatory warning labels, clearly define unhealthy foods, tighten advertising regulations, and educate the public about the risks associated with UPFs.

Key Takeaways:

- **Obesity Crisis:**

One in four Indian adults is obese or diabetic, largely due to unhealthy diets dominated by ultra-processed foods.

- **Flawed Regulations:**

Current food labelling and advertising rules are vague, industry-friendly, and ineffective at helping consumers make healthy choices.

- **Misleading "Star" Labels:**

The proposed Indian Nutrition Rating system wrongly gives unhealthy foods a positive image, failing to clearly warn consumers about sugar, salt, and fat content.

- **Warning Labels as Solution:**

Clear front-of-pack warning labels (like Chile's) effectively reduce junk food consumption and should replace misleading star ratings.

- **Advertising Loopholes:**

Current advertising laws don't require brands to disclose crucial nutritional information, allowing harmful marketing practices, especially targeting children.



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- **Policy Recommendations:**

Adopt clear warning labels, set strict limits for sugar/salt/fat in foods, enforce stronger advertising regulations, and raise public awareness about the dangers of UPFs.

14th March 2025

[Kidney disease no longer just for the elderly, say experts: TH Science](#)

Science

Easy Explanation

Kidney disease is becoming more common among young Indians, even though it was traditionally seen as a health issue for older adults. This rise is mainly due to poor lifestyle habits, excessive use of painkillers and supplements, lack of awareness, and conditions like obesity, diabetes, and high blood pressure. Many people don't realize they have kidney disease because the early stages often show no clear symptoms. This makes regular health checkups, including simple tests like urine albumin and creatinine blood tests, very important.

Doctors warn that kidney disease is a "silent killer." It doesn't cause pain or visible symptoms at first, but it can lead to severe health problems, including kidney failure. In India, around 10-15% of people are affected by kidney-related issues, and this includes young people, even teenagers. If detected early, kidney disease can be managed with lifestyle changes and medication. But if left untreated, it can require dialysis (a process that filters the blood when kidneys fail) or even a kidney transplant, which is costly and not easily available for everyone.

Why is kidney disease increasing?

- **Unhealthy lifestyle choices:** Eating too much processed food, drinking less water, and not exercising regularly can harm kidney health.
- **Use of painkillers and supplements:** Many young people take painkillers without a doctor's advice or consume excessive protein supplements like whey protein and creatine, which can strain the kidneys.
- **Ignoring hydration:** Some students avoid drinking water to avoid using school restrooms, increasing their risk of kidney stones and infections.
- **Lack of awareness:** Since kidney disease doesn't show symptoms in the early stages, many people don't get tested until it's too late.

What are the warning signs?

Most people don't notice symptoms until the disease has progressed. However, some warning signs include:

- **Foamy urine** (indicating protein leakage)
- **Blood in urine**
- **Swelling in legs, face, or hands**
- **Frequent urinary infections**
- **Persistent tiredness or difficulty concentrating**

How can kidney disease be prevented?

Doctors recommend simple lifestyle changes to protect kidney health:

1. **Stay hydrated:** Drink enough water daily.



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2. **Limit salt intake:** Too much salt can increase blood pressure and strain the kidneys.
3. **Avoid unnecessary painkillers:** Don't take over-the-counter painkillers frequently without medical supervision.
4. **Eat a balanced diet:** Include fruits, vegetables, and natural sources of protein like nuts, lentils, and dairy instead of excessive supplements.
5. **Exercise regularly:** Maintain a healthy weight to prevent diabetes and high blood pressure, which can harm the kidneys.
6. **Get tested regularly:** High-risk individuals (such as those with diabetes, high blood pressure, or a family history of kidney disease) should get kidney function tests every year.

Kidney disease in children and young adults

Many children suffer from kidney diseases due to genetic disorders, infections, or conditions like nephrotic syndrome. Low birth weight and premature birth can also increase the risk of kidney disease later in life.

In teenagers and young adults, excessive weight gain, unregulated supplement use, and high blood pressure can lead to kidney problems. Since kidney damage often goes unnoticed, it's crucial for parents and schools to educate young people about the importance of kidney health.

Key Takeaways

Rising Kidney Disease Cases

- Kidney problems are increasing among young Indians due to poor lifestyle choices, excessive supplement use, and lack of awareness.
- Around **10-15% of Indians** are affected by kidney-related issues.
- Chronic kidney disease (CKD) has **no obvious early symptoms**, making regular screening essential.

Causes of Kidney Disease

- **Unhealthy diet** (processed foods, high salt, low water intake)
- **Overuse of painkillers and supplements** (especially protein powders like whey and creatine)
- **Dehydration** (many students drink less water to avoid using school restrooms)
- **Obesity, diabetes, and high blood pressure**

Warning Signs of Kidney Problems

- **Foamy urine** (a sign of protein leakage)
- **Blood in urine**
- **Swelling in legs, face, or hands**
- **Frequent urinary infections**
- **Unexplained fatigue or trouble concentrating**

Preventing Kidney Disease

- **Drink enough water** daily to stay hydrated.
- **Limit salt intake** to keep blood pressure under control.
- **Avoid unnecessary painkillers** and consult a doctor before using supplements.
- **Eat a balanced diet** with natural sources of protein like dairy, nuts, and lentils.
- **Exercise regularly** to maintain a healthy weight.
- **Get annual kidney tests** (especially for people with diabetes, high BP, or a family history of kidney disease).





Kidney Disease in Children and Teenagers

- Some children are born with kidney diseases due to genetic factors.
- Young adults are at risk due to **obesity, supplement misuse, and high blood pressure**.
- Schools and parents should educate children about **hydration and healthy eating habits**.

The Need for Awareness and Early Detection

- Many people don't realize they have kidney disease until 90% of kidney function is lost.
- Kidney failure requires **dialysis or transplantation**, both of which are expensive and limited in availability.
- **Early detection** through simple urine and blood tests can prevent serious complications.

By making small but important changes in lifestyle and increasing awareness, kidney disease can be prevented before it becomes life-threatening.

[High rates of self-treatment among older adults: study](#)

Science

Easy Explanation

A recent study conducted among 600 older adults across six Indian cities has found that **many elderly people take multiple medications daily (polypharmacy) and often self-medicate without understanding the risks**. Polypharmacy means taking **five or more medicines per day**, and it is common among those with multiple health conditions. The study also found that many elderly individuals mix modern medicines with traditional remedies, some of which **have no labels or proper dosage instructions**, raising serious safety concerns.

Why is polypharmacy a problem?

As people age, they often develop multiple health conditions like high blood pressure, diabetes, arthritis, and heart disease. To manage these, doctors prescribe different medicines. However, when an elderly person takes **too many medicines together**, there is a **higher chance of harmful side effects, drug interactions, or incorrect dosages**. Some medicines may not be suitable for older adults, but they **continue taking them without proper medical review**.

The study found that **33.7% of elderly participants were taking five or more medicines daily**, with the highest cases of polypharmacy in **Guwahati (57%)** and the lowest in **Ujjain (11.7%)**. The most commonly prescribed medicines were for **high blood pressure, diabetes, high cholesterol, calcium supplements, and pain relief**.

The danger of self-medication

Nearly **1 in 5 elderly people (19.7%)** were self-medicating, meaning they took medicines **without a doctor's prescription**. Many of them were **using painkillers (59%), paracetamol (42.4%), or antibiotics for infections and diarrhea (33.9%)**. Self-medication was more common among those who:

- Lived alone
- Had multiple health problems
- Were recently hospitalized

The problem with self-medication is that **people often take the wrong medicine, incorrect doses, or mix drugs that interact dangerously**. Some traditional medicines being used had **no labels or information**, making it difficult to know their safety.



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Why does this happen?

Many elderly people in India do not have easy access to doctors or **believe that self-medicating saves time and money**. There is also **a lack of awareness** about the dangers of mixing medications. Some older adults continue taking medicines that were prescribed long ago **without checking with a doctor** whether they are still needed.

How can we improve safe medication use for older adults?

1. **Regular medication reviews** – Elderly individuals should have their medicines checked by a doctor **at least once a year** to remove unnecessary or unsafe drugs.
2. **Awareness about self-medication risks** – Education on why **taking medicines without a doctor's advice is dangerous**, especially antibiotics and painkillers.
3. **Proper labeling of traditional medicines** – Traditional medicines must **clearly mention ingredients and instructions** to prevent harmful interactions.
4. **Encourage safe storage of medicines** – Keeping track of dosages and avoiding expired medicines.
5. **Community programs to support elderly patients** – Regular health camps and awareness drives for **senior citizens and caregivers** to ensure safe medication use.

Key Takeaways

Polypharmacy in Older Adults

- Taking **five or more medicines daily** is called polypharmacy, which can lead to **side effects and drug interactions**.
- **33.7% of elderly individuals** in the study were taking multiple medicines.
- Common medicines included those for **high blood pressure, diabetes, cholesterol, and pain relief**.

Self-Medication Among the Elderly

- **19.7% of older adults self-medicated**, often with **painkillers (59%), paracetamol (42.4%), and antibiotics (33.9%)**.
- People who **lived alone, had multiple illnesses, or were recently hospitalized** were more likely to self-medicate.
- Many took **traditional medicines that had no labels or proper dosage instructions**, increasing health risks.

Dangers of Polypharmacy and Self-Medication

- **Mixing too many medicines can cause harmful side effects**.
- **Some medicines become unsafe for older adults**, but they **continue taking them without review**.
- **Self-medicating with antibiotics leads to antibiotic resistance**, making infections harder to treat.
- **Using unregulated traditional medicines** can be dangerous if ingredients are unknown.

Solutions for Safer Medication Use

- **Regular doctor consultations** to check whether all prescribed medicines are still needed.
- **Avoid taking medicines without medical advice**, especially antibiotics and painkillers.
- **Traditional medicines should have clear labels and instructions**.
- **Educating senior citizens and caregivers** about safe medication practices.





Science

Hantavirus is a rare but deadly virus that spreads to humans mainly through contact with infected rodents or their waste. The virus can cause two serious illnesses: **hantavirus pulmonary syndrome (HPS)** and **hemorrhagic fever with renal syndrome (HFRS)**. Both conditions can lead to severe respiratory issues, internal bleeding, and kidney failure. The recent death of Betsy Hackman, wife of actor Gene Hackman, has brought attention to this virus, emphasizing the need for awareness, even though cases are uncommon.

Hantavirus is primarily carried by **rodents like deer mice, white-footed mice, rice rats, and cotton rats**. People can get infected when they **breathe in virus particles** from contaminated dust, especially when **sweeping or cleaning areas with rodent droppings, urine, or nests**. It can also spread through **direct contact with rodent waste** or, in rare cases, **bites from infected rodents**. The virus does not spread from person to person, unlike the flu or COVID-19.

The symptoms of hantavirus start **1 to 8 weeks after exposure** and **initially resemble the flu**—fever, muscle aches, and fatigue. However, the disease **quickly worsens**, leading to **severe breathing problems, coughing, chest tightness, and fluid buildup in the lungs**. Without immediate medical care, **patients can develop acute respiratory distress syndrome (ARDS), which can be fatal**. Those most at risk include **farmers, construction workers, campers, and homeowners dealing with rodent infestations**. The CDC advises that **young children, pregnant women, and people with weak immune systems should avoid handling pet rodents**.

Currently, **there is no specific cure or antiviral treatment** for hantavirus. Doctors can only provide **supportive care**, such as **oxygen therapy and mechanical ventilation** to help with breathing. In severe cases, **patients require intensive care** to prevent respiratory failure. Since treatment options are limited, **the best way to stay safe is by preventing exposure to rodents**, keeping homes clean, sealing any rodent entry points, and **wearing protective gear when cleaning areas where rodents may be present**.

Key Takeaways

- **What is Hantavirus?**
 - A rare but deadly virus carried by rodents.
 - Causes two major illnesses: **Hantavirus Pulmonary Syndrome (HPS)** and **Hemorrhagic Fever with Renal Syndrome (HFRS)**.
 - Leads to severe respiratory distress, internal bleeding, and kidney failure.
- **How Does It Spread?**
 - Humans get infected **through exposure to rodent droppings, urine, or saliva**.
 - **Inhalation of virus particles** (aerosolization) while sweeping or cleaning contaminated areas is the most common transmission method.
 - Direct contact with infected rodents or, rarely, rodent bites.
 - **Not spread from person to person**.
- **Symptoms and Progression**
 - Incubation period: **1 to 8 weeks after exposure**.
 - **Early symptoms**: Fever, muscle aches, fatigue, nausea, vomiting (flu-like).
 - **Severe stage**: Shortness of breath, coughing, chest pain, rapid lung failure (HPS) or internal bleeding and kidney failure (HFRS).
 - Can **quickly turn fatal without medical care**.
- **Who is Most at Risk?**
 - **People working or living in rodent-prone areas** (farmers, campers, construction workers).





- **Homeowners with rodent infestations.**
- **Children under five, pregnant women, and immunocompromised individuals** should avoid pet rodents.
- **Treatment Options**
 - **No specific cure or antiviral medication available.**
 - Supportive care includes **oxygen therapy and mechanical ventilation** for breathing difficulties.
 - Intensive care may be required in severe cases.
- **Prevention Measures**
 - **Seal homes to prevent rodent entry.**
 - **Avoid sweeping or vacuuming rodent droppings;** instead, wet them with disinfectant before cleaning.
 - **Store food properly and eliminate rodent nesting areas.**
 - **Use protective gear (masks and gloves) when cleaning rodent-infested areas.**

[Acceptable contrast: TH Editorial](#)

Economy

Easy Explanation

Three key economic indicators—industrial production, retail inflation, and mutual fund investments—paint a mixed picture of India's economy. On one hand, the **real economy** is showing signs of stability and resilience, but on the other, **financial markets** are experiencing volatility.

The good news is that **inflation is cooling down**. February's **retail inflation fell to 3.61%**, the lowest in seven months, and food inflation, which had been very high last year, has dropped to just 3.75%. This means that people are spending less on groceries, which is a relief for policymakers. The government had hoped that lower inflation would encourage people to spend more, helping India meet its **GDP growth target of 6.5% for 2025**.

Since inflation is now well within the **Reserve Bank of India's (RBI) target of 4%**, the central bank **reduced the repo rate** (the interest rate at which it lends money to banks) from **6.50% to 6.25%** for the first time in five years. This is meant to help businesses and individuals borrow money more easily, boosting economic activity. However, there is still concern about **foreign investors pulling out their money** due to global uncertainties, which has led to a **liquidity crunch in the banking system**. To counter this, the RBI **pumped ₹2 trillion into the banking system** through currency swap auctions to ensure that banks have enough cash to lend.

Despite the turbulence in financial markets, the **real economy remains strong**. **Industrial production grew by 5% in January**, the highest in eight months. This growth was driven by increased production in infrastructure, construction, and essential goods, showing that businesses are still expanding.

However, the **financial markets are struggling**. Mutual fund inflows dropped **27% in February**, marking the fourth consecutive month of weak stock market performance. Many retail investors, particularly those from middle- and upper-middle-class backgrounds, **rushed into the stock market after COVID-19**, but now they are withdrawing due to declining stock returns. The number of new **Systematic Investment Plans (SIPs)** **fell to the lowest level this financial year**.

In summary, while **the stock market is facing short-term volatility**, **the core economy is still doing well**. The decline in inflation, strong industrial production, and RBI's measures to improve liquidity indicate that the economy is on a steady path, even as financial markets go through temporary fluctuations.

Key Takeaways



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- **Retail Inflation is Falling**
 - February's **retail inflation dropped to 3.61%**, the lowest in seven months.
 - **Food inflation** fell to **3.75%**, a two-year low.
 - This makes goods and groceries more affordable and supports economic stability.
- **RBI's Repo Rate Cut & Liquidity Measures**
 - **First repo rate cut in five years** (from **6.50% to 6.25%**) to stimulate borrowing and economic growth.
 - RBI **pumped ₹2 trillion** into the banking system to tackle the liquidity crunch.
 - Foreign investors pulling money out of India has caused liquidity issues in the financial markets.
- **Industrial Production is Growing**
 - **January's industrial production grew by 5%**, the highest in eight months.
 - Growth was led by **construction, infrastructure, and essential goods**.
 - Indicates that businesses are expanding despite financial market volatility.
- **Stock Market & Mutual Funds Are Struggling**
 - **Mutual fund inflows fell by 27%** in February.
 - Many retail investors are pulling money out after experiencing **four months of declining stock returns**.
 - The number of **new Systematic Investment Plans (SIPs)** dropped to the lowest level this year.
- **Overall Economic Outlook**
 - **The real economy (production, inflation, and business activity) remains strong**.
 - **Financial markets are volatile**, but this is likely temporary.
 - RBI's actions aim to **stabilize liquidity and encourage investment**, keeping the economy on track for **6.5% GDP growth in 2025**.

[Old ties, new priorities: TH Editorial](#)

International Relations

Easy Explanation

Prime Minister Narendra Modi recently visited Mauritius to strengthen India's relationship with the island nation. This was his first visit to Mauritius in ten years, and he was warmly welcomed by the newly elected Prime Minister, Navin Ramgoolam. The two leaders have a long history of friendship, with India even helping Mr. Ramgoolam during the COVID-19 pandemic by facilitating his medical treatment in India.

Mauritius and India share strong cultural and historical ties. More than **70% of Mauritians have Indian ancestry**, and Indian traditions, festivals, and languages are widely observed in the country. However, Modi's visit was not just about cultural ties; it had significant strategic and economic goals. **Mauritius is important to India because of its location in the Indian Ocean, its connection to Africa, and its role in the Global South.**

During the visit, India and Mauritius **upgraded their strategic partnership** and agreed to expand their **defense cooperation**. India also announced new **economic projects**, including:

- **Bilateral trade in national currencies** (instead of relying on the U.S. dollar).
- **Funding for a new Mauritius Parliament building**.
- **A ₹487 crore credit line** to help improve **water infrastructure** in Mauritius.



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This builds on past Indian investments in Mauritius, such as the **Mauritius Metro rail project, an airstrip in the Agalega islands, and a new Supreme Court building.**

Another major issue discussed was the **Chagos Archipelago dispute**. This is a group of islands currently controlled by the **United Kingdom**, with a U.S. military base on **Diego Garcia**. Mauritius wants full sovereignty over these islands, and India has **promised to support whatever decision Mauritius makes** in negotiations with the U.K.

At the same time, **India is watching China's increasing influence in Mauritius**. China's **trade with Mauritius is \$1.1 billion—double that of India-Mauritius trade**. China has also signed a **free trade agreement** with Mauritius and is increasing its naval presence in the **Indian Ocean**, which concerns India.

To counter this, **Modi announced the "MAHASAGAR doctrine,"** a strategy to strengthen India's leadership in the **Indian Ocean region**. This comes at a time when **U.S. foreign policy changes are disrupting global trade and alliances**, and India wants to ensure stability by strengthening partnerships with trusted allies.

In summary, **Modi's visit to Mauritius reinforced India's commitment to regional partnerships, countered China's growing influence, and supported Mauritius' political goals while deepening economic and defense ties.**

Key Takeaways

- **Cultural & Historical Ties**
 - Over **70% of Mauritians** have **Indian ancestry**.
 - India and Mauritius share deep cultural, historical, and linguistic connections.
- **Economic & Development Initiatives**
 - India announced **new projects**, including:
 - **Bilateral trade in national currencies** (instead of using the U.S. dollar).
 - **A new Parliament building** for Mauritius.
 - **₹487 crore credit facility** to improve water infrastructure.
 - Builds on past **Indian projects**, like the **Mauritius Metro rail project, an airstrip in the Agalega islands, and a Supreme Court building**.
- **Defense & Strategic Cooperation**
 - **India and Mauritius upgraded their strategic ties**.
 - Committed to **stronger defense collaboration**.
- **Chagos Archipelago Dispute**
 - Mauritius wants full control over **Chagos Islands**, currently under the U.K.
 - India **assured support** for whatever decision Mauritius takes in negotiations.
- **China's Growing Influence**
 - China's **trade with Mauritius (\$1.1 billion)** is **twice that of India's (\$554 million)**.
 - **Free trade agreement & Chinese naval expansion** in the Indian Ocean concern India.
- **India's MAHASAGAR Doctrine**
 - Modi announced a **new strategy for Indian Ocean security and influence**.
 - Aimed at **countering China's growing presence** in the region.





- **Strengthening Regional Stability**

- **U.S. foreign policy shifts are affecting global trade and alliances.**
- **India wants to ensure regional stability** by reinforcing relationships with friendly nations.

[The gender budget — bigger allocations, little impact: TH Editorial](#)

Economy

Easy Explanation

The Union Budget for 2025-26 has significantly increased funding for **women-focused schemes**, with the total **gender budget rising to ₹4.49 lakh crore**—a **37.25% jump** from the previous year. While this looks like a big step forward, the actual benefits reaching women, especially those from **Scheduled Castes (SC) and Scheduled Tribes (ST)**, remain questionable.

One major issue is that despite allocating more funds, many government schemes **fail to reach marginalized women** due to digital barriers, bureaucratic red tape, and lack of proper outreach. **Digitization of welfare programs**, while aiming to remove middlemen, has created problems for **women with low digital literacy**, making it harder for them to access benefits.

Another challenge is that government policies **lack updated data**. India's last Census was in **2011**, meaning policymakers are **still relying on outdated statistics** to decide where funds should go. Without **current gender-disaggregated data**, it is difficult to measure whether these schemes truly help SC/ST women. Reports show that **over 35% of funds allocated for SC/ST development remain unused** because of **bureaucratic hurdles, complicated paperwork, and lack of community involvement**.

Women in **tribal areas** face even bigger struggles. Their **literacy rate is only 49.4%**, compared to **64.63% for all Indian women**. Poor access to **education and healthcare** makes it even harder for them to take advantage of government programs. Local **panchayati raj institutions** (village councils) could play a big role in bridging this gap, but **many of them lack the power and resources to implement gender-sensitive policies**. Additionally, **"Sarpanch husbands"**—where elected women leaders are controlled by their husbands—remain a major issue in rural governance.

Experts suggest that **just increasing budget allocations is not enough**. The government should **involve communities, especially women from marginalized backgrounds**, in planning and monitoring welfare schemes. For example, **Kerala's Kudumbashree mission** has shown that when women are directly involved in implementation, **outreach and effectiveness improve dramatically**.

A **better tracking system** is also needed to ensure that the allocated funds are **actually spent on women's welfare**. A **gender budget tracking portal** could increase transparency and help the public monitor how funds are used.

While the **higher gender budget is a step in the right direction**, its **real impact will depend on effective execution**. Without addressing **caste, class, and gender barriers**, these funds may not truly empower women. To make real progress, policies **must go beyond token measures** and focus on **equity, accessibility, and accountability**.

Key Takeaways

- **Gender Budget Increase**





- **₹4.49 lakh crore** allocated for **women's schemes** in 2025-26, a **37.25%** rise from the previous year.
- **Limited Impact Despite Higher Funding**
 - Despite rising allocations, benefits have **not reached marginalized women** in the same proportion.
 - SC/ST women **struggle to access these programs** despite specific schemes targeting them.
 - **Over 35% of funds under SC/ST welfare programs remain unused** due to **bureaucratic red tape**.
- **Digital Barriers**
 - Digitization of welfare programs **excludes women with low digital literacy**.
 - Urgent need for **digital literacy programs** to help women navigate these systems.
- **Outdated Data & Policy Challenges**
 - **India's last Census was in 2011**, making current policies **based on old statistics**.
 - **Lack of gender-specific data** in budget allocations makes it **hard to track impact on SC/ST women**.
- **Struggles of Tribal Women**
 - **Tribal women's literacy rate (49.4%) is far lower** than the national average (64.63%).
 - **Poor access to education & healthcare** limits their ability to benefit from government schemes.
- **Challenges in Local Governance**
 - **Panchayati raj institutions lack power & resources** to effectively implement gender policies.
 - **"Sarpanch husbands"** (men controlling elected women leaders) hinder progress.
- **Need for Community-Led Programs**
 - Kerala's **Kudumbashree mission** shows that **community-driven schemes work better**.
 - **Women should be directly involved** in planning & monitoring schemes for better results.
- **Lack of Transparency in Fund Utilization**
 - No clear system to track how gender budget funds are used.
 - A **gender budget tracking portal** could improve accountability.
- **Conclusion**
 - **Budget increase is positive, but implementation needs improvement.**
 - Without addressing **caste, class, and gender barriers**, women's empowerment will remain **largely symbolic**.
 - Policies should **move beyond token measures** and focus on **real, measurable impact**.

[How can India meet its rising power demand?: TH Text&Context](#)

Environment

Easy Explanation

India's electricity demand is **rising rapidly**, growing at around **9% per year** since 2021. This is driven by **economic growth, urbanization, and increasing heat waves due to climate change**. The demand is **becoming unpredictable**, with peak electricity usage often exceeding projections. In **May 2024, peak demand hit 250 GW**, surpassing estimates.



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Household energy consumption, particularly from air conditioners, is increasing rapidly due to rising incomes and extreme weather.

To keep up with demand, **India has significantly expanded its power generation capacity**. It now produces **460 GW of electricity**, making it the **third-largest producer globally**. However, **coal still dominates the energy mix**, supplying **75% of electricity** despite its falling share in capacity. **Renewable energy (RE) sources like solar and wind are growing fast**. India's RE capacity has reached **165 GW**, and another **32 GW is expected in 2025**. The government has set a **target of 500 GW of non-fossil fuel energy by 2030**, but recent studies suggest that **India should aim for 600 GW** instead to **avoid power shortages and reduce energy costs**.

A study by the **Council on Energy, Environment, and Water (CEEW)** found that **failing to meet the 500 GW clean energy target will lead to power shortages and higher costs**. If India **only reaches 400 GW of clean energy**, around **1 million households could experience daily power cuts**. To avoid this, **India has two choices—either add more coal plants or increase renewable energy capacity beyond the 500 GW goal**. Adding **6 GW of coal power** may provide energy, but it would **strain the system and lead to frequent breakdowns**. On the other hand, **adding 100 GW more renewables (beyond 500 GW) would be a more stable and cost-effective solution**.

If India achieves **600 GW of clean energy by 2030**, it will provide **reliable power at lower costs**, saving around **₹42,400 crore (\$5 billion) annually**. It will also create **100,000 new jobs** and significantly **reduce air pollution**. However, reaching **600 GW means adding 70 GW of renewables every year**, which is **challenging** due to **land acquisition issues, slow transmission infrastructure expansion, and bureaucratic delays**.

To speed up the adoption of renewables, India should:

1. **Expand renewable projects beyond a few states** like Gujarat and Rajasthan and encourage states like **Odisha, Bihar, Punjab, and Kerala** to invest in clean energy.
2. **Promote energy storage solutions like batteries and pumped hydro storage** to ensure stable power supply.
3. **Improve bidding and contract processes** to attract investment in renewables.

India has already **made great progress in renewable energy**, and if these strategies are implemented, it could **double its clean energy share from 25% to 50% by 2030**.

Key Takeaways

- **Electricity Demand Rising Rapidly**
 1. Demand has grown at **9% per year** since 2021.
 2. **Extreme heat and increasing use of air conditioners** are driving consumption.
 3. **Household electricity demand is rising fastest** due to economic growth.
- **India's Current Energy Mix**
 1. India is the **third-largest electricity producer globally** with **460 GW capacity**.
 2. **Coal still supplies 75% of power**, though its share in capacity is decreasing.
 3. **Renewable energy (RE) is expanding**, reaching **165 GW in 2024**, with **32 GW more expected in 2025**.
- **Need to Increase Renewable Energy Targets**
 1. The government's **500 GW clean energy target by 2030 may not be enough**.
 2. A study by CEEW found that if India reaches only **400 GW**, **1 million households may face power shortages**.





3. To prevent shortages, India must **either add 6 GW of coal power or 100 GW more renewables** beyond 500 GW.
 4. **Increasing renewables is a better option** to ensure stable and affordable electricity.
- **Benefits of Achieving 600 GW of Clean Energy by 2030**
 1. **Saves ₹42,400 crore (\$5 billion) annually** in power costs.
 2. **Creates 100,000 new jobs** by 2030.
 3. **Reduces air pollution by 23%**, improving public health.
 - **Challenges in Expanding Renewable Energy**
 1. **Land acquisition delays** slow down new solar and wind projects.
 2. **Lack of transmission infrastructure** prevents efficient power distribution.
 3. **State electricity boards are hesitant to invest** in large-scale renewables.
 - **Strategies to Speed Up Renewable Energy Growth**
 1. **Expand RE projects across more states** to reduce land pressure in existing regions.
 2. **Promote energy storage solutions** like **batteries and pumped hydro storage** to ensure power reliability.
 3. **Improve bidding and contract systems** to attract investment and ensure faster RE adoption.

Understanding the neurobiological basis of substance abuse addiction: TH Text&Context

Sociology

Easy Explanation

Addiction is not just about bad choices; it is a **brain disorder** that changes how the brain works. As we mark **Brain Awareness Week**, scientists emphasize that **addiction is a chronic condition** that can be understood, treated, and even reversed with the right approach.

A recent study published in **Nature Mental Health** has revealed that **addiction affects multiple brain regions, not just one**. Researchers analyzed **9,000 brain scans** and found that addiction involves a **network of brain circuits responsible for cravings, emotions, and decision-making**. These findings **challenge the old belief** that addiction is just a failure of self-control—it is actually the result of changes in brain function.

Three main **brain regions** are involved in addiction:

1. **Basal Ganglia** – This part of the brain processes rewards. It makes people want to **repeat pleasurable activities**, like eating or socializing. When drugs or alcohol enter the system, they **hijack this process**, making substance use feel rewarding and reinforcing addictive behavior.
2. **Extended Amygdala** – This region controls stress and emotions. **When a person stops using a substance, they experience withdrawal symptoms** like anxiety and irritability, pushing them to use again to relieve discomfort.
3. **Prefrontal Cortex** – This part is responsible for **decision-making and self-control**. In addiction, it becomes **weakened**, making it harder to resist urges, even when a person knows the consequences.

Teenagers are at the highest risk of addiction because their **prefrontal cortex is still developing**. This makes it harder for them to control impulses and resist peer pressure. **Early substance use can permanently alter brain function**, increasing the risk of long-term addiction.



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Scientists now understand that **addiction is influenced by many factors**—including genetics, environment, and mental health. Some people may use substances without becoming addicted, while others are **more vulnerable due to their brain chemistry**. This challenges the idea that **addiction is simply a matter of willpower**.

Brain imaging studies, such as **MRI and PET scans**, have shown the **physical changes in the brain** caused by addiction. However, researchers are still exploring **how the brain heals** after a person stops using substances. **Understanding recovery is crucial for improving addiction treatment** and preventing relapse.

One of the biggest breakthroughs in addiction research is **reducing stigma**. By proving that addiction is a **brain condition, not a moral failing**, scientists have encouraged better treatment and healthcare policies. **New medications** are being tested to help with substance use disorders, particularly for **opioid addiction**.

As we continue to study addiction, the focus must be on **compassionate and science-based treatment**. The **brain's ability to heal, known as plasticity**, offers hope for recovery. By improving public awareness, research, and support systems, **we can help people overcome addiction and rebuild their lives**. Behind every person struggling with addiction is a brain that can recover—and a person who deserves support.

Key Takeaways

- **Addiction is a Brain Disorder, Not Just a Choice**
 - Addiction alters brain function, making quitting difficult.
 - It is **not a failure of willpower** but a **chronic condition** like diabetes or heart disease.
- **New Research Shows Addiction Involves Multiple Brain Areas**
 - A recent **study of 9,000 brain scans** found that addiction affects a **network of circuits**, not just one part of the brain.
 - The brain regions involved are:
 1. **Basal Ganglia** – Creates cravings and reinforces addictive behavior.
 2. **Extended Amygdala** – Involved in withdrawal symptoms and stress.
 3. **Prefrontal Cortex** – Responsible for decision-making and impulse control, which becomes weakened in addiction.
- **Teenagers Are at High Risk**
 - The **prefrontal cortex is still developing in teens**, making them more vulnerable to addiction.
 - Early substance use can **permanently affect brain function**.
- **Addiction is Influenced by Multiple Factors**
 - Genetics, environment, and mental health all play a role.
 - Not everyone who uses substances becomes addicted, but some are **more vulnerable due to brain chemistry**.
- **Brain Imaging Has Helped Scientists Understand Addiction**
 - MRI and PET scans show **how substances change brain function**.
 - Scientists are now focusing on **how the brain recovers** after addiction.
- **New Treatment Approaches Focus on the Brain's Ability to Heal**





- Research into **neuroplasticity** (the brain's ability to adapt) is helping improve addiction treatments.
- Medications for opioid addiction and **better psychological support** are being developed.
- **Reducing Stigma is Crucial**
 - Addiction should be seen as a **medical condition, not a moral failure**.
 - Compassionate, science-based approaches are needed to support recovery.
- **The Future of Addiction Research**
 - Scientists are working to understand **how to support long-term recovery**.
 - Improved treatments and **public awareness** can help more people overcome addiction.

15th March 2025

[Modern day summitry, its perils and its prospects: TH Editorial](#)

Easy Explanation

Summit diplomacy refers to meetings between world leaders to discuss and resolve global issues. While it can sometimes lead to positive outcomes, it is often filled with complexities, political maneuvering, and image-building rather than concrete results.

In today's world, leaders like **Donald Trump** and **Narendra Modi** are often called "**strong leaders**" because they centralize power, dominate their political parties, and engage in **high-profile diplomatic meetings**. Italian Prime Minister **Giorgia Meloni** recently mentioned both leaders as shaping a **new conservative movement**, highlighting their global influence.

Historically, **summit diplomacy** has played a key role in shaping international politics. The **Congress of Vienna (1814-15)** helped redraw Europe after the **Napoleonic Wars**, and in modern times, **the Camp David Accords (1978)** brought temporary peace between **Egypt and Israel**. Similarly, **Cold War tensions** reduced when **Ronald Reagan and Mikhail Gorbachev** held direct talks. However, many such meetings fail because leaders often seek **quick agreements for publicity rather than real solutions**.

A recent example of "**pseudo**" summit diplomacy was the heated exchange between **Trump and Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy** at the **White House on February 28, 2025**. Instead of a private diplomatic discussion, the meeting became a **public spectacle**, with Zelenskyy **challenging Trump on live television**. This approach backfired, with Trump **threatening to withdraw U.S. support** for Ukraine. This situation forced **European leaders** to scramble for an alternative, resulting in a rushed meeting in **London** where leaders expressed vague commitments but failed to present any concrete solutions.

Despite Trump's aggressive reputation, his meeting with **Modi on February 13, 2025**, was **more balanced**. Though Trump criticized **India's trade barriers**, the discussion remained **civil**. The U.S. also offered **F-35 fighter jets** to India, which could pressure the Indian government to **strengthen its air force against China**. However, **the joint statement issued after the meeting lacked clarity**, focusing on potential cooperation but failing to outline specific commitments.

While summit diplomacy is supposed to focus on **conflict resolution and building trust**, many leaders use it as a **public relations tool**. Today, many summits are conducted **without proper preparation**, leading to agreements that sound impressive but lack real impact. Despite its flaws, **summit diplomacy will continue to play a key role in international relations**, especially as global issues become more complex and require **collective action**.



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Key Takeaways

- **Summit Diplomacy and "Strong Leaders"**
 - Leaders like **Donald Trump and Narendra Modi** are seen as "**strong leaders**" who centralize power and dominate their political parties.
 - **Summit diplomacy** is a common tool for these leaders, but it often focuses more on **image-building** than real outcomes.
- **Historical Successes of Summit Diplomacy**
 - **Congress of Vienna (1814-15)**: Redrew the European map after the **Napoleonic Wars**.
 - **Camp David Accords (1978)**: Helped **Egypt and Israel** reach a temporary peace.
 - **Reagan-Gorbachev Talks (1980s)**: Helped **reduce Cold War tensions** between the U.S. and the Soviet Union.
- **Recent Failures in Summit Diplomacy**
 - The **Trump-Zelenskyy** meeting in February 2025 turned into a **public confrontation**, leading to **U.S. threats to withdraw support for Ukraine**.
 - A rushed **European summit** in London tried to counter Trump's decision but lacked concrete solutions.
- **India-U.S. Summit: A Different Approach**
 - The **Modi-Trump** meeting in February 2025 was **more balanced**.
 - **India was criticized for trade barriers**, but no major conflict occurred.
 - The U.S. offered **F-35 fighter jets** to India, raising **strategic concerns about China**.
- **Challenges in Modern Summit Diplomacy**
 - Many summits today are **poorly prepared**, leading to **superficial agreements**.
 - Leaders often use these meetings for **political image-building** rather than solving real problems.
- **The Future of Summit Diplomacy**
 - Despite its flaws, **summit diplomacy remains crucial** for global politics.
 - As international conflicts and challenges increase, **leaders will rely on these meetings more than ever**.

[A voluntary mandate: TH Editorial](#)

Polity

Easy Explanation

The **Automated Permanent Academic Account Registry (APAAR) ID** is a new system introduced by the Ministry of Education to **digitize student academic records** throughout their lifetime. It is linked with **Aadhaar** and is meant to serve as a **centralized and permanent record** for each student. While this might sound beneficial, its **implementation has raised serious concerns** about legality, consent, and misuse of power at the state level.

According to the **Education Ministry**, APAAR is **not mandatory** by law, meaning schools and students are **not legally required** to enroll. However, **state governments and education administrators** in places like **Uttar Pradesh and Karnataka** have **pressured schools** to achieve **100% enrollment**, treating APAAR as **compulsory in practice**. Some schools have even warned **parents of negative consequences** if they do not register their children.



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This **coercive approach** is similar to what happened with **Aadhaar and Digi Yatra**, where the government first introduced these systems as "optional" but later made them **so widespread** that they became **de facto mandatory**. Now, similar problems are emerging with APAAR, including **errors like name mismatches**, which **prevent students from enrolling** in schools.

