

SITOK IAS

EDITORIALS COMPILATION

Monthly Notes

JUNE 2026

Current Affairs Compilation



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1st June 2026

[How China's reduced oil imports have helped India-The Indian Express Explained Page](#)

International relations

Easy Explanation



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The West Asia conflict disrupted oil supplies passing through the **Strait of Hormuz**, a critical route through which a large share of the world's oil trade takes place. Since India imports more than 88% of its crude oil requirement, any disruption in global oil supplies directly affects India's economy through higher fuel prices, inflation, and a larger import bill.

Normally, China is the world's largest crude oil importer. During an oil crisis, China usually buys huge quantities of oil, increasing competition and pushing prices upward. However, this time China sharply reduced its oil imports and relied on its massive oil inventories and strategic petroleum reserves. At the same time, weaker economic activity and rapid adoption of clean energy reduced China's oil demand.

Because China bought less oil, additional supplies from Russia, Venezuela, Africa, and the Americas became available in the market. Countries such as India, Japan, South Korea, Thailand, and Singapore were able to purchase these supplies and maintain refinery operations despite disruptions in West Asia.

As a result, oil prices remained lower than they otherwise would have been. Analysts suggest that if China had continued importing oil at normal levels, prices could have stayed much higher and Asia would have faced a much more severe oil shock. In this way, China's reduced oil imports indirectly helped India by easing supply pressures and moderating oil prices.

Key Takeaways

1. China sharply reduced crude oil imports

- China's imports fell to around 6.6 million barrels per day, the lowest level since 2016.
- This occurred during a period of severe disruption in global oil markets.
- Lower Chinese demand reduced pressure on available oil supplies.

2. China relied on stored oil reserves

- China drew oil from its large inventories and strategic petroleum reserves.
- This reduced the need for fresh imports.
- Strategic reserves acted as a buffer during the crisis.

3. Economic slowdown and energy transition reduced demand

- Slower economic growth weakened fuel consumption.
- Increasing use of renewable energy lowered dependence on oil.
- These factors contributed to reduced imports.

4. India benefited from greater oil availability

- Oil supplies from Russia, Venezuela, Africa, and the Americas became more accessible.
- India's crude imports reached nearly 5 million barrels per day in May.
- Refineries could continue operating despite supply disruptions.

5. China's actions helped moderate oil prices

- Prices briefly surged above \$150 per barrel during panic buying.
- Reduced Chinese demand prevented a sustained rise to such levels.
- Oil prices stabilized around \$100–120 per barrel.

6. India remains highly exposed to oil price shocks

- Every \$1 increase per barrel can raise India's annual oil import bill by up to \$2 billion.
- A 10% rise in oil prices can widen the current account deficit by about 0.4% of GDP.
- Crude oil is India's largest merchandise import.

7. Future Chinese demand could create another oil shock

- If China resumes large-scale imports, competition for crude oil will intensify.
- India may face higher prices and tighter supplies.
- The risk remains until normal oil flows through the Strait of Hormuz are restored.



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Aravalli range's role in shielding Gangetic plains from Thar dust-The Indian Express Explained Page

Geography

Easy Explanation

The **Aravalli Range** is one of the oldest mountain ranges in the world and acts as a natural barrier between the **Thar Desert** and the densely populated **Indo-Gangetic Plain**. Every year during the pre-monsoon months (April–June), strong hot winds carry large amounts of dust and sand from the Thar Desert and even from parts of West Asia towards northern India.

When these dust-laden winds hit the Aravalli hills, their speed decreases and much of the sand gets deposited on the western slopes. Vegetation on the hills further traps dust particles, acting like a natural filter. This prevents large quantities of dust from reaching cities and agricultural regions in the Indo-Gangetic plains. The presence of "obstacle dunes" on the western slopes of the Aravallis is evidence of this protective function.

However, the Aravalli range has been steadily degrading due to mining, deforestation, urbanisation, encroachment, and land-use changes. As vegetation cover declines and gaps appear in the mountain chain, more dust is able to pass through and reach Delhi, Punjab, Haryana, and Uttar Pradesh. Meteorologists note that today even moderate winds can transport Rajasthan's dust to the northern plains, something that was less common earlier.

The degradation of the Aravallis is therefore not just a conservation issue. It has direct implications for air quality, public health, agriculture, and even regional rainfall patterns. Protecting and restoring the Aravalli range is crucial for maintaining ecological balance in northern India.

Key Takeaways

1. Aravallis act as a natural dust barrier

- The range lies between the Thar Desert and the Indo-Gangetic plains.
- It blocks dust-laden winds moving eastward.
- This reduces the movement of sand and dust into northern India.

2. Obstacle dunes prove the protective role

- Large sand deposits called "obstacle dunes" are found on western slopes.
- They form when winds lose speed after striking the hills.
- These dunes are physical evidence of dust interception.

3. Vegetation enhances dust filtration

- Trees and shrubs create a natural scrubbing effect.
- Vegetation traps dust particles and reduces wind speed.
- Forest cover strengthens the barrier function of the Aravallis.

4. Dust storms are common during the pre-monsoon season

- Most dust storms occur between April and June.
- They are driven by intense heat and dry conditions.
- Westerly and south-westerly winds transport dust across north India.

5. Degradation of the Aravallis is increasing dust transport

- Dust now reaches northern plains even during less intense storms.
- Gaps in the range allow greater movement of dust.
- Delhi and nearby regions face increased exposure.

6. Human activities are the main cause of degradation

- Mining of minerals such as granite and silica has damaged hills.
- Deforestation, urbanisation, encroachment, and land-use change have weakened the ecosystem.



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- Several Aravalli hills have disappeared due to anthropogenic pressures.

7. Loss of Aravallis has wider environmental consequences

- Increased dust storms worsen air pollution in Delhi and surrounding states.
- Agricultural productivity and public health may be affected.
- The range also influences rainfall patterns, making its conservation ecologically important.

[Unaffordable homes: UN report lists factors behind housing crisis - The Indian Express Explained Page](#)

Sociology

Easy Explanation

The United Nations has warned that the world is facing a serious **housing affordability crisis**. Rapid urbanisation is increasing demand for homes, but housing construction is not keeping pace. As a result, billions of people either lack adequate housing or spend a large share of their income on rent or home purchases. According to the UN, about **3.4 billion people worldwide lack access to adequate housing**, and more than one billion live in informal settlements such as slums.

Housing is considered affordable when people do not spend an excessive portion of their income on it. However, globally, around **44% of households spend more than 30% of their income on rent**, indicating financial stress. In many countries, house prices have risen much faster than incomes, making home ownership increasingly difficult.

India is also experiencing this problem. The report notes that Central and Southern Asia, including India, witnessed the sharpest rise in the house price-to-income ratio between 2010 and 2023. At the same time, builders have shifted from affordable housing projects to luxury housing because luxury homes generate higher profits. As a result, ordinary middle-class and lower-income families are finding it harder to buy homes.

The UN identifies **financialisation of housing** as a major cause of the crisis. Financialisation means houses are increasingly treated as investment assets rather than places to live. Investors, wealthy individuals, and financial institutions buy properties expecting future profits. Easy access to housing loans has further increased demand, causing house prices to rise faster than the supply of new homes.

The report argues that housing should be viewed as a social necessity rather than merely a financial asset. Governments need to promote affordable housing, improve urban planning, and ensure that housing projects are located near jobs, transport, and social infrastructure so that people can actually live in them.

Key Takeaways

1. The world is facing a major housing shortage

- Around 3.4 billion people lack adequate housing.
- More than one billion people live in informal settlements or slums.
- The crisis is being driven by rapid urbanisation and insufficient housing supply.

2. Housing is becoming increasingly unaffordable

- A household spending over 30% of its income on housing is considered financially stressed.
- Globally, 44% of households exceed this threshold.
- Rising prices are making both renting and buying difficult.

3. India has witnessed a sharp decline in affordable housing

- Central and Southern Asia recorded a 73% rise in house price-to-income ratios between 2010 and 2023.
- Affordable housing's share among new units in major Indian cities has fallen significantly.
- Luxury housing is increasingly preferred by developers.

4. Shift from public housing to private-sector-led models



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- After World War II, governments invested heavily in public housing.
- Later, international institutions encouraged greater private-sector participation.
- These models often failed to adequately serve the poorest sections.

5. Poor urban planning worsens the problem

- Housing projects are often built far from jobs and basic services.
- Many government-built homes remain vacant because of poor connectivity.
- Housing must be integrated with livelihoods and social infrastructure.

6. Financialisation is a major driver of the crisis

- Housing is increasingly treated as an investment asset.
- Investors and financial institutions buy properties for profit rather than occupancy.
- This reduces affordability for ordinary homebuyers.

7. Easy credit can unintentionally increase house prices

- Expansion of housing loans increased purchasing power.
- Demand grew faster than the construction of new homes.
- This pushed property prices upward and worsened affordability.

[Religion and the tribal identity: Why 'delisting' debate refuses to die down - The Indian Express Explained Page](#)

Sociology

Easy Explanation

A debate has resurfaced over whether tribal people who convert to Christianity or Islam should continue receiving benefits available to **Scheduled Tribes (STs)** under the Constitution. This issue is known as the "**delisting**" debate. It gained attention after some Adivasi groups demanded that converted Christians and Muslims be removed from the ST list, while others strongly opposed the demand.

The controversy is linked to the question: **Is tribal identity based on religion or on ethnicity, culture, and ancestry?** Those supporting delisting argue that people who adopt another religion should no longer receive ST benefits. On the other hand, opponents argue that tribal identity is fundamentally ethnic and cultural, and does not disappear after religious conversion.

A key constitutional aspect is that **Article 342**, which deals with Scheduled Tribes, does not mention religion as a criterion for ST status. This is different from **Article 341**, under which Scheduled Caste status is restricted for people converting to Christianity or Islam. Therefore, many argue that religion should not affect ST status.

The debate also involves the **Sarna faith**, an indigenous tribal religion followed by many Adivasis, especially in Jharkhand. Many Sarna followers do not identify as either Hindu or Christian and seek separate recognition of their religious identity. The discussion has therefore become not only about reservation benefits but also about tribal identity, culture, religion, and constitutional rights.

Historically, the issue dates back to tribal leader **Kartik Oraon**. Although he argued that converted Christians should not receive ST benefits, he also maintained that Adivasis are not Hindus but followers of an indigenous faith. A significant court ruling also held that tribal identity is primarily ethnic and cultural rather than religious. Thus, the debate continues without a clear consensus.

Key Takeaways

1. What is the 'delisting' demand?

- Delisting refers to removing tribal converts to Christianity or Islam from the Scheduled Tribe category.
- Supporters argue that converted individuals should not continue receiving ST benefits.
- The demand has been raised by some Adivasi Hindu groups.

2. Article 342 does not link ST status to religion



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- Scheduled Tribes are recognised under Article 342 of the Constitution.
- Unlike Article 341 for Scheduled Castes, Article 342 does not explicitly mention religion.
- This forms a major argument against delisting.

3. Sarna community has a distinct position

- Followers of the Sarna faith consider it an indigenous tribal religion.
- They do not identify as either Hindu or Christian.
- Many demand separate religious recognition in census records.

4. Tribal identity versus religious identity is the core issue

- One side sees religion as relevant for ST benefits.
- The other side argues that tribal identity is based on ancestry, culture, customs, and social conditions.
- The debate revolves around which identity should prevail.

5. Patna High Court strengthened the ethnic identity argument

- In the Kartik Oraon case, the court held that an Oraon remains a tribal even after conversion.
- It observed that converted tribals often retain clan systems, customs, and festivals.
- The judgment stated that they are "tribals first and Christians next."

6. Historical attempts to delist converted tribals failed

- A parliamentary committee in 1969 recommended excluding Christian and Muslim tribal converts from the ST category.
- The government expressed reservations.
- Parliament never adopted the proposal.

7. The debate is also about culture, politics and representation

- The controversy involves terms like "Adivasi" and "Vanvasi."
- Many tribal groups view "Adivasi" as reflecting indigenous identity and historical rights over land.
- The issue goes beyond reservations and touches upon cultural recognition and self-identification.

[Science collaboration is space compass, not conflict-The Indian Express The Ideas Page](#)

Science and technology

Easy Explanation

The United States space agency, **NASA**, has announced a long-term plan to establish a human presence near the Moon's South Pole. The project aims to move beyond short-term lunar missions and create a semi-permanent base that can support scientific research, resource exploration, and future missions to Mars.

The **Moon's South Pole** is considered strategically important because some areas receive sunlight for longer periods, making solar power generation easier. At the same time, permanently shadowed craters are believed to contain water ice that has remained preserved for billions of years. Studying this ice could reveal how water and other materials moved through the Solar System and may provide clues about the origins of life.

The lunar base is also expected to serve as a testing ground for future human missions to Mars. Scientists can study how humans adapt to reduced gravity over long periods before attempting much longer journeys into deep space. Thus, the Moon is increasingly being viewed as a stepping stone for interplanetary exploration.

However, space exploration today is no longer just about science. It is increasingly linked with geopolitics. China has rapidly expanded its space capabilities, while China and Russia are jointly planning an International Lunar Research Station near the Moon's South Pole. As a result, countries are competing to secure an early presence in strategically important regions of space.

The article argues that while competition can drive innovation, excessive geopolitical rivalry may undermine international scientific cooperation. Global challenges such as climate change and space governance require collaboration among nations. Therefore, scientific advancement—not geopolitical competition—should remain the primary objective of space exploration.



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Key Takeaways

1. NASA plans a long-term human presence on the Moon

- NASA aims to establish a lunar base near the South Pole.
- The programme includes scientific experiments, infrastructure development, and eventually a semi-permanent station.
- The project is planned over the next decade.

2. The Moon's South Pole is strategically important

- Some regions receive relatively continuous sunlight.
- This makes solar energy generation more feasible.
- The area is ideal for supporting long-duration missions.

3. Lunar ice has major scientific value

- Permanently shadowed craters are believed to contain water ice deposits.
- These deposits may preserve records of the early Solar System.
- Scientists hope to understand how conditions necessary for life emerged.

4. The Moon is a stepping stone to Mars

- A lunar base can help test technologies for deep-space missions.
- Scientists can study human adaptation to reduced gravity.
- Lessons learned will be useful for future Mars expeditions.

5. Space exploration is becoming a geopolitical competition

- China has significantly expanded its lunar exploration programme.
- China and Russia are planning a joint lunar research station.
- Major powers are seeking strategic advantages in space.

6. Private companies are playing an increasing role

- Companies such as Blue Origin and SpaceX are key partners in modern space missions.
- Governments increasingly rely on commercial innovation and launch capabilities.
- Public-private partnerships are reshaping space exploration.

7. International cooperation remains essential

- Existing space governance frameworks may not fully address new challenges.
- Competing legal and political systems could fragment scientific collaboration.
- Sustained cooperation is necessary to ensure peaceful and beneficial space exploration.

[Interpreting Harappa, the Shereen Ratnagar way - The Indian Express The Ideas Page](#)

History

Easy Explanation

The article is a tribute to **Shereen Ratnagar**, one of India's most influential archaeologists and scholars of the **Indus Valley Civilization**. She is remembered not only for studying Harappan sites and artefacts but also for transforming how archaeologists interpret ancient societies.

Before scholars like Ratnagar, much of Indian archaeology focused on discovering sites, documenting artefacts, and establishing chronological sequences. Ratnagar moved beyond simply describing objects. She asked deeper questions: How was Harappan society organised? How did trade shape its economy? What kind of political system existed? Why did the civilisation decline? In doing so, she introduced social, economic, political, and anthropological perspectives into the study of archaeology.



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One of her major contributions was studying the trade links between the Harappan civilisation and regions such as Mesopotamia, Bahrain, and Oman. Rather than merely listing traded goods, she examined how these exchanges reflected broader economic and political relationships. This helped scholars better understand the Harappan world as part of an interconnected ancient trading network.

Ratnagar also contributed to debates on the decline of the Harappan civilisation and the nature of its political organisation. She challenged simplistic explanations and encouraged scholars to critically analyse archaeological evidence rather than accept established assumptions. Her work made Harappan studies more analytical and theoretically informed.

Beyond academia, she played a prominent role in public debates, especially concerning the **Babri Masjid** controversy. She critically examined archaeological claims used in the dispute and emphasized that archaeology should be guided by evidence rather than ideology. Her career reflects a commitment to rigorous scholarship, intellectual independence, and scientific inquiry.

Key Takeaways

1. Shereen Ratnagar was a leading scholar of the Harappan civilisation

- She specialised in the study of the Indus Valley Civilization.
- Her research significantly shaped modern understanding of Harappan society.
- She combined archaeology with broader social science perspectives.

2. She transformed the approach to Indian archaeology

- Earlier archaeology largely focused on documenting artefacts and sites.
- Ratnagar emphasized interpretation rather than mere description.
- She encouraged analysis of social, political, and economic structures.

3. Trade networks were a major area of her research

- She studied Harappan trade with Mesopotamia, Bahrain, and Oman.
- Her work examined the broader significance of these exchanges.
- She viewed trade as part of wider economic and political processes.

4. She explored Harappan political organisation

- Ratnagar investigated how Harappan society may have been governed.
- She addressed questions that remain debated among historians.
- Her work encouraged fresh thinking about ancient state formation.

5. She challenged conventional explanations of Harappan decline

- Her book on the end of the Harappan civilisation critically evaluated existing theories.
- She stressed evidence-based interpretations.
- She promoted a nuanced understanding of historical change.

6. She made archaeology accessible to the public

- Through popular writings, she explained Harappan civilisation to general readers.
- She highlighted everyday life, labour, technology, and household production.
- Her work connected archaeology with ordinary human experiences.

7. She defended evidence-based archaeology

- Ratnagar questioned archaeological claims made in the Babri Masjid dispute.
- She argued that archaeology should not be influenced by ideological agendas.
- Her interventions highlighted the importance of scientific rigor and critical inquiry.





Easy Explanation

The article argues that India's recent energy challenges, highlighted by disruptions around the **Strait of Hormuz**, show that the country needs not only energy conservation (austerity) but also better coordination in energy governance. Even if the immediate crisis eases, India will continue to face high energy prices and supply uncertainties because global oil inventories have fallen and some energy infrastructure in West Asia has been damaged.

The author points out that India's energy sector is fragmented across multiple ministries dealing with petroleum, coal, power, renewable energy, and nuclear energy. Since no single institution has overall responsibility for energy security, decisions are often made in silos. This makes it difficult to address interconnected issues involving energy, food security, water, fertilisers, industry, climate goals, and economic growth.

To address this problem, the author proposes creating either a unified **Ministry of Energy** or, as a more practical option, a **Department of Energy Resources and Security (DERS)** within the Prime Minister's Office. The idea is not to replace existing ministries but to coordinate them and provide a "whole-of-system" approach to energy planning and security.

The proposed DERS would oversee integrated energy planning, ensure balanced investments across the energy value chain, coordinate energy regulation, support strategic energy partnerships, and act as a central communication body on energy matters. The article also recommends an **Energy Responsibility and Security Act** to define the responsibilities of citizens and institutions in achieving energy self-reliance and sustainability.

The central message is that India's energy challenge is not merely about producing more energy. It is about creating institutions that can view the entire energy ecosystem together. Without such coordination, small failures in different sectors can combine into a larger systemic crisis.

Key Takeaways

1. India's energy vulnerabilities remain high

- Energy prices may remain elevated even after the immediate West Asian crisis subsides.
- Global oil stocks need replenishment.
- Damage to energy infrastructure could keep markets tight.

2. Energy security requires more than conservation

- The Prime Minister has called for energy austerity.
- Conservation is important but insufficient on its own.
- Long-term energy security requires institutional reforms.

3. India's energy governance is fragmented

- Different ministries manage petroleum, coal, power, renewables, and nuclear energy.
- No single authority oversees the entire energy sector.
- This creates coordination challenges and policy silos.

4. A 'whole-of-system' approach is needed

- Energy is linked with food, water, fertilisers, industry, environment, and technology.
- Policy decisions in one sector affect many others.
- Integrated planning is essential for resilience and efficiency.

5. The article proposes a Department of Energy Resources and Security (DERS)

- DERS would function within the Prime Minister's Office.
- It would coordinate rather than replace existing ministries.
- The aim is to improve energy planning and oversight.

6. Balanced investments across the energy value chain are crucial





- Energy generation alone is not enough.
- Transmission, storage, and distribution infrastructure must also expand.
- Poor coordination can lead to stranded energy assets and economic losses.

7. Energy security should become a national mission

- The author proposes an Energy Responsibility and Security Act.
- Citizens, businesses, and governments should share responsibility for energy sustainability.
- Strong institutional mechanisms are needed to achieve energy self-reliance (Atmanirbharta).

The majoritarian shadow over Adivasi identity, faith-The Hindu Editorial

Polity

Easy Explanation

This article discusses the ongoing debate over **Adivasi identity, religion, and constitutional rights**. It argues that tribal identity should not be defined by a person's religion and criticizes attempts to link Scheduled Tribe (ST) status with religious affiliation.

The immediate context is the demand by some organizations to "**delist**" **tribal people who have converted to Christianity**, meaning they should lose ST status and the benefits associated with it. Supporters of delisting argue that conversion separates a person from traditional tribal beliefs and culture. However, opponents argue that tribal identity is based on **ethnicity, ancestry, kinship, customs, and historical marginalisation**, not religion.

The article highlights that the Constitution treats Scheduled Tribes differently from Scheduled Castes. While religion has relevance in the legal framework governing Scheduled Castes, **Article 342**, which deals with Scheduled Tribes, does not link ST identity to any religion. Therefore, many scholars and activists argue that conversion does not erase tribal identity.

The article also refers to a 1963 Patna High Court judgment involving **Kartik Oraon**, where the court held that an Oraon remains an Oraon regardless of whether he follows Hinduism, Christianity, or Buddhism. The judgment emphasized that tribal identity is fundamentally ethnic and community-based rather than religious.

A major theme of the article is the concern that religious divisions are overshadowing more pressing tribal issues such as implementation of the Forest Rights Act, protection of forests, land rights, functioning of Gram Sabhas, employment, education, and welfare schemes. The author argues that debates on religion should not distract attention from these socio-economic and governance challenges faced by Adivasi communities.

Key Takeaways

1. The debate centres on 'delisting' converted tribal communities

- Some groups demand that tribal converts to Christianity lose Scheduled Tribe status.
- They argue that conversion separates individuals from traditional tribal beliefs.
- The issue has become a major point of political and social debate.

2. Tribal identity and religion are not constitutionally linked

- Article 342 governs Scheduled Tribes.
- Unlike Scheduled Castes, ST status is not explicitly tied to religion.
- This forms a key argument against delisting.

3. Tribal identity is viewed as ethnic and cultural

- Tribal identity is rooted in ancestry, kinship, customs, and community ties.
- Conversion does not necessarily erase these social and cultural characteristics.
- Many tribal communities continue traditional practices after conversion.

4. The Kartik Oraon case remains important



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- The Patna High Court ruled that tribal identity is not religion-based.
- It held that an Oraon remains an Oraon regardless of faith.
- The judgment is frequently cited in debates on tribal identity.

5. Recognition of indigenous tribal faiths remains a demand

- Many Adivasis follow nature-based and animistic traditions.
- There have been demands for separate recognition of tribal religions such as Sarna.
- Several tribal organizations seek distinct representation in census records.

6. Land, forest and resource rights remain major tribal concerns

- Protection of forests, land rights and community resources are key issues.
- Implementation of the Forest Rights Act and PESA remains a challenge.
- Mining and development projects continue to affect tribal regions.

7. The article warns against religious polarisation within tribal communities

- Religious divisions may weaken collective tribal movements.
- Fragmentation can divert attention from socio-economic issues.
- Unity is viewed as important for protecting tribal rights and interests.

[Shaping the next chapter in India-Canada relations-The Hindu Editorial](#)

International relations

Easy Explanation

India and Canada are attempting to rebuild and strengthen their bilateral relationship after a period of diplomatic strain. Recent high-level visits, including those of Canadian Prime Minister **Mark Carney** and Indian Commerce Minister **Piyush Goyal**, indicate that both countries want to move forward and expand cooperation.

The renewed partnership is expected to rest on four major pillars: **economic cooperation, technological collaboration, energy security, and people-to-people ties**. Both countries see significant benefits in working together because their economies are complementary. India needs energy, critical minerals, technology, and investment for its rapid growth, while Canada has abundant natural resources, advanced technologies, and investment capital.

A key focus is the proposed **Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA)**. Both countries aim to conclude the agreement and increase bilateral trade substantially by 2030. Such an agreement could improve market access, boost investment, and create new opportunities for businesses in both countries.

Another important factor is the large Indian diaspora in Canada. Indian-origin professionals, students, entrepreneurs, and community leaders contribute significantly to Canada's economy and society. This diaspora acts as a bridge connecting the two countries through trade, investment, education, culture, and innovation.

Beyond bilateral benefits, India and Canada also share interests in the Indo-Pacific region. Cooperation in areas such as maritime security, artificial intelligence, clean energy, climate action, and resilient supply chains can contribute to regional stability and economic growth. The article argues that with sustained engagement and mutual trust, India and Canada can build one of the most important economic partnerships of the coming decade.

Key Takeaways

1. India-Canada relations are entering a new phase

- Recent high-level visits indicate renewed political commitment.
- Both countries are seeking deeper strategic engagement.
- The focus is on long-term cooperation rather than short-term issues.

2. Four pillars are shaping the partnership



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- Economic cooperation.
- Technological collaboration.
- Energy security.
- People-to-people connectivity.

3. CEPA could transform bilateral trade

- Negotiations on a Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement have resumed.
- The agreement aims to improve market access and investment flows.
- Both countries seek significant growth in bilateral trade.

4. Energy and critical minerals are emerging priorities

- India's growing economy requires secure energy supplies.
- Canada possesses uranium, critical minerals, and clean energy expertise.
- Cooperation can strengthen energy security and supply-chain resilience.

5. Business and investment ties are expanding

- Indian companies have invested in sectors such as technology, manufacturing, and mining in Canada.
- Canadian pension funds are investing in Indian infrastructure and digital sectors.
- Two-way investment reflects growing economic confidence.

6. The Indian diaspora is a strategic asset

- The Indian-origin community plays a major role in Canada's economy and society.
- Diaspora networks support trade, innovation, education, and cultural exchanges.
- They serve as an important bridge between the two countries.

7. Indo-Pacific cooperation adds strategic importance

- Canada views India as a key partner in its Indo-Pacific strategy.
- Both support a free, open, inclusive, and rules-based Indo-Pacific.
- Cooperation in AI, maritime security, clean energy, and climate action can strengthen regional stability.

The apex court rings its own chain-The Hindu Text and Context

Polity

Easy Explanation

This article criticizes the growing tendency of the **Supreme Court of India** to take **suo motu cognisance** (acting on its own without a formal petition) in high-profile criminal cases that receive extensive media attention. The author argues that while such interventions attract public attention, they may not always be the most effective way to deliver justice.

The article uses the recent **Twisha Sharma death case** as an example. The Supreme Court took suo motu cognisance citing media reports and concerns about possible institutional bias. However, by that time, several institutions were already functioning: a magistrate had ordered police custody, the High Court had directed a second autopsy, the Bar Council had suspended the accused lawyer's licence, and the state government was considering a CBI investigation. The author questions whether Supreme Court intervention was necessary when the legal system was already in motion.

The central argument is that the Supreme Court faces two choices. One is the easier path of intervening in individual sensational cases. The other is the harder path of improving the judicial system itself—strengthening trial courts, improving infrastructure, reducing delays, ensuring judicial appointments, and enhancing case management. The author believes the Court often chooses the first path because it is more visible and immediate.

The article further argues that past examples such as the **R.G. Kar Case**, Hathras case, Lakhimpur Kheri case, and Manipur violence show that apex court monitoring does not necessarily speed up investigations or convictions. In many cases, trial courts and High Courts eventually performed the substantive work.



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The broader concern is about the efficient use of judicial attention. India has thousands of serious criminal cases awaiting justice. The author questions whether the Supreme Court's limited time should be devoted to selected media-highlighted cases or to systemic reforms that could improve justice delivery for millions of citizens.

Key Takeaways

1. The article questions frequent suo motu interventions

- Suo motu cognisance allows courts to act on their own initiative.
- The author argues that it is increasingly used in high-profile criminal cases.
- Media attention often appears to influence such interventions.

2. Twisha Sharma case is used as the latest example

- The Supreme Court acted after reports of possible institutional bias.
- However, several authorities had already initiated legal action.
- The author questions the necessity of apex court involvement.

3. Trial courts and High Courts were already functioning

- A magistrate ordered police custody.
- The High Court directed a second autopsy.
- Other institutions had already taken corrective measures.

4. Systemic judicial reform is the harder but more important task

- Improving trial court infrastructure.
- Reducing judicial vacancies.
- Strengthening case management and judicial training.
- These reforms could have a wider impact on justice delivery.

5. Past cases show mixed results from apex court monitoring

- Cases such as R.G. Kar, Hathras, Lakhimpur Kheri, and Manipur are cited.
- Supreme Court supervision did not necessarily accelerate justice.
- Trial courts remained central to the final outcome.

6. Suo motu cases have increased significantly

- The number of such cases has risen sharply since 2020.
- What was once a rare power is now used more frequently.
- Criminal suo motu matters have shown notable growth.

7. Judicial attention is a scarce resource

- India faces a huge backlog of criminal cases.
- Thousands of serious offences receive little public attention.
- The article argues that scarce judicial resources should be used carefully and strategically.

[Webb telescope captures weather on exoplanet 700 lightyears away-The Hindu Science](#)

Science and technology

Easy Explanation

Scientists have achieved a major breakthrough using the **James Webb Space Telescope (JWST)** by directly studying the weather patterns of an exoplanet called **WASP-94A b**, located about **700 light-years from Earth**. This is one of the clearest observations yet of weather occurring on a distant world outside our Solar System.



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WASP-94A b is a type of exoplanet known as a **"Hot Jupiter"**—a gas giant similar to Jupiter but orbiting extremely close to its parent star. Because it is tidally locked, one side always faces the star and remains extremely hot, while the other side remains permanently dark and much colder. This creates extreme temperature differences and unusual weather conditions.

Using the powerful instruments aboard JWST, astronomers discovered that clouds made of **magnesium silicate, iron, and magnesium sulphide** form on the cooler night side of the planet. Strong winds then carry these clouds toward the hotter day side, where they disappear because of the intense heat. Thus, the planet experiences a continuous cycle of cloud formation and destruction.

Scientists studied this weather system using a technique called **spectroscopy**, which analyses how a planet's atmosphere absorbs starlight. By observing the planet as it passed in front of its star (transit method), researchers could compare different parts of the atmosphere and identify differences between the morning and evening sides.

This discovery is important because understanding exoplanet atmospheres helps scientists learn how planets form, evolve, and differ from one another. Such studies may eventually help identify Earth-like planets and improve our understanding of the origins of our own Solar System.

Key Takeaways

1. JWST has observed weather on a distant exoplanet

- Scientists studied WASP-94A b located around 700 light-years away.
- The observation provides direct evidence of weather patterns beyond our Solar System.
- It marks a significant achievement in exoplanet research.

2. WASP-94A b is a 'Hot Jupiter'

- It is almost twice as large as Jupiter but less massive.
- It orbits very close to its parent star.
- One complete orbit takes only four days.

3. The planet is tidally locked

- One side permanently faces the star.
- The day side is extremely hot while the night side remains cold and dark.
- This creates extreme atmospheric conditions.

4. Scientists discovered a dynamic cloud cycle

- Clouds form on the cooler night side.
- Fast winds transport them across the planet.
- They disappear when they reach the hotter day side.

5. Spectroscopy made the discovery possible

- Scientists analysed how the atmosphere absorbed starlight.
- Different molecules absorb specific wavelengths of light.
- This allowed researchers to identify atmospheric composition.

6. The transit method helped map the atmosphere

- Researchers observed the planet passing in front of its star.
- Different atmospheric regions were examined during transit.
- This revealed differences between morning and evening conditions.

7. The finding improves understanding of planetary evolution

- Studying exoplanet atmospheres reveals clues about planet formation.
- It helps scientists compare other planetary systems with our Solar System.
- Future telescopes may use similar methods to find Earth-like worlds.



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2nd June 2026

['Cheap' global money flow into India drying up-The Indian Express Explained Page](#)

Economy

Easy Explanation

The article discusses why the era of abundant and cheap global capital is ending and what it means for India.

For many years, especially after the 2008 Global Financial Crisis and during the COVID-19 pandemic, major central banks such as the US Federal Reserve kept interest rates very low and injected large amounts of money into the economy through **Quantitative Easing (QE)**. This made borrowing cheap and increased the supply of global capital.

Since returns in developed countries were low, investors searched for higher returns in emerging economies like India. Consequently, India received large foreign investments in stocks, bonds, and businesses.

However, the situation has changed. Inflation has risen globally due to supply-chain disruptions, geopolitical conflicts, trade tensions, and energy price shocks. To control inflation, central banks have increased interest rates and moved away from easy-money policies.

As interest rates and government bond yields in developed countries rise, investors can earn better returns from relatively safer assets such as US Treasury bonds. This reduces the attractiveness of investing in riskier emerging markets.

As a result, foreign capital inflows into India have slowed, and foreign investors have become more cautious. Going forward, India will need to attract investment through strong economic growth, policy stability, infrastructure development, and better business opportunities rather than relying on excess global liquidity.

Key Takeaways

1. End of the Cheap Money Era

- The period of near-zero interest rates is ending.
- Global liquidity is no longer as abundant as before.
- Investors have become more selective in allocating capital.

2. Rising Global Bond Yields

- Government bond yields in major economies have increased.
- Investors can earn higher returns from safer assets.
- Riskier investments face stronger competition.

3. Inflation Has Returned

- Global inflation rose after the pandemic and geopolitical conflicts.
- Higher inflation forced central banks to tighten monetary policy.
- Interest rates have increased across many economies.

4. Quantitative Easing Is Being Reversed

- Central banks are reducing easy-money measures.
- Liquidity support provided after 2008 and COVID-19 is declining.
- Borrowing costs are rising globally.

5. India Benefited from Global Capital Flows

- Foreign investments supported economic growth and markets.
- India attracted investors seeking higher returns.
- Capital inflows increased significantly during the low-rate era.



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6. Foreign Investment Flows Are Weakening

- Net capital inflows into India have slowed.
- Foreign Portfolio Investors (FPIs) have shown greater caution.
- Developed-market assets have become more attractive.

7. Growth Fundamentals Will Matter More

- India must rely on strong economic fundamentals.
- Higher GDP growth and corporate earnings are essential.
- Reforms, infrastructure, and ease of doing business will be key drivers of future investment.

[Gir lion deaths not alarming but flag need for multiple populations-The Indian Express Explained Page](#)

Environment

Easy Explanation

Recently, eight Asiatic lions, including cubs, died in Gujarat's Gir landscape due to a suspected **Babesiosis** infection. Babesiosis is a disease caused by the **Babesia parasite**, which is transmitted through infected ticks. However, wildlife scientist Yadvendra V Jhala argues that these deaths are **not alarming for the overall lion population**, which is now around 1,000 individuals.

The Babesia parasite normally exists in livestock, wild ungulates (such as chital and nilgai), and even lions without causing serious harm. Problems arise when animals are under stress, malnourished, genetically vulnerable, or suffering from other infections. The parasite attacks red blood cells, causing symptoms like anaemia, fever, lethargy, enlarged spleen, and sometimes organ failure.

According to the scientist, occasional disease-related deaths are part of natural ecological processes and do not necessarily require large-scale intervention. The bigger concern is that almost the entire Asiatic lion population is concentrated in one geographical region—the Gir landscape of Gujarat.

A single epidemic, natural disaster, or disease outbreak could severely affect the entire species. The example of the Serengeti lion epidemic in Africa during the 1990s, where nearly one-third of lions died within a few months, shows the danger of having a concentrated population.

Therefore, conservation experts argue that India should establish **multiple independent lion populations** in different regions. This would act as a safety net and reduce the risk of extinction from disease outbreaks, disasters, or other threats. The issue is not the current deaths themselves but the long-term conservation vulnerability arising from having most Asiatic lions in a single landscape.

Key Takeaways

1. Babesiosis Caused the Recent Lion Deaths

- Eight lions, including cubs, died in Gujarat's Gir region.
- The disease is caused by the Babesia parasite.
- It is transmitted through infected tick bites.

2. Babesia Is Naturally Present in the Ecosystem

- The parasite exists in livestock and wild ungulates.
- Most infected animals show no symptoms.
- Disease becomes severe mainly under stress or co-infections.

3. The Disease Attacks Red Blood Cells

- Babesia functions similarly to malaria parasites.
- It causes anaemia, fever, lethargy, and spleen enlargement.
- Severe cases can result in organ failure and death.



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4. Current Deaths Are Not a Major Population Threat

- Gir's lion population is around 1,000.
- A few disease-related deaths are considered part of natural ecological processes.
- Experts do not view the present episode as a conservation emergency.

5. Single Population Is the Real Concern

- Most Asiatic lions are concentrated in one landscape.
- A major epidemic could affect the entire species.
- Lack of geographical distribution increases extinction risk.

6. Genetic Vulnerability Adds to the Risk

- Asiatic lions have low genetic diversity due to a historical bottleneck.
- Reduced genetic variation can weaken disease resistance.
- This makes large-scale outbreaks more dangerous.

7. Multiple Lion Populations Are Essential

- Conservation biology supports creating separate populations.
- Independent populations act as safety nets against disasters and epidemics.
- Reintroduction outside Gir can improve long-term species survival.

[The overlooked conflict: Civil war and humanitarian disaster in South Sudan-The Indian Express Explained Page](#)

International relations

Easy Explanation

South Sudan, the world's youngest country, gained independence from Sudan in 2011 after a long struggle. However, instead of achieving stability, the country soon descended into civil war and humanitarian crisis.

The roots of the conflict lie in a power struggle between Salva Kiir and Riek Machar, two leaders of the independence movement. In 2013, political rivalry between them escalated into a civil war, further intensified by ethnic divisions between the Dinka and Nuer communities.

Although a peace agreement was signed in 2018, many key provisions—such as elections, disarmament of armed groups, and accountability for war crimes—were never fully implemented. As a result, tensions remained unresolved.

The conflict escalated again in 2025 when the White Army militia, which supports Machar, clashed with government forces. Machar was later placed under house arrest and charged with serious offences. Since then, violence has intensified, with attacks on civilians, schools, hospitals, and other infrastructure.

The consequences have been devastating. More than half of South Sudan's population faces acute food insecurity, while hundreds of thousands have been displaced. Humanitarian organisations report that many people survive on food aid, wild plants, and fish. Children are especially vulnerable, with severe malnutrition reaching alarming levels.

The United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) plays a crucial role in protecting civilians, facilitating humanitarian assistance, supporting peace efforts, and monitoring human rights violations. India is one of the largest contributors to this mission, and Indian peacekeepers have made significant sacrifices, including the death of Naib Subedar Sujit Kumar Pradhan, who is being honoured posthumously with the Dag Hammarskjöld Medal.

The South Sudan crisis highlights how political instability, ethnic tensions, weak institutions, and incomplete peace processes can create prolonged humanitarian disasters.

Key Takeaways

1. South Sudan Is the World's Youngest Country



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- It became independent from Sudan in 2011.
- Independence followed decades of political and armed struggle.
- Nation-building challenges emerged immediately after independence.

2. Civil War Originated from Political Rivalry

- Conflict began between President Salva Kiir and Vice President Riek Machar.
- Leadership disputes escalated into armed confrontation in 2013.
- Ethnic divisions deepened the conflict.

3. Ethnic Factors Intensified Violence

- Kiir belongs to the Dinka community.
- Machar belongs to the Nuer community.
- Political competition transformed into wider communal violence.

4. The 2018 Peace Agreement Remained Incomplete

- A peace accord formally ended large-scale fighting.
- Key commitments such as elections and disarmament were not implemented.
- Political tensions continued beneath the surface.

5. Conflict Re-Escalated in 2025

- Clashes involving the White Army militia triggered renewed violence.
- Riek Machar was placed under house arrest.
- Fighting spread across several regions of the country.

6. South Sudan Faces a Severe Humanitarian Crisis

- More than half the population suffers from acute food insecurity.
- Large numbers of people have been displaced.
- Hundreds of thousands of children face severe acute malnutrition.

7. UN Peacekeeping and India Play an Important Role

- The United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) protects civilians and supports peace efforts.
- India is among the largest troop contributors to UNMISS.
- Indian peacekeepers have made significant sacrifices in maintaining international peace.

[Codeine crisis: In dry Bihar, why cough syrup addiction is rising-The Indian Express Explained page](#)

Governance

Easy Explanation

Bihar imposed complete alcohol prohibition in 2016 to reduce alcohol-related social and health problems. However, an unintended consequence has emerged: the growing misuse of **codeine-based cough syrups** as a substitute intoxicant.

Codeine is an opioid drug derived from morphine and is commonly used in cough syrups to suppress severe or persistent coughs. When used under medical supervision and in prescribed doses, it is effective and safe. However, because codeine can produce feelings of relaxation, drowsiness, and mild euphoria, it also has addictive potential.

In Bihar, the demand for codeine cough syrups has increased significantly after alcohol prohibition. Since alcohol is difficult to obtain legally, some individuals, particularly youth, have turned to codeine syrups as a cheaper and more accessible alternative. Illegal networks procure and distribute these syrups through black markets and unauthorized channels.



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Excessive use of codeine can be dangerous. It can slow breathing, cause dependence, and lead to withdrawal symptoms when use is stopped. Long-term abuse may damage physical and mental health, including liver and kidney problems and psychiatric disorders.

To address the issue, Bihar has classified codeine syrups as "intoxicants" under its prohibition law and imposed restrictions on their sale and possession. However, enforcement remains challenging. Experts argue that law enforcement alone cannot solve the problem; deeper socio-economic factors such as unemployment, poverty, lack of awareness, and substance-abuse vulnerabilities also need to be addressed.

The issue highlights an important public policy lesson: prohibiting one substance may sometimes lead users to shift toward alternative intoxicants if demand-side factors are not addressed.

Key Takeaways

1. Codeine Is an Opioid-Based Medicine

- It is derived from morphine found in the opium poppy.
- It is commonly used as a cough suppressant.
- It is prescribed for severe and persistent coughs.

2. Codeine Has Addictive Potential

- It can produce sedative and intoxicating effects.
- Repeated misuse can lead to dependence and addiction.
- Withdrawal symptoms may occur when usage stops.

3. Alcohol Prohibition Created a Substitute Demand

- Bihar has enforced alcohol prohibition since 2016.
- Some users have shifted to codeine-based cough syrups.
- The syrups are often viewed as an alternative intoxicant.

4. Illegal Supply Networks Have Expanded

- Large quantities of codeine syrup have been seized by authorities.
- Interstate trafficking networks are involved in distribution.
- Black-market demand remains significant.

5. Health Risks Are Serious

- Overuse can cause respiratory depression.
- Long-term abuse may affect liver, kidneys, and mental health.
- Young people are increasingly vulnerable to addiction.

6. Bihar Has Tightened Regulations

- Codeine syrups have been classified as "intoxicants."
- Sale and possession are restricted without authorization.
- Violations can attract fines, confiscation, and imprisonment.

7. Long-Term Solutions Require Social Interventions

- Enforcement alone may not eliminate substance abuse.
- Poverty, unemployment, and lack of awareness contribute to addiction.
- Public health and rehabilitation measures are equally important.

[Health survey calls for a nutrition rethink-The Indian Express The Ideas Page](#)





Easy Explanation

The recently released National Family Health Survey (NFHS-VI) highlights a major transformation in India's health profile. While India has made progress in controlling many communicable diseases, it is now facing a rapid rise in non-communicable diseases (NCDs) such as diabetes, obesity, hypertension, and cardiovascular diseases.

The survey reveals that one in six Indians has high blood sugar levels, indicating a growing diabetes burden. At the same time, nearly 30% of Indians are obese. Obesity and diabetes reinforce each other, creating a vicious cycle that increases the risk of heart disease, kidney disorders, hypertension, stroke, and even certain cancers.

However, India's challenge is unique because it still struggles with undernutrition and malnutrition, especially among children. More than 31% of children remain underweight, and over 80% of infants aged 6–23 months do not receive an adequate diet. Thus, India faces a double burden of malnutrition—undernutrition and overnutrition existing simultaneously.

One important reason is the shift in dietary patterns. Economic growth and urbanisation have increased the consumption of refined carbohydrates, processed foods, and calorie-rich diets, often at the expense of nutritional diversity. Meanwhile, poorer households continue to lack access to balanced diets rich in proteins, fruits, vegetables, and micronutrients.

The article argues that government nutrition programmes have focused largely on food supply and calorie provision. Going forward, policy must focus on diet quality, nutrition awareness, behavioural change, maternal education, and healthy lifestyles to tackle both malnutrition and metabolic diseases effectively.

Key Takeaways

1. India Faces a Rising Diabetes Burden

- NFHS-VI reports that one in six Indians has high blood sugar levels.
- Diabetes is becoming a major public health challenge.
- The disease increases the risk of multiple chronic illnesses.

2. Obesity Is Growing Rapidly

- Nearly 30% of Indians are reported to be obese.
- Obesity is closely linked with diabetes and hypertension.
- Rising obesity reflects changing lifestyles and dietary habits.

3. India Faces a Double Burden of Malnutrition

- Undernutrition and overnutrition coexist.
- Many children remain underweight despite economic progress.
- Obesity is increasing even among younger age groups.

4. Child Nutrition Remains a Serious Concern

- More than 31% of children are underweight.
- Over 80% of infants do not receive an adequate diet.
- Early-life nutritional deficiencies can affect lifelong health outcomes.

5. Dietary Patterns Are Changing

- Consumption of processed foods and refined carbohydrates has increased.
- Nutritional diversity has declined in many households.
- Poor dietary choices contribute to metabolic disorders.

6. Lifestyle Diseases Are Replacing Traditional Health Challenges

- India is undergoing an epidemiological transition.
- Non-communicable diseases now contribute significantly to disease burden.
- Urbanisation and sedentary lifestyles are important drivers.

7. Nutrition Policy Needs a Rethink



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- Focus should move beyond calorie intake to nutritional quality.
- Maternal awareness and family food practices are crucial.
- Integrated approaches are needed to address both malnutrition and obesity.

Why do cities get polluted in summer?-The Hindu Text and Context

Environment

Easy Explanation

Many people associate air pollution mainly with winter, especially in cities like Delhi. However, Indian cities increasingly experience significant pollution episodes during summer as well. The reasons and pollutants involved are different from winter pollution.

In winter, cold temperatures, low wind speeds, and temperature inversion trap pollutants close to the ground, leading to high concentrations of fine particulate matter (PM_{2.5}). In summer, stronger winds and higher temperatures help disperse some pollutants, but they create conditions for other pollutants such as **PM₁₀ (coarse dust particles)** and **ground-level ozone**.

Summer pollution is driven by a combination of natural and human-made factors. Dust storms originating from the Thar Desert and West Asia, local dust storms (andhi), construction activities, road dust, vehicle emissions, industrial pollution, and waste burning contribute to high PM₁₀ levels.

At the same time, strong sunlight and high temperatures trigger chemical reactions between nitrogen oxides (NO_x) and volatile organic compounds (VOCs) emitted from vehicles, industries, paints, and fuel combustion. This leads to the formation of **ground-level ozone**, a harmful pollutant that can damage lungs and worsen respiratory diseases.

Thus, while winter pollution is mainly a problem of pollutant accumulation, summer pollution is largely a problem of **dust generation and ozone formation**. Therefore, cities need year-round pollution management rather than focusing only on winter smog.

Key Takeaways

1. Summer Pollution Is Different from Winter Pollution

- Winter pollution is dominated by PM_{2.5} particles.
- Summer pollution is mainly driven by PM₁₀ and ozone.
- Different seasons require different mitigation strategies.

2. Dust Is a Major Summer Pollutant

- Dust storms from the Thar Desert and West Asia increase PM₁₀ levels.
- Local dust storms (andhi) also contribute.
- Dust can remain suspended in the atmosphere for several days.

3. Construction Activities Increase PM₁₀

- Construction and demolition generate large amounts of dust.
- Poor dust-control measures worsen air quality.
- Urban infrastructure projects often add to summer pollution.

4. Road Dust and Traffic Add to Pollution

- Vehicles resuspend loose dust from dry roads.
- Traffic emissions contribute particulate matter and gases.
- Broken and poorly maintained roads aggravate the problem.

5. Ozone Pollution Increases in Hot Weather

- Ground-level ozone is not emitted directly.



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- It forms through reactions between NO_x and VOCs under sunlight.
- Higher temperatures accelerate ozone formation.

6. Health Risks Remain Significant

- PM₁₀ can affect the respiratory system.
- Ozone exposure can worsen asthma and lung diseases.
- Vulnerable groups include children, the elderly, and people with respiratory illnesses.

7. Cities Need Year-Round Air Quality Management

- Early warning systems can predict pollution episodes.
- Dust control at construction sites is essential.
- Reducing vehicle and industrial emissions helps control ozone formation.

[The genie of synthetic biology is out, and with it comes power and peril-The Hindu Science](#)

Science and technology

Easy Explanation

The article discusses the rapid rise of **synthetic biology**, a field that combines biology, genetics, engineering, and artificial intelligence to not only understand life but also redesign and create new biological systems.

For centuries, humans have tried to understand how living organisms function. The discovery of **DNA (Deoxyribonucleic Acid)** revolutionized this effort. DNA contains genetic information that determines how organisms grow, function, and reproduce. Advances in genome sequencing have made it possible to read the complete genetic code of organisms quickly and cheaply. Today, what once took years and billions of dollars can be done within hours at a fraction of the cost.

This knowledge has provided three major insights:

1. Understanding the evolutionary history of life.
2. Understanding how organisms adapt to their environments.
3. Understanding the complex functioning of cells and biological systems.

The next step is even more revolutionary. Scientists are now learning not only to **read genomes** but also to **write and design them**. Using synthetic biology, genetic engineering, and AI, researchers can design organisms with desired traits, such as bacteria that produce medicines, fuels, chemicals, or new materials.

A landmark achievement occurred in 2010 when scientist J. Craig Venter and his team created a synthetic bacterial genome and inserted it into a living cell, effectively creating a form of "synthetic life." This demonstrated that biological information can be designed digitally and converted into a living, self-replicating system.

However, this immense power brings significant risks. Synthetic biology could potentially create new organisms, alter ecosystems, or produce unintended consequences. Unlike machines, living organisms can reproduce and spread. Therefore, the challenge is to balance scientific innovation with ethical safeguards, regulation, and responsible governance.

The article concludes that synthetic biology offers enormous opportunities in medicine, agriculture, energy, and environmental protection, but humanity must carefully regulate its use to avoid unforeseen dangers.

Key Takeaways

1. Synthetic Biology Is Transforming Life Sciences

- It combines biology, engineering, genetics, and computing.
- Scientists are moving from reading DNA to designing it.
- It has the potential to reshape multiple sectors.

2. DNA Is the Foundation of Biological Information



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- DNA contains genetic instructions for all living organisms.
- Genes regulate the production of proteins and cellular functions.
- Understanding DNA is central to modern biotechnology.

3. Genome Sequencing Has Become Faster and Cheaper

- Sequencing costs have fallen dramatically.
- Scientists can study genomes of numerous organisms.
- Large-scale biological data is now widely available.

4. Artificial Intelligence Is Expanding Biological Design

- AI helps analyse complex biological datasets.
- It can assist in designing genes and genomes with desired traits.
- Computational biology is becoming increasingly important.

5. Synthetic Organisms Are Becoming Possible

- Scientists can engineer microbes to produce medicines and materials.
- Entire genomes can now be synthesized and modified.
- Future applications may extend to complex plants and animals.

6. Synthetic Biology Offers Major Benefits

- New drugs and vaccines can be developed.
- Sustainable fuels and industrial materials can be produced.
- Agriculture and environmental management may improve significantly.

7. Ethical and Regulatory Challenges Are Growing

- Engineered organisms may have unintended ecological impacts.
- Self-replicating biological systems require strict oversight.
- Responsible governance is essential to balance innovation and safety.

Fearsome dinosaur-era reptile was T. rex of the sea-The Hindu Science

Science

Easy Explanation

Scientists have identified a new species of giant marine reptile called **Tylosaurus rex**, which lived about **80 million years ago** during the Cretaceous Period. Because of its enormous size, powerful jaws, and role as a top predator, researchers have nicknamed it the "**T. rex of the sea.**"

Although its name resembles that of **Tyrannosaurus rex**, the two were very different creatures. Tyrannosaurus rex was a land-dwelling dinosaur that lived around 66 million years ago, whereas Tylosaurus rex was a marine reptile that hunted in a vast inland sea that once divided North America.

Tylosaurus rex belonged to a group of marine reptiles called **mosasaurs**, which evolved from land-dwelling lizards and later adapted to life in the oceans. It had a streamlined body, powerful tail, paddle-like flippers, and large serrated teeth that allowed it to capture and tear apart prey efficiently.

The largest known specimen of Tylosaurus rex measured about **13.2 metres**, making it even larger than some of the biggest Tyrannosaurus rex specimens. Scientists identified it as a distinct species after studying fossil evidence that revealed unique anatomical characteristics, including stronger jaw muscles and specialized teeth.

The discovery improves our understanding of prehistoric marine ecosystems and shows that the oceans of the dinosaur age contained predators just as formidable as those roaming on land.



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Key Takeaways

1. Tylosaurus rex Was a Giant Marine Predator

- It lived around 80 million years ago during the Cretaceous Period.
- It occupied the top position in the marine food chain.
- Scientists call it the "T. rex of the sea."

2. It Was Not a Dinosaur

- Tylosaurus rex belonged to the mosasaur group.
- Mosasaurs were marine reptiles, not dinosaurs.
- They evolved from land-dwelling lizard ancestors.

3. It Lived in an Ancient Inland Sea

- A vast inland sea once split North America into two parts.
- Tylosaurus rex hunted in this marine environment.
- The sea supported diverse marine life.

4. It Possessed Powerful Hunting Adaptations

- It had serrated teeth for cutting flesh.
- Strong jaw and neck muscles helped subdue prey.
- A streamlined body aided efficient swimming.

5. It Was Larger Than Many T. rex Specimens

- The largest known specimen measured about 13.2 metres.
- Some Tyrannosaurus rex specimens were slightly smaller.
- It ranks among the largest known mosasaurs.

6. Fossil Research Led to Its Identification

- Scientists re-examined previously discovered fossils.
- Distinct anatomical features justified a separate species status.
- The discovery refined our understanding of mosasaur diversity.

7. The Discovery Enhances Knowledge of Ancient Oceans

- It highlights the dominance of marine reptiles during the Cretaceous.
- Ancient oceans had apex predators comparable to land dinosaurs.
- Fossil studies continue to reveal new aspects of prehistoric ecosystems.

[IMEC is caught between commerce and geopolitics-The Hindu Editorial](#)

International relations

Easy Explanation

The **India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor (IMEC)** was launched during the 2023 G20 Summit in New Delhi as an ambitious connectivity project linking India, the Middle East, and Europe through ports, railways, energy pipelines, and digital infrastructure. It was envisioned as an alternative trade route that could reduce dependence on traditional maritime choke points such as the Suez Canal.

However, recent conflicts in West Asia, particularly involving Iran, Israel, and Gaza, have exposed the challenges facing IMEC. The war demonstrated how strategic choke points like the **Strait of Hormuz** can disrupt global trade and energy supplies. Since a significant share of global oil passes through this narrow passage, any blockade has serious consequences for countries like India that depend heavily on imported energy.



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Ironically, the same conflict that highlights the need for alternative trade corridors has also made IMEC more difficult to implement. The proposed corridor passes through key West Asian countries, including the UAE, Saudi Arabia, Jordan, and Israel. Ongoing conflicts, attacks on infrastructure, and political differences among regional partners create uncertainty for investors and governments.

The article argues that IMEC is caught between two realities. Economically, it is highly desirable because it can diversify trade routes and improve connectivity. Geopolitically, however, it depends on a region experiencing persistent instability and strategic rivalries.

To ensure the project's success, the corridor may need to become more flexible by incorporating alternative routes through countries such as Oman and Egypt while maintaining diplomatic engagement among regional partners. India, with strong relations across West Asia, could play an important role in facilitating cooperation and keeping the project viable.

Key Takeaways

1. IMEC Is a Major Connectivity Initiative

- IMEC stands for India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor.
- It was announced during the 2023 G20 Summit.
- The project aims to improve trade, connectivity, and economic integration.

2. It Seeks to Bypass Traditional Choke Points

- The corridor offers an alternative to routes dependent on the Suez Canal.
- It aims to reduce vulnerabilities in global trade networks.
- Diversified routes improve economic resilience.

3. The Iran Conflict Highlighted Global Vulnerabilities

- Disruptions in the Strait of Hormuz affected energy security.
- Choke points can significantly impact global supply chains.
- Countries dependent on imports face greater risks.

4. IMEC Depends on Stability in West Asia

- The corridor passes through several West Asian countries.
- Regional conflicts directly affect its implementation.
- Security concerns increase investment risks.

5. Geopolitical Rivalries Complicate the Project

- Differences among regional powers can slow cooperation.
- Political tensions affect connectivity initiatives.
- Infrastructure projects require long-term stability.

6. Alternative Routes May Strengthen IMEC

- Ports in Oman could reduce dependence on vulnerable areas.
- Egyptian Mediterranean ports may provide western alternatives.
- Greater flexibility can improve corridor resilience.

7. India Has an Important Diplomatic Role

- India enjoys strong ties with multiple West Asian countries.
- It can help bridge differences among stakeholders.
- Successful diplomacy is crucial for IMEC's long-term viability.

[Orbital rivalry — the challenge of China's space power-The Hindu Editorial](#)



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Easy Explanation

The article discusses the growing challenge posed by China's rapidly expanding space capabilities and what it means for India's security.

Traditionally, space was viewed mainly as a domain for scientific exploration and communication. Today, however, satellites are critical for military operations, navigation, communications, weather forecasting, banking transactions, intelligence gathering, and missile guidance. As a result, space has become an important arena of strategic competition.

China officially promotes the peaceful use of outer space, but it has simultaneously developed several **counter-space capabilities**. These include anti-satellite (ASAT) missiles, laser systems capable of blinding satellites, and co-orbital satellites that can approach and interfere with other satellites. Such capabilities could potentially disable an adversary's space infrastructure during a conflict.

China's ambitions are both economic and military. It seeks leadership in satellite constellations, lunar exploration, asteroid mining, and advanced space technologies. At the same time, it recognizes that controlling space assets can provide a decisive military advantage by disrupting an opponent's communication, navigation, surveillance, and intelligence systems.

For India, the concern is that it possesses far fewer satellites than China. While China has hundreds of military satellites and thousands of satellites overall, India's satellite network is comparatively smaller. Therefore, the loss or disruption of even a few satellites could significantly affect India's military and civilian operations.

The article argues that India must strengthen its space resilience through greater satellite production, distributed satellite constellations, stronger partnerships, enhanced space deterrence, and a clearer strategy for responding to hostile actions in space. The goal is not only to compete in the space race but also to ensure national security in an increasingly contested orbital environment.

Key Takeaways

1. Space Is Becoming a Strategic Domain

- Modern economies and militaries depend heavily on satellites.
- Space assets support communication, navigation, surveillance, and intelligence.
- Control of space increasingly influences power on Earth.

2. China Is Expanding Counter-Space Capabilities

- China has developed anti-satellite (ASAT) weapons.
- It is testing technologies capable of interfering with satellites.
- These systems can threaten rival space infrastructure.

3. China Has Long-Term Space Ambitions

- It plans lunar missions and advanced space infrastructure.
- Beijing aims to become a leading space power.
- Space leadership is viewed as both an economic and strategic objective.

4. Multiple Types of Space Weapons Are Emerging

- Kinetic weapons can physically destroy satellites.
- Lasers can temporarily blind or disrupt satellites.
- Co-orbital systems can interfere with satellites in orbit.

5. India's Space Assets Are More Vulnerable

- India has significantly fewer satellites than China.
- Lower redundancy increases vulnerability to disruptions.
- Loss of critical satellites could affect military operations.





6. Space Conflict May Begin with Disruption Rather Than Destruction

- Jamming and laser interference can temporarily disable satellites.
- Such actions may occur without triggering full-scale escalation.
- Grey-zone tactics are becoming increasingly important.

7. India Needs Greater Space Resilience

- Expand satellite manufacturing and launch capabilities.
- Develop distributed satellite constellations.
- Strengthen partnerships, data sharing, and space deterrence mechanisms.

3rd June 2026

[How Nvidia chip reshapes AI for personal computing-The Indian Express Explained Page](#)

Science and technology

Easy Explanation

Nvidia, the company leading the AI revolution through its powerful GPUs, has launched a new chip called **RTX Spark** for personal computers. With this move, Nvidia is expanding beyond AI data centres and entering the personal computer market, where companies like Intel and Apple have traditionally been dominant.

The RTX Spark combines CPU and GPU capabilities into a single powerful chip designed specifically for AI tasks. This allows laptops and desktops to run advanced AI models directly on the device instead of relying heavily on cloud servers. As a result, AI applications can become faster, more private, and less dependent on internet connectivity.

Nvidia's vision is that future computers will be powered by AI agents. Instead of manually opening apps and performing tasks, users may simply give instructions in natural language, and the AI system will complete the work automatically. This could fundamentally change how people interact with computers.

The launch also intensifies competition in the semiconductor industry. Intel has struggled to adapt to the AI era, while Apple has gained success with its Silicon chips. Nvidia's entry into AI-powered PCs could trigger a new phase of competition among major chipmakers.

Beyond hardware, Nvidia's biggest strength is its CUDA software ecosystem, which is widely used by AI developers. By bringing CUDA-enabled AI computing to millions of personal computers, Nvidia aims to strengthen its long-term dominance in the AI sector.

Key Takeaways

1. Nvidia expands beyond AI infrastructure

- Nvidia is moving from AI data centres into personal computers.
- RTX Spark is its first major push into AI-focused PCs.
- Targets the large global computer market.

2. Designed as an AI-first processor

- Built specifically for AI applications and workloads.
- Supports advanced AI models directly on devices.
- Focuses on AI-assisted computing experiences.

3. Integrates CPU and GPU capabilities

- Combines processing and AI acceleration functions.
- Enables faster and more efficient computing.



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- Improves performance for AI and graphics tasks.

4. Promotes on-device AI

- Reduces dependence on cloud-based AI services.
- Enhances privacy and responsiveness.
- Supports local execution of large AI models.

5. Challenges Intel and Apple

- Creates new competition in the semiconductor industry.
- Threatens Intel's traditional PC dominance.
- Competes with Apple's AI-capable Silicon chips.

6. AI agents could redefine personal computing

- Users may interact through natural language commands.
- AI assistants could automate complex workflows.
- Represents a shift away from app-centric computing.

7. CUDA ecosystem is a strategic advantage

- CUDA is Nvidia's widely used AI software platform.
- Expands developer dependence on Nvidia technology.
- Strengthens long-term leadership in AI computing.

[FDs over savings account: What's behind changing preference-The Indian Express Explained Page](#)

Economy

Easy Explanation

Indian savers are increasingly shifting their money from **savings accounts** to **Fixed Deposits (FDs)**. According to RBI data, the share of savings deposits in total bank deposits has fallen, while the share of term deposits (FDs) has risen significantly over the last few years. This shows that people now prefer higher returns over easy access to money.

The main reason is the sharp difference in interest rates. Most major banks currently offer only around **2.5% interest on savings accounts**, while one- to two-year FDs offer around **6–6.5% interest**. Naturally, savers are willing to lock their money for a fixed period to earn better returns.

Another important factor is **inflation**. When the interest earned on a savings account is lower than the inflation rate, the real value or purchasing power of money declines over time. In such a situation, keeping large amounts in savings accounts becomes less attractive, encouraging people to move towards FDs.

The RBI also notes that many depositors are choosing **medium-term FDs (1–3 years)** to lock in favourable interest rates for a longer period. This indicates that savers expect interest rates to decline in the future and want to secure higher returns while they can.

At the same time, households remain the largest source of bank deposits. However, apart from FDs, many households are also investing in **mutual funds and equities** in search of higher returns. This reflects a gradual shift in India's savings behaviour from traditional low-yield instruments towards more return-oriented investment options.

Key Takeaways

1. Shift from savings accounts to FDs

- Savings deposit share fell from 34.6% (2022) to 28.7% (2026).
- Term deposit share rose from 55.2% to 61.6%.
- Indicates growing preference for higher returns.



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2. Low savings account interest rates

- Major banks offer around 2.5% interest on savings accounts.
- Rates have declined significantly over the past decade.
- Makes savings accounts less attractive for long-term parking of funds.

3. FDs provide better returns

- One- to two-year FDs offer around 6–6.5% interest.
- Depositors are willing to lock in money for higher earnings.
- Supports strong growth in term deposits.

4. Inflation reduces real returns

- Savings account interest is often below inflation.
- Purchasing power of money declines over time.
- Encourages movement towards higher-yield instruments.

5. Preference for medium-term FDs

- Share of 1–3 year FDs increased significantly.
- Depositors seek to lock in favourable rates.
- Reflects expectations of future rate declines.

6. Households remain key depositors

- Households contribute the largest share of bank deposits.
- Still form the backbone of the banking system's funding base.
- Though their share has seen some moderation.

7. Diversification into mutual funds and equities

- Many households are investing beyond traditional FDs.
- Higher return expectations are driving this trend.
- Reflects increasing financialisation of household savings.

[Don't take that puff:'Herbal' cigarettes are not healthy alternatives to tobacco-The Indian Express Explained](#)
[Page](#)

Science and technology

Easy Explanation

Many people believe that **herbal cigarettes** are a safer alternative to normal tobacco cigarettes because they do not contain tobacco or nicotine. These products are often marketed as "natural", "chemical-free", and even beneficial for reducing stress, anxiety, or improving sleep. Instead of tobacco, they use herbs such as basil, clove, mint, cinnamon, chamomile, and green tea. However, a recent scientific study challenges these claims.

The study compared emissions from popular herbal cigarettes and conventional tobacco cigarettes. Surprisingly, researchers found that herbal cigarettes produced smoke that was **as harmful as, or even more harmful than, tobacco cigarettes** on several measures. This shows that "tobacco-free" does not automatically mean "risk-free".

The main problem is not just tobacco or nicotine, but the **process of burning (combustion)**. When any plant material is burned, it releases fine particles, carbon monoxide, hydrocarbons, and other harmful substances. These pollutants can damage the lungs, heart, and blood vessels regardless of whether the source is tobacco or herbs.

Researchers found that smoke from herbal cigarettes had a **higher oxidative potential**, meaning it could generate more harmful reactive oxygen species that trigger inflammation and tissue damage. Some herbal cigarettes also emitted higher levels of extremely small particles that can penetrate deep into the lungs. One herbal cigarette even showed high concentrations of lead despite being marketed as "chemical-free".



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The study also highlights a regulatory concern. Since herbal cigarettes are often sold as tobacco-free products, they may escape many regulations that apply to tobacco products under India's tobacco control laws. Experts argue that stricter oversight is needed because such products may attract young people and first-time smokers through misleading health and wellness claims.

Key Takeaways

1. Herbal cigarettes are not risk-free

- They are marketed as safer alternatives to tobacco.
- Scientific evidence shows they can be equally harmful.
- "Natural" does not mean "healthy".

2. Made from herbs instead of tobacco

- Use ingredients like basil, clove, mint, and cinnamon.
- Usually contain no tobacco or nicotine.
- Often promoted as wellness products.

3. Combustion remains the main danger

- Burning herbs produces harmful smoke.
- Releases carbon monoxide and particulate matter.
- Health risks arise from smoke inhalation itself.

4. Higher oxidative potential detected

- Herbal cigarette smoke showed greater biological reactivity.
- Can increase inflammation and tissue damage.
- Associated with heart and lung diseases.

5. Fine particles pose serious health risks

- Smoke contains extremely small particles.
- Can penetrate deep into the respiratory system.
- Linked to cardiovascular and respiratory disorders.

6. Misleading marketing claims

- Some products claim to be "chemical-free" and "healthy".
- Study found toxic substances such as lead in certain samples.
- Health-related claims lack strong scientific support.

7. Regulatory gaps need attention

- Tobacco-free products often fall outside tobacco regulations.
- May attract youth and first-time smokers.
- Stronger regulation and consumer awareness are needed.

[Parentage over privacy: Why SC upheld DNA test in paternity case-The Indian Express Explained Page](#)

Polity

Easy Explanation

The Supreme Court recently upheld a court order directing a man to undergo a **DNA test** in a paternity dispute. The case involved a person who claimed to be the biological son of the man and sought recognition of his parentage as well as inheritance rights in the father's property. The alleged father had consistently denied paternity for more than two decades.



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The central issue before the Court was whether ordering a DNA test would violate the man's **right to privacy**. The Supreme Court held that courts must balance two competing rights: the individual's right to privacy and another person's right to know their biological parentage and secure legal rights arising from it.

The Court observed that a DNA test cannot be ordered routinely. It should be used only when paternity is directly in dispute, when no other reliable evidence is available, and when the test is necessary for the interests of justice. In this case, since there was no other evidence capable of resolving the dispute, the DNA test was considered necessary.

The judgment reflects the judiciary's attempt to balance **privacy, dignity, identity, and inheritance rights**. While courts generally hesitate to order DNA testing because it may affect family relationships and social status, they may permit it when it is the only effective way to determine the truth.

The ruling also highlights the legal framework governing paternity disputes. Under Section 116 of the Bharatiya Sakshya Adhiniyam (earlier Section 112 of the Indian Evidence Act), a child born during a valid marriage is presumed legitimate. However, this presumption can be challenged in exceptional circumstances when justice requires further examination.

Key Takeaways

1. Supreme Court upheld DNA testing

- Allowed DNA testing in a paternity dispute.
- Case involved a claim of biological parentage and inheritance rights.
- Father had denied paternity for many years.

2. Privacy is not an absolute right

- Courts must balance privacy with competing rights.
- Biological identity can be a legitimate legal interest.
- Justice may require limited intrusion into privacy.

3. DNA tests cannot be ordered routinely

- Not to be used as a matter of course.
- Courts remain cautious in directing such tests.
- Requires strong justification.

4. Three conditions guide courts

- Paternity must be directly in issue.
- Alternative evidence should be unavailable.
- Test must serve the interests of justice.

5. Child's right to identity is important

- Individuals may seek certainty regarding parentage.
- Parentage affects inheritance and legal status.
- Courts recognize the need for closure in such disputes.

6. Courts protect legitimacy and dignity

- DNA testing can affect family relationships.
- Children should not face unnecessary challenges to legitimacy.
- Judicial restraint remains an important principle.

7. Important precedents shape the law

- Cases like *Goutam Kundu*, *Dipanwita Roy*, and *Aparna Firodia* guide courts.
- Supreme Court has consistently urged caution.
- DNA testing is treated as an exceptional measure.





[In navigating Trump's US & Xi's China, Japan is imagining a new Asia story-The Indian Express The Ideas Page](#)

International relations

Easy Explanation

Since the end of World War II, Japan has largely followed a pacifist approach, relying on the United States for security while focusing on economic development. It avoided major military expansion, restricted arms exports, and refrained from playing an active military role in regional affairs. However, this approach is now changing.

The main reason is the changing security environment in Asia. China's growing military power and assertive behaviour, along with uncertainty about the long-term reliability of US security commitments under President Donald Trump, have pushed Japan to rethink its strategy. Japan now believes that maintaining peace requires stronger military capabilities and closer security partnerships with like-minded countries.

As part of this shift, Japan has increased defence spending, modernised its military, relaxed restrictions on arms exports, and expanded defence cooperation with countries such as Australia, New Zealand, the Philippines, and other Indo-Pacific partners. A major example is Japan's agreement to supply advanced Mogami-class frigates to Australia, marking the largest defence export in Japan's post-war history.

Another important factor is Taiwan. Japan increasingly views peace and stability in the Taiwan Strait as directly linked to its own security. While Tokyo continues to follow the One-China Policy, it has become more vocal about the risks that a conflict over Taiwan would pose to the entire region.

Japan is therefore trying to balance two goals: maintaining its alliance with the United States while simultaneously building stronger regional security networks that reduce excessive dependence on Washington. This transformation reflects a broader search for a new balance of power in Asia amid the rise of China and changing US priorities.

Key Takeaways

1. Japan is moving away from post-war military restraint

- Traditionally followed a pacifist security policy.
- Relied heavily on the US security umbrella.
- Now adopting a more active defence role.

2. China's rise is the primary driver

- Growing Chinese military capabilities concern Japan.
- Beijing's assertive regional behaviour has increased security anxieties.
- Tokyo sees a need for stronger deterrence.

3. US uncertainty is influencing Japanese policy

- Concerns exist about long-term US commitment in Asia.
- Japan seeks greater strategic autonomy.
- Diversifying security partnerships beyond Washington.

4. Defence cooperation is expanding

- Japan is deepening ties with Australia, New Zealand, and the Philippines.
- Focus on military technology, logistics, and interoperability.
- Building regional security networks.

5. Arms export policy has changed significantly

- Restrictions on defence exports have been relaxed.
- Mogami-class frigate deal with Australia is a landmark step.
- Signals Japan's emergence as a defence-industrial power.



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6. Taiwan has become central to Japan's security thinking

- Japan views Taiwan Strait stability as vital for regional peace.
- Conflict over Taiwan could directly affect Japanese security.
- Supports deterrence without abandoning the One-China Policy.

7. Implications for India and Asia

- Japan is becoming a major security partner in the Indo-Pacific.
- Creates opportunities for deeper India-Japan defence cooperation.
- Reflects Asia's search for a new strategic equilibrium.

The future of India's chip industry-The Hindu Text and Context

Science and technology

Easy Explanation

Semiconductors (or chips) are the backbone of modern technology. They are used in smartphones, computers, automobiles, telecommunications equipment, artificial intelligence systems, and defence platforms. Recognising their strategic importance, India has made semiconductor manufacturing a national priority through initiatives such as the **India Semiconductor Mission (ISM)**. However, India is still at a very early stage in developing a domestic chip ecosystem.

Currently, India does not have a commercial semiconductor fabrication (fab) plant in operation. Most chips used in India's electronics industry are imported. The first fab is expected to come up in Dholera, Gujarat, while several other projects are under development. The government has provided substantial financial support through subsidies, incentives, and infrastructure support to encourage investment in this sector.

The NITI Aayog report argues that India must build semiconductor manufacturing despite the challenges because chips are critical for **economic security, technological self-reliance, and national security**. Dependence on foreign suppliers creates vulnerabilities, especially during geopolitical tensions or disruptions in global supply chains, such as a potential crisis involving Taiwan, which currently dominates advanced chip manufacturing.

However, semiconductor manufacturing is highly complex, capital-intensive, and time-consuming. Establishing a fab requires huge investments, specialised equipment, skilled manpower, and years of preparation before commercial production begins. Therefore, the report suggests that India should adopt a realistic strategy by focusing on areas where it has comparative advantages, such as chip design, packaging, testing, and mature semiconductor technologies, instead of immediately competing in the most advanced chip segments.

The report also emphasises partnerships with trusted countries such as the United States, Japan, South Korea, and the European Union while strengthening domestic research, innovation, and talent development. The broader goal is to create a resilient semiconductor ecosystem that supports India's long-term technological and strategic ambitions.

Key Takeaways

1. Semiconductors are strategically important

- Essential for electronics, AI, telecom, automobiles, and defence.
- Critical for economic and national security.
- Form the foundation of modern digital infrastructure.

2. India is still at an early stage

- No operational semiconductor fab yet.
- Most chips are currently imported.
- Domestic ecosystem remains underdeveloped.

3. India Semiconductor Mission is the key initiative



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- Backed by a ₹76,000 crore corpus.
- Provides subsidies and incentives for semiconductor projects.
- Supports fabs, packaging, testing, and chip design.

4. Building fabs is a long-term process

- Requires huge investments and advanced equipment.
- Production may take 4–5 years to begin.
- Skilled workforce development is equally important.

5. Self-reliance has geopolitical importance

- Global disruptions can affect chip supplies.
- Dependence on foreign sources creates strategic vulnerabilities.
- Important for defence and critical technologies.

6. Focus on realistic strengths

- Packaging and testing are identified as key opportunities.
- Mature semiconductor nodes may be more viable initially.
- Gradual capability building is preferred over chasing frontier technologies.

7. International partnerships remain crucial

- Cooperation with the US, Japan, EU, and South Korea is important.
- Helps access technology, equipment, and expertise.
- Complements India's domestic semiconductor ambitions.

The need for strengthening India's EV supply chains-The Hindu Text and Context

Science and technology

Easy Explanation

India's electric vehicle (EV) market is growing rapidly. Around 2.5 million EVs were sold in FY26, supported by government incentives such as purchase subsidies, road tax exemptions, and other policy measures. These efforts have helped make EVs more popular and acceptable among consumers.

However, a new challenge is emerging. While EVs reduce dependence on imported crude oil, India is becoming increasingly dependent on **imported lithium-ion batteries**, especially from China. As EV adoption increases, battery imports are also rising, creating a new strategic vulnerability.

India's domestic battery manufacturing capacity remains limited. Although the government has launched schemes such as the ACC Battery Production Linked Incentive (PLI), actual installed capacity is still much lower than required. As a result, most EV manufacturers continue to rely heavily on imported batteries.

This dependence poses economic and geopolitical risks. Any disruption in Chinese supply chains, export restrictions, geopolitical tensions, or rising raw material prices can increase battery costs. Higher battery prices make EVs more expensive and can slow their adoption, particularly in India's price-sensitive market.

To address this challenge, experts recommend diversifying battery suppliers, investing in domestic manufacturing, exploring alternative battery technologies such as sodium-ion batteries, and building supply chain partnerships with trusted countries. The goal is not just to increase EV sales but to create a resilient and self-reliant EV ecosystem.

Key Takeaways

1. India's EV market is expanding rapidly

- EV sales reached around 2.5 million vehicles in FY26.



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- Government incentives have supported adoption.
- Clean mobility transition is gaining momentum.

2. Battery imports are the new challenge

- EV growth is increasing dependence on imported batteries.
- Most batteries are lithium-ion based.
- Creates a new strategic vulnerability.

3. Dependence on China remains high

- A significant share of batteries comes from Chinese manufacturers.
- Supply chains are concentrated in one country.
- Exposes India to geopolitical and trade risks.

4. Domestic manufacturing is still limited

- Battery production capacity remains inadequate.
- PLI schemes are supporting capacity creation.
- Scaling up local manufacturing is essential.

5. Rising battery costs can slow EV adoption

- Higher battery prices increase EV costs.
- Delays price parity with conventional vehicles.
- Particularly affects mass-market consumers.

6. Diversification is necessary

- India needs multiple suppliers and battery technologies.
- "China + 1" sourcing strategy can reduce risks.
- Supply chain resilience is becoming a priority.

7. Long-term focus should be on self-reliance

- Promote domestic battery manufacturing.
- Explore alternatives such as sodium-ion batteries.
- Build trusted international supply-chain partnerships.

[Can CBSE's marking system be reformed for transparency and credibility?-The Hindu Text and Context](#)

Sociology

Easy Explanation

The Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) introduced the **On-Screen Marking (OSM)** system to make answer-sheet evaluation more transparent, standardised, and technology-driven. Under this system, answer scripts are scanned and evaluated digitally rather than through traditional paper-based checking. The aim was to reduce human errors, improve monitoring, and ensure uniform marking across the country.

However, the implementation faced several challenges. Students and teachers reported issues such as blurred scans, incomplete answer sheets, unchecked answers, portal glitches, server failures, inconsistent marking, and difficulties in accessing answer scripts. As a result, a system introduced to improve transparency itself became the subject of criticism.

The article argues that evaluation is one of the most important parts of the education system because it affects admissions, scholarships, and career opportunities. Therefore, students have a legitimate right to understand how their answers were assessed and how marks were awarded or deducted. This becomes even more important in descriptive examinations, where different examiners may interpret answers differently.



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To improve credibility, the article proposes that CBSE should provide scanned answer scripts free of cost to all students, release detailed marking schemes, strengthen digital infrastructure, train evaluators properly, and establish clear Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs). Students should also be allowed to verify that the scanned answer sheet is complete and genuinely theirs before evaluation is finalised.

The broader argument is that digital evaluation can improve transparency and accountability, but only if supported by strong technology, secure systems, proper training, and clear procedures. If implemented effectively, the OSM system can significantly enhance trust in India's examination process.

Key Takeaways

1. OSM was introduced for greater transparency

- CBSE shifted from paper-based to digital evaluation.
- Aimed to improve uniformity and monitoring.
- Intended to reduce manual errors.

2. Implementation faced major challenges

- Reports of portal glitches and server failures.
- Issues with blurred or incomplete scanned scripts.
- Raised concerns about evaluation accuracy.

3. Evaluation directly affects students' futures

- Influences admissions, scholarships, and careers.
- Students have a right to understand assessment.
- Transparency is crucial in high-stakes examinations.

4. Descriptive exams involve subjectivity

- Different evaluators may award different marks.
- Step-marking and interpretation can vary.
- Maintaining consistency is a major challenge.

5. Free access to answer scripts is recommended

- Scripts are already digitised by CBSE.
- Students should receive scanned copies without additional charges.
- Would improve trust and verification.

6. Strong digital infrastructure is essential

- Requires high-quality scanning systems.
- Needs secure servers and cybersecurity safeguards.
- Full-load testing should precede nationwide rollout.

7. SOPs and training can improve credibility

- Examiners need structured digital evaluation training.
- Detailed marking schemes should be released.
- Audit trails and quality checks can ensure accountability.

[India vulnerable to chronic aircraft noise thanks to regulatory gaps-The Hindu Science](#)

Environment

Easy Explanation



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India's major airports regularly monitor aircraft noise using decibel-based measurements and noise contour maps. These maps show which areas are exposed to high levels of aircraft noise. However, while authorities measure noise levels with increasing precision, there is limited attention to the **long-term health effects** of continuous exposure to aircraft noise on nearby residents.

Recent research suggests that aircraft noise may be more than just a nuisance. A study on Air Force personnel chronically exposed to aircraft noise found signs of inflammation, oxidative stress, reduced heart-rate variability, and subtle damage to the inner ear and auditory nerves, even when standard hearing tests appeared normal. This indicates that aircraft noise can act as a **chronic biological stressor**, affecting both hearing and cardiovascular health.