Another major concern is **data security and privacy**. India's **Digital Personal Data Protection Act, 2023**, which is meant to protect personal information, has **not yet been fully implemented**. This means that vast amounts of **sensitive student data** are being collected **without strong legal protections** in place. The **Supreme Court of India** has also ruled that **Aadhaar cannot be mandated for basic education**, yet APAAR is being **used as a workaround to bypass this ruling**.

If the government truly wants to improve the **reliability and accessibility of education records**, it should **introduce proper legislation** rather than **forcing an unregulated system** onto students and parents. Until laws are passed ensuring **data privacy, security, and voluntary participation**, APAAR risks becoming another **unlawful surveillance tool** under the guise of education reform.

Key Takeaways

- **What is APAAR?**
 - The **Automated Permanent Academic Account Registry (APAAR) ID** is a system introduced to **digitize academic records** of students across India.
 - It is **linked to Aadhaar** and aims to provide a **single source of truth** for student records.
- **Implementation Issues**
 - The **Education Ministry** states APAAR is **voluntary**, but **schools in Uttar Pradesh and Karnataka** are **treating it as compulsory**.
 - Schools have **pressured parents** to enroll their children, warning of **consequences for non-registration**.
 - This is similar to the way **Aadhaar and Digi Yatra** were initially optional but became **de facto mandatory over time**.
- **Legal and Privacy Concerns**
 - The **Supreme Court** ruled that **Aadhaar cannot be mandatory for basic education**, yet **APAAR is being used as a loophole**.
 - The **Digital Personal Data Protection Act, 2023**, which should protect student data, has **not yet taken effect**, raising concerns over **privacy and security**.
 - **Data mismatches** (such as incorrect names) are already causing **enrollment failures** for students.
- **What Should Be Done?**
 - Instead of **forcing APAAR through pressure tactics**, the government should **introduce proper laws** to regulate its use.
 - **Informed consent** must be the foundation of any **digital public infrastructure**, ensuring that participation is **truly voluntary**.
 - Data collection should only proceed with **strong legal safeguards** to protect students' **privacy and rights**.





16th March 2025

[Why has India got another tiger reserve?: TH FAQ](#)

Environment

Easy Explanation

India has just announced its **58th tiger reserve** at **Madhav National Park in Madhya Pradesh**, making it the **ninth** tiger reserve in the state—the highest among all states in India. This decision is part of India's **longstanding conservation efforts** to protect tigers, which were once nearly wiped out due to **hunting, poaching, and deforestation**.

In the early **20th century**, India had an estimated **40,000 tigers**, but by the **1960s**, that number had dropped to **2,000–4,000** due to **unregulated hunting, forest destruction, and commercial fur trade**. The situation worsened, prompting the government to take action. In **1973**, then-Prime Minister **Indira Gandhi** launched "**Project Tiger**", which set up **nine tiger reserves** to protect and rebuild the tiger population. Over time, this project evolved, and today, tiger reserves are managed under the **National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA)**.

Tiger reserves are **carefully planned zones**, consisting of a **core area**, where human activities are strictly limited, and a **buffer zone**, where controlled human presence is allowed. This ensures that **tigers and their prey can thrive without interference**, while also balancing the needs of local communities. The NTCA **oversees these reserves**, ensuring that they are protected from threats like **poaching and habitat destruction**.

Funding for tiger conservation comes from a **60:40 ratio between the Central and State governments**. However, in **Northeastern and Himalayan states**, the Centre provides **90% of the funds** due to their **remote and challenging landscapes**. The funding supports activities such as **anti-poaching measures, habitat restoration, human-wildlife conflict resolution, and village relocations** from critical tiger zones.

The newly declared **Madhav National Park Tiger Reserve** is crucial because it acts as a **wildlife corridor between Rajasthan's Ranthambore Tiger Reserve and Madhya Pradesh's Kuno National Park** (which currently houses cheetahs). Though tigers were **not originally present** in Madhav, in **2023**, **one male and two female tigers** were **relocated**, and the population has now grown to **seven**.

Madhya Pradesh already has some of India's **most famous tiger reserves**, including **Kanha, Panna, and Bandhavgarh**, with the **highest tiger population (785 tigers)** in the country. However, the **Kuno-Madhav region** has **historically been neglected**. With increasing conservation focus, this area could soon become **one of India's most important wildlife hubs**.

One significant debate remains: **whether lions from Gujarat's Gir Forest should be relocated to Kuno National Park**. The **Supreme Court has approved the move**, but the government has hesitated, citing possible conflicts between lions, cheetahs, and tigers. If lions are eventually relocated, it could bring **more funding and international conservation efforts** to the region.

As of the **2023 tiger census**, **India has 3,682 tigers**, with nearly **30% living outside protected reserves**. This shows that **conservation efforts are working**, but also that **more action is needed to protect tigers living in unprotected areas**.

Key Takeaways



| Click to Connect Now.



- **New Tiger Reserve Declared**

- **Madhav National Park in Madhya Pradesh** has been designated as **India's 58th tiger reserve**.
- It is **Madhya Pradesh's ninth tiger reserve**, making it the **state with the highest number of reserves**.

- **Why Are Tiger Reserves Important?**

- In the **early 1900s**, India had **40,000 tigers**, but by the **1960s**, this number had dropped to **2,000–4,000** due to **hunting, poaching, and deforestation**.
- In **1973**, **Project Tiger** was launched to protect and revive tiger populations.
- Tiger reserves consist of **core zones (strictly protected)** and **buffer zones (limited human activity allowed)** to support conservation.

- **How Are Tiger Reserves Funded?**

- **60% of funding comes from the Centre**, **40% from states** (except for **Northeastern and Himalayan states**, where the Centre provides **90%**).
- Funds go towards **anti-poaching efforts**, **habitat restoration**, **resolving human-wildlife conflicts**, and **relocating villages**.

- **Madhav National Park's Role**

- It serves as a **wildlife corridor** connecting **Ranthambore (Rajasthan)** and **Kuno (Madhya Pradesh)**.
- Initially, it had **no tigers**, but after **relocating three in 2023**, the population has grown to **seven**.
- It could play a crucial role in **future conservation efforts**, especially as **Kuno also houses cheetahs**.

- **Debate Over Lion Relocation**

- The **Supreme Court** has approved relocating **Asiatic lions** from **Gir (Gujarat)** to **Kuno National Park**.
- The government is **concerned about conflicts between lions, tigers, and cheetahs** in the same habitat.
- If lions are introduced, it could **attract more conservation funding and international support**.

- **Current Status of Tigers in India**

- According to the **2023 census**, India has **3,682 tigers**, with **30% living outside reserves**.
- Madhya Pradesh has the **highest tiger population (785 tigers)**.
- **More conservation efforts** are needed to protect tigers **outside protected areas**.

[What is the reach of an ICC warrant?:TH FAQ](#)

International Relations

Easy Explanation

Former **Philippines President Rodrigo Duterte** has been taken to the **Netherlands** to face charges of **crimes against humanity** at the **International Criminal Court (ICC)**. The charges stem from his **controversial war on drugs**, during which **thousands of people were allegedly killed in extrajudicial executions**. Human rights groups estimate that around **30,000 people** lost their lives due to **police operations and unidentified assailants** between **2011 and 2019**—a period covering both his tenure as **Davao City mayor and President**.

Despite the **seriousness of the charges**, there are major **legal and political complications**. The **ICC does not have its own enforcement power** and relies on national governments to carry out arrests. **Duterte withdrew the Philippines from the ICC in 2019**, arguing that the court had **no jurisdiction over the country anymore**. However, **ICC prosecutors claim they can still investigate crimes committed before the withdrawal**. This led to an official investigation being



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opened in **2021**, which was initially resisted by the **current President, Ferdinand Marcos Jr.** However, after **political tensions between Duterte and Marcos increased**, the Philippine government **cooperated with the ICC in executing the arrest warrant**.

Duterte and his allies argue that the **ICC has no right to prosecute him**, citing the Philippines' **2019 withdrawal from the Rome Statute**, the treaty that established the ICC. However, the **ICC rejected this argument**, stating that the **Philippine legal system had not done enough to investigate or prosecute the alleged crimes**, meaning ICC intervention was justified. **All 125 countries that have signed the Rome Statute are legally required to arrest and surrender individuals with ICC warrants**, but enforcement has been inconsistent.

This case is seen as **a significant success for the ICC**, which has struggled to enforce arrest warrants against **other high-profile leaders like Russia's Vladimir Putin and Israel's Benjamin Netanyahu**. However, the ICC faces political pressure from **countries like the U.S. and China**. The **U.S. previously threatened to sanction ICC officials over investigations involving Israel**, while **China has criticized the case as politically motivated**, especially given its territorial dispute with the **Philippines over the South China Sea**.

Duterte's legal team has **challenged his arrest**, calling it **"kidnapping"**. The next step in the legal process is a **hearing before the ICC Pre-Trial Chamber**, where the **prosecutors will present their charges**. Duterte may also **apply for interim release**, but if the court **finds enough evidence**, the case will move to a **full trial**.

Key Takeaways

Why is Duterte facing trial?

- The **International Criminal Court (ICC)** has charged **former Philippines President Rodrigo Duterte** with **crimes against humanity** for his **violent war on drugs between 2011 and 2019**.
- Human rights groups estimate that **30,000 people** were killed in extrajudicial executions by **police and unidentified assailants** during his tenure.

Does the ICC have jurisdiction?

- **Duterte withdrew the Philippines from the ICC in 2019**, arguing that it had **no legal authority over him**.
- However, the **ICC ruled that it could still investigate crimes committed before the withdrawal** and opened a formal investigation in **2021**.
- The **Philippine government initially resisted cooperation**, but after **political tensions** between Duterte and current President **Ferdinand Marcos Jr.**, authorities **allowed the ICC warrant to be executed**.

Legal and political implications

- The **ICC does not have its own enforcement power** and relies on **governments to arrest and extradite suspects**.
- **All 125 countries that have signed the Rome Statute must comply**, but enforcement has been inconsistent.
- The **U.S. and China have criticized the ICC's actions**—the **U.S. opposes ICC investigations involving Israel**, while **China sees the case as political**, given its dispute with the Philippines.

What happens next?

- Duterte's legal team has **challenged the arrest**, calling it **"kidnapping"**.
- The **ICC will hold a Pre-Trial Chamber hearing to review evidence and confirm the charges**.
- Duterte may **apply for interim release**, but if enough evidence is found, the case will proceed to a **full trial**.



What's on the agenda of the Raisina Dialogue?: TH FAQ

International Relations

Easy Explanation

India is hosting the **10th edition of the Raisina Dialogue** from **March 17-19, 2025**, a major international conference where global leaders and experts discuss key geopolitical issues. This year's discussions will be **dominated by U.S. foreign policy shifts under President Donald Trump**, as well as the **ongoing Russia-Ukraine war**, the **U.S.'s changing ties with NATO allies**, and **global economic uncertainties**. The **theme for this year's conference is "Kalachakra" (Wheel of Time)**, reflecting the evolving nature of global affairs.

Prime Minister **Narendra Modi** will inaugurate the event, while **New Zealand's Prime Minister Christopher Luxon** will deliver the keynote speech. However, a **large U.S. delegation**, including **U.S. Director of National Intelligence Tulsi Gabbard**, is expected to take center stage. Other U.S. officials include **Ricky Gill (National Security Council)** and **James Carafano (Advisor to Trump and co-author of "Project 2025")**, who will defend U.S. policy decisions.

A key highlight will be a **Quad panel discussion**, featuring senior naval officials from **India, Australia, Japan, and the U.S.**, in preparation for the upcoming **Quad Summit**, where announcements on **maritime security cooperation** are expected.

The **Russia-Ukraine war** will be a major discussion point, especially after the **tense U.S.-Ukraine-Russia ceasefire talks** and the recent **public clash between Trump and Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy**. Many **European Foreign Ministers** will be attending, including **Ukraine's Foreign Minister Andrii Sybiha**, and are likely to push India to take a stronger stance on the war. Russian Foreign Minister **Sergey Lavrov**, a regular speaker at past Raisina Dialogues, **will not be attending this year**, signaling a shift in Russia's engagement with India.

Other notable speakers include **International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) chief Rafael Grossi**, who will discuss nuclear security, particularly in the context of **Ukraine and Iran**.

Several South Asian leaders will also attend, including the **Foreign Ministers of Bhutan, Nepal, Maldives, and Mauritius**. However, **Pakistan is not invited**, and **no representatives from Bangladesh** are listed this year. There is also a **speaker from China's Fudan University**, indicating an improvement in **India-China relations** after the Modi-Xi Jinping meeting last year.

One **interesting geopolitical development** is the possible **warming of India-Canada relations**, following the **change in leadership in Canada**. Canadian intelligence chief **Daniel Rogers** is in Delhi and may attend the conference. Former Canadian Prime Minister **Stephen Harper** and former Australian Prime Minister **Tony Abbott**, both past attendees, will also be present.

Despite India's increasing **diplomatic focus on West Asia (Gulf countries) and ASEAN**, these regions are **underrepresented** at the conference. The **only ASEAN representatives** are **Philippines' Foreign Minister Enrique Manalo** and **Thailand's Foreign Minister Maris Sangiampongsa**.

The **Raisina Dialogue** was launched in **2016** by India's **Ministry of External Affairs** as a global policy forum, aiming to be **India's answer to the Munich Security Conference (Germany) and the Shangri-La Dialogue (Singapore)**. It has grown into a **major international gathering**, showcasing India's diplomatic influence and shaping global conversations.



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Key Takeaways

What is the Raisina Dialogue?

- India's **flagship international conference on global affairs**, launched in **2016**.
- Aims to be India's **equivalent of the Munich Security Conference and Shangri-La Dialogue**.
- The 2025 edition is being held from **March 17-19 in Delhi**, with the theme "**Kalachakra**" (Wheel of Time).

Key Issues in Focus

- **Major shifts in U.S. foreign policy** under **Donald Trump**, including **trade policies**, **NATO relations**, and **China-Taiwan tensions**.
- **The Russia-Ukraine war**, especially after **recent tense U.S.-Ukraine-Russia ceasefire talks**.
- **The role of the Quad (India, U.S., Japan, Australia)** in **maritime security and Indo-Pacific cooperation**.
- **Nuclear security**, with a special focus on **Ukraine and Iran**, featuring **IAEA chief Rafael Grossi**.

Who is Attending?

- **Indian PM Narendra Modi** (Inaugural Speech).
- **New Zealand PM Christopher Luxon** (Keynote Speaker).
- **U.S. Delegation:**
 - **Tulsi Gabbard** (Director of National Intelligence).
 - **Ricky Gill** (National Security Council).
 - **James Carafano** (Trump Advisor, "Project 2025").
- **European Foreign Ministers**, including **Ukraine's Andrii Sybiha**.
- **South Asian Leaders:** Foreign Ministers of **Bhutan, Nepal, Maldives, Mauritius**.
- **China:** A speaker from **Fudan University**, signaling better India-China ties.
- **Canada:** Possible **warming of India-Canada relations**, with Canadian intelligence chief **Daniel Rogers** attending.
- **Global South:** Representatives from **Ghana, Cuba, Peru, Antigua & Barbuda**.

Who is Missing?

- **Russia:** Foreign Minister **Sergey Lavrov is not attending**, unlike in previous years.
- **Pakistan:** **Not invited** due to ongoing diplomatic tensions.
- **Bangladesh:** No representatives from the new **Yunus government** are listed.
- **West Asia & ASEAN:** Limited participation; only **Philippines and Thailand** are attending from ASEAN.

Why is this Dialogue Important?

- **Major platform for shaping India's foreign policy narratives** and strengthening international ties.
- Showcases **India's growing role in global diplomacy** as it hosts world leaders and policymakers.
- Highlights **shifting global power dynamics**, particularly concerning **U.S. policies, NATO's future, the Indo-Pacific, and the Ukraine war**.

[The rebels who shook Pakistan: TH Profiles](#)

Internal Security/IR



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Easy Explanation

The **Baloch Liberation Army (BLA)** has been one of the most active insurgent groups fighting for Balochistan's independence from **Pakistan**. It suffered major setbacks between **2018 and 2021**, but in **March 2025**, it carried out its **biggest-ever attack** by assaulting the **Quetta-Peshawar Jaffar Express**, proving that it has regained strength.

The BLA has been fighting against Pakistan for nearly **25 years**, claiming that the **Pakistani government exploits Balochistan's resources** without giving the local population their fair share. Over the years, it has grown into a powerful armed movement, moving beyond traditional tribal leadership and gaining support from **young, educated Baloch nationalists**.

The group suffered a **major blow in 2018** when **Afghan police chief Abdul Raziq Achakzai** (who helped facilitate Baloch militants' movement across the border) was **assassinated by the Taliban**. Just months later, **BLA commander Aslam Baloch was killed in a blast**, which weakened their leadership and disrupted their logistics. The **United States officially designated the BLA as a terrorist organization in 2019**, further pressuring the group.

However, despite these setbacks, the BLA **continued its attacks**, including a **2019 attack on the Pearl Continental Hotel in Gwadar**, a key port for **China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC)**. The Taliban's **takeover of Kabul in August 2021** initially reduced BLA activity, but by **2024**, the group had resumed weekly attacks. In **October 2024**, it bombed **Karachi's airport road**, killing **two Chinese nationals** and raising fears about its growing capabilities.

The BLA is **loosely structured** and does not follow a traditional military command. It has about **6,000 armed fighters**, but many more sympathizers, especially among **Baloch youth on social media**. Its **Majeed Brigade**, a suicide attack wing, has been responsible for the most high-profile strikes, including the recent **Jaffar Express train attack** in which **31 people were killed**.

Historically, the **Baloch nationalist struggle** began with **tribal leaders (sardars)** like the Bugtis, Marris, and Mengals, who wanted **greater autonomy** after **Pakistan's independence in 1947**. However, today's BLA is **less dependent on traditional tribal leaders** and operates more independently. Earlier, the **Soviet Union and radical Marxist ideology** influenced the Baloch movement, but modern fighters focus more on **anti-Pakistan sentiments and local grievances**.

Baloch leaders claim that **Pakistan has exploited Balochistan's natural resources** (such as gas, minerals, and ports) without benefiting the local population. This exploitation has fueled **resentment and armed resistance**.

Internally, the BLA has faced **leadership disputes**, such as during the **2020 Karachi Stock Exchange attack**, when its own spokesperson denied involvement, hinting at **Iranian interference**. Iran also has a **Baloch population in its Sistan-Balochistan province**, which complicates regional politics.

One of the BLA's most vocal supporters is **Hyrbair Marri**, a **London-based pro-independence leader**, who openly calls for **"Free Balochistan."** Following the **Jaffar Express attack**, he reaffirmed that the **BLA rejects Pakistan's flag and demands full independence**.

Pakistan has often accused **India of supporting Baloch separatists**, citing past visits by Baloch leaders and human rights activists to India. However, after the train attack, **India strongly rejected these accusations**, stating that **Pakistan should focus on its internal issues instead of blaming others**.

Currently, **Pakistan is facing security challenges from multiple fronts**. In addition to the **BLA's resurgence**, the **Pakistani Taliban (TTP) has increased its attacks**, while the country struggles with **political instability and an economic crisis**. With former Prime Minister **Imran Khan still in jail**, tensions between the **military-backed government and opposition forces** continue to rise.





Key Takeaways

BLA's Rise and Setbacks

- The Baloch Liberation Army (BLA) is a separatist militant group fighting for an independent Balochistan.
- It suffered major setbacks between 2018-2021:
 - 2018: Afghan police chief Abdul Raziq Achakzai was assassinated, disrupting BLA's movement.
 - 2018: Top BLA commander Aslam Baloch was killed in a blast.
 - 2019: The U.S. designated the BLA as a terrorist group, reducing its support.
- Despite these losses, the BLA launched new attacks in 2024-25, showing its resurgence.

Jaffar Express Train Attack (March 2025)

- BLA carried out its biggest attack ever, targeting the Quetta-Peshawar Jaffar Express.
- The Majeed Brigade, the suicide attack wing of the BLA, executed the operation.
- This attack marked the BLA's return as a major threat to Pakistan.

Balochistan Conflict Background

- Balochistan's tribal leaders initially led the nationalist movement, but the modern BLA is less dependent on them.
- Pakistan has been accused of exploiting Balochistan's natural resources without benefiting the locals.
- Earlier, the Soviet Union and Marxist ideology influenced Baloch nationalism, but today's fighters focus on anti-Pakistan sentiments.

BLA's Internal Conflicts and Iran's Role

- The 2020 Karachi Stock Exchange attack revealed internal disputes within the BLA.
- Iran also has a Baloch population, and some suspect Iranian influence in Baloch politics.

Pakistan's Accusations Against India

- Pakistan has accused India of supporting Baloch separatists based on past visits by Baloch leaders to India.
- India strongly rejected the allegations, telling Pakistan to focus on its internal issues.

Current Challenges for Pakistan

- BLA's resurgence and increased attacks.
- Pakistani Taliban (TTP) stepping up attacks in tribal areas.
- Political instability due to tensions between the military-backed government and jailed former PM Imran Khan.
- Economic crisis, making it harder for Pakistan to handle security threats.

[Enter India: TH Profiles](#)

Science tech

Easy Explanation



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The **Indian government is considering granting a license to Starlink**, Elon Musk's satellite internet company, to operate in India. Initially, major telecom companies like **Reliance Jio, Airtel, and VI** raised concerns about "fair competition," but surprisingly, **both Jio and Airtel later announced partnerships with Starlink**. These deals were revealed **shortly after a meeting between Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi and U.S. President Donald Trump**, where **Elon Musk also met Mr. Modi** to discuss technology, space, and innovation.

Airtel's **March 11 statement** clarified that its partnership with Starlink is **subject to SpaceX getting the necessary government approvals**. The next day, **Jio made a similar announcement**, emphasizing that Starlink must still obtain official authorization. While Jio and Airtel welcomed Starlink, they also highlighted their **existing satellite internet ventures**:

- **Airtel partners with Eutelsat OneWeb**, which has **630+ satellites in low Earth orbit (LEO)**.
- **Jio runs JioSpaceFiber**, in collaboration with **SES**, which has **70 satellites in two different orbits**.

How Do These Satellites Work?

Starlink operates in **low Earth orbit (LEO)**, **about 550 km above Earth**, providing fast internet in remote areas. However, the **number of satellites isn't the only factor** that determines efficiency. A satellite's **altitude (low, medium, or high orbit)** affects its coverage, speed, and application. While Starlink is designed for **high-speed consumer internet**, other satellite systems may focus on **military or large-scale monitoring**.

As of **March 15**, Starlink is still marked as "**pending regulatory approval**" in India, while **Bhutan is the only neighboring country with official Starlink access**. Bangladesh has ongoing discussions about Starlink services.

Challenges Starlink Has Faced in India

- **Regulatory Issues:** In **early 2022**, Starlink had to **refund pre-orders** because the Indian government stated it **did not have a valid license** to operate.
- **Security Concerns:** In **December 2024**, Starlink-branded satellite equipment was **seized in Manipur and linked to militant activity**. Elon Musk denied these claims, saying that Starlink **was not operational in India at the time**.

What's Next?

While Starlink still **needs formal approval** from the Indian government, the new **partnerships with Jio and Airtel signal a shift in policy**. These developments **could pave the way for Starlink's entry into India**, bringing satellite internet to rural and remote areas.

Key Takeaways

Starlink's Potential Entry into India

- The Indian government is **considering licensing Starlink**, Elon Musk's satellite internet company.
- Initially, **Reliance Jio, Airtel, and VI** raised concerns about "**fair competition**", but later, **Jio and Airtel partnered with Starlink**.
- The **partnerships were announced after PM Modi's U.S. visit**, where he met **Elon Musk and President Trump**.

Details of Airtel and Jio's Starlink Deals

- **March 11:** Airtel announced its partnership with Starlink, subject to regulatory approvals.



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- **March 12:** Jio made a similar announcement, emphasizing Starlink's role in India's **telecom and satellite broadband sector**.
- Both **Airtel and Jio** already have existing satellite internet projects:
 - **Airtel works with Eutelsat OneWeb** (630+ satellites in low Earth orbit).
 - **Jio operates JioSpaceFiber** in partnership with SES (70 satellites in multiple orbits).

How Starlink Works & Comparison with Other Satellites

- Starlink operates in **low Earth orbit (LEO, 550 km above Earth)**, which enables **high-speed consumer internet**.
- Satellite performance depends on **orbit location (LEO, MEO, or GEO)**, affecting **coverage, speed, and purpose (consumer, military, etc.)**.

Starlink's Previous Struggles in India

- **2022:** Starlink had to **refund pre-orders** because it lacked a valid **Indian government license**.
- **2024:** Starlink-branded equipment was **seized in Manipur**, linked to **militant activity**, which Elon Musk denied.

Current Status & Future Prospects

- As of **March 15**, Starlink is still **"pending regulatory approval"** in India.
- **Bhutan** already has Starlink, and **Bangladesh** is in discussions.
- Despite past hurdles, the partnerships with Airtel and Jio suggest a more positive outlook for Starlink in India.

[Increasing greenhouse gas emissions may threaten satellites: TH Science](#)

Science

Easy Explanation

A new study warns that **increasing greenhouse gas emissions could significantly reduce the number of satellites that can safely orbit Earth by up to 66% by the year 2100**. This happens because greenhouse gases **cool and shrink Earth's upper atmosphere**, reducing the natural drag that helps clear out space debris. As a result, debris stays in orbit much longer, increasing the risk of collisions and making space more crowded and hazardous.

Researchers at **MIT Cambridge** used **atmospheric models** to predict how many satellites can be safely managed in **low Earth orbit (LEO)** under different emission scenarios. If emissions remain at the **highest predicted levels (SSP5-8.5 scenario)**, the **satellite-carrying capacity could drop by half or more**, meaning we may only be able to support **25-40 million satellites** instead of a much higher number.

The study found that **lower emission levels would slow this process, but moderate and high emissions significantly increase the risk**. Since **satellite deorbiting slows down due to reduced atmospheric drag**, debris accumulates, making space operations more dangerous.

This means **controlling greenhouse gas emissions is not only crucial for Earth's climate but also for the safe use of outer space**. If emissions continue rising, space congestion could limit future satellite launches and space missions.

Key Takeaways

How Greenhouse Gases Impact Satellites



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- Increasing greenhouse gas emissions **shrink Earth's upper atmosphere (mesosphere & thermosphere)** by reflecting **infrared radiation into space**.
- This **reduces atmospheric density**, making it harder for space debris to fall back to Earth naturally.
- More debris stays in orbit **for longer**, increasing the risk of collisions and making space more hazardous.

Predictions for 2100 Based on Emissions Scenarios

- Under the **highest emissions scenario (SSP5-8.5)**, the **maximum number of safely orbiting satellites could drop by 50-66%**.
- This would reduce the **satellite capacity to about 25-40 million satellites**.
- Even under **moderate emissions scenarios**, the rate of satellite deorbiting **decreases**, meaning space debris will continue to build up.

Why This Matters for Space Use

- More **space debris increases risks** for future satellites, space missions, and astronauts.
- Without proper atmospheric drag, **old satellites and debris remain in orbit longer**, making collisions more likely.
- This could **limit future satellite launches and space-based activities**, affecting global communications, navigation, and space exploration.

Solution: Reducing Greenhouse Gas Emissions

- The study highlights that **cutting emissions is not just about protecting Earth's climate but also ensuring the long-term usability of outer space**.
- Controlling emissions **can help maintain a safe and sustainable orbital environment** for future satellite operations.

[Environmental mapping reveals melioidosis peak during monsoon: TH Science](#)

Science

Easy Explanation

Melioidosis, a bacterial disease caused by *Burkholderia pseudomallei*, is heavily influenced by climate factors like **rainfall, temperature, and humidity**. It spreads through **contaminated soil and water** when people inhale, ingest, or come into direct contact with the bacteria. A 2016 study in *The Lancet* estimated that **165,000 people contract melioidosis worldwide each year**, with **India and South Asia contributing 44% of the cases**. However, it remains a **poorly understood disease**.

In India, **AIIMS Bhubaneswar and IIT Bhubaneswar collaborated to study how climate conditions affect melioidosis cases in Odisha**. The researchers **tracked 144 cases from 2015-2023**, linking infections to **weather conditions like rainfall, humidity, temperature, and solar radiation**. They **mapped high-risk areas using climate data**, identifying **Cuttack, Balasore, Khordha, and Jajpur as hotspots**.

The **findings revealed a clear seasonal pattern**, with infections **peaking during and after the monsoon**. The study also noted that **rapid urbanization and poor sanitation increase human exposure to the bacteria**, and **climate change could make the disease more widespread or shift it to new areas**.



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The researchers suggest **integrating climate analytics into disease tracking systems** to improve **early warnings, preparedness, and response**. Odisha's approach could serve as a **model for other regions** facing climate-driven infectious diseases.

Key Takeaways

What is Melioidosis?

- A bacterial disease caused by *Burkholderia pseudomallei*, found in **soil and water**.
- Spreads through **inhalation, ingestion, or contact with contaminated environments**.
- Can cause **mild skin infections to severe pneumonia and fatal sepsis** (50% fatality in severe cases).

Why is it Difficult to Diagnose?

- **Symptoms mimic other infections**, leading to frequent misdiagnosis.
- Requires **special lab conditions** for detection, making it **hard to identify** in standard microbiology labs.
- **Treatment is lengthy** (initial IV therapy followed by **12-20 weeks** of antibiotics), so **misdiagnosis can cause treatment failure**.

Odisha's Climate-Based Study on Melioidosis

- AIIMS & IIT Bhubaneswar **studied 144 cases (2015-2023)**, analyzing **climate factors like rainfall, temperature, and humidity**.
- **Mapped disease hotspots** using a **10 km grid system** to identify risk zones.
- Found **infections peak during and after monsoon**, with **Cuttack, Balasore, Khordha, and Jajpur** identified as high-risk areas.

How Climate Change Increases the Risk

- **Extreme weather events and rising temperatures** could **spread the disease to new regions**.
- **Urbanization and poor sanitation** increase human exposure to contaminated environments.
- The study highlights the **need to integrate climate data into disease surveillance systems** for early detection and prevention.

Why This Study Matters

- Shows how **climate science can improve disease prediction and outbreak response**.
- Helps **public health systems prepare for climate-driven infectious diseases**.
- Odisha's model could be **used in other regions to track and manage emerging health risks**.

[Treating chikungunya using HIV/AIDS drug efavirenz: TH Science](#)

Science

Easy Explanation

Researchers at **IIT Roorkee** have found that **efavirenz**, a drug currently used to treat **HIV/AIDS**, could potentially be **repurposed to treat chikungunya**. Currently, **there is no approved antiviral treatment for chikungunya**, making this a significant discovery.

What Did the Study Find?



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- In lab tests (cell cultures), efavirenz inhibited chikungunya virus replication by nearly 99% even at low concentrations.
- In mice infected with chikungunya, efavirenz significantly reduced the viral load, preventing the virus from spreading further.
- The drug acts during the early stages of the chikungunya infection, blocking the virus soon after it enters the body.
- Interestingly, efavirenz was also found to inhibit the Sindbis virus, which is closely related to chikungunya.

Why is This Important?

- Chikungunya cases have been increasing in India since 2018 after a decline post-2014.
- The disease, which reappeared in India in 2006 after decades, still lacks a specific treatment.
- Efavirenz has good pharmacokinetic properties, meaning it is well-absorbed by the body, making it a strong candidate for clinical trials.

Side Effects Noted

- While viral load was reduced, mice treated with efavirenz showed increased limb swelling due to the drug's pro-inflammatory effects.
- However, the overall benefits outweighed this issue, as the virus itself was significantly suppressed.

Supporting Evidence from Humans

- A 43-year-old HIV patient infected with chikungunya and treated with efavirenz showed improved condition.
- While the improvement cannot be fully attributed to efavirenz alone, the results align with the study's findings.

What's Next?

- The study suggests that efavirenz should be tested in human clinical trials to confirm its effectiveness against chikungunya.
- If successful, this could provide the first-ever antiviral treatment for chikungunya using an already approved drug.

Key Takeaways

Why is This Discovery Important?

- No approved antiviral exists for chikungunya; efavirenz could be the first effective treatment.
- Efavirenz significantly reduced viral load in both lab studies and infected mice.
- The drug works early in the infection, stopping the virus before it spreads.

What Were the Study's Findings?

- 99% virus inhibition in cell cultures even at low doses.
- Significant viral load reduction in mice, though with some inflammation.
- Also effective against the Sindbis virus, which is related to chikungunya.

What's the Next Step?

- Human clinical trials are needed to confirm its potential as a chikungunya treatment.



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- If successful, **doctors could repurpose an existing HIV drug** instead of waiting for new drug development.

This study highlights the potential of **drug repurposing** to combat diseases that currently have **no specific treatment**, offering **new hope for chikungunya patients** worldwide.

17th March 2025

One more tiger reserve: why India needs them, the challenges some face-Indian Express Explained

Environment

Easy Explanation:

- **New Tiger Reserve:** Madhav National Park in Shivpuri, Madhya Pradesh, was recently declared India's 58th tiger reserve. Although it currently has only a handful of tigers, this step should help the animals move safely along the broader corridor that spans Ranthambore–Kuno–Madhav, supporting a healthy tiger population.
- **Why Tiger Reserves Matter:** India launched "Project Tiger" in 1973 to conserve tigers—once widely hunted and threatened by habitat loss. These reserves have "core" areas (strictly protected for wildlife) and "buffer" zones (where limited human activity is allowed). This helps ensure tigers have safe breeding spaces and corridors to move around.
- **Growth in Numbers & Distribution:** India's tiger count is about 3,681 (with an estimated range of 3,167–3,925). They occupy roughly 89,000 sq km across various landscapes, from the Shivalik Hills to the Sundarbans. Some reserves like Corbett, Bandipur, and Nagarhole host robust tiger populations.
- **Challenges in Certain Regions:** Despite overall success, many reserves in states like Telangana, Odisha, Jharkhand, and Chhattisgarh have very few or no tigers, mostly because of issues like mining, development, and socio-economic instability. Conservation is especially hard where there is pressure on forest resources and local communities have limited means to earn a living.

Key Takeaways:

1. Number of Tiger Reserves

- India has 58 tiger reserves, with Madhav National Park being the newest addition.

2. Project Tiger's Origin & Purpose

- Began in 1973 to protect a dwindling tiger population, targeting both the animals and their habitat.
- Uses core-buffer model: a fully protected core area and a buffer where limited human activity is allowed.

3. Tiger Population Trends

- India's estimated tiger population stands at ~3,681.
- Major strongholds include Corbett, Bandipur, Nagarhole, and Madhya Pradesh overall.

4. Uneven Success

- While some reserves have thriving populations, others have very few or no tigers.
- Factors include habitat destruction, mining, political instability, poverty, and human-wildlife conflicts.



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5. Importance of Corridors & Community Involvement

- Protecting forest corridors allows tigers to move safely between reserves.
- Close collaboration with local communities and addressing their livelihood needs are key for conservation success.

[The Five Eyes fracture-Indian Express Editorial](#)

International relations

Easy Explanation

The Five Eyes is an intelligence-sharing alliance formed during World War II among five English-speaking countries: the US, the UK, Australia, Canada, and New Zealand. Historically, it has been one of the most cohesive partnerships, exchanging critical security and surveillance data on mutual threats (like the Soviet Union during the Cold War, terrorism after 9/11, and more recently, cybersecurity and concerns related to China).

However, the alliance is now under strain—largely due to the radical shifts in US foreign policy during Donald Trump's second term. Trump's confrontational stance, especially toward Canada and the UK, has unsettled the other Five Eyes members. Mention of Canada as the "51st state," the idea of "annexing" Greenland (part of Denmark), along with sharp criticisms of British policies, has made the rest of the alliance worry about America's reliability. This discord raises the question: Is this just a momentary rift or a permanent crack in the Five Eyes partnership?

India, meanwhile, is hosting intelligence officials from some of these friendly nations. Indian policymakers are keen to see how these tensions might affect global intelligence-sharing and whether they open up new avenues for India's own intelligence diplomacy.

Key Takeaways

1. Origins and Significance of Five Eyes

- Evolved from secret intelligence cooperation during WWII into a formal alliance among the US, UK, Australia, Canada, and New Zealand.
- Historically focused on intercepting enemy communications and, more recently, cybersecurity and counterterrorism.

2. New Pressures on the Alliance

- Trump's foreign policy has pushed for radical changes, clashing with traditional allies on trade, security, and broader geopolitical issues.
- Tensions are especially visible with Canada (talk of the "51st state") and the UK (accusations about "woke politics" and "Islamist" concerns).

3. Deepening Internal Rifts

- Statements by Trump allies about "liberating" Britain, expelling Canada from Five Eyes, and dismissing existing borders and alliances have generated alarm among members.
- Appointments in the US intelligence community (e.g., Tulsi Gabbard as Director of National Intelligence, Kash Patel as FBI Director) have fueled further worries about stability and reliability.

4. Potential Consequences

- If the US drastically reduces its support or cooperation, it could weaken the entire Five Eyes framework.



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- These divisions may affect broader military arrangements in the “Anglosphere,” including initiatives like AUKUS (nuclear-powered submarine project involving the US, UK, and Australia).

5. Implications for India

- As India hosts intelligence officials from friendly nations, it is closely observing whether Five Eyes can remain intact or if it will fracture.
- A weakening Five Eyes might create fresh opportunities for India to strengthen its own intelligence ties and partnerships with Western powers in a rapidly changing global order.

[BREAKING THROUGH-Indian Express Editorial](#)

Sociology

Easy Explanation

India's higher education institutions have shown improved performance in the recent QS University World Rankings. More Indian universities are listed than ever before, and some are ranked among the top 50 worldwide. This progress is attributed to efforts to upgrade the research and academic ecosystem, indicating that India's top universities are gradually improving in terms of employer reputation and global standing.

However, there remain clear challenges:

- **Faculty Shortages:** Many universities struggle to attract and retain enough qualified professors, which hampers teaching quality.
- **Limited International Exposure:** More collaboration with foreign universities, student exchange programs, and global research partnerships are needed.
- **Student Learning Experience:** While top global universities score near-perfect in resources for teaching and student support, Indian institutions lag behind significantly in this area.

The National Education Policy (NEP) emphasizes international tie-ups, and there have been some promising initiatives like foreign universities setting up Indian campuses and Indian institutions expanding abroad. Still, these need to be broadened and streamlined so that all universities — not just the top few — can benefit.

Key Takeaways

1. Rising Global Recognition

- India's institutions feature more prominently in the QS rankings, reflecting some success in boosting research and academia.

2. Need for Better Faculty Resources

- Persistent faculty shortages and an inadequate student-teacher ratio undermine India's quest for world-class education standards.
- A more robust mechanism is needed to track the quantity and quality of faculty.

3. Focus on Improving Student Experiences

- Resources for teaching, curriculum development, and student support remain insufficient.
- Efforts to enhance learning experiences must be prioritized for India to rival top global universities.

4. Greater International Collaboration



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- Collaborations, joint-degree programs, and global research tie-ups will give Indian scholars broader exposure and strengthen institutional standing.
- Regulatory and policy frameworks must evolve to simplify student and faculty exchanges.

5. Role of the Top Institutes

- Prestigious institutes (like IITs) can share their experience and mentor smaller universities, helping uplift the broader higher education system.
- Partnerships like the one between IIT-Bombay and Monash University can serve as a model for other institutions.

[Air pollution will lower India's solar generation capacity: study-The Hindu Science](#)

Environment

Easy Explanation

A recent study by researchers at IIT Delhi (published in *Environmental Research Letters*) found that air pollution and climate change could significantly lower India's solar power generation capacity by mid-century. While solar cells need bright sunlight and cool conditions to perform well, the country's rising air pollution and temperatures will reduce the amount of sunlight that reaches the panels and diminish their efficiency. Specifically, blocking sunlight with pollutants and heating up solar cells both lead to noticeable reductions in power output. The study predicts that under certain scenarios, efficiency could drop by around 2.3%, translating to a loss of at least 840 gigawatt-hours of electricity per year (based on current generation levels). The authors emphasize that reducing greenhouse-gas emissions and improving air quality will help India fully realize its large solar-power potential.

Key Takeaways

1. Air Pollution & Climate Change Impact

- **Pollutants** (aerosols, particulate matter) block incoming solar radiation.
- **Rising temperatures** cause solar cells to overheat, lowering their efficiency.

2. Projected Efficiency Drop

- By the 2040s, India's solar panel efficiency could drop by ~2.3%, causing large annual power losses (≥ 840 GWh).

3. Importance of Accurate Projections

- The study used data from 1985–2014 and projected conditions for 2041–2050 – a relevant timeline because solar plants typically last 20–25 years.

4. Critical Factors for Solar Cells

- **Solar radiation** is the primary factor (less sunlight = less power).
- **Temperature** is second in significance (hotter cells are less efficient).
- **Wind speed** helps cool panels but has a smaller impact compared to radiation and temperature.

5. Regional Variations

- Northeast India and Kerala may see an increase in solar potential due to expected reductions in cloud cover.
- This highlights the need for careful site selection when expanding solar power projects.





6. Path Forward

- **Cut Emissions:** Reducing greenhouse gases will slow temperature rise and clear air pollution.
- **Stricter Pollution Controls:** Ensures more sunlight reaches the ground, boosting panel performance.
- **Public Participation:** Adopting green transport and urban greenery can help combat pollution locally.

By addressing air quality and climate change in tandem, India can protect and even enhance its considerable solar power potential.

[What is Elon Musk's Starlink all about?-The Hindu Text and Context](#)

Science and technology

Easy Explanation

- **What is Starlink?**

Starlink is a satellite-based internet service by Elon Musk's SpaceX. It uses thousands of small satellites in low-earth orbit (LEO) to deliver broadband to ground terminals (small dish/receiver units). Because these satellites are closer to Earth than traditional satellite networks, they can provide faster internet speeds—though still with higher latency than wired connections.

- **Why does it matter for India?**

Starlink could quickly provide high-speed internet in areas lacking fiber networks or strong mobile signals. This is especially helpful for remote regions because installation is faster than laying new cables.

- **Why regulatory hurdles?**

1. **License and Security Clearance:** India requires a special 'GMPCS' license for satellite services and security approvals from the Ministry of Home Affairs.
2. **Spectrum Allotment:** Satellite signals also need allocated frequencies. Indian telecoms previously wanted these frequencies auctioned (like 4G/5G spectrum), but most countries don't auction satellite spectrum. This debate holds up Starlink's final approval.

- **Why hasn't India auctioned satellite spectrum?**

In most places, satellite spectrum is shared by multiple providers because satellites operate narrow "spot beams" that can overlap without interference. Auctions are more typical for terrestrial (ground-based) mobile frequencies, which are used exclusively by operators. So far, India leans toward the global norm of not auctioning satellite spectrum, but local telecom firms have challenged this, pointing to a Supreme Court ruling that "natural resources" should be auctioned.

- **Impact of U.S. trade pressure**

Because Elon Musk has political clout in the U.S. and there is potential American interest in expanding Starlink globally, some speculate that U.S. pressure might nudge India to clear Starlink. However, India has insisted on following its own security and regulatory processes.

- **Approvals Starlink needs**

1. **GMPCS license** to legally offer satellite broadband
2. **Security clearance** ensuring lawful interception and compliance with Indian data rules
3. **Spectrum allocation** for satellite signals



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4. **Local infrastructure** (ground stations) that meet legal requirements

Key Takeaways

1. **Global Satellite Internet**

- Starlink uses thousands of LEO satellites to provide broadband everywhere, particularly helpful in under-connected rural areas.

2. **Regulatory Roadblocks**

- India requires a special satellite license (GMPCS) and security clearances, plus clarity on how satellite spectrum will be allocated.

3. **Spectrum Debate**

- Unlike terrestrial mobile frequencies, satellite frequencies are typically shared and not auctioned; Indian telecoms have challenged this approach, causing delay.

4. **Potential U.S. Influence**

- Starlink's approval could be accelerated by American diplomatic and trade pressure, but India's final decisions hinge on domestic regulatory norms.

5. **Cost Implications**

- Starlink equipment and monthly fees may be expensive by Indian standards, potentially limiting widespread adoption in non-remote areas.

[Is Syria heading toward peace or more chaos?-The Hindu Text and Context](#)

International relations

Easy Explanation

In this hypothetical post-Assad scenario, Syria is ruled by an interim government led by Ahmed al-Sharaa, once part of the militant group Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham (HTS). This new leadership has tried to integrate Kurdish forces (the SDF), but it still struggles with armed resistance from Assad loyalists and intense fighting in regions such as Latakia. Adding to the turmoil, Israel has expanded operations in the Golan Heights, citing "terror threats." All of this takes place against a backdrop of crippling international sanctions, massive poverty, and fears of renewed sectarian violence. The big question is whether the interim government can unify the country, rebuild the economy, and secure global backing.

Key Takeaways

1. **Leadership Transition**

- **Ahmed al-Sharaa's Interim Government:** Formed after Bashar al-Assad's fall in December 2024.
- **HTS Involvement:** HTS, once a militant Islamist group, claims to be moving toward inclusive governance but struggles with a mixed reputation.

2. **Continued Conflict**

- **Loyalist Resistance:** Assad supporters still operate in coastal Latakia, often clashing with interim forces.



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- **Kurdish Integration:** The SDF (Kurdish forces in the northeast) are partially integrated into the state—but face Turkish-backed attacks.
- **Israeli Intervention:** Israel has launched numerous airstrikes, expanded beyond the UN buffer zone in the Golan Heights, and demanded Syrian demilitarization near Damascus.

3. Sectarian Tensions

- **Alawite Massacres:** Rising violence in Latakia has led to reports of Alawite civilians being killed, raising fear of revenge attacks given HTS's past Sunni Islamist affiliations.

4. Economic Collapse

- **Sanctions & Poverty:** 90% of Syrians live below the poverty line, and Assad-era sanctions remain mostly in place. This undermines rebuilding efforts.
- **Partial Easing:** Some relief from the U.K. and Canada suggests slight improvements, but economic hardship persists.

5. Uncertain Future

- **Need for a New Constitution:** Ensuring minority rights and sovereignty is crucial for peace.
- **Global Recognition:** Whether the interim government gains international legitimacy and lifts sanctions remains unclear.
- **Risk of More Violence:** With widespread poverty, large numbers of unemployed former fighters, and multiple power centers, there is high risk of further unrest if reforms stall.

18th March 2025

[Europe and the new America-Indian Express Explained](#)

International relations

Easy Explanation

This text is an interview about how Europe and the United States view each other's roles in global security and where India fits in the changing geopolitical landscape. The conversation centers on reactions to a speech by U.S. Vice President J.D. Vance at the Munich Security Conference. That speech surprised Europeans by attacking shared values rather than focusing on specific policies (like troop withdrawals). It shocked Europe into taking stronger action on its own security but may have also damaged the trust between Europe and the U.S.

The discussion also touches on Russia's relations with the West—how leaders may have ignored early warnings from Russian President Vladimir Putin, ultimately leading to the conflict in Ukraine. Another big point is India's potential role as a peacemaker and a major power that could bridge differences between Russia and the West. Finally, there is concern over the rise of the far-right in Germany, which the speaker sees as another sign that governments need to address real public worries rather than let fringe parties gain ground.

Key Takeaways:

1. Impact of J.D. Vance's Speech on Europe-U.S. Relations

- Vance's surprising attack on "common values" rather than policy issues jolted European leaders into action on defense.
- However, it may have harmed long-standing trust within the transatlantic alliance.



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2. Europe's Need to Take More Responsibility

- Europe must increase its defense capabilities, not just to please the U.S. but for its own security and stability.
- Past U.S. presidents have urged Europe to do more for decades, and the speaker believes this pressure is justified.

3. Lessons from Ignoring Putin's Warnings

- In 2007, President Putin spoke about his dissatisfaction with a “unipolar” (U.S.-dominated) world order; Europe did not take it seriously enough.
- The interviewee feels ignoring other nations' grievances—even when not fully justified—can have severe consequences later.

4. India's Evolving Global Role

- Europe was initially disappointed that India continued buying Russian energy after the Ukraine conflict began.
- But European leaders now better understand India's need for affordable energy to reduce poverty and develop its economy.
- They hope India will use its good relations with both Russia and Europe to help mediate peace and become a bigger leader in reforming international institutions.

5. Concerns About Far-Right Politics in Germany

- The rise of the far-right in local elections is worrisome, reflecting deeper frustrations among the public.
- Mainstream parties need to address people's concerns—e.g., around immigration—rather than ignore them, or extremist parties will continue to grow.

Overall, the text highlights shifting global alliances, Europe's security dilemmas, Russia's relationship with the West, and why India might be crucial in today's uncertain world order.

[Why docking-undocking capability is crucial for India's space ambitions-Indian Express Explained](#)

Science and technology

Easy Explanation:

The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) recently pulled off a major achievement in space technology by docking (joining) two satellites in orbit and then separating them again (undocking). This “docking-undocking” capability, which so far only the United States, Russia, and China have demonstrated, is essential when building large structures in space from multiple launches—like space stations—or when carrying out complex missions (for instance, bringing back lunar rock samples or undertaking human missions to the Moon).

ISRO's experiment involved two satellites (named SDX01 “Chaser” and SDX02 “Target”) that were launched into orbit and guided to physically connect, share power, and then separate safely. This gives India a major boost toward more ambitious missions in the future, such as returning Moon samples (Chandrayaan-4), eventually sending humans to the Moon, and assembling its own space station.

Key Takeaways:

1. What is Docking & Undocking?



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- Docking is when two spacecraft in orbit line up, move closer, and physically connect.
- Undocking is the reverse: separating them without damage.
- It's a delicate process because these vehicles move incredibly fast and must be aligned precisely.

2. Why It Matters for India's Future Missions

- **Building Complex Structures in Space:** Assembling modules launched on different rockets (e.g., a space station) requires docking.
- **Carrying Astronauts & Supplies:** Just like how the International Space Station (ISS) is regularly visited by cargo and crew spacecraft, India's planned missions will need to attach and detach safely.
- **Sample-Return Missions:** Missions like Chandrayaan-4 need a spacecraft to bring back lunar soil or rock, meaning a module with the samples must dock with another spacecraft that returns to Earth.

3. India Joins an Elite Group

- Only the US, Russia, and China had demonstrated docking-and-undocking before India.
- India's new system is similar to the one used at the ISS but uses fewer motors, showing ISRO's ability to tailor existing ideas to its own needs.

4. Historical Context

- The United States carried out the first docking in 1966 (Gemini VIII, commanded by Neil Armstrong).
- The USSR did the first fully autonomous (no astronaut involvement) docking in 1967.
- China performed its first unmanned docking in 2011, followed by a crewed docking in 2012.

In short, successful docking and undocking pave the way for India's most ambitious space ventures—whether it's a permanent Indian space station, crewed missions to the Moon, or advanced satellite constellations.

[A NOTE OF HOPE-Indian Express Editorial](#)

Sociology

Easy Explanation:

A primary school in West Bengal has introduced a small wooden mailbox where very young students—five to ten years old—can drop notes about their worries, feelings, or problems at home. This gives children a safe place to express themselves, sometimes anonymously. The school then reads these letters, and if needed, reaches out to families to offer help. This simple idea makes children feel heard and supported, showing that a small step can create a big, positive change in their lives.

Key Takeaways:

1. Safe Space for Children:

- The mailbox offers students a private way to share concerns—whether it's problems at home or simple requests like wanting more playtime.

2. Mental Health Support:

- It tackles hidden stress and emotional turmoil in young kids, many of whom struggle silently with issues they can't easily talk about.

3. Early Intervention:



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- By reading the letters, the school identifies issues early—such as family disputes or loneliness—and can arrange counseling or family outreach.

4. Encouraging Expression & Resilience:

- Knowing their voices are heard makes children more confident and resilient. They learn that it's okay to speak up about worries or feelings.

5. Small Action, Big Impact:

- A simple, low-tech approach like a wooden mailbox can make a profound difference, highlighting how small, thoughtful gestures can spark significant change.

Pi Day was on March 14. Why is it celebrated?-The Hindu Science

Science

Easy Explanation

Pi (π) is a special number that represents the ratio of a circle's circumference to its diameter. No matter how big or small the circle is, this ratio always stays the same: about 3.14159... (and so on, forever). We celebrate Pi Day on March 14 (3/14) because those digits match the first three digits of pi. This day also happens to be Albert Einstein's birthday, making it a fun excuse to appreciate mathematics, science, and the endless wonder of pi's infinite decimals.

Key Takeaways:

1. Date & History

- **March 14 (3/14)** is Pi Day because 3.14 are the first digits of pi.
- Physicist Larry Shaw started Pi Day celebrations in 1988 at a San Francisco science museum.
- In 2009, the US Congress officially recognized March 14 as Pi Day to boost interest in math and science.

2. What Is Pi?

- **Ratio of a Circle's Circumference to Its Diameter:** Always about 3.14... but continues forever without repeating.
- **Irrational Number:** Pi's digits never end and never form a repeating pattern.
- **Name Origin:** The symbol π was adopted by Welsh mathematician William Jones in 1706. It's the first Greek letter in words like *periphery* and *perimeter*.

3. Historical Contributions

- Ancient civilizations (Egypt, Babylon, China) worked on pi.
- Isaac Newton calculated pi's decimals by hand.
- Indian mathematician **Srinivasa Ramanujan** published formulas in 1914 that advanced the ability to compute pi's digits.
- Modern computers have calculated trillions of pi digits.

4. Why Pi Matters

- Used for **engineering and design**: e.g., making sure cylinder sizes in refineries or printer paper rolls are correct.
- **Space exploration**: NASA, ISRO, and other agencies use pi to calculate orbits, rocket propulsion, and satellite communications.
- **Everyday technology**: from antennas pointing at satellites to tank sizes for heating systems.



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5. Einstein & Hawking Connection

- **Albert Einstein** was born on March 14, 1879. Pi appeared in many of his scientific equations.
- **Stephen Hawking** passed away on March 14, 2018. His quote about imperfection reminds us pi itself is never-ending—an example of how nothing is “perfect.”

Overall, Pi Day is a fun annual event to celebrate math, science, and the infinite wonder that pi represents.

[Why are electoral reforms necessary?-The Hindu Text and Context](#)

Polity

Easy Explanation

India's elections are critical for upholding democracy, but concerns around electronic voting machines (EVMs), voter list manipulation, excessive campaign spending, and candidates with criminal charges have prompted calls for reforms. EVMs have been used nationwide since the 2004 Lok Sabha elections, and since 2019, all EVMs also produce a paper trail (VVPAT). Opposition parties have accused the Election Commission (EC) of electoral roll errors and duplicate voter IDs across different States, creating fears of fake or “bogus” voters. Similarly, many candidates facing serious criminal charges contest elections without strong disclosures. Thus, electoral reforms aim to improve transparency, accountability, and fairness at every stage—from voting procedures to campaign conduct.

Key Takeaways:

1. Electoral Process & EVMs

- EVMs have replaced traditional paper ballots nationwide since 2004, with VVPAT (paper trail) added in 2019.
- Critics want expanded random checks of VVPAT slips and potentially “totaliser” machines (which combine votes from multiple booths) for added security.

2. Alleged Voter Roll Manipulation

- Opposition parties claim certain States have duplicated or fake voter IDs.
- The EC attributes this to old, decentralised ID systems and vows to clean up duplicates.

3. Campaign Conduct

- **Star Campaigners** sometimes use hate speech or appeal to caste/religion, violating the Model Code of Conduct (MCC).
- Candidates often exceed official spending limits, while there is currently no limit on party spending.

4. Criminal Charges of Candidates

- A significant portion of elected representatives face serious criminal cases.
- The Supreme Court requires them to publicise these charges widely to help voters make informed choices.

5. Suggested Reforms

- Increase sample VVPAT checks; if any error is found, verify all votes in that region.
- Link voter ID to Aadhaar (while addressing privacy concerns) to remove duplicates.
- Give the EC the authority to suspend “Star Campaigner” privileges for severe MCC violations.



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- Impose spending caps on both individual candidates and political parties.
- Strictly enforce the rule to publicise criminal charges multiple times before the polls.

Overall, the aim is to ensure a more transparent, fair, and accountable election system so that voters can trust the process and outcomes.

[Aland where ambition grows minus an outbound ticket-The Hindu Editorial](#)

International relations

Easy Explanation

Many Indians are still risking their lives (and money) to leave the country illegally, hoping for better job prospects in places like the United States. Even prosperous families take these risks because they see more opportunity abroad than at home. Recently, the harsh deportation of Indians by U.S. authorities—some even handcuffed or shackled—sparked anger. It highlights a deeper problem: India's fast-growing economy still can't provide enough well-paying opportunities or hope for many of its young citizens, pushing them to seek futures elsewhere. The author argues that India must become a place where people actually want to stay and prosper, rather than feeling forced to leave.

Key Takeaways

1. Illegal Migration Reflects Lack of Opportunities at Home

- Despite India's rising economy and success stories like Sundar Pichai and Satya Nadella, many Indians feel compelled to leave because they can't find viable careers or stability at home.

2. High Financial & Human Costs

- People pay huge sums (sometimes millions of rupees) to get smuggled across borders; tragedies—including deaths from harsh conditions—highlight the desperation.

3. Deportations & Diplomatic Concerns

- The U.S. has the legal right to deport illegal migrants, but doing so in a humiliating way (shackles, military flights) disrespects human dignity. This also tests India's response and citizens' global standing.

4. "American Dream" vs. Reality

- The once-golden promise of U.S. opportunities often becomes a cycle of fear and underpaid jobs. Some migrants end up exploited, living in constant fear of deportation.

5. Needed Reforms & Future Vision

- India must create inclusive growth, better infrastructure, and broad opportunities so that leaving the country is a choice rather than a necessity. The goal: make India a place people want to stay in or return to, rather than a stepping stone to foreign lands.

19th March 2025

[Astronauts to return:what delayed them,what we will learn-Indian Express Explained](#)

Science and technology



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Easy Explanation

Two American astronauts, Sunita Williams and Butch Wilmore, ended up spending over nine months—286 days—on the International Space Station (ISS) when their planned one-week trip stretched unexpectedly. They'd traveled to the ISS aboard Boeing's new Starliner spacecraft, which was on its first crewed test mission. However, technical issues with Starliner meant it couldn't safely bring them back to Earth. NASA had to wait for a replacement spaceship, a SpaceX Dragon, to take them home. While delays in space travel are always challenging, this extended stay gave scientists more opportunities to study how the human body reacts to long durations in orbit.

Key Takeaways

1. Reason for Delay

- The Boeing Starliner spacecraft that took Williams and Wilmore to the ISS developed technical problems and was deemed unsafe for their return trip.
- They had to wait for a later SpaceX Dragon mission to bring them back.

2. Extended Stay

- Instead of a short one-week visit, the astronauts stayed 286 days—about nine months.
- Their unplanned long-duration mission adds to existing data on how human bodies respond to extended time in microgravity.

3. Boeing's New Spacecraft

- The Starliner CST-100 was making its first attempt to carry humans into space as part of NASA's Commercial Crew Program.
- Despite reaching the ISS, the spacecraft had issues along the way, leading to safety concerns.

4. What We Will Learn

- NASA is studying the impacts of long-term space travel, such as changes in bone density, muscle mass, fluid distribution in the brain, and psychological well-being.
- Williams and Wilmore's situation—staying longer than planned—offers valuable insights because their bodies and minds weren't "preconditioned" for a nine-month stay.

5. Commercial Crew Program

- NASA partners with private companies like SpaceX and Boeing to ferry astronauts to and from the ISS.
- This allows NASA to focus on deeper space missions, like those going to the Moon and eventually Mars.

6. Other Long Stays

- Several astronauts (US and Russian) have spent longer periods in space—up to over a year.
- Each extended mission helps scientists improve life-support systems, medical care, and overall preparation for long-duration spaceflight.

7. Future Plans

- With the goal of establishing permanent facilities on the Moon (and beyond), agencies need more data about how people handle long stretches in space.
- Unexpected events, like spacecraft glitches, can become "happy accidents" by offering unplanned research opportunities.





By studying Sunita Williams and Butch Wilmore's nine-month stay, NASA and other space agencies gain crucial information that will help make future missions to the Moon and Mars safer and more successful.

[The MAGA effect outside US-Indian Express Explained](#)

International relations

Easy Explanation

- **Trump's Tariff Moves**

Former U.S. President Donald Trump, in pushing for "Make America Great Again," imposed or threatened aggressive tariffs on trade partners. While meant to boost American industries, these moves have triggered widespread disruptions and uncertainty in global markets.

- **Unexpected Outcome**

Instead of making the U.S. stronger alone, Trump's tariffs have prompted other countries to adapt quickly—lowering their own tariffs, seeking out new trade partners, or boosting domestic spending. In some cases, these responses might help other nations' economies become more resilient or more united in dealing with the United States.

- **India**

India had been raising tariffs, but recently started cutting them—partly because of pressure from Trump's pursuit of "tariff parity." India wants to shake off the image of being a high-tariff economy, but this comes at a time when many other countries are also raising their own barriers against U.S. exports.

- **China**

Facing a trade war with the U.S. and a slowdown in exports, China is launching a big push to get people to spend more at home. It has a 30-point plan to boost consumption (raising wages, improving child care, encouraging paid leave, etc.). Analysts believe these steps aim to cushion China's economy from tariff impacts.

- **Europe**

European countries are increasing defense spending as the U.S. signals it may not fully stand by old defense commitments. Germany in particular may bend its strict "debt brake" rules, borrowing to fund both military and infrastructure. Meanwhile, talk of closer Canada–Europe ties signals a shift away from heavy U.S. reliance.

- **United States**

The tariffs could backfire by increasing U.S. inflation and undermining global confidence in U.S. debt. A trade war might force the Federal Reserve to stop cutting interest rates sooner (to contain inflation), which could slow the U.S. economy. Also, other countries are now targeting American industries—especially agriculture—making the situation tough for the U.S.

Key Takeaways

1. **Tariffs Spark Global Realignment**

Trump's trade barriers have led many countries to quickly shift policies—lowering their own tariffs, finding new trade partners, or changing how they grow their economies.



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2. **India's Reversal on Tariffs**

After years of raising import duties, India is now lowering tariffs (especially on U.S.-sensitive goods) to avoid retaliation and to improve its reputation in global trade.

3. **China's Focus on Home Consumption**

China has unveiled a large-scale plan to boost consumer spending and reduce reliance on exports, reflecting how seriously it takes the threat of a U.S. trade war.

4. **Europe's Defense and Spending Surge**

With uncertainty over U.S. defense backing, European nations—led by Germany—are loosening debt rules to invest more in security and infrastructure.

5. **Canada's Possible Pivot Toward the EU**

Some Canadians are considering closer ties with the European Union, possibly due to doubts about long-term trade stability with the U.S.

6. **U.S. Risks Inflation and Weakened Trust**

Higher import costs and a potential escalation in trade battles may create inflation in the U.S., dampening economic growth. There is also a fear that foreign lenders might grow wary of funding U.S. debt indefinitely.

7. **Doubts About New U.S. Deals**

Trump's willingness to impose tariffs on partners—even those with recently negotiated deals—raises questions about the reliability of U.S. trade agreements.

8. **Global Monetary Impact**

If U.S. inflation rises and the Federal Reserve halts or reverses its rate cuts, it can affect monetary easing worldwide, including countries like India.

Overall, the article highlights how Trump's tariff strategy—meant to uplift the U.S.—is motivating other countries to find workarounds, sometimes to their benefit, and could erode long-term confidence in the United States as a stable economic partner.

[Livelihoods And Ecology:behind Kerala protests over off shore mining plan-Indian Express Explained](#)

Governance

Easy Explanation

1. **What's Happening**

The central government in India has opened up certain “offshore blocks” for mining—areas in the sea where private or government companies can extract resources like sand. Three of these blocks lie off the coast of Kollam in Kerala.

2. **Why Kerala Is Worried**

Kerala's politicians and fishing communities fear that mining the seabed will hurt marine life, reduce fish catches, and endanger the livelihood of about 1.1 million fishermen.



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3. **Legal/Ownership Dispute**

Under Indian law, fishing and related activities within 12 nautical miles belong to the state. But these proposed mining blocks are located beyond 12 nautical miles, which is under central control. Hence, the state government feels left out of decisions that could affect its fishermen.

4. **Environmental Concerns**

Opponents warn that mining could stir up large quantities of seabed sediment, releasing toxins and blocking sunlight that sea creatures need. They say any damage to the marine ecosystem would affect both the food chain and people who depend on fishing.

5. **Government Assurances**

New rules (amendments to the Offshore Areas Mineral (Development and Regulation) Act, 2002) allow private companies to bid for mining rights. Central ministers insist safeguards are in place to protect the environment and note that an “Offshore Areas Mineral Trust” will help mitigate ecological harm.

Key Takeaways

1. **Offshore Mining Expansion**

- Recent amendments to the OAMDR Act permit private-sector participation in mining resources off India’s coast.
- Three of the 13 newly opened blocks are off Kerala, with a proposed lease period of 50 years.

2. **Fishermen’s Livelihood at Risk**

- Kerala’s fishing community relies on rich fishing grounds such as “Kollam parappu.”
- Concern is high that dredging and sediment plumes would reduce fish populations and harm the ecosystem.

3. **Legal/Administrative Tussle**

- Kerala’s government can regulate fisheries only up to 12 nautical miles, but these blocks lie beyond that range.
- The central government thus controls the area and proceeds with plans despite local opposition.

4. **Environmental Impact Concerns**

- Sediment clouds could block sunlight (harming photosynthesis) and potentially release toxins.
- Large mining vessels could interfere with fishing routes, creating safety risks for fishermen.

5. **Central Government’s Stance**

- It claims the project areas exclude 130 marine protected zones.
- Funds from mining royalties will go to an “Offshore Areas Mineral Trust,” which supposedly can address ecological damage and support affected communities.

6. **Call for Independent Study**

- Lawmakers from Kerala demand a neutral, in-depth study of the ecological and social impacts before mining proceeds.

In essence, Kerala’s protests reflect a clash between the center’s drive to tap offshore mineral wealth and a state’s priority to protect marine resources and local livelihoods.



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International relations

Easy Explanation**1. India's "Vital Sea"**

K.M. Panikkar, a renowned Indian diplomat and thinker, long ago argued that the Indian Ocean is more important to India than any other ocean area is to other nations. Historically, however, India and other countries have not worked together to create strong institutions in this region.

2. New Efforts Toward Indian Ocean Unity

Various organizations (e.g., IORA, BIMSTEC, IONS) have tried to bring the region together but with limited success. Meanwhile, the rise of the U.S.-centric "Indo-Pacific" concept sometimes overshadows the idea of a unified Indian Ocean.

3. India's Diplomatic Outreach

The Indian Ocean Conference (IOC) – organized by India's Ministry of External Affairs and the think-tank India Foundation – aims to unite countries and carry forward Prime Minister Modi's concept of SAGAR ("Security and Growth for All in the Region").

4. Role of the Indian Navy

India's Navy (IN) has taken the lead in "maritime diplomacy," helping neighbors during disasters (like the 2004 tsunami) and evacuating people trapped in conflict zones. This has built goodwill and shown India to be a "first responder" in the region.

5. Need for Bigger Maritime Plans

For India to play this leading security and humanitarian role, the government must develop more robust naval capabilities (for heavy-lift, disaster relief, hospital ships) and better coordination between the Ministry of Defense (MoD) and the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA).

6. Maritime Domain Awareness

India has been sharing real-time information with Seychelles, Mauritius, Maldives, and Sri Lanka to help track and stop illegal fishing or smuggling. This cooperation strengthens regional security and trust.

7. Maritime Diplomacy as a Strategic Tool

Warships are versatile – they can deliver humanitarian aid or project power. However, a cohesive national security strategy is required for these actions to be most effective. This "whole-of-government" approach, aligning the military, diplomats, and other agencies, is still in progress.

Key Takeaways**1. Centrality of the Indian Ocean**

- India's security and growth depend heavily on the Indian Ocean; this perspective comes from K.M. Panikkar's ideas dating back to 1945.

2. Limited Regional Cooperation So Far



- Organizations meant to unify the region (IORA, BIMSTEC, etc.) have struggled to gain momentum, partly because of competing interests and limited political will.

3. Indian Ocean Conference (IOC) Gains Traction

- The IOC focuses on implementing the SAGAR vision for maritime cooperation and has recently seen higher participation, highlighting India's attempt to lead in the region.

4. Indian Navy as a Diplomatic Asset

- India's Navy has repeatedly shown its value in humanitarian and disaster relief operations and in safeguarding regional waters, boosting India's image as a reliable partner.

5. Call for Stronger Maritime Capabilities

- A fully funded and well-coordinated plan for security and humanitarian assistance (including ships with hospital facilities and heavy-lift capacity) is necessary for India to be the "first responder."

6. Maritime Domain Awareness

- India's sharing of real-time maritime data with neighbors enhances security, stops smuggling, and builds trust among Indian Ocean states.

7. Need for a "Whole-of-Government" Approach

- Truly effective maritime diplomacy requires deep coordination between the Navy, diplomats, and government ministries, backed by a national security strategy that everyone supports.

[Trust and punishment-Indian Express Editorial](#)

Polity

Easy Explanation

1. Too Many Criminal Laws

India has over **370 laws with criminal provisions**, covering **7,305 crimes**, many of which impose harsh punishments for minor infractions. These include being jailed for something as small as failing to report a pet's death or selling a feeding bottle to a mother who can't breastfeed.

2. Unfair and Disproportionate Punishments

Some laws treat minor infractions just as severely as serious crimes. For example, **driving through a red light** carries the same jail term as **forcing someone into labor**. This creates inconsistencies in justice and leads to **arbitrary enforcement**.

3. Laws Affect the Poor the Most

Many legal provisions are rarely enforced, but their existence gives corrupt officials the power to exploit people, especially the poor, who can't afford legal help. **75% of prisoners in India are undertrials** (not yet convicted).

4. Jan Vishwas Bills for Reform

The **Jan Vishwas 2.0 and 3.0 Bills** aim to decriminalize unnecessary offenses, reduce excessive punishments, and **make laws clearer and fairer**. The first version had limited success because bureaucrats resisted giving up their power.



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5. A Smarter Approach to Criminal Law

Legal experts propose **four guiding principles** for fair laws:

- **Protect societal values** – Laws should only criminalize actions that harm society.
- **Prevent real harm** – Criminalization should only apply to serious threats.
- **Use only when necessary** – Crime laws should be the last resort, not the first.
- **Ensure proportionality** – Punishment should match the severity of the crime.

6. Balancing Trust and Punishment

India's criminal laws need to focus more on **rehabilitation** rather than just punishment. Jan Vishwas reforms could create a **better balance between enforcing rules and trusting citizens**, making life easier for the common person.

Key Takeaways

1. India's Criminal Laws Are Overloaded and Harsh

- There are **370 central laws** containing **7,305 criminal offenses**, many of which criminalize minor actions that do not pose a serious public threat.
- Over **5,333 offenses** carry jail terms, **982 have mandatory minimum sentences**, and **301 can result in the death penalty**.
- Many of these laws govern everyday life, such as pet care, transportation, and minor business regulations, making citizens vulnerable to legal trouble for trivial infractions.

2. Disproportionate Punishments Create Legal Inconsistencies

- The system **blurs the lines between minor infractions and serious crimes**. Some offenses receive **harsher punishments than they deserve**, while serious crimes may be **under-punished**.
- For example, under the **Mental Healthcare Act (2017)**, failing to maintain medical records **carries the same six-month jail term as performing brain surgery on a mentally ill patient without consent**.
- Similarly, **running a red light while driving** can result in **the same jail time as forcing someone into labor**—highlighting the irrationality in punishment severity.

3. The Burden Falls Heaviest on the Poor

- **Three out of four prisoners (75%) in India are undertrials**, meaning they are in jail **without being convicted** of any crime.
- **Conviction rates are low**, meaning most people arrested are caught in a slow legal process rather than found guilty of crimes.
- The **poor suffer the most**, as they cannot afford legal help or bail, making them the primary victims of an **over-criminalized system**.
- Many citizens are unaware of obscure laws, which allows corrupt officials to **exploit them for bribes or arbitrary punishments**.

4. Jan Vishwas Bills Aim to Fix Over-Criminalization

- The **Jan Vishwas 2.0 and 3.0 Bills** are efforts to **decriminalize minor infractions**, reduce excessive punishments, and make laws clearer and easier to follow.
- These bills aim to **increase the ease of living** for India's **1.4 billion citizens** by ensuring that **non-serious offenses do not result in unnecessary arrests or legal harassment**.



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- The previous **Jan Vishwas 1.0** faced **challenges**, as bureaucrats resisted removing their authority to impose criminal penalties, slowing progress on reforms.

5. Four Key Principles for Smarter Criminal Laws

To create a **balanced and fair legal system**, experts recommend that criminal laws should be based on:

- **Protection of societal values** – Laws should only criminalize actions that genuinely threaten **public safety or essential rights**.
- **Prevention of clear and substantial harm** – Criminalization should be **justified only when there is a direct and serious risk** to individuals or society.
- **Use as a last resort** – Laws should **not default to criminalization** but instead rely on civil penalties, warnings, or education where possible.
- **Proportional response** – The punishment should be **proportionate to the severity of the offense** to ensure fairness in sentencing.

6. Reforming India's Justice System for a Balanced Approach

- The **justice system** should focus on **rehabilitation, not just punishment**.
- **Laws should be concise, clear, and practical**, avoiding vague or unnecessary criminal provisions.
- **Reducing over-criminalization** can **free up courts**, allowing them to focus on serious cases rather than minor infractions.
- Jan Vishwas reforms, if implemented effectively, can **strike a balance between trust and enforcement**, improving citizens' lives and strengthening governance.

7. Towards a Just and Efficient Legal System

- India has **3.5 crore (35 million) pending criminal cases**, many of which arise from outdated laws.
- If India wants to achieve **"Viksit Bharat" (Developed India) by 2047**, the **focus must shift to making laws that promote trust rather than unnecessary punishment**.
- A **whole-of-government approach** is needed to align legal, bureaucratic, and enforcement agencies to create a **fair, efficient, and humane justice system**.

By removing outdated and overly harsh criminal laws, India can **enhance the rule of law while making life easier for its people**.

[What is happening in Balochistan?-The Hindu Text and Context](#)

International relations

Easy Explanation

A Long-Running Conflict

Balochistan is a large, resource-rich province in Pakistan. Many local people (called the Baloch) feel neglected and say the central government has not invested enough in their region.

Recent Train Hijacking

In March, Baloch militants hijacked a passenger train, showing they now have the power to launch large-scale attacks. The government tried a military rescue, and both sides suffered casualties.



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Why Locals Are Angry

- **Neglect and Poverty:** Despite having coal, gas, gold, and more, the local population barely benefits.
- **Harsh Crackdowns:** The Pakistani army is accused of using enforced disappearances and other heavy-handed tactics against Baloch activists and militants.
- **China Projects:** Massive infrastructure like Gwadar Port and the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) were built without enough local input, sparking fears of outsiders moving in.

Insurgent Groups

Multiple armed groups (like the Balochistan Liberation Army) fight the Pakistani state. These groups have begun coordinating more effectively, which has led to bigger, more organized attacks.

International Context

- Baloch insurgents have little outside support because the region isn't close to many sympathetic countries.
- Attacks on Chinese workers raise concerns in Beijing about safety and security of its projects in Pakistan.
- Pakistan's military also faces threats from other groups like the Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP).

Outlook

Since Pakistan's government and military aren't widely trusted by locals, a peaceful solution seems difficult. Without genuine efforts to share resources and power, the turmoil in Balochistan is expected to continue.