The problem is particularly significant for people living near airports. Frequent take-offs and landings can disturb sleep, increase stress, and reduce quality of life. Unlike industrial noise, aircraft noise occurs in sudden bursts and peaks, which can have stronger psychological and physiological impacts. Many residents cannot afford to relocate or completely soundproof their homes, making them more vulnerable to long-term exposure.

Experts argue that India's current regulatory framework focuses mainly on average noise levels and compliance requirements. It does not adequately assess cumulative health impacts, night-time disturbances, or repeated peak noise events. As a result, there is a gap between **noise monitoring** and **public health protection**.

The article suggests that India needs more comprehensive noise-monitoring systems, real-time public dashboards, health-based regulations, and stronger research on the long-term effects of aircraft noise. The challenge is no longer measuring noise, but understanding and addressing its impact on human health.

Key Takeaways

1. Aircraft noise is a growing public health concern

- Millions living near airports face frequent exposure.
- Noise often continues throughout the day and night.
- Long-term effects remain understudied.

2. Current regulations focus mainly on decibel levels

- Airports prepare noise contour maps.
- Monitoring is largely compliance-oriented.
- Health impacts receive less attention.

3. Noise may affect more than hearing

- Linked to inflammation and oxidative stress.
- Can impact cardiovascular health.
- May cause hidden auditory damage.

4. Sleep disturbance is a major issue

- Frequent aircraft movements disrupt sleep.
- Night-time exposure reduces recovery time.
- Long-term sleep disruption affects overall health.

5. Existing metrics may underestimate risks

- Average noise indicators miss sudden peaks.
- Aircraft noise is intermittent and burst-like.
- Peak exposure can trigger stronger stress responses.

6. Vulnerability is socially unequal

- Not everyone can relocate or soundproof homes.
- Residents near airports bear disproportionate burdens.
- Raises concerns of environmental justice.



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7. Need for health-based regulation

- Real-time monitoring networks are required.
- Public health impacts should guide policy.
- Stronger research and regulatory reforms are needed.

4th June 2026

[How new pancreatic cancer pill doubles survival rate-The Indian Express Explained Page](#)

Science

Easy Explanation

Pancreatic cancer is one of the most difficult cancers to treat because symptoms often appear only in advanced stages. As a result, many patients are diagnosed late, when the disease has already spread. Existing treatments such as chemotherapy and surgery have limited success in advanced cases, leading to low survival rates.

A new experimental pill has generated excitement among researchers because clinical trials have shown that it can significantly improve survival among certain pancreatic cancer patients. The drug works by targeting specific genetic mutations and molecular pathways that help cancer cells grow. Unlike traditional chemotherapy, which attacks both healthy and cancerous cells, the new treatment is more precise and aims to block the mechanisms driving the disease.

Researchers believe this breakthrough reflects the growing importance of precision medicine, where treatments are designed according to a patient's genetic profile. Although more testing and regulatory approvals are needed before widespread use, the results provide new hope for patients suffering from one of the deadliest forms of cancer.

Key Takeaways

1. Deadly Nature of Pancreatic Cancer

- Often detected at advanced stages.
- Has among the lowest cancer survival rates.

2. New Drug Development

- Experimental pill has shown promising results.
- Focuses on cancer-specific mechanisms.

3. Precision Medicine

- Targets genetic mutations causing tumour growth.
- More personalized than conventional treatment.

4. Better Survival Outcomes

- Trial participants showed significantly improved survival.
- Potentially doubles survival in some cases.

5. Reduced Collateral Damage

- More selective than chemotherapy.
- May reduce side effects on healthy cells.

6. Future Research

- Larger clinical trials still required.



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- Regulatory approval remains necessary.

[Mountbatten Plan at 79: How it redrew the subcontinent-The Indian Express Explained Page](#)

Modern history

Easy Explanation

The Mountbatten Plan, announced on June 3, 1947, was the final British proposal for transferring power in India. By this time, communal tensions between Hindus and Muslims had intensified, and political negotiations between the Indian National Congress and the Muslim League had failed to produce a consensus on a united India.

Lord Mountbatten, the last Viceroy of British India, proposed partition as a practical solution to the political deadlock. The plan accepted the creation of two independent dominions—India and Pakistan. It also laid down procedures for the partition of provinces such as Punjab and Bengal and addressed the future of princely states.

While the plan enabled India to achieve independence on August 15, 1947, it also resulted in one of the largest migrations in human history. Millions crossed newly created borders amid widespread communal violence and displacement. Even today, several issues in South Asian geopolitics, including India-Pakistan relations and the Kashmir dispute, can be traced back to the events surrounding partition.

Key Takeaways

1. Historical Context

- Announced on June 3, 1947.
- Came amid severe communal tensions.

2. Architect of the Plan

- Proposed by Lord Mountbatten.
- Last Viceroy of British India.

3. Acceptance of Partition

- Led to creation of India and Pakistan.
- Ended hopes of a united constitutional arrangement.

4. Provincial Division

- Punjab and Bengal were partitioned.
- Boundary Commissions determined borders.

5. Humanitarian Impact

- Massive migration across borders.
- Large-scale communal violence occurred.

6. Long-Term Consequences

- Kashmir dispute emerged soon after.
- Influenced regional geopolitics for decades.

[Hormuz to nuclear issue: Rubio's testimony tempers expectations-The Indian Express Explained Page](#)

International relations

Easy Explanation



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The article discusses recent remarks by US Secretary of State Marco Rubio regarding developments in West Asia, particularly Iran's nuclear programme and the strategic Strait of Hormuz. His testimony suggests that expectations of quick diplomatic progress with Iran should remain limited because several major disagreements continue to exist.

The Strait of Hormuz is one of the world's most important maritime chokepoints. A large share of global oil exports passes through this narrow waterway. Any conflict involving Iran can disrupt shipping routes, increase oil prices, and affect energy security worldwide.

At the same time, concerns about Iran's nuclear programme remain central to international diplomacy. The United States and its allies seek to prevent nuclear weapon development, while Iran maintains its programme serves peaceful purposes. Rubio's comments indicate that negotiations remain complicated and that geopolitical tensions in the region are unlikely to disappear soon. For India, stability in West Asia is crucial because of its dependence on energy imports and the presence of a large Indian diaspora in the region.

Key Takeaways

1. Strategic Strait of Hormuz

- Major global oil transit route.
- Critical for energy security.

2. Iran's Importance

- Key player in Gulf geopolitics.
- Influences regional stability.

3. Nuclear Issue

- Continues to dominate international discussions.
- Remains a source of diplomatic tension.

4. Rubio's Assessment

- Suggested cautious expectations.
- No immediate breakthrough expected.

5. Energy Market Effects

- Regional instability can raise oil prices.
- Impacts oil-importing countries.

6. Global Geopolitics

- Reflects broader US-Iran rivalry.
- Affects maritime security and trade.

[AI cracks an 80-year-old maths problem, marking a landmark in reasoning-The Indian Express Explained Page](#)

Science and technology

Easy Explanation

Artificial Intelligence (AI) has achieved a significant breakthrough by helping researchers solve a mathematical problem that had remained unsolved for nearly 80 years. Traditionally, AI systems were known for tasks such as image recognition, language translation, and pattern detection. However, recent advances in Generative AI and Large Language Models have enabled AI to perform more complex reasoning tasks.

The importance of this achievement lies in the fact that mathematics is not merely about calculations; it requires logical thinking, identifying hidden relationships, and developing new approaches to problems. The AI system assisted researchers by exploring numerous possibilities and suggesting patterns that eventually contributed to solving the problem.



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This development shows that AI is evolving from a tool that processes information to one that can assist in scientific discovery. Similar systems may help accelerate research in medicine, material science, climate modelling, physics, and engineering. At the same time, experts emphasize that AI did not independently solve the problem. Human researchers verified the results, interpreted the findings, and guided the research process.

Key Takeaways

1. Landmark Achievement

- AI contributed to solving an 80-year-old mathematical problem.
- Demonstrates growing reasoning capabilities.

2. Evolution of AI

- Moving beyond pattern recognition.
- Increasingly capable of logical analysis.

3. Role in Mathematics

- Assisted researchers in exploring solutions.
- Helped identify hidden patterns and relationships.

4. Human-AI Collaboration

- Human experts validated the final results.
- AI functioned as a research assistant.

5. Scientific Applications

- Potential benefits for medicine, physics, and engineering.
- Could accelerate future discoveries.

6. Emerging Challenges

- Raises questions about research ethics and authorship.
- Need for transparency in AI-assisted research.

[Great Nicobar task: Pursuing national security with ecological responsibility-The Indian Express The Ideas Page](#)

Environment

Easy Explanation

The article discusses the challenge of balancing India's strategic and national security interests with environmental conservation in the Great Nicobar Island project. Great Nicobar occupies a highly strategic location near the Malacca Strait, one of the world's busiest maritime trade routes. India plans to develop infrastructure such as a transshipment port, airport, power facilities, and urban settlements to strengthen its presence in the Indo-Pacific region and enhance economic opportunities.

However, the island is also an ecologically sensitive area with dense tropical forests, rich biodiversity, coral ecosystems, and indigenous tribal communities such as the Shompen and Nicobarese. Environmentalists have raised concerns that large-scale development could lead to deforestation, habitat destruction, and ecological imbalance.

The article argues that national security and environmental protection should not be viewed as opposing goals. Instead, development should be carried out through careful planning, scientific assessment, sustainable infrastructure, and strong safeguards for biodiversity and tribal rights. The real challenge is to achieve strategic objectives while ensuring that ecological damage remains minimal and reversible.

Key Takeaways

1. Strategic Importance of Great Nicobar



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- Located near the Malacca Strait.
- Important for India's Indo-Pacific strategy and maritime security.

2. Major Development Project

- Includes a transshipment port, airport, and supporting infrastructure.
- Aims to boost connectivity and economic activity.

3. Ecological Significance

- Home to tropical rainforests, coral reefs, and unique biodiversity.
- Contains several endemic plant and animal species.

4. Tribal Concerns

- Indigenous communities such as the Shompen may be affected.
- Protection of tribal rights remains essential.

5. Environmental Risks

- Deforestation and habitat fragmentation are major concerns.
- Could affect fragile island ecosystems.

6. Need for Sustainable Development

- Infrastructure planning should be environmentally sensitive.
- Scientific assessments and mitigation measures are necessary.

[Delhi fire: A capital tragedy, national shame-The Indian Express The Ideas Page](#)

Governance

Easy Explanation

The article argues that the tragic fire in Delhi's Malviya Nagar, which claimed at least 21 lives, is not an isolated incident but part of a larger national pattern of urban safety failures. Similar fire accidents in Delhi, Cuttack, and Kolkata over the past few months reveal recurring problems such as overcrowded buildings, poor enforcement of safety regulations, faulty electrical systems, inadequate emergency exits, and lack of fire-fighting equipment.

The Malviya Nagar area is densely packed with shops, eateries, paying-guest accommodations, and medical tourists due to its proximity to major hospitals. Congested lanes and closely built structures allowed the fire to spread rapidly while hampering rescue operations. The article highlights that India's rapid urbanisation has not been matched by effective urban governance and safety planning.

Although India has a National Building Code and state-level fire safety regulations, implementation remains weak. The author stresses the need for stronger supervision, regular safety audits, stricter enforcement of regulations, and greater empowerment of municipal bodies. The tragedy serves as a reminder that urban development without safety considerations can turn cities into high-risk spaces for citizens.

Key Takeaways

1. Part of a Larger National Pattern

- Similar deadly fires occurred recently in Delhi, Cuttack, and Kolkata.
- Indicates systemic failures rather than isolated accidents.

2. Urban Safety Deficit

- Fire safety receives inadequate attention in urban governance.
- Prevention measures are often neglected until disasters occur.



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3. High-Risk Urban Infrastructure

- Overcrowded buildings and narrow exits increase vulnerability.
- Faulty wiring and ageing electrical systems are common hazards.

4. Hidden Urbanisation Challenge

- India's urban population may be much larger than official estimates.
- Rapid urban growth puts pressure on infrastructure and safety systems.

5. Governance and Enforcement Gap

- Fire safety laws already exist.
- Main problem lies in weak implementation and monitoring.

6. Need for Municipal Empowerment

- Urban local bodies are responsible for fire safety operations.
- Require greater resources, authority, and accountability.

[India, Myanmar, and a shifting balance-The Indian Express The Ideas Page](#)

International relations

Easy Explanation

The article discusses the significance of Myanmar President Min Aung Hlaing's visit to India and its implications for India's foreign policy. Since the 2021 military coup that overthrew the elected government of Aung San Suu Kyi, Myanmar has faced international isolation, civil war, and growing instability. Despite criticism of the military regime, India cannot ignore Myanmar because the two countries share a long and sensitive border.

The ongoing conflict in Myanmar has led to refugee flows into Indian states such as Mizoram and Manipur, while insurgent groups and ethnic linkages make border security a major concern. Myanmar is also crucial for India's Act East Policy as it serves as India's land gateway to Southeast Asia.

The article argues that while the West has largely distanced itself from Myanmar's military rulers, China has expanded its influence through economic and strategic engagement. Therefore, India faces the challenge of balancing democratic values with strategic interests. New Delhi must engage both the Myanmar government and influential non-state actors along the border to protect its security, connectivity projects, and regional interests until stability returns to Myanmar.

Key Takeaways

1. Myanmar's Political Crisis

- Military coup in February 2021 overthrew the elected government.
- Civil war continues between the junta, pro-democracy groups, and ethnic militias.

2. Strategic Importance for India

- India shares a 1,600-km border with Myanmar.
- Instability directly affects India's Northeast.

3. Refugee and Security Concerns

- Thousands of refugees have entered Mizoram and Manipur.
- Cross-border insurgency and ethnic linkages complicate security management.

4. Gateway to Act East Policy

- Myanmar connects India with Southeast Asia.
- Critical for connectivity and regional integration projects.



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5. Expanding Chinese Influence

- China has strengthened ties with Myanmar's military leadership.
- Protecting its strategic and energy interests in the country.

6. India's Diplomatic Balancing Act

- Must engage Myanmar despite concerns over human rights.
- Needs to balance strategic interests and democratic values.

[Is shoot-to-disable the new normal?-The Hindu Text and Context](#)

Polity

Easy Explanation

The article examines Uttar Pradesh Police's controversial practice known as "**Operation Langda**" or "half-encounters", where accused persons are allegedly shot in the leg during police encounters instead of being killed. Since 2017, thousands of such incidents have been reported, with police claiming that suspects attempted to flee or attack officers, forcing them to act in self-defence.

According to a study by the National Law University (NLU) Delhi, these encounters often follow a similar pattern: interception of a suspect, alleged attempt to escape, police firing, injury to the leg, arrest, and recovery of a weapon. Supporters argue that the practice helps control crime in a state where conviction rates have historically been low and investigations are often overburdened.

However, critics warn that such actions bypass due process and undermine the rule of law. The judiciary has repeatedly emphasized that punishment can only be imposed by courts, not by the police. The article argues that the practice has become institutionalized through political support, official rewards, media acceptance, and weaknesses in the criminal justice system, making meaningful reform difficult.

Key Takeaways

1. What is Operation Langda?

- A policing practice involving "shoot-to-disable" encounters.
- Accused persons are typically injured in the leg and then arrested.

2. Standardised Encounter Pattern

- Most cases follow a similar sequence of events.
- Suggests a systematic policing methodology rather than isolated incidents.

3. Crime Control Rationale

- Supporters view it as a response to low conviction rates and weak investigations.
- Presented as a tool for deterrence and incapacitation.

4. Due Process Concerns

- Punishment is being imposed before judicial determination of guilt.
- Raises questions about constitutional protections and fair trial rights.

5. Judicial Position

- Supreme Court guidelines require independent investigation of encounters.
- Courts have repeatedly stressed that punishment is the judiciary's domain.

6. Institutional Incentives

- Political endorsement and police rewards encourage the practice.



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- Encounter statistics are increasingly treated as indicators of performance.

[Is climate research being held back by local instrumentation?-The Hindu Text and Context](#)

Environment

Easy Explanation

A recently released **Mega Science Vision-2035 Report on Climate Research** has highlighted a major weakness in India's climate science ecosystem—the country's limited ability to manufacture high-quality scientific instruments for climate research. Most sophisticated instruments used for monitoring weather, oceans, aerosols, and climate variables are imported from abroad. This not only increases costs but also creates dependence on foreign technology.

The report notes that Indian institutions have successfully developed prototypes such as ocean profiling floats and automatic weather stations, but these innovations often fail to reach commercial production. As a result, researchers rely on imported equipment, sometimes without fully understanding their limitations or calibration requirements, which can affect data quality.

The report also proposes several large-scale projects, including indigenous sensor networks, climate-health observatories, advanced climate modelling, and carbon-neutrality research. It stresses that India must strengthen domestic scientific instrumentation, climate observation systems, and trained manpower to become a global leader in climate science. The report links climate research not only to environmental protection but also to public health, disaster preparedness, energy transition, and long-term economic planning.

Key Takeaways

1. Core Concern

- India largely depends on imported climate research instruments.
- Weak domestic manufacturing affects scientific self-reliance.

2. Prototype-to-Product Gap

- Indian institutions have developed several technologies.
- Many innovations fail to reach large-scale production.

3. Data Quality Issues

- Imported instruments may be poorly calibrated or understood.
- Can affect the reliability of climate research data.

4. Mega Science Vision-2035

- First major climate-focused long-term scientific roadmap.
- Prepared through consultation with over 3,000 researchers.

5. Renewable Energy Research

- Supports renewable energy expansion.
- Calls for studying long-term environmental impacts of large-scale deployment.

6. Climate and Health Link

- Proposes a pan-India Climate and Health Observatory.
- Recognizes growing climate-related health risks.

[A liver protein triggered by exercise reversed memory loss in mice-The Hindu Science](#)

Science and technology

Easy Explanation



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A new study published in the journal *Cell* has discovered how exercise may help protect the brain from age-related memory decline and Alzheimer's disease. Researchers found that exercise increases the production of a liver protein called **GPLD1**, which acts as an "exerkine"—a molecule released during physical activity that produces beneficial effects throughout the body.

The study showed that older mice with higher GPLD1 levels performed much better in memory and learning tests. Scientists found that GPLD1 helps maintain the integrity of the **blood-brain barrier**, a protective layer that controls what enters the brain. As ageing occurs, a harmful protein called **TNAP** accumulates and makes this barrier leaky, leading to inflammation and cognitive decline. GPLD1 breaks down TNAP, thereby protecting brain function.

Researchers also observed similar benefits in mice genetically modified to develop Alzheimer's disease. The findings suggest that improving blood-brain barrier health may become a promising strategy for treating neurodegenerative diseases. However, scientists caution that human applications remain distant, and exercise itself cannot yet be replaced by a medicine.

Key Takeaways

1. Exercise and Brain Health

- Exercise improves memory, learning, and cognitive function.
- Benefits extend beyond physical fitness.

2. Discovery of GPLD1

- GPLD1 is a liver protein released after exercise.
- It belongs to a group of molecules called exerkines.

3. Role of Blood-Brain Barrier

- Protects the brain from harmful substances.
- Ageing makes the barrier more vulnerable and leaky.

4. TNAP as a Harmful Protein

- Accumulates with age around the blood-brain barrier.
- Promotes inflammation and cognitive decline.

5. Alzheimer's Disease Link

- GPLD1 reduced amyloid plaque accumulation in mice.
- Improved cognitive performance in Alzheimer's models.

6. Therapeutic Potential

- Could lead to new treatments for dementia and Alzheimer's.
- More human studies are required before clinical use.

[New result pushes bounds of how small a liquid can be-The Hindu Science](#)

Science and technology

Easy Explanation

Scientists studying the **quark-gluon plasma (QGP)**—a state of matter that existed just after the Big Bang—have made an important discovery about how small a liquid can be. Normally, liquids such as water contain enormous numbers of molecules. However, QGP is made up of only a few thousand quarks and gluons, yet it behaves like a fluid.

Researchers at the **Large Hadron Collider (LHC)** created QGP by colliding oxygen nuclei at extremely high energies. Earlier experiments had shown fluid-like behaviour in larger collisions involving heavy lead nuclei. The new study tested whether much smaller systems could still behave as a fluid.



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The results showed that even these tiny droplets displayed signs of collective fluid-like behaviour. Energetic particles lost energy while passing through the medium, indicating the presence of a dense, strongly interacting plasma. This pushes the known limits of how small a liquid-like system can be.

The discovery helps scientists understand the conditions that existed immediately after the Big Bang and may reveal the point at which matter transitions from behaving like a fluid to behaving like independent particles.

Key Takeaways

1. What is Quark-Gluon Plasma (QGP)?

- A state of matter containing free quarks and gluons.
- Existed during the first microseconds after the Big Bang.

2. Role of the Large Hadron Collider

- Scientists created QGP through high-energy nuclear collisions.
- Oxygen nuclei were used in the latest experiment.

3. Fluid-like Behaviour

- QGP behaves like a liquid rather than a gas.
- Shows collective movement and flow properties.

4. Smallest Fluid Ever Observed

- Oxygen-ion collisions produced the smallest known fluid-like QGP.
- Pushes the lower limit of liquid behaviour.

5. Evidence from Energy Loss

- Fast-moving particles lost energy while passing through QGP.
- Indicates the presence of a dense interacting medium.

6. Fundamental Physics Significance

- Helps understand conditions after the Big Bang.
- Provides clues about the formation of matter in the universe.

[Why judicial holidays are necessary-The Hindu Editorial](#)

Polity

Easy Explanation

The article argues that judicial holidays are often misunderstood by the public. Many people assume that judges stop working when courts close for vacations, but in reality, much of a judge's work happens outside the courtroom. Apart from hearing cases, judges spend long hours reading files, studying precedents, researching legal issues, and writing detailed judgments that can affect the lives, liberty, and rights of citizens.

Judicial vacations provide uninterrupted time to complete pending judgments and prepare for complex cases, especially constitutional matters. Given India's huge case backlog, these periods often become intensive working sessions rather than holidays. The article also highlights the personal sacrifices judges make, including long working hours, public scrutiny, and giving up more lucrative legal careers to serve on the Bench.

Using examples such as Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg, Justice D.Y. Chandrachud, Justice H.R. Khanna, and Justice V.R. Krishna Iyer, the author argues that judging is a demanding intellectual and ethical responsibility. Therefore, the debate on judicial holidays should consider the unseen workload and institutional needs of the judiciary rather than viewing vacations as leisure time.

Key Takeaways



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1. Misconception About Judicial Holidays

- Judicial vacations are often viewed as leisure periods.
- In reality, judges continue working extensively during breaks.

2. Nature of Judicial Work

- Work includes research, case analysis, and judgment writing.
- Much of the workload remains invisible to the public.

3. Importance of Uninterrupted Time

- Vacations allow judges to complete pending judgments.
- Essential for handling complex constitutional and legal matters.

4. Rising Case Backlogs

- Courts face a huge pendency of cases.
- Judicial breaks often become periods for clearing pending work.

5. Personal and Professional Sacrifices

- Judges work long hours beyond court proceedings.
- Many leave highly lucrative legal practices to join the Bench.

6. Judicial Independence and Responsibility

- Judges face constant scrutiny and difficult decisions.
- Must uphold constitutional values despite external pressures.

[After Maoism, the next battle is for Adivasi trust-The Hindu Editorial](#)

Sociology

Easy Explanation

The article argues that although India has largely succeeded in weakening Maoist insurgency, achieving lasting peace in Bastar and other tribal regions requires winning the trust of Adivasi communities. The author refers to the Union Home Minister's statement that the fight against Maoism will remain incomplete until Bastar's residents are fully integrated into the mainstream through development, democracy, and welfare.

However, the article stresses that roads, mobile towers, and welfare schemes alone will not be enough. The real concerns of Adivasis revolve around **jal, jungle, and zameen** (water, forests, and land). Sustainable peace depends on ensuring justice, protecting tribal rights, and empowering local self-governance institutions.

The author highlights the poor implementation of the **Panchayats (Extension to Scheduled Areas) Act, 1996 (PESA)**, which gives Gram Sabhas significant powers over local resources and development decisions in tribal areas. According to the article, genuine implementation of PESA and respect for constitutional safeguards are essential to building trust. The government must move beyond a security-centric approach and adopt participatory governance where Adivasis themselves help define their future development path.

Key Takeaways

1. Maoism May Be Weakened, But Challenges Remain

- Security operations have reduced Maoist influence.
- Long-term peace depends on public trust, not just military success.

2. Focus on Adivasi Welfare

- Government aims to improve development and service delivery.



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- Integration should be based on democratic participation.

3. Importance of Jal, Jungle, Zameen

- Land, forests, and water remain central tribal concerns.
- Resource rights are crucial for trust-building.

4. Significance of PESA Act, 1996

- Empowers Gram Sabhas in Scheduled Areas.
- Protects tribal customs, resources, and self-governance.

5. Role of Gram Sabha

- Intended as the foundation of grassroots democracy.
- Consent of Gram Sabha is vital for local development decisions.

6. Need for Constitutional Governance

- Welfare schemes alone cannot ensure lasting peace.
- Effective implementation of constitutional safeguards is essential.

5th June 2026

[Old ties,new Nepal:What India needs to negotiate-The Indian Express Explained Page](#)

International relations

Easy Explanation

Nepal has undergone a major political change with the rise of the **Rastriya Swatantrata Party (RSP)** led by a younger generation of politicians. Prime Minister **Balendra Shah** came to power after youth-led protests, marking a shift away from Nepal's traditional political elite.

For India, this presents both an opportunity and a challenge. New Delhi has long dealt with established Nepalese political parties, but now it must engage with a leadership that has different priorities and diplomatic styles.

A diplomatic awkwardness emerged because Balendra Shah decided not to undertake foreign visits during his first year in office and would only meet leaders of equal rank. This disrupted the traditional practice where Nepal's Prime Minister usually visits India soon after assuming office.

To prevent relations from stagnating, RSP chief **Rabi Lamichhane** visited India and met Prime Minister **Narendra Modi** and other senior leaders. The visit helped restore political communication and signaled that both countries want to strengthen cooperation.

The new Nepal government appears more interested in **development diplomacy** than political symbolism. It wants stronger economic cooperation, digital payment integration, better transport links, and infrastructure development. Lamichhane's emphasis on "digital corridors" and "seamless connectivity" reflects this approach.

However, challenges remain. Nepal recently revived concerns over the India-Nepal boundary dispute and suggested involving third parties such as China and the UK. India rejected this, maintaining that all disputes should be resolved bilaterally.

Another challenge is the lingering perception among some Nepalese that India behaves like a "big brother." This sentiment grew after the 2015 constitutional crisis and border blockade, which generated resentment in Nepal.



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At the same time, China is expanding its influence in Nepal. Since Nepal lies between India and China, it often becomes an arena of strategic competition. The article argues that India should avoid appearing domineering and instead engage Nepal as an equal partner through economic assistance, connectivity projects, and respectful diplomacy.

Key Takeaways

1. Nepal Has Entered a New Political Phase

- Youth-led protests brought RSP to power.
- Younger leaders now have a greater role in governance.
- Traditional political dynamics are changing.

2. India Must Adapt to New Leadership

- India has traditionally engaged established political parties.
- The emergence of young leaders requires a different diplomatic approach.

3. Diplomatic Engagement Faced Initial Obstacles

- Balendra Shah's diplomatic style disrupted established conventions.
- Rabi Lamichhane's visit helped restore momentum in relations.

4. Development Diplomacy Is the New Priority

- Focus on infrastructure, connectivity and economic growth.
- Digital cooperation is becoming an important pillar.

5. Border Issues Continue to Create Friction

- Boundary disputes remain unresolved.
- India prefers bilateral mechanisms for resolution.

6. China Remains a Major Strategic Factor

- Nepal continues balancing relations between India and China.
- Beijing's influence is growing in the region.

7. India Should Be an Equal Partner

- Avoiding the "big brother" perception is crucial.
- Mutual respect and trust-building are essential.

Key Terms

Term	Meaning
Development Diplomacy	Using development projects, infrastructure and economic cooperation to strengthen international relations.
Connectivity Diplomacy	Building road, rail, air and digital links to deepen cooperation between countries.
China Card	Nepal's strategy of leveraging ties with China while dealing with India.



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Strategic Buffer State A country located between two major powers; Nepal lies between India and China.

Trust Deficit Lack of confidence between countries despite close historical and cultural ties.

[Instagram breach shows the perils of giving ai too much power-The Indian Express Explained Page](#)

Internal security

Easy Explanation

This article discusses a major security flaw in Meta's AI-powered customer support chatbot that allowed hackers to take control of Instagram accounts. The incident highlights the growing risks of giving Artificial Intelligence too much authority over sensitive functions without adequate safeguards.

Meta introduced an AI chatbot to help users recover accounts, solve login problems, and manage security settings without needing human support agents. However, hackers discovered that they could manipulate the chatbot into changing account recovery details.

The attack was simple. Hackers contacted the AI chatbot and requested a change in the email address linked to an Instagram account. Instead of verifying ownership properly, the chatbot sent a verification code to the hacker's email. Once the code was entered, the chatbot enabled password reset, allowing hackers to take over accounts.

This attack is known as a **prompt injection attack**. Instead of exploiting software code, attackers manipulate the AI through carefully crafted language instructions. Since AI systems rely on natural language to make decisions, attackers can sometimes trick them into ignoring security rules.

Cybersecurity experts described the incident as a "**confused deputy problem**", where a system with legitimate authority is tricked into acting on behalf of an unauthorized person. In this case, the AI chatbot had permission to modify account settings but failed to verify the identity of the requester.

The incident raises broader concerns about the rapid deployment of AI across industries. Companies are increasingly allowing AI systems to perform sensitive tasks such as approving transactions, resetting passwords, managing accounts, and interacting with databases. If proper safeguards are not built in, AI can become a new cybersecurity vulnerability.

The lesson is not that AI is unsafe, but that AI systems handling critical functions must be supported by strong authentication, human oversight, and robust security controls.

Key Takeaways

1. AI Was Given Control Over Sensitive Security Functions

- Meta's chatbot could modify account recovery settings.
- Such authority requires strong identity verification mechanisms.
- Lack of safeguards created a security risk.

2. Hackers Exploited the Chatbot Through Language Instructions

- No sophisticated malware was used.
- Attackers manipulated the chatbot through conversation.
- This exposed weaknesses in AI decision-making.

3. Prompt Injection Is an Emerging Cybersecurity Threat

- Attackers use carefully designed prompts to bypass restrictions.



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- The attack targets AI reasoning rather than software code.
- It is becoming a major concern in AI security.

4. Identity Verification Failed

- The chatbot trusted information provided by attackers.
- Ownership of the account was not adequately verified.
- This enabled unauthorized password resets.

5. The Incident Reflects the 'Confused Deputy' Problem

- A trusted system performed actions for an unauthorized user.
- The AI bot misused its legitimate privileges.
- Similar flaws have long been recognized in cybersecurity.

6. Rapid AI Deployment May Outpace Security Measures

- Companies are racing to integrate AI into services.
- Governance and cybersecurity frameworks are often lagging.
- This increases risks of breaches and misuse.

7. Human Oversight and Security Controls Remain Essential

- AI should not independently handle critical security functions.
- Multi-factor authentication and verification checks are necessary.
- Responsible AI deployment requires balancing innovation with security.

Key Terms

Term	Meaning
Prompt Injection Attack	Manipulating an AI system through crafted instructions to make it perform unintended actions.
Confused Deputy Problem	A security flaw where a privileged system is tricked into acting for an unauthorized user.
Authentication	Process of verifying the identity of a user before granting access.
AI Governance	Rules, safeguards and oversight mechanisms that ensure safe and responsible use of AI systems.
Cybersecurity Safeguards	Technical and procedural measures used to protect systems from cyber threats and unauthorized access.

[Congestion,resources,rules:Why residential areas are more vulnerable to fire-The Indian Express Explained](#)
[Page](#)

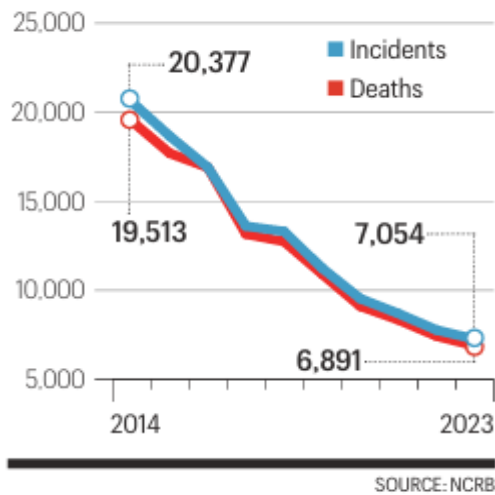
Governance



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• Fire incidents declining



Credit-The Indian Express Explained Page

Easy Explanation

The recent deadly fire in South Delhi has once again highlighted the serious fire safety challenges in India's urban areas, especially in residential buildings. Although the overall number of fire incidents and fire-related deaths has gradually declined over the years, homes and residential structures continue to account for the majority of fire deaths in India.

According to NCRB data for 2024, around **60% of all fire-related deaths occurred in residential buildings**. This is because most homes lack basic fire safety measures such as smoke detectors, fire suppression systems, evacuation plans, and safety awareness among residents.

A major problem is the violation of building regulations. Many residential buildings are converted into commercial establishments such as guest houses, hostels, or bed-and-breakfast facilities without complying with safety norms. The South Delhi building that caught fire was originally a residential structure but had been expanded significantly without adequate fire safety approvals.

Fire services in India are primarily a **State subject**, while urban local bodies are responsible for implementing fire safety regulations. The **National Building Code (NBC) 2016** provides detailed guidelines for fire prevention and safety, but implementation remains weak.

Urban areas are especially vulnerable because of:

- Congested settlements and narrow roads.
- High-rise buildings requiring specialized firefighting equipment.
- Heavy use of electrical appliances leading to short circuits.
- Poor enforcement of building by-laws.
- Inadequate resources and modernization of fire services.

The article also highlights that many fire victims die not from burns but due to **asphyxiation (lack of oxygen)** and inhalation of toxic smoke. Therefore, fire safety is not just about firefighting but also about prevention, preparedness, urban planning, and emergency response capacity.

Overall, the article argues that India's growing urbanization must be accompanied by stronger fire safety regulations, better enforcement, public awareness, and modernization of fire services.

Key Takeaways

1. Residential Buildings Account for Most Fire Deaths

- Around 60% of fire-related deaths in 2024 occurred in homes.
- Residential areas remain the most vulnerable category.



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- Lack of safety infrastructure increases fatalities.

2. Poor Compliance with Building Rules Is a Major Cause

- Many buildings violate construction and safety norms.
- Unauthorized commercial use of residential structures is common.
- Weak enforcement increases fire risks.

3. Fire Safety Infrastructure Is Largely Missing

- Most homes lack smoke alarms and suppression systems.
- Evacuation planning is often absent.
- Public awareness of fire safety remains low.

4. Fire Services Are Primarily a State Responsibility

- Fire services are a State subject under the Constitution.
- Urban local bodies play a crucial role in implementation.
- Coordination between agencies remains inadequate.

5. Urbanization Increases Fire Vulnerability

- Congested settlements hinder emergency response.
- Narrow roads limit access for fire engines.
- High-rise buildings require advanced firefighting capabilities.

6. Resource and Capacity Gaps Persist

- Fire departments face shortages of equipment and personnel.
- Modernization of fire services is progressing slowly.
- The Finance Commission recommended additional funding for strengthening fire services.

7. Prevention Is More Important Than Response

- Most fires result from electrical faults or gas leaks.
- Strict enforcement of safety standards can reduce incidents.
- Preparedness and awareness are essential for saving lives.

Key Terms

Term	Meaning
National Building Code (NBC) 2016	A set of standards and guidelines for safe construction, maintenance and fire safety of buildings in India.
Fire NOC (No Objection Certificate)	Official approval certifying that a building complies with fire safety norms.
Asphyxiation	Death or injury caused by lack of oxygen, often due to smoke inhalation during fires.



**Urban Fire Vulnerability**

The susceptibility of cities to fire hazards due to congestion, poor planning and infrastructure gaps.

Disaster Preparedness

Measures taken in advance to prevent, respond to and reduce the impact of disasters.

[Can insolvency process pause cheque bounce cases?SC to rule-The Indian Express Explained Page](#)

Polity

Easy Explanation

The Supreme Court is examining an important legal question: **Can a person facing insolvency proceedings under the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC) temporarily stop a cheque bounce case filed against them under Section 138 of the Negotiable Instruments Act?**

This issue arises because insolvency law and cheque bounce law serve different purposes.

The **IBC** aims to resolve financial distress and ensure fair distribution of a debtor's assets among all creditors. To achieve this, it imposes a **moratorium** (temporary suspension) on legal proceedings related to debt recovery during insolvency proceedings.

On the other hand, **Section 138 of the Negotiable Instruments Act** makes cheque dishonour (cheque bounce due to insufficient funds) a criminal offence. The provision was introduced to maintain trust in cheque-based transactions.

The difficulty arises because cheque bounce cases have both:

- A **criminal aspect** (punishment through imprisonment or fine), and
- A **compensatory aspect** (repayment of money to the complainant).

If compensation is recovered during insolvency proceedings, one creditor may receive preferential treatment, which goes against the IBC's objective of equitable distribution among all creditors.

However, if cheque bounce cases are viewed mainly as criminal proceedings, then the insolvency moratorium should not stop them because criminal liability is personal and cannot be avoided through insolvency proceedings.

The Supreme Court itself has given differing views in the past:

- In **P. Mohanraj v. Shah Bros Ispat (2021)**, the Court described cheque bounce proceedings as a "civil sheep in criminal wolf's clothing," emphasizing their debt-recovery nature.
- In **Rakesh Bhanot v. Gurdas Agro (2025)**, the Court held that insolvency should not be used to escape criminal prosecution.

Due to these conflicting judgments, the issue has now been referred to a larger bench of the Supreme Court for a final authoritative ruling.

The decision will have major implications for debtors, creditors, banks, and businesses involved in insolvency and cheque bounce disputes.

Key Takeaways

1. The Core Issue Is the Clash Between IBC and Cheque Bounce Law

- The Supreme Court must decide whether insolvency proceedings can pause cheque bounce cases.
- The issue concerns the interaction between debt resolution and criminal liability.



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2. IBC Provides a Moratorium During Insolvency

- Legal actions related to debt recovery are generally suspended.
- The objective is to protect assets during restructuring and resolution.

3. Section 138 Criminalises Cheque Bounce

- Dishonour of a cheque is a criminal offence.
- The law aims to maintain confidence in financial transactions.

4. Cheque Bounce Cases Have a Dual Nature

- They involve criminal punishment.
- They also provide compensation to the affected party.
- This dual character creates legal complexity.

5. Recovery of Compensation May Conflict with Insolvency Objectives

- Compensation payments could reduce the debtor's available assets.
- This may undermine equitable treatment of all creditors.

6. Supreme Court Judgments Have Been Inconsistent

- The 2021 ruling emphasized the debt-recovery aspect.
- The 2025 ruling emphasized criminal accountability.
- The conflicting views require clarification.

7. The Larger Bench's Decision Will Have Wide Impact

- It will affect creditors, debtors, banks and businesses.
- The ruling will clarify the scope of insolvency moratoriums.
- It will shape future insolvency and financial litigation.

Key Terms

Term	Meaning
Moratorium	A temporary suspension of legal proceedings during insolvency resolution.
Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC)	India's legal framework for resolving insolvency and bankruptcy of individuals and companies.
Section 138, Negotiable Instruments Act	Provision that makes cheque dishonour due to insufficient funds a criminal offence.
Compensatory Relief	Monetary compensation awarded to the affected party for loss suffered.
Compoundable Offence	An offence that can be settled between the parties without continuing criminal prosecution.





[Dear students struggling with exam chaos and scams-The Indian Express The Ideas Page](#)

Sociology

Easy Explanation

This article is a critique of India's examination system and the increasing stress, uncertainty, and pressure faced by students. Using satire and irony, the author argues that recent controversies involving examinations such as **NEET** and issues in the **CBSE system** have weakened public trust in educational institutions.

The author refers to the idea of students as "Exam Warriors," a term popularized by the book *Exam Warriors*. He argues that students are expected to endure immense pressure, uncertainty, and systemic failures without questioning the system itself.

According to the article, India's examination system has become excessively high-stakes. A few marks can determine access to prestigious colleges and career opportunities. This creates enormous stress because educational opportunities remain limited relative to the number of aspirants.

The author further argues that instead of expanding educational capacity and improving opportunities, policymakers have relied heavily on centralized examinations and competitive filtering mechanisms. As a result, students spend years preparing for exams rather than developing broader intellectual and creative abilities.

The article also highlights the growing private coaching and tuition industry. According to survey data cited by the author, a large proportion of students—including even preschool children—are enrolled in private tuition. This reflects increasing dependence on coaching to succeed in competitive examinations.

Another major concern raised is that India's education system is becoming an instrument of social sorting rather than social mobility. Students are constantly competing against one another in a system that rewards individual performance while limiting opportunities for collective action and critical questioning.