Key Takeaways

- **Long-Standing Insurgency**
Balochistan has experienced multiple waves of insurgency over many decades. Resentment toward the central government runs deep, fueled by a sense of political and economic marginalization.
- **Recent Escalation**
The Balochistan Liberation Army's (BLA) train hijacking in March highlights the insurgents' growing ability to organize large-scale, sophisticated attacks and withstand state force for extended periods.
- **Local Grievances**
Despite being rich in natural resources (coal, gas, gold), Balochistan's people feel they see few benefits. Widespread claims of neglect, along with military crackdowns (including enforced disappearances), deepen public anger.
- **CPEC Factor**
Large-scale China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) projects, such as Gwadar Port, have been undertaken with minimal input from local stakeholders. Many Baloch fear demographic changes and resource exploitation by outsiders.
- **Disparate Groups Uniting**
Several Baloch armed groups (BLA, BLF, BRG) are coordinating under an umbrella (Baloch Raji Aajoi Sangar/BRAS), leading to more powerful and coordinated strikes against Pakistani security forces.





- **Limited External Support**

The Baloch insurgency has received little backing from foreign governments, partly due to Balochistan's geography and regional political complexities (including Iran's and Afghanistan's separate interests).

- **Legitimacy Crisis in Pakistan**

Pakistan's civilian government and its military face credibility issues at home, reducing the likelihood of successful negotiations with Baloch insurgents. Without a more inclusive, decentralized approach to governance, the conflict is likely to persist.

[What factors influence women's political participation?-The Hindu Text and Context](#)

Polity

Easy Explanation

1. **Women's Voting on the Rise**

In India, women used to have lower voter turnout. That started changing meaningfully only in the 2010s, with more women now showing up at the polls.

2. **But Are They Really Empowered?**

Many government schemes (like Ujjwala for cooking gas, Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana for housing) are targeted at "helping" women, but they often treat women as dependent beneficiaries, rather than decision-makers with political power of their own.

3. **Not a Monolithic Group**

Women in India aren't all the same – caste, class, religion, and region matter a lot. That means there isn't a single "women's vote." Different social or regional backgrounds lead to different political choices.

4. **Beyond Just Voting**

While more women now vote, they're still less likely than men to join rallies, become party members, or influence policy discussions. So actual political engagement is still limited.

5. **Mixed Support for Parties**

Historically, Congress and left-wing parties enjoyed slightly more female support, while the BJP struggled with a "gender gap." Although the BJP is catching up, women generally still support it less than men do.

6. **No 'Women's Bloc' Yet**

Because women's political choices are shaped by complex factors (region, caste, welfare benefits, family advice), they haven't formed a unified "women's constituency." It's far from just about being a woman; other identities play a huge role.

Key Takeaways

1. **Higher Turnout, But Limited Influence**

Women's turnout has risen, but their deeper involvement in politics—such as campaigning, running for office, or shaping policy—remains limited.



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2. Welfare Schemes: Double-Edged Sword

While policies like Ujjwala and Ladli Laxmi offer material benefits, they often treat women as passive recipients rather than independent voters or leaders.

3. Intersectional Identities

Voting behavior among women is influenced by region, caste, class, and religion, making it hard to lump all women voters together as one group.

4. Complex Political Choices

Women don't always vote based solely on gender issues; sometimes family, local community, or party loyalties matter more.

5. Shifting Party Support

- **Congress & Left** historically attracted a relatively higher share of female votes.
- **BJP** used to have a big gender gap, but this is shrinking—though men still back the party more than women do.

6. No Single 'Women's Constituency'

Despite more women going to the polls, they are not forming one large, unified voting bloc focused only on women's issues. Their choices are shaped by many overlapping factors.

7. Still a Long Way to Go

Overall, India hasn't fully tapped into women's potential as political influencers. More inclusive policies and recognition of women's diverse experiences are needed to truly empower them in politics.

20th March 2025

[In fresh attacks on Yemen's Houthis, what is US seeking? - Indian Express Explained](#)

International relations

Easy Explanation

1. Renewed U.S. Strikes on the Houthis

- The United States recently conducted over 40 "precision strikes" targeting Iran-backed Houthi forces in Yemen.
- President Donald Trump framed these strikes as a response to Houthi attacks on shipping lanes in the Red Sea and as a warning to Iran to cease its support for the Houthis.

2. Conflict Context & Trigger

- The Houthis have disrupted Red Sea shipping since December 2023, forcing detours and skyrocketing insurance costs for vessels.
- Escalations tie into wider regional tensions, particularly the resumed hostilities in Gaza and the broader U.S.-Iran standoff.

3. Trump's Objectives



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- By targeting Iranian-backed militants in Yemen, Trump showcases U.S. power and signals to Iran that the U.S. can strike its proxies without resorting to a direct, full-scale conflict with Tehran.
- This move pressures Iran in any nuclear negotiations, as it demonstrates American readiness to use force if diplomatic demands aren't met.

4. Houthis' Position & Capabilities

- The Houthis are battle-hardened, having endured thousands of airstrikes by the Saudi-led coalition since 2015.
- They continue to deploy ballistic missiles, drones, and anti-ship weapons, exhibiting resiliency and effective asymmetric strategies.
- They draw not just on Iranian support but also on backing (political, diplomatic, and possibly material) from Russia and China.

5. Wider Implications

- Disrupting Red Sea traffic has global economic impacts, drawing the U.S. deeper into the conflict.
- While sporadic U.S. military action may temporarily degrade Houthi offensive capacities, enduring external support could sustain the group's ability to strike shipping and regional targets.

Key Takeaways

- **Strategic Signaling:** The strikes serve a dual purpose: protect global maritime routes and warn Iran against further expansion of its proxy capabilities.
- **Avoiding Direct War with Iran:** Targeting Houthi proxies is a high-profile way for the U.S. to flex its muscle without engaging in a larger conflict with Tehran.
- **Resilient Houthi Forces:** Years of conflict and external support have solidified the Houthis' tactics and arsenal, suggesting that airstrikes alone are unlikely to decisively weaken them.
- **Broader Power Dynamics:** Russia and China's roles—through diplomacy, trade (especially Chinese purchase of Iranian oil), and possible arms transfers—further complicate U.S. efforts to neutralize the Houthis.

[Why euro is rising against dollar-Indian Express Explained](#)

International relations

Easy Explanation

1. Initial Fall of the Euro Post-Election (Nov 2024–Jan 2025)

- Right after the U.S. election on November 5, 2024, the euro traded at about \$1.0933. By the time Donald Trump took office on January 20, it had weakened to about \$1.0277.
- Markets anticipated that Trump's promised tax cuts and deregulation would boost U.S. economic growth, making American assets (like stocks and bonds) more attractive than their European counterparts.
- Simultaneously, many EU economies were struggling with slow growth, political uncertainties, and cautionary monetary policies, which further weakened investor sentiment toward the euro.

2. Euro's Recovery After Inauguration

- Since Trump's inauguration, the euro climbed back to around \$1.0942 as of March 18, 2025, almost back to where it was right before the election.
- Two major factors prompted this reversal:



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- **Worsening U.S. Outlook:** President Trump's emphasis on tariffs, cuts to federal government size, and policy unpredictability dampened confidence in future U.S. growth. The OECD projects the U.S. growth rate could slow from 2.8% in 2024 to 1.6% in 2026. With lower growth and a falling stock market, global investors pulled money out of the U.S.
- **Improving EU Prospects:** European leadership (led by Germany and France) moved away from strict austerity. The EU's GDP is expected to rise from 0.7% in 2024 to 1.2% by 2026, boosting optimism that Europe can shake off stagnation and spur demand for euro-denominated assets.

3. Key Drivers in Currency Exchange Rates

- **Relative Economic Growth:** Faster U.S. growth initially strengthened the dollar; fading optimism reversed that trend.
- **Interest Rates & Monetary Policy:** If the U.S. Federal Reserve cuts rates due to weaker growth, U.S. bonds become less attractive, pulling the dollar down.
- **Investment Flows:** As investors pivot to regions with better returns, currencies in those regions strengthen (in this case, the euro).

4. Likely Future Trends (Uncertain)

- Further comments from the U.S. Federal Reserve (e.g., on March 19) and any new tariff announcements (e.g., on April 2) may tilt the balance again.
- If Trump's tariffs escalate or if U.S. policy continues to provoke uncertainty, the dollar could remain under pressure while the euro could hold its gains or even strengthen further.

5. Impact on India

- **Against the Dollar:** With the U.S. dollar weakening, the Indian rupee appreciated from 87.5 to 86.5 per dollar (Feb 6 to Mar 18), helping curb inflation (since India imports crude oil in dollars).
- **Against the Euro:** The rupee weakened from 87.4 to 94.5 per euro (Jan 5 to Mar 18). A weaker rupee vs. the euro can boost Indian exports to euro-area countries, as Indian goods become relatively cheaper in Europe.

Key Takeaways

1. **Initial Euro Weakness:** After the U.S. election in November 2024, market optimism about President Trump's promised tax cuts and deregulation strengthened the dollar, pushing the euro down to nearly parity with the dollar by January 2025.
2. **Euro's Recovery Factors:**
 - **Worsening U.S. Outlook:** Trump's policy focus on tariffs, cuts in federal spending, and legal uncertainty around his decisions dented confidence in U.S. growth.
 - **Improved EU Prospects:** European leaders stepped away from austerity, raising hopes that the EU could boost growth, attracting investment back into euros.
3. **Investor Reallocations:** With U.S. economic indicators softening and the stock market falling, global investors shifted capital toward Europe, pushing the euro higher versus the dollar.
4. **Volatility Continues:** Future U.S. Federal Reserve policy decisions and any new tariff announcements will heavily influence exchange rates, making further currency moves unpredictable.





5. Impact on India:

- **Rupee vs. Dollar:** A weaker dollar helped the rupee strengthen, easing India's import-related inflation.
- **Rupee vs. Euro:** Meanwhile, a stronger euro means Indian exporters become more competitive in euro-zone markets, though it raises the cost of European imports.

[SONIC WEAPON-Indian Express Explained](#)

Science and technology

Easy Explanation

Sonic weapons create extremely loud or focused sound waves that can cause pain, discomfort, or disorientation in people. They work like powerful loudspeakers, directing sound so intense that it can affect hearing and even balance. Examples include devices like the LRAD (Long-Range Acoustic Device), which can reach painful decibel levels, and the "Mosquito," which emits high-pitched sounds mainly heard by younger people. While governments sometimes use these devices for crowd control, they are controversial because of potential hearing damage and their indiscriminate effects on everyone in the area, including bystanders.

Key Takeaways

1. **Purpose & Mechanism:** Sonic weapons use sound—either very loud or specifically targeted frequencies—to disperse crowds or deter people.
2. **Types of Devices:**
 - **LRAD:** Projects sound up to 160 decibels (louder than a gunshot), risking immediate hearing damage.
 - **Mosquito:** High-pitched, mainly audible and irritating to younger ears.
 - **Infrasonic Weapons:** Use very low frequencies that can cause discomfort without being clearly heard.
3. **Health Effects:** Hearing loss, ear pain, tinnitus (ringing), nausea, dizziness, and headaches can result, even from brief exposure.
4. **Ethical Concerns:** Critics call these weapons "indiscriminate" because they can injure protesters, bystanders, and law enforcement alike. Research on long-term effects remains limited.
5. **Recent Controversy:** Serbia's President denied using sonic devices against protesters, highlighting global worries about the fairness and safety of these weapons.

[CLOSER TO CARE-Indian Express Editorial](#)

Governance

Easy Explanation

India has a very high number of people affected by cancer (over 14 lakh in 2023 according to government data, possibly more in reality), but most cases are caught late—especially in rural areas. To tackle this issue, the government plans to set up cancer care centers in every district hospital. Each center will have a doctor, two nurses, a pharmacist, and a multi-purpose worker. However, India has too few cancer specialists, and most of them work in cities. Experts suggest using mobile clinics to reach remote areas for screenings, and adopting telemedicine so that doctors in big cities can guide medical teams in rural areas. Emotional support and counseling at these centers will also encourage people to continue treatment.

Key Takeaways



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1. High Cancer Burden:

- Official data shows over 14 lakh cancer patients in India for 2023, but real numbers could be far higher.
- Late detection is a major problem, especially in rural regions, leading to delayed treatment.

2. New Government Initiative:

- Every district hospital is set to have its own cancer care center.
- Each center will be staffed with a medical officer, nurses, a pharmacist, and a multi-purpose worker.

3. Shortage of Specialists:

- India lacks at least 2,000 oncologists, and over half of existing specialists practice in urban areas.
- Recruiting and retaining cancer specialists in rural areas will be a significant challenge.

4. Mobile Clinics & Telemedicine:

- Mobile clinics can improve access by conducting screenings and diagnostic tests where people live and work.
- Telemedicine can connect rural centers with urban hospitals for expert consultations and treatment guidance.

5. Focus on Counseling & Continuity:

- Counseling is critical, as many rural patients discontinue therapy due to emotional stress and lack of support.
- Telehealth counseling can complement on-site counseling services to maintain patient well-being during treatment.

6. Using Technology to Bridge Gaps:

- Linking rural centers with the National Cancer Grid can share expertise and resources efficiently.
- Technological tools (telemedicine, digital record-keeping) can help offset deficits in manpower and infrastructure.

[Is the APAAR ID for students mandatory?-The Hindu Text and Context](#)

Sociology

Easy Explanation

APAAR (Automated Permanent Academic Account Registry) is an identification system linked to a student's academic records in India. Its aim is to provide every student a unique, permanent "One Nation, One Student ID" that can be used to track their progress through schools and colleges. Although government circulars frequently mention APAAR as an essential reform, it is officially voluntary. Still, many schools and State authorities are pushing for every child to enroll, often without clearly informing parents they can opt out. Critics, including digital rights activists, worry about how minors' personal data is gathered and stored, especially when there is no comprehensive, legally backed framework to ensure data security or protect against misuse.

Key Takeaways



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1. What is APAAR?

- **Full Form:** Automated Permanent Academic Account Registry
- **Purpose:** Offers a “One Nation, One Student ID,” storing a child’s academic records for easy transfers and verifications.
- **Link to Aadhaar:** Typically associated with a student’s Aadhaar number and stored in the DigiLocker platform.

2. Is it Mandatory?

- **Officially Voluntary:** Government documents confirm it is not compulsory.
- **On-the-Ground Practice:** Schools and States (e.g., Uttar Pradesh, CBSE) sometimes pressure parents to register without clarifying they can opt out.

3. Data Collection Concerns:

- **Personal Data of Minors:** Large-scale gathering of children’s data is constitutionally questionable without a solid legal framework backing it.
- **Security & Privacy:** Critics worry about inadequate safeguards, risk of unauthorized third-party access, and potential violations under India’s Digital Personal Data Protection Act, 2023 (especially regarding children).

4. Why the Push from Schools and States?

- **Administrative Targets:** The NEP 2020 emphasizes better data management for policy and academic tracking.
- **Misaligned Messaging:** Pressure for “100% saturation” can make parents and schools assume it is obligatory.

5. Opting Out:

- **Right to Refuse:** Parents can submit written refusals to schools if they do not want an APAAR ID generated.
- **Activist Templates:** Organizations like the Software Freedom Law Centre (SFLC) provide draft letters for opting out.
- **Local-Level Pressures:** Some States threaten to de-recognize institutions that don’t fully participate, although parents have successfully opted out by formally citing the program’s voluntary nature.

6. What Next?

- **Continuing Debate:** As the government tries to integrate students’ data into a centralized database, privacy concerns are mounting.
- **Practical Implementation Issues:** Errors in personal details—like name or birth date mismatches—have caused additional administrative burdens for schools.
- **Demand for Transparency:** Repeated queries to public authorities (e.g., RTI applications) have gone unanswered or shuffled around, adding to the uncertainty about APAAR’s policy framework.

[A delimitation red flag — the lessons from J&K, Assam-The Hindu Editorial](#)

Polity

Easy Explanation

Every 10 years, India is supposed to redraw (“delimit”) the boundaries of parliamentary and Assembly constituencies to



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reflect changes in population. However, since 1976, the country has largely put a freeze on changing the number of seats allotted to each State, to avoid penalizing States that succeeded in limiting population growth.

Now, there is debate about resuming delimitation in 2026. This raises important issues:

1. **Population-Based Seat Redistribution:** Many worry that States with slower population growth (often in the south) will lose influence in Parliament if seat distribution becomes strictly proportional to population growth, which has been faster in many northern States.
2. **Recent Controversial Examples:**
 - **Jammu and Kashmir (2022):** Critics say the redrawn map heavily favored Hindu-majority seats, giving them smaller population sizes (thus a more powerful vote) while Muslim-majority seats ended up larger.
 - **Assam (2023):** The government merged certain districts in ways that effectively reduced Muslim-majority constituencies and increased Hindu and tribal seats.
3. **Communal Demarcation Danger:** These recent delimitations highlight a risk that new constituency maps could be manipulated to polarize voters along religious lines, giving one community more weight and marginalizing others.
4. **Potential Solutions:**
 - **Increasing State Assembly seats rather than parliamentary seats** so that each region gets more localized representation without upending the balance of power in Parliament.
 - **Redistributing Rajya Sabha seats** (which represent States in the Upper House) among different geographical zones to ensure balanced regional representation, especially if Lok Sabha seats become uneven.
 - **Preventing communal manipulation** in how constituencies are drawn, so that minorities or certain communities are not intentionally disadvantaged.

In essence, the concern is twofold:

- States that successfully controlled their populations should not lose out on parliamentary representation.
- Constituencies should not be carved out in a way that benefits one community or religion over another, which risks dividing the country further.

Key Takeaways

1. **Upcoming 2026 Delimitation:**
 - The freeze on seat reallocation is set to end in 2026, spurring debates on how to balance representation among regions with different population growth rates.
2. **Risk of Power Imbalance:**
 - Strictly population-based seat redistribution could give large, fast-growing States in northern India more seats (and hence more power) at the expense of States with better population control (often in the south).
3. **Examples from Jammu & Kashmir, Assam:**



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- Recent delimitation exercises in these States saw new boundaries that critics say were drawn along communal lines, favoring certain religious groups with smaller electorate sizes.

4. Communal Polarization:

- There is a real danger that seat boundaries could be manipulated for political gain, exacerbating communal tensions and dividing voters by religion.

5. Potential Solutions:

- Freeze Lok Sabha Seats, Increase Assembly Seats:** This approach improves local representation without drastically altering the current balance in Parliament.
- Rework Rajya Sabha Representation:** Balancing seats among geographic zones (north, south, east, west, central) could offset any losses in Lok Sabha representation for some regions.
- Stronger Safeguards & Oversight:** Ensuring transparency in how constituency lines are drawn, so that neither regional nor communal biases skew the outcome.

6. Central Issue:

- Both a power imbalance between States (rich vs. poor, north vs. south) and religiously polarizing seat demarcations pose major threats to India's federal structure and pluralism. Their combined impact could undermine national unity if not checked.

21st March 2025

[Rajasthan's coaching centre Bill, why it has been criticised-Indian Express Explained](#)

Governance

Easy Explanation

The Rajasthan government has introduced a Bill to regulate private coaching centres (especially in places like Kota and Jaipur), where students often face enormous pressure while preparing for competitive exams. Concerns about student suicides and the high-stress environment prompted this move. While the Bill proposes certain regulations such as mandatory registration, psychological counseling, and hefty fines for violators, it has been criticized for watering down key provisions from earlier drafts and from the Centre's guidelines.

Key Takeaways

1. Objective of the Bill

- To ensure coaching centres follow certain quality and safety standards.
- To curb the commercialization and create a healthier environment for students.

2. Higher Fines

- The Bill prescribes a first-time fine of ₹2 lakh and ₹5 lakh for a second violation, leading to cancellation of registration afterward.
- These fines are stricter than the Centre's guidelines, which suggested starting at ₹25,000.

3. Missing Age Limit & Attendance Rules



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- Earlier drafts (and the Centre's guidelines) restricted enrolment to students aged at least 16 or who have completed secondary school. The new Bill has no such age criterion.
- Provisions for biometric attendance and rules for notifying parents when students miss classes repeatedly have been dropped.

4. Omissions from Previous Drafts

- No mandatory mention of observing national/local holidays.
- No clauses ensuring non-discrimination or accessibility for differently abled students, despite it being in the Centre's guidelines.

5. Criticisms from Parents & Opposition

- Parents' groups say the Bill overlooks key safeguards like fee regulation and accountability for student suicides.
- Opposition members allege the government relaxed critical measures to appease coaching centres.

6. Next Steps

- The Bill is set for debate and passage in the Rajasthan Legislative Assembly.
- Parents and Opposition leaders want stronger clauses, especially regarding minimum age, fee controls, and stricter rules to reduce pressure on students.

[The looming power shortage-Indian Express Explained](#)

Economy

Easy Explanation

India is rapidly expanding solar and wind power to meet its electricity needs. However, because renewables like solar only generate power during the day—and wind generation depends on wind speeds—there can be power shortages during evenings (non-solar hours) when demand still remains high. At the same time, India has slowed down building new coal-based (thermal) plants, which traditionally supply dependable “baseload” power.

- As a result, the country is projected to face significant power shortages in the coming summer (especially in May and June).
- Without enough **energy storage systems** (like big batteries or pumped-storage plants) to store daytime solar power, the grid becomes unstable whenever there's a sudden spike in demand—or a drop in renewable generation.
- Policymakers are now considering emergency steps, such as using higher-cost imported coal plants, to handle peak demand periods.

Key Takeaways

1. Rise of Renewables, Lack of Storage

- Renewables (solar + wind) in India have grown very quickly, but the parallel growth in energy storage has not kept pace.
- Without sufficient storage, solar power that is generated during the day cannot be carried over to the evening hours when most households switch on air conditioning.

2. Thermal (Coal) Capacity Constraints

- India scaled down plans for building new coal-based plants about a decade ago.





- With limited coal capacity added in recent years, the existing thermal plants are already running near maximum load in the evenings, leaving little room to bridge the supply gap.

3. Projected Power Shortages

- Demand is expected to touch **270 GW** this summer, up sharply from 169 GW in 2018-19.
- The National Load Despatch Centre (NLDC) warns of potential shortages from April to October, with May and June labeled “high-risk months”.
- The probability of supply failing to meet demand (Loss of Load Probability) in May 2025 could be as high as 31%.

4. Grid Stability Concerns

- Sudden drops in renewable output (e.g., due to cloud cover) can cause mismatches that force grid operators to cut supply (load shedding) to prevent wide-scale blackouts.
- Energy storage systems like **battery storage** (BESS) and **pumped storage** (PSP) are crucial to maintain a stable power supply through these rapid fluctuations.

5. Emergency & Policy Measures

- Policymakers have proposed invoking emergency powers to run imported-coal-based plants at higher capacity when needed.
- New guidelines push for co-locating energy storage with upcoming solar plants to help store daytime solar for use at night.
- Delayed or insufficient addition of storage infrastructure remains the biggest risk to sustaining and balancing India’s growing power needs.

6. Cost Implications

- While solar power is cheap on paper, the overall cost increases when factoring in the expense of maintaining standby thermal plants for evening and off-peak hours.
- India’s earlier focus on rapid renewables expansion—while ignoring the parallel need for either new baseload capacity or storage—has led to the current tight supply situation.

[For those without a voice-Indian Express Editorial](#)

Governance

Easy Explanation

This address, delivered during the Ramnath Goenka Excellence in Journalism Awards, emphasizes the enduring importance of journalism grounded in empathy and public service. Reflecting on the legacy of Ramnath Goenka—who championed press freedom before and after India’s Independence—the speaker underlines how journalism has historically served as a tool for social awareness (with figures like Mahatma Gandhi also having been journalists). At the same time, the speaker acknowledges the new challenges the media faces: finding sustainable business models, responding to the rapid rise of Artificial Intelligence, and combating disinformation. Despite these pressures, it is argued that genuine, human-centered reporting—focused on telling the stories of those who cannot speak for themselves—will always remain essential.

Key Takeaways

1. Role of Journalism in Democracy



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- Free and fair journalism is crucial for informed citizens and healthy democratic processes.
- Referencing Ramnath Goenka's fearless editorial stance during the Emergency underscores the press's duty to uphold democratic values.

2. Service to Society

- Drawing inspiration from Mahatma Gandhi, who viewed journalism primarily as a form of public service.
- Good journalism highlights the voices and issues of marginalized groups.

3. Challenges Facing the Media

- **Business Models:** Declining traditional revenue and the difficulty of balancing profitability with editorial independence.
- **Disinformation:** Deepfakes, misinformation, and "post-truth" narratives demand better awareness and verification tools.
- **AI Disruption:** Machines can automate news compilation, but they lack empathy—a key human value in journalism.

4. Importance of Empathy and Human Values

- Empathy differentiates truly impactful journalism from AI-driven content creation.
- Ground reporting and thorough research are essential to maintain quality and credibility.

5. Call for Solutions

- Emphasizes building a newsroom culture of research, collaboration, and on-the-ground reporting.
- Urges proactive campaigns to educate citizens, especially the youth, about discerning bias and misinformation.
- Encourages highlighting stories in regional languages to extend reach beyond major cities.

6. Outlook on the Future

- With sustained effort, malicious content can be curbed, and the worst effects of disinformation minimized.
- Journalists who carry forward the legacy of service and empathy will remain central to democratic society.

[The TB crisis and women: why gender issues matters more than ever-The Hindu Science](#)

Science

Easy Explanation

Tuberculosis (TB) remains a major public health issue in India, especially affecting women in unique ways due to social and economic factors. While men often face higher overall rates of TB (linked to smoking, mining, and other work exposures), many women go undiagnosed, receive delayed treatment, or suffer abandonment and discrimination. This highlights the need not only for medical interventions but also for social support systems. India has set a target to eliminate TB by 2025, undertaking several measures like direct benefit transfers and community involvement. However, experts stress that stigma, lack of awareness, and inadequate nutrition still pose challenges, particularly for women.

Key Takeaways



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1. Women Face Unique Barriers

- **Underdiagnosis** and **delayed treatment** are common among women because of stigma, family roles, and financial constraints.
- Some women are **abandoned by family and employers** after diagnosis.

2. Stigma & Mental Toll

- Many face **discrimination** due to visible symptoms (e.g., skin discoloration, weight loss), which can lead to social isolation.
- Fear of negative comments or job loss often leads women to **hide** their illness or even stop treatment prematurely.

3. Social & Economic Pressures

- Traditional caretaker roles and **limited decision-making power** mean women often **prioritize family** over their own health.
- **Poverty** and lack of awareness contribute to fewer check-ups and inadequate nutrition.

4. Government Initiatives

- India aims to **eliminate TB by 2025**, running programs like:
 - **Nikshay Poshan Yojana**: A monthly cash transfer of ₹1,000 for the entire treatment period.
 - **Pradhan Mantri TB Mukh Bharat Abhiyan**: Mobilizes community and corporate support for nutritional aid.
- The **National TB Elimination Program (NTEP)** focuses on early detection, prompt treatment, prevention, and direct benefit transfers.

5. Continuing Challenges

- Although men statistically have higher TB rates, **women's TB** remains **under-reported and under-detected**.
- **Ongoing stigma** and lack of community support hamper efforts even when free testing and treatment are available.

Overall, addressing TB in women requires not only medical solutions but also tackling the social and economic barriers that lead to delayed diagnoses and inadequate care.

[The challenge of policing digital giants-The Hindu Editorial](#)

Science and technology

Easy Explanation

In November 2024, India's Competition Commission (CCI) took a strong stand against Meta (the parent company of WhatsApp, Facebook, and Instagram) by imposing a fine of over ₹213 crore and banning WhatsApp from sharing user data with Meta's other platforms for five years, for advertising purposes. Although the National Company Law Appellate Tribunal (NCLAT) later put this data-sharing ban on hold (and asked Meta to deposit half the fine), the case highlights how digital companies can exploit users' data to maintain a dominant position. The article explains how data-driven dominance works globally – from India to the U.S. and Europe – and why India's current laws need to be updated to address this new era of “data monopolies.”



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Key Takeaways

1. Competition Commission of India (CCI) vs. Meta

- The CCI fined Meta over WhatsApp's 2021 privacy policy, which forced users to accept data-sharing on a "take-it-or-leave-it" basis.
- Meta appealed, and the NCLAT stayed (paused) the ban and fine, pending further review.

2. Data as a Source of Dominance

- Digital platforms like Meta gather huge amounts of user data, letting them tailor ads and lock users into their ecosystems.
- This data advantage can make it nearly impossible for smaller players to compete, creating "data monopolies."

3. Global Regulatory Actions

- **Google** has faced similar fines in India for bundling its apps on Android devices.
- **U.S.** regulators have sued Google over its search and advertising dominance; Meta faces lawsuits for its Instagram and WhatsApp acquisitions.
- **EU** regulators have fined Google billions of euros and are scrutinizing Meta over data use, citing both competition rules and data protection (GDPR).

4. Gaps in Indian Law

- India's **Competition Act, 2002** does not specifically address "data monopolization."
- While new data protection laws (the **Digital Personal Data Protection Act, 2023**) may help regulate data collection and usage, there's no explicit mechanism to coordinate with the CCI for joint enforcement on data-related competition issues.

5. Need for Comprehensive Reform

- Experts suggest redefining "dominant position" to factor in data-collection.
- Mandating interoperability or splitting up integrated services (like WhatsApp from Facebook) could level the playing field for smaller competitors.
- Coordination between competition law and data protection frameworks, similar to the EU's Digital Markets Act (DMA) and GDPR, is necessary to manage data-driven monopolies.

6. Looking Ahead

- As AI and digital services expand, India needs to update its laws to keep pace with emerging technologies.
- The CCI's actions against Meta and Google are a start, but ongoing legal battles show that more robust, forward-looking policy changes are needed.

[The assault on multilateralism and international law-The Hindu Editorial](#)

International relations

Easy Explanation

This piece discusses how the "America First" approach under President Trump has led the U.S. to retreat from the international community it once helped build. The administration has taken steps such as withdrawing from major organizations (like the WHO, UNHRC, and the Paris Climate Agreement) and sanctioning bodies like the



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International Criminal Court. A new proposal, the DEFUND Act, even aims to cut off U.S. ties with the United Nations. These moves weaken multilateral cooperation—the shared effort among countries to tackle global challenges like climate change, human rights, and economic stability. In effect, while the U.S. adopts isolationist policies, there's a growing risk that international law and cooperation will suffer, potentially giving non-Western nations, such as India, the chance to lead on the global stage.

Key Takeaways

- **Retreat from Multilateralism:**
 - The U.S. has been distancing itself from key international bodies (WHO, UNHRC, Paris Agreement) it once helped establish.
 - The proposed DEFUND Act could sever U.S. financial and operational ties with the UN, undermining its role in global peacekeeping and cooperation.
- **Sanctions on International Legal Institutions:**
 - An executive order imposed sanctions on the ICC, accusing it of unjustly targeting America and its allies, which challenges the court's mandate to hold violators of international law accountable.
- **Economic Isolationism:**
 - Aggressive tariffs and protectionist policies reminiscent of the 1930s are being reintroduced, threatening the established rules-based multilateral trading system (like GATT and the WTO).
- **Implications for Global Governance:**
 - These unilateral moves risk destabilizing international law and multilateral political and economic cooperation, critical for addressing global issues such as climate change and human rights.
 - The erosion of multilateralism could lead to retaliatory measures from other nations.
- **Opportunities for New Leadership:**
 - As the U.S. withdraws, non-Western nations—particularly India—may have the chance to assume greater leadership in upholding international law and promoting cooperative global governance.

[Should immigrants have the same right to protest as citizens?-The Hindu Text and Context](#)

International relations

Easy Explanation

International law guarantees that everyone—including immigrants—has the right to protest peacefully. Under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), freedom of expression is a fundamental human right that applies to both citizens and non-citizens. However, in practice, the extent of this right depends on domestic laws and an individual's legal status. For example, in the U.S., while non-citizens generally have free speech protections, their rights in protest or during deportation proceedings can be less robust compared to citizens. Cases involving foreign students and activists show how immigration status and national security concerns can lead to restrictions or actions like visa revocations and arrests.

Key Takeaways

- **Universal Right to Protest:**



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- International law (ICCPR) guarantees freedom of expression and peaceful assembly for all individuals, regardless of citizenship.
- **Dependence on Domestic Law:**
 - The actual ability to protest freely can vary depending on a country's legal framework and the individual's immigration status.
- **Legal Status Matters:**
 - Citizens generally have stronger protections compared to non-citizens (e.g., student visa holders versus green card holders).
- **National Security & Public Order:**
 - States may impose restrictions on protest rights to safeguard national security and public order, sometimes affecting immigrants more severely.
- **Real-World Examples:**
 - The cases of Ranjani Srinivasan (an Indian doctoral student whose visa was revoked) and Mahmoud Khalil (a Palestinian student activist arrested on security grounds) illustrate the complexities and challenges faced by immigrants exercising their right to protest.

22nd March 2025

[Why X has challenged govt's use of Section 79 of the IT Act-Indian Express Explained](#)

Polity

Easy Explanation

This piece revolves around a legal challenge by X (formerly Twitter) against the Indian government's practice of using **Section 79(3)(b)** of the IT Act to remove or block content, which X argues is an improper way to bypass the stricter procedures under **Section 69A**. Here's a simplified breakdown:

1. Section 69A (Content Blocking)

- **Purpose:** Allows the government to block online content for specific reasons like national security, public order, decency, etc.
- **Safeguards:**
 - The government **must** record its reasons for blocking so these can be challenged in court.
 - The Supreme Court in **Shreya Singhal (2015)** highlighted these safeguards and deemed them constitutional.

2. Section 79 (Safe Harbour for Intermediaries)



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- **Purpose:** Protects online platforms (intermediaries like X) from being held liable for user-posted content.
- **Exception (Section 79(3)(b)):** If the government or a court notifies an intermediary that certain content is unlawful, and the intermediary does not take it down “upon receiving actual knowledge,” the safe-harbour protection can be lost.
- **Supreme Court’s Clarification (Shreya Singhal):**
 - The requirement to take down content under Section 79(3)(b) is triggered **only if** there is a court order or **if** the content actually violates the reasons outlined in **Article 19(2)** of the Constitution (e.g., threat to national security, etc.).

3. Government’s Recent Use of Section 79

- In October 2023, the government told various ministries and the police that **blocking orders** could be issued under **Section 79(3)(b)**.
- The Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) created the “Sahyog” portal in October 2024 for issuing and uploading such blocking orders.

4. What X is Challenging

- X says the government is effectively **skipping the safeguards** of Section 69A by using Section 79 instead.
- X argues Section 79 was **never meant** to create a whole new “blocking regime”; it only **protects intermediaries** if they comply with lawful requests from the government or courts.
- By using Section 79(3)(b) in this way, the government can order content takedowns **without** following the strict procedures (and safeguards) of Section 69A or getting a court order.

5. Relevance of AI-Generated Content (Grok)

- X has an AI chatbot called Grok, which uses Hindi slang and sometimes produces content critical of the government.
- There is a new question of whether **AI-generated content** from a platform’s own tool is protected by the same “safe harbour” that user-generated content typically has.

Key Takeaways

- **Section 69A:** The proper channel for blocking online content, with built-in protections and requirements.
- **Section 79:** A “safe harbour” that shields platforms from legal liability for user posts—**not** meant as a direct way for the government to issue blanket blocking orders.





- **X's Position:** The government is misusing Section 79 to sidestep the harder-to-meet standards of Section 69A, undermining free speech protections.
- **AI Complication:** As AI chatbots become more common, courts need to determine if AI-produced content qualifies as “third-party content” (and thus protected under Section 79) or if the platform is responsible for its own AI’s speech.

In essence, **X’s case** hinges on the idea that **the government should follow the str**

[WHY SCIENTISTS WERE SURPRISED TO FIND LIFE UNDER ANTARCTIC ICE SHELF-Indian Express Explained](#)

Geography

Easy Explanation

A team of scientists explored a part of the Antarctic seafloor that was previously inaccessible because it was covered by a 510-square-kilometre iceberg, named A-84, which recently broke off from the George VI Ice Shelf. Using a remotely operated submersible, they were surprised to discover a flourishing under-ice ecosystem teeming with life: giant sea spiders, octopi, a giant jellyfish, deep-sea corals, and sponges—some of which could be hundreds of years old.

Scientists were especially amazed because ecosystems typically depend on sunlight for photosynthesis, and these communities have been sealed off under ice hundreds of metres thick for centuries. This means there must be another mechanism—likely ocean currents or glacial meltwater—that transports nutrients beneath the ice shelf, helping sustain an underwater world that was, until now, almost completely hidden.

Key Takeaways

1. The Iceberg “A-84”

- A massive iceberg, around **510 sq km** (about 2.5 times the size of Kolkata), broke away from the Antarctic ice shelf in January.
- This breakaway opened access to a **previously unexplored** underwater region.

2. Thriving Ecosystem

- Scientists found **giant sea spiders, octopi, corals, sponges**, and potentially **new species** at depths of up to 1,300 metres.
- Some organisms—like the giant phantom jelly and vase-shaped sponges—may be **decades to centuries old**.

3. Why It’s Surprising

- The area was **completely cut off from sunlight** by about **150 metres of thick ice** for centuries.



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- Usually, deep-sea communities rely on **nutrients from photosynthesis** sinking down. Scientists need to figure out how these creatures got enough food.

4. Ongoing Mystery

- Researchers suspect **ocean currents** or **glacial meltwater** may be carrying nutrients under the ice.
- Understanding these nutrient pathways could **reshape** how we think about life in extreme, sunless environments.

5. Part of a Bigger Effort

- This expedition is part of **Challenger 150**, a **UNESCO-endorsed** global deep-sea research initiative.
- Ongoing studies will help us **learn more** about how ecosystems survive in places once considered almost uninhabitable.

Trump and a weaker dollar-Indian Express Explained

International relations

Easy Explanation

Donald Trump believes the US dollar is “too strong” (overvalued) and that this is fueling massive trade deficits—because it’s cheaper for Americans to buy goods from abroad than to manufacture them at home. He wants to reverse this by pressuring other countries to cooperate in bringing the dollar’s value down. This idea is sometimes called a “Mar-a-Lago Accord,” likening it to the famous **Plaza Accord (1985)** in which the US and its major trading partners worked together to **devalue** the dollar.

1. Why a Strong Dollar Matters

- A strong dollar makes imports cheaper for Americans but harms US exports.
- Over time, this can lead to **fewer goods** produced in the US, contributing to **trade deficits** and a decline in domestic manufacturing.