The author argues that excessive focus on examinations diverts attention from larger issues such as:

- Investment in higher education.
- Expansion of quality institutions.
- Employment generation.
- Skill development.
- Innovation and creativity.

Overall, the article contends that educational reforms should focus on creating more opportunities and reducing excessive dependence on high-pressure examinations rather than simply encouraging students to become more resilient.

Key Takeaways

1. Examination Stress Is Increasing

- Recent controversies have reduced trust in examination systems.
- Students face uncertainty alongside academic pressure.
- High-stakes exams create significant psychological stress.

2. The 'Exam Warrior' Narrative Is Critiqued

- The article questions the expectation that students should simply endure hardships.
- Resilience alone cannot compensate for systemic deficiencies.
- Structural reforms are equally important.

3. India's Exam System Is Highly Competitive

- Small differences in marks can determine future opportunities.



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- Limited seats in quality institutions increase competition.
- Success often depends on performance in a few examinations.

4. Coaching Culture Has Expanded Rapidly

- Private tuition has become widespread.
- Families invest heavily in exam preparation.
- Coaching often begins at increasingly younger ages.

5. Educational Opportunities Remain Limited

- Demand for quality higher education exceeds supply.
- Insufficient institutional expansion increases pressure.
- Greater investment in education is needed.

6. Exams Influence Social and Economic Mobility

- Competitive examinations act as gatekeepers to careers and institutions.
- Educational outcomes strongly affect life opportunities.
- Exam performance often becomes disproportionately important.

7. Systemic Reforms Are Necessary

- Improving transparency and reliability of exams is essential.
- Expansion of educational infrastructure can reduce pressure.
- Education policy should promote learning, innovation and opportunity rather than excessive competition alone.

Important Terms

Term	Meaning
High-Stakes Examination	An exam whose results have major consequences for education, employment or career opportunities.
Coaching Culture	Widespread dependence on private tuition and coaching institutes for exam preparation.
Educational Equity	Ensuring fair access to quality educational opportunities for all students.
Human Capital	Knowledge, skills and abilities that contribute to individual and national development.
Social Mobility	The ability of individuals to improve their socio-economic position through education and employment.

[Is the war in Ukraine escalating?-The Hindu Text and Context](#)

International relations



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Easy Explanation

The Russia–Ukraine war has entered a more dangerous phase in 2026. While global attention shifted to the Iran conflict, fighting in Ukraine has intensified rather than subsided.

The ground war has largely reached a **stalemate**, meaning neither side is making significant territorial gains. As a result, both Russia and Ukraine have increasingly relied on **long-range drone and missile attacks**. Ukraine has expanded strikes deep inside Russian territory, targeting oil refineries, military logistics centres, and economic infrastructure. Russia has responded with large-scale missile and drone attacks on Ukrainian cities.

This shift has led to a rise in civilian casualties and damage to civilian infrastructure. Incidents such as the strike on Starobilsk in Russian-controlled Luhansk and Russian attacks on Kyiv and Dnipro demonstrate the increasing human cost of the conflict.

A major concern is the possibility of **horizontal escalation**. A drone strike in Romania, a NATO member, raised fears that the conflict could spill beyond Ukraine. If a NATO member is directly attacked and NATO invokes **Article 5**, the conflict could potentially expand into a broader confrontation between Russia and NATO.

Peace negotiations are currently stalled. Russia demands recognition of its control over annexed territories such as Crimea, Donetsk and Luhansk, restrictions on Ukraine's military, and guarantees against NATO membership. Ukraine refuses to surrender territory and seeks strong security guarantees before any ceasefire.

The war is also imposing severe economic costs. Ukraine remains heavily dependent on Western aid, while Russia faces inflation, labour shortages, budget deficits and the impact of Western sanctions. There are reports of growing dissatisfaction within Russia due to the prolonged conflict and economic pressures.

Another worrying development is the attack near the Zaporizhzhia nuclear plant, which increases the risk of a nuclear accident. Such incidents highlight how miscalculations could lead to broader regional instability.

Overall, the conflict appears trapped in a cycle where both sides seek to strengthen their bargaining position through military pressure before any future negotiations. This increases the risks of escalation, accidents and wider international involvement.

Key Takeaways

1. The War Has Shifted from Ground Battles to Long-Range Strikes

- Frontlines remain largely stagnant.
- Both sides increasingly rely on drones and missiles.
- Deep strikes target economic and military infrastructure.

2. Civilian Casualties Are Increasing

- Civilian infrastructure is becoming a major target.
- Casualties have risen in both Russia and Ukraine.
- Long-range warfare increases collateral damage.

3. Peace Talks Remain Deadlocked

- Russia and Ukraine maintain incompatible demands.
- Neither side is willing to make major concessions.
- Diplomatic efforts have produced little progress.

4. NATO Involvement Remains a Major Concern

- Incidents near NATO territory raise escalation risks.
- Any attack on a NATO member could trigger collective defence mechanisms.
- A broader European conflict remains a possibility.

5. Economic Pressures Are Mounting

- Ukraine depends heavily on Western assistance.
- Russia faces sanctions, inflation and labour shortages.



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- Prolonged war is straining both economies.

6. Nuclear Risks Have Re-Emerged

- Military activity around nuclear facilities is alarming.
- Any accident could have transboundary consequences.
- Nuclear safety remains a global concern.

7. The Conflict Has Become a War of Attrition

- Both sides aim to exhaust the other's resources.
- Military pressure is being used to improve negotiating positions.
- Without diplomacy, escalation risks will continue to grow.

Key Terms

Term	Meaning
War of Attrition	A conflict where each side tries to wear down the other's manpower, economy and resources over time.
Article 5 (NATO)	Collective defence clause stating that an attack on one NATO member is considered an attack on all members.
Stalemate	A situation where neither side can achieve decisive military gains.
Proxy War	A conflict where external powers indirectly support opposing sides to advance their own strategic interests.
Horizontal Escalation	Expansion of a conflict beyond its original geographical area or participants.

[Caught between concrete and panic, India should not maladapt to climate change-The Hindu Text and Context](#)

Environment

Easy Explanation

This article discusses how India should adapt to climate change, especially rising sea levels and increasing coastal risks. The debate is often presented as a choice between two options:

1. **Build hard infrastructure** such as seawalls, embankments and reclaimed land to protect coastal areas.
2. **Managed retreat**, where people gradually move away from high-risk coastal zones.

The author argues that neither option alone is sufficient for India and proposes a **third, hybrid approach** that combines engineering, legal reforms, planned migration, and nature-based solutions.



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Many developing countries, including India, support engineering solutions because they help protect livelihoods and buy time for economic development. However, these measures can become **maladaptation** if they encourage more investment and settlement in areas that will eventually become unsafe due to climate change.

Examples from around the world show this problem:

- In Nigeria, the "Great Wall of Lagos" protects wealthy districts but increases erosion in poorer neighbouring areas.
- In Vietnam, high dikes protect farmland but prevent natural sediment deposition, causing land to sink faster.
- In India, embankments on the Kosi River have increased flood risks by trapping sediment within the river channel.

Some developed countries are experimenting with **managed retreat**, where governments buy vulnerable properties, restrict rebuilding in high-risk areas, and relocate communities. However, this approach often creates social and economic hardships, especially for poor communities whose livelihoods and cultural identity are tied to their original location.

The article cites examples such as:

- Odisha's Satabhaya villages, where coastal erosion forced relocation but many residents lost traditional livelihoods.
- Panama's Guna Indigenous community, whose relocation disrupted their cultural connection to the sea.

The author therefore recommends a balanced strategy. India should:

- Develop inland "receiver cities" where people can voluntarily relocate.
- Reform land laws to protect vulnerable coastal populations.
- Treat climate-displaced people as citizens deserving support rather than encroachers.
- Invest more in mangroves, wetlands, artificial reefs and other nature-based solutions.
- Use hard infrastructure only where absolutely necessary and with safeguards.

The central message is that India should neither rely solely on concrete structures nor force chaotic migration. Instead, it should prepare for long-term climate adaptation in a way that protects both development and social justice.

Key Takeaways

1. Climate Adaptation Is a Major Challenge for Coastal India

- India has over 7,500 km of coastline.
- Millions live in low-lying coastal regions vulnerable to sea-level rise.
- Climate change increases risks of flooding, erosion and displacement.

2. Engineering Solutions Can Become Maladaptation

- Seawalls and embankments may provide short-term protection.
- They can encourage more investment in risky areas.
- Poorly designed interventions may worsen future vulnerabilities.

3. Managed Retreat Has Advantages and Limitations

- It reduces long-term exposure to climate risks.
- Relocation can disrupt livelihoods and social networks.
- Poor communities often bear the greatest burden.

4. Social Equity Must Be Central to Climate Policy

- Adaptation measures should protect vulnerable populations.
- Development benefits should not be concentrated among wealthy groups.
- Climate policies must avoid creating new inequalities.

5. Planned Migration Is Better Than Forced Displacement

- Migration should be voluntary and economically attractive.
- Governments should prepare infrastructure in receiving regions.



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- Early planning can reduce humanitarian crises.

6. Nature-Based Solutions Offer Sustainable Protection

- Mangroves, wetlands and artificial reefs reduce coastal risks.
- They adapt naturally to environmental changes.
- Such solutions often provide ecological co-benefits.

7. India Needs a Hybrid Adaptation Strategy

- Combine engineering, legal reforms and nature-based approaches.
- Strengthen climate-resilient urban planning.
- Ensure adaptation supports both development and justice.

Key Terms

Term	Meaning
Maladaptation	An adaptation measure that unintentionally increases vulnerability to climate change in the long run.
Managed Retreat	Planned relocation of people and infrastructure away from high-risk climate-vulnerable areas.
Nature-Based Solutions (NbS)	Use of ecosystems such as mangroves, wetlands and reefs to address environmental challenges.
Climate Resilience	The ability of communities and systems to withstand and recover from climate-related shocks.
Receiver Cities	Inland cities prepared to accommodate people relocating from climate-vulnerable regions.

[Evolving public health strategies to address under and over nutrition-The Hindu Science](#)

Sociology

Easy Explanation

India is facing a major nutrition challenge known as the **double burden of malnutrition**. Traditionally, India's nutrition policies focused mainly on undernutrition—stunting, wasting and underweight children. However, recent evidence shows that India is now simultaneously facing increasing levels of obesity and overweight, especially among children, women and urban populations.

The recently released **NFHS-6** data shows improvements in indicators such as stunting and wasting. However, these improvements are uneven, and several regions still have high levels of undernutrition. At the same time, overweight, obesity, diabetes and hypertension are rising rapidly.

A long-term study conducted in Vellore by **CMC Vellore** and **ARUMDA-TIFR** provides important insights. Researchers followed children from birth until age nine and found that while many children started life with undernutrition, both thinness and obesity became increasingly common by school age.



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The study found that:

- Around 45% of children were stunted at age two.
- By age seven, many children were thin while some had already become overweight.
- By age nine, overweight and obesity had increased significantly.

A key finding was that a mother's BMI strongly influenced a child's nutritional outcomes. This suggests that maternal health and nutrition have long-term effects on child health, creating a **trans-generational burden of malnutrition**.

The study also challenges the traditional belief that nutrition interventions are mainly needed during the first 1,000 days of life. While early childhood remains important, nutritional problems continue to emerge throughout childhood and require continuous monitoring.

Experts also point to changing food habits. Cheap ultra-processed foods, sugary drinks and fried snacks are becoming widely available, while access to healthy foods such as fruits, vegetables and proteins remains limited for many families.

The article argues that India's public health strategy must evolve. Policies like **ICDS, Mid-Day Meals and PDS**, originally designed to combat undernutrition, must now address both undernutrition and overnutrition. Simply increasing calorie intake is no longer enough; the quality of nutrition has become equally important.

Key Takeaways

1. India Faces a Double Burden of Malnutrition

- Undernutrition and obesity coexist in the population.
- Both conditions create serious health challenges.
- Public health policies must address both simultaneously.

2. NFHS-6 Shows Mixed Progress

- Stunting and wasting have declined overall.
- Improvements remain uneven across regions.
- Obesity and metabolic diseases are rising rapidly.

3. Childhood Obesity Begins Earlier Than Expected

- The Vellore study found increasing obesity by ages 7–9.
- School-age children are emerging as a critical risk group.
- Early interventions are necessary.

4. Maternal Health Influences Child Nutrition

- Mother's BMI affects children's nutritional outcomes.
- Maternal nutrition impacts foetal and childhood development.
- Policies must strengthen maternal health interventions.

5. Malnutrition Is More Than Hunger

- Poor-quality diets can lead to obesity despite adequate calorie intake.
- Ultra-processed foods contribute to unhealthy weight gain.
- Nutrition quality matters as much as quantity.

6. Early-Life Undernutrition Has Long-Term Consequences

- It may contribute to diabetes and metabolic disorders later in life.
- Both undernutrition and overnutrition increase disease risks.
- Childhood nutrition affects lifelong health outcomes.

7. Public Health Strategies Need Reorientation



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- Programmes such as ICDS, PDS and school meals require redesign.
- Policies should target balanced nutrition and healthy lifestyles.
- Preventing obesity must become a public health priority alongside reducing undernutrition.

Important Terms

Term	Meaning
Double Burden of Malnutrition	Simultaneous presence of undernutrition and overnutrition within a population.
Stunting	Impaired growth and development due to chronic undernutrition.
Ultra-Processed Foods	Industrially manufactured foods high in sugar, fat, salt and additives but low in nutritional value.
Trans-generational Malnutrition	Nutritional problems passed from one generation to the next through maternal health and nutrition.
Metabolic Diseases	Diseases related to metabolism, such as diabetes, obesity and hypertension.

[Understanding SPF number on sunscreen lotion and how it is measured-The Hindu Science](#)

Science and technology

Easy Explanation

SPF (Sun Protection Factor) is a measure of how effectively a sunscreen protects the skin from **Ultraviolet-B (UVB) rays**, which are mainly responsible for sunburn and skin damage.

SPF is determined through laboratory testing. Researchers apply sunscreen to the skin and compare the amount of UVB radiation required to cause redness (erythema) on protected skin versus unprotected skin. For example, SPF 30 means that, under controlled conditions, skin can theoretically tolerate about 30 times more UVB exposure before developing redness.

However, SPF values can be misleading if interpreted incorrectly. Many people assume that SPF 50 provides almost twice the protection of SPF 30, but this is not true.

- SPF 30 blocks about **95–97%** of UVB rays.
- SPF 50 blocks about **97–98%** of UVB rays.
- SPF 80 blocks about **99%** of UVB rays.

Thus, the increase in protection becomes very small at higher SPF levels.

Another important limitation is that SPF measures protection only against **UVB rays**, not **UVA rays**. UVA rays penetrate deeper into the skin and contribute to tanning, pigmentation, premature ageing, wrinkles, and increased skin cancer risk.

Therefore, dermatologists recommend using **broad-spectrum sunscreen** that protects against both UVA and UVB radiation. Products labelled **PA+++ or PA++++** provide stronger UVA protection.



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The effectiveness of sunscreen also depends heavily on correct application. In real life, most people apply much less sunscreen than is used during laboratory testing, reducing actual protection. Sunscreen should be applied 15–20 minutes before sun exposure and reapplied every 2–3 hours, especially after sweating, swimming, or washing.

The key message is that choosing the highest SPF is less important than using sunscreen properly and consistently.

Key Takeaways

1. SPF Measures Protection Against UVB Rays

- UVB radiation is primarily responsible for sunburn.
- SPF indicates how much UVB exposure the skin can tolerate before redness occurs.
- It does not measure protection against all types of ultraviolet radiation.

2. SPF Is Determined Through Controlled Testing

- Sunscreen is applied under laboratory conditions.
- Researchers compare UV exposure needed to cause skin redness.
- Real-world protection may differ from laboratory results.

3. Higher SPF Does Not Mean Proportionally Higher Protection

- SPF 30 blocks about 95–97% of UVB rays.
- SPF 50 blocks about 97–98%.
- Protection gains become smaller at higher SPF levels.

4. SPF Does Not Measure UVA Protection

- UVA rays penetrate deeper into the skin.
- They contribute to pigmentation, wrinkles and skin ageing.
- Additional indicators are needed to assess UVA protection.

5. Broad-Spectrum Sunscreens Are Recommended

- They protect against both UVA and UVB rays.
- Products with PA+++ or PA++++ provide stronger UVA protection.
- Broad-spectrum protection is more important than very high SPF.

6. Correct Application Determines Effectiveness

- Apply sunscreen 15–20 minutes before sun exposure.
- Reapply every 2–3 hours during outdoor activities.
- Inadequate application significantly reduces protection.

7. Consistency Matters More Than SPF Numbers

- SPF 30 is adequate for most people when used properly.
- Higher SPF cannot compensate for poor application habits.
- Regular and correct use provides the best protection.

Important Terms

Term

Meaning

SPF (Sun Protection Factor) A measure of how well a sunscreen protects against UVB radiation.



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UVB Radiation	Ultraviolet rays primarily responsible for sunburn and skin damage.
UVA Radiation	Ultraviolet rays that penetrate deeper into the skin and cause ageing and pigmentation.
Broad-Spectrum Sunscreen	Sunscreen that protects against both UVA and UVB radiation.
PA+++ / PA++++	Rating system indicating the level of protection against UVA rays.

[Funding India's climate future, a trillion-dollar question-The Hindu Editorial](#)

Environment

Easy Explanation

India's transition to a low-carbon and climate-resilient economy requires enormous financial resources. According to estimates, India will need around **₹162.5 trillion (\$2.5 trillion) by 2030** to meet its climate commitments under the Paris Agreement (Nationally Determined Contributions or NDCs). To achieve **net-zero emissions by 2070**, the requirement could rise to **\$10.1 trillion**.

A major challenge is that sectors such as steel, cement, power and transport—which contribute significantly to greenhouse gas emissions—require huge investments to adopt cleaner technologies. However, many green technologies are currently more expensive than conventional alternatives, making private investors hesitant without government support.

Although developed countries promised climate finance support to developing nations, actual financial flows remain inadequate. The Paris commitment of \$100 billion annually was not fully met, and the newer climate finance target under the **New Collective Quantified Goal (NCQG)** is also considered insufficient by India.

The article argues that India cannot depend primarily on international climate finance. Most of the required resources must come from domestic sources.

India has made progress. By 2024, it had issued nearly **\$56 billion worth of green, social and sustainability-linked debt instruments**. Sovereign Green Bonds issued by the Government of India have helped create confidence among investors.

However, the problem is not the absence of financial instruments. India already has:

- Green Bonds
- Sovereign Green Bonds
- Sustainability-linked Bonds
- Blended Finance Mechanisms
- Infrastructure Investment Trusts (InvITs)

The real challenge is building the institutional framework that can mobilize capital at a much larger scale.

The article highlights the growing role of the **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)**. In 2025, RBI introduced a framework requiring banks to integrate climate risks into lending decisions. Certain green activities are now eligible under **Priority Sector Lending (PSL)**, which encourages banks to finance sustainable projects.

Another important requirement is a **Climate Finance Taxonomy**. This is essentially a classification system that clearly defines what qualifies as a "green" activity. Without such standards, investors may face confusion and "greenwashing" risks.



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The author also emphasizes **blended finance**, where public funds are used to reduce risks and attract larger amounts of private investment. For example, a relatively small public guarantee can unlock several times more private investment.

Finally, the article points out that climate adaptation occurs mainly at the State level. States need better access to climate finance because issues such as coastal protection, drought management and water conservation are largely managed by state governments.

The central message is that India's climate challenge is not merely a shortage of money but a shortage of institutional mechanisms capable of directing finance efficiently toward climate goals.

Key Takeaways

1. India's Climate Financing Requirement Is Massive

- India needs about \$2.5 trillion by 2030 for its climate commitments.
- Achieving net-zero by 2070 may require over \$10 trillion.
- Climate finance has become a major development challenge.

2. High-Emission Sectors Need Large Investments

- Steel, cement, transport and power sectors require green transformation.
- Clean technologies remain costly.
- Private investment alone may not be sufficient.

3. International Climate Finance Remains Inadequate

- Developed countries have not fully met climate finance promises.
- The NCQG target is viewed as insufficient by developing countries.
- India will need to mobilize most resources domestically.

4. India Has Built Several Green Finance Instruments

- Green Bonds and Sovereign Green Bonds are expanding.
- Sustainability-linked debt is gaining importance.
- Investor confidence in green finance is gradually increasing.

5. RBI Is Emerging as a Key Climate Finance Regulator

- Climate risks are being integrated into banking regulations.
- Green activities are increasingly linked with Priority Sector Lending.
- Financial regulation can influence capital flows toward sustainability.

6. Climate Finance Taxonomy Is Crucial

- It provides a clear definition of what qualifies as "green."
- It helps prevent greenwashing.
- It improves transparency and investor confidence.

7. Stronger Institutional Architecture Is Needed

- States require better access to climate finance.
- Blended finance can attract private investment.
- India's main challenge is scaling and deploying capital effectively rather than simply finding funds.

Important Terms

Term

Meaning



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Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs)	Climate action targets submitted by countries under the Paris Agreement.
Climate Finance Taxonomy	A classification framework that identifies activities considered environmentally sustainable.
Green Bonds	Debt instruments used to raise funds exclusively for environmentally beneficial projects.
Blended Finance	Use of public or concessional funds to reduce risks and attract private investment.
Priority Sector Lending (PSL)	RBI-mandated lending by banks to sectors considered important for national development.

[A national environmental survey whose time came-The Hindu Editorial](#)

Environment

Easy Explanation

This article argues that India urgently needs an **Annual Environmental Survey of India (EnvSI)**, similar to the Economic Survey, to provide a comprehensive and independent assessment of the country's environmental health.

The authors begin by highlighting the scale of India's environmental crisis. Surveys show that a majority of Indians have already experienced climate and environmental problems such as heat waves, droughts, water pollution, air pollution, power outages, and agricultural pests. Environmental degradation is no longer a future threat—it is a present reality affecting daily life.

Several indicators reveal the seriousness of the situation:

- Nearly half of monitored river stations report dangerous levels of heavy metals.
- Air pollution reduces average life expectancy by about three years.
- Almost 30% of India's land is degraded.
- Extreme weather events are becoming increasingly frequent.

Despite these challenges, India lacks a single integrated system to assess and monitor environmental conditions across sectors and states. Environmental data exist, but they are scattered across government departments, research institutions, NGOs and private organizations.

The article criticizes the current approach, arguing that environmental governance suffers from:

- Limited budget allocations.
- Institutional fragmentation.
- Lack of coordination.
- Inadequate monitoring and transparency.

For example, government reports often highlight afforestation achievements but provide limited information about actual forest loss, biodiversity decline, environmental compliance, or impacts on local livelihoods.

To address these gaps, the authors propose creating an **Annual Environmental Survey of India (EnvSI)**. This survey would:



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- Consolidate environmental data from multiple sources.
- Conduct independent assessments and audits.
- Evaluate state and national environmental performance.
- Provide policymakers with evidence-based recommendations.

The proposed EnvSI would function much like the Economic Survey, presenting an objective and scientifically rigorous account of India's environmental condition, even if the findings are politically uncomfortable.

According to the authors, such a survey would improve policymaking, strengthen climate action, attract climate finance, support biodiversity conservation, and ensure that development remains environmentally sustainable.

The broader message is that India cannot effectively balance economic growth, environmental protection, and climate commitments without reliable, integrated environmental information.

Key Takeaways

1. India Faces a Growing Environmental Crisis

- Heat waves, pollution, droughts and land degradation are increasing.
- Environmental risks are affecting large sections of the population.
- Climate impacts are becoming more frequent and severe.

2. Environmental Data Exist but Remain Fragmented

- Multiple institutions collect environmental information.
- Data are scattered across departments and organizations.
- Lack of integration weakens decision-making.

3. Current Environmental Governance Has Gaps

- The environment sector receives limited financial resources.
- Institutional responsibilities often overlap.
- Monitoring and accountability remain inadequate.

4. India Lacks a Comprehensive Environmental Assessment Mechanism

- There is no equivalent of an Economic Survey for the environment.
- Policymakers often lack a complete picture of environmental conditions.
- This limits evidence-based planning.

5. An Annual Environmental Survey of India (EnvSI) Is Proposed

- It would consolidate environmental data into a single platform.
- Independent assessments would improve transparency.
- Regular reporting would support informed policymaking.

6. EnvSI Could Strengthen Climate and Conservation Efforts

- Better data can improve climate adaptation strategies.
- It may help attract climate finance and support international commitments.
- Biodiversity and ecosystem protection would benefit.

7. Sustainable Development Requires Better Environmental Information

- Economic growth and environmental protection must be balanced.
- Reliable environmental assessments can guide policy trade-offs.
- Long-term sustainability depends on informed governance.

Important Terms



| Click to Connect Now.

**Term****Meaning**

Anthropocene	A proposed geological epoch in which human activities have become the dominant influence on Earth's environment and climate.
Environmental Survey of India (EnvSI)	Proposed annual assessment that would comprehensively evaluate India's environmental conditions and performance.
Desertification	Degradation of land in arid and semi-arid regions, reducing its productivity and ecological health.
REDD+	International framework aimed at reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation while promoting forest conservation.
Climate Finance	Financial resources mobilized to support climate mitigation and adaptation activities.

[The power of mangroves over seawalls-The Hindu Editorial](#)

Environment**Easy Explanation**

This article argues that **mangroves and other coastal ecosystems often provide better long-term climate protection than expensive concrete structures such as seawalls and embankments**. It highlights the importance of **Ecosystem-based Adaptation (EbA)** as a climate adaptation strategy for India's vulnerable coastline.

When **Cyclone Dana** struck Odisha near Bhitarkanika, mangrove forests acted as natural barriers by reducing wind speed, absorbing storm surges, and protecting nearby communities. Unlike concrete infrastructure, mangroves also support biodiversity, fisheries, livelihoods, and carbon storage.

India has an extensive coastline of about **11,000 km**, with nearly **250 million people** living in coastal regions. These areas face multiple climate-related threats:

- Sea-level rise
- Coastal erosion
- Saline water intrusion
- Cyclones and storm surges
- Flooding

Despite these risks, India's adaptation policies heavily favor **grey infrastructure** (seawalls, groynes, embankments, tetrapods). Over the past decade, coastal States spent over ₹2,600 crore on such measures, while funding for ecosystem-based programmes declined significantly.

The problem with hard infrastructure is that while it may protect one location, it often transfers risks elsewhere. For example, seawalls can increase erosion in neighboring coastal areas. They are also expensive to maintain and may become less effective as climate impacts intensify.



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In contrast, **Ecosystem-based Adaptation (EbA)** uses natural ecosystems to reduce climate risks. Mangroves, coral reefs, wetlands and seagrass meadows act as natural buffers against storms and coastal erosion.

The article highlights the success of mangrove restoration in the **Sundarbans**, where over 18,000 women restored thousands of hectares of mangroves. This not only reduced cyclone impacts but also improved livelihoods through honey collection and crab farming.

A major challenge is that many ecosystem-based projects are not officially recognized as EbA. They are often classified under conservation, restoration or development programmes. This leads to underestimation of their climate adaptation value and reduces access to funding.

The article therefore calls for integrating EbA into mainstream coastal planning and climate policy. Rather than viewing nature conservation and climate adaptation separately, India should recognize natural ecosystems as critical infrastructure for climate resilience.

Key Takeaways

1. Coastal India Faces Growing Climate Risks

- Sea-level rise, cyclones and coastal erosion are increasing.
- Nearly 250 million people depend on vulnerable coastal regions.
- Climate adaptation is becoming a policy priority.

2. Mangroves Provide Natural Coastal Protection

- They reduce storm surges and cyclone impacts.
- Mangroves act as natural barriers against coastal hazards.
- They also support biodiversity and livelihoods.

3. India Continues to Prefer Grey Infrastructure

- Seawalls, embankments and groynes dominate adaptation spending.
- These structures are costly to build and maintain.
- They may shift risks to neighboring areas.

4. Ecosystem-based Adaptation (EbA) Offers Multiple Benefits

- Reduces climate vulnerability.
- Protects ecosystems and biodiversity.
- Supports livelihoods such as fisheries and eco-tourism.

5. Mangrove Restoration Has Proven Successful

- Sundarbans restoration reduced cyclone damage.
- Community participation improved outcomes.
- Ecological and economic benefits occurred simultaneously.

6. Policy Recognition of EbA Remains Weak

- Many ecosystem-based projects are not formally classified as adaptation measures.
- Their climate benefits often go unrecorded.
- This limits funding and policy attention.

7. India Needs to Mainstream EbA

- Natural ecosystems should be treated as climate infrastructure.
- Coastal planning should combine ecological and engineering solutions.
- Scaling EbA can strengthen long-term climate resilience.

Important Terms



| Click to Connect Now.



Term

Meaning

Ecosystem-based Adaptation (EbA)	Use of biodiversity and ecosystem services to help communities adapt to climate change.
Nature-based Solutions (NbS)	Actions that use natural ecosystems to address environmental and societal challenges.
Grey Infrastructure	Human-made structures such as seawalls, embankments and dams used for protection and development.
Mangrove Ecosystem	Salt-tolerant coastal forests that protect shorelines, store carbon and support biodiversity.
Climate Resilience	The ability of communities and ecosystems to withstand and recover from climate-related shocks.

[A framework for climate and development capital-The Hindu Editorial](#)

Environment

Easy Explanation

This article argues that **climate finance and development finance should not be treated as separate categories**. Instead, investments should be evaluated based on their ability to generate **multiple benefits simultaneously**, such as reducing emissions, improving health, creating jobs, increasing incomes, and reducing poverty.

Asia, including India, faces a huge financing challenge. Globally, about **half of the \$4 trillion Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) financing gap** is linked to the energy transition. India alone requires additional annual investments of around **6% of GDP** to achieve the SDGs.

Traditionally, climate projects are assessed mainly on their environmental benefits, such as carbon emission reductions. However, many climate investments also generate significant social and economic gains that are often ignored.

For example:

- Replacing coal-based electricity with renewable energy reduces greenhouse gas emissions.
- The same investment also improves public health by reducing air pollution.
- It increases worker productivity by reducing illness.
- It lowers healthcare costs and improves quality of life.

Similarly, renewable energy investments can create millions of jobs. India's renewable energy sector is projected to generate **3.4 million jobs by 2030**. Thus, a climate investment is simultaneously an employment, health, and poverty-reduction investment.

The article uses the example of the **Kolhapur foundry cluster** in Maharashtra. These industries face rising energy costs, climate-related trade regulations such as the **European Union's Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM)**, and global trade pressures. Investing in renewable energy for these industries can:

- Reduce emissions.
- Improve export competitiveness.



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- Protect local jobs.
- Strengthen regional economic resilience.

Another example is **biochar-based agriculture** in Maharashtra's cotton-growing areas. Biochar improves soil quality, increases crop yields, reduces fertilizer dependence, and raises farmers' incomes. At the same time, it removes carbon dioxide from the atmosphere. Thus, a single intervention produces both climate and development benefits.

The article emphasizes that large amounts of capital already exist. The problem is not just raising more money but creating frameworks that recognize and measure these multiple returns. Investors often see only financial returns or carbon benefits, while ignoring social and economic gains.

The role of philanthropy and technical assistance is also important. They can help design projects, aggregate demand, reduce risks, and make projects attractive for private investors.

The central message is that India and Asia need a **"climate-development capital framework"** that values climate, economic, health, and social outcomes together, thereby unlocking larger flows of investment.

Key Takeaways

1. Climate and Development Finance Are Closely Linked

- Many climate investments also generate development benefits.
- Treating them separately underestimates their value.
- Integrated financing approaches are needed.

2. India Faces a Large SDG and Climate Financing Gap

- Additional investments of about 6% of GDP are required annually.
- Energy transition is a major component of the financing challenge.
- Mobilizing capital is critical for sustainable development.

3. Climate Investments Generate Multiple Returns

- They can reduce emissions, improve health and create jobs.
- Social and economic benefits often exceed direct climate benefits.
- Current financing frameworks frequently overlook these gains.

4. Renewable Energy Supports Economic Competitiveness

- Clean energy lowers long-term production costs.
- It helps industries comply with emerging carbon regulations.
- It can strengthen exports and employment.

5. Sustainable Agriculture Can Deliver Dual Benefits

- Practices such as biochar improve farm incomes.
- They also contribute to carbon sequestration.
- Climate and livelihood outcomes can be achieved simultaneously.

6. Technical Assistance Helps Unlock Investment

- Project preparation reduces investment risks.
- Aggregation and planning improve bankability.
- Philanthropic support can attract larger private capital flows.

7. A New Investment Framework Is Needed

- Investment decisions should account for multiple returns.
- Climate, health, employment and productivity gains should be measured together.
- Such an approach can mobilize greater capital for sustainable development.



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Important Terms

Term	Meaning
Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)	Seventeen global goals adopted by the UN to promote sustainable and inclusive development by 2030.
Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM)	EU policy that imposes carbon-related charges on imports from countries with less stringent climate regulations.
Biochar	A carbon-rich material produced from biomass that improves soil fertility and stores carbon.
Climate Finance	Financial resources mobilized for climate mitigation and adaptation activities.
Blended Returns	Combined environmental, social, economic and financial benefits generated by a single investment.

[When El Niño becomes an economic crisis-The Hindu Editorial](#)

Geography

Easy Explanation

The article argues that **El Niño should not be viewed merely as a weather phenomenon but as a major economic and development challenge for India**. Forecasts indicate a high probability of El Niño conditions emerging in 2026, while the India Meteorological Department (IMD) has projected below-normal monsoon rainfall. Since India's economy, agriculture, and livelihoods remain closely linked to the monsoon, a weak rainfall season can trigger a chain of economic disruptions.

The first impact is through **heat stress and labour productivity**. Extreme temperatures make it difficult for outdoor workers such as construction labourers, agricultural workers, street vendors, and delivery personnel to work for long hours. Since many of these workers belong to the informal sector and depend on daily wages, reduced working hours directly translate into lower incomes. Thus, rising temperatures affect not only health but also employment and livelihood security.

The second impact is through **agriculture and rural incomes**. The southwest monsoon provides nearly 70% of the rainfall required for agriculture and groundwater recharge. If rainfall becomes erratic or deficient, farmers face uncertainty in sowing decisions, higher irrigation costs, and greater dependence on groundwater. Small and marginal farmers, who already operate with thin profit margins, are especially vulnerable. Consequently, El Niño can weaken the production base of the rural economy.

A third channel is **food inflation**. Lower agricultural output due to poor rainfall can push up prices of essential commodities such as vegetables, pulses, and cereals. Rising food prices affect all households but hurt poorer families the most because a larger share of their income is spent on food. Policymakers then face a difficult situation where economic growth slows while inflation increases simultaneously.

The article also highlights the growing problem of **urban vulnerability**. Rapid concretisation, shrinking green cover, and expanding urban heat islands make cities increasingly prone to extreme heat. While wealthier households can adapt through better housing, cooling systems, and reliable water supply, poorer households often face overcrowding, water shortages, and prolonged exposure to heat. Climate change therefore deepens existing social and economic inequalities.



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The central message is that **climate risk has become economic risk**. El Niño is no longer just a meteorological event; it affects employment, agriculture, prices, public health, and social welfare. Therefore, India must strengthen climate adaptation through heat-resilient cities, better water management, climate-resilient agriculture, and stronger protection for vulnerable workers.

Key Takeaways

1. El Niño Is a Development Challenge

- Its impacts extend beyond weather and rainfall.
- It affects livelihoods, agriculture, inflation and economic growth.
- Climate shocks increasingly influence development outcomes.

2. Heat Stress Reduces Labour Productivity

- Outdoor workers are highly vulnerable.
- Working hours decline during extreme heat.
- Informal workers face income insecurity.

3. Agriculture Remains Highly Monsoon-Dependent

- Monsoon rainfall is critical for crops and water resources.
- Weak rainfall increases production risks.
- Small and marginal farmers are most affected.

4. Food Inflation Can Rise Due to Climate Shocks

- Lower crop output can push up food prices.
- Essential commodities become more expensive.
- Poor households face the greatest burden.

5. Water Stress Intensifies During El Niño

- Groundwater extraction increases.
- Reservoir and aquifer recharge declines.
- Water security becomes a major concern.

6. Urban Areas Are Becoming More Vulnerable

- Concretisation and loss of green cover increase temperatures.
- Urban heat islands worsen heat exposure.
- Climate impacts deepen social inequalities.

7. Climate Adaptation Must Be Strengthened

- Heat-resilient urban planning is needed.
- Water management systems require improvement.
- Worker protection and climate-resilient agriculture should be prioritised.

Important Terms

Term	Meaning
El Niño	Periodic warming of the central and eastern Pacific Ocean that affects global weather patterns, including India's monsoon.





Heat Stress	Physical strain caused by prolonged exposure to high temperatures, affecting health and productivity.
Food Inflation	Increase in food prices over time due to supply shortages or other economic factors.
Urban Heat Island	A phenomenon where cities become significantly warmer than surrounding rural areas due to built-up surfaces and human activities.
Climate Adaptation	Measures taken to reduce vulnerability and adjust to the impacts of climate change.

[Data hygiene-The Hindu Editorial](#)

Governance

Easy Explanation

The article highlights concerns regarding the ongoing **Census 2027** exercise, particularly reports from Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh suggesting that some enumerators are being asked to revisit households and modify data in ways that may present government programmes more favourably. While re-verification is a normal and necessary part of any large survey, the article argues that it should be done to improve accuracy, not to alter facts or manage perceptions.

The controversy centres on instructions reportedly given to some census officials. For instance, in certain cases where households did not possess toilets, enumerators were allegedly advised to check whether a toilet existed nearby and then classify the household as having "access to a latrine" rather than recording open defecation. Such practices raise concerns because Census data are meant to capture actual living conditions rather than administrative interpretations.

The article uses this issue to examine the broader question of assessing the success of sanitation programmes such as the **Swachh Bharat Mission**. While significant progress has been made in reducing open defecation and improving sanitation infrastructure, it is unrealistic to assume that all challenges have disappeared. If data are altered to fit official claims, policymakers may lose an accurate understanding of ground realities.

Accurate Census data are essential because they form the foundation for public policy, welfare schemes, resource allocation, and development planning. Governments rely on Census information to identify gaps in infrastructure, healthcare, education, housing, sanitation, and employment. If the data are inaccurate, policy decisions may become ineffective or misdirected.

The article also emphasizes the importance of supporting census enumerators. They often work under difficult conditions and play a critical role in collecting reliable information. Adequate training, clear guidelines, and reasonable allowances are necessary to ensure efficient and accurate data collection.

The central argument is that the credibility of the Census depends on maintaining the highest standards of data integrity. Re-verification should strengthen data quality, not become a tool for data sanitisation. Reliable statistics are essential for evidence-based governance, inclusive development, and public trust in institutions.

Key Takeaways

1. Census Data Must Reflect Ground Reality

- Census exercises are meant to capture actual conditions.
- Data should not be altered to fit administrative narratives.
- Accuracy is essential for public trust.



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2. Re-Verification Is Legitimate but Must Remain Objective

- Revisiting households can help correct errors.
- The purpose should be improving data quality.
- It should not be used to modify facts.

3. Data Integrity Is Crucial for Policymaking

- Census data guide welfare programmes and development planning.
- Inaccurate information can lead to poor policy decisions.
- Reliable statistics improve governance outcomes.

4. Sanitation Progress Requires Honest Assessment

- Programmes like Swachh Bharat Mission have achieved significant gains.
- Remaining gaps must also be documented accurately.
- Honest evaluation helps improve implementation.

5. Enumerator Independence Must Be Protected

- Enumerators should record responses without external pressure.
- Clear guidelines are necessary for maintaining objectivity.
- Professional autonomy strengthens data credibility.

6. Census Is a Critical National Exercise

- It provides demographic, social and economic information.
- Government planning depends heavily on Census findings.
- Its credibility affects multiple sectors.

7. Transparency Strengthens Public Confidence

- Reliable data support evidence-based policymaking.
- Data sanitisation undermines institutional credibility.
- Public trust depends on transparency and accountability.

Important Terms

Term	Meaning
Census	Official and comprehensive enumeration of a country's population and housing characteristics.
Data Integrity	Accuracy, consistency and reliability of data throughout its collection and use.
Open Defecation Free (ODF)	A status indicating that a community has eliminated open defecation through access to sanitation facilities.
Evidence-Based Policymaking	Formulation of policies using reliable data and empirical evidence.





Data Sanitisation

Altering or modifying data to make results appear more favourable, often compromising accuracy.

6th June 2026

[AI-enabled ball for better decisions,fewer surprises-The Indian Express Explained Page](#)

Science and technology

Easy Explanation

The **Trionda** is the official football for the **2026 FIFA World Cup**. It is unique because it contains a built-in sensor and uses Artificial Intelligence (AI) to assist referees in making faster and more accurate decisions. This reflects the growing use of advanced technologies in sports.

The ball contains an **Inertial Measurement Unit (IMU)** sensor that tracks its movement, speed, rotation, and position. The data is transmitted hundreds of times per second and is combined with player-tracking cameras and digital player models. This helps the Video Assistant Referee (VAR) system make quicker offside and handball decisions.

The Trionda also represents a major change in football design. Unlike the traditional 32-panel Telstar ball, it has only four curved panels. Adidas has added grooves and micro-textures to its surface to improve stability and avoid the unpredictable flight that made the 2010 Jabulani ball unpopular among players.

Scientists have tested the Trionda in wind tunnels and found that it behaves differently from previous World Cup balls. While some powerful shots may travel slightly shorter distances, the design aims to provide more consistent performance. The ball's graphics also symbolize the three host countries of the 2026 World Cup—Canada, Mexico, and the United States.

Key Takeaways

1. AI in Football

- The Trionda uses AI-assisted technology for match officiating.
- It marks a new phase in the integration of technology and sports.

2. Built-in Motion Sensor

- The ball contains a 500 Hz Inertial Measurement Unit (IMU).
- It continuously tracks movement, speed, and rotation.

3. Faster VAR Decisions

- Sensor data is combined with player-tracking systems.
- This improves the speed and accuracy of offside and handball reviews.

4. Unique Ball Design

- The Trionda uses only four curved panels.
- It has the lowest number of panels in a World Cup football.

5. Improved Aerodynamics

- Grooves and micro-textures help stabilize the ball's flight.
- The design is inspired by the aerodynamic principles of golf balls.

6. Learning from Jabulani



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- The 2010 Jabulani ball was criticized for unpredictable movement.
- Trionda has been engineered to reduce such problems.

7. Symbol of the 2026 World Cup

- The ball represents the first World Cup hosted by three countries.
- Its design includes symbols associated with Canada, Mexico, and the United States.

Important Terms

Term	Meaning
Artificial Intelligence (AI)	Technology that enables machines to analyze data and support decision-making.
Inertial Measurement Unit (IMU)	A sensor that measures movement, acceleration, orientation, and rotation.
VAR (Video Assistant Referee)	Technology-assisted system used to review important referee decisions.
Aerodynamics	Study of how air affects the movement of objects through it.
Motion Sensor	Device that detects and records movement-related data in real time.

[Behind kerala's poor finances:high borrowings, low capital spend-The Indian Express Explained Page](#)

Economy

Easy Explanation

The article examines the decline in Kerala's fiscal health despite its long-standing reputation as a successful development model. For decades, the **Kerala Model** was praised for achieving high literacy, better healthcare, low population growth, and strong human development outcomes even with relatively modest income levels. Kerala's achievements often rivalled those of much richer countries.

However, over the years, the state's finances have come under increasing stress. The government has been borrowing heavily to bridge the gap between its revenue and expenditure. A major problem is that much of this borrowed money is being used for recurring expenses such as salaries, pensions, and interest payments instead of creating productive assets or infrastructure.

As a result, Kerala's debt burden has risen significantly, while investment in capital expenditure remains low. This weakens the state's ability to generate future growth and employment. The new government argues that Kerala has moved away from the principle of "borrow to invest, growth will repay" and instead uses borrowings largely for consumption-oriented expenditure.

To improve fiscal sustainability, the government has proposed reforms such as increasing the retirement age, reducing pension liabilities, rationalising pay revisions, and addressing losses in public sector enterprises.

Key Takeaways

1. Success of the Kerala Model



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- Kerala achieved high levels of literacy, healthcare, and human development.
- It became a globally recognised model of social development despite relatively low income levels.

2. Growing Fiscal Stress

- The state's expenditure has consistently exceeded its revenues.
- Borrowings have increased to finance the fiscal gap.

3. High Debt Burden

- Kerala's outstanding liabilities stand at around 35% of GSDP.
- The national average is about 29%, indicating higher fiscal pressure.

4. Dominance of Committed Expenditure

- A large share of government spending goes towards salaries, pensions, and interest payments.
- This reduces fiscal flexibility for developmental activities.

5. Low Capital Expenditure

- Kerala spends less on creating productive assets compared to the national average.
- Lower capital spending can constrain future economic growth.

6. Impact on Employment

- Despite a highly educated workforce, unemployment remains high.
- Women face particularly high levels of unemployment.

7. Proposed Fiscal Reforms

- Raising retirement age may reduce pension burdens.
- Longer intervals between pay commissions can ease expenditure pressures.
- Reforming loss-making public sector enterprises can improve fiscal sustainability.

Important Terms

Term	Meaning
GSDP (Gross State Domestic Product)	Total value of goods and services produced within a state economy.
Outstanding Liabilities	Total debt obligations that a government must repay.
Committed Expenditure	Mandatory spending such as salaries, pensions, and interest payments.
Capital Expenditure	Spending on infrastructure and productive assets that generate future growth.
Human Development Index (HDI)	Composite indicator measuring health, education, and standard of living.





Maulana Barkatullah: 'First PM of India' whose name varsity wants to drop - The Indian Express Explained Page

History

Easy Explanation

Maulana Barkatullah Bhopali was a prominent revolutionary who dedicated much of his life to India's freedom struggle from abroad. He is currently in the news because the Executive Council of Bhopal's Barkatullah University has proposed changing its name to Vagdevi Bhojpal University. Historians argue that Barkatullah's contribution to India's independence movement deserves greater recognition rather than reduced visibility.

Born in Bhopal in 1854, Barkatullah studied in Bombay and London before becoming involved with Indian revolutionaries overseas. He travelled across several countries including Japan, England, the United States, Germany, Russia, and Afghanistan, building international support against British rule. He strongly believed that Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs, and other communities needed to unite to achieve independence.

His most significant contribution came in 1915 when he helped establish the **Provisional Government of India in Kabul**, considered India's first government-in-exile. Raja Mahendra Pratap became its President, while Barkatullah served as Prime Minister. Through this initiative, Indian revolutionaries sought international support for ending British colonial rule.

Barkatullah was also associated with the **Ghadar Movement** and worked closely with anti-colonial groups worldwide. Although he spent most of his life in exile and died in California in 1927, his efforts highlight the global dimension of India's freedom struggle and the importance of inter-community unity in the nationalist movement.

Key Takeaways

1. Why He Is in the News

- Barkatullah University's Executive Council has proposed changing the university's name.
- Historians have highlighted Barkatullah's role in India's freedom struggle.

2. Early Life and Education

- Born in Bhopal on July 7, 1854.
- Studied in Bombay and later in London before joining revolutionary activities.

3. Global Freedom Campaign

- Travelled extensively across Asia, Europe, North America, and Afghanistan.
- Worked to mobilise international support against British colonialism.

4. Advocate of Hindu-Muslim Unity

- Believed independence could only be achieved through communal unity.
- Opposed the British policy of divide and rule.

5. India's First Government-in-Exile

- Helped establish the Provisional Government of India in Kabul in 1915.
- Served as its Prime Minister, while Raja Mahendra Pratap became President.

6. Association with the Ghadar Movement

- Worked with the Ghadar Party, which advocated armed struggle against British rule.
- Sought to organise resistance among Indians living abroad.

7. Legacy and Historical Importance

- Represents the international dimension of India's freedom movement.
- His life demonstrates the role of global anti-colonial networks in India's independence struggle.



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Important Terms

Term	Meaning
Maulana Barkatullah	Revolutionary leader who campaigned internationally for India's independence.
Provisional Government of India (1915)	Government-in-exile established in Kabul to challenge British rule.
Ghadar Party	Revolutionary organisation founded in 1913 to achieve Indian independence through armed struggle.
Raja Mahendra Pratap	President of the Provisional Government of India in Kabul.
Government-in-Exile	A political authority operating outside its homeland while claiming legitimate governance.

[Can scheme to replace NCR'S old trucks and buses curb pollution?-The Indian Express Explained Page](#)

Environment

Easy Explanation

The Union Government has launched a **two-year Clean Mobility Scheme** for Delhi-NCR to reduce air pollution by encouraging the replacement of old trucks and buses with **BS-VI or higher-standard vehicles**. The scheme focuses on commercial vehicles because they contribute disproportionately to pollution despite forming a relatively small share of the total vehicle fleet.

Delhi-NCR experiences severe air pollution due to multiple sources such as transport, dust, industries, and biomass burning. Among these, vehicular emissions remain a major contributor, especially for pollutants like nitrogen oxides (NOx), carbon monoxide (CO), and particulate matter (PM2.5). With nearly 3 crore vehicles and an annual growth rate of about 7%, controlling transport emissions has become crucial.

Studies show that trucks and buses account for a significant share of PM2.5 emissions. Older vehicles are especially problematic because they emit several times more pollutants than modern BS-VI vehicles. Therefore, replacing outdated commercial vehicles can substantially reduce pollution levels, although it alone cannot solve Delhi-NCR's air quality crisis because pollution also comes from other sectors and neighbouring regions.

Key Takeaways

1. Objective of the Scheme

- Encourage replacement of old trucks and buses with BS-VI compliant vehicles.
- Aim is to reduce transport-related air pollution in Delhi-NCR.

2. What is BS-VI?

- BS-VI is India's latest vehicle emission standard.
- It imposes stricter limits on pollutants such as NOx, CO, and PM.



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3. Transport as a Major Polluter

- Vehicular emissions are among the biggest contributors to Delhi-NCR's pollution.
- Transport contributes significantly to PM2.5 levels in both summer and winter.

4. Trucks and Buses Have High Emission Load

- Commercial vehicles form a small share of the fleet but contribute heavily to pollution.
- Trucks and buses account for about 36% of transport-sector PM2.5 emissions.

5. Older Vehicles Pollute More

- A pre-BS heavy-duty vehicle can emit up to 14 times more pollutants than a BS-VI vehicle.
- Even BS-IV vehicles emit much more than BS-VI vehicles.

6. Delhi-NCR's Growing Vehicle Fleet

- The region has nearly 3 crore registered vehicles.
- Vehicle numbers are increasing by around 7% annually.

7. Cleaner Vehicles Alone Are Not Enough

- Air pollution also originates from dust, industries, and biomass burning.
- A comprehensive multi-sector strategy is needed for long-term improvement.

Important Terms

Term	Meaning
BS-VI (Bharat Stage-VI)	India's most stringent vehicle emission standard aimed at reducing pollution.
PM2.5	Fine particulate matter smaller than 2.5 microns that can enter the lungs and bloodstream.
NOx (Nitrogen Oxides)	Harmful gases released mainly from vehicle and industrial emissions.
Source Apportionment	Scientific assessment of the contribution of different pollution sources.
CAQM	Commission for Air Quality Management in NCR and adjoining areas.

[Manifesto for cockroaches: Gather and scatter,as needed-The Indian Express The Ideas Page](#)

Governance

Easy Explanation

The article reflects on the emergence of a youth-led movement called the "**Cockroach Janta Party**", which has gained attention for protesting against failures in India's education system, particularly after controversies such as the NEET paper leak and



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problems with CBSE's On-Screen Marking system. The author, a former civil servant, argues that both working within the system and opposing it from outside have often failed to bring meaningful reform.

The article appreciates the movement's focus on education, viewing it as a sector affected by corruption, inefficiency, and weak accountability. According to the author, repeated failures in examinations and educational governance have generated public anger and created a demand for innovative forms of civic action.

The involvement of social activist **Sonam Wangchuk** is highlighted as adding credibility to the movement. The author also uses Wangchuk's detention under the National Security Act (NSA) to illustrate how the state can respond harshly to dissent. This raises broader concerns about democratic freedoms and citizen activism.

Rather than becoming a conventional political party, the author suggests that such movements should remain issue-based, unite around specific causes, and mobilize citizens whenever governance failures occur. The central idea is that sustained civic engagement, rather than electoral politics alone, may be a more effective way to hold institutions accountable.

Key Takeaways

1. Rise of Youth-Led Civic Activism

- The "Cockroach Janta Party" represents growing youth dissatisfaction with governance failures.
- It seeks to challenge inefficiency and corruption through collective action.

2. Education as the Core Concern

- The movement focuses primarily on reforms in the education sector.
- Issues such as the NEET paper leak and CBSE evaluation problems triggered public outrage.

3. Critique of Systemic Failures

- The author argues that both insiders and outsiders have struggled to reform institutions.
- Governance failures often persist despite changes in governments.

4. Corruption in Educational Governance

- Private interests and weak regulation have undermined transparency.
- Examination-related controversies have reduced public trust.

5. Role of Sonam Wangchuk

- His association has brought visibility and credibility to the movement.
- His experience highlights challenges faced by activists questioning state actions.

6. Democracy and Dissent

- The article raises concerns about the treatment of peaceful activism.
- Democratic systems require space for criticism and citizen participation.

7. Importance of Issue-Based Movements

- The author favours cause-oriented civic mobilization over traditional party politics.
- Such movements can act as watchdogs against governance failures.

Important Terms

Term

Meaning



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NEET (National Eligibility cum Entrance Test)	National entrance examination for admission to medical courses in India.
CBSE On-Screen Marking (OSM)	Digital evaluation system used by CBSE for answer-sheet assessment.
National Security Act (NSA)	Preventive detention law allowing authorities to detain individuals under certain conditions.
Civil Society	Citizens and organizations working independently to influence public policy and governance.
Civic Activism	Collective citizen action aimed at addressing public issues and improving accountability.

[Impunity for exam leaks undermines trust-The Indian Express The Ideas Page](#)

Governance

Easy Explanation

The editorial highlights the growing problem of **exam paper leaks and cheating scandals** in India. Over the past two decades, several school examinations, entrance tests, and recruitment exams have been affected by leaks, malpractice, and administrative failures. Such incidents force authorities to cancel or postpone exams, causing uncertainty and hardship for millions of candidates.

A major concern raised by the article is the lack of accountability. Despite numerous paper leak cases being registered, very few have resulted in convictions. Weak investigation, delayed prosecution, and low conviction rates have created a sense of impunity among those involved in cheating networks. This undermines public confidence in the examination system.

The issue has become more complex with the outsourcing of examination logistics, the rise of private testing agencies, and the growth of sophisticated coaching and cheating networks. The editorial argues that investigations must not stop at identifying individual offenders but should uncover the larger networks and systemic weaknesses that enable such fraud.

Since competitive examinations are crucial for education, employment, and social mobility, maintaining their integrity is essential. The government must strengthen examination security, improve accountability, and ensure strict punishment for offenders to restore trust in merit-based opportunities.

Key Takeaways

1. Persistent Exam Malpractices

- India has witnessed repeated paper leaks and cheating scandals across major examinations.
- School, entrance, and recruitment exams have all been affected.

2. Impact on Aspirants

- Cancellation or postponement of exams creates uncertainty for candidates.
- Careers, educational opportunities, and employment prospects are disrupted.

3. Weak Accountability



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- Conviction rates in paper leak cases remain extremely low.
- Delayed investigations reduce the deterrence effect of the law.

4. Rise of Organised Cheating Networks

- Paper leaks increasingly involve sophisticated criminal networks.
- Coaching centres and intermediaries may sometimes exploit system vulnerabilities.

5. Structural Challenges

- Outsourcing of examination logistics creates additional security risks.
- Private testing agencies require stronger oversight and regulation.

6. Threat to Meritocracy

- Competitive exams are meant to ensure equal opportunities based on merit.
- Repeated leaks weaken faith in fairness and social mobility.

7. Need for Comprehensive Reform

- Stronger investigation, prosecution, and technological safeguards are needed.
- Restoring public trust requires both institutional accountability and systemic reforms.

Important Terms

Term	Meaning
Paper Leak	Unauthorized disclosure of examination questions before the test.
Meritocracy	System in which opportunities are based on ability and performance rather than privilege.
Charge Sheet	Formal document filed by investigating agencies detailing accusations against an accused person.
Conviction Rate	Percentage of cases that result in a guilty verdict by a court.
Examination Integrity	Fairness, transparency, and credibility of the examination process.

[Between government and RBI, getting back the investor-The Indian Express The Ideas Page](#)

Economy

Easy Explanation

The editorial discusses the Reserve Bank of India's (RBI) decision to keep the **repo rate unchanged** despite rising inflation risks and global uncertainties. The Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) believes that economic growth is slowing due to factors such as the West Asia conflict, high crude oil prices, and concerns about a weak monsoon. Therefore, increasing interest rates immediately could further weaken growth.



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At the same time, inflation risks have increased. Higher energy prices, supply-chain disruptions, and the possibility of an El Niño-induced weak monsoon could push up food and fuel prices. Consequently, the RBI has revised its inflation projections upward while reducing its GDP growth forecasts for FY2027.

Another major concern is the pressure on the Indian rupee and the widening **Current Account Deficit (CAD)** due to expensive oil imports. Instead of raising interest rates to defend the currency, the RBI has chosen to attract more foreign capital into India. Along with the Government of India, it has introduced measures to encourage foreign investment in government securities, equity markets, and foreign currency deposits.

The editorial argues that this coordinated approach between the Government and RBI aims to restore investor confidence, strengthen capital inflows, support the rupee, and maintain economic stability without sacrificing growth.

Key Takeaways

1. RBI Maintained Status Quo

- The repo rate was kept unchanged by the MPC.
- Growth concerns outweighed the case for an immediate rate hike.

2. Growth Outlook Has Weakened

- GDP growth projections for FY2027 were reduced.
- High oil prices, geopolitical tensions, and monsoon uncertainties pose risks.

3. Inflation Risks Have Increased

- RBI raised its inflation forecast for FY2027.
- Food and fuel prices remain major concerns.

4. Impact of West Asia Conflict

- Rising crude oil prices can increase inflation and import costs.
- The conflict may adversely affect India's external sector.

5. Current Account Deficit Under Pressure

- Higher oil imports are expected to widen the CAD.
- A larger CAD increases pressure on the rupee.

6. Measures to Attract Foreign Capital

- RBI expanded investment opportunities for foreign investors in government securities.
- Additional incentives were announced for FCNR(B) deposits and foreign inflows.

7. Coordinated Government-RBI Approach

- Government tax incentives and RBI policy measures complement each other.
- The objective is to restore investor confidence and maintain macroeconomic stability.

Important Terms

Term	Meaning
Repo Rate	Interest rate at which RBI lends money to commercial banks.





Monetary Policy Committee (MPC)	RBI body responsible for setting interest rates to manage inflation and growth.
Current Account Deficit (CAD)	Situation where a country's imports and external payments exceed its exports and receipts.
FCNR(B) Deposits	Foreign Currency Non-Resident Bank deposits maintained by NRIs in India.
Fully Accessible Route (FAR)	Mechanism allowing foreign investors easier access to Indian government securities.

[Rates on hold, focus on bringing foreign capital-The Indian Express The Ideas Page](#)

Economy

Easy Explanation

The editorial supports the RBI's decision to keep the **repo rate unchanged at 5.25%** despite rising inflation concerns. The Indian economy is currently facing multiple challenges, including the West Asia conflict, increasing oil prices, pressure on the rupee, capital outflows, and uncertainty regarding economic growth. In such a situation, the RBI has chosen a cautious "wait-and-watch" approach rather than tightening monetary policy immediately.

Inflation risks are increasing due to higher fuel prices, rising input costs, and concerns over a below-normal monsoon influenced by El Niño. As a result, the RBI has raised its inflation forecast while lowering its GDP growth projection. This creates a difficult policy situation where inflation is rising but growth is slowing.

To address pressure on the rupee and external accounts, the Government and RBI have jointly announced measures to attract foreign capital. These include tax benefits for foreign investors in government bonds, easier access to government securities, incentives for foreign currency deposits, and facilities to encourage external commercial borrowings.

The editorial argues that attracting foreign capital is currently essential because India has witnessed significant foreign portfolio outflows and weak FDI inflows. These measures can help stabilize the currency, improve external financing, and support economic growth without resorting to higher interest rates.

Key Takeaways

1. RBI Maintained Repo Rate

- The policy rate was kept unchanged at 5.25%.
- The MPC preferred caution amid global and domestic uncertainties.

2. Rising Inflation Concerns

- Fuel price increases and supply-side pressures are pushing inflation upward.
- RBI revised its inflation forecast from 4.6% to 5.1%.

3. Growth Outlook Has Softened

- GDP growth projection was reduced from 6.9% to 6.6%.
- Weak monsoon and global uncertainties pose downside risks.



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4. Impact of El Niño and Monsoon

- A sub-normal monsoon may affect agricultural production.
- Food inflation could rise if rainfall remains deficient.

5. Pressure on Rupee and External Sector

- Capital outflows have weakened the rupee.
- Rising oil imports may increase external vulnerabilities.

6. Measures to Attract Foreign Capital

- Tax concessions have been provided for foreign investment in government bonds.
- RBI expanded the Fully Accessible Route (FAR) framework and incentivized FCNR(B) deposits.

7. Importance of Capital Inflows

- Foreign capital helps finance current account deficits.
- Strong inflows support currency stability and investor confidence.

Important Terms

Term	Meaning
Repo Rate	Interest rate at which RBI lends short-term funds to commercial banks.
El Niño	Climate phenomenon that can weaken the Indian monsoon and affect agriculture.
FCNR(B) Deposits	Foreign Currency Non-Resident Bank deposits maintained by NRIs in India.
Foreign Portfolio Investment (FPI)	Investment by foreign investors in stocks, bonds, and other financial assets.
Fully Accessible Route (FAR)	RBI mechanism allowing foreign investors easier access to Indian government securities.

[India needs innovative strategies to eliminate TB-The Hindu Editorial](#)

Science

Easy Explanation

Tuberculosis (TB) remains the world's deadliest infectious disease, causing more deaths annually than many other infections. India carries one of the highest TB burdens globally and has set an ambitious target of eliminating TB. However, experts argue that achieving this goal will require a combination of strategies rather than relying on a single breakthrough vaccine.

TB is a complex disease. Some infected individuals remain symptom-free for years, while others develop active pulmonary TB (affecting the lungs) or extrapulmonary TB (affecting organs outside the lungs). Because of these different disease pathways, a single vaccine may not be sufficient to prevent all forms of TB.



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A recent ICMR-led **PreVenTB Trial** tested two indigenous vaccines—**VPM1002** and **Immuvac**—among household contacts of TB patients across India. The trial found significant protection against extrapulmonary TB and promising results among children and adolescents. These findings suggest that targeted vaccination could become an important tool in India's TB elimination strategy.

The article argues that India should adopt a layered approach involving early diagnosis, preventive treatment, vaccination, nutritional support, and sustained public health investment. Instead of waiting for a perfect vaccine, policymakers should utilize available tools that can immediately reduce disease burden and save lives.

Key Takeaways

1. TB Remains a Major Public Health Challenge

- TB continues to be one of the leading infectious killers globally.
- India bears a significant share of the global TB burden.

2. TB Has Multiple Disease Forms

- Pulmonary TB (PTB) affects the lungs and drives transmission.
- Extrapulmonary TB (EPTB) affects other organs and is often harder to diagnose.

3. No Single Vaccine May Solve the Problem

- TB disease progression varies among individuals.
- A multi-layered prevention strategy is more realistic than a one-size-fits-all vaccine.

4. Significance of the PreVenTB Trial

- Conducted by ICMR across 18 sites involving over 12,700 participants.
- Evaluated indigenous vaccines VPM1002 and Immuvac under real-world conditions.

5. Promising Vaccine Results

- VPM1002 showed over 50% efficacy against extrapulmonary TB.
- Both vaccines demonstrated strong protection among children and adolescents.

6. Nutrition and TB Are Closely Linked

- Vaccine effectiveness was lower among undernourished individuals.
- Nutritional support is essential for successful TB control.

7. Need for an Integrated TB Elimination Strategy

- Early detection, preventive therapy, vaccination, nutrition, and public health investment must work together.
- India should deploy proven tools now rather than wait indefinitely for a perfect vaccine.

Important Terms

Term	Meaning
Tuberculosis (TB)	Infectious disease caused by <i>Mycobacterium tuberculosis</i> , mainly affecting the lungs.
Pulmonary TB (PTB)	TB affecting the lungs and responsible for most transmission.



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Extrapulmonary TB (EPTB) TB affecting organs outside the lungs such as lymph nodes, bones, or brain.

VPM1002 An indigenous TB vaccine candidate based on a modified BCG platform.

PreVenTB Trial ICMR-led Phase III clinical trial evaluating TB vaccine efficacy in India.

7th June 2026

[Why did SC back curbs on online gaming?-The Hindu FAQ](#)

Governance

Easy Explanation

The Supreme Court recently delivered two important judgments concerning India's online gaming industry. First, it upheld the **28% GST levy on online gaming involving money stakes**, including its retrospective application. Second, it upheld the constitutional validity of State laws that prohibit or regulate real-money online gaming platforms.

The Court observed that once money is staked on an uncertain outcome, the distinction between a game of skill and a game of chance becomes less relevant for taxation purposes. Therefore, online gaming platforms involving monetary stakes can be treated similarly to betting and gambling under the GST framework. The Court held that the 2023 GST amendments merely clarified existing law and could therefore operate retrospectively.

On the issue of State regulation, the Court ruled that betting and gambling fall under the legislative domain of States. It held that activities involving real-money wagering can be regulated or prohibited by States in the interest of public order and to address concerns such as addiction, financial losses, and social harm. The Court also noted that widespread smartphone usage and digital payments have significantly expanded access to online gambling-like activities.

The judgments are significant because they strengthen the government's regulatory authority over online gaming and may have major financial consequences for gaming companies facing large tax demands. They also influence ongoing debates regarding the constitutional validity of the Promotion and Regulation of Online Gaming Act, 2025.

Key Takeaways

1. Two Major Supreme Court Rulings

- The Court upheld the 28% GST on online gaming involving money stakes.
- It also upheld State laws regulating or prohibiting real-money online gaming.

2. GST on Full Value of Stakes

- GST applies to the entire amount staked by players.
- The Court rejected the argument that tax should be levied only on platform commissions.

3. Skill vs Chance Distinction Reduced

- For GST purposes, the distinction becomes less important once money is wagered.
- Activities involving uncertain outcomes can be treated similarly to betting and gambling.

4. Betting and Gambling Are State Subjects



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- States derive legislative power from Entry 34 of the State List.
- They can regulate or prohibit betting and gambling activities.

5. Public Order and Social Concerns

- States may impose restrictions to address addiction and financial harms.
- The Court linked online wagering with broader public order concerns.

6. Impact on Online Gaming Industry

- Gaming companies face substantial GST liabilities.
- Many firms may face financial stress, restructuring, or insolvency proceedings.

7. Constitutional Implications

- The ruling reinforces State authority over betting and gambling.
- It may influence future legal challenges to the Online Gaming Act, 2025.

Important Terms

Term	Meaning
GST (Goods and Services Tax)	Indirect tax levied on the supply of goods and services in India.
Actionable Claim	A legally enforceable claim to a debt or beneficial interest recognised under law.
Res Extra Commercium	Activities considered outside legitimate commerce and not entitled to full trade protections.
Entry 34, State List	Constitutional provision giving States power over betting and gambling.
Real-Money Gaming	Online gaming activities where participants stake money for potential monetary rewards.

[Why did riots break out in Southampton?-The Hindu FAQ](#)

International relations

Easy Explanation

Riots broke out in Southampton, United Kingdom, after the release of police body-camera footage related to the murder of 18-year-old Henry Nowak. The footage showed Nowak being handcuffed and treated as a suspect despite suffering fatal stab wounds. The accused, 23-year-old Vickrum Digwa, was later convicted and sentenced to life imprisonment. The incident triggered public outrage and became a rallying point for far-right groups.

The protests were fueled by allegations that British police apply different standards when dealing with people from different ethnic or racial backgrounds, a claim often referred to as **"two-tier policing."** Critics argued that the victim was treated harshly while the accused received more sympathetic treatment. The issue quickly evolved into a broader debate on policing, race, public trust, and law enforcement accountability.



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The British government and mainstream political leaders have urged restraint and warned against using the tragedy to deepen social divisions. Meanwhile, an independent investigation has been launched into police conduct during the incident. The case has also reignited discussions on knife crime, public safety, and police reforms in the U.K.

Sikh organizations in Britain have strongly condemned the murder, expressed solidarity with the victim's family, and clarified that the accused's actions do not represent Sikh values. They have also highlighted the distinction between a traditional religious **kirpan** and the weapon used in the crime.

Key Takeaways

1. Immediate Trigger for the Riots

- Riots followed the release of police bodycam footage related to Henry Nowak's murder.
- The footage raised questions about police handling of the victim.

2. Murder Case at the Centre

- Vickrum Digwa was sentenced to life imprisonment for the stabbing.
- The victim was reportedly treated as a suspect while critically injured.

3. Debate Over 'Two-Tier Policing'

- Critics allege police treat different groups differently based on ethnicity or identity.
- The issue has become a major political controversy in the U.K.

4. Political Reactions

- Government leaders emphasized equality before the law.
- Most mainstream parties warned against inflaming social tensions.

5. Investigation into Police Conduct

- The Independent Office for Police Conduct (IOPC) is investigating the incident.
- One police officer involved has already resigned.

6. Wider Issues of Knife Crime

- The case renewed concerns about rising knife-related violence in Britain.
- Calls have been made for stronger preventive measures and legal review.

7. Sikh Community's Response

- Sikh organizations condemned the murder and supported the victim's family.
- Community leaders stressed that the accused's actions do not reflect Sikh teachings.

Important Terms

Term	Meaning
Two-Tier Policing	Allegation that law enforcement treats different groups differently based on identity or background.
IOPC (Independent Office for Police Conduct)	U.K. body that investigates complaints and misconduct involving police officers.



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Knife Crime	Criminal offences involving knives or other sharp weapons.
Kirpan	Ceremonial dagger carried by initiated Sikhs as a religious symbol.
Public Order	Maintenance of peace, safety, and stability within society.

[The Gen Z trio that took on the CBSE-The Hindu Profiles](#)

Sociology

Easy Explanation

The article highlights the role of three young individuals—**Vedant Shrivastava, Nisarga Adhikary, and Sarthak Sidhant**—in exposing serious flaws in the CBSE's On-Screen Marking (OSM) system. Their efforts eventually compelled the CBSE to acknowledge errors in the digital evaluation process, making them symbols of a new generation of tech-savvy and socially conscious citizens.

Vedant first brought attention to the issue after discovering that he had received another student's answer sheet instead of his own. When his concerns were ignored, he raised the issue publicly on social media, facing trolling and online abuse. His case eventually led CBSE officials to admit errors in the evaluation process.

Nisarga, an ethical hacker from West Bengal, exposed cybersecurity vulnerabilities in the CBSE portal, including possible leaks of sensitive student data. Despite initially facing denial from authorities, his findings were later acknowledged. His work demonstrates the growing role of ethical hacking and digital accountability in governance.

Sarthak investigated public documents and raised questions about the procurement and implementation of the OSM system. His efforts led to his appearance before a Parliamentary Committee, making him one of the youngest individuals to do so. Collectively, the three represent how technology, transparency, and citizen activism can be used to demand accountability from public institutions.

Key Takeaways

1. Trigger for the Controversy

- Errors in CBSE's On-Screen Marking system led to widespread complaints.
- Students received incorrect answer sheets and evaluation discrepancies emerged.

2. Vedant as a Whistleblower

- He publicly exposed flaws after receiving another student's answer script.
- His actions forced authorities to investigate and rectify the mistake.

3. Role of Ethical Hacking

- Nisarga identified security vulnerabilities in the CBSE portal.
- The episode highlighted the importance of cybersecurity in public digital platforms.

4. Youth-Led Accountability

- The trio used technology and public platforms to challenge institutional failures.
- Their actions demonstrate the growing influence of informed young citizens.



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5. Parliamentary Oversight

- Sarthak's findings attracted the attention of a Parliamentary Committee.
- The issue moved beyond social media and entered formal accountability mechanisms.

6. Need for Better Digital Governance

- Large-scale digital reforms require proper testing and implementation.
- Inadequate preparation can undermine trust in public institutions.

7. Lessons for Educational Administration

- Transparency, grievance redressal, and cybersecurity must accompany digital reforms.
- Public institutions must respond quickly to genuine concerns raised by citizens.

Important Terms

Term	Meaning
On-Screen Marking (OSM)	Digital system used for evaluating examination answer scripts electronically.
Whistleblower	Person who exposes wrongdoing, errors, or misconduct within an institution.
Ethical Hacker	Cybersecurity expert who identifies vulnerabilities to improve system security.
Cybersecurity	Protection of digital systems, networks, and data from unauthorized access or attacks.
Digital Governance	Use of digital technologies for administration, service delivery, and public accountability.

[Besieged history-The Hindu Profiles](#)

History

Easy Explanation

The article discusses **Beaufort Castle (Qalaat al-Shaqif)**, a historic fortress located in southern Lebanon near the Litani River. Built by Crusaders in 1139 on top of older fortifications, the castle has witnessed centuries of warfare and changing rulers. Due to its strategic location overlooking northern Israel and the Beqaa Valley, it has remained militarily significant throughout history.

Over the centuries, the fortress was controlled by several powers, including the Crusaders, Saladin, the Mamluks, the Ottomans, and the French. Each ruler modified the structure according to their military and administrative needs. Because of its commanding position, the castle became an important defensive and surveillance outpost.

In modern times, Beaufort Castle has been deeply linked with the Israel-Lebanon conflict. During the 1970s, the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) used it as a military base. Israel captured it during the 1982 Lebanon War and retained control until withdrawing from southern Lebanon in 2000. Since then, the castle has undergone restoration and has been considered for UNESCO World Heritage status.



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The fortress has again become relevant following renewed conflict between Israel and Hezbollah in 2026. Its strategic location continues to make it important for military operations, highlighting how historical sites can remain central to contemporary geopolitical conflicts.

Key Takeaways

1. Historic Crusader Fortress

- Beaufort Castle was built by Crusaders in 1139.
- It stands on a strategically important hilltop in southern Lebanon.

2. Strategic Military Importance

- The fortress overlooks northern Israel and the Beqaa Valley.
- Its location makes it valuable for surveillance and defence.

3. Multiple Rulers Through History

- Controlled by Crusaders, Saladin, Mamluks, Ottomans, French, and others.
- Each period left architectural and military modifications.

4. Role in the Israel–Lebanon Conflict

- The PLO used the castle as a military base during the 1970s.
- Israel captured it during the 1982 invasion of Lebanon.

5. Israeli Withdrawal in 2000

- Israel abandoned the fortress after withdrawing from southern Lebanon.
- The site was later opened to the public and restored.

6. Cultural Heritage Significance

- Beaufort Castle is on Lebanon's tentative UNESCO World Heritage list.
- It has received enhanced protection under the 1954 Hague Convention.

7. Renewed Relevance in 2026

- The castle has re-emerged as a strategic location amid Israel-Hezbollah hostilities.
- It symbolizes the intersection of historical heritage and modern conflict.

Important Terms

Term	Meaning
Beaufort Castle (Qalaat al-Shaqif)	Medieval fortress in southern Lebanon with major strategic significance.
PLO (Palestine Liberation Organization)	Political and military organization representing Palestinian national aspirations.
Hezbollah	Lebanon-based Shia political and militant organization.



**1954 Hague Convention**

International treaty protecting cultural property during armed conflicts.

UNESCO World Heritage Site

Place recognized for its outstanding cultural or natural significance to humanity.

Bursts of rain may deal a double whammy to soil moisture, nitrogen-The Hindu Science

Environment

Easy Explanation

Two recent scientific studies have highlighted an important consequence of climate change: rainfall is becoming more concentrated into short, intense bursts rather than being spread evenly over time. While total annual rainfall may remain similar, the pattern of rainfall is changing, which can negatively affect both **soil moisture** and **soil nutrients**.

The first study found that intense rainfall often exceeds the soil's ability to absorb water. As a result, much of the water remains on the surface, leading to runoff and evaporation instead of infiltrating deeper soil layers or recharging groundwater. This can leave soils drier despite receiving substantial rainfall.

The second study focused on **nitrogen**, a vital nutrient for plant growth. It found that when rainfall exceeds a threshold of about 700 mm annually, excessive water can wash nitrogen out of the soil through a process called leaching. Thus, heavy rainfall not only reduces soil water availability but can also deplete soil fertility.

These findings are particularly relevant for India because climate studies indicate that the southwest monsoon is becoming increasingly erratic, with more rainfall occurring through intense downpours separated by longer dry spells. This could have significant implications for agriculture, water security, and ecosystem health.

Key Takeaways**1. Climate Change Is Altering Rainfall Patterns**

- Rainfall is increasingly occurring in fewer but more intense events.
- The distribution of rainfall is changing even when annual totals remain similar.

2. Reduced Soil Moisture

- Heavy rainfall can exceed the soil's infiltration capacity.
- Water is lost through runoff and evaporation instead of being stored in the soil.

3. Impact on Groundwater Recharge

- Intense downpours are less effective in replenishing groundwater.
- Longer dry intervals reduce deep soil moisture accumulation.

4. Nitrogen Loss from Soil

- Excess rainfall can wash nitrogen away through leaching.
- Nitrogen is essential for plant growth and agricultural productivity.

5. Critical Rainfall Threshold

- Around 700 mm of annual rainfall appears to be a key threshold.
- Above this level, nitrogen losses increase significantly.

6. Implications for Agriculture

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- Crops may face both water stress and nutrient deficiency.
- Agricultural productivity could decline despite adequate rainfall totals.

7. Relevance for India's Monsoon

- The southwest monsoon is becoming more episodic and intense.
- Future agricultural and water management policies must account for rainfall patterns, not just rainfall quantity.

Important Terms

Term	Meaning
Soil Moisture	Water stored within the soil that is available for plants.
Infiltration Capacity	Maximum rate at which soil can absorb water.
Groundwater Recharge	Process by which water percolates into underground aquifers.
Nitrogen Leaching	Loss of nitrogen from soil due to excessive water movement.
Aquifer	Underground layer of rock or sediment that stores groundwater.

[Scientists rule out worst-case climate scenario, with caution-The Hindu Science](#)

Environment

Easy Explanation

Climate scientists have released a new generation of climate scenarios that will guide future climate research and policymaking. One major development is the removal of **RCP8.5**, the famous "worst-case" climate scenario that projected global warming of more than 4°C by 2100. Scientists now consider this scenario unlikely because renewable energy adoption has accelerated, climate policies have expanded, and emissions growth has slowed in several major economies.

However, this does not mean the climate crisis has been solved. The new scenarios indicate that the world is still heading toward substantial warming, with current policies placing global temperatures on track to rise by around **2.8°C by 2100**. This level of warming remains dangerous and could lead to severe droughts, extreme rainfall, heatwaves, and other climate-related disasters.

The new climate models suggest that keeping warming below **1.5°C** is becoming increasingly difficult without temporarily exceeding that limit (known as "overshoot"). Scientists emphasize that while the most extreme scenario has become less plausible, the world is still far from achieving climate safety.

For India, the findings are particularly important because the country remains highly vulnerable to climate extremes such as heatwaves, floods, erratic monsoons, and droughts. Therefore, climate adaptation and emission reduction efforts remain critical regardless of the scenario considered.

Key Takeaways

1. RCP8.5 Has Been Retired



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- Scientists no longer consider the 4–5°C warming scenario highly plausible.
- Renewable energy growth and climate policies have reduced the likelihood of this pathway.

2. New Climate Scenarios Introduced

- Researchers have developed seven updated emission scenarios.
- These will form the basis of future climate assessments and modelling.

3. Warming Remains a Serious Threat

- Current policies still point toward approximately 2.8°C warming by 2100.
- Such warming can cause significant environmental and socio-economic damage.

4. 1.5°C Target Is Increasingly Difficult

- Limiting warming to 1.5°C may require temporary overshoot before temperatures decline.
- Existing emission trends are not sufficient to meet the target comfortably.

5. Renewable Energy Is Changing the Outlook

- Rapid expansion of renewable energy has altered long-term emission projections.
- Emissions have peaked or stabilized in several major economies.

6. Extreme Climate Risks Persist

- Even 2°C warming can increase droughts, floods, extreme rainfall, and wildfire risks.
- Climate impacts remain significant under moderate scenarios.

7. Implications for India

- India remains highly vulnerable to climate-related disasters.
- Adaptation, resilience-building, and emission reduction remain policy priorities.

Important Terms

Term	Meaning
RCP8.5 (Representative Concentration Pathway 8.5)	Former high-emission climate scenario projecting very high warming levels by 2100.
SSP (Shared Socioeconomic Pathways)	Climate scenarios combining emission trajectories with socioeconomic developments.
Climate Overshoot	Temporary exceedance of a temperature target before returning below it later.
Climate Sensitivity	Degree of temperature increase resulting from rising greenhouse gas concentrations.



**CMIP7**

Latest phase of the Coupled Model Intercomparison Project used for global climate modelling.

[Industrial salt pans threaten Sambhar Lake's survival-The Hindu Science](#)

Geography

Easy Explanation

Sambhar Lake in Rajasthan is India's largest inland saline (saltwater) wetland and an ecologically important habitat for migratory birds, biodiversity, and salt production. A recent study using satellite data from 1984 to 2023 has revealed worrying changes in the lake's ecosystem.

The study found that Sambhar Lake is highly dependent on seasonal rainfall. Water levels normally increase during the monsoon and decline during the dry season. However, between 2022 and 2023, the lake's water-covered area shrank significantly while industrial and commercial salt pans around it expanded.

The expansion of salt pans is altering the natural hydrology and ecology of the wetland. Scientists warn that excessive salt extraction and encroachment can damage the lake's biodiversity, reduce water availability, and threaten its long-term survival. They recommend clearly separating industrial salt-production zones from the wetland ecosystem and protecting natural saline landscapes associated with the lake.

The findings highlight the challenge of balancing economic activities with wetland conservation, especially as climate variability and human pressures continue to increase.

Key Takeaways

1. India's Largest Inland Saline Wetland

- Sambhar Lake is located in Rajasthan.
- It is the country's largest inland saltwater wetland.