2. Trump’s Goals

- **Reduce the trade deficit** (the US has run deficits of around \$1 trillion for several years).
- **Bring manufacturing jobs** back to the US.
- He thinks a weaker dollar would help US factories compete with foreign goods.

3. Trump’s Methods

- **Tariffs:** He has imposed (or threatened) higher import taxes, hoping it forces other countries to either accept fewer exports to the US or shift manufacturing to the US.



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- **Proposed Currency Coordination (“Mar-a-Lago Accord”)**: Similar to the **Plaza Accord** of 1985, in which major economies agreed to bring down the dollar’s value to make US exports more competitive.

4. The Plaza Accord (1985)

- Signed by the US, Japan, Germany, France, and the UK to **lower the dollar’s exchange rate**.
- It worked in the short run (the dollar’s value fell), but it had **unintended consequences**—especially for Japan, which later suffered a major economic downturn (the so-called “lost decades”).

5. Challenges Today

- More players (particularly **China**, which is also a US military adversary).
- **Global leaders** are less willing to accept demands that could hurt their own economies.
- The scale of the required dollar revaluation would be **huge**, given how pervasive the dollar is in global finance.
- Trump’s combative style could make cooperation difficult.

Key Takeaways

1. Strong Dollar = High Imports + Trade Deficits

- Because a stronger dollar buys more foreign goods, US manufacturing can suffer when Americans rely heavily on cheap imports.

2. A “Mar-a-Lago Accord” = Potential Coordination for a Weaker Dollar

- Trump wants something akin to the Plaza Accord (1985) so that major trading partners act to **reduce** the dollar’s value.

3. Tariff Wars vs. Currency Moves

- Trump’s **tariffs** are one tool to reduce deficits, but they risk retaliation, higher consumer prices, and global trade turmoil.
- **Coordinated currency action** could boost US competitiveness but requires multilateral cooperation.

4. Lessons from Japan’s Experience

- Japan’s economy suffered long-term stagnation after the Plaza Accord. A rapid rise in the yen harmed exports and created asset bubbles.
- This cautionary tale makes other countries wary of repeating 1985’s steps.





5. Today's Complexity

- More global players, a bigger role for China, and deeply integrated supply chains make a modern-day Plaza Accord ("Mar-a-Lago Accord") far from straightforward.

THE TIGER'S TALE-Indian Express Editorial

Environment

Easy Explanation

Over the past two decades, India's tiger population rebounded from a low of under 1,400 in 2006 to more than 3,600 today — a significant conservation win. However, poaching networks have evolved in response. They are now more mobile, use social media and the dark web to plan operations, and often target tigers that wander outside protected reserves. An investigation shows that at least 100 tigers have been poached over the last three years. Unfortunately, India's enforcement efforts have not kept up:

- **Limited Coordination:** Multiple agencies (WCCB, CBI, DRI, state forest departments) rarely share information or coordinate.
- **Understaffed Agencies:** The Wildlife Crime Control Bureau (WCCB), for example, has only 10 wildlife inspectors (some posts are vacant, and many lack specialist training).
- **Modern Poachers:** Poachers use digital tools to stay ahead of authorities and face a low conviction rate — over 90% avoid punishment.

With increasing evidence that tigers roam beyond traditional reserves, the danger of poaching has expanded to new areas (especially in the Northeast). Authorities need to modernize their approach and collaborate more effectively if they want to protect the momentum of India's tiger conservation success.

Key Takeaways

1. **Tiger Population Recovery:** India's tiger numbers rebounded from fewer than 1,400 in 2006 to over 3,600 today due to focused conservation efforts.
2. **Evolving Poaching Tactics:** Poachers now operate in leaner, more mobile networks, rely on digital and social media tools, and frequently target tigers roaming outside protected reserves.
3. **Coordination Gaps:** Multiple agencies (WCCB, CBI, DRI, state forest departments) investigate wildlife crime but rarely share data or synchronize their efforts.
4. **Under-Resourced Enforcement:** The Wildlife Crime Control Bureau has very few specialist staff; many positions lie vacant, and deputed personnel often lack wildlife crime expertise.
5. **Low Conviction Rates:** Despite some improvement, more than 90% of poachers who are nabbed eventually escape punishment due to weak investigations and inadequate legal follow-through.





6. **New Trafficking Routes:** The Northeast is emerging as a major conduit for smuggling tiger parts, yet authorities are still slow to establish a strong presence in these areas.
7. **Urgent Need for Action:** Without stronger coordination, staffing, and resources, the gains from India's successful tiger conservation efforts could be rapidly undone by poaching networks.

[All-American deportations-Indian Express Editorial](#)

International relations

Easy Explanation

- **Hannah Arendt's View of America:** Arendt, a Jewish thinker who fled Nazi Germany, believed the United States was uniquely "anti-totalitarian." She saw it as different from European colonial powers, which blinded her to racial and imperial-like policies within America itself.
- **Recent Deportations Under the Second Trump Presidency:**
 - Individuals like Ranjani Srinivasan, Rasha Alawieh, and Mahmoud Khalil have been deported or detained over alleged sympathies with groups that the U.S. government calls "terrorist."
 - Criticisms of the Israeli government are often labeled as "anti-Semitic," linking immigration/visa issues to "national security" concerns.
- **Fortress America:**
 - Despite being a global powerhouse, the U.S. often sees itself as under threat, relying on old laws (like the 18th-century Alien Enemies Act) to justify deportations.
 - This "siege mentality" treats America as self-contained and easily "invaded" by perceived outsiders.
- **American "Outlaw" Myth vs. Reality:**
 - U.S. culture values individual freedom and distrusts government overreach (the "outlaw" spirit).
 - However, there has been little mass protest against federal power used in these deportations, suggesting a gap between the American "myth" of liberty and what actually happens.
- **The Danger of American Exceptionalism:**
 - Arendt's belief in America's special status, and the shock people express when the U.S. enforces harsh policies, show how American actions can be excused or overlooked.
 - Calling the U.S. "unique" can allow problematic practices—like politically motivated deportations—to continue unchallenged.

Key Takeaways



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1. The “Arendt Conundrum”

- **Hannah Arendt’s View of America:** She saw the U.S. as inherently anti-totalitarian and distinct from global imperialist histories – a perspective that neglected America’s own racial politics.
- **Implications for Today:** This “blind spot” frames how America’s domestic policies (e.g., deportations) are often disconnected from the global contexts of colonialism or empire-building.

2. Recent Deportations Under the Second Trump Presidency

- **Targeting ‘Anti-Semitic’ or ‘Pro-Terrorist’ Sympathies:** Several high-profile cases (e.g., Ranjani Srinivasan, Rasha Alawieh, Mahmoud Khalil) involve accusations of criticizing Israel or supporting entities that the current U.S. administration deems “terrorist.”
- **Equating Criticism of Israel with Anti-Semitism:** This links deportation decisions to broader “national security” concerns, echoing how national security arguments can override individual freedoms.

3. America’s Fortress-Culture Identity

- **Global Footprint vs. Provincial Self-Image:** Despite being a dominant global power (economically, culturally, militarily), American national identity retains a “self-contained” myth, often justifying exclusionary policies like mass deportations.
- **Historical Roots:** Laws such as the 18th-century Alien Enemies Act, intended for wartime, now feed into the notion of the U.S. as a fortress under siege.

4. Individual Liberties vs. State Power

- **Myth of the American ‘Outlaw’:** A powerful cultural narrative in the U.S. emphasizes suspicion of central authority and the celebration of individual freedoms.
- **Contradiction in Practice:** Despite these ideals, there has been little mass outcry against the state’s arbitrary use of power in deportation cases, suggesting America’s reality may differ from its founding mythology.

5. Cultural Exceptionalism

- **Misleading “Shock”:** Viewing America as uniquely liberal or anti-totalitarian can obscure systemic injustices, leading to surprise when harsh policies—like politically motivated deportations—occur.
- **Allowing Societies to “Get Away With” Injustices:** Treating certain societies as “exceptional” can normalize or overlook repressive measures.

Overall, the current deportations highlight deeper tensions in American identity: a country projecting a universal cultural reach yet holding fast to a parochial sense of itself as a fortress, all while balancing individual liberty myths against the reality of expansive state power.





Charting a route for IORA under India's chairship-The Hindu Editorial

International relations

Easy Explanation

The Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) is a forum where Indian Ocean countries come together to cooperate on issues affecting this vast maritime region. India, which is set to chair IORA from November 2025, can shape the group's agenda by focusing on three core priorities:

1. **Finding More Funds:** IORA is relatively small and underfunded. It must look for new ways to grow its budget, such as involving private maritime-related industries (like shipping, oil and gas, tourism) that rely on Indian Ocean trade routes.
2. **Technology & Data Management:** Strong data collection and digitization can improve decision-making for ocean governance, resource sharing, and crisis response.
3. **Maritime-Focused Education & Training:** Expanding collaborations between universities, think tanks, and industries can create specialized courses (e.g., "marine accounting") to nurture skilled experts in the blue economy.

Overall, the Indian Ocean has tremendous economic potential but also needs cooperation to tackle challenges like **piracy, natural disasters, climate change, and poverty**. During its chairship, India's job is to strengthen IORA's institutional foundation, mobilize resources, and ensure that the group's policies work at a "ground level," not just on paper.

Key Takeaways

1. IORA's Importance

- **Broad Mandate:** Covers maritime security, disaster relief, fisheries management, blue economy, and more.
- **Geostrategic Relevance:** Connects Asia, Africa, and Australia; crucial for global trade routes and energy supplies.

2. Funding Woes & Solutions

- **Current Budget:** Quite small, reliant on member contributions (many are developing countries).
- **New Funding Avenues:** Engage private industry (e.g., shipping, tourism, oil/gas) both for policy input and financial contributions.

3. Use of Technology



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- **Efficiency Gains:** Digitized data management can help track regional resources, manage disaster risks, and conduct policy research more effectively.
- **Improved Governance:** Technology reduces human error and speeds up analysis for better decision-making.

4. Collaboration & Capacity Building

- **Academic-Industry Partnerships:** Universities can develop courses that meet real industry needs (e.g., marine accounting, coastal resource management).
- **Traditional Knowledge:** Coastal and island nations like Sri Lanka, Seychelles, and Mauritius have local wisdom that can inform sustainable marine practices.

5. India's Role

- **Vision of SAGAR ("Security and Growth for All in the Region"):** Aligns well with IORA's objectives.
- **Leadership Opportunity:** By drawing in international partners (e.g., Australia, France, Singapore, UAE, Oman), India can steer resources and expertise to strengthen IORA.

In short, India's upcoming IORA chairship is a chance to **boost collaboration, modernize data systems, tap new funding sources, and foster local talent** to address Indian Ocean challenges and unlock sustainable growth.

[Navigating differences-The Hindu Editorial](#)

International relations

Easy Explanation

During the 10th Raisina Dialogue in New Delhi, New Zealand Prime Minister Christopher Luxon met with Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi to strengthen bilateral ties. Key outcomes include a defense Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to expand military cooperation — such as naval visits and joint training — and plans to restart talks on a free trade agreement. The two sides also discussed ways to boost people-to-people connectivity, including potential direct flights by the end of 2028.

However, there are still challenges:

1. **Trade Disputes:** India's concerns over market access for dairy and agricultural products were a factor in its exit from the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP), of which New Zealand is a member.
2. **Diaspora Issues:** PM Modi publicly raised concerns about "anti-India" activities in New Zealand, linked to a pro-Khalistan group's protest. New Zealand maintains it supports free expression while cautioning against importing foreign political conflicts into its diverse immigrant communities.

Despite these differences, both countries — two democracies at opposite ends of the Indo-Pacific — hope to deepen ties through trade, defense cooperation, and shared interests in freedom of navigation.



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Key Takeaways

1. Growing Indo-Pacific Cooperation

- Both India and New Zealand view freedom of navigation and maritime security in the Indo-Pacific as critical.
- They have signed a defense MoU to facilitate closer military ties.

2. Trade and Economic Prospects

- They plan to revive free-trade talks to expand their comparatively small trade volume (under \$2 billion).
- Market access for dairy and agriculture remains a sticking point, especially given India's earlier exit from RCEP.

3. Connectivity Boost

- A codeshare agreement between Air India and Air New Zealand could lead to direct flights by 2028.
- This is expected to deepen business, educational, and tourist exchange.

4. Diaspora Concerns

- PM Modi raised worries about "anti-India" protests by pro-Khalistan groups in New Zealand.
- New Zealand upholds freedom of expression while urging communities not to bring foreign political disputes to its shores.

5. Moving Forward

- Sensitive issues like diaspora tensions may be better addressed discreetly through diplomatic channels.
- Both sides can gain from enhanced cooperation, reflecting two democracies looking to maintain stability and openness across the Indo-Pacific.

23rd March 2025

[Why is uploading voting data a challenge?: TH FAQ](#)

Polity

Easy Explanation:

During the 2024 Lok Sabha elections, a group called the Association for Democratic Reforms (ADR) filed a request in the Supreme Court. They wanted the Election Commission (EC) to **upload booth-wise voter turnout data** from **Form**



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17C (Part 1) on its website **within 48 hours of polling**. This form is filled at every polling station on election day and includes important information like how many people voted and how many votes the EVM (Electronic Voting Machine) recorded.

Currently, this data is **only shared with polling agents** (representatives of the candidates) and is **not made public**. The EC argued that it is only legally required to share this form with polling agents—not with the general public or the media. However, after people raised doubts about mismatches in voting numbers in many constituencies, the new Chief Election Commissioner said he is willing to talk to ADR and consider the demand.

Now, why is this data so important? After the elections, ADR studied the voting numbers shared by the EC and found something surprising: in **only 5 out of 543 constituencies**, the number of votes counted matched exactly with the number of votes polled. In the rest, either **fewer votes were counted** than polled, or **extra votes were counted**. Although the difference was not large in most cases, ADR argued that **every single vote should be properly accounted for**, regardless of whether it affects the final result.

Form 17C Part 1 is the only official record that tells us exactly **how many votes were cast at each polling booth**, and making it public could help verify whether the numbers are accurate and spot any errors early. ADR pointed out that **not every political party can afford to have polling agents at all booths**, so only sharing this form with polling agents may not ensure full transparency.

On the other hand, the Election Commission said that uploading Form 17C publicly could cause problems. For example, people could **manipulate or fake the images of the form**, leading to confusion or distrust. They also said that their process already includes multiple levels of checks, including election observers verifying the data after polling.

In the end, this is a debate between **making the election process more transparent** for the public versus **the practical challenges and risks** involved in sharing sensitive election documents online.

Key Takeaways:

What is Form 17C?

- It is an official election document filled for every polling booth.
- **Part 1** is filled on polling day and includes total electors, votes cast, and EVM details.
- **Part 2** is filled on counting day and shows how many votes each candidate received.
- Both parts are signed by officials and polling agents and stored securely.

What is the issue?

- ADR and others want **Form 17C Part 1 to be uploaded online** within 48 hours of voting.
- They believe this will help ensure full transparency and allow people to verify data.
- The Election Commission says it is not legally required to do this and fears misuse.

Why is Form 17C important?



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- It shows booth-wise data on how many people voted and helps detect errors.
- ADR found mismatches in most constituencies between votes polled and counted.
- These mismatches, even if small, raise questions about data accuracy.

What are the Election Commission's concerns?

- Publishing this data online might lead to **fake or doctored forms** being circulated.
- The EC says it already provides a copy of Form 17C to polling agents.
- Verifying all data properly takes time and is done by election observers.

What are the ground-level challenges?

- Around **10.5 lakh polling stations** and **1 crore election workers** are involved.
- Some workers may make errors due to stress, and these get corrected later.
- But **polling agents may not always be present**, especially in remote areas or for smaller parties.

Why are opposition parties pushing for it?

- Because they fear the current system hides errors or manipulation.
- Making Form 17C public helps them and voters track every vote honestly.
- They argue that transparency must go beyond polling agents to include the public.

What happens next?

- The EC is open to discussion, but it's not clear if they will agree to upload the forms.
- The Supreme Court is still hearing the case and will decide on the matter.

[What does a terror group branding entail?: TH FAQ](#)

Internal Security

Easy Explanation:

Recently, the Indian government raised its concern again about a group called **Sikhs for Justice (SFJ)**, which is known for demanding a separate country called **Khalistan** carved out of India. This group operates from **countries like the U.S., Canada, the U.K., and New Zealand** and has been organizing **so-called "referendums"** asking Sikhs living abroad to



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vote in support of Khalistan. These events are not officially recognized by any government, but they grab headlines and irritate India.

This week, SFJ is planning another such "vote" in **Los Angeles, USA**. In response, **Prime Minister Modi** and **Defence Minister Rajnath Singh** urged leaders from the **U.S. and New Zealand** to **ban SFJ and declare it a terrorist group**. India wants these countries to treat SFJ as a serious security threat because the group often issues **threats against Indian officials, embassies, and institutions**, and praises people linked with **past terrorist attacks** like the **1985 Air India bombing**.

However, countries like **New Zealand and the U.S.** haven't agreed to India's demand. They say **freedom of speech and protest** are allowed in their democracies, and unless someone breaks a specific law, they cannot ban such groups. New Zealand's Prime Minister even said that peaceful protest is protected by law in his country.

From India's point of view, this is deeply frustrating. The government sees SFJ as **dangerous and extremist**, and feels that **other countries are not taking the threats seriously enough**. India also reminds the world of what happened in the 1980s, when Canada didn't act in time, and it led to the bombing of an Air India flight that killed 329 people.

If countries like the U.S., U.K., or Canada **ban SFJ**, it would mean that the group's **bank accounts could be frozen, their leaders (like Gurpatwant Singh Pannun) could be stopped from traveling freely, and their activities could be prosecuted under anti-terror laws**. India also hopes that if even one country takes this step, others (especially those in the "Five Eyes" intelligence group) will follow.

So far, **India itself has banned SFJ under its anti-terror law (UAPA)** and has filed **over 120 cases** against the group. However, the group continues to operate freely abroad, and India is trying hard to change that. Whether other countries will act or continue treating SFJ as a fringe, loud group remains to be seen.

Key Takeaways:

What is SFJ (Sikhs for Justice)?

- A pro-Khalistan group demanding a separate Sikh nation carved out of India.
- Organizes "referendums" in countries like the U.S., Canada, and New Zealand among diaspora Sikhs.
- Founded by Gurpatwant Singh Pannun, an immigration lawyer based in the U.S.

Why is India concerned?

- SFJ is accused of making threats against Indian diplomats and institutions.
- The group has praised terrorists from the past, including those behind the 1985 Air India bombing.
- Indian agencies have filed **122 cases** against SFJ and arrested **105 individuals** since 2018.
- India banned SFJ under the **Unlawful Activities Prevention Act (UAPA)** in 2019 and renewed the ban recently.

What does India want from other countries?



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- India is urging the **U.S., U.K., Canada, Australia, and New Zealand** to ban SFJ and label it a terrorist group.
- A ban would lead to **freezing of funds, travel restrictions, and legal prosecution** of its members.
- India believes this would also improve its image in ongoing investigations related to alleged plots involving its agents abroad.

Why haven't these countries acted yet?

- Western democracies have strong **free speech protections**, so SFJ's activities are not always considered illegal.
- Countries see SFJ as **provocative but not dangerous enough** to ban.
- New Zealand and others say peaceful protests and expression are protected by law.

What happens if one country bans SFJ?

- If any of the "Five Eyes" nations bans SFJ, others may follow due to intelligence-sharing agreements.
- India could then take the case to the **UN Security Council** under Resolution 1373, making it an international issue.

What's next?

- SFJ plans another "referendum" in Los Angeles this week.
- India continues diplomatic pressure to get international recognition of SFJ as a terror group.
- Whether global powers act or not will depend on how seriously they view India's security concerns.

[How do astronauts recoup after space stay?: TH FAQ](#)

Science Tech

Easy Explanation:

On March 19, a spacecraft from **SpaceX** safely brought back four astronauts — **Sunita Williams, Barry Wilmore, Nick Hague** (all from NASA), and **Aleksandr Gorbunov** (from Russia's Roscosmos) — after their mission at the **International Space Station (ISS)**. Sunita Williams and Barry Wilmore had been in space for **nine months**, living in zero gravity since June last year.

Living in space isn't easy on the human body. Because there's **no gravity**, fluids inside the body shift, muscles get weaker, bones lose density, and overall fitness can drop. Astronauts follow a strict routine of **exercise and special diets** in space to stay as healthy as possible. However, after such long space missions, they still need help getting used to Earth's gravity again once they come back.



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NASA has a **detailed health monitoring system**. Astronauts are checked **before, during, and after** spaceflight — this includes checking their **eyes, hearing, body strength, blood flow**, and more. During space missions, they report health updates regularly, especially in the first few days after arriving in space. Even things like blood clots or unusual blood flow are tracked.

When they return to Earth, they begin **physical rehabilitation**. This means working with doctors and therapists to gradually restore their **balance, muscle strength, coordination, and heart health**. Each astronaut gets a **personalized fitness recovery plan**, and most return to their normal health in about **45 days**.

In the first week, they go through **gentle exercises** using machines like elliptical trainers and bicycles. Later, they try jogging or water-based exercises to improve coordination. Doctors and therapists check on their recovery daily. If needed, the recovery programme is extended until the astronaut is fully fit again.

This process is important because **space travel affects each person differently**, and long missions can impact things like **mental health, balance, and even how bones and muscles work**. So, thorough medical checks ensure that astronauts can safely return to regular life on Earth.

Key Takeaways:

Who returned from space?

- Four astronauts: Sunita Williams, Barry Wilmore, Nick Hague (NASA), and Aleksandr Gorbunov (Roscosmos).
- They returned from the International Space Station on March 19.
- Sunita Williams and Barry Wilmore had spent nine months in space.

How does space affect the human body?

- Fluids move toward the head, causing pressure.
- Muscle strength and bone density decrease.
- There may be vision changes and stress due to isolation and limited space.

How are astronauts monitored in space?

- Regular medical checkups (daily, weekly, monthly).
- Eye and hearing tests every three months.
- Blood, urine, and body weight checks.
- Monitored for blood clots, heart function, and radiation exposure.

What happens after returning to Earth?



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- Day of return: Physical exams, heart tests (ECG), vision checks, and more.
- Regular exams at 3 days, 1-2 weeks, and 2 months after return.
- Psychological assessments may also be done.

What does physical rehabilitation include?

- Initial exercises using machines like elliptical trainers and bicycles.
- Back and leg exercises, stretching, and balance training.
- Gradual progression to jogging and playing water-based games.
- The goal is to restore strength, stamina, flexibility, and coordination.

When is the astronaut considered fully recovered?

- When they return to their pre-mission fitness level.
- Doctors and physiotherapists assess them daily until they're fit to return to normal work.

[Return of the spacewalkers: TH Profiles](#)

Science Tech

Easy Explanation:

Sunita Williams is one of the most respected astronauts in the world. But her journey to space didn't start with a dream of becoming an astronaut. She grew up in the U.S., wanting to be a veterinarian. It was her older brother who encouraged her to join the Navy. She did — and that choice changed her life.

She became a Navy pilot, flew during the Gulf War, helped in disaster relief missions, and eventually trained as a test pilot — someone who tries out new or modified aircraft. That's what opened the door for her to become an astronaut at NASA.

Sunita went to space for the first time in 2006 on NASA's Space Shuttle Discovery and lived on the International Space Station (ISS). She went again in 2012, this time on a Russian Soyuz spacecraft. She's not just known for her space missions — she also became the **second woman ever to command the ISS**. And while in space, she ran a **marathon on a treadmill** and even completed a **triathlon** — yes, in space!

In 2024, she made history again by becoming the **first woman to test-fly an entirely new orbital spacecraft** — Boeing's Starliner. This mission was tricky because it hadn't been flown with humans before, but she handled it with confidence alongside fellow astronaut Barry Wilmore.



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Sunita and Barry share many similarities. Both were Navy pilots, both flew in war missions, and both trained to test new aircraft before joining NASA. They've now become key figures helping NASA work with private companies like SpaceX and Boeing to build the future of space travel.

Sunita is of Indian origin — her father moved from India to the U.S. years ago. Because of this, many in India see her as a source of pride and call her “India’s daughter.” While this support is heartfelt, some people have pointed out that other Indian heroes closer to home (like athletes or activists) don’t always get the same kind of recognition.

Despite the media attention or political drama surrounding her missions, Sunita Williams remains focused and humble. She’s always believed in taking one step at a time and giving her best — and that’s what truly makes her a role model for people everywhere.

Key Takeaways:

Who is Sunita Williams?

- NASA astronaut with two space missions (2006 and 2012) and a third in 2024.
- Served in the U.S. Navy, flew combat and relief missions, and trained as a test pilot.
- Of Indian and Slovene-American descent, born in Ohio in 1965.

Major Space Achievements:

- First flew to the ISS on Space Shuttle Discovery in 2006.
- Returned to the ISS in 2012 aboard a Russian Soyuz spacecraft.
- Ran the **Boston Marathon** in space (2007) and completed a **triathlon** onboard the ISS (2012).
- Became the **second woman** to command the ISS.
- In 2024, became the **first woman to test-fly an orbital spacecraft** (Boeing’s Starliner).

About Her 2024 Mission:

- Flew with astronaut Barry Wilmore, also a military veteran and seasoned space traveler.
- Faced challenges due to the Starliner being a newly tested spacecraft.
- Despite political noise and media confusion, both astronauts completed their mission safely.

Indian Connection and Soft Diplomacy:

- Widely celebrated in India due to her Indian heritage.



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- Referred to as “India’s daughter” by Indian ministers, though critics note such recognition is uneven for other Indian heroes.
- Seen as a powerful symbol of **global cooperation, women in space, and NASA’s soft power**.

What Makes Her Inspiring?

- Her belief in **"one step at a time"**—tackling big goals by focusing on the present.
- Her calm approach, hard work, and teamwork spirit.
- Her contributions to space science, fitness, and public outreach.

[No mismatch between circulating flu strains and vaccine strains: TH Science](#)

Science Tech

Easy Explanation:

Recently, newspapers reported a big rise in flu (influenza) cases in the Delhi-NCR region. Some headlines even mentioned a 54% spike. But where did this number come from? It wasn't from hospitals or lab tests — it was from a local online survey asking people if they had flu-like symptoms. This included not just flu, but also viral fevers and COVID-like symptoms. So, it's not clear how many actual flu cases there were.

Official data from the Indian government (IDSP) said that in January 2025, India had 516 confirmed flu cases and six deaths. But it's hard to know whether this was more than previous years because detailed monthly comparisons aren't available.

India usually sees two flu peaks: one during the monsoon season and another during winter. According to a study, around 15% of people with general respiratory illness (cough, fever, etc.) and around 13% with severe respiratory infections actually have the flu.

However, it's not easy to track exact flu deaths. In most clinics, doctors don't regularly test for flu, and many deaths due to flu are not recorded as such. One study in 2020 used modelling (based on past data) to estimate that over **1.2 lakh people** die each year in India due to flu-related lung and heart issues. Most deaths happen in people **over 65 or under 5 years old**.

Despite this, India does not make flu vaccination a major priority. Unlike many countries, flu vaccine is **not part of India's regular immunisation programme**. The government says it is “recommended” for pregnant women, people with chronic illnesses, and health workers. But for the elderly and young children (who are most at risk), it is only marked as “desirable,” not mandatory.

Each year, the World Health Organization (WHO) recommends which flu virus strains should go into the vaccines for the coming season — months in advance. This gives vaccine makers time to prepare. Most flu vaccines in India are made using chicken eggs and take months to produce. Serum Institute and Sanofi are the two main flu vaccine producers in India.



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In the U.S., flu vaccination is taken seriously — over 57 million adults and nearly half of all children had already been vaccinated this season. But in India, uptake is still very low — less than 5%. A 2022 study found that only **1.5% of adults over 45** had ever taken a flu shot. Even after deadly outbreaks in recent years, the public doesn't seem to consider flu a serious threat, and many aren't even aware there's a vaccine for it.

Though the flu vaccine market in India is growing (21% growth in 2025 vs. 2024), experts say the overall coverage is still poor. Without proper awareness and government-led vaccination drives, flu will continue to cause avoidable deaths, especially among the elderly and children.

Key Takeaways:

Reported Spike in Flu Cases

- A 54% rise in “flu-like” cases in Delhi-NCR was reported based on a **non-clinical** survey, not actual lab tests.
- Symptoms included flu, viral fever, and COVID, so exact flu cases remain unclear.

Official Influenza Data in India

- January 2025: 516 flu cases and 6 deaths reported across India.
- 2024 total: 20,414 flu cases and 347 deaths.
- India does not publish monthly comparisons, unlike the U.S. CDC's weekly flu tracking.

When Does Flu Peak in India?

- Peaks during the **monsoon** and has a **secondary peak in winter**.
- Estimated **1.27 lakh flu-linked deaths** annually (based on 2010–2013 modelling).
- Most deaths occur in **elderly (65+)** and **children under 5**.

Flu Vaccination in India

- Flu vaccine is **not part of India's universal immunisation programme**.
- Government **recommends** it for:
 - Health workers
 - Pregnant women
 - People with chronic illnesses
- Vaccine is only marked “desirable” for:





- Children <5 years
- Adults >65 years
- Uptake remains **very low** (<5%), despite high-risk groups and outbreaks.

WHO's Role in Flu Vaccines

- WHO announces recommended flu strains **months in advance** to help manufacturers prepare.
- India's vaccines are mostly **egg-based** (e.g. Serum Institute); Sanofi makes both egg-based and recombinant types.

India vs. U.S. in Vaccination

- As of Feb–March 2025:
 - **57 million** U.S. adults vaccinated
 - Nearly **47%** of U.S. children vaccinated
- In India:
 - Only **1.5% of adults above 45** have ever taken the flu vaccine (as per 2022 study).

Production & Supply in India

- Serum Institute produces **3–4 lakh doses**, can increase up to **1 million+** depending on demand.
- Flu vaccine market in India grew **21% in 2025** compared to 2024, but still not widespread.

[Health benefits of jackfruit: TH Science](#)

Science

Easy Explanation:

If mango is called the “king” of fruits, then jackfruit can be called the “doctor” of fruits — it’s that healthy! Jackfruit, known as *kathal* in Hindi and *chakka* in Malayalam, has been used in Indian traditional medicines like Ayurveda and Unani for a long time. It’s eaten in many ways across India — as a fruit in some places, and as a vegetable in others. In places like Kerala and the Northeast, unripe jackfruit is even cooked in curries and biryani. It’s a great meat substitute because it tastes similar but has less fat and cholesterol.

Interestingly, jackfruits grow straight from the trunk or thick branches, not from thin twigs like other fruits. That’s why they can grow huge — one in Kerala weighed 42 kg! Apart from food, jackfruit trees are also useful. In Southeast Asia, monks dye their robes yellow using jackfruit bark, and its wood is used for making termite-resistant furniture.



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But jackfruit is becoming even more famous now — as a **superfood**. Studies by researchers from universities like Cleveland and Duke in the U.S. have found it to be rich in protein, potassium, magnesium, and important vitamins like A, B, and C. It's better than apples and mangoes in terms of nutrition. It can help control blood sugar, reduce body fat buildup, and protect against diabetes and heart disease.

This is especially important for India, where more than **21 crore people** suffer from diabetes. One study in Andhra Pradesh even found that **green jackfruit powder** (made from unripe jackfruit) helped control blood sugar when used instead of rice or wheat. This makes it a great option even for people in North India, where jackfruit isn't grown much.

So whether you're diabetic or just want to stay healthy, jackfruit is a tasty and powerful addition to your diet — eat it ripe, in curries, or even as flour!

Key Takeaways:

1. Jackfruit Basics

- Known as *kathal*, *chakka*, *palaa*, etc. in Indian languages.
- Used in both fruit and vegetable forms — especially in South and Northeast India.
- Ripe jackfruit is sweet; unripe is used in curries and biryani.
- Grows directly on the trunk/branches — can reach massive sizes (record: 42 kg in Kerala).

2. Cultural and Everyday Uses

- Jackfruit bark used to dye monks' robes yellow in Southeast Asia.
- Wood is tough, termite-resistant, and used for furniture.

3. Health Benefits

- Rich in **protein, vitamins (A, B, C), minerals** (potassium, magnesium, phosphorus).
- Contains **carotenoids** that reduce risk of **Type 2 diabetes and heart diseases**.
- Helps in **controlling blood sugar** and reducing **fat buildup in organs**.
- **Vitamin A and C** help fight viral infections.

4. Role in Diabetes Management

- India has **~215 million diabetics**.
- Clinical trial in Andhra Pradesh (2021) showed **green jackfruit flour** helps lower blood sugar.





- Can replace rice or wheat in meals, especially helpful in northern India.

5. Low Awareness, High Potential

- Jackfruit powder (flour) is now being sold widely by Indian startups.
- Can benefit both **diabetics and healthy individuals** as part of daily diet.

24th March 2025

[Crops US hopes to sell to India-Indian Express Explained](#)

Economy

Easy Explanation

The US wants India to open its markets more to American crops—mainly **corn, soyabean, and cotton**—as part of trade talks, especially amid US threats to impose reciprocal tariffs. With China reducing imports from the US, India is seen as a **major future buyer** due to its growing demand for animal products, which drives the need for **more animal feed like corn and soyabean meal**.

A US report predicts India's feed demand will rise sharply by 2040–2050 due to economic and population growth. However, India currently imports very little feed due to **high tariffs (45–50%)** and restrictions on genetically modified (GM) products.

Cotton, once India's strong export crop, is now seeing lower production. India has started **importing more cotton**, which opens new opportunities for US cotton exports, especially if India **removes the 11% duty** on raw cotton.

Key takeaways

1. US Export Interests

- Three primary crops: **soyabean, corn, cotton**
- Combined US exports (2022): **\$62 billion**

2. Decreasing Chinese Imports (2022–2024)

- Soyabean: from **\$17.9 billion** to **\$12.8 billion**



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- Corn: from **\$5.2 billion** to **\$328 million**
- Cotton: from **\$2.9 billion** to **\$1.5 billion**

3. India's Increasing Demand (Projected by 2050)

- Corn consumption could reach **200.2 million tonnes** (up from **34.7 million tonnes** in 2022–23)
- Soyabean meal consumption could reach **68.3 million tonnes** (up from **6.2 million tonnes** in 2022–23)

4. Potential Imports Required by India (Rapid Growth Scenario)

- Corn imports: **46 million tonnes** (2040), **134 million tonnes** (2050)
- Soyabean meal imports: **19 million tonnes** (2040), **53 million tonnes** (2050)

5. Current Trade Barriers in India

- Soyabean import tariff: **45%**
- Corn import tariff: **50%**
- GM product imports effectively banned

6. India's Cotton Production Shift

- Production fell from **39.8 million bales** (peak in 2013–14) to **29.9 million bales** (2024)
- India's cotton imports (2024–25): **3 million bales**, exports: **1.7 million bales**
- Current import duty on cotton: **11%**

7. US Cotton Exports to India

- 2022: **\$491.2 million**
- 2023: **\$231.2 million**
- 2024: **\$210.7 million**
- Potential growth if import duties are removed.

[Why some in Meghalaya oppose rail connectivity to state-IndianExpress Explained](#)





Easy Explanation

Railway projects in Meghalaya—especially to Shillong and Jowai—have faced strong opposition for decades, mainly from Khasi and Jaintia pressure groups like the Khasi Students' Union (KSU). The concern is that railways could bring a large influx of “outsiders” into the state, threatening the **identity, land, and jobs** of the indigenous population.

Protesters are demanding **Inner Line Permit (ILP)** rules, like in other northeastern states, to regulate who can enter and stay. Meanwhile, some leaders argue that rail connectivity will **boost the economy, cut transport costs**, and help local businesses.

Because of the continued resistance, the Indian Railways is likely to **shelve projects** to Shillong and Byrnihat, and new plans to connect Jowai are already being opposed. Meghalaya remains the **only state capital without a railway link**, with just one operational station at Mendipathar in the Garo Hills.

Key takeaways

1. Existing Rail Connectivity

- Meghalaya has **1 railway station**: Mendipathar (operational since 2014)
- Daily passenger trains run to **Guwahati**
- Freight services began **recently**

2. Shelved/Blocked Projects

- **Byrnihat project** (21.5 km): Only Assam-side construction (19 km) completed
- **Shillong project** (108.76 km): No land acquired due to opposition
- **Jowai project** (proposed in 2023): Facing early protests
- Indian Railways has asked for a **return of ₹209.37 crore** allocated for land acquisition

3. Opposition Reasons

- Led by **Khasi Students' Union (KSU)** and other local groups
- Fear of mass migration from outside Meghalaya due to **easy and cheap train access**
- Demand for **Inner Line Permit (ILP)** system to regulate non-local entry

4. Inner Line Permit (ILP)

- Already in force in **Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland, Mizoram, and Manipur**
- Requires Indian citizens from outside the state to get official permission to enter/stay





5. Demographic Concerns

- Khasi population: **13–14 lakh**, Garo population: **10 lakh**
- Fear of becoming a **minority in their own land**

6. Mixed Public Opinion

- Some leaders and citizens see trains as an **economic opportunity**
- Could help **reduce transport costs**, increase **market access**, and support **local businesses**

7. Garo Hills Push for Expansion

- Leaders from **South Garo Hills** want to **extend the existing line** to Baghmara
- Seen as a **positive development** by sections of the Garo community

[AN OPEN JUSTICE-Indian Express Editorial](#)

Polity

Easy Explanation

The Supreme Court is taking unprecedented steps to ensure transparency and accountability within the judiciary. In a case involving Justice Yashwant Varma—where cash was reportedly found at his residence during a fire incident—a three-member panel has been set up by Chief Justice Sanjiv Khanna for an in-house inquiry. This action is part of a broader move toward addressing complaints against high-level judges and protecting the integrity of the judicial system. Similar measures were taken recently after another in-house inquiry was launched following controversial remarks by an Allahabad High Court judge regarding the Uniform Civil Code.

Key takeaways

Transparency Initiative

- Chief Justice Sanjiv Khanna has initiated a three-member in-house inquiry panel.
- This marks an unprecedented move to ensure institutional transparency in the judiciary.