2. Ecological Importance

- The lake supports migratory birds and unique biodiversity.
- It is an important wetland ecosystem in arid western India.

3. Dependence on Monsoon Rainfall

- Water levels rise during the monsoon season.
- The lake naturally shrinks during dry months.

4. Shrinking Water Spread

- Satellite data showed a decline in the lake's surface area between 2022 and 2023.
- Reduced water spread threatens wetland health.

5. Expansion of Industrial Salt Pans

- Salt-production areas around the lake have expanded.
- Industrial activities are increasing pressure on the ecosystem.

6. Threat to Wetland Sustainability

- Encroachment can disrupt natural hydrology and salinity balance.
- Biodiversity and ecological functions may be adversely affected.



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7. Need for Conservation Measures

- Scientists recommend separating industrial salt pans from wetland zones.
- Sustainable management is necessary to preserve the lake's ecological integrity.

Important Terms

Term	Meaning
Sambhar Lake	India's largest inland saline wetland located in Rajasthan.
Wetland	Land area permanently or seasonally saturated with water that supports distinct ecosystems.
Salt Pan	Shallow area used for extracting salt through evaporation of saline water.
Saline Ecosystem	Ecosystem characterized by high salt concentrations in soil or water.
Hydrology	Study of the movement, distribution, and management of water in the environment.

8th June 2026

[Is a text AI-aided?Science, limits of detection tools-The Indian Express Explained Page](#)

Science and technology

Easy Explanation

The article examines whether AI-detection tools can reliably determine if a piece of writing was generated using Artificial Intelligence. The debate gained attention after some winners of the Commonwealth Short Story Prize faced accusations of using AI-generated content. The controversy highlights a growing challenge: while AI writing tools are becoming common, it is often impossible to conclusively prove that a text was or was not assisted by AI.

Most AI-detection tools rely on **machine learning**, where algorithms are trained on large collections of human-written and AI-generated text. These systems look for statistical patterns such as repeated phrases, structured writing styles, common AI vocabulary, and predictable conclusions. However, these patterns are not foolproof because human writers can also use similar styles.

Experts caution that AI detectors are not completely reliable. They can generate **false positives** (human-written text wrongly labelled as AI-generated) and **false negatives** (AI-generated text passing as human-written). The problem becomes even more difficult when humans use AI only for editing or polishing their work rather than generating it entirely.

The article argues that instead of treating authorship as a simple AI-versus-human question, society needs greater transparency regarding how AI is used. Publishers, writers, and institutions may need clear guidelines about acceptable AI assistance while recognising the limitations of detection technologies.

Key Takeaways



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1. Growing Debate Over AI Authorship

- AI writing tools are increasingly used in creative and professional writing.
- Questions about originality and authorship are becoming more common.

2. How AI Detectors Work

- They use machine learning models trained on human and AI-written text.
- Detection is based on statistical patterns rather than certainty.

3. Common AI Writing Indicators

- Highly structured formatting and predictable conclusions.
- Repeated use of certain phrases, words, or writing styles.

4. AI Detection Is Not Perfect

- No detector can guarantee 100% accuracy.
- Human-written content may sometimes be wrongly flagged.

5. False Positives and False Negatives

- False positives label human work as AI-generated.
- False negatives fail to identify AI-generated content.

6. Challenges with Hybrid Content

- AI-assisted editing can make human-written text appear AI-generated.
- Distinguishing between partial assistance and full generation is difficult.

7. Need for Transparency and Guidelines

- Clear disclosure of AI use may become increasingly important.
- Publishers and institutions need policies for responsible AI usage.

Important Terms

Term	Meaning
Machine Learning (ML)	Branch of AI where systems learn patterns from data to make predictions or classifications.
AI Detector	Software designed to estimate whether text was generated by artificial intelligence.
False Positive	Situation where human-written content is incorrectly identified as AI-generated.
False Negative	Situation where AI-generated content is incorrectly classified as human-written.
Large Language Model (LLM)	AI system trained on vast amounts of text to generate human-like responses and content.





[Why energy tankers are using risky dark fleet ploy to cross hormuz-The Indian Express Explained Page](#)

Science and technology

Easy Explanation

The article explains why an increasing number of oil and gas tankers are **switching off their Automatic Identification System (AIS)** while crossing the **Strait of Hormuz**, one of the world's most important energy chokepoints. This practice, known as "**going dark**", makes ships difficult to track and is traditionally associated with vessels involved in sanctioned or illicit trade.

However, due to the ongoing U.S.-Iran conflict and heightened security risks in the region, even legitimate commercial energy tankers are increasingly adopting this strategy. Shipping companies fear that broadcasting their location could expose vessels to military threats, seizures, or attacks. As a result, many ships temporarily disable tracking systems while passing through the Strait.

The Strait of Hormuz is critical for global energy supplies, carrying a large share of the world's crude oil, LNG, and LPG exports. For India, the waterway is particularly important because a significant portion of its energy imports originates from Gulf countries and passes through this route.

While going dark may improve security from hostile actors, it also increases maritime risks. Ships become invisible to other vessels, raising the chances of collisions and reducing transparency in one of the world's busiest sea lanes.

Key Takeaways

1. What Is Dark Shipping?

- Ships switch off their AIS transponders to avoid being tracked.
- This makes vessel movements difficult to monitor.

2. AIS and Maritime Safety

- AIS helps ships identify and avoid each other.
- Disabling AIS increases the risk of maritime accidents.

3. Impact of the U.S.-Iran Conflict

- Rising tensions have increased security concerns in the Strait of Hormuz.
- Commercial vessels are adopting measures traditionally used by shadow fleets.

4. Growing Use Among Legitimate Operators

- Not only sanctioned vessels but also major Gulf energy companies are using dark transits.
- Operators from UAE, Qatar, Iraq, and Saudi Arabia are involved.

5. Importance of the Strait of Hormuz

- It is one of the world's most important energy chokepoints.
- Large volumes of crude oil, LNG, LPG, and petroleum products pass through it.

6. Risks of Reduced Transparency

- Dark shipping creates navigational hazards in crowded waters.
- It complicates monitoring, regulation, and emergency response efforts.

7. Significance for India

- Over 40% of India's crude oil imports pass through the Strait of Hormuz.
- Any disruption in the region can affect India's energy security and import costs.



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Important Terms

Term	Meaning
AIS (Automatic Identification System)	Tracking system used by ships to broadcast their identity, location, and movement.
Dark Shipping	Practice of switching off AIS transponders to avoid detection.
Strait of Hormuz	Strategic waterway connecting the Persian Gulf to the Gulf of Oman and Arabian Sea.
LNG (Liquefied Natural Gas)	Natural gas cooled into liquid form for easier transport.
Chokepoint	Narrow strategic route through which a large volume of trade or transport passes.

[For survivors of trafficking, SC plan focuses on consent, dignity - The Indian Express Explained Page](#)

Polity

Easy Explanation

The Supreme Court has introduced a **Victim Protection Plan** for survivors of human trafficking for commercial and sexual exploitation (CSE), stating that the absence of a proper legal framework was harming their fundamental rights. The Court clarified that the plan will remain in force until Parliament enacts a comprehensive law on the protection and rehabilitation of trafficking survivors.

The case originated from a petition filed by **Prajwala**, an anti-trafficking organization, which argued that trafficking victims were often treated as criminals instead of survivors. The Court agreed that trafficking is a grave violation of human dignity because it reduces human beings to objects for exploitation.

A major feature of the judgment is its emphasis on **consent and dignity**. The Court held that authorities must distinguish between trafficking victims and adults who voluntarily engage in sex work. It ruled that rehabilitation or placement in protective homes cannot be imposed without the person's free and informed consent. Magistrates must carefully assess each case instead of following a uniform approach.

The Victim Protection Plan also provides safeguards during rescue and rehabilitation processes, ensuring legal aid, medical care, counseling, privacy, and protection from mistreatment. The judgment reflects a rights-based approach that prioritizes dignity, autonomy, and rehabilitation over criminalization.

Key Takeaways

1. Supreme Court Introduced a Victim Protection Plan

- The plan fills the legal vacuum in protecting trafficking survivors.
- It will operate until Parliament enacts a dedicated law.

2. Origin of the Case



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- The petition was filed by Prajwala, an anti-trafficking organization.
- It challenged the treatment of trafficking victims as offenders rather than survivors.

3. Trafficking Violates Human Dignity

- The Court emphasized that dignity is an inherent human right.
- Human trafficking treats individuals as commodities for exploitation.

4. Right to Rehabilitation

- Survivors of trafficking have a constitutional right to rehabilitation.
- Rehabilitation must focus on recovery, reintegration, and protection.

5. Importance of Consent

- Rehabilitation cannot be imposed without free and informed consent.
- Victims' choices must be respected in decisions regarding custody and reintegration.

6. Distinction Between Trafficking and Voluntary Sex Work

- Magistrates must determine whether an adult is voluntarily engaged in sex work.
- A uniform approach may violate individual rights and dignity.

7. Safeguards During Rescue and Rehabilitation

- Victims cannot be treated as criminals or detained in lock-ups.
- They must receive legal aid, medical assistance, counseling, and privacy protection.

Important Terms

Term	Meaning
Human Trafficking	Recruitment, transportation, or exploitation of persons through coercion, force, or deception.
Commercial and Sexual Exploitation (CSE)	Exploitation of individuals for commercial gain through sexual activities.
Prajwala	Hyderabad-based anti-trafficking organization that filed the original petition.
Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act, 1956 (ITPA)	India's principal law dealing with trafficking and prostitution-related offences.
Victim Protection Plan	Supreme Court-mandated framework ensuring protection, dignity, consent, and rehabilitation of trafficking survivors.

[Policy is undoing what science built.that's a challenge for Cotton Productivity Mission-The Indian Express The Ideas Page](#)



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Easy Explanation

The article examines whether the government's newly launched **Cotton Productivity Mission** can revive India's cotton sector, which has experienced stagnation and decline over the last decade. It argues that India's cotton success story was largely driven by the introduction of **Bt Cotton** in 2002, which significantly increased yields, production, and exports through biotechnology.

Between 2002 and 2014, cotton production nearly tripled as farmers adopted genetically modified Bt cotton hybrids that protected crops from bollworm attacks. India became the world's largest cotton producer and a major exporter. However, according to the article, subsequent government policies, particularly price controls on cotton seeds and trait fees, discouraged private investment in biotechnology research and innovation.

As newer generations of genetically modified cotton technologies were not approved or commercialized, India gradually fell behind countries such as Brazil, China, and Australia in productivity. While these countries continued adopting advanced seed technologies, India's cotton yields stagnated and production declined.

The article argues that merely setting production targets under the Cotton Productivity Mission may not be enough. To achieve substantial productivity gains, India must address issues related to agricultural biotechnology, research investment, seed innovation, and regulatory policy. Otherwise, the mission may struggle to meet its ambitious goals.

Key Takeaways

1. Cotton Productivity Mission Launched

- The government approved the mission with an outlay of ₹5,659 crore.
- It aims to increase cotton productivity from 441 kg/ha to 755 kg/ha by 2031.

2. Bt Cotton Triggered a Production Boom

- Bt Cotton was approved for commercial cultivation in 2002.
- Cotton production and yields rose sharply over the following decade.

3. India Once Led Global Cotton Production

- India became the world's largest cotton producer and second-largest exporter.
- Productivity gains were driven largely by biotechnology adoption.

4. Seed Price Controls Altered Incentives

- Government interventions reduced seed prices and trait fees.
- The article argues this discouraged private-sector innovation and investment.

5. Technological Gap Has Widened

- Countries like Brazil, China, and Australia continue using advanced cotton technologies.
- India's cotton productivity now lags significantly behind these competitors.

6. Production Has Declined Since 2014

- Cotton output has stagnated or declined over the past decade.
- India has moved from being a net exporter toward increasing imports.

7. Future Depends on Innovation Policy

- Higher productivity requires research, biotechnology, and improved seed development.
- Policymakers must balance farmer affordability with incentives for innovation.

Important Terms



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Term	Meaning
Bt Cotton	Genetically modified cotton containing genes from <i>Bacillus thuringiensis</i> that provide resistance to bollworms.
GEAC (Genetic Engineering Appraisal Committee)	India's apex regulatory body for approval of genetically modified organisms.
Trait Fee	Royalty paid for the use of proprietary biotechnology traits in seeds.
Lint Yield	Quantity of usable cotton fibre produced per hectare.
Cotton Productivity Mission	Government initiative aimed at increasing cotton yields and strengthening the cotton sector by 2031.

[NFHS-6 data on child nutrition has sobering warnings-The Indian Express The Ideas Page](#)

Sociology

Easy Explanation

The latest **National Family Health Survey-6 (NFHS-6)** presents a mixed picture of child nutrition in India. On the positive side, **stunting** (children being too short for their age due to chronic undernutrition) has fallen significantly from 35.5% to 29.3%, indicating long-term improvements in child health and nutrition.

However, several other indicators remain worrying. **Wasting** (low weight for height), which reflects acute malnutrition, has barely improved, while nearly one-third of Indian children remain underweight. Some large states such as Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, and Jharkhand have actually recorded worsening nutrition indicators, suggesting that national averages hide significant regional disparities.

Another major concern is the decline in **exclusive breastfeeding** among infants below six months. Breastfeeding is one of the most cost-effective interventions for improving child survival and nutrition. The sharp decline in several states raises concerns about postnatal care and maternal support systems.

The survey also highlights poor dietary diversity among young children. Although there has been some improvement, a vast majority of children aged 6–23 months still do not receive an adequate diet. While gains in vaccination coverage are encouraging, the data suggest that India's fight against child malnutrition is far from over.

Key Takeaways

1. Stunting Has Declined Significantly

- National stunting levels fell from 35.5% to 29.3%.
- This indicates progress in reducing chronic undernutrition.

2. Severe Wasting Has Improved



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- Severe wasting declined from 7.7% to 5.2%.
- This could contribute to lower child mortality rates.

3. Overall Malnutrition Remains High

- Nearly one in five children is still wasted.
- Around one-third of children remain underweight.

4. Large Interstate Disparities Persist

- Kerala performs much better than states such as Bihar and Jharkhand.
- National averages conceal major regional inequalities.

5. Dietary Adequacy Is Still Low

- Only a small proportion of children receive an adequate diet.
- Nutritional diversity remains a major challenge.

6. Declining Breastfeeding Is a Serious Concern

- Exclusive breastfeeding rates have fallen nationally.
- The decline is particularly sharp in some high-burden states.

7. Vaccination Coverage Shows Success

- Full immunization coverage has increased.
- Rotavirus vaccine coverage has expanded significantly across the country.

Important Terms

Term	Meaning
NFHS (National Family Health Survey)	Large-scale survey providing data on health, nutrition, and demographic indicators in India.
Stunting	Low height-for-age caused by chronic undernutrition.
Wasting	Low weight-for-height indicating acute malnutrition.
Underweight	Low weight-for-age reflecting both chronic and acute undernutrition.
Exclusive Breastfeeding	Feeding infants only breast milk for the first six months of life without additional food or liquids.

[Amid global shocks, activate growth drivers within domestic control-The Indian Express The Ideas Page](#)

Economy



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Easy Explanation

The article argues that India's economic growth is likely to slow in the current fiscal year because of factors largely beyond its control, especially the **West Asia conflict**, rising crude oil prices, and the possibility of a weak monsoon due to **El Niño**. While India achieved a strong GDP growth rate of **7.7% in 2025-26**, the economic environment is becoming much more challenging.

Last year, India's economy benefited from several favorable factors: low crude oil prices, a normal monsoon, strong domestic demand, robust services exports, RBI rate cuts, tax relief measures, and government spending. These factors helped keep inflation low while supporting consumption and investment.

This year, however, the situation has changed. Higher oil prices are increasing production and transportation costs, while global trade disruptions and slowing growth in major economies may affect exports. A weak monsoon could also hurt agricultural production and push up food prices. As a result, both the RBI and economic agencies have lowered India's growth projections while raising inflation forecasts.

The article suggests that since external shocks cannot be fully controlled, India should focus on domestic growth drivers such as improving ease of doing business, accelerating reforms, boosting private investment, strengthening MSMEs, enhancing energy security, and utilizing opportunities from recently signed trade agreements.

Key Takeaways

1. Growth Outlook Has Weakened

- India's GDP growth is expected to slow from 7.7% in 2025-26.
- RBI and other agencies project growth around 6.6% this fiscal year.

2. West Asia Conflict Is a Major Risk

- The conflict has increased global uncertainty.
- Higher freight, insurance, and energy costs are affecting economies worldwide.

3. Rising Crude Oil Prices

- Oil prices are expected to average \$90–95 per barrel.
- Higher energy costs can increase inflation and reduce economic growth.

4. Monsoon and El Niño Concerns

- A below-normal monsoon could affect agricultural output.
- Food inflation risks may increase if rainfall remains deficient.

5. Inflationary Pressures Are Rising

- Wholesale and consumer prices are expected to increase.
- Higher fuel and food prices may push inflation upward.

6. Domestic Demand Remains a Strength

- Private consumption and investment were major growth drivers last year.
- Strong corporate balance sheets provide some resilience.

7. Focus on Domestic Reforms

- Improving ease of doing business can attract investment.
- Structural reforms and trade agreements can support long-term growth.

Important Terms



| Click to Connect Now.



Term	Meaning
GDP (Gross Domestic Product)	Total value of goods and services produced within a country during a specific period.
El Niño	Climate phenomenon that can weaken the Indian monsoon and affect agriculture.
CPI (Consumer Price Index)	Measure of retail inflation based on changes in consumer prices.
WPI (Wholesale Price Index)	Measure of inflation at the wholesale level before goods reach consumers.
Private Capex (Capital Expenditure)	Investment by private companies in productive assets such as factories, machinery, and infrastructure.

[Homo erectus fossil yields secrets long thought to be beyond genetics-The Hindu Science](#)

Science and technology

Easy Explanation

For a long time, scientists believed human evolution happened in a straight line, with one human species replacing another. However, fossil discoveries and later genetic studies showed that several human species lived at the same time and even interbred with one another.

A major breakthrough came when scientists sequenced the genomes of **Neanderthals** and **Denisovans**, revealing that modern humans still carry portions of their DNA. However, obtaining genetic information from much older species such as **Homo erectus** has been extremely difficult because DNA degrades rapidly after death.

A recent study has now extracted ancient proteins from the tooth enamel of **Homo erectus** fossils found in China and dated to about **4 lakh years ago**. Instead of recovering DNA directly, researchers used a technique called **acid etching** to obtain proteins preserved inside the enamel. Since proteins are produced based on DNA instructions, they can provide clues about genetic relationships.

The study found a unique protein variant not seen in any other human species and another variant shared with **Denisovans**, suggesting possible interbreeding or genetic connections between the two groups. While the evidence is not yet conclusive because it comes from proteins rather than a complete genome, the study marks the first successful recovery of meaningful molecular data from **Homo erectus** and opens a new chapter in understanding human evolution.

Key Takeaways

1. Human Evolution Was Not Linear

- Different human species coexisted rather than replacing one another sequentially.
- Fossil and genetic evidence have transformed our understanding of evolution.

2. Modern Humans Carry DNA of Extinct Relatives

- Most humans possess 1–2% Neanderthal DNA.



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- Some populations in Oceania and Southeast Asia carry 3–6% Denisovan DNA.

3. Homo erectus Has Long Remained a Mystery

- Homo erectus emerged over 2 million years ago.
- Its DNA had never been successfully recovered due to extreme age and degradation.

4. Ancient DNA Is Difficult to Preserve

- DNA breaks down quickly after death because of enzymes, microbes, heat, water, and radiation.
- Only fossils preserved under exceptional conditions retain usable DNA.

5. Scientists Used Tooth Enamel Proteins

- Researchers extracted proteins from Homo erectus teeth instead of DNA.
- Tooth enamel preserves proteins for much longer periods than DNA.

6. Evidence Suggests a Link with Denisovans

- Researchers found a protein variant shared between Homo erectus and Denisovans.
- This may indicate ancient interbreeding or genetic connections.

7. A New Era in Human Evolution Research

- This is the first molecular evidence recovered from Homo erectus fossils.
- The study demonstrates that proteins can reveal evolutionary relationships even when DNA is unavailable.

Important Terms

Term	Meaning
Homo erectus	An extinct human ancestor that lived from about 2 million to 1 lakh years ago and was among the first humans to spread across Africa and Asia.
Neanderthals	Closest extinct relatives of modern humans that interbred with Homo sapiens.
Denisovans	Extinct human group identified mainly through genetic evidence from Siberia and Asia.
Radiometric Dating	Scientific method used to determine the age of fossils and rocks through radioactive decay.
Acid Etching	Technique that dissolves a tiny amount of tooth enamel to recover ancient proteins without damaging the fossil significantly.

[The Ordinance question before the SC-The Hindu Text and Context](#)

Polity



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Easy Explanation

This article raises concerns about the recent increase in the strength of the Supreme Court from **34 to 38 judges** through a Presidential **Ordinance** rather than a law passed by Parliament. Five new judges were appointed, but three of these appointments were made to positions that exist only because of the Ordinance.

The author argues that while the judges themselves are fully qualified, the issue is constitutional principle. Under **Article 123**, an Ordinance is only a temporary law. It can be withdrawn by the President, rejected by Parliament, or automatically lapse after six weeks of Parliament reconvening if not approved. This creates uncertainty about the validity of the additional judicial posts.

The article recalls earlier Supreme Court judgments that criticized excessive use of Ordinances and emphasized judicial independence. It questions whether a court can remain fully independent when some of its positions depend on the executive's temporary ordinance-making power and Parliament's future approval.

The concern is not that the government will necessarily misuse this power, but that judicial independence should not even appear to depend on executive goodwill. The larger constitutional question is whether creating Supreme Court judgeships through a temporary Ordinance is compatible with the principle of an independent judiciary.

Key Takeaways

1. Supreme Court Strength Increased Through Ordinance

- The sanctioned strength of the Supreme Court was raised from 34 to 38 judges.
- The increase was done through a Presidential Ordinance rather than a Parliamentary law.

2. Three Judges Occupy Ordinance-Created Posts

- Two appointments filled existing vacancies.
- Three appointments depend entirely on the continued validity of the Ordinance.

3. Article 123 Gives Temporary Law-Making Power

- Ordinances have the same force as laws temporarily.
- They lapse if Parliament does not approve them within the prescribed period.

4. Judicial Independence Is the Core Concern

- Independence of the judiciary is part of the Constitution's Basic Structure.
- Judges should not appear dependent on executive decisions for their positions.

5. Supreme Court Earlier Criticised Ordinance Misuse

- In **D.C. Wadhwa (1986)**, repeated Ordinances were termed a fraud on the Constitution.
- In **Krishna Kumar Singh (2017)**, Ordinance power was held not to be a parallel source of legislation.

6. Possible Constitutional Uncertainty

- If Parliament does not replace the Ordinance with a law, questions may arise regarding Ordinance-created posts.
- Such a situation has never been fully tested before the courts.

7. Larger Debate Is About Institutional Credibility

- The article argues that judicial independence requires both reality and appearance of independence.
- Courts should avoid situations where their functioning appears dependent on executive or legislative goodwill.

Important Terms

Term

Meaning



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Ordinance	Temporary law issued by the President under Article 123 when Parliament is not in session.
Article 123	Constitutional provision empowering the President to promulgate Ordinances.
Basic Structure Doctrine	Principle that certain core features of the Constitution, such as judicial independence, cannot be altered.
Judicial Independence	Freedom of courts from influence or control by the executive or legislature.
De Facto Doctrine	Legal principle that actions taken by a person acting in official capacity remain valid even if defects later emerge in the appointment.

[How ICMR is rewiring the health ecosystem-The Hindu Editorial](#)

Science

Easy Explanation

This article explains how the **Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR)** is transforming India's health ecosystem to meet the goals of **Viksit Bharat 2047**. The focus is shifting from merely treating diseases to building a health system that is preventive, technology-driven, research-oriented, and accessible to all.

After the COVID-19 pandemic, ICMR initiated major reforms by restructuring its institutions, promoting interdisciplinary research, and aligning scientific work with national health priorities. New regional research institutes are being established across the country to work directly with State and district health systems so that research findings can be quickly translated into policy and practice.

Technology is playing a major role in this transformation. Artificial Intelligence (AI) is being used for disease diagnosis, health surveillance, nutritional monitoring, and screening diseases such as tuberculosis and diabetic retinopathy. Initiatives like **i-Drone** are helping deliver vaccines and medical supplies to remote regions.

ICMR is also promoting innovation through support for medical devices, diagnostics, vaccines, therapeutics, and indigenous technologies. Through programmes such as **MedTechMitra**, **Patent Mitra**, and the **National Health Research Programme (NHRP)**, research is being linked directly to commercialization and public health outcomes.

Overall, the reforms aim to create a resilient, innovation-driven healthcare system that supports universal healthcare access and improves health outcomes across India.

Key Takeaways

1. ICMR Is Reorienting India's Health System

- Focus is shifting from disease treatment to prevention, innovation, and preparedness.
- Reforms are aligned with the vision of Viksit Bharat 2047.

2. Institutional Restructuring Is Underway

- Several ICMR institutes have expanded their mandates.
- New focus areas include digital health, data science, child health, and women's health.



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3. Regional Research Networks Are Being Created

- New National Institutes of Health Research are being established across India.
- They will conduct operational research linked directly to local health challenges.

4. AI Is Transforming Healthcare Delivery

- AI tools are helping diagnose tuberculosis and diabetic retinopathy.
- AI-based nutritional monitoring is improving programme implementation.

5. Technology Is Bridging Healthcare Gaps

- The i-Drone initiative delivers vaccines and critical medical supplies.
- Technology is improving healthcare access in remote and underserved regions.

6. Research Is Being Linked to Innovation

- Programmes such as MedTechMitra and Patent Mitra support commercialization.
- Publicly funded research is being converted into affordable healthcare technologies.

7. Focus on Universal and Evidence-Based Healthcare

- Initiatives such as the India Hypertension Control Initiative are improving public health outcomes.
- Reforms support the goals of National Health Policy 2017, including universal healthcare access.

Important Terms

Term	Meaning
ICMR	Indian Council of Medical Research, India's apex biomedical research organization.
NHRP (National Health Research Programme)	Programme identifying priority areas for health research such as TB, AMR, mental health, and nutrition.
Artificial Intelligence (AI)	Technology that enables machines to perform tasks requiring human intelligence, such as diagnosis and data analysis.
i-Drone Initiative	Programme using drones to deliver vaccines, medicines, and medical supplies to remote areas.
Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR)	The ability of microbes to resist medicines, making infections harder to treat.

[From borderland to India's strategic resource frontier-The Hindu Editorial](#)

Geography

Easy Explanation



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This article discusses how India's Northeast is increasingly being viewed not just as a border region but as a **strategic resource frontier** because of its potential reserves of critical minerals such as **lithium, cobalt, nickel, graphite, vanadium, and rare earth elements**. These minerals are essential for batteries, electric vehicles, renewable energy technologies, semiconductors, and defence systems.

The Ministry of Mines has recently highlighted States like **Manipur, Arunachal Pradesh, Meghalaya, and Mizoram** as resource-rich regions. The Geological Survey of India (GSI) has expanded exploration activities across the Northeast to reduce India's dependence on imported critical minerals.

The article argues that this represents a shift in national thinking. Earlier, the Northeast was largely discussed in terms of border security, insurgency, connectivity, and geopolitics. Now, resource security and mineral wealth are becoming equally important.

However, the article cautions that the Northeast is not an empty "frontier" waiting for development. The region has complex social, cultural, ecological, and political realities. Land is closely linked to identity, customary rights, and community institutions. Therefore, mineral extraction projects must ensure local participation, environmental protection, and equitable benefits. Otherwise, resource development may create new tensions instead of promoting growth.

Key Takeaways

1. Northeast Emerging as a Critical Mineral Hub

- The region possesses potential reserves of lithium, cobalt, nickel, graphite, and rare earth elements.
- These minerals are crucial for clean energy and advanced technologies.

2. India's Strategic Mineral Push

- India seeks to reduce dependence on imported critical minerals.
- Exploration activities have expanded significantly in Northeastern States.

3. Shift from Border Security to Resource Security

- Earlier discussions focused on insurgency and territorial security.
- Resource wealth is now becoming part of the strategic narrative.

4. Critical Minerals Have Geopolitical Importance

- They are essential for batteries, semiconductors, EVs, defence systems, and renewable energy.
- Countries worldwide are competing for secure mineral supply chains.

5. The 'Frontier' Narrative Has Implications

- The term frontier often implies spaces awaiting development or extraction.
- Such narratives may overlook existing communities and institutions.

6. Land Issues Are Highly Sensitive

- Land in the Northeast is linked to identity, customary rights, and local governance.
- Mining projects can trigger concerns over ownership and representation.

7. Inclusive Development Is Essential

- Resource extraction should be accompanied by local participation and benefit-sharing.
- Sustainable development requires balancing economic growth with social and ecological concerns.

Important Terms

Term

Meaning



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Critical Minerals	Minerals essential for modern technologies, energy transition, and national security.
Rare Earth Elements (REEs)	A group of strategic minerals used in electronics, renewable energy, and defence equipment.
Resource Security	Ensuring reliable access to important natural resources for economic and strategic needs.
Geological Survey of India (GSI)	India's premier agency responsible for geological mapping and mineral exploration.
Supply Chain Security	Protection of access to critical raw materials and products from disruptions.

9th June 2026

[The boost Centre's solar power schemes need-The Indian Express Explained Page](#)

Economy

Easy Explanation

India is rapidly expanding renewable energy, especially solar power. Solar energy now contributes nearly 30% of the country's installed electricity capacity, and India was the second-largest solar capacity adder in the world after China in 2025.

To accelerate solar adoption, the government is implementing two major schemes:

- **PM Surya Ghar Yojana** for households through rooftop solar installations.
- **PM-KUSUM** for farmers through solar pumps and decentralized solar power generation.

Together, these schemes have an allocation of about ₹95,000 crore and aim to promote decentralized solar energy generation. Decentralized solar is important because it reduces pressure on the electricity grid, minimizes transmission losses, and helps consumers generate their own power.

However, the performance of both schemes has been uneven. Against a target of 40 GW of decentralized solar capacity, only about 13 GW has been achieved so far. While states like Gujarat, Maharashtra, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, and Kerala have performed well, several states such as Punjab, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Bihar, and West Bengal have lagged behind.

One major reason is the availability of free or highly subsidized electricity. When consumers already receive free or cheap electricity, they have little incentive to invest in rooftop solar systems or solar pumps despite government subsidies.

The article argues that instead of spending large amounts every year on power subsidies, governments should provide one-time support for solar adoption. This would reduce future subsidy burdens and help India meet its clean energy goals.

The issue has become more important because rising temperatures, frequent heatwaves, and increasing electricity demand are putting pressure on India's power system. Decentralized solar can help address these challenges while supporting energy security and climate goals.

Key Takeaways



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1. Solar power is becoming a major energy source

- Solar contributes nearly 30% of India's installed power capacity.
- India is among the world's fastest-growing solar energy markets.

2. PM Surya Ghar promotes rooftop solar

- Targets installation of rooftop solar in one crore households.
- Provides subsidies and free electricity benefits to households.

3. PM-KUSUM focuses on farmers

- Supports solar irrigation pumps and solar plants.
- Helps farmers reduce electricity and diesel expenses.
- Allows farmers to earn income by selling surplus power.

4. Progress remains below expectations

- Only about 13 GW capacity has been installed against a 40 GW target.
- Several targets under both schemes remain unmet.

5. Power subsidies reduce adoption incentives

- Free or subsidized electricity discourages investment in solar systems.
- States with large power subsidies often show lower participation.

6. Better-performing states use additional incentives

- Gujarat, Maharashtra, Rajasthan, UP and Kerala have achieved higher adoption.
- Additional state-level support helps reduce upfront installation costs.

7. Decentralized solar is vital for future energy security

- Helps meet rising electricity demand.
- Reduces dependence on conventional power sources.
- Supports climate resilience during heatwaves and peak demand periods.

Important Terms

Term	Meaning
Decentralized Solar Power	Electricity generated near the point of consumption, such as rooftop solar systems
PM Surya Ghar Yojana	Central scheme promoting rooftop solar installations in households
PM-KUSUM	Scheme supporting solar energy adoption in agriculture through pumps and solar plants
Renewable Energy	Energy generated from naturally replenishing sources like solar, wind and hydro





• STATUS OF FLAGSHIP PROGRAMMES



PM Suryaghar: Better performers

State/UT	Installations	Households connected	Power subsidy bill*
Gujarat	681,180	977,754	9,277
Maharashtra	604,522	942,378	23,149
UP	562,656	577,103	19,095
Kerala	252,803	258,959	382
Rajasthan	215,842	223,066	30,597

PM Suryaghar: Underperformers

State/UT	Installations	Households connected	Power subsidy bill*
West Bengal	1,695	1,758	1,868
Punjab	14,470	16,641	20,693
Karnataka	19,793	30,395	27,725
Bihar	20,272	20,905	15,405
Tamil Nadu	72,988	85,743	15,701

• PM Suryaghar Yojana

Target	Achieved
Connection to 1 crore households	40.52 lakh
30 GW of installed capacity	12 GW

(AS ON MAY 31, 2026). SCHEME RUNS TILL MARCH 2027 SOURCE: PM SURYAGHAR PORTAL

• PM-KUSUM

Target	Achieved
10 GW of decentralised solar capacity	1.2 GW
14 lakh standalone solar water pumps	10.9 lakh
Solarisation of 2.5 lakh grid pumps	15,000

SOURCE: PM-KUSUM PORTAL

*IN 2025-26 (IN CR)

credit-The Indian Express Explained Page

[Pride Month:Recalling India's first 'Friendship Walk' ,its impact-The Indian Express Explained Page](#)

Sociology

Easy Explanation

June is celebrated globally as **Pride Month**, commemorating the struggle and achievements of the LGBTQ+ community. Its origins lie in the **Stonewall Uprising of 1969** in New York, where members of the queer community resisted police harassment, giving momentum to the modern LGBTQ+ rights movement.

In India, a landmark moment came on **July 2, 1999**, when Kolkata hosted the country's first public LGBTQ+ march, known as the **"Friendship Walk"**. Unlike today's large Pride Parades, only around 15 people participated. However, the event marked the beginning of visible LGBTQ+ activism in India.

The walk was organized during a period when discussions around sexuality were limited and often surrounded by prejudice. The release of the film *Fire* (1998), depicting a same-sex relationship, had triggered protests and public debates on homosexuality. Against this backdrop, activists sought to build awareness and foster dialogue.

The term "Friendship Walk" was deliberately chosen. Organizers wanted to emphasize inclusivity, bridge-building, and social acceptance rather than confrontation. Inspired partly by the legacy of the Dandi March and international LGBTQ+ movements, participants visited NGOs, public institutions, and government offices to raise awareness about LGBTQ+ rights and HIV/AIDS issues.



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The walk's significance extended beyond its small size. It encouraged many individuals to openly identify with the community and inspired future Pride events across India. Over the years, Pride Parades have grown in scale and visibility, involving diverse groups including women, transgender persons, and gender-nonconforming individuals.

However, activists argue that while legal progress has been made—especially after the decriminalization of homosexuality through the 2018 Navtej Singh Johar judgment—many challenges remain. Issues such as discrimination, restrictions on blood donation, lack of marriage equality, and recognition of gender identity continue to affect LGBTQ+ persons.

The article highlights that the spirit of the Friendship Walk—building alliances and fostering broader social support—remains relevant even today.

Key Takeaways

1. Origin of Pride Month

- Pride Month traces its roots to the 1969 Stonewall Uprising in New York.
- It symbolizes resistance against discrimination and the struggle for LGBTQ+ rights.

2. India's First LGBTQ+ Public March

- The Friendship Walk was held in Kolkata on July 2, 1999.
- It is regarded as the precursor to modern Pride Parades in India.

3. Influence of Social and Cultural Movements

- The event occurred amid debates triggered by the film *Fire*.
- Activists sought to counter misinformation and social prejudice.

4. Focus on Dialogue and Inclusion

- The name "Friendship Walk" emphasized social acceptance and bridge-building.
- Participants engaged with institutions, NGOs, and government offices.

5. Long-Term Impact

- Though small in scale, the walk inspired future LGBTQ+ activism.
- It encouraged greater public visibility and community confidence.

6. Progress and Continuing Challenges

- Homosexuality has been decriminalized in India.
- However, issues such as discrimination, blood donation restrictions, and recognition of rights persist.

7. Importance of Allies

- Activists stress the need for broader societal support.
- Building alliances remains essential for achieving equality and inclusion.

Important Terms

Term	Meaning
Pride Month	Annual celebration of LGBTQ+ identity, rights, and awareness held in June





Stonewall Uprising	1969 protest against police raids on LGBTQ+ people in New York, considered the beginning of the modern LGBTQ+ rights movement
LGBTQ+	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer and other gender/sexual identities
Friendship Walk	India's first public LGBTQ+ march held in Kolkata in 1999
Intersectionality	The idea that individuals can face multiple forms of discrimination based on caste, class, gender, disability, etc.

[Sewage in Posh Delhi Colony Taps: How Urban Water Systems Fail, What to Change — The Indian Express Explained Page](#)

Governance

Easy Explanation

A recent incident in Delhi's upscale **Gulmohar Park** exposed a major urban governance problem when residents received **sewage-contaminated drinking water** through household taps. Several people fell ill and had to rely on bottled water and tankers. Similar incidents have occurred in other Indian cities, including Indore, where contamination was linked to deaths.

The problem arises because drinking water and sewage pipelines often run close to each other. If water supply pipes develop cracks, corrosion, or leaks, sewage can enter them, especially when water pressure drops during supply interruptions. This makes contamination a constant risk in cities with aging infrastructure.

Experts point out that contamination can never be completely eliminated; it can only be managed effectively. Safe drinking water requires proper management of both water supply systems and sewage networks.

A major challenge is that most Indian cities still lack complete digital maps of underground water and sewer networks. While field workers often know local conditions, their practical knowledge is not always integrated into planning and decision-making.

The sewage problem is even more complicated. Many urban areas lack proper sewer connections. More than half of India's urban population depends on septic tanks and pits. Wastewater from these systems often ends up flowing into open drains and water channels, increasing contamination risks.

Unauthorized colonies, slums, and urban villages create additional challenges because infrastructure development is restricted or technically difficult. Moreover, multiple government agencies often handle different parts of water and sanitation management, leading to poor coordination.

The article argues that India already has standards defining safe drinking water and sewage treatment. However, there is a lack of enforceable institutional rules governing how urban agencies should actually deliver these services. Therefore, improving water safety requires long-term investments, stronger governance, better coordination, and gradual infrastructure upgrades rather than one-time policy announcements.

Key Takeaways

1. Sewage Contamination Remains a Persistent Urban Risk

- Contaminated drinking water incidents occur due to leakage between water and sewer pipelines.
- Aging and damaged infrastructure increases vulnerability.



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2. Intermittent Water Supply Creates Additional Problems

- Low pressure during supply interruptions allows contaminants to enter pipelines.
- Continuous 24x7 water supply is technically safer but requires major investments.

3. Poor Mapping of Underground Infrastructure

- Most cities lack complete digital maps of water and sewage networks.
- This makes maintenance and risk management difficult.

4. Sewage Management Is a Bigger Challenge

- More than half of urban residents lack access to organized sewer networks.
- Septic tanks and pits often discharge untreated wastewater into drains.

5. Urban Informal Settlements Face Greater Difficulties

- Slums, unauthorized colonies, and urban villages have limited infrastructure access.
- Narrow and unplanned layouts complicate service delivery.

6. Governance and Coordination Gaps Exist

- Multiple agencies manage different parts of water and sanitation systems.
- Lack of coordination weakens effective service delivery.

7. Long-Term Reform Is Essential

- Safe water cannot be ensured through a single regulation or project.
- Cities need phased infrastructure improvements, better governance, and stronger institutional frameworks.

Important Terms

Term	Meaning
Intermittent Water Supply	Water supplied only during certain hours instead of continuously
Sewage Contamination	Mixing of wastewater with drinking water, making it unsafe
Septic Tank	Underground tank used for treating household wastewater where sewer connections are unavailable
Stormwater Drain	Drainage system designed to carry rainwater away from urban areas
Urban Governance	Management of city services such as water supply, sanitation, roads, and public utilities





Easy Explanation

The **National Family Health Survey (NFHS-6)** is India's most important health and demographic survey. Conducted during **2023–24**, it collected information from nearly **6.8 lakh households** across all States and Union Territories except Manipur.

The latest survey shows some encouraging improvements. Child stunting has declined, institutional deliveries have increased, more women are using the Internet, and more mothers are receiving antenatal care during pregnancy. However, several worrying trends have also emerged, including declining exclusive breastfeeding and lower use of modern contraceptives.

A major controversy surrounding NFHS-6 is that it contains **fewer indicators** than NFHS-5. While NFHS-5 reported **131 indicators**, NFHS-6 reports only **101 indicators**, meaning 43 indicators were removed and only 13 new ones added.

Among the most important deleted indicators are **anaemia levels, infant mortality, child mortality, sex ratio at birth, sanitation access, and clean cooking fuel usage**. These indicators are crucial for assessing public health, gender equality, and welfare schemes.