Justice Varma Case

- Cash was found at the residence of Justice Yashwant Varma during a fire incident on March 14.
- Judicial work has been withdrawn from Justice Varma pending further inquiry.



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- The preliminary internal report, partly redacted, has raised important questions about judicial conduct.

Historical Context

- This is the second in-house inquiry in just over three months.
- The previous inquiry involved Justice Shekhar Yadav from the Allahabad High Court, following his controversial speech on the Uniform Civil Code.
- Public and political reactions have pushed the judiciary to reconsider its traditional methods for handling internal complaints.

Judicial Accountability and Institutional Integrity

- The current measures underscore the importance of judicial independence and accountability.
- The inquiry process is seen as a test for the judiciary in handling cases involving its own members fairly and transparently.
- The approach sets a new benchmark for how allegations against high-ranking judges should be managed.

Future Implications

- The developments come at a crucial time as CJI Khanna is set to retire in May.
- His successor, BR Gavai, will inherit the responsibility of maintaining a balance between due process and institutional autonomy.
- The handling of these cases is critical for preserving public trust and the system of checks and balances in the judicial framework.

[Migration,after Covid-Indian Express Editorial](#)

Sociology

Easy Explanation

The COVID-19 pandemic dramatically disrupted migration patterns in India. During the lockdowns, millions of migrant workers returned from cities to rural areas due to job losses and harsh living conditions. As the crisis eased, most migrants began moving back to urban centers in search of better opportunities. In addition to economic factors and rural distress, climate change is increasingly influencing migration by impacting agriculture. Internationally, while many Indian emigrants faced hardships, remittances stayed robust, supporting households. Student migration has also surged. To address migrant vulnerabilities, the government has implemented policies like the e-Shram portal and One Nation One Ration Card, but challenges such as outdated migration data and incomplete coverage persist.



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Key takeaways

1. During the first lockdown, an estimated 44.13 million migrants returned to rural areas; during the second lockdown, the figure was 26.3 million.
2. Most returning migrants later moved back to urban areas as the rural economy could not sustain the workforce.
3. Projections indicate that 40% of India's population will reside in cities by 2026.
4. Climate change is increasingly affecting agriculture, particularly in regions like Odisha, driving further out-migration.
5. International migration patterns have shifted, with increasing numbers of Indians moving to non-traditional destinations such as parts of Europe (including Malta and Georgia) and Africa.
6. Remittances remained resilient despite job losses, with outward remittances for education peaking at approximately \$3,171 million in 2021.
7. Student migration from Kerala nearly doubled from 1.29 lakh in 2018 to 2.5 lakh in 2023.
8. Policy initiatives such as the e-Shram portal and One Nation One Ration Card aim to provide social security and food security, although gaps remain in registration and coverage.
9. The lack of updated migration data, partly due to delays in the census and limited comprehensive databases, continues to challenge effective policy responses.
10. The Kerala Migration Survey model, conducted every five years since 1998, has improved understanding of migration trends and is recommended for replication in other states to enhance governance and policy interventions.

[The need for universal and equitable health coverage-The Hindu Editorial](#)

Sociology

Easy Explanation

India has made significant progress in its fight against tuberculosis (TB) by adopting innovative strategies that improve detection, treatment, and prevention. The country has expanded molecular testing, introduced a shorter, all-oral drug regimen (BPaLM), and increased nutritional support for patients under the Nikshay Poshan Yojana. These measures have led to a notable decline in TB incidence and TB-related deaths. In addition, TB care is being integrated into the broader public health system through the Ayushman Bharat initiative, which aims to provide universal health coverage (UHC). This integration seeks to decentralize services, improve patient experiences at primary health centers, and reduce financial burdens while addressing social determinants and stigma associated with TB.

Key Takeaways

1. **Progress in TB Care:**



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- Expanded molecular testing for rapid TB and drug-resistance detection.
- Introduction of the shorter, all-oral BPaLM regimen (combining Bedaquiline, Pretomanid, Linezolid, and Moxifloxacin).
- Doubling of nutrition support under the Nikshay Poshan Yojana to ₹1,000 per month.
- Roll-out of TB preventive therapy and community engagement through TB survivors and Champions.

2. Impact on TB Statistics:

- TB incidence declined by 17.7%, from 237 per 100,000 population in 2015 to 195 per 100,000 in 2023.
- TB-related deaths reduced by 21.4%.

3. Integration into Universal Health Coverage (UHC):

- TB services are now part of the Ayushman Bharat scheme, which includes:
 - Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (AB-PMJAY) for insurance coverage.
 - Ayushman Arogya Mandirs (AAMs), serving as primary health centers and sputum collection points.

4. Decentralized and Person-Centered Care:

- TB patients can receive diagnosis, treatment, and preventive care at the nearest health center, reducing travel time and costs.
- Emphasis on training community health officers at AAMs to identify and refer high-risk TB patients.

5. Challenges in the Private Sector:

- Over 50% of people with TB symptoms seek care in the private sector, where inconsistent standards lead to delays, poorer outcomes, and high out-of-pocket expenses.
- Strengthening referral mechanisms from private providers to the public health system is crucial.

6. Key Steps Toward Equitable TB Care:

- Strengthen person-centered care and scale model interventions for vulnerable groups.
- Recognize and address intersectional factors (gender, caste, age, disability, socio-economic status) that affect TB outcomes.
- Promote integrated care models that screen for co-morbid conditions alongside TB.





- Expand social protection measures (e.g., additional nutrition support, wage-loss schemes, livelihood programs) to reduce indirect costs.
- Enhance public awareness and communication to reduce TB stigma and improve early detection.

7. Overall Goal:

- Ensure every individual receives high-quality, person-centered TB care as part of the broader goal of achieving universal health coverage and TB elimination in India.

[Not the only path-The Hindu Editorial](#)

Internal security

Easy Explanation

The Article argues that relying solely on a militaristic approach to counter the Maoist insurgency in India can lead to significant tribal repression and unintended harm. While aggressive operations in areas like Bastar have reduced the number of active Maoists, they risk alienating tribal communities by increasing state violence and repression. This approach not only endangers innocent civilians caught in the crossfire but also strengthens the insurgents' narrative of state oppression, potentially deepening tribal disenchantment and bolstering Maoist influence. The piece advocates for a balanced strategy that includes engaging civil society, negotiating truces, and offering rehabilitation incentives—similar to the pathways taken by FARC in Colombia and the Nepali Maoists—to create a more sustainable and inclusive resolution to the conflict.

Key Takeaways

1. In recent operations in Bastar, 30 alleged Maoists were killed in one day, pushing the total this year to over 100.
2. The Communist Party of India (Maoist) has been active for more than 20 years and reached its peak insurgency in the mid- to late-2000s.
3. The Maoist strategy has shifted from mass mobilization to a more militaristic approach, which has eroded their support base in tribal areas.
4. Aggressive state operations, such as the Salwa Judum campaign, have at times led to tribal repression and collateral harm.
5. A purely militaristic approach risks deepening disenchantment among tribal communities, potentially causing Maoist ideologies to take firmer root.
6. A more balanced strategy involving civil society, negotiations, and incentives for rehabilitation (as seen in examples like FARC in Colombia and the Nepali Maoists) is proposed as a better pathway to ending the insurgency.

25th March 2025



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Polity

Easy Explanation

1. What Happened?

- A fire broke out on March 14 at the official residence of Delhi High Court Judge **Justice Yashwant Varma**. Allegedly, large amounts of cash were found there.
- In response, **Chief Justice of India (CJI) Sanjiv Khanna** formed a **three-member inquiry committee**—an internal “in-house” investigation—to look into the matter.

2. Why an In-House Inquiry?

- The Constitution specifies a formal procedure for **impeaching** judges (removing them from office), but impeachment happens only for very serious “misbehaviour” or “incapacity.”
- The Supreme Court realized in the mid-1990s there needed to be a **less drastic** way to handle allegations that might be serious but not necessarily rise to the level of impeachment. This led to the creation of an **internal procedure**.

3. Impeachment Basics

- Under **Article 124(4)** (applicable to Supreme Court judges) and **Article 218** (High Court judges), Parliament can remove a judge via impeachment but must meet **very high voting thresholds**:
 1. **Two-thirds** of the members present and voting in **each House** must support removal, and
 2. More than **50%** of the **total membership** in each House must vote in favor.
- That is a **rare** and **very difficult** process.

4. In-House Procedure

- In 1995, certain allegations against a Bombay High Court Chief Justice prompted the Supreme Court to create this **internal mechanism**.
- It was formalized in **1997** and **updated in 2014**.
- **Steps**:
 1. If a complaint is made against a judge, the CJI can get a **preliminary report** from the Chief Justice of that state's High Court.
 2. If the CJI decides the complaint is serious, the judge is asked for his side.





3. If more probing is needed, the CJI appoints a **three-member committee** (two Chief Justices of other High Courts + one High Court judge).
4. The committee examines the evidence, hears the judge's explanation, and then reports to the CJI.
5. If the allegations are not severe enough for impeachment, the CJI might simply **advise** or **warn** the judge.
6. If they are severe, the CJI can suggest the judge **resign** or **retire voluntarily**.
7. If the judge refuses, the CJI can stop giving him/her judicial work and inform the government that impeachment might be required.

5. Current Status of Justice Yashwant Varma

- For now, the CJI has told the Delhi High Court not to assign him any new judicial cases.
- The **three-member** panel will investigate and recommend further action.

Key Takeaways

- **Two Tracks for Judge Misconduct:**
 - **Impeachment** (requires a high parliamentary vote threshold).
 - **In-House Inquiry** (internal court procedure for serious but possibly non-impeachable conduct).
- **Why This Matters:**
 - Impeachment is **rare** and **complex**, so the Supreme Court's internal mechanism helps maintain **judicial accountability** without always resorting to a full-blown constitutional process.
- **Outcome Possibilities:**
 - The in-house panel could clear the judge, advise lesser action (like a formal caution), or, if allegations are very serious, recommend steps toward **removal**.
- **Preserving Judicial Independence:**
 - The in-house procedure allows the judiciary to **police its own ranks** while maintaining independence, ensuring that not every complaint escalates into a political or parliamentary showdown.

[Five contentious changes proposed by the Waqf Bill, 2024-Indian Express Explained](#)

Governance

Easy Explanation



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The **Waqf (Amendment) Bill, 2024** has created controversy because it makes big changes to how Muslim religious properties (like mosques and graveyards) are managed. The Bill allows **non-Muslims** to be part of Waqf Boards, which many feel is wrong since Waqf is a religious matter. It also gives **government officers** the power to decide if land belongs to Waqf or the government, raising concerns of bias. The Bill removes the rule that land used for religious purposes over time (even without documents) can be considered Waqf. It also makes **online registration of all Waqf land compulsory within six months**, or else legal rights over that land may be lost. Lastly, it lets people **challenge Waqf Tribunal decisions in High Court**, which could lead to long legal battles. Many Muslim groups and opposition leaders say the Bill **interferes with religious freedom** and could lead to loss of Waqf properties.

Key Takeaways

- The Bill has sparked **nationwide criticism** from Muslim organizations and opposition parties, who see it as interference in religious affairs.
- It allows **non-Muslims to be appointed** as members and even CEO of Waqf Boards, raising concerns over religious autonomy.
- The power to decide if a property is Waqf or government-owned has been shifted from Waqf Tribunals to **state government officers**, leading to fears of bias.
- The Bill **removes the concept of “waqf by user”**, which protected properties used for religious purposes over time without formal documents. This could impact many older mosques and graveyards.
- All Waqf properties must be **registered in a central database within six months**, or the right to go to court in case of disputes may be lost.
- **Waqf Tribunal decisions are no longer final** and can now be challenged in High Court, possibly leading to longer legal battles.

[Reimagining reservation-Indian Express Editorial](#)

Polity

Easy Explanation

Telangana has taken a bold step by raising OBC reservations to 42% and sub-classifying 59 Scheduled Castes (SCs) into three groups to ensure fair distribution of benefits. These reforms aim to address internal inequalities within marginalized groups, based on findings from a caste survey. While the move challenges the Supreme Court's 50% reservation cap, Telangana argues that its scientifically grounded data justifies this exception. The SC sub-classification has stronger legal support due to a 2024 Supreme Court ruling. However, success depends on legal validation, accurate socio-economic data, and proper implementation. Politically, these reforms may help Congress gain support among OBC and SC communities. Nationally, it could reposition the party as a champion of data-driven social justice. Yet, risks remain: legal rejection, community backlash, or opposition exploitation. Regardless of the outcome, Telangana's move could reshape India's affirmative action policies for years to come.

Key Takeaways:



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1. Bold Quota Reforms

- Telangana increased OBC quota to 42% and split SCs into 3 sub-groups.
- Aims to ensure more equitable distribution of reservation benefits.

2. Legal and Constitutional Challenges

- Breaches Supreme Court's 50% cap on reservations.
- Justified using caste survey data as evidence of "extraordinary circumstances."
- SC sub-classification is backed by a 2024 Supreme Court ruling.

3. Importance of Data and Methodology

- The success hinges on proving actual deprivation—not just population numbers.
- Survey must show disparities in education, jobs, and public services among groups.
- Courts demand strong, transparent data (unlike Bihar's rejected attempt).

4. Political Calculations

- Congress aims to consolidate OBC and SC votes (over 70% of Telangana's electorate).
- The move positions Congress as a "social justice" party, contrasting BJP's stance.

5. National Implications

- Could influence similar policies in Congress-ruled states like Karnataka, Jharkhand.
- May redefine Congress's appeal ahead of 2029 elections.

6. Risks and Opposition

- Legal rejection if the Court upholds the 50% cap strictly.
- Potential resistance from dominant sub-castes fearing reduced benefits.
- BJP may label it as "vote-bank politics" and target delays as tokenism.

7. New Phase in Reservation Policy





- Marks a shift from population-based quotas to data-driven, targeted inclusion.
- Raises debate over the need to revise the 50% reservation cap in today's context.

8. The Road Ahead

- Long-term impact depends on court approval and effective execution.
- Could lead to a new, nuanced era of affirmative action focusing on **intersectional inequalities** rather than broad group identity.

[China ties — beware conciliation without deterrence-The Hindu Editorial](#)

International relations

Easy Explanation

India is currently softening its tone toward China, with Prime Minister Modi recently calling for dialogue to build a stable relationship. This shift follows years of tension, especially after a deadly 2020 border clash. Despite unresolved disputes, both nations have made progress in disengaging troops and continue trading heavily. However, it's unclear if India's friendlier tone signals a true policy change or just a strategic move. India is also wary of America's reliability under Trump, especially if the U.S. chooses to make deals with rivals like China. Experts warn that while peace is desirable, India shouldn't reduce military investment. True stability comes not just from dialogue but also from deterrence—maintaining strong military power to prevent future aggression.

Key Takeaways:

1. Changing Tone, Unclear Policy

- PM Modi made unusually warm comments about China.
- India may be signaling openness to dialogue or just hedging its options.

2. History of Tensions and Recovery

- Relations ruptured in 2020 after deadly border clashes.
- Since then, military disengagements and rising trade hint at cautious normalization.

3. Economic and Strategic Realism

- India must manage ties with China, a much larger economy, while pursuing national development.
- Stabilizing relations may be pragmatic, not submissive.



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4. U.S. Policy Uncertainty

- Trump's shifting approach raises concerns about American reliability.
- India may doubt future U.S. support in a crisis.

5. Deterrence Still Vital

- A friendlier tone must be backed by military strength.
- Defence investment is lagging; further delay risks national security.

6. Long-Term Security Strategy

- Modernizing the military and deepening cooperation with allies is essential.
- Dialogue without deterrence could lead to vulnerability.

[The need for a localised urban agenda-The Hindu Text and Context](#)

Sociology

Easy Explanation

India is rapidly urbanising, but the country's cities are still governed through centralised schemes designed far from local realities. Though the Centre has supported urbanisation through major missions like JNNURM, AMRUT, and PMAY, this top-down approach often ignores unique local needs. Cities differ widely in their challenges—some need housing, others don't; some need sanitation, others need infrastructure. Yet, urban funds come with rigid conditions and priorities set by the Centre. Experts argue that financial decentralisation—giving more funds and power directly to states and cities—is essential. Local governments, being closer to the people, can better decide how to spend resources effectively. A shift to a bottom-up, needs-based approach will lead to more efficient development, improved livability, and stronger trust in governance.

Key Takeaways:

1. Centralised Urban Missions Dominate

- Urban development is led by centrally sponsored schemes.
- Schemes like AMRUT, SBM, and PMAY use a prescriptive top-down model.

2. Cities Lack Flexibility

- One-size-fits-all models ignore regional differences.
- Local governments often can't prioritise based on actual needs.



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3. Finance Flow is Too Centralised

- Funds come with rigid conditions.
- Cities are treated as "growth engines" but denied financial autonomy.

4. Regional Realities Are Vastly Different

- States like Kerala see rural-urban blending.
- Some cities need infrastructure, while others need housing or water.

5. Top-Down Doesn't Work Everywhere

- Schemes like Smart Cities often led to poor, unused infrastructure.
- Cities need tailored solutions—not centrally imposed guidelines.

6. Call for Financial Decentralisation

- Experts suggest 70% of Union Budget transfers should go directly to States and cities.
- Local governments should choose their priorities in areas like housing, water, and mobility.

7. Democratic Governance Needs Local Leadership

- Central bureaucracy is too distant to respond to city-specific issues.
- Empowered city governments build stronger citizen trust and more efficient outcomes.

8. A New Urban Vision is Needed

- Redefine the roles of Central, State, and Local governments.
- A decentralised, context-sensitive approach is crucial for sustainable urban transformation.

[What are DNA polymorphisms and how do they differentiate between people?-The Hindu Science](#)

Science and technology

Easy Explanation

DNA polymorphisms are natural variations in DNA that help distinguish one individual from another. These variations—especially in regions called short tandem repeats (STRs)—form the basis of DNA fingerprinting. STRs are repeating DNA sequences that vary in length from person to person. Scientists use techniques like PCR (Polymerase Chain Reaction) to copy these regions and analyze them through capillary electrophoresis.



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The result is a unique DNA fingerprint that can identify individuals, determine relationships (like parent and child), solve crimes, and even identify remains from disasters. Only identical twins share the same DNA fingerprint. DNA's stability allows it to be used even decades or centuries after death, making it a powerful tool in forensics, archaeology, and legal justice.

Key Takeaways:

1. What Are DNA Polymorphisms?

- Small variations in DNA between individuals.
- Help differentiate people by their unique genetic patterns.

2. Role of STRs (Short Tandem Repeats)

- STRs are repetitive DNA segments.
- Number of repeats varies from person to person—key to fingerprinting.

3. DNA Fingerprinting = Unique Identity

- Like an Aadhaar number, but biological.
- Except for identical twins, everyone's DNA fingerprint is unique.

4. How DNA Fingerprints Are Made

- DNA is copied using PCR (Polymerase Chain Reaction).
- STRs are analyzed via capillary electrophoresis, sorted by size.

5. Uses of DNA Fingerprints

- Identifying remains at disaster sites.
- Solving crimes (using blood, sweat, saliva).
- Establishing biological relationships.
- Clearing wrongfully accused individuals.

6. DNA's Stability Over Time

- Can survive thousands of years.





- Used in solving "cold cases" or studying ancient human remains.

7. DNA Analysis Tools

- PCR: Amplifies small DNA samples.
- Thermocycler: Machine that performs PCR cycles.
- Capillary electrophoresis: Sorts DNA by size for analysis.

8. Importance in Justice and Medicine

- Critical in forensic science and organ donation matching.
- Builds trust in science-based legal investigations.

Glaciers losing ice at record levels around the globe: UN-The Hindu Science

Environment

Easy Explanation

Glaciers around the world are melting at record rates, with the last three years seeing the most ice lost since tracking began, says a UNESCO report. Since 1975, about 9 trillion tonnes of ice have disappeared—equivalent to a block the size of Germany, 25 meters thick. In 2024 alone, glaciers lost 450 billion tonnes of mass. This rapid melt is driven by rising global temperatures due to climate change, especially from burning fossil fuels. The consequences include rising sea levels, loss of freshwater for 1.1 billion mountain dwellers, and increased natural disasters like floods and landslides. Glacial loss is also increasing local water conflicts, such as in East Africa, where glaciers are vanishing fast. Even small sea level rises affect hundreds of thousands of people annually. Experts warn that protecting glaciers will require global effort, as their loss has far-reaching environmental, social, and economic consequences.

Key Takeaways:

1. Glacial Melting at Record Levels

- 2021–2024 saw the fastest glacial loss ever recorded.
- 9 trillion tonnes of ice lost since 1975.

2. Climate Change Is the Main Driver

- Caused by fossil fuel use and rising global temperatures.
- Expected to speed up further if not addressed.

3. Major Contributor to Sea Level Rise



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- Mountain glaciers alone caused 18 mm rise since 2000.
- Just 1 mm rise can increase annual flood risk for 300,000 people.

4. Billions Depend on Glaciers

- Glaciers hold 70% of the world's freshwater.
- 1.1 billion people in mountain regions face the worst impact.

5. Increased Natural Hazards

- Avalanches, landslides, flash floods, and GLOFs are becoming more common.
- Glacier loss leads to water shortages and disasters.

6. Regional Crises Are Growing

- East Africa's glaciers may vanish by 2030.
- Melting has led to local conflicts and loss of cultural heritage.

7. Long-Term Global Impact

- Water, energy, and agriculture systems are under threat.
- Glacial loss affects people worldwide, not just nearby regions.

8. Urgent Need for Collective Action

- Global cooperation is essential to slow glacier loss.
- "Billions are connected to glaciers—billions must help protect them."

26th March 2025

[How global warming is affecting mountain regions across the world-Indian Express Explained](#)

Environment

Easy Explanation

Global warming is causing fast and mostly irreversible changes in mountain areas across the world. Temperatures are rising faster at higher elevations, leading to rapid glacier melting. Since 1975, glaciers have lost over 9,000 billion tonnes of ice, and the melting is speeding up. Permafrost—frozen ground in mountains—is also thawing, releasing



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carbon into the atmosphere and making slopes unstable, which raises the risk of landslides. Snow cover is shrinking, especially in spring and summer, and snowfall patterns are becoming less predictable, with more rain falling instead of snow. This affects water supply for around 2 billion people who rely on mountain water sources. Melting glaciers also contribute to rising sea levels and increase the risk of sudden floods from glacial lakes. These changes threaten ecosystems and communities downstream, making it urgent for countries to create better climate policies and act quickly to reduce global warming impacts.

Key Takeaways:

- **Glaciers are melting fast** – more than 9,000 billion tonnes of ice lost since 1975.
- **Permafrost is thawing** – releasing carbon and making slopes unstable.
- **Snow cover is shrinking** – especially in spring and summer.
- **Snowfall is less predictable** – more rain falls instead of snow in many places.
- **Freshwater supply is at risk** – 2 billion people depend on mountain water.
- **Flood risks are rising** – especially from glacial lake outbursts.
- **Sea levels are rising** – glacier melt adds 1 mm per year, risking floods for 300,000+ people.
- **Urgent action needed** – stronger climate policies and awareness are critical.

[Why Kerala has finally opened the door for private universities in the state-Indian Express Explained](#)

Governance

Easy Explanation

Kerala has passed a new law allowing private universities in the state for the first time. Until now, it was the only Indian state without any. The 2025 Bill sets rules for how these universities will work. The government will have representatives in all major university councils to ensure public oversight. At least 40% of seats in each course must go to permanent Kerala residents, including reserved categories like SC, ST, and OBC. The bill also includes student representation and a government-run regulatory body. Kerala had previously resisted private universities due to fears of commercialization. But the government now says public universities are being strengthened, and controlled private investment can help students stay in Kerala instead of going out of state or abroad. Critics, however, argue that this move doesn't address bigger problems like brain drain or empty seats in existing colleges. Other states like Gujarat and Tamil Nadu already allow private universities with similar rules.

Key Takeaways:

- **Kerala Ends Private University Ban:** Kerala passes a 2025 Bill allowing private universities for the first time, reversing a decades-old policy.
- **Strong Government Oversight:** The law mandates government nominees on key university bodies like the governing, executive, and academic councils.



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- **Seat Reservations for Locals:** 40% of seats in each course must go to permanent residents of Kerala, including SC/ST/OBC reservations.
- **Student Representation:** Each university must have a student council with elected members, including women and SC/ST students.
- **Dedicated Regulatory Body:** A new government-run body will monitor teaching quality, research, and training in private universities.
- **Shift in Left's Position:** The CPI(M), once strongly against private education, now supports regulated private investment alongside strengthening public institutions.
- **Reason for Change:** Many students leave Kerala for better private education elsewhere; the government aims to retain them by offering local options.
- **Criticism:** Opposition says the Bill doesn't address falling enrollment and brain drain in existing colleges.

[Europe without America-Indian Express Editorial](#)

International relations

Easy Explanation

After last week's phone call between President Trump and President Putin discussing a ceasefire in Ukraine, a notable shift is emerging in Europe's security and defence strategy. Russian officials, including Dmitry Medvedev, imply that America's reduced commitment is giving Russia greater influence in European affairs. As a result, European nations are rethinking their reliance on US protection and exploring new military measures. Plans such as Readiness2030 aim to strengthen Europe's own defence capabilities, while some countries consider reintroducing conscription to bolster armed forces. Meanwhile, debates about nuclear deterrence have resurfaced, with proposals to extend or develop nuclear capabilities in response to perceived Russian threats. This evolving landscape challenges Europe to become more self-reliant and united in defence, even as internal disagreements and economic concerns complicate the shift. The situation underscores a broader realignment in global security and Europe's quest for greater autonomy. Europe is now seeking a more independent future.

Key Takeaways:

- **US Withdrawal Impact:** The recent Trump–Putin call signals a reduced American security commitment to Europe, prompting a rethinking of transatlantic defense.
- **European Self-Reliance:** European nations are considering boosting their military capabilities through initiatives like Readiness2030 and even reintroducing conscription to counterbalance the perceived US withdrawal.
- **Nuclear Deterrence Debate:** The credibility of the US nuclear umbrella is waning, sparking discussions about extending nuclear deterrence or developing indigenous nuclear capabilities, especially in countries like Germany and Poland.
- **Russian Influence:** Russian efforts to separate Europe from the US are influencing European security policies, with leaders wary of becoming overly dependent on American protection.



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- **Internal Divisions:** Despite a shared concern about security, Europe faces internal disagreements on the best strategy for defense and military modernization.

[AI, UBI, in between-Indian Express Editorial](#)

Science and technology

Easy Explanation

The idea that artificial intelligence will transform how we work and earn money is gaining attention, as Bill Gates has discussed. Gates suggests that, thanks to AI, traditional jobs might eventually vanish, leading to a world where work isn't needed just to earn a living. Instead, AI-driven productivity could reduce the cost of essential services like healthcare, education, and legal advice, creating what he calls "deflationary abundance." In this future, people could enjoy high-quality services at near-zero cost, shifting the focus from earning cash to accessing value. However, this shift raises important questions: if traditional employment disappears, how will people secure enough income? One proposed solution is a universal basic income (UBI), where everyone receives regular financial support regardless of their job status. Gates also emphasizes that countries like India have a strategic advantage by adapting open-source AI tools, which can help them leap forward quickly and reshape society.

Key Takeaways:

- **Transformation of Work:** Bill Gates envisions AI potentially eliminating traditional jobs, leading to a fundamental shift in how people earn a living.
- **Post-Labor Economy:** In a future where AI drives productivity, society might move away from the market-driven work model, making traditional employment less necessary.
- **Deflationary Abundance:** AI could dramatically lower the costs of essential services—like healthcare, education, and legal advice—making them almost free and shifting value from cash to access.
- **Universal Basic Income (UBI):** As jobs decline, a UBI could serve as a safety net, ensuring that people have the financial means to meet their basic needs.
- **India's Strategic Position:** With access to open-source AI models and tools, India could quickly adapt and benefit from AI advancements, narrowing the gap with leading nations.

[The Canadian election, shaped by Trudeau and Trump-The Hindu Editorial](#)

International relations

Easy Explanation

Canada's upcoming election is heavily influenced by domestic tensions and the Trump presidency in the U.S. Former Prime Minister Justin Trudeau resigned, paving the way for Liberal leader Mark Carney, who called snap elections to strengthen his position. The Liberal Party gained popularity due to strong Canadian nationalism sparked by President Trump's aggressive trade policies and controversial claim of merging Canada into the U.S. These actions have triggered widespread anger among Canadians, leading to increased support for buying local and avoiding American goods. On the other side, Conservative leader Pierre Poilievre has lost ground, partly because voters see similarities between him and Trump's style of politics. The election outcome will impact Canada's future relations, especially with the U.S., India,



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and China. Both leading candidates seek better ties with India, but domestic pressures related to Khalistani groups complicate relations. Regardless of who wins, managing domestic unity and foreign policy challenges remains critical.

Key Takeaways:

- **Leadership Shake-Up:** Former Prime Minister Trudeau lost support, leading to his resignation and the appointment of Mark Carney as the new Liberal leader.
- **Snap Elections:** Facing a looming no-confidence vote, Carney called snap elections on April 28, presenting an opportune moment for the Liberal Party.
- **Trump's Impact:** U.S. President Trump's policies and rhetoric have stirred Canadian nationalism, boosting support for the Liberals amid anti-American sentiments.
- **Conservative Challenges:** Conservative leader Pierre Poilievre, whose rhetoric echoes Trump's, has lost his early lead and now ties with the Liberals in polls.
- **Main Contenders:** The race is primarily between Carney and Poilievre, with Bloc Québécois and NDP leaders playing lesser roles.
- **Foreign Policy Hurdles:** The winner will need to navigate strained U.S. relations and reorient Canada's ties toward Asia and Europe.

[The 'Great Abandonment' of Afghanistan-The Hindu Editorial](#)

International relations

Easy Explanation

The 'Great Abandonment' of Afghanistan describes how the United States and Europe disengaged from Afghan affairs, leaving the country vulnerable to the Taliban. U.S. policies under Trump and Biden, including bypassing the elected government in favor of direct talks with the Taliban and signing the Doha Accords, weakened Afghanistan's leadership. This neglect paved the way for the Taliban's return, resulting in harsher restrictions on women, who now face bans on education, employment, and even public visibility. Meanwhile, countries such as Russia, China, Pakistan, and others have accepted the Taliban regime, while India struggles to balance strategic interests and moral principles. India has cautiously reopened its technical mission in Kabul and considers deeper engagement, but critics warn that ignoring exiled Afghan voices and women's rights could damage its longstanding goodwill. The abandonment has left many Afghans feeling betrayed and uncertain about their future. This crisis highlights urgent need for global responsibility.

Key Takeaways:

- **U.S. Abandonment:** The U.S. disengaged from Afghanistan under Trump and Biden, negotiating directly with the Taliban and leaving the elected government sidelined, leading to the Taliban's return in 2021.
- **Taliban 2.0 Reality:** Despite global non-recognition, the Taliban regime has firm control and is more repressive—especially against women—than during its previous rule.
- **India's Balancing Act:** India has cautiously re-engaged with the Taliban via a technical mission in Kabul but hasn't fully endorsed their rule. It's now considering deeper engagement, including allowing a Taliban-



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appointed ambassador.

- **Pragmatism vs. Principle:** India's shift is driven by realpolitik—acknowledging the Taliban's grip, maintaining regional presence, and reviving development efforts—but critics warn it risks moral compromise and alienating pro-India Afghan groups.
- **Strategic Risks:** Ignoring exiled Afghan voices and women's rights could erode India's long-standing goodwill. Past refugees built strong pro-India ties; today, denial of visas signals a retreat from those values.
- **Call for Inclusive Engagement:** India is urged to balance ties with the Taliban while supporting opposition groups and promoting Afghan women's rights, maintaining broad relevance for future outcomes.

[What is India's approach to citizens on death row abroad?-The Hindu Text and Context](#)

International relations

Easy Explanation

India's approach to citizens on death row abroad involves a multi-step diplomatic process aimed at assisting those convicted in foreign courts. When an Indian national is sentenced to death abroad, the case typically passes through three phases: initial arrest and indictment, a lengthy judicial process culminating in a death sentence, and finally, an appeal for clemency. Families are guided to submit pardon petitions, which the Indian embassy then forwards to the relevant foreign authorities or rulers for reconsideration. In countries with transparent legal systems, the embassy can also nominate lawyers and provide legal support using welfare funds. In some Gulf states, sentences may be commuted in exchange for blood money, subject to state and victim family approval. However, in authoritarian systems with opaque judicial procedures, like Saudi Arabia, the embassy often remains uninformed until after execution. India has intervened in several cases, saving lives through diplomatic appeals and legal efforts.

Key Takeaways:

- **Three-Phase Process:** Arrest & indictment, judicial sentencing, and an appeal for clemency.
- **Diplomatic Assistance:** Embassies guide families, forward pardon petitions, and provide legal aid.
- **Commutation via Blood Money:** In some Gulf states, death sentences may be commuted if approved.
- **Limited Role in Authoritarian Regimes:** In countries like Saudi Arabia, embassies often learn of sentences post-execution.
- **Past Interventions:** India has successfully intervened in cases, helping save Indian nationals on death row.
- **Current Figures:** As of March 20, 49 Indians are on death row abroad, with the UAE and Saudi Arabia holding the highest numbers.



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27th March 2025

Status of India's bioeconomy, how to sustain further growth-Indian Express Explained

Economy

Easy Explanation

1. What is Bioeconomy?

- **Bioeconomy** involves using biological resources (plants, animals, microorganisms) and natural biological processes to produce goods and services.
- Typical examples include **biofuels** like ethanol (made by fermenting crops such as sugarcane) and **bioplastics** derived from renewable sources.

2. Growing Importance

- Bio-based products offer **sustainable, eco-friendly, and often cheaper** alternatives to traditional fossil-fuel-based products.
- They are increasingly being used in a wide range of sectors beyond healthcare and agriculture – for example, in **fuels, chemicals, textiles, and construction materials**.

3. India's Bioeconomy Value

- In 2024, the **value of India's bioeconomy** reached **\$165 billion**, which is **over 4.2% of India's GDP**.
- There are aspirations for India's bioeconomy to exceed **\$300 billion by 2030** and possibly **\$1 trillion by 2047**.

4. Sector-Wise Growth

- **Industrial (biofuels, bioplastics, etc.):** Nearly half of India's bioeconomy value (\$78 billion).
- **Pharma (vaccines, medicines, etc.):** About 35% of total value.
- **Research & IT (biotech software, bioinformatics, clinical trials):** This is the **fastest-growing** segment.

5. Regional Distribution

- Five states—Maharashtra, Karnataka, Telangana, Gujarat, and Andhra Pradesh—contribute over **two-thirds** of India's total bioeconomy value.
- The eastern and northeastern regions together account for **less than 6%** of the total value, indicating a **significant regional imbalance**.



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6. Government Push (BioE3 Policy)

- The government unveiled the **BioE3 policy** (Biotechnology for Economy, Environment, and Employment) to position India as a **global hub** for bio-manufacturing and research.
- Focus areas include **bio-based chemicals, enzymes, functional foods, precision biotherapeutics, marine/space biotech, and climate-resilient agriculture.**

7. Challenges & Way Forward

- Maintaining high growth will require **more innovation, policy support, infrastructure development, and better regulatory clarity** (especially for genetically modified crops).
- The **regional imbalance** needs addressing through more inclusive investments and policies.
- There is a proposal to create a **National BioEconomy Mission** and a **single-window regulatory mechanism** to help biotech solutions scale more quickly.

Key Takeaways

1. **Rapid Expansion:** India's bioeconomy almost doubled in value over the last few years, highlighting a substantial growth opportunity.
2. **Substantial Share in GDP:** At over 4.2% of GDP, bioeconomy in India is becoming a major economic driver—on par with global leaders like the U.S. and China, though countries like Spain/Italy have even bigger relative shares.
3. **Strong Government Backing:** With the BioE3 policy, the government aims to nurture bio-based industries and research, positioning India competitively in the global biotech arena.
4. **Innovation & Scale:** Continued growth depends on fostering innovation (e.g., synthetic biology, genetically modified crops) and removing regulatory and infrastructure barriers.
5. **Uneven Distribution:** A large chunk of the sector is concentrated in just a few states; there is a big need to develop the bioeconomy more evenly across the country.
6. **Future Potential:** Targeting \$300 billion by 2030 and \$1 trillion by 2047 requires strategic measures—like a National BioEconomy Mission and simplified regulations—to accelerate adoption and commercialization of biotech solutions.

[Why activists are worried about Section 44\(3\) of new data protection law-Indian Express Explained](#)

Governance

Easy Explanation

1. **What Does Section 44(3) Do?**



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- Under the **Digital Personal Data Protection Act, 2023**, Section 44(3) *alters* Section 8(1)(j) of the RTI Act, 2005.
- Previously, Section 8(1)(j) **balanced privacy with public interest**, allowing disclosure of personal information if it served a “larger public interest.”
- Under the new amendment, personal information is **broadly exempted** from disclosure—removing the explicit requirement for a public-interest test.

2. Why Are Activists Worried?

- **Loss of Public Interest Clause:** By shortening the RTI exemption to simply “information which relates to personal information,” the law could **deny important disclosures** that were previously allowed when a larger public interest was established.
- **Hampers Accountability:** Under the old language, details such as public servants’ assets, liabilities, and conduct could be disclosed if it was in the public interest. The new wording might allow authorities to **blanket-decline** these requests, affecting transparency.
- **Undermines RTI’s Purpose:** RTI was designed to provide citizens with a powerful tool to hold officials accountable. Many activists fear the revised clause will weaken this tool by making it easier to claim “personal information” and dismiss requests.

3. Context & Background

- The DPDP Act aims to **protect individuals’ digital personal data**. However, in doing so, it has altered the delicate balance between an individual’s privacy and the public’s right to information.
- During earlier RTI cases, **courts and information commissions** often decided whether information was private or in the public interest on a case-by-case basis. Now, the new blanket exemption could reduce such nuanced decision-making.
- Activists, journalists, and legal experts have **written to government officials** and organized press conferences to highlight how this change might “destroy” or severely weaken the RTI Act.