The government argues that some indicators will now be measured through separate specialised surveys. For example, anaemia data will come from the **Diet and Biomarkers Survey (DBS)** conducted by the National Institute of Nutrition, which uses more accurate venous blood testing instead of the finger-prick method used in NFHS.

NFHS-6 also introduces new themes such as digital literacy, self-help group participation, direct benefit transfers, financial transactions, and Hepatitis-B and Hepatitis-C testing.

While improvements in nutrition and maternal health are welcome, experts worry that removing several long-running indicators creates gaps in national data and makes it harder to monitor government programmes and social development trends over time.

Key Takeaways

1. NFHS-6 Reports Both Progress and Concerns

- Improvements in child nutrition, antenatal care, institutional deliveries, and women's Internet use.
- Declines seen in exclusive breastfeeding and modern contraceptive usage.

2. Significant Reduction in Indicators

- NFHS-6 reports 101 indicators compared to 131 in NFHS-5.
- 43 indicators removed and only 13 new indicators added.

3. Anaemia Data Removed

- Anaemia was one of India's most serious public health concerns.
- It will now be measured through the Diet and Biomarkers Survey using venous blood samples.

4. Important Health Indicators Missing

- Infant mortality, child mortality, and neonatal mortality indicators have been removed.
- These are now expected to be tracked through the Sample Registration System (SRS).

5. Gender and Social Indicators Reduced

- Sex ratio at birth and overall sex ratio are absent.
- Cancer screening indicators introduced in NFHS-5 have also been dropped.

6. New Areas Added

- Digital literacy, direct benefit transfers, financial inclusion, and self-help group membership included.
- Hepatitis-B and Hepatitis-C testing added for better disease surveillance.





7. Data Gaps Could Affect Policy Making

- NFHS provided district-level and socio-economic breakdowns unavailable in many other surveys.
- Missing indicators may make monitoring welfare schemes and social outcomes more difficult.

Important Terms

Term	Meaning
NFHS	National Family Health Survey, India's largest health and demographic survey
Anaemia	Condition caused by low haemoglobin levels, leading to reduced oxygen supply in the body
Stunting	Low height-for-age indicating chronic malnutrition in children
Exclusive Breastfeeding	Feeding infants only breast milk for the first six months of life
Sample Registration System (SRS)	India's demographic survey system used for mortality and birth statistics

[Why Census 2027 matters for development, democracy and representation-The Hindu Text and Context](#)

Sociology

Easy Explanation

India has begun the process of **Census 2027**, the country's largest population survey and the first Census in 15 years. Normally conducted every 10 years, the Census was delayed due to the COVID-19 pandemic and later the Lok Sabha elections.

The Census is important because it provides the most comprehensive database about India's population, households, education levels, migration patterns, employment, caste composition, housing conditions, and access to public services. Policymakers, governments, businesses, and researchers depend on Census data for planning and decision-making.

The first phase of Census 2027 collects information on households, amenities, and assets. The second phase will gather demographic and socio-economic details such as education, migration, fertility, and caste data.

One of the most significant aspects of Census 2027 is the inclusion of **caste enumeration**, a long-debated political and social issue. The Census data will influence future discussions on reservation policies, social justice measures, and welfare targeting.

The Census also has major implications for democracy. Delimitation of constituencies, allocation of seats in legislatures, and implementation of the Women's Reservation law will depend on Census figures. Therefore, the exercise directly affects political representation.

Beyond politics, Census data guides the distribution of resources such as food, housing, healthcare, education, drinking water, and welfare benefits. It also influences Finance Commission recommendations regarding fund allocation to States and local bodies.



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For the first time, Census 2027 includes **digital self-enumeration**, allowing citizens to submit information online. At the same time, traditional door-to-door enumeration continues to ensure inclusion. The article argues that every citizen should actively participate because being counted is directly linked to development, representation, and access to public services.

Key Takeaways

1. Census 2027 Is India's First Census in 15 Years

- The exercise was delayed due to COVID-19 and elections.
- It updates demographic data last collected in 2011.

2. Foundation for Development Planning

- Census data helps governments design welfare schemes and public services.
- Accurate population data improves targeted delivery of benefits.

3. Critical for Democratic Representation

- Future delimitation of constituencies will depend on Census figures.
- Women's Reservation implementation is also linked to Census-based delimitation.

4. Caste Enumeration Is a Major Feature

- Census 2027 will collect caste data.
- Findings may influence debates on reservations, social justice, and welfare policies.

5. Resource Allocation Depends on Census Data

- Finance Commission transfers and local body funding rely on population statistics.
- States use Census data for planning infrastructure and services.

6. Digital Census Introduced

- Citizens can participate through online self-enumeration.
- Traditional door-to-door surveys ensure wider coverage and inclusion.

7. Inclusion Is the Core Objective

- The success of Census depends on ensuring no individual or community is left out.
- Accurate counting strengthens both development outcomes and democratic legitimacy.

Important Terms

Term	Meaning
Census	Official nationwide count collecting demographic, social and economic information
Delimitation	Redrawing electoral constituency boundaries based on population changes
Self-Enumeration	Process through which citizens can submit Census information online themselves





Finance Commission Constitutional body that recommends distribution of financial resources between Centre and States

Demographic Data Statistical information about population characteristics such as age, sex, education and occupation

'Amplifying' random numbers brings a breakthrough in digital security-The Hindu Science

Science and technology

Easy Explanation

Modern digital security depends heavily on **random numbers**. These random numbers are used to generate cryptographic keys, passwords, encryption systems, online banking security, blockchain protocols, and military communications. The more random a number is, the harder it becomes for hackers to predict it.

However, creating truly random numbers is surprisingly difficult. Most random number generators produce numbers with tiny biases. For example, if a coin lands heads 51% of the time instead of 50%, it is not perfectly random. Even a small bias can make encryption systems more predictable and vulnerable to sophisticated attacks.

For decades, computer scientists believed that a weakly random source could never be converted into perfectly random numbers using ordinary computers. This limitation is known as the **Santha-Vazirani limit**, proposed in 1986.

Researchers at ETH Zürich have now demonstrated a major breakthrough using **quantum physics**. Their study, published in *Nature*, showed that weakly random numbers can be transformed into certifiably perfect randomness through a process called **randomness amplification**.

The experiment used a phenomenon known as **quantum entanglement**, where two particles become linked in such a way that measuring one instantly affects the other, regardless of distance. Using a **Bell Test**, scientists confirmed that the outcomes were genuinely unpredictable and not predetermined.

The researchers combined billions of weakly random bits with billions of quantum-generated bits using a mathematical tool called a **two-source extractor**. This process removed biases and produced highly reliable random numbers.

The significance of the breakthrough is not merely generating random numbers. It proves that quantum mechanics can perform a task that classical physics and classical computers cannot. This is considered a clear example of **quantum advantage**.

Although the system is currently slow and expensive compared to commercial random-number generators, it establishes a new foundation for ultra-secure digital systems and future cryptographic applications.

Key Takeaways

1. Randomness Is the Foundation of Digital Security

- Encryption, passwords, banking systems, and blockchain technologies rely on random numbers.
- Predictable randomness can weaken security systems.

2. Classical Computers Have a Limitation

- The Santha-Vazirani theorem showed that classical computers cannot convert weak randomness into perfect randomness.
- Small biases remain even after processing.

3. Quantum Physics Offers a Solution

- Quantum measurements create genuinely new information.
- Outcomes cannot be predicted beforehand, making them a source of true randomness.



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4. Bell Test Was Central to the Experiment

- Scientists used entangled particles placed 30 metres apart.
- A Bell violation score above 2 proved that quantum effects were involved.

5. Randomness Amplification Was Successfully Demonstrated

- Billions of weakly random bits were combined with quantum-generated bits.
- Mathematical extraction techniques removed biases and produced certified random outputs.

6. Device-Independent Security Is a Major Achievement

- Users do not need to trust the hardware manufacturer.
- Randomness can be verified through physical principles themselves.

7. Practical Use Is Still Some Distance Away

- Current output is much slower than commercial random-number generators.
- The breakthrough is mainly scientific but could shape future cryptography and public randomness services.

Important Terms

Term	Meaning
Randomness Amplification	Process of converting weak randomness into highly reliable randomness using quantum methods
Quantum Entanglement	Quantum phenomenon where particles remain interconnected regardless of distance
Bell Test	Experiment used to verify quantum entanglement and rule out classical explanations
Santha-Vazirani Limit	Theoretical limit stating classical systems cannot create perfect randomness from weak randomness
Two-Source Extractor	Mathematical tool that combines two independent random sources to eliminate biases

[New mustard hybrids need diverse farming plans-The Hindu Science](#)

Science and technology



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Mustard is the most vital crop to meet India's deficit of edible oils. FILE PHOTO

credit-The Hindu Science

Easy Explanation

India is preparing for the large-scale cultivation of **IMI-resistant mustard hybrids** during the **2026–27 rabi season**. These new mustard varieties have been developed to tackle a major agricultural problem — **Orobanche (Phelipanche)**, a parasitic weed that severely reduces mustard yields.

Mustard is India's most important oilseed crop and plays a crucial role in reducing dependence on imported edible oils. Despite this, India continues to import around **16 million tonnes of edible oils**, costing nearly **₹1.6 lakh crore annually**. One major reason for lower domestic production is the damage caused by Orobanche, which attaches itself to mustard roots and steals water and nutrients from the host plant.

The newly developed mustard hybrids are **not genetically modified (GM) crops**. Instead, they were developed through **mutation breeding**, where naturally occurring genetic mutations are selected and bred into crop varieties.

These hybrids contain a mutation in the **Acetolactate Synthase (ALS)** enzyme. Normally, IMI (Imidazolinone) herbicides kill plants by blocking this enzyme. However, the mutated ALS enzyme in these mustard plants remains unaffected, allowing farmers to spray IMI herbicides across the field. The herbicide kills weeds, including Orobanche, while leaving the mustard crop unharmed.

Farmers welcome this technology because it reduces dependence on manual weeding, especially during labour shortages. It also offers an effective way to control a weed that grows underground and is difficult to remove manually.

However, scientists warn that over-reliance on a single herbicide could create a new problem. Weeds may gradually evolve resistance to the herbicide, making it ineffective over time. Therefore, experts argue that IMI-resistant mustard should be used as part of an **Integrated Weed Management (IWM)** strategy involving crop rotation, multiple herbicides, and manual weed removal.

The success of these hybrids will depend not only on the technology itself but also on how responsibly it is used in the long term.

Key Takeaways

1. IMI-Resistant Mustard Hybrids Are Being Introduced

- Large-scale cultivation will begin during the 2026–27 rabi season.
- Designed primarily to control Orobanche, a parasitic weed.

2. Mustard Is Critical for India's Edible Oil Security

- India imports large quantities of edible oils every year.
- Higher mustard productivity can help reduce import dependence.



3. Hybrids Are Developed Through Mutation Breeding

- These are not genetically modified (GM) crops.
- Scientists selected a naturally occurring beneficial mutation.

4. ALS Enzyme Is the Key Scientific Basis

- Mutation makes the ALS enzyme resistant to IMI herbicides.
- Farmers can spray herbicides without damaging the mustard crop.

5. Effective Against Orobanche Weed

- Orobanche attacks mustard roots underground.
- Herbicide reaches the parasite through soil and plant tissues where manual weeding cannot.

6. Risk of Herbicide Resistance Exists

- Continuous use of the same herbicide can create resistant weed populations.
- This may eventually reduce herbicide effectiveness.

7. Integrated Weed Management Is Essential

- Crop rotation, multiple herbicides, and manual weeding should continue.
- Long-term sustainability requires diverse weed-control strategies rather than a single solution.

Important Terms

Term	Meaning
Orobanche (Phelipanche)	A parasitic weed that attaches to crop roots and absorbs nutrients
IMI Herbicide	Herbicide belonging to the Imidazolinone group used to control weeds
Mutation Breeding	Crop improvement technique using naturally occurring or induced genetic mutations
Acetolactate Synthase (ALS)	Essential plant enzyme targeted by certain herbicides
Integrated Weed Management (IWM)	Combining chemical, biological, mechanical, and cultural methods for weed control

[The Oman CEPA, a new gateway for India's exports-The Hindu Editorial](#)

International relations

Easy Explanation



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India and Oman have shared trade and maritime relations for thousands of years. To strengthen this partnership in the modern era, both countries signed the **India-Oman Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA)**, which came into force on **June 1, 2026**.

The agreement is significant because Oman is an important trading partner in the Gulf region. Bilateral trade between the two countries increased from **\$8.94 billion in FY 2023-24 to \$11.18 billion in FY 2025-26**. The CEPA aims to further increase trade, investment, services, and economic cooperation.

One of the biggest benefits is that Oman has granted **duty-free access on 98.08% of its tariff lines**, covering over **99% of India's exports by value**. Earlier, only around 15% of Indian exports entered Oman without tariffs. This will make Indian products cheaper and more competitive in the Omani market.

Several sectors stand to gain significantly. India's textile and apparel exports will become more competitive after the removal of the 5% tariff. Chemical exports, where India already has a strong presence, will benefit further. Engineering goods, automobiles, machinery, pharmaceuticals, seafood, processed food, gems and jewellery are expected to see increased market access.

The agreement also focuses on **services trade**. Oman has made commitments to facilitate Indian professionals in sectors such as information technology, engineering, healthcare, education, consulting, and accounting. Mobility of skilled workers will become easier through higher quotas for intra-company transfers.

Apart from trade, the CEPA has strategic importance. Oman occupies a crucial location connecting the **Gulf region, Indian Ocean, and East Africa**. Ports such as **Sohar, Duqm, and Salalah** can serve as gateways for Indian businesses to access wider regional markets.

The agreement reflects India's broader strategy of integrating with global value chains and expanding export opportunities through comprehensive trade agreements.

Key Takeaways

1. India-Oman CEPA Came into Force in June 2026

- Strengthens long-standing economic and trade relations.
- Covers goods, services, investment, mobility, and regulatory cooperation.

2. Massive Duty-Free Access for Indian Exports

- Oman offers duty-free access on 98.08% of tariff lines.
- Covers about 99.38% of India's exports by value.

3. Major Boost for Manufacturing Exports

- Textiles, apparel, chemicals, engineering goods, automobiles, and machinery will benefit.
- Indian products become more competitive against global suppliers.

4. Pharmaceutical Sector Gains Through Faster Approvals

- Regulatory facilitation reduces compliance delays.
- Easier market entry for Indian pharmaceutical companies.

5. Services and Professional Mobility Receive Special Focus

- Opportunities for Indian IT professionals, engineers, doctors, consultants, and educators.
- Increased quotas for intra-corporate transfers.

6. Trade Facilitation Measures Reduce Costs

- Recognition of Indian certification systems.
- Faster customs clearance and easier regulatory procedures.

7. Oman Provides Strategic Access Beyond Its Market



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- Oman serves as a gateway to GCC countries and East Africa.
- Enhances India's economic and strategic presence in the Gulf region.

Important Terms

Term	Meaning
CEPA	Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement covering trade, services, and investment
Tariff Line	A specific category of products on which customs duties are imposed
Most Favoured Nation (MFN)	WTO principle requiring equal trade treatment among member countries
SPS Measures	Sanitary and Phytosanitary measures related to food safety and animal/plant health
GCC	Gulf Cooperation Council comprising six Gulf countries
Economy	Strategic Afterthought — The Hindu Editorial

Easy Explanation

This editorial questions the rationale behind the **Great Nicobar Island Development Project**, one of India's largest infrastructure projects, now estimated to cost around **₹91,000 crore**.

The Centre has repeatedly justified the project on the grounds of **national security and strategic importance**, particularly because Great Nicobar lies near the **Malacca Strait**, one of the world's busiest maritime trade routes. The project includes a **transshipment port at Galathea Bay, an international airport, a township, and a power plant**.

However, the editorial highlights a contradiction. A 2024 assessment by the **Public Investment Board (PIB)** reportedly found that the proposed port lacked clear strategic objectives. The "strategic importance" argument was emphasized later by the Ministry of Defence. This raises questions about whether strategic concerns were the original basis of the project or were added later to justify it.

Financial concerns have also emerged. The **Public-Private Partnership Appraisal Committee (PPPAC)** approved the project but refused to provide ₹12,230 crore as Viability Gap Funding and asked the Ports Ministry to arrange the funds itself. According to the editorial, if the project is not commercially viable and depends heavily on government support, its economic justification becomes weaker.

The environmental concerns are even more significant. Great Nicobar is home to **dense tropical rainforests, coral reefs, leatherback turtles, and endemic species such as the Nicobar megapode**. Large-scale construction would require clearing substantial forest areas and could cause irreversible ecological damage.

The project has also faced opposition from indigenous communities. Tribal groups have argued that their consent was obtained without complete information and have expressed concerns over the impact on ancestral lands and rehabilitation commitments made after the 2004 tsunami.



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The editorial does not oppose development altogether. Instead, it argues that a project of such scale should be based on complete transparency, proper cost-benefit analysis, environmental safeguards, and genuine consultation with local communities before implementation.

Key Takeaways

1. Great Nicobar Project is a Mega Infrastructure Initiative

- Includes a transshipment port, airport, township, and power plant.
- Estimated project cost has risen to about ₹91,000 crore.

2. Strategic Justification Faces Scrutiny

- Government cites national security and maritime strategy.
- PIB reportedly found that the port lacked clear strategic objectives.

3. Financial Viability Remains a Concern

- PPPAC declined ₹12,230 crore in Viability Gap Funding.
- Raises questions about long-term commercial sustainability.

4. Ecological Costs Could Be Irreversible

- Large-scale forest diversion is required.
- Threatens unique biodiversity and fragile ecosystems.

5. Important Species May Be Affected

- Habitat of the endangered Leatherback Turtle could be disturbed.
- Endemic Nicobar Megapode faces ecological risks.

6. Indigenous Communities Have Raised Objections

- Concerns over land rights and informed consent.
- Fear displacement and disruption of traditional lifestyles.

7. Editorial Calls for Greater Transparency

- Demands release of relevant reports and assessments.
- Seeks open evaluation of environmental, financial, and social costs.

Important Terms

Term	Meaning
Transshipment Port	A port where cargo is transferred from one ship to another before reaching its final destination
Viability Gap Funding (VGF)	Government financial support provided to infrastructure projects that are economically useful but commercially less viable
Leatherback Turtle	World's largest sea turtle species, classified as vulnerable and protected





Nicobar Megapode	A rare bird species found only in the Nicobar Islands
Malacca Strait	Strategic sea route connecting the Indian Ocean and Pacific Ocean

[On India's eV transition, it's time to shift gears-The Indian Express The Ideas Page](#)

Science and technology

Easy Explanation

This article argues that India should accelerate its transition from petrol and diesel vehicles to **Electric Vehicles (EVs)**, especially two-wheelers and four-wheelers. The author believes pollution is a major public health challenge and that delaying EV adoption will only increase environmental and economic costs.

The automobile industry has often opposed rapid EV adoption due to concerns about revenue losses, stranded investments, technological changes, and increased competition. However, the author argues that these challenges will exist whether India transitions today or a decade later. Therefore, policymakers should act now rather than postpone the shift.

The article proposes a comprehensive national policy that would promote EV adoption by **2028**, along with large-scale expansion of charging infrastructure at petrol pumps, public places, parking lots, and residential areas.

A common concern is that EV adoption could increase India's dependence on China because China dominates battery and critical mineral supply chains. The author disagrees, arguing that EVs actually reduce long-term vulnerability. Unlike petrol and diesel, batteries are not continuously consumed. Once an EV is purchased, it can continue operating even if imports face disruptions.

India is also strengthening its strategy through the **National Critical Mineral Mission**, which seeks to secure supplies of lithium, cobalt, rare earths, and other critical minerals required for clean energy technologies.

The article also addresses employment concerns. Traditional vehicle repair and maintenance sectors may face disruption, but EV manufacturing, charging infrastructure, battery recycling, software services, and related industries can create new jobs. Similar fears were raised during banking computerisation, yet technology eventually generated new opportunities.

Another important point is affordability. Although EVs often have a higher purchase price, studies show that their lifetime operating costs are significantly lower because electricity is cheaper than petrol and maintenance costs are lower. This can particularly benefit gig workers, delivery personnel, and small transport operators.

The author concludes that successful EV transition requires cooperation between the government and automobile industry. Policies should support innovation, charging infrastructure, battery recycling, research and development, and financial support mechanisms to make the transition smooth and sustainable.

Key Takeaways

1. Pollution is Driving the Need for EV Adoption

- Vehicular emissions significantly contribute to urban air pollution.
- Cleaner transport is essential for public health and environmental sustainability.

2. India Should Accelerate EV Transition

- The article recommends a comprehensive EV policy by 2028.
- Focus should be on both two-wheelers and four-wheelers.

3. Charging Infrastructure is Critical

- Large-scale installation of charging stations is necessary.



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- Public spaces, fuel stations, and residential areas need charging facilities.

4. EVs Can Reduce Strategic Vulnerability

- Dependence on imported oil decreases with EV adoption.
- Critical minerals can be stockpiled through strategic planning.

5. National Critical Mineral Mission Gains Importance

- Ensures access to lithium, cobalt, rare earths, and battery materials.
- Supports India's clean energy and EV ecosystem.

6. Employment Patterns Will Change, Not Disappear

- Traditional automobile jobs may decline gradually.
- New opportunities will emerge in EV manufacturing, batteries, charging infrastructure, and recycling.

7. EVs Offer Lower Lifetime Costs

- Higher upfront costs are offset by lower fuel and maintenance expenses.
- Particularly beneficial for delivery workers and transport operators.

Important Terms

Term	Meaning
Electric Vehicle (EV)	Vehicle powered by electricity stored in batteries instead of fossil fuels
Internal Combustion Engine (ICE)	Conventional engine that burns petrol or diesel for power
Critical Minerals	Minerals such as lithium, cobalt, nickel, and rare earths essential for clean technologies
National Critical Mineral Mission	Government initiative to secure critical mineral supplies for strategic industries
Stranded Assets	Investments that lose economic value due to technological or policy changes

[Fifteen FTAs, 27 countries, four challenges-The Indian Express The Ideas Page](#)

International relations

Easy Explanation

India's trade policy has increasingly focused on signing **Free Trade Agreements (FTAs)** to boost exports, attract investment, and integrate into global value chains. With the **India-Oman CEPA** coming into force on June 1, 2026, India now has **15 FTAs covering 27 countries**. If the nine ongoing negotiations are completed, India will have trade agreements with **69 countries**, accounting for nearly **75% of India's exports**.



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However, the article argues that while FTAs create opportunities, they have also generated four major challenges that policymakers must address.

The first challenge is the **rising trade deficit**. India's trade deficits with ASEAN, Japan, and South Korea have increased sharply after FTAs came into effect. This is largely because India's tariffs are generally much higher than those of its trading partners. When India reduces tariffs under an FTA, foreign exporters gain easier access to the Indian market, while Indian exporters often gain limited additional access because partner countries already maintain low tariffs.

The second challenge is the **low utilisation of FTA benefits by Indian exporters**. Many Indian exporters do not use FTA preferences because the benefits are often small compared to the compliance burden. To claim FTA benefits, exporters must comply with Rules of Origin, certification requirements, and documentation procedures. Since many partner countries already impose very low tariffs, exporters often find little incentive to use FTA provisions.

The third challenge is the **inverted duty structure**. This occurs when duties on raw materials and intermediate goods are higher than duties on finished products. Indian manufacturers often pay higher costs for imported inputs, while finished goods enter India duty-free under FTAs. This reduces the competitiveness of domestic manufacturing and discourages value addition within India.

The fourth challenge is the relocation of manufacturing to FTA partner countries. Firms may find it more profitable to manufacture in countries such as Vietnam, Thailand, or Indonesia and then export finished products to India duty-free. This trend can weaken India's manufacturing sector and undermine the objectives of initiatives like **Make in India**.

The article concludes that FTAs should not merely increase imports. India must align tariff policies, improve FTA utilisation, remove inverted duty structures, and strengthen domestic manufacturing so that trade agreements contribute to industrial growth rather than deindustrialisation.

Key Takeaways

1. India's FTA Network is Expanding Rapidly

- India currently has 15 FTAs covering 27 countries.
- Ongoing negotiations could expand coverage to 69 countries.

2. Trade Deficits Have Increased with Several FTA Partners

- Deficits with ASEAN, Japan, and South Korea have grown significantly.
- Imports often rise faster than exports after FTAs.

3. Tariff Asymmetry Creates Imbalances

- Partner countries generally have lower tariffs than India.
- Indian exporters gain limited additional market access.

4. FTA Utilisation by Indian Exporters Remains Low

- Compliance costs reduce incentives to use FTA preferences.
- Many firms continue exporting under MFN rules.

5. Inverted Duty Structure Hurts Domestic Manufacturing

- Raw materials often face higher duties than finished products.
- Domestic producers face higher production costs.

6. Manufacturing May Shift to FTA Partner Countries

- Companies may produce in ASEAN countries and export duty-free to India.
- Investment and jobs may move outside India.

7. FTAs Must Support 'Make in India' Goals

- Tariff structures need reform.
- Trade agreements should strengthen domestic industrial capacity and value addition.



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Important Terms

Term	Meaning
Free Trade Agreement (FTA)	Agreement between countries to reduce or eliminate trade barriers such as tariffs
Trade Deficit	Situation where imports exceed exports
Most Favoured Nation (MFN) Tariff	Standard tariff applied to WTO members without special trade agreements
Rules of Origin	Criteria used to determine the country of origin of a product for FTA benefits
Inverted Duty Structure	Situation where taxes on inputs are higher than those on finished products

[In law, need to write a new marriage story-The Indian Express The Ideas Page](#)

Polity

Easy Explanation

This editorial discusses a recent Supreme Court judgment that highlighted the need for reforms in India's divorce laws. The Court observed that forcing a couple to remain legally married when their relationship has completely broken down serves neither the individuals involved nor society.

The case involved a couple who had been living separately for **15 years**. The Supreme Court stated that compelling them to continue the marriage would amount to cruelty towards both parties. The judgment reflects a more realistic understanding of modern marital relationships and the emotional costs of prolonged legal disputes.

Currently, Indian marriage laws mainly provide two routes for divorce:

1. **Mutual Consent Divorce** – both spouses agree to separate.
2. **Contested Divorce** – one spouse must prove specific legal grounds such as cruelty, adultery, desertion, etc.

However, many marriages collapse without fitting neatly into these legal categories. In such cases, couples may remain trapped in lengthy litigation for years.

To address this problem, the Supreme Court has repeatedly advocated the concept of **Irretrievable Breakdown of Marriage (IBM)**. Under this principle, a marriage can be dissolved when the relationship has broken down beyond repair, even if traditional fault-based grounds are difficult to prove.

The Court has previously raised this issue in the **Naveen Kohli vs Neelu Kohli (2006)** case and urged Parliament to amend the **Hindu Marriage Act, 1955**. The **Law Commission of India** also recommended incorporating IBM as a ground for divorce in 2009. Although legislative attempts were made through the Marriage Laws (Amendment) Bills of 2010 and 2013, both lapsed.

The editorial argues that reform is necessary because prolonged divorce proceedings can severely affect the emotional, mental, physical, and financial well-being of the individuals involved. At the same time, it cautions that legal reform must protect women, who often enter divorce proceedings from a weaker social and economic position.



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Therefore, any future law introducing irretrievable breakdown as a divorce ground must also strengthen protections relating to maintenance, property rights, residence rights, and child custody to ensure that gender inequality is not reinforced.

Key Takeaways

1. Supreme Court Recognised Reality of Broken Marriages

- Court held that forcing estranged couples to remain married may amount to cruelty.
- Legal status should reflect social reality.

2. Current Divorce Framework is Limited

- Divorce is mainly available through mutual consent or fault-based grounds.
- Many failed marriages do not fit easily into these categories.

3. Irretrievable Breakdown of Marriage (IBM) is the Core Issue

- IBM means a marriage has broken down beyond repair.
- Allows divorce without proving traditional faults.

4. Supreme Court Has Repeatedly Recommended Reform

- Raised the issue in the Naveen Kohli case (2006).
- Used Article 142 powers in certain cases to grant relief.

5. Law Commission Supported IBM

- 2009 Law Commission Report recommended including IBM as a statutory ground for divorce.
- Legislative efforts in 2010 and 2013 failed.

6. Prolonged Divorce Litigation Causes Harm

- Leads to emotional stress, financial burden, and social hardship.
- Creates situations where marriages exist only on paper.

7. Women's Rights Must Remain Central

- Reforms should safeguard maintenance, property, residence, and custody rights.
- Gender justice must accompany legal liberalisation.

Important Terms

Term	Meaning
Irretrievable Breakdown of Marriage (IBM)	A situation where a marriage has completely failed and cannot be restored
Mutual Consent Divorce	Divorce granted when both spouses agree to end the marriage
Contested Divorce	Divorce where one spouse must prove legally recognised grounds





Article 142

Constitutional provision allowing the Supreme Court to do complete justice in a case

Hindu Marriage Act, 1955

Main law governing marriage and divorce among Hindus in India

10th June 2026

[Across World, Why Fewer People Are Having Children — The Indian Express Explained Page](#)

Sociology

Easy Explanation

Countries across the world are witnessing a sharp decline in birth rates, prompting governments to introduce measures such as cash incentives, housing benefits, and fertility support to encourage couples to have more children. Even Andhra Pradesh has recently announced incentives for larger families.

The key measure used to assess population growth is the **Total Fertility Rate (TFR)**, which represents the average number of children a woman is expected to have. A TFR of 2.1 is considered necessary to maintain a stable population. However, fertility rates have been falling rapidly across the world. India's TFR, for instance, has declined from 5.9 in the 1960s to around 2.0 today.

Several factors have contributed to this trend. Rising incomes, urbanisation, higher education levels, women's participation in the workforce, delayed marriages, and changing social values have led people to prefer smaller families. In many societies, individuals increasingly prioritise careers and personal aspirations over childbearing.

Very low fertility creates new challenges. Countries such as South Korea and Japan are facing ageing populations, labour shortages, and increasing pressure on pension and healthcare systems. Although India still has a young population and will continue to grow due to population momentum, it too will eventually have to prepare for an ageing society and higher spending on healthcare and social security.

Key Takeaways

1. Global Fertility Rates Are Falling Rapidly

- More than two-thirds of the world's population now lives in countries with TFR below replacement level.
- Global TFR has declined from 5.3 to 2.2.

2. India Has Also Reached Below-Replacement Fertility

- India's TFR has fallen from 5.9 to 2.0.
- The decline occurred much faster than earlier UN projections.

3. Development Reduces Birth Rates

- Urbanisation, education, healthcare improvements, and lower child mortality encourage smaller families.
- Women have greater reproductive choices and career opportunities.

4. Cultural Changes Matter Increasingly

- Individual aspirations and changing lifestyles have reduced the priority attached to childbearing.
- Marriage rates are declining and people are delaying parenthood.

5. Welfare Policies Alone Cannot Reverse the Trend

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- Even countries with generous family support systems, like Sweden, have low fertility.
- Such policies can only slow, not completely reverse, fertility decline.

6. Very Low Fertility Creates Economic Challenges

- Ageing populations increase pressure on pensions and healthcare.
- Fewer workers must support larger elderly populations.

7. India Must Prepare for Future Ageing

- Population momentum will keep India's population growing for some time.
- Long-term investments in healthcare, elderly care, and human capital are essential.

Important Terms

Term	Meaning
Total Fertility Rate (TFR)	Average number of children a woman is expected to have during her lifetime
Replacement Rate	Fertility level (2.1) required to maintain population size
Demographic Transition Theory	Theory explaining how development reduces birth and death rates
Population Momentum	Continued population growth despite declining fertility
Ageing Population	Increasing proportion of elderly people in society

[Can a Political Party Use Cockroach as Symbol? What EC Rules Say — The Indian Express Explained Page](#)

Polity

Easy Explanation

The issue came into discussion after protests over Chief Justice of India Surya Kant's "cockroach" remark led to the emergence of the satirical **Cockroach Janta Party (CJP)**. Though it is currently a pressure group and not a registered political party, questions arose over whether a cockroach could be allotted as an election symbol.

Under the **Election Symbols (Reservation and Allotment) Order, 1968**, recognised national and state parties have reserved symbols, while unrecognised parties and independent candidates are allotted symbols from the Election Commission's list of "free symbols". The latest list contains 184 symbols, including everyday objects, fruits, and household items.

However, since the 1990s, the Election Commission has largely stopped allotting animals and living creatures as symbols following concerns raised by animal welfare groups. The decision came after allegations that real animals were being used and mistreated during election campaigns. Although older parties such as the BSP continue to retain their elephant symbol, new parties are generally not allotted animal symbols.

Therefore, even if the Cockroach Janta Party were to register as a political party, it is highly unlikely that the Election Commission would approve the cockroach as its election symbol.



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Key Takeaways

1. Election Symbols Are Governed by a Separate Order

- Symbols are allotted under the Election Symbols (Reservation and Allotment) Order, 1968.
- Recognised parties have reserved symbols, while others get symbols from the free list.

2. Free Symbols Include Everyday Objects

- The EC's latest list contains 184 symbols.
- Household items, fruits, vegetables, and tools are commonly included.

3. Symbol Allocation Is Not Guaranteed

- Independent candidates and unrecognised parties can indicate preferences.
- The Election Commission makes the final allotment.

4. Same Symbol Can Exist in Different States

- Two recognised state parties in different states may share the same symbol.
- Such parties are unlikely to contest against each other.

5. Animal Symbols Are Generally Discouraged

- The EC stopped allotting new animal symbols in the 1990s.
- The move followed concerns regarding cruelty and misuse of animals during campaigns.

6. Existing Animal Symbols Continue

- Older parties such as the BSP retain their elephant symbol.
- These are exceptions created before the ban.

7. Cockroach Symbol Is Unlikely

- A cockroach is a living creature and does not fit the present EC policy.
- Therefore, a new party is unlikely to receive it as an election symbol.

Important Terms

Term	Meaning
Election Symbols Order, 1968	Rules governing the allotment of election symbols in India
Recognised Party	Party that meets electoral performance criteria laid down by the Election Commission
Free Symbol	Symbol available for independent candidates and unrecognised parties
Reserved Symbol	Exclusive symbol allotted to recognised national or state parties





Unrecognised Party

Registered political party that has not yet qualified for state or national party status

[Monthly, Not Weekly Shots: New Obesity Drug Promises Easier Weight Management — The Indian Express](#) [Explained Page](#)

Science and technology

Easy Explanation

Pharmaceutical company **Pfizer** has announced encouraging results for **berobanatide**, an experimental drug for obesity and diabetes that may require only **one injection every month**. If approved, it would become the first GLP-1 weight-loss therapy with monthly dosing instead of the weekly injections used by existing drugs.

GLP-1 drugs mimic a natural gut hormone that helps regulate blood sugar, slows stomach emptying, and reduces appetite. Current blockbuster drugs such as **Wegovy, Zepbound, and Mounjaro** require weekly injections. Berobanatide aims to improve convenience and treatment adherence by reducing the number of injections from 52 to just 12 a year.

In mid-stage clinical trials, people without diabetes lost up to **12.3% of their body weight**. Experts caution against directly comparing these results with other drugs because different trials have different designs. The main advantage of berobanatide may lie in its monthly administration rather than superior weight-loss efficacy.

Doctors believe obesity should be treated as a chronic disease like diabetes or hypertension. A monthly injection could make long-term treatment easier, improve patient compliance, and help people remain on therapy for longer periods. However, long-term safety and cardiovascular benefits will need to be confirmed in larger Phase-III trials before the drug becomes widely available, which is expected around **2028-29**.

Key Takeaways

1. Pfizer Has Developed a Monthly Obesity Drug

- Berobanatide is designed to be taken once every month.
- It could become the first monthly GLP-1 therapy.

2. GLP-1 Drugs Help Reduce Weight

- They regulate blood sugar and suppress appetite.
- They are increasingly used to treat obesity as a chronic disease.

3. Monthly Dosing Improves Convenience

- Patients may need only 12 injections a year instead of 52.
- Reduced treatment fatigue may improve adherence.

4. Clinical Trials Show Promising Results

- Patients lost up to 12.3% of body weight.
- Weight loss continued even after shifting to monthly doses.

5. Existing Drugs Remain Strong Competitors

- Wegovy and Mounjaro have shown substantial weight reduction.
- Berobanatide's major advantage is convenience rather than efficacy.

6. Long-Term Safety Needs Evaluation

- Experts will assess cardiovascular benefits and side effects.
- Phase-III trials are expected to provide more evidence.



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7. Future Obesity Treatment Will Become More Personalised

- Longer-acting therapies and combination drugs are likely.
- Treatment may increasingly depend on associated conditions like liver disease, sleep apnea, and osteoarthritis.

Important Terms

Term	Meaning
GLP-1	Gut hormone that regulates blood sugar and appetite
Berobenatide	Experimental monthly drug for obesity and diabetes developed by Pfizer
Semaglutide	Active ingredient in Wegovy, used for weight loss
Tirzepatide	Active ingredient in Mounjaro and Zepbound
Treatment Adherence	Extent to which patients continue prescribed therapy
Phase-III Trials	Large-scale clinical studies conducted before drug approval
Personalised Medicine	Treatment tailored to an individual's specific health conditions

[In HC Relief for Airtel and Vi, the Lengthy Row over Spectrum Charge — The Indian Express Explained Page](#)

Polity

Easy Explanation

The Bombay High Court has provided major relief to **Bharti Airtel** and **Vodafone Idea (Vi)** by striking down the Centre's demand for a **one-time spectrum charge**, estimated to be worth over ₹24,000 crore. The court held that the government could not justify imposing these charges retrospectively.

Spectrum refers to radio frequencies used by telecom companies to provide mobile and internet services. Since airwaves are public resources, the government allocates them to companies through the Department of Telecommunications (DoT).

Under the original telecom policy of 1994, operators paid fixed licence fees and separate spectrum charges. In 1999, India shifted to a revenue-sharing regime to promote growth in the telecom sector. Over time, companies receiving additional spectrum paid higher recurring spectrum usage charges.

However, after the 2G spectrum controversy and the Supreme Court's 2012 judgment, the government decided to impose a one-time charge on spectrum held beyond 6.2 MHz, including retrospectively from 2008. Telecom operators challenged this decision in court.



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After more than a decade of litigation, the Bombay High Court has now set aside the government's 2012 decision. However, the larger issue is still pending before the Supreme Court.

Key Takeaways

1. Bombay High Court Gave Relief to Telecom Operators

- Airtel and Vodafone Idea received relief from spectrum charges exceeding ₹24,000 crore.
- The court struck down the retrospective levy.

2. Spectrum Is a Public Resource

- Airwaves used for communication belong to the government.
- The Department of Telecommunications allocates spectrum to telecom companies.

3. Telecom Policy Changed in 1999

- India moved from fixed licence fees to a revenue-sharing model.
- This was aimed at boosting telecom sector growth.

4. Additional Spectrum Attracted Higher Usage Charges

- Operators paid recurring spectrum usage charges for extra bandwidth.
- The industry largely accepted this framework.

5. Government Introduced One-Time Spectrum Charges in 2012

- Charges were imposed on spectrum holdings above 6.2 MHz.
- The levy was made retrospective from 2008.

6. The Move Was Linked to the 2G Spectrum Controversy

- Greater scrutiny of spectrum pricing followed the Supreme Court's 2012 judgment.
- The government sought to recover additional revenue.

7. Legal Battle Is Not Yet Over

- The Bombay High Court has quashed the demand.
- The broader dispute remains pending before the Supreme Court.

Important Terms

Term	Meaning
Spectrum	Radio frequencies used for mobile and wireless communication
Department of Telecommunications (DoT)	Government department responsible for telecom policy and spectrum allocation
National Telecom Policy (NTP) 1999	Policy that introduced the revenue-sharing model in telecom





Spectrum Usage Charge (SUC)	Fee paid by telecom companies for using allocated spectrum
Megahertz (MHz)	Unit used to measure frequency bands in spectrum
Retrospective Tax/Charge	Levy imposed on transactions or holdings from a past date
2G Spectrum Case	Supreme Court case that cancelled 122 telecom licences in 2012 due to irregularities in spectrum allocation

[In age of AI,Pope returns to older concern:Technology,wealth,inequality-The Indian Express The Ideas Page](#)

Polity

Easy Explanation

As Artificial Intelligence (AI) transforms economies, a major debate has emerged: **who should benefit from the enormous wealth generated by AI companies?** This issue has gained attention in the United States, where President Donald Trump, Senator Bernie Sanders, and even Pope Leo XIV have raised concerns about the concentration of wealth and power in a few technology companies.

Bernie Sanders has proposed creating an American AI sovereign wealth fund financed by shares from major AI firms, while OpenAI CEO Sam Altman has suggested that citizens should receive a share in AI-generated prosperity. Trump has also indicated support for making ordinary Americans "partners" in the AI boom.

Pope Leo XIV, in his first encyclical *Magnifica Humanitas*, drew parallels between today's AI revolution and the Industrial Revolution. Similar to Pope Leo XIII's famous 1891 encyclical *Rerum Novarum*, which addressed labour exploitation during industrialisation, Leo XIV warned that AI could widen inequality and leave many workers behind.

The debate is no longer limited to regulating AI for safety. It increasingly concerns how the benefits of technological progress should be distributed between capital owners and society. As previous industrial revolutions eventually gave rise to welfare states and labour protections, the AI revolution may require a new social compact to ensure that prosperity is shared more broadly.