Key Takeaways

1. Sweeping Exemption

- Section 44(3) potentially makes **all personal data off-limits** for RTI requests, instead of requiring a public interest justification to disclose it.

2. Reduced Transparency

- Without the “larger public interest” clause, authorities can **deny requests more easily**, possibly reducing scrutiny of public officials and government functioning.





3. Tension Between Privacy & Right to Know

- The updated Section 8(1)(j) effectively **tips the balance** in favor of privacy over the people's right to access information.

4. Activist Opposition

- Multiple **prominent RTI activists**, legal experts, and opposition leaders have urged the government to **repeal or revise** Section 44(3) to restore the original safeguard of public interest.

5. Potential Regulatory Uncertainty

- Before the DPDP Act fully comes into force, the government must finalize its **Rules and implementation guidelines**. Activists are calling for **clarifications or amendments** to protect RTI's core purpose.

[NJAC and the veto question-Indian Express Explained](#)

Polity

Easy Explanation

1. Background: The Currency Note Controversy

- A row broke out when **wads of currency notes** were found at the residence of a Delhi High Court judge, Justice Yashwant Varma.
- This incident reignited debate on how judges in higher courts (High Courts and Supreme Court) are appointed in India, and whether reforms to the current system are needed.

2. From Executive Appointments to the Collegium System

- **1950s to 1970s:** Initially, the executive (government) appointed judges. Although clashes occurred between the government and judiciary over various laws, judicial appointments continued under executive control.
- **1970s:** The Indira Gandhi-led government **superseded senior judges** in selecting the Chief Justice of India (CJI) more than once, especially during the Emergency.
- **Response:** Concerned about government interference, the Supreme Court developed the "**collegium system**" through a series of landmark judgments (often called the First, Second, and Third Judges Cases).
 1. Under this system, a **group (collegium)** led by the CJI and the next senior-most Supreme Court judges has the **primary say** in appointing judges.

3. What is the Collegium System?



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- **Supreme Court Collegium:** Consists of the CJI + the four next senior-most SC judges. This body recommends appointments and transfers of HC and SC judges.
- **High Court Collegium:** Consists of the CJI + two senior-most SC judges (for recommending HC judges).
- **Rationale:** Judicial independence—making sure the judiciary is not controlled by the executive—was deemed part of the “basic structure” of the Constitution.

4. Narendra Modi Government’s Reform Attempt: NJAC

- **In 2014**, soon after coming to power, the Modi government passed the **99th Constitutional Amendment** and the **NJAC Act** to **replace** the collegium with an “independent” National Judicial Appointments Commission.
- **Composition of NJAC:**
 1. Chief Justice of India (Chairperson)
 2. Two senior-most SC judges
 3. Union Law Minister
 4. Two “eminent persons” from civil society (chosen by a group including the CJI, the Prime Minister, and the Leader of the Opposition).
- **Veto Issue:** Any **two members** could block (veto) a recommendation, giving the executive (and non-judge members) considerable influence over appointments.

5. Supreme Court Strikes Down the NJAC

- In 2015, the Supreme Court declared the 99th Amendment and the NJAC Act **unconstitutional** with a 4:1 majority, citing violations of the “basic structure” of judicial independence.
- **Core Concern:** The possibility of three judges being outvoted by the Law Minister + two eminent persons. This diminished the judiciary’s primacy in appointing judges, undermining judicial independence.
- Some felt that **negotiating** the veto clause or giving the CJI a **casting vote** might have helped the NJAC survive scrutiny. But the law was struck down before it could be tested in practice.

Key Takeaways

1. Appointment Tussle:

- India’s system for appointing higher court judges remains rooted in the **collegium** because of historical attempts by the executive to manipulate the process during the 1970s.





2. Why NJAC Was Controversial:

- Though it aimed to **increase transparency** and **broaden the appointment process**, the **veto power** given to the non-judicial members was a prime reason the Supreme Court deemed it unconstitutional.

3. Judicial Independence:

- The Supreme Court has held that **judicial primacy** in appointing judges is essential to maintaining **independence**—a principle protected as part of India's constitutional “basic structure.”

4. Unfinished Reform:

- The NJAC was never put into practice. Many believed a **compromise** (removing the executive's veto or granting the judiciary a casting vote) could have led to a workable appointments commission.
- The debate over whether the collegium is too **opaque** and unaccountable, or whether it is necessary to **shield the judiciary** from political interference, continues to this day.

5. Significance Now:

- Discoveries such as **cash at a judge's residence** prompt renewed calls for better accountability and reform in the appointment process—but any new proposal must navigate the Supreme Court's demand that judicial independence remain paramount.

[Whittling down sources of U.S. soft power-The Hindu Text and Context](#)

International relations

Easy Explanation

1. What is Soft Power?

- **Soft power** means gaining influence by attracting and persuading other countries through culture, values, and policies—rather than using force, sanctions, or threats (which are considered “hard power”).

2. Key Areas of U.S. Soft Power and How They Are Affected

- **Alliances**
 - The U.S. has historically relied on alliances like NATO to expand its global influence.
 - Recent statements from President Trump—about Greenland, Canada, or the Russia-Ukraine war—have **soured relationships** with traditional allies, undermining confidence in U.S. commitments.
- **USAID (Foreign Aid)**
 - America's global aid program has helped build goodwill in developing regions.
 - Large cuts to USAID (and other U.S.-funded agencies like Voice of America) reduce the **positive impact** of American support, eroding international goodwill.
- **Trade**
 - The U.S. once championed free trade and helped create the WTO.
 - The current push for “reciprocal tariffs” signals a **protectionist turn**, which harms America's reputation as a reliable trading partner.
- **Immigration**



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- America's identity as a "nation of immigrants" has historically boosted its appeal.
- Crackdowns on both **legal and illegal** immigration, plus heightened airport scrutiny, have **damaged** the welcoming image that once attracted talent from around the world.
- **Education**
 - U.S. universities are a huge draw for international students and contribute significantly to American influence.
 - Policies that **restrict student visas, crack down on protests**, and withdraw funding from universities reduce the flow of foreign students, weakening this core pillar of American soft power.
- 3. **Overall Decline in Influence**
 - The political scientist Joseph Nye, who coined the term "soft power," notes that prioritizing coercive power over persuasion **weakens** the U.S.'s global standing.
 - This inward-looking or "America First" approach parallels China's "wolf warrior" diplomacy, which also ended up **reducing** China's international support.
- 4. **Implications for Other Countries (e.g., India)**
 - Countries negotiating with the U.S. (like India) might benefit from **watching how domestic "checks and balances"** (courts, public opinion, Senate elections) could moderate Trump's policies.
 - Rushing into major agreements now could mean **unnecessary compromises** if U.S. policies shift again in the future.

Key Takeaways

1. **Soft Power Under Stress**
 - The U.S. is eroding long-standing sources of soft power—alliances, aid, trade leadership, openness to immigrants, and its renowned university system.
2. **Loss of Global Appeal**
 - Protectionist trade measures, immigration crackdowns, and cuts to foreign aid programs are causing the U.S. to lose the trust and admiration it once enjoyed around the world.
3. **Shift Away from Openness**
 - Visible changes—such as deportations, fewer student visas, and restricted freedoms on campus—signal a departure from America's traditional image of welcoming diversity.
4. **Possible Reversal**
 - Domestic "checks and balances" could eventually rein in these policies, but until then, other nations may approach deals with the U.S. more cautiously, waiting to see if or how policies change.
5. **Long-Term Consequences**
 - Even if policies reverse, the **reputation damage** done in the interim could have lasting effects, leaving the U.S. with a weaker position in global affairs than before.

[The role of communities in conserving water-The Hindu Editorial](#)

Environment

Easy Explanation

1. **Why is Water Conservation Important Right Now?**
 - Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the Ministry of Jal Shakti have **emphasized that water conservation is crucial** for both present and future generations.



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- They launched the **Jal Shakti Abhiyan: Catch the Rain 2025**, underlining **community participation** as key to conserving water, especially in rural areas.

2. Key Issues in India's Rural Water Policies

- **Community Involvement**
 - **Local and indigenous communities** possess valuable knowledge about their ecosystems.
 - Current policies allow them limited roles (e.g., Water User Associations) but **do not fully empower** them to make decisions or use their own ecological practices.
 - Genuine participation means actually **giving communities a voice** in policy and decision-making.
- **Vulnerability of Marginalized Groups**
 - Environmental crises **disproportionately affect subaltern and economically weaker sections**—particularly those facing multiple layers of marginalization.
 - Water policies should **recognize their greater vulnerability** and ensure that these groups have a say in water governance.
- **Fragmented Management of Natural Resources**
 - Different parts of the environment (forests, water, land, biodiversity) are **governed by separate policies**.
 - This “siloed” approach overlooks their **interdependence** and can lead to ineffective outcomes.
 - A more **integrated approach** (like local orans—sacred forests that also serve water conservation purposes) can yield better, holistic results.
- **More-than-Human Perspective**
 - Recent discussions on environmental law suggest **valuing nature for its own sake**, not just for human use.
 - Courts in India have recognized nature's rights in some cases, but **water policies remain human-focused**.
 - Some local practices, however, do consider **the needs of animals and the broader ecosystem** alongside human needs.
- **Impact of Climate Change**
 - Rising global temperatures will worsen **India's water gap**, meaning **scarcer water availability** in many regions.
 - Water policies must align with **climate policies** to create **climate-resilient water systems** and help communities adapt more effectively.

3. Moving Beyond Rhetoric

- While there is plenty of **talk** about community engagement, actual policies **must give real decision-making power** to local groups.
- Local traditions and practices can greatly **complement modern conservation**—though they may also need **capacity building** to address any limitations or outdated practices.

Key Takeaways

1. Communities are Crucial

- **Local and indigenous knowledge** about ecosystems is often more nuanced and effective than uniform, top-down solutions.

2. Empower the Marginalized

- Water policies must address **unequal vulnerabilities** and **include the voices** of subaltern groups in decision-making.

3. Integrated Ecosystem View

- Fragmented management (separating forest, water, land) often fails; **holistic approaches** (like orans) recognize the interdependence of nature's elements.





4. Respect Nature's Rights

- Shifting from a purely human-centric model to a **more-than-human perspective** can lead to more sustainable, ethical water governance.

5. Climate Change is Urgent

- Rising temperatures and more extreme weather events will **intensify water shortages**, so both water policies and climate policies must **work in tandem**.

6. From Rhetoric to Reality

- True participation means giving communities **real power and resources**, not just token roles.
- Strengthening **local practices** can be a big step toward **long-term water sustainability**.

These points highlight how communities, especially those in rural and vulnerable regions, can be the cornerstone of effective water conservation. Policies designed to protect and replenish water sources should fully incorporate local expertise and priorities—an approach that benefits people, ecosystems, and future generations alike.

[Going electric-The Hindu Editorial](#)

Science and technology

Easy Explanation

1. Duty Exemptions for EV Batteries

- The government has **removed import duties** on some capital goods used to manufacture electric vehicle (EV) batteries and mobile phone batteries.
- This move is **meant to encourage** more local manufacturing and help India's transition to clean technology.

2. Why Batteries Matter

- EV batteries are **the most expensive part** of an electric vehicle—around **40%** of its cost.
- Reducing the cost of batteries is **crucial** to making EVs more affordable and speeding up their adoption.
- Currently, **China dominates** global battery production, holding **70%** of the market.

3. India's EV Adoption

- **Passenger EVs** are still a small portion of car sales in India (just **2%** of all car registrations in 2024).
- However, electric **two-wheelers** have done **better**, reaching **1.14 million units sold** in 2024 (60% of total EV sales).

4. Strategic Significance

- India's move to cut duties is also part of maintaining **positive trade ties** with countries like the United States, avoiding retaliatory tariffs.
- More broadly, it's about **decarbonizing transport**—cutting pollution and reliance on imported oil.

5. Building a Global Role

- India must **integrate** into the full battery supply chain—from **mining and refining** to **manufacturing and assembly**.
- Doing so will help **lower costs** through technology sharing, make India a **more reliable supply chain partner**, and position it as an **alternative to China** for developed nations.

6. Road to Success

- India's future in the EV sector hinges on using **trade policies** effectively, investing in **R&D**, and ensuring a **firm foothold in battery production**—all of which could accelerate its global competitiveness.

Key Takeaways

1. Lower Import Duties



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- India has reduced tariffs on capital goods for EV battery production, aiming to foster domestic manufacturing and boost EV adoption.
- 2. **Battery Costs are Central**
 - Since batteries make up nearly half an EV's cost, bringing that cost down is essential for accelerating electric mobility in India.
- 3. **China's Dominance**
 - China currently leads in battery manufacturing, which underscores India's urgency to catch up or form strategic partnerships.
- 4. **Focus on EV Two-Wheelers**
 - Electric two-wheelers already show promise, pointing to **strong potential** for broader EV acceptance in India.
- 5. **Global Supply Chain Integration**
 - By getting involved in every step of the battery supply chain, India can **reduce dependency, strengthen trade ties**, and position itself as a **major alternative** to Chinese production.
- 6. **Long-Term Strategy**
 - India's EV success depends on **sustained policy support, investment in R&D**, and **collaborations** that secure technology transfers and supply chain resilience.

28th March 2025

['Preparation 'for rape vs 'attempt 'to commit rape: what law says-Indian Express Explained](#)

Polity

Easy Explanation

This case revolves around whether certain actions — specifically grabbing a minor girl's breast and breaking the string of her pyjamas — amount to an "attempt to commit rape" or are merely "preparation" to commit the offence.

1. **Allahabad High Court's View**
 - The High Court held that the accused men's actions did not cross the line from preparation to attempt.
 - Consequently, it *deleted* the charges of attempted rape, stating that the acts "hardly constitute" an offence of attempt to rape and only amounted to assault.
2. **Supreme Court's Response**
 - The Supreme Court stayed (i.e., put on hold) the High Court's order.
 - It found the High Court's observations to be insensitive and not in keeping with established legal principles.
 - By staying the High Court's ruling, the Supreme Court effectively indicated that forcibly grabbing the victim and breaking her pyjama string could be seen as an attempt (rather than mere preparation), and the matter needs proper reconsideration.
3. **Why the Distinction Matters**
 - **Preparation** to commit a crime generally is *not* punishable in most cases.
 - **Attempt** to commit a crime *is* punishable.
 - In other words, if the court labels an act as mere "preparation," the law typically does not impose the same severe penalties as it does for "attempt." This difference can drastically affect the punishment and the gravity of charges.
4. **Legal Standard for 'Attempt'**

The courts usually require:

 - **Intention** to commit the offence.



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- **Preparation** (planning or arranging) to commit it.
 - A direct step toward carrying out the offence (“the attempt”), beyond mere planning.
5. Once the defendant’s actions go far enough that the offence would happen if not stopped or interrupted, it is no longer “preparation” but rather an “attempt.”
6. **Historical Case Used (Rex v James Lloyd, 1836)**
- This old English ruling was cited by the High Court to argue that there must be an absolute determination to have intercourse despite any resistance — effectively raising the bar for proving “attempt to rape.”
 - Critics say relying on such an old standard sets the threshold too high, especially in modern contexts, and can lead to under-punishment of serious acts.

Key Takeaways

1. **Supreme Court Intervention**
 - The Supreme Court quickly intervened because it found the High Court’s labeling of the act as “preparation” too narrow and insensitive, especially given the facts of the case (involving a minor).
2. **Importance of Defining ‘Attempt’ Properly**
 - Whether something is considered mere planning (“preparation”) or an actual move to commit the offence (“attempt”) has huge legal consequences.
3. **Protection of Children**
 - The Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act (POCSO) covers sexual assault against minors and typically imposes strict liability for attempts as well. The High Court’s order potentially weakened the seriousness under POCSO standards.
4. **Likely Reassessment of Old Standards**
 - The Supreme Court’s stay indicates it may revisit or clarify these old common-law tests (like *Rex v Lloyd*) that demand a very high threshold to prove “attempt to commit rape.”
5. **Sensitivity and Modern Legal Norms**
 - Modern legal approaches emphasize that forcing someone, especially a minor, and actively assaulting them should be treated severely, rather than minimized.

[India’s deep sea challenge-Indian Express Explained](#)

Geography

Easy Explanation

1. **Why Deep-Sea Exploration Matters**
 - **Resources and Economic Opportunities:** The seabed holds minerals, oil, gas, and other valuable resources like gas hydrates and rare-earth metals. There is also a vast potential for fishing, nutraceuticals, and important data for weather and climate research.
 - **Security and Strategic Interests:** Undersea cables carry the bulk of global Internet and communication traffic. Controlling, laying, and safeguarding these cables (and other vital infrastructure like pipelines) is essential for national security in the face of potential hostile threats.
2. **What Makes Deep-Sea Operations So Challenging**
 - **Extreme Conditions:** Pressure increases by 1 atmosphere (atm) for every 10 meters of depth, meaning equipment must withstand hundreds of atmospheres at depths of thousands of meters.



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- **Complex Underwater Acoustics:** Communication and navigation underwater depend on low-frequency or extremely low-frequency signals, which require advanced (and costly) technology to develop and operate reliably.
- **High Costs and Technical Expertise:** Building submersibles and deep-sea infrastructure requires specialized skills, research, and significant investment.

3. India's Current Capabilities

- **Matsya-6000:** India has developed a submersible that can reach depths of about 6 km. This is part of the government's Deep Ocean Mission.
- **Gaps Remain:** India still lacks robust deep-sea fishing capabilities, advanced infrastructure for deep-sea exploration, and all-encompassing undersea domain awareness. More funding, academic research, and human capital are required.

4. Why China is Ahead

- **Massive Investments:** China has poured huge resources into deep-sea science and engineering centers. It now has the largest fleet of submersibles and continues to innovate, recently revealing a cable-cutting device for undersea operations.
- **Dual-Use Technology:** What is developed for commercial resource extraction can also be employed for strategic or military purposes, such as severing undersea communication lines.

5. The Way Forward for India

- **Institutional Strengthening:** The government must consolidate and elevate ocean development, possibly by upgrading it into a full-fledged Cabinet-level ministry.
- **Mission-Mode Focus:** Launch well-funded, time-bound programs that foster public-private partnerships, academic excellence, and streamlined approvals.
- **Safeguard Security Interests:** Alongside using deep-sea tools for resource extraction, consider how these technologies can guard undersea cables and critical infrastructure.

Key Takeaways

1. Strategic Importance of Deep Seas

- The future of national and economic security increasingly depends on mastery of deep-sea technologies, from resource exploration to securing key communications cables.

2. Technological Barriers Are High

- Underwater pressure and acoustic challenges demand specialized materials, engineering, and long-term research investments.

3. Deep Ocean Mission

- India's Matsya-6000 submersible is a positive step, but more comprehensive and rapid efforts are needed to build broad deep-sea capabilities (fishing, mapping, salvage, rescue, etc.).

4. Need for Centralized Coordination

- A robust institutional setup (possibly a dedicated Ministry of Ocean Development) can drive R&D, funding, and policy-making under one umbrella.

5. Dual-Use Considerations

- Deep-sea technologies for commercial and research purposes can be used to disrupt or defend in conflicts — India must factor this into strategic planning.

6. Fast-Track Funding and Execution

- Achieving self-reliance in deep-sea tech calls for large-scale investment, academic-industry collaboration, and accelerated approvals, much like a "mission-mode" program.





Economy

Easy Explanation

1. What Was the Equalisation Levy?

- Introduced in 2016 via the Finance Act (not the Income Tax Act), the equalisation levy targeted income from digital advertising and, later, broader digital services provided by multinational tech giants.
- Its primary aim was to ensure that large digital companies (most headquartered outside India) paid some tax on the value they generated in India's market, rather than escaping taxation by shifting profits to lower-tax jurisdictions.

2. Why Did India Introduce It?

- International tax rules didn't adequately address the "digital economy," leaving big tech companies lightly taxed in many markets.
- The OECD's Base Erosion and Profit Shifting (BEPS) framework left options on the table without providing a definitive global model for digital taxation, prompting India to act unilaterally.
- By structuring the levy in the Finance Act, India avoided treaty complications; foreign companies couldn't claim a lower tax rate under India's tax treaties.

3. Controversy and Global Reactions

- **U.S. Backlash:** The United States, home to most tech giants, deemed India's digital tax "discriminatory" and initiated trade investigations (USTR Section 301). The threat of retaliatory tariffs loomed over India if it maintained or expanded the levy.
- **Double Taxation Concerns:** Critics argued the levy could lead to double taxation and possibly get passed on to consumers. But there is no conclusive evidence to show it directly inflated consumer prices.

4. Why Withdraw It Now?

- **No Global Deal Yet:** The OECD still has not finalized a global consensus on how to tax digital giants (commonly referred to as "Pillar One" negotiations).
- **Political Shifts in the U.S.:** With the potential return of a trade confrontation (and the possibility of renewed threats of retaliatory tariffs), India appears to be stepping back from its unilateral measure.
- **Diplomatic and Trade Pressures:** While the levy brought in significant revenue (about ₹4,000 crore in 2022), India seemingly weighed the risk of harming trade ties with the U.S. and decided to withdraw.

5. Implications

- **Loss of a Revenue Tool:** India will lose a direct mechanism to tax foreign digital services until a comprehensive global agreement emerges.
- **Lesson for Developing Countries:** The equalisation levy proved that a developing nation can enact domestic measures to protect its tax base, even amid a slow-moving international tax system.
- **Future Uncertainties:** Without a global digital tax framework, tensions may arise again, particularly if major economies remain at odds over how to share tax rights on digital profits.

Key Takeaways

1. **India's Bold Move:** The equalisation levy was a pathbreaking step that forced the global community to pay attention to digital taxation in emerging markets.
2. **Unresolved Global Debate:** Although the OECD has worked on proposals, no final consensus ("global tax deal") exists on taxing the digital economy.





3. **U.S. Pressure:** Fears of retaliatory tariffs and broader trade disputes played a significant role in India's decision to back down.
4. **Missed Opportunity:** For now, India loses a steady revenue source. With the levy withdrawn, big tech companies may once again pay minimal tax on profits linked to India.
5. **Future Outlook:** Digital taxes will remain a hot-button issue until nations (through the OECD or UN forums) reach a fair and comprehensive arrangement for taxing digital giants.

Should the free movement regime between India and Myanmar remain?-The Hindu text and Context

International relations

Easy Explanation

1. What Is the Free Movement Regime (FMR)?

- The FMR, introduced in 1968, allows people residing within 16 km on either side of the India-Myanmar border to travel freely back and forth.
- Initially, the limit was 40 km (1968), reduced to 16 km in 2004, and further regulations were imposed in 2016.
- The core idea behind the FMR is that many ethnic communities and families straddle the border and historically moved across without formal checkpoints.

2. Why the Recent Debate?

- **Proposal to Scrap the FMR:** In February 2024, Union Home Minister Amit Shah announced plans to do away with the FMR, citing concerns about cross-border crime, smuggling (drugs, gold, contraband), and migration potentially exacerbating ethnic tensions (especially in Manipur).
- **Opposition to Scrapping:** States like Mizoram and Nagaland oppose any blanket removal of the FMR or border fencing, stressing the deep historical, familial, and ethnic ties across the border. They argue that a one-size-fits-all, security-centric approach could disrupt local livelihoods and communal harmony.

3. Security Concerns vs. Local Realities

- **Security Concerns:** Supporters of ending the FMR point to issues such as unchecked smuggling of drugs and contraband, possible infiltration of militants, and the instability in Myanmar that may spill over into India.
- **Local Viewpoint:** Many people along the border have effectively ignored the official FMR distance limit and continue crossing for trade, family, or cultural ties. They fear that a total fence or rigid restrictions would not only be impractical (given the mountainous terrain) but also threaten their economic survival and social unity.

4. Practical Challenges of Fencing

- The terrain is rough, with numerous communities living along the 1,700 km border. Putting up a continuous fence is difficult, costly, and risks intense local opposition.
- Observers point out that fencing alone does not necessarily stop smuggling or infiltration (citing global examples where fences have had limited success).

5. Possible Solutions

- **Better Monitoring and Regulation:** Instead of outright scrapping the FMR or building an impenetrable fence, many suggest strengthening customs checks, using surveillance technologies, and involving local communities in guarding the border.
- **Legalizing or Formalizing Certain Cross-Border Trade:** Since local people are exchanging goods anyway, regulated trade corridors could curb illegal smuggling, secure revenue for the government, and foster legitimate livelihoods on both sides.



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- **Local Community Involvement:** Any policy changes should consider local sensitivities. Consulting communities and giving them a sense of ownership in border management can be more effective than a top-down enforcement strategy.

Key Takeaways

1. Ethnic and Familial Bonds Run Deep

- Many borderland communities view the boundary as an artificial line that divides their people, thus resisting heavy-handed attempts at fencing or blocking cross-border movement.

2. Security vs. Humanitarian Balance

- While national security is paramount, completely cutting off movement might worsen humanitarian concerns (such as refugees fleeing conflict in Myanmar) and harm historical cross-border ties.

3. Scrapping the FMR Alone Won't Solve Smuggling

- Drugs, gold, and other contraband flow in despite the current restrictions. Experts argue that ending the FMR without effective on-the-ground monitoring will have limited impact on crime.

4. Fencing Is Logistically Daunting

- A border fence spanning 1,653-1,700 km of challenging terrain is both costly and likely to face local opposition, possibly fueling discontent or even rekindling demands for separate homelands.

5. Inclusive Policy Needed

- Local stakeholders emphasize that government initiatives need to take them into confidence, address their livelihood concerns, and consider the political volatility in Myanmar.

6. Regulated, Legal Channels

- Many believe a better path forward is to legalize and tax cross-border trade, give local communities a stake in security, and use focused surveillance and intelligence (rather than blanket bans).

[Women unbound-The Hindu Editorial](#)

Sociology

Easy Explanation

1. Increasing Incidents of Public Harassment

Recent months have seen multiple alarming cases of women facing violence and harassment in public transport:

- A 23-year-old woman jumped off a train to escape assault.
- A pregnant woman was reportedly pushed out of a train in an attempted rape and suffered a miscarriage.
- Harassment on trains and buses remains distressingly common, revealing just how unsafe women feel in everyday public spaces.

2. Society's Contradiction

- Despite proclaiming "women's empowerment," society often relies on restricting women's mobility – urging them to stay indoors or only travel at certain times.
- Authors of *Why Loiter?* highlight that proclaiming "protection" without genuinely making public areas safe ends up confining women instead of empowering them.

3. Judicial Responses

- A significant Delhi High Court ruling: Upheld the conviction of a man who molested a woman on a public bus, emphasizing that such judgments are vital signals against normalizing harassment.



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- The Supreme Court's intervention: Stayed a controversial Allahabad High Court order which held that certain inappropriate contact with a minor did not constitute attempted rape, strongly condemning such "insensitive" legal interpretations.

4. Need for Broader Measures

- The editorial insists that courts alone cannot solve the problem.
- Administrative bodies must ensure better policing, improved infrastructure (e.g., well-lit streets), and quick filling of law enforcement vacancies.
- Without systemic change, women remain fearful of public spaces and are deprived of their rightful participation in society.

Key Takeaways

1. Persistent Vulnerability

Women continue to experience violence and harassment in seemingly ordinary public spaces, underscoring that legal measures alone are not eliminating threats.

2. Societal Mindset

Rather than truly securing public areas, societal norms often encourage "protecting" women by restricting their mobility or confining them to private, supervised environments.

3. Critical Role of Courts

Judicial rulings can strongly influence public perception and reaffirm that harassment and assault will not be trivialized. Both the Delhi High Court and Supreme Court have recently set important precedents by refusing to minimize sexual harm.

4. Multi-Pronged Approach

Comprehensive measures—better street lighting, trained law enforcement, and quick filling of vacancies—are essential to create genuinely safe public spaces.

5. Right to Freedom of Movement

The broader aim is ensuring women (and by extension everyone) can traverse cities and public spheres freely, without constant fear or limitation.

Access to abortion, foetal viability, and laws thereof: women are caught in the crossfire-The Hindu Science

Science

Easy Explanation

1. What Is Foetal Viability?

- *Foetal viability* refers to the stage in pregnancy when a foetus can survive outside the womb with medical assistance. There is no single universal week at which this happens, but the later the pregnancy, the more likely the foetus can survive.
- This idea of viability influences *legal cutoffs* for abortion in many places: lawmakers tend to become stricter once the foetus is more likely to live outside the uterus.

2. Indian Abortion Law (MTP Act)

- **Up to 20 weeks:** A single registered medical practitioner (doctor) can approve and carry out an abortion.
- **20 to 24 weeks:** Two registered medical practitioners must approve.
- **Beyond 24 weeks (up to 30 weeks):** A special Medical Board must review and approve an abortion, but *only* under specific conditions (e.g., major foetal abnormalities incompatible with life or severe risk to the mother's health).

3. What Happens After 24 Weeks?



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- Since the law views the foetus as increasingly viable at this point, obtaining an abortion is more complicated and restricted.
- If the Medical Board *does not* see a “life-threatening” abnormality in the foetus or serious harm to the mother, courts may deny abortion, forcing the mother to continue the pregnancy.

4. Tension Between Women’s Rights and Foetal Rights

- **Women’s Autonomy:** The Supreme Court in India has recognised women’s reproductive choice as part of personal liberty. This means women *should* have a say in whether to continue a pregnancy.
- **Foetal ‘Right to Life’:** As the foetus grows older, some medical and legal authorities prioritise the foetus’s survival. Courts may refuse an abortion if they believe the foetus can survive, or if there’s no severe abnormality—even if the mother insists she cannot continue the pregnancy.

5. Challenges and Real-life Implications

- **Late-Term Dilemmas:** Many women who seek late-term abortions do so under extreme circumstances (e.g., discovering pregnancy very late, severe mental health conditions, pregnancy resulting from assault).
- **Medical Practitioners’ Reluctance:** Some doctors express moral or religious reservations about providing abortions. Others worry about legal repercussions, so they are extra cautious.
- **Case-by-Case Basis:** Despite legal amendments meant to ease access to safe abortions, in practice, women often have to prove their case before a Medical Board or even a court — particularly after 24 weeks.

6. Why Most Women Do Not Choose Abortion Lightly

- Studies suggest many see abortion as a serious, last-resort measure rather than casual “family planning.”
- Emotional, social, and religious factors often make terminating a pregnancy a painful choice, not something taken lightly.

Key Takeaways

1. Legal Cutoffs Matter

- In India, abortion is easier to obtain before 20 weeks. After 20 weeks, the process becomes more regulated. Post-24 weeks, it typically requires formal approval by a Medical Board and is granted *only under specific, strict conditions*.

2. Foetal Viability Is a Gray Area

- There’s no exact week when a foetus is automatically considered “viable,” yet the law (and many doctors) treat the foetus more like a separate life the further along the pregnancy is.

3. Women’s Autonomy vs. Foetal Rights

- Even though the Indian Supreme Court supports women’s reproductive rights, many courts and doctors still weigh the “right to life” of the foetus heavily — especially in late-term scenarios.

4. Medical Boards and Courts Have High Discretion

- Beyond 24 weeks, a Medical Board’s recommendation (and possible court involvement) can effectively force a woman to continue a pregnancy if they decide the foetus is viable or has no fatal abnormality.

5. Doctors’ Moral Reservations

- Some healthcare providers feel ethically conflicted or morally uneasy performing abortions, particularly late-term. Their personal biases can affect how they counsel or treat patients, which adds *another layer* of difficulty for women seeking abortion.

6. Not a Casual Decision

- Research shows most women view abortion as a grave step — often a “last measure.” Laws and providers should factor in that this is rarely a trivial choice.





29th March 2025

[Judges' assets: disclosure norms, difference with politicians-Indian Express Explained](#)

Polity

Easy Explanation

In India, judges of higher courts (the Supreme Court and High Courts) are not legally required to publicly disclose their assets, unlike many politicians and government officials. While judges do often share details of their assets with the Chief Justice as per an internal resolution, these disclosures typically are not made available to the general public. By contrast, ministers, Members of Parliament (MPs), and many bureaucrats have clearer, legally mandated rules requiring them to disclose their assets—often viewable on official websites or through Right to Information (RTI) requests.

Recent events—like the discovery of large amounts of money in a sitting judge's residence—have led to renewed concerns about corruption and fresh calls for mandatory public disclosure of judges' assets. Despite recommendations by parliamentary committees and the Supreme Court clarifying that such assets are not “personal information,” most High Courts still do not publish them, and there is no uniform legislation yet requiring judges' asset details to be made public.

Key Takeaways

1. Current Practice for Judges

- Supreme Court and High Court judges are not bound by law to publicly declare their assets.
- There has been an internal Supreme Court resolution (1997) for judges to share assets with the Chief Justice of India, but this does not make the information public.
- Some Supreme Court judges have volunteered declarations in the past, but updates have been inconsistent.

2. Politicians and Bureaucrats

- Politicians (Union Ministers, MPs, state ministers) and government officials typically must disclose their assets; these disclosures are more easily accessible.
- People running for any elected office in India must declare their assets as part of the nomination process.

3. Resistance from High Courts

- Many High Courts have firmly opposed public disclosure of their judges' assets, sometimes rejecting RTI requests on the matter.

4. Calls for Change

- Scandals involving judges' wealth have fueled demands for stronger transparency.
- A parliamentary committee in 2023 recommended a law making judges' asset disclosure mandatory, but no such law has been enacted yet.

5. Impact of the RTI Act

- The RTI Act (2005) promotes transparency, and has led to more public disclosures among other public servants.
- However, the higher judiciary remains largely outside the scope of mandatory public reporting of assets, despite Supreme Court rulings that judges' assets are not strictly “personal information.”

[SAGAING FAULT:WHAT CAUSED THE MASSIVE EARTHQUAKE IN MYANMAR-Indian Express Explained](#)

Geography



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Easy Explanation

Myanmar sits on top of a major fault line called the **Sagaing Fault**, which runs from north to south through the center of the country. Earthquakes happen when sections of the Earth's outer shell (tectonic plates) move or slip against each other, releasing built-up energy. Along the Sagaing Fault, the Indian Plate and the Eurasian Plate slide sideways (strike-slip movement). When they suddenly jerk past each other, it triggers powerful quakes.

On the day described, a **magnitude 7.7 earthquake** hit close to Mandalay in central Myanmar. Because it was a shallow quake (occurring only 10 km deep), the ground shaking was intense. Many buildings collapsed, and there were numerous aftershocks. Neighboring countries like Thailand and parts of Northeast India also felt tremors.

Key Takeaways

1. Tectonic Plate Boundary

- The Sagaing Fault marks the boundary between the Indian and Eurasian Plates. The plates move horizontally relative to each other, which can lead to severe earthquakes.

2. Strike-Slip Faulting

- When plates slide sideways (rather than one going under the other), this is called “strike-slip” faulting. These movements can happen suddenly, causing strong shocks.

3. Shallow Earthquake, Strong Impact

- Quakes that happen close to the surface (like 10 km deep) can cause more intense shaking, resulting in greater damage to buildings and infrastructure.

4. Frequent Seismic Activity

- Myanmar experiences earthquakes frequently along the Sagaing Fault. At least six earthquakes of magnitude 7 or higher have occurred near this fault since 1900.

5. Historical Major Earthquakes

- One of the largest known quakes in the region was an estimated magnitude 8.3 in 1839. Large quakes have the potential to cause widespread damage and loss of life.

[Erdogan's new gambit-Indian Express Explained](#)

International relations

Easy Explanation

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan has taken fresh steps to solidify his power by targeting his most prominent political rival, Ekrem Imamoglu (Mayor of Istanbul). Imamoglu's arrest in March sparked the largest protests seen in Turkey in a decade. Erdogan, who came to power in 2003, initially curtailed the influence of the military by taking a pro-EU stance but later shifted to a more populist Islamist approach. Over time, he has also weakened the judiciary to act in his favor—something that has accelerated after a failed coup attempt in 2016.

By moving against a popular politician three years before the next presidential election, Erdogan is betting he can weather current street protests, mend the economy over time, and prevent any formidable challenge to his rule in the 2028 elections. On the international front, shifting alliances—especially in Syria—have reduced pressure on Erdogan's increasingly authoritarian tactics.

Key Takeaways

1. Arrest of Ekrem Imamoglu

- Imamoglu, Istanbul's three-time mayor, was arrested on serious charges (bribery, fraud, terrorism), seen widely as politically motivated.



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- His removal from office triggered massive protests, underscoring his popularity and potential to challenge Erdogan.

2. Erdogan's Path to Power

- Erdogan rose in 2003 on a pro-EU reformist agenda, using it to curb the power of Turkey's secular military establishment.
- After securing control, he adopted a more hardline Islamist populism, especially amid the Arab Spring.

3. Weakening the Judiciary

- Following the failed coup in 2016, Erdogan purged thousands of judges, bringing courts largely under government influence.
- The arrest of Imamoglu illustrates how the judiciary now frequently acts to support Erdogan's political strategy.

4. Geopolitical Shifts Help Erdogan

- Turkey's strategic position, especially its role in neighboring Syria, has made the West more hesitant to openly confront Erdogan's authoritarianism.
- Less external pressure allows Erdogan more freedom to dismantle political opposition at home.

5. Erdogan's Calculation

- By crushing a major rival well ahead of the next election, Erdogan hopes protests will fade and the economy will improve, thwarting any serious challenge to his rule.
- He draws confidence from surviving earlier, larger protests (like the Gezi Park protests of 2013).

[Losing the thread-Indian Express Editorial](#)

Science and technology

Easy Explanation

Over the past decade, India's once-booming cotton production has fallen significantly, turning the country from a major global exporter into a net importer of cotton. A key factor has been the blocking of new genetically modified (GM) cotton technologies—after the initial success of Bt cotton—due to stringent regulations and political resistance. This policy paralysis has left farmers vulnerable to pests like pink bollworm, lowered yields, and forced India to rely more on imports from countries such as the U.S., Brazil, and Australia. In essence, India's reluctance to adopt new technologies in cotton and other GM crops has hurt local farmers and opened the door for more foreign cotton to flood its markets.

Key Takeaways

1. Rise and Fall of India's Cotton

- India's cotton output and exports soared between 2002-03 and 2013-14, largely thanks to the introduction of Bt (genetically modified) cotton.
- Since hitting a peak in 2013-14, production has declined, and India is again a net importer of cotton – reversing its status as the world's top cotton producer and a major exporter.

2. Success of Bt Cotton

- Early GM hybrids (Bollgard) helped dramatically increase yields, from 302 kg lint/hectare in 2002-03 to 566 kg lint/hectare by 2013-14.
- Roughly 95% of India's cotton acreage came under Bt cotton within a decade of its introduction.

3. Regulatory Hurdles for GM Crops

- Policy shifts and moratoriums (starting around 2009-2010) halted further GM approvals, including new Bollgard variants, as well as other transgenic crops (like GM mustard).
- The stringent and unpredictable approval process has effectively stifled development and release of newer pest-resistant cotton varieties.



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4. Pink Bollworm Infestation

- With no fresh GM solutions, major pest attacks—especially pink bollworm—have cut into yields and quality.
- Despite warning signs, the delayed policy response meant farmers remained vulnerable.

5. Economic Impact

- India's cotton imports have jumped (doubling in value between 2023-24 and 2024-25), while exports have fallen, increasing dependence on other major exporters (the U.S., Brazil, Australia).
- Pressure may grow for India to lower or remove its 11% import duty on cotton, and also allow more imports of GM-based products such as soyameal and corn.

6. Long-term Consequences

- Farmers lack access to the latest GM seeds that could offer pest resistance and higher yields.
- Regulatory gridlock driven by activist concerns and political caution has left India at a disadvantage globally—both in cotton and other potential GM crops.

[Advantage China in Africa's nuclear energy market race-The Hindu Editorial](#)

International relations

Easy Explanation

Many African countries (beyond South Africa, which already has a nuclear plant) are looking to build new nuclear reactors to meet their growing energy needs. Various global powers—France, the U.S., Russia, South Korea, and especially China—want to build these reactors, earn contracts, and invest in Africa's energy infrastructure.

- **China** stands out as the leading partner due to its large state-owned nuclear companies (CGN and CNNC) and its willingness to provide financing for both reactor construction and the transmission networks required for distributing power.
- **Russia** has signed some nuclear deals in Africa, but its ongoing conflict with Ukraine and economic sanctions may limit its ability to finance major new projects.
- **Other players** like the U.S. and France have historically done deals in Africa, but China's large-scale financing and integrated Belt and Road Initiative make it the more attractive partner to many African nations.
- For **India**, which hopes to expand its nuclear power capacity substantially (to 100 GW by 2047), securing a stable supply of uranium from African countries is crucial. However, China's deepening relationships on the continent could complicate India's access to African uranium and potentially affect India's long-term energy security.

Key Takeaways

1. Rising Nuclear Plans in Africa

- Africa has only one nuclear plant at present (Koeberg, in South Africa), but many countries (e.g., Ghana, Nigeria, Sudan, Rwanda, Kenya, Zambia) are eager to develop nuclear energy to boost electricity access.
- The continent could generate **15,000 MW of nuclear power by 2035**, creating a **\$105 billion investment opportunity**.

2. Global Scramble for Contracts

- **France** was once dominant, but its influence is waning.
- The **U.S.** has organized nuclear summits but has not made major recent gains in Africa's nuclear market.
- **Russia** has several agreements in place (e.g., with Egypt, Mali, Burkina Faso, and Burundi), but its war in Ukraine and related sanctions hinder big investments abroad.

3. China Leads the Race



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- China's state-owned nuclear giants (CGN and CNNC) offer comprehensive solutions: building reactors, financing them, and developing related infrastructure.
- Through scholarships, training, and cooperation with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), China is steadily building relationships and technical ties with African nations.
- Infrastructure projects (like grids to distribute nuclear-generated electricity) can also be funded under China's **Belt and Road Initiative**, giving it a major edge.

4. Implications for India

- India aims to **dramatically increase** its own nuclear power capacity—from 8,180 MW to 100 GW by 2047—and needs reliable uranium sources.
- Though India has agreements with countries like Namibia and Niger, China's growing dominance in African nuclear markets could make it harder for India to invest in uranium mines or secure long-term supply deals.

5. Broader Energy and Geopolitical Significance

- Africa's turn to nuclear power underscores the continent's efforts to address future energy demand and reduce reliance on fossil fuels.
- China's role as a main financier and builder cements its economic and geopolitical footprint in Africa, extending far beyond just energy to overall infrastructure and investment.

[India's geopolitical vision should be larger-The Hindu Editorial](#)

International relations

Easy Explanation

India, now the world's fifth-largest economy, is seen as a rising global power that aspires to a permanent seat on the United Nations Security Council and greater influence in a multipolar world. Yet, when it comes to international or regional conflicts, India often holds back, focusing instead on its economic development and bilateral relations. The article argues that continuing this "reticence" runs the risk of ceding geopolitical space to other countries. Instead, India should step forward more boldly in conflict situations—just as it has done in the past in its neighborhood (Bangladesh 1971, Maldives 1988, Sri Lanka 2009)—to shape the international order and safeguard its interests.

Key Takeaways

1. From Regional to Global Player

- Historically, India took decisive action in conflicts close to home. As its international stature grows, it's now expected to be more proactive beyond its immediate region.

2. Balancing Economics and Geopolitics

- India's rapid economic rise has rightly been a priority, but the piece argues that focusing on growth need not mean avoiding a more assertive diplomatic or security role.
- Active engagement in global conflicts could strengthen India's strategic partnerships and expand its influence.

3. Greater Expectations from India

- India's goal of becoming a permanent member of the UNSC and positioning itself as a major pole in a multipolar world increases the pressure to step up on big global issues.
- India's unique credibility in talking to both sides of a conflict (e.g., Russia and Ukraine) is a strength that can be leveraged.

4. Risks of Non-Engagement

- If India remains on the sidelines, other countries—such as Türkiye, Saudi Arabia, or Qatar—will take the lead mediating and shaping outcomes in conflicts, from Europe to West Asia to Africa.



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- A diminished Indian role could weaken its regional interests and influence, especially in a rapidly changing world order.

5. Call for Strategic Vision

- The writer suggests India adopt a more integrated regional policy rather than rely solely on bilateral ties. For instance, investing more in groupings like the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) or forging closer ties with European nations.
- Internally, India can pursue economic reforms to make it more competitive and capable of sustaining a larger global footprint in the long run.

30th March 2025

[What are the rules on judicial transfers?: TH FAQ](#)

Polity

Easy Explanation

Justice Yashwant Varma, who was serving in the Delhi High Court, has now been transferred back to his original High Court in Allahabad. This happened after some troubling allegations were made — that burnt currency notes were found at his residence after a fire. Justice Varma has strongly denied these claims and called it a conspiracy to defame him.

The Delhi High Court's Chief Justice wanted an internal inquiry to be done, and while the investigation continues, the government moved him to Allahabad — possibly to avoid any disruption in Delhi's court work, since he was involved in many important committees.

So, how does the transfer of High Court judges work?

According to our Constitution, the President can transfer a judge from one High Court to another after consulting the Chief Justice of India. But over the years, the Supreme Court has said this power must be used carefully — not to punish judges, but to serve public interest and improve the justice system. The Chief Justice of India has to consult senior judges and other concerned people before recommending a transfer.

Once a recommendation is made by the top judges (a group called the collegium), the Law Ministry checks it, then the Prime Minister sends it to the President for final approval. After that, a formal order is issued.

But this system — called the collegium — has been criticized for being secretive and lacking transparency. In fact, in 2014, the government tried to replace it with a new system called the National Judicial Appointments Commission (NJAC), where judges would be selected and transferred by a mixed panel of judges, government officials, and respected citizens. However, the Supreme Court struck it down in 2015, saying it would affect judicial independence.

Now, global bodies like the International Commission of Jurists (ICJ) are also raising concerns about how judge transfers in India are done. They say the reasons behind such transfers aren't clear, and sometimes it feels like a judge is being punished. They recommend creating a neutral Judicial Council to manage all this transparently.

As for Justice Varma, the Supreme Court says no criminal case can be filed yet — they are waiting for the internal inquiry to finish. For now, even though he's been moved to Allahabad, he won't be assigned any judicial work. This whole situation has brought back the debate on how judges should be appointed and transferred in India.

Key Takeaways



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1. What Happened?

- Justice Yashwant Varma was transferred from Delhi High Court to Allahabad High Court.
- Allegations surfaced that burnt currency was found at his home after a fire.
- Justice Varma denies the allegations and calls it a conspiracy.
- An internal inquiry is ongoing.

2. How Are Judges Transferred?

- Article 222(1) of the Constitution allows the **President**, in consultation with the **Chief Justice of India (CJI)**, to transfer High Court judges.
- The **collegium system** (a group of senior Supreme Court judges) handles recommendations.
- The Law Ministry and PM process it, and the **President issues final approval**.
- A judge **does not need to give consent** for transfer.

3. Criticisms of the Transfer System

- Critics say transfers often happen without clear reasons and can seem like punishment.
- The **International Commission of Jurists (ICJ)** says the system lacks transparency and accountability.
- They recommend setting up an independent **Judicial Council** for appointments and transfers.

4. What Was the NJAC?

- In 2014, Parliament passed a law to replace the collegium with a **National Judicial Appointments Commission (NJAC)**.
- The NJAC included judges, the Law Minister, and civil society members.
- In 2015, the Supreme Court **struck it down**, calling it unconstitutional and harmful to judicial independence.

5. Current Status of Justice Varma

- Internal inquiry ongoing — no timeline yet.
- Supreme Court has refused to allow an FIR for now.
- Chief Justice of Allahabad High Court has been told **not to assign him any judicial work**.
- The case has revived debate on **judicial reforms and transparency**.

[Is a revamped GST 2.0 on the cards?: TH FAQ](#)

Economy

Easy Explanation (Layman's Language)

The government introduced GST in 2017 to make India's tax system simpler and more uniform. But over time, many practical issues have cropped up. A recent report by Parliament's Public Accounts Committee (PAC) says the system needs a full review — something they call "**GST 2.0**." Why? Because GST has become too complicated for people and businesses to follow easily.

When GST started, states were worried they'd lose revenue. So, the Centre promised compensation. But for over **six years**, the accounts for that compensation fund haven't been audited by the **CAG (Comptroller and Auditor General)** —



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which is a major red flag. Without proper audits, states haven't been getting the compensation they were promised on time.

The PAC also found other serious problems. In many cases, **businesses didn't get their tax refunds**, or got stuck in **tax registration issues**. Sometimes, a business's GST registration was cancelled without even informing them properly. This can destroy their ability to operate.

Many businesses, especially **small ones and exporters**, are suffering due to **long refund delays**, complex rules, and unclear processes. MSMEs (Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises) don't always have the money to wait months for refunds. This affects their day-to-day cash flow.

The committee has asked the Finance Ministry to fix the broken systems, simplify the rules, and **make timelines clear** for every GST process like registration, filing, and refunds. A portal called '**Antarang**' is being developed to help, but experts say there are still too many pending cases and unanswered appeals — some involving huge tax amounts. There's also an urgent need to start the **GST Appellate Tribunal** to reduce the backlog.

So, overall, the committee says the government needs to **go back to the drawing board and redesign GST** so that it actually helps — not hurts — businesses.

Key Takeaways

1. PAC's Main Demand

- Calls for a complete review of the GST system to remove unnecessary rules.
- Recommends designing a simplified version called "**GST 2.0**" after consulting all stakeholders.

2. Issue with GST Compensation to States

- The **Compensation Fund Account** hasn't been audited by the **CAG for over 6 years**.
- This has delayed payment of dues to states.
- ₹32,577 crore is stuck due to **2,447 inconsistencies** in data, affecting state revenues.

3. Problems in the GST System

- Tax refund delays due to confusion over **which tax office handles what**.
- **Suo motu cancellations** of GST registration without notice in thousands of cases (6,353 out of 14,998).
- Automated systems lack proper documentation.

4. Filing and Refund Challenges

- Refunds are **slow and lack proper timelines**, creating **cash flow issues** for businesses.
- Data quality and poor recordkeeping are key hurdles.
- The Finance Ministry says the **Antarang portal** will streamline this, but it's still a work in progress.

5. Who Is Most Affected?

- **MSMEs and Exporters**, who rely on timely refunds and smooth documentation.
- **Export-related delays** and refund issues are hurting their finances.
- Refunds for **Input Tax Credit (ITC)** must be processed quickly.
- 19,730 tax-related cases (worth ₹1.45 lakh crore) still pending.

6. Expert Suggestion



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- Speed up **appeals** and **set up the GST Appellate Tribunal** to reduce backlog.
- Allow taxpayers to **edit or withdraw applications** for registration.

[Why has X sued the government over SAHYOG?: TH FAQ](#)

Polity

Easy Explanation

The government has created a system called the **SAHYOG portal** to help police and other government bodies ask social media companies (like X, Instagram, etc.) to **take down certain posts** they believe are harmful or illegal.

The government says this system helps them act faster in emergencies, like finding missing people. But **X (formerly Twitter)** has taken the government to court, saying this system is like a **censorship tool**. X argues that it gives too much power to authorities to remove content without proper legal checks.

Here's the legal issue: Under India's **IT laws**, platforms like X are normally not punished for what users post. But this protection goes away if they don't take down harmful content after the government notifies them.

The problem? X says that the **SAHYOG portal bypasses proper legal procedure**, which is defined under another law (Section 69A). That law includes safeguards like a hearing before something is removed. But **SAHYOG just sends takedown requests**, and companies, to avoid trouble, often remove content without question—even when there's no formal legal order.

The government disagrees. It says these notices under Section 79 aren't formal blocks, just **warnings**, and if the platforms ignore them, **they lose their legal protection**.

X believes this still pressures platforms to act like censors. And because social media companies don't own the content and don't want legal trouble, **they may delete content even when it's not clearly illegal**, just to be safe.

Key Takeaways

1. What is SAHYOG?

An online portal developed by the Indian government to help police and officials **send content removal requests** to social media platforms quickly. It's being rolled out across the country.

2. Why is X (Twitter) upset?

X has filed a lawsuit claiming that SAHYOG acts like a **mass censorship tool**, bypassing proper legal procedures. They argue that only **Section 69A** of the IT Act allows content blocking with legal safeguards, not **Section 79** used by SAHYOG.

3. What's the legal difference?

- **Section 69A:** Allows blocking, but with **due process** (e.g., the person gets a chance to respond).
- **Section 79(3):** Says platforms must take down content when notified, or **lose their legal protection**, but **doesn't mention formal blocking**.

4. Why does this matter?

Without proper checks, platforms may **remove content just to stay safe legally**, even if that content isn't clearly unlawful. This can hurt **free speech** online.



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5. Government's defense

The government says SAHYOG just sends **compliance notices** and isn't about forced blocking. If companies don't act, they can lose their "safe harbour" (legal protection), but **it's still their choice**.

6. Bigger concern

Experts say this system gives too much power to the government, and **platforms are not motivated to protect user rights**—leading to what looks like censorship without a court order.

[An intel snafu: TH Profiles](#)

Science Tech

Easy Explanation

A big controversy has come up in the U.S. where top officials — including the Vice President and the National Security Adviser — were found discussing military plans through a private group chat on the app **Signal**. This was discovered when a journalist, Jeffrey Goldberg, was accidentally added to their chat.

Signal is known for its **high-level privacy and encryption**, which means that no one (not even Signal itself) can read the messages. That's why it's used by people like **Edward Snowden** and even recommended by **Elon Musk**. It's also open-source, meaning anyone can inspect the code — which builds trust.

But even with all its security, the issue is not about the app being weak — the problem is **how and where** these government officials were using it. In the U.S., if officials want to discuss **classified or sensitive matters**, they are supposed to do it only in specially secured rooms (called **Sensitive Compartmented Information Facilities**) that cannot be spied on. Using a mobile app — even one as secure as Signal — may still pose a risk, especially if the phone is already hacked or infected with malware.

Experts say that apps like Signal are safe **only up to a point**. If your phone is already compromised, then even a secure app can't help. That's why strict rules are in place for how top officials communicate.

This incident — now being called "**Signalgate**" — shows how difficult it is to balance **fast, convenient communication** with **national security needs**. The app might be secure, but human mistakes or misuse of technology can still cause major risks.

Key Takeaways

1. What happened?

A journalist was accidentally added to a private Signal group chat used by top U.S. officials discussing military plans related to Yemen. This raised concerns about how securely sensitive information is being handled.

2. What is Signal?

Signal is a private messaging app that uses end-to-end encryption. It's widely respected for being more secure than apps like WhatsApp, especially because it also hides metadata and is open-source.

3. Why is there a controversy?

Even though Signal is secure, top officials are expected to discuss sensitive or classified matters only in highly secure rooms with strict protections. Using an app — even a secure one — may still allow leaks if a device is hacked.



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4. What are the risks?

Signal can be vulnerable if the device itself is already compromised with malware. In that case, even before a message is encrypted, hackers can steal it through things like keystroke logging or screen monitoring.

5. What does this show?

Signalgate is a reminder that **digital security is not just about having a secure app** — it also depends on where, how, and on what devices communication happens. Technology alone can't prevent leaks or mistakes.

[Transplantation of a gene-modified pig liver shows promise: TH Science](#)

Science Tech

Easy Explanation

Doctors in China have done something that could change the future of organ transplants. They took a **liver from a genetically modified pig** and transplanted it into a **human who was brain-dead**, just to see how the pig liver would behave in the human body. This was done under strict ethical monitoring, and the pig was a special kind called a **Bama miniature pig**.

The pig's liver had been **genetically edited**—scientists removed the pig genes that would usually cause the human body to reject the organ and added some human genes to help it work better in a human body.

For 10 days, they closely watched how the liver worked:

- It made **bile** (important for digestion)
- It produced **pig albumin** (a kind of protein)
- It had **stable blood flow**
- There were **no signs of rejection**

They used **immunosuppressant drugs** to help the body accept the liver, and everything went smoothly for the short trial.

However, the doctors say this is only a **starting point**. The pig liver worked for a while, but **more studies are needed** to see if it could truly support a living human over a longer time. The idea is that in the future, such pig organs could be used as a **temporary “bridge”** to keep patients alive while they wait for a human donor liver.

Why pigs? Their organs are similar in size and function to human organs. And thanks to **gene editing**, scientists can now tweak pig organs to reduce the chance of rejection.

This isn't a full solution yet, but it's an important step toward solving the **organ shortage problem**.

Key Takeaways

1. What happened?

A genetically modified pig liver was transplanted into a brain-dead human in China to study how well it would function over 10 days.



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2. What were the results?

The pig liver produced bile, maintained stable blood flow, and didn't get rejected. It even made pig-specific proteins like albumin.

3. Why is this important?

This gives hope for using pig organs in humans, especially when human organ donors are not available. It could be used as a **temporary fix** ("bridge therapy") for patients waiting for transplants.

4. What are the limitations?

The test lasted only 10 days. The liver handled basic functions, but we don't know yet if it could support a human long-term.

5. What's next?

More research is needed to understand how pig livers can work in living humans for longer periods and whether they can handle **all** the complex tasks our liver does.

[U.S. measles cases till March surpasses all of 2024: TH Science](#)

Science

Easy Explanation

A big measles outbreak is happening in the U.S. — it started in Texas in January 2025 and has now spread to New York City and 17 other states. By March 20, **378 people had gotten measles**, and **two unvaccinated people died**.

Most of the cases (226) are from **Gaines County in Texas**, especially among the **Mennonite community**, where vaccination rates are low. This community has a **14% exemption rate** from vaccines for school children — meaning many kids don't get vaccinated due to religious or cultural beliefs.

Out of the 378 cases:

- **33% are in children under 5**
- **42% are in people aged 5 to 19**
- In Texas alone, **63 adults** were also infected

About **95% of people who got measles were either unvaccinated or their vaccination status is unknown**. Only a **very small number (2%) were fully vaccinated**, and even then, they had **mild symptoms** and were less likely to spread the virus.

The **MMR vaccine** (for Measles, Mumps, and Rubella) is very effective:

- **One dose = 93% protection**
- **Two doses = 97% protection**

But no vaccine is 100% perfect. Some people, even after two doses, might still get infected, especially if they have a weak immune system or are in very close contact with someone who has the virus. Still, vaccinated people usually don't get seriously sick.

Also, if someone is **exposed to measles**, getting the **MMR vaccine within 72 hours** can still help reduce the risk or make the illness milder.



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Globally, measles is rising too. The **WHO reported over 1.27 lakh cases in Europe and Central Asia in 2024** — **twice as many as in 2023** and the **highest since 1997**, with **38 deaths** already this year.

Key Takeaways

1. U.S. Measles Outbreak (2025)

- Started in Texas in January; now spread to 18 states
- **378 total cases, 2 deaths** (both unvaccinated)
- **226 cases from one county**: Gaines County, Texas, mostly among unvaccinated Mennonites

2. Who's Affected?

- **Children under 5 and teens** most affected
- **95% of infected people were unvaccinated** or unsure about their vaccination status
- A few fully vaccinated people also got infected, but symptoms were mild

3. Vaccine Effectiveness

- **1 dose = 93% effective**
- **2 doses = 97% effective**
- Vaccine can still help if taken **within 72 hours of exposure**

4. Global Situation

- **WHO reports a major rise in Europe and Central Asia**
- **1.27 lakh cases in 2024**, highest since 1997
- **38 deaths reported so far this year**

5. What this shows

- **Low vaccine coverage = high risk**
- **Even a small community with low vaccination can lead to a national outbreak**
- **Vaccines work**, and catching up on missed vaccinations is important to avoid bigger outbreaks

31st March 2025

[Kathmandu protests:why some Nepalis want King's return-Indian Express Explained](#)

International relations

Easy Explanation:

In Nepal, there is growing frustration with the current democratic government because many powerful leaders — including former prime ministers — are facing serious corruption allegations. Tired of constant scandals, some Nepalis believe that bringing back the monarchy could fix the situation and serve as a unifying force. This has led to street protests in Kathmandu where supporters of the former King Gyanendra Shah have clashed with police. Although the King himself has not openly asked to return to power, he has hinted in public messages that Nepal's troubles might be solved with the monarchy's revival. Meanwhile, top leaders of the major political parties firmly oppose restoring the monarchy, creating a tense and potentially volatile political climate.



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Key Takeaways

1. Widespread Dissatisfaction

Many Nepalis are angry about corruption and repeated scandals, as almost every major politician has been named in some form of wrongdoing. This frustration has fueled demands to bring back the monarchy.

2. Former King Gyanendra's Role

- The ex-king mostly stays out of direct politics, but has issued statements suggesting that Nepal's traditional monarchy could be a unifying symbol.
- His recent public appearances and comments have energized pro-monarchy supporters, leading to big rallies and street protests.

3. Violent Protests

- Clashes between pro-monarchy demonstrators and the police turned violent in Kathmandu, resulting in multiple deaths and arrests.
- Some protestors even attacked the offices of former Prime Ministers who oppose the monarchy's return.

4. Corruption Allegations

- Senior leaders from various political parties, including ex-prime ministers, are accused of scams involving government land, illegal commissions, and misuse of funds.
- There is a perception that if the monarchy were restored, these politicians could face investigations and possible convictions.

5. Political Stand-off

- The ruling parties and former Maoist leaders have warned the ex-king against "dreaming" of reclaiming the throne.
- It seems likely there will be continued unrest unless the government addresses the corruption, or negotiates with royalist groups that are gaining momentum among the public.

Overall, many citizens are disillusioned with the state of democracy in Nepal due to corruption, lack of accountability, and frequent changes in government. This has revived the monarchy question, creating both new tensions and the possibility of major political shifts ahead.

[WHAT A NEW STUDY FOUND ON LASTING IMPACT OF DEEP-SEA MINING-Indian Express Explained](#)

geography

Easy Explanation

A new study published in the journal *Nature* shows that a section of the Pacific Ocean's seabed mined for metals more than 40 years ago has still not recovered. Deep-sea mining typically involves collecting mineral-rich deposits and metals, such as nickel, cobalt, and rare earth elements, from the ocean floor. These metals are important for making batteries and electronic devices. However, scientists say the mining process disturbs sediments and harms marine creatures — and its effects may last for decades. This has sparked global debate on whether or not to allow more deep-sea mining.

Key Takeaways

1. Deep-Sea Mining Basics

- It involves extracting metals (like nickel, cobalt, and rare earths) from the ocean floor.
- These metals are essential for batteries, renewable energy technologies, and everyday electronics.

2. Study's Main Finding



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- A seabed region mined in 1979 still shows damage 40 years later — including disturbed sediment and smaller populations of marine life.

3. Environmental Impacts

- Deep-sea mining can cause noise, vibrations, sediment plumes, and light pollution under the ocean surface.
- These disturbances can significantly reduce or change marine animal populations.

4. Global Concern

- The latest study strengthens calls for a moratorium (temporary ban) on new deep-sea mining projects until more research can assess environmental risks.
- The International Seabed Authority recently met with 36 countries to decide if mining companies should be allowed to exploit the ocean floor.

5. Uncertain Recovery

- Although the new study found some signs of animals gradually returning to mined areas, there are places with “little or no recovery.”
- This highlights the long-lasting impact and uncertainty of damage done by deep-sea mining.

Overall, while valuable metals are needed for modern technology, scientists are warning that mining the deep ocean floor can have serious, long-term consequences for marine ecosystems. More research is needed before widespread commercial mining can be considered safe.

Trump's global tariffs-Indian Express Explained

International relations

Easy Explanation

The United States under President Donald Trump is planning to impose “reciprocal tariffs” on all countries that send goods to the U.S. The goal is to reduce America’s large trade deficit (when a country imports more than it exports) and bring manufacturing jobs back to the U.S. However, economists are divided on how these tariffs actually work in practice:

- Some of Trump’s advisors argue that other countries will end up paying these tariffs, because their currencies will become cheaper compared to the U.S. dollar, which prevents prices from rising for U.S. consumers.
- Other experts say U.S. companies and consumers will end up paying more for imported goods and face higher inflation.
- Because the U.S. dollar is already very strong worldwide, adding new tariffs could make it even stronger, possibly making American goods more expensive overseas in the long run.

This situation is complex, and these new tariffs might cause major confusion in global trade, potentially harming economic growth both in the U.S. and around the world.

Key Takeaways

1. Reciprocal Tariffs

- Trump wants to tax imports based on how other countries tax American products.
- It’s unclear exactly how these tariffs will be calculated, including whether non-tariff factors (like subsidies) might be included.

2. Overvalued Dollar

- Economists say the U.S. dollar has been “overvalued” for decades because it is the world’s main currency; its demand rarely drops.



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- A strong dollar helps Americans buy imported goods cheaply but also makes U.S. exports more expensive abroad.

3. Who Pays the Tariffs?

- According to one view, foreign producers absorb the cost by lowering their prices or letting their currencies weaken, which prevents price hikes in the U.S.
- Other economists argue tariffs are eventually passed on to U.S. consumers through higher prices.

4. Possible Outcomes

- If foreign currencies drop in value, it may prevent inflation in the U.S. but make the U.S. dollar even stronger, possibly worsening the trade deficit.
- If currency adjustments do not happen, U.S. consumers may face higher prices for everyday goods.

5. Uncertain Global Impact

- Applying tariffs on all major U.S. trading partners is a big gamble that could stall global trade and harm economic growth.
- Many economists worry this will add confusion, disrupt supply chains, and raise costs for both businesses and consumers worldwide.

[The nuclear leap-Indian Express Editorial](#)

Science and technology

Easy Explanation

India is rapidly expanding its nuclear power program to meet growing energy needs while reducing carbon emissions. The government has set an ambitious target of achieving 100 gigawatts (GW) of nuclear power capacity by 2047 (up from about 8.18 GW now). Recent policies also allow more private-sector involvement. India follows a three-stage nuclear program (envisioned by Dr. Homi Bhabha) designed to ultimately use abundant thorium reserves. In parallel, advanced technologies like fast breeder reactors and small modular reactors (SMRs) are in development. Safety, public acceptance, and financial viability remain important concerns, but the government emphasizes that India's safety record is strong, with radiation levels remaining well below international benchmarks.

Key Takeaways

1. Push for Self-Reliance

- India's nuclear power program aims to reduce dependence on imported fossil fuels and meet ambitious climate targets.
- Indigenous technology development is a major focus, highlighted by the successful commissioning of the country's first 700 MWe indigenous reactor at Kakrapar.

2. Rapid Capacity Expansion

- Current nuclear power capacity stands at 8.18 GW.
- By 2047, India wants to ramp up to 100 GW, with 21 reactors (15.3 GW) already in various stages of construction or planning.

3. Three-Stage Nuclear Program

- Developed by Dr. Homi Bhabha to eventually leverage India's abundant thorium reserves.
- The Prototype Fast Breeder Reactor (PFBR) is a key component of Stage 2, nearing completion in Tamil Nadu.

4. New Reactor Technologies

- **Small Modular Reactors (SMRs):** The government budgeted Rs 20,000 crore to research and develop at least five indigenous SMRs by 2033.



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- **Bharat Small Reactors (BSRs):** Based on proven 220 MW PHWR designs, they can be deployed near industrial sites for captive power, helping to decarbonize industries.

5. Private Sector Participation

- The nuclear sector is being opened to private players through amendments to existing laws.
- A new joint venture (ASHVINI) between the Nuclear Power Corporation of India Ltd. (NPCIL) and NTPC (National Thermal Power Corporation) aims to develop additional nuclear power plants.

6. Safety and Public Perception

- India's nuclear safety record is strong; radiation levels at reactors remain well below global norms.
- There is continued emphasis on "safety first, production next" to address public concerns and ensure high safety standards.

Overall, India's nuclear leap is a significant move to align rapid economic growth with cleaner, more reliable energy – balancing expansion, technological innovation, and safety.

[What is the controversy over the Bodh Gaya temple?-The Hindu Text and Context](#)

Governance

Easy Explanation

Bodh Gaya in Bihar is the most sacred site in Buddhism because it is where Siddhartha Gautama (the Buddha) attained enlightenment. However, a law called the Bodh Gaya Temple Act (BTA), 1949 created a committee of both Buddhists and Hindus to manage the Mahabodhi Temple (Mahavihara). Since the local District Magistrate — who is often a Hindu — became the ex-officio chairperson, Buddhists believe they do not have sole control over their holiest shrine. Protests have arisen (led by groups like the All India Buddhist Forum) demanding that this law be repealed so Buddhists can manage the temple independently. Historically, a Hindu mutt (monastery) was established in the area during Emperor Akbar's reign in 1590, which transferred control to Hindu leaders until 1949, when the new Act was passed to share management. Despite amendments and attempts at new bills, Buddhists continue to seek full autonomy over this major pilgrimage site.

Key Takeaways

1. Sacred Buddhist Site

Bodh Gaya is the place where the Buddha attained enlightenment. It is often referred to as the "Mecca of Buddhism."

2. Hindu Involvement

A Hindu monk established a mutt (monastery) in Bodh Gaya in 1590, leading to centuries of Hindu control over the shrine.

3. Bodh Gaya Temple Act (BTA), 1949

- It sets up an eight-member managing committee made up equally of Hindus and Buddhists.
- The local District Magistrate is the ex-officio head, resulting in what Buddhists say is a "Hindu majority."

4. Why Buddhists Are Protesting

- They want sole authority to run what they regard as their holiest temple.
- They find the Act unfair because it legally requires shared administration with Hindu representatives.

5. Attempts to Change the Law

- A proposed Bodh Gaya Mahavihara Bill in the early 1990s would have granted management only to Buddhists.
- Various legal challenges and protests have taken place, but no final settlement has been reached.



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Overall, the dispute revolves around whether Buddhists alone should oversee their most revered temple, or whether the shared arrangement created after Independence should continue.

[What is status of the SpaceX Mars mission?-The Hindu Text and Context](#)

Science and technology

Easy Explanation

SpaceX CEO Elon Musk says his company aims to land an uncrewed Starship on Mars before the end of next year. This mission is planned to carry Tesla's Optimus robot. But many experts doubt the ambitious timeline, citing recent test failures and major technological hurdles. One big challenge is that Starship does not yet have the means to refuel in space, which will be necessary to travel the long distance to Mars. Concerns are also mounting that Elon Musk's role in a U.S. government advisory body (the Department of Governmental Efficiency, or DOGE) could pose a conflict of interest if it results in budget cuts at NASA that then redirect more funds to SpaceX.

Key Takeaways

1. **Proposed Timeline for Mars Landing**
 - Elon Musk claims an uncrewed Mars mission will launch by the end of next year (a very tight schedule).
 - If that goes well, a crewed Mars mission could take place around 2029–2031.
2. **Major Technical Obstacles**
 - **Orbital Refuelling:** Starship doesn't have enough fuel capacity for Mars travel, so mid-orbit tanker spacecraft must be built, tested, and used to refuel Starship in space.
 - **Test Flight Failures:** Recent Starship launches ended in "rapid unscheduled disassemblies," casting doubt on reliability.
3. **Importance of Launch Windows**
 - Earth and Mars align favorably every 26 months. Missing a launch window could delay the mission by more than two years.
4. **Potential Conflict of Interest**
 - Musk chairs the Department of Governmental Efficiency (DOGE), which supports federal budget cuts.
 - NASA officials worry that shutting down NASA's tech-policy offices might divert more funding to SpaceX's projects, raising ethical and conflict-of-interest questions.
5. **NASA's Concerns**
 - Scientists and administrators at NASA are uneasy about losing key policy offices and the Chief Scientist role.
 - They also see significant technological risks in rushing Starship to land on Mars before it's thoroughly tested.

Overall, while SpaceX has repeatedly demonstrated groundbreaking achievements, the company faces unprecedented engineering, scheduling, and political challenges in trying to land on Mars so soon.

[Why the Parker Solar Probe is trying to 'touch' the sun-The Hindu Science](#)

Science and technology

Easy Explanation



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NASA's Parker Solar Probe is the first spacecraft to travel so close to the sun — coming within about 6 million km of its surface. It's exploring the sun's outer atmosphere (the corona) to study solar wind (streams of charged particles) and powerful eruptions that can affect Earth's power grids and satellites. To survive the sun's intense heat, Parker carries a special heat shield made from carbon-carbon composite, and uses a combination of gravitational assists (mainly from Venus) to gradually spiral closer over multiple orbits. By "touching" the sun, Parker has already provided new insights into solar phenomena like magnetic "switchbacks," dust-free regions near the sun, and the possible causes of the corona's mysterious heat.

Key Takeaways

1. Record-Breaking Closeness

- Parker's orbit brings it just 6 million km from the sun's surface — closer than any spacecraft in history.
- Moving at speeds up to 692,000 km/h, it endures extreme conditions to gather data firsthand.

2. Cutting-Edge Heat Shield

- The probe's 4.5-inch-thick carbon-carbon shield tolerates temperatures above 1,300 °C.
- Behind the shield, instruments operate at near-room temperature.

3. Why "Touch" the Sun?

- To investigate how solar wind is generated and how it flows through space.
- Understanding coronal mass ejections and solar flares helps protect Earth's satellites, communication channels, and power grids.

4. Unraveling Solar Mysteries

- Parker has detected "switchbacks" in the sun's magnetic field — unexpected bends in the solar wind.
- It's also helping to explain why the corona is so much hotter than the sun's surface (by factors of hundreds).

5. Orbit Strategy & Frequent Flybys

- Instead of a single dive, Parker makes repeated flybys of the sun, aided by Venus's gravity to refine its path.
- It aims for 24 orbits in total, each bringing it progressively closer to the solar surface.

6. Impacts on Earth

- Better knowledge of solar activity helps predict and mitigate disruptions from solar storms.
- It also informs future missions, including NASA's Aditya-L1 and other probes studying our star.

Overall, the Parker Solar Probe is a groundbreaking mission that is redefining our understanding of the sun by venturing into regions previously beyond our technological reach.

[An IJS is an idea whose time has come-The Hindu Editorial](#)

Polity

Easy Explanation

Recent controversies involving judges – such as half-burnt currency being found at a judge's residence, a disturbing ruling on sexual assault, and questions over the Lokpal's authority – have highlighted concerns about the existing system of selecting judges via the Collegium. Many argue that it is opaque, susceptible to nepotism, and lacks transparency. One solution that has resurfaced is the establishment of an **Indian Judicial Service (IJS)**, patterned on other national-level civil services (IAS, IPS, etc.) through a competitive exam and transparent selection process. This proposal aims to open the higher judiciary to a wider pool of candidates from across India and all sections of society, making it both more representative and merit-driven.



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Key Takeaways

1. Recent Judicial Controversies

- A High Court judge's residence had half-burnt currency discovered by firefighters.
 - Lokpal's intervention in a corruption complaint against a judge was questioned in the Supreme Court.
 - A "repulsive" High Court ruling on sexual assault has drawn widespread criticism.
- These incidents have reignited calls for improving judicial accountability.

2. Flaws of the Collegium System

- Judges of higher courts in India are currently selected by a Collegium of senior judges, which many find opaque.
- Critics say it allows for nepotism and "judicial dynasties."

3. National Judicial Appointments Commission (NJAC) Struck Down

- Parliament passed the NJAC Act (with multiple States ratifying it), but it was rejected by the Supreme Court.
- Many argue the Court could have simply tested its constitutionality, instead of striking it down in full.

4. Proposal for an Indian Judicial Service (IJS)

- This service would select senior-level judges via a competitive exam, like the IAS/IPS.
- The **Union Public Service Commission (UPSC)** could conduct this exam, ensuring transparency and merit-based appointments.
- This approach would increase inclusivity, bringing in more women and underrepresented communities.
- Rigorous training and oversight mechanisms would ensure accountability and integrity.

5. Benefits of an IJS

- **Greater Representation:** Would open the higher judiciary to a broader talent pool, not limited by family connections.
- **Transparency:** A uniform, public selection process is more credible and answerable to citizens.
- **Integrity & Accountability:** With set mechanisms for disciplinary action, public faith in the judiciary can be restored.

Overall, **forming an Indian Judicial Service** could be a crucial step toward revitalizing the justice system. It promises a more inclusive, transparent, and merit-based pathway for senior judges – potentially reducing controversies and ensuring the judiciary remains worthy of public trust.