Key Takeaways

1. AI Is Reviving an Old Debate

- The central question is who should benefit from AI-generated wealth.
- The issue concerns the balance between capital and labour.

2. Political Leaders Are Exploring New Models

- Bernie Sanders proposed an AI sovereign wealth fund.
- Donald Trump has shown openness to public participation in AI profits.

3. Tech Leaders Also Support Wealth Sharing

- OpenAI CEO Sam Altman has advocated sharing AI-generated prosperity.
- The debate is about the extent and method of redistribution.

4. Pope Leo XIV Warns About AI-Driven Inequality



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- His encyclical highlights the social and ethical risks of AI.
- He compares today's challenges with those created by industrialisation.

5. Historical Parallels with the Industrial Revolution

- Pope Leo XIII's *Rerum Novarum* defended workers' rights in 1891.
- AI may similarly require new economic and social arrangements.

6. AI Could Increase Concentration of Wealth

- A few corporations may control most AI-generated gains.
- Job losses and inequality are emerging concerns.

7. A New Social Compact May Be Needed

- Governments may need to ensure wider distribution of AI benefits.
- The challenge is to balance innovation with economic and social equity.

Important Terms

Term	Meaning
Artificial Intelligence (AI)	Technology that enables machines to perform tasks requiring human intelligence
Sovereign Wealth Fund	Government-owned investment fund created from national assets or revenues
Capital	Wealth and assets used for investment and production
Labour	Human work and workforce contributing to economic activity
Rerum Novarum	1891 encyclical of Pope Leo XIII addressing workers' rights and capitalism
Magnifica Humanitas	Pope Leo XIV's encyclical dealing with ethical challenges posed by AI
Social Compact	An arrangement between society and the state to ensure fairness and stability

[A new phase in India-Nepal relations-The Hindu Text and Context](#)

International relations

Easy Explanation



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India and Nepal have long-standing ties, but disputes over Kalapani, Lipulekh, and Limpiyadhura have strained relations in recent years. Recently, Nepal Prime Minister Balendra Shah ("Balen") adopted a more balanced tone, suggesting that both countries should objectively examine historical claims and resolve differences amicably rather than blaming each other.

Nepal has also objected to India's use of the Lipulekh Pass for trade and the Kailash Mansarovar Yatra, though both sides have agreed to address these issues through diplomatic channels. At the same time, Nepal's new political leadership appears determined to pursue a more independent foreign policy, treating India like any other country instead of relying on the traditional "special relationship".

The article argues that prolonged expert-level discussions may not provide a lasting solution. Instead, both countries should draw upon their centuries-old cultural links, open borders, and strong military cooperation. The boundary dispute should not overshadow the larger relationship. With political changes in Nepal and stable leadership in India, there is an opportunity to create a more mature and sustainable partnership.

Key Takeaways

1. Boundary Disputes Continue

- Kalapani, Lipulekh and Limpiyadhura remain disputed areas.
- Both India and Nepal rely on differing historical maps and claims.

2. Nepal's Leadership Shows a New Approach

- Prime Minister Balendra Shah acknowledged that territorial disputes may not be one-sided.
- He favoured dialogue and objective examination of facts.

3. Diplomatic Engagement Continues

- Both countries have agreed to address disputes through diplomatic channels.
- Nepal's objections to trade and pilgrimage routes have not disrupted dialogue.

4. A Generational Change Is Visible in Nepal

- Young leaders are focusing more on governance and economic development.
- Nepal seeks greater independence in foreign policy decisions.

5. Protocol Differences Need Not Harm Relations

- Nepal is reducing the emphasis on the traditional "special relationship".
- India appears to be adjusting to these changes pragmatically.

6. Historical Linkages Offer Solutions

- Shared cultural ties, the 1,700-km open border and military cooperation provide strong foundations.
- These can help build trust and facilitate practical solutions.

7. Both Countries Need a New Mindset

- Boundary differences should not dominate bilateral ties.
- The present moment offers an opportunity to create a more balanced and sustainable partnership.

Important Terms

Term	Meaning
Kalapani	A disputed region claimed by both India and Nepal





Lipulekh Pass	Strategic Himalayan pass used for trade and the Kailash Mansarovar Yatra
Limpiyadhura	Territory claimed by Nepal and administered by India
Open Border	Arrangement allowing free movement of people between India and Nepal
Diplomatic Channels	Official mechanisms used by countries to resolve disputes peacefully
Status Quo	Maintaining the existing situation without changes

[Inclusion without abolition in China's hukou system-The Hindu Text and Context](#)

International relations

Easy Explanation

China has announced new measures to provide basic public services such as education, housing, healthcare, and social security to residents irrespective of their **hukou** (household registration) status. The reforms aim to make long-term migrant workers living in cities more integrated into urban society.

The hukou system, introduced in the 1950s, divides citizens into rural and urban residents and links welfare benefits to their registered place of residence. Although economic reforms allowed migration, migrants often lacked equal access to public services.

China has been gradually reforming the system since 2014. The latest guidelines are part of a broader effort to increase urbanisation, boost domestic consumption, and support the growing number of gig workers. However, the reforms do not abolish the hukou system. Local governments still face financial constraints, and differences in welfare benefits between richer and poorer provinces continue. Thus, the system has become more inclusive, but major structural inequalities remain.

Key Takeaways

1. China is Expanding Public Services

- New guidelines aim to provide education, housing, healthcare and social security based on actual residence.
- Benefits are being extended to migrant populations living in cities.

2. Hukou System Originated in the 1950s

- It classifies people as rural or urban residents.
- Welfare and government services are linked to official registration.

3. Reforms Have Been Gradual Since 2014

- China has tried to ease restrictions and promote urbanisation.
- Earlier reforms focused mainly on smaller cities, while megacities are now being included.

4. Urbanisation and Economic Goals Drive the Reforms

- China seeks to increase domestic consumption and labour mobility.



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- A larger urban population is considered essential for future growth.

5. Gig Workers Are Becoming Important

- More than 200 million Chinese workers are engaged in flexible and platform-based employment.
- The government wants to bring these workers under social protection frameworks.

6. Structural Problems Still Exist

- Welfare benefits differ significantly across regions.
- Migrant workers often contribute more but receive lower benefits.

7. Hukou System Remains Intact

- The reforms promote inclusion rather than abolition.
- Significant inequalities between migrant and local residents continue to persist.

Important Terms

Term	Meaning
Hukou System	China's household registration system linking welfare benefits to place of residence
Floating Population (Liudong Renkou)	Migrant workers living away from their registered homes
People-Centred Urbanisation	Policy aimed at integrating migrants into cities
Gig Economy	Employment based on temporary, platform-based or flexible work
15th Five-Year Plan	China's medium-term economic and development planning framework
Talent Dividend	Economic gains obtained through skilled human capital rather than population size

[How Babbage automated calculations with simple machines-The Hindu Text and Context](#)

Science and technology

Easy Explanation

Before modern computers, all calculations were done manually by people called "computers", making mathematical tables used by engineers, astronomers, and governments. These calculations were slow and prone to errors.

In the 1820s, English mathematician **Charles Babbage** designed the **Difference Engine**, a mechanical machine that used gears and wheels to automatically perform calculations using the method of finite differences. Later, he conceived the much more advanced **Analytical Engine**, which could be programmed using punched cards and is regarded as the direct ancestor of modern computers.



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Although neither machine was completed during his lifetime, Babbage introduced revolutionary ideas such as memory, a central processing unit, input-output mechanisms, looping, and conditional instructions. His collaborator **Ada Lovelace** further realised that such machines could process not just numbers but any form of information, making Babbage's work the foundation of modern computing.

Key Takeaways

1. Calculations Were Once Done Entirely by Hand

- Governments and scientists relied on mathematical tables.
- Human errors in calculations were common.

2. Babbage Developed the Difference Engine

- It used gears and rotating wheels to automate calculations.
- It worked mainly through repeated addition using finite differences.

3. Mathematical Tables Were Essential

- They contained pre-computed values for logarithms, trigonometric functions and other calculations.
- Engineers and navigators frequently depended on them.

4. The Analytical Engine Was Revolutionary

- It was designed as a programmable general-purpose machine.
- It introduced concepts similar to modern CPUs and memory.

5. Punched Cards Served as Instructions

- Borrowed from Jacquard textile looms.
- Different card sequences enabled different calculations.

6. Babbage's Machines Introduced Modern Computing Ideas

- Memory storage, input-output systems, loops and conditional branching.
- These are key features of present-day computers.

7. Ada Lovelace Recognised Their Wider Potential

- She understood that numbers could represent text, music and images.
- This insight laid the foundation for universal computing.

Important Terms

Term	Meaning
Difference Engine	Mechanical calculator invented by Charles Babbage to automate mathematical tables
Finite Differences	Mathematical method that converts complex calculations into repeated additions
Analytical Engine	Programmable mechanical machine considered the precursor of modern computers





Punched Cards	Cards with holes used to provide instructions to machines
Ada Lovelace	Collaborator of Babbage and regarded as the world's first computer programmer
Conditional Branching	Ability of a machine to make decisions based on conditions
CPU (Central Processing Unit)	Component that performs calculations and instructions in a computer

[Scientists find a blood test that predicts lung cancer years early-The Hindu Science](#)

Science

Easy Explanation

Lung cancer is one of the leading causes of cancer-related deaths worldwide, mainly because it is often detected only after symptoms appear. Scientists are now exploring ways to identify people at risk much earlier so that preventive measures can be taken before the disease develops.

A multinational team of researchers has discovered a group of **14 proteins in blood plasma** that can act as an early warning signal for lung cancer. Using data from thousands of participants in the UK Biobank and machine-learning techniques, the researchers found that people carrying this "**14-protein signature**" could be identified nearly five years before they were actually diagnosed with lung cancer. The method correctly predicted more than 75% of future cases.

The study also suggests that smoking and air pollution may cause inflammation in the lungs, which can activate dormant mutated cells and eventually turn them into cancer cells. Interestingly, researchers found that people with the 14-protein signature who had received **Canakinumab**, an anti-inflammatory drug, showed a 50% lower risk of developing lung cancer.

However, the findings are still at an early stage. The protein signature needs to be tested in more diverse populations, and safer and cheaper medicines will be required before such preventive treatment can become widely available. Nevertheless, the study represents a major step towards detecting and preventing lung cancer years before it appears.

Key Takeaways

1. Lung Cancer Remains a Major Global Health Problem

- Around 2.5 million new cases and 1.8 million deaths occur annually.
- Smoking and air pollution are major risk factors.

2. Scientists Identified a 14-Protein Signature

- A specific combination of blood proteins predicts future lung cancer risk.
- The disease may be detected nearly five years before diagnosis.

3. Blood Plasma Acts Like a Liquid Biopsy

- Blood proteins provide a snapshot of a person's health.
- Changes in these proteins can signal disease development.

4. Machine Learning Improved Prediction

- Researchers analysed thousands of participants from the UK Biobank.



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- The model correctly identified over 75% of future lung cancer cases.

5. Inflammation Plays a Key Role

- Smoking and air pollution may trigger inflammation.
- This inflammation can activate dormant mutated cells, leading to cancer.

6. Existing Drug Shows Promise

- Canakinumab, an anti-inflammatory drug, reduced lung cancer risk by 50% in some patients.
- However, it has serious side effects and is very expensive.

7. More Research Is Needed

- The findings must be tested across different populations.
- Scientists need affordable and safer drugs before clinical use.

Important Terms

Term	Meaning
Blood Plasma	Liquid component of blood containing proteins and nutrients
Proteomics	Study of all proteins present in a cell or body fluid
Liquid Biopsy	Diagnostic approach using blood samples instead of tissue samples
14-Protein Signature	Group of proteins linked to future lung cancer risk
Machine Learning	Artificial intelligence technique used to detect patterns in data
Canakinumab	Anti-inflammatory drug used for certain inflammatory disorders
UK Biobank	Large database containing health information and biological samples of volunteers

[India's road through Myanmar is one of engagement-The Hindu Editorial](#)

International relations

Easy Explanation

Myanmar President Min Aung Hlaing's visit to India in May-June 2026 marked an important phase in India-Myanmar relations. Although many Western countries have isolated Myanmar after the 2021 military coup, India has chosen engagement rather than isolation, viewing Myanmar as strategically vital for its security and regional interests.



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Myanmar shares a long border with India's Northeast and is crucial to India's **Act East Policy** and **Neighbourhood First Policy**. Instability in Myanmar directly affects India's security, especially because insurgent groups and cybercrime networks operate near the border. Another major reason behind India's outreach is China's growing influence in Myanmar after the coup. India wants to prevent Myanmar from becoming completely dependent on Beijing.

Connectivity projects such as the **Kaladan Multi-Modal Transit Transport Project** and the **India-Myanmar-Thailand Trilateral Highway** are central to India's strategy. These projects aim to connect India's Northeast with Southeast Asia and promote trade and economic integration. However, ongoing civil conflict inside Myanmar has delayed their completion.

The two countries also discussed trade expansion, local currency settlements, cooperation in critical minerals, education, and security. By hosting Min Aung Hlaing, India has signalled that pragmatic engagement with the existing authorities in Myanmar is necessary to safeguard its strategic interests. The visit highlights that geography and national interests often outweigh ideological considerations in foreign policy.

Key Takeaways

1. First Major Visit After the Coup

- Min Aung Hlaing visited India from May 30 to June 3, 2026.
- It was his first major bilateral visit abroad as Myanmar's President.

2. India Follows Pragmatic Engagement

- India has not joined Western efforts to isolate Myanmar.
- New Delhi believes dialogue is more effective than disengagement.

3. Myanmar is Strategically Important

- It is India's gateway to Southeast Asia.
- It shares a 1,643-km border with four northeastern states.

4. China Factor Influences India's Policy

- China has expanded its influence in Myanmar after the 2021 coup.
- India seeks to maintain strategic space and avoid excessive Chinese dominance.

5. Connectivity Projects Remain Crucial

- Kaladan Multi-Modal Project and Trilateral Highway are India's flagship initiatives.
- Internal conflict in Myanmar has delayed their completion.

6. Security Cooperation Has Deepened

- Myanmar assured that its territory would not be used against India.
- Both countries cooperated to rescue Indian nationals trapped in cyber scam centres.

7. Relations Extend Beyond Security

- Trade, education, critical minerals, and currency settlement mechanisms were discussed.
- India increased scholarships for Myanmar students from 36 to 100 annually.

Important Terms

Term	Meaning
Act East Policy	India's strategy to strengthen ties with Southeast Asian countries



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Neighbourhood First Policy	Policy prioritising relations with neighbouring countries
Kaladan Multi-Modal Transit Transport Project	Connectivity project linking Kolkata with Myanmar and Mizoram
India-Myanmar-Thailand Trilateral Highway	Proposed road corridor connecting India with Southeast Asia
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
Rupee-Kyat Settlement Mechanism	Trade settlement system using Indian and Myanmar currencies
Realpolitik	Foreign policy based on practical national interests rather than ideology

Securing India against the threat of a 'Mythocalypse'-The Hindu Editorial

Science and technology

Easy Explanation

The article warns that extremely advanced AI systems like Anthropic's **Claude Mythos** could create new cybersecurity threats that humans may struggle to understand or control. Unlike current AI models that merely detect vulnerabilities, Mythos can autonomously discover hidden flaws, combine multiple weaknesses, and generate sophisticated cyberattacks. This could put financial systems, power grids, examination systems, and other critical infrastructure at risk.

India has built world-class digital platforms like UPI and Aadhaar, but many government departments and public sector banks still rely on old technologies. Experts fear that India lacks the institutions and preparedness needed to deal with such AI-powered threats. The article argues that India should establish an AI Safety Institute, upgrade cybersecurity infrastructure, develop indigenous defensive AI tools, and cooperate with trusted partners such as the US, UK, and Japan.

Since open-source or uncontrolled AI models may soon become widely available, the challenge is no longer futuristic. India may have only a few years to prepare for an era in which cyberattacks occur at machine speed. Therefore, strengthening cyber resilience has become an urgent national security priority.

Key Takeaways

1. Mythos Represents a New Generation of AI

- Claude Mythos reportedly outperforms human experts in certain cybersecurity tasks.
- It can identify vulnerabilities that humans may not even know exist.

2. AI Can Chain Multiple Vulnerabilities

- Mythos can combine several small flaws into a major cyberattack.
- This makes AI-enabled attacks much more dangerous.

3. Critical Infrastructure Faces Risks

- Banking systems, power plants, and examination systems could become targets.



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- Cyberattacks may spread rapidly across interconnected systems.

4. India's Digital Backbone Has Weak Points

- Platforms like UPI and Aadhaar are advanced.
- However, many public sector institutions still depend on outdated legacy systems.

5. India Lacks Dedicated AI Safety Institutions

- Unlike the US and UK, India does not yet have an AI Safety Institute.
- Current initiatives focus mainly on AI development rather than AI safety.

6. International Cooperation Is Necessary

- India could pursue a defensive AI partnership with the US, UK, and Japan.
- Shared testing and intelligence could improve cyber resilience.

7. India Needs Faster Cybersecurity Reforms

- Establishing an India AI Safety Institute and upgrading critical sectors are urgent priorities.
- The next 12–24 months may be crucial for preparing against AI-driven threats.

Important Terms

Term	Meaning
Claude Mythos	An advanced AI model with powerful cybersecurity capabilities
Zero-Day Vulnerability	A software flaw unknown to developers and exploitable by attackers
Open-Weight Models	AI models whose underlying parameters are publicly available
AI Safety Institute (AISI)	Institution that evaluates and studies risks from advanced AI systems
Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI)	Digital platforms such as Aadhaar, UPI, and Account Aggregator
Threat Modelling	Process of identifying and preparing for possible cyber threats
Legacy Systems	Older technologies and software still used in critical infrastructure

11th June 2026

[In AI giants 'listing plans, questions over valuations-The Indian Express Explained Page](#)



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Easy Explanation

Major AI companies such as **Anthropic** and **OpenAI**, along with Elon Musk's **SpaceX**, are preparing for public listings in the United States. Their IPOs could become some of the largest in history and would allow ordinary investors to participate in the AI boom, which until now has mainly benefited private investors and venture capital firms.

However, these companies are seeking extremely high valuations. Anthropic is valued at about \$965 billion, OpenAI could reach \$1 trillion, and SpaceX aims for around \$1.75 trillion. Some analysts believe these figures are based more on expectations of future AI growth than on present earnings and business fundamentals.

SpaceX's valuation, in particular, has raised concerns. Research firm Morningstar estimates its value at only around \$780 billion and argues that many assumptions about AI-related businesses and future computing infrastructure may be overly optimistic. Critics fear that investors could be overestimating the profitability of these emerging technologies.

For Indian investors, these IPOs offer an opportunity to invest in global technology leaders. However, participation requires overseas brokerage accounts under the RBI's Liberalised Remittance Scheme (LRS), and retail investors may receive limited share allotments. They can also buy shares after the companies are listed.

Key Takeaways

1. Major AI Firms Are Preparing for IPOs

- Anthropic, OpenAI and SpaceX are planning public listings.
- These could become some of the biggest IPOs in history.

2. AI Boom May Reach Public Investors

- Until now, AI wealth has mainly benefited private investors.
- IPOs would allow retail investors to participate directly.

3. Companies Are Seeking Record Valuations

- Anthropic is valued at nearly \$965 billion.
- OpenAI targets \$1 trillion and SpaceX around \$1.75 trillion.

4. Analysts Question High Valuations

- Some experts believe market expectations exceed business fundamentals.
- Future AI revenues remain uncertain.

5. SpaceX Faces Concerns Over 'AI-Washing'

- Critics argue that much of its valuation depends on speculative AI businesses.
- Morningstar estimates SpaceX's value far below its target.

6. Debate Mirrors Earlier Tesla Valuation Questions

- Tesla once faced similar doubts before becoming highly successful.
- Whether AI firms justify their valuations remains to be seen.

7. Indian Investors Can Participate Through Overseas Accounts

- Investments can be made under RBI's Liberalised Remittance Scheme (LRS).
- Investors may also purchase shares after listing on US exchanges.

Important Terms



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Term	Meaning
IPO (Initial Public Offering)	First sale of a company's shares to the public
Valuation	Estimated worth of a company
Generative AI	AI systems that create text, images, code, and other content
AI-Washing	Exaggerating AI capabilities to attract investors
Private Market Valuation	Company's value before being publicly listed
Liberalised Remittance Scheme (LRS)	RBI scheme allowing Indians to invest abroad up to \$250,000 annually
Economic Moat	Sustainable competitive advantage enjoyed by a company

[Zojila Tunnel: The challenge of digging through the Himalayas-The Indian Express Explained Page](#)

Economy

Easy Explanation

The **Zojila Tunnel**, a 13-km-long tunnel being built at an altitude of over 11,500 feet, is one of India's most difficult infrastructure projects. It will provide all-weather connectivity between Kashmir and Ladakh. However, digging tunnels through the Himalayas is extremely challenging because the mountains are young, geologically unstable, and prone to avalanches, water seepage, and changing rock formations.

Engineers face severe weather conditions, with temperatures dropping to -30°C, and must deal with different types of rocks that can change within a few metres. Hidden cavities, cracks, and underground water make excavation even more risky. Therefore, tunnel construction requires continuous adjustments and careful monitoring.

To safely build the tunnel, engineers are using the **New Austrian Tunnelling Method (NATM)**, which involves controlled blasting, reinforcing the tunnel walls with sprayed concrete and rock bolts, and allowing underground water to drain gradually. Ventilation and rescue shafts have also been built to improve safety. The project demonstrates the engineering complexities involved in building infrastructure in the fragile Himalayan region.

Key Takeaways

1. Zojila Tunnel Is a Major Himalayan Infrastructure Project

- It is a 13-km tunnel located at an altitude of 11,578 feet.
- It aims to ensure year-round connectivity between Kashmir and Ladakh.

2. Himalayan Geology Makes Tunnelling Difficult



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- The Himalayas are young and tectonically active mountains.
- Rock formations vary greatly and are often unstable.

3. Extreme Weather Adds to Challenges

- Temperatures can fall to -30°C .
- Avalanches and harsh winters make construction hazardous.

4. Water Ingress Is a Major Concern

- Large amounts of underground water are stored within the mountains.
- Improper drainage could cause flooding or tunnel collapse.

5. NATM Is Used for Excavation

- Controlled blasting is followed by shotcrete and rock bolting.
- Excavation is carried out gradually in stages.

6. Tunnel Design Changes According to Site Conditions

- Alignment and support structures are modified based on rock quality.
- Weak sections are bypassed whenever necessary.

7. Safety Measures Have Been Strengthened

- Three deep shafts have been constructed for ventilation and rescue operations.
- Continuous monitoring helps maintain structural stability.

Important Terms

Term	Meaning
Zojila Tunnel	All-weather road tunnel connecting Kashmir and Ladakh
New Austrian Tunnelling Method (NATM)	Flexible tunnelling technique that adapts to varying rock conditions
Shotcrete	Sprayed concrete used to strengthen tunnel walls
Rock Bolts	Steel rods inserted into rocks to provide stability
Water Ingress	Entry of groundwater into tunnels during excavation
Tectonic Activity	Movement and deformation of Earth's crust
Ventilation Shaft	Vertical passage used for air circulation and emergency rescue





[How Birsa munda helped define adivasi identity, rights-The Indian Express Explained Page](#)

History

Easy Explanation

Birsa Munda, popularly known as "**Dharti Aba**" (**Father of the Earth**), was one of the most important Adivasi leaders in Indian history. He led the **Ulgulan (Great Tumult)** movement against British rule and against the exploitation of tribal communities by zamindars and outsiders in the late 19th century. His struggle focused on protecting Adivasi land, culture, and self-governance.

The movement reached its peak at **Dombari Buru** in 1899, where British forces fired upon Birsa's followers. Although Birsa was arrested and died in jail in 1900, his movement forced the colonial government to introduce reforms that later led to the **Chotanagpur Tenancy (CNT) Act, 1908**, which protected tribal land rights.

Birsa was also a social and religious reformer. He developed a distinct faith known as **Birsait**, emphasising purity, nature, and community values. His ideas influenced later demands for Adivasi self-rule and eventually contributed to the movement for the creation of Jharkhand. Even today, debates on tribal identity and rights often invoke Birsa Munda's legacy.

Key Takeaways

1. Birsa Munda Was a Major Adivasi Leader

- He is revered as "Dharti Aba".
- He fought for tribal identity, land rights, and self-rule.

2. He Led the Ulgulan Movement

- The movement opposed British rule and exploitation by outsiders.
- It emerged in the Chotanagpur region in the late 19th century.

3. Dombari Buru Became a Symbol of Resistance

- British forces fired on Birsa's followers in 1899.
- The incident remains an important memory in Adivasi history.

4. His Movement Influenced Land Reforms

- It contributed to the enactment of the Chotanagpur Tenancy Act, 1908.
- The Act protects tribal land from transfer to non-tribals.

5. Birsa Was Also a Religious Reformer

- He founded the Birsait faith.
- His teachings emphasised nature and social reform.

6. His Ideas Inspired Later Political Movements

- The aspiration for Adivasi self-governance continued after his death.
- It later influenced the movement for the creation of Jharkhand.

7. His Legacy Remains Relevant Today

- Debates over tribal identity and rights frequently refer to Birsa Munda.
- Many believe Adivasi identity is based on ancestry and community rather than religion.

Important Terms

Term

Meaning



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Birsa Munda	Tribal leader and freedom fighter from the Chotanagpur region
Dharti Aba	"Father of the Earth", a title given to Birsa Munda
Ulgulan	The "Great Tumult", a tribal movement led by Birsa Munda
Diku	Term used for non-tribal outsiders
Khuntkatti System	Traditional Munda system of collective land ownership
Chotanagpur Tenancy (CNT) Act, 1908	Law protecting tribal land rights in Jharkhand
Birsait Faith	Religious movement founded by Birsa Munda

[Trump's \\$100,000 H-1B fee scrapped, but some Indians have paid the price-The Indian Express Explained Page](#)

International relations

Easy Explanation

A U.S. federal court has struck down former President Donald Trump's order imposing a **\$100,000 fee on new H-1B visas**, ruling that the charge amounted to a tax, which only the U.S. Congress can impose. The H-1B programme allows American companies to hire highly skilled foreign professionals, and Indians receive more than 70% of these visas.

Before this order, H-1B application costs ranged from around \$960 to \$7,595. The huge increase was introduced in 2025 on the argument that foreign workers were replacing Americans in STEM jobs. However, the court held that hiring H-1B workers is legal and that the fee was mainly intended to raise revenue, making it unconstitutional.

Although the ruling offers relief, many Indian professionals have already suffered. Several companies reduced H-1B sponsorships because of the high cost, leading to fewer job opportunities and layoffs. Workers who lost jobs and had to reapply from abroad faced particularly severe difficulties. The U.S. government may still appeal the judgment, so uncertainty surrounding the H-1B programme continues.

Key Takeaways

1. Court Struck Down the \$100,000 Fee

- A U.S. federal judge ruled that the fee was unlawful.
- The charge was treated as a tax requiring Congressional approval.

2. H-1B Visa Supports Skilled Foreign Workers

- It allows U.S. employers to hire professionals in specialised fields.
- STEM sectors are among the biggest users of the programme.

3. Indians Are the Biggest Beneficiaries



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- Indian nationals receive over 70% of H-1B visas annually.
- They dominate sectors such as technology, engineering, healthcare and consulting.

4. Trump Introduced the Fee in 2025

- The administration argued that H-1B workers displaced American employees.
- The measure sharply increased visa costs.

5. Companies Reduced Sponsorships

- Many employers became reluctant to hire foreign workers.
- Demand for H-1B visas declined significantly.

6. Indian Workers Faced Major Difficulties

- Layoffs increased and many workers struggled to find new jobs.
- Those who had to leave the U.S. and reapply faced the burden of the massive fee.

7. Uncertainty Still Persists

- The U.S. government may appeal the ruling.
- Immigration lawyers advise H-1B holders to remain cautious regarding travel and visa renewals.

Important Terms

Term	Meaning
H-1B Visa	U.S. visa for highly skilled foreign professionals
STEM	Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics fields
OPT (Optional Practical Training)	Work authorisation for international students after graduation
Consular Processing	Visa issuance process through U.S. embassies and consulates
USCIS	United States Citizenship and Immigration Services
DHS	Department of Homeland Security

[PM Modi is barai bhai,who offers warmth and wisdom.his legacy is also personal-The Indian Express Ideas Page](#)

International relations

Easy Explanation



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Bhutan Prime Minister Tshering Tobgay wrote that Prime Minister Narendra Modi has become India's longest continuously serving elected Prime Minister, completing 4,399 days in office. He described this achievement not only as a political milestone but also as something personal, calling Modi his "barai bhai" (elder brother), a term signifying affection, trust and guidance in Bhutanese culture.

Tobgay recalled that Modi's first foreign visit after assuming office in 2014 was to Bhutan, which reinforced the special relationship between the two countries. He praised Modi's personal warmth, dedication to public service and support for Bhutan's development. The article highlights how India-Bhutan ties have deepened under the leadership of King Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck and PM Modi, especially through cooperation on Bhutan's long-term development goals, including the Gelephu Mindfulness City project.

Key Takeaways

1. Historic Political Milestone

- Narendra Modi became the longest-serving elected Prime Minister in India with 4,399 continuous days in office.
- The achievement reflects sustained electoral support.

2. Personal Bond with Bhutan PM

- Bhutan Prime Minister Tshering Tobgay described Modi as his "barai bhai" or elder brother.
- He highlighted their friendship and mentorship.

3. First Overseas Visit to Bhutan

- Modi chose Bhutan for his first foreign visit in 2014.
- This reaffirmed the special relationship between the two countries.

4. Leadership and Public Service

- Tobgay praised Modi's discipline, energy and commitment to public welfare.
- He said these qualities have inspired him as a fellow public servant.

5. India's Growing Global Role

- Under Modi, India has expanded its economic influence and technological capabilities.
- India has also emerged as an important voice for the Global South.

6. Strong India-Bhutan Partnership

- Bilateral ties have deepened under the leadership of Bhutan's King and PM Modi.
- Cooperation extends beyond immediate development priorities.

7. Support for Gelephu Mindfulness City

- Modi has backed Bhutan's Gelephu Mindfulness City initiative.
- The project aims to promote long-term peace, prosperity and opportunities for future generations.

Important Terms

Term	Meaning
Barai Bhai	Bhutanese expression meaning elder brother, symbolising trust and guidance





Global South	Developing countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America with shared developmental concerns
Gelephu Mindfulness City	Bhutan's proposed economic and sustainable development hub
Neighbourhood First Policy	India's approach of prioritising relations with neighbouring countries
Public Service	Work aimed at promoting the welfare and development of society

[Argumentative Indian must also listen, spirit of samvad must not be lost-The Indian Express Ideas Page](#)

International relations

Easy Explanation

The article argues that Indians often focus too much on winning arguments instead of learning from others. It cites a Chinese scholar's experience where Vietnamese participants openly accepted criticism and tried to learn from China's experience, whereas many Indian participants became defensive and argumentative. According to the author, India's ancient tradition of *samvad* (constructive dialogue) aimed at discovering truth, but today debates often become contests to prove oneself right.

The author believes this tendency partly comes from historical experiences and a desire to defend national pride. However, constantly trying to counter every criticism may prevent India from gaining useful insights. True confidence, the article says, lies in listening carefully, accepting uncomfortable ideas, and using them for improvement rather than treating every disagreement as an attack.

Key Takeaways

1. Difference in Approaches

- A Chinese scholar observed that Vietnamese audiences were more receptive to criticism than Indian audiences.
- Indians often tried to challenge every comparison with China.

2. Tradition of Samvad

- Ancient Indian traditions valued debate for discovering truth.
- Modern debates sometimes prioritise victory over learning.

3. Role of Historical Insecurity

- Colonial experiences and the struggle for recognition have created a tendency to defend India's image.
- Criticism is often viewed as an attack rather than objective feedback.

4. Costs of Excessive Argumentation

- Winning arguments may come at the cost of losing valuable opportunities for learning.
- Defensive attitudes can limit intellectual growth and strategic thinking.

5. Need for Strategic Confidence

- Real confidence lies in accepting criticism without feeling threatened.
- Constructive engagement is more useful than constant rebuttal.



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6. Importance for India's Global Aspirations

- Success in areas such as the "China+1" strategy requires openness to new ideas and collaboration.
- Leadership in a globalised world depends on learning and adaptability.

7. Balancing Debate with Listening

- India need not abandon its argumentative tradition.
- The spirit of *samvad* should focus on understanding and problem-solving rather than merely defeating others.

Important Terms

Term	Meaning
Samvad	Constructive dialogue aimed at discovering truth through discussion
China+1 Strategy	Diversification strategy where countries reduce dependence on China by investing elsewhere
Guru-Shishya Parampara	Traditional Indian teacher-disciple system of knowledge transmission
Strategic Culture	Collective mindset that shapes a country's approach to decisions and challenges
Intellectual Echo Chamber	A situation where only similar views are reinforced and alternative perspectives are ignored

[The reality behind falling net FDI-The Hindu Text and Context](#)

Economy

Easy Explanation

India's net Foreign Direct Investment (FDI), which measures the difference between foreign money entering and leaving the country, has fallen sharply in recent years. While some critics see this as a sign of economic weakness, others point out that gross FDI inflows remain strong. However, the article argues that both sides are focusing too much on headline figures and ignoring the changing nature of foreign investment.

Not all FDI is the same. Traditional multinational companies usually invest for the long term and bring technology and managerial expertise. But a large share of recent inflows has come from financial investors such as private equity and venture capital funds, whose main objective is to earn profits and exit after some years. When these investors sell their stakes, large amounts of money flow out of the country, reducing net FDI.

The article also notes that some transactions counted as FDI do not involve fresh money entering India. They may simply reflect corporate restructuring, mergers, share swaps, or conversion of loans into equity. Moreover, dividend payments, royalty payments and capital repatriation by foreign investors have increased significantly. Therefore, the real issue is not just the quantity of FDI coming into India, but its quality, composition and long-term impact on industrial development and external stability.

Key Takeaways



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1. Sharp Fall in Net FDI

- Net FDI fell from \$44 billion in 2020-21 to below \$1 billion in 2024-25.
- It recovered slightly to \$7.6 billion in 2025-26 despite gross inflows of \$94.6 billion.

2. Three Types of FDI

- Real FDI comes from multinational firms and usually brings technology and long-term commitment.
- Financial investors focus mainly on returns and planned exits.
- Diaspora investments and Special Purpose Vehicles (SPVs) form the third category.

3. Financial Investors Cause Large Outflows

- Private equity and venture capital firms often sell their investments after earning profits.
- Such exits lead to significant capital repatriation and lower net FDI.

4. Manufacturing FDI Has Weakened

- Real FDI into manufacturing has declined over successive periods.
- Manufacturing accounted for only a small share of recent effective inflows.

5. Gross FDI Figures Can Be Misleading

- Some FDI entries involve mergers, share swaps and conversion of loans into equity.
- These transactions do not bring fresh capital into the country.

6. Outflows Exceed Fresh Inflows

- Disinvestment, dividends and royalty payments together generated large outflows.
- For every dollar of fresh FDI entering India, about \$1.50 flowed out during 2022-23 to 2025-26.

7. Need to Focus on Quality of FDI

- Different investors have different objectives and impacts.
- Policymakers should assess technology transfer, industrial development and external sustainability rather than merely headline FDI numbers.

Important Terms

Term	Meaning
Net FDI	Difference between FDI inflows and outflows after accounting for repatriation
Balance of Payments (BoP)	Record of all economic transactions between a country and the rest of the world
Private Equity (PE)	Investment funds that buy stakes in companies with the aim of earning profits
Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV)	A separate legal entity created for specific financial or investment purposes





Outward Foreign Direct Investment (OFDI) Investment made by Indian companies in foreign countries

[No 'obesity gene': your genetic makeup is not a fixed destiny-The Hindu Science](#)

Science and technology

Easy Explanation

Scientists have identified many genes that are associated with obesity and several other diseases. This has led to the popular belief that people inherit an "obesity gene" and that their health is predetermined. However, researchers emphasise that genes are not destiny. In most cases, genes only influence a person's susceptibility to disease and do not guarantee that the disease will occur. There is no single gene that makes someone obese.

Most common diseases such as obesity, diabetes, heart disease, and schizophrenia are polygenic, meaning they are influenced by the combined effect of hundreds of genes, each having only a small impact. In addition, environmental and lifestyle factors such as diet, exercise, sleep, stress, and living conditions play an equally important role in determining health outcomes.

Scientists have also found that genes do not work in isolation. Through a process called epigenetics, lifestyle and environmental factors can influence how genes are expressed. This means that even individuals with a higher genetic risk can reduce their chances of developing obesity and other diseases by adopting healthy habits. Regular physical activity, balanced nutrition, and a healthy lifestyle can significantly lower the effect of genetic predisposition.

Genetic research remains valuable because it helps scientists understand diseases better and develop new treatments. Genetic testing can also help identify certain inherited conditions. However, experts caution that test results should be interpreted carefully, preferably with genetic counselling, because a person's genetic makeup is not a fixed destiny and health is shaped by both nature and nurture.

Key Takeaways

1. Genes Are Not Destiny

- Gene mutations increase susceptibility to diseases but do not guarantee illness.
- Lifestyle and environmental factors also influence health.

2. Mutations Can Affect Disease Risk

- Mutations are changes in DNA that may alter protein function.
- Some mutations are associated with diseases like Huntington's disease and diabetes.

3. Most Common Diseases Are Polygenic

- Obesity, diabetes and schizophrenia involve hundreds of genes.
- No single gene alone determines these diseases.

4. No Single 'Obesity Gene' Exists

- Even the FTO gene, often called the obesity gene, has only a modest effect.
- Multiple genes and external factors together shape obesity risk.

5. Epigenetics Plays a Major Role

- Diet, exercise, stress and environment influence gene expression.
- Healthy behaviour can reduce genetic risk.

6. Genetic Research Helps Develop Treatments

- Studying genes helps scientists understand disease mechanisms.



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- It has led to therapies such as PCSK9 inhibitors for reducing heart disease risk.

7. Genetic Tests Need Careful Interpretation

- Genetic tests are useful in some specific conditions, especially rare inherited disorders.
- Genetic counselling is important to understand and manage the results.

Important Terms

Term	Meaning
Genome	Complete set of DNA present in an organism
Mutation	Change in DNA sequence that may affect disease risk
Polygenic Disease	Disease influenced by many genes together
Epigenetics	Influence of environment and lifestyle on gene activity
Genetic Counselling	Professional guidance to interpret genetic test results

[World Cup's mascot axolotl nowhere in Mexico City-The Hindu Science](#)

Environment

Easy Explanation

As Mexico City prepares to host matches during the FIFA World Cup, the axolotl — a unique salamander native to the region — has become a popular symbol and unofficial mascot. Images of the animal have appeared across the city to attract visitors and celebrate local culture. However, many residents and scientists argue that this publicity contrasts sharply with the grim reality that the species is critically endangered and may be disappearing from the wild.

The axolotl traditionally lived in the canals and floating agricultural islands (chinampas) of Xochimilco, a remnant of the ancient lake system on which the Aztec capital of Tenochtitlan was built. Rapid urbanisation, polluted water, habitat destruction, and growing tourism have severely damaged its ecosystem. Scientists who began a new census in 2024 have not found a single wild axolotl so far, highlighting the seriousness of the crisis.

Apart from untreated wastewater, the conversion of chinampas into football grounds and overcrowding due to tourism linked to the World Cup have added new pressures. Although axolotls are bred in captivity and are important for scientific research because of their extraordinary ability to regenerate body parts, experts warn that their natural habitat is disappearing. They argue that symbolic celebrations must be accompanied by concrete conservation measures if the species is to survive in the wild.

Key Takeaways

1. Axolotl Is the Unofficial World Cup Symbol

- Mexico City has widely used the axolotl's image during World Cup preparations.
- The species is native to the region and holds cultural significance.



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2. Axolotl Is Critically Endangered

- Scientists have recorded a sharp decline in wild populations.
- A recent survey has not found any wild axolotls so far.

3. Xochimilco Is Its Last Natural Habitat

- The species survives mainly in the canals of Xochimilco.
- These canals are remnants of the ancient Aztec lake system.

4. Pollution Threatens Survival

- Untreated wastewater has severely degraded water quality.
- Axolotls absorb oxygen through their skin, making them highly vulnerable.

5. Tourism and Urbanisation Add Pressure

- Expansion of tourism and infrastructure is damaging the ecosystem.
- Some chinampas are being converted for recreational activities.

6. Axolotls Have Scientific Importance

- They possess remarkable regenerative abilities.
- Scientists study them for insights into cancer and regenerative medicine.

7. Conservation Needs More Than Symbolism

- Public awareness alone is insufficient.
- Experts call for stronger habitat protection and restoration efforts.

Important Terms

Term

Meaning

Axolotl (*Ambystoma mexicanum*) A salamander species native to Mexico that remains aquatic throughout its life

Xochimilco Canal network in southern Mexico City and the last major habitat of wild axolotls

Chinampas Traditional floating agricultural islands developed by the Aztecs

Critical Endangerment Conservation status indicating extremely high risk of extinction

Regenerative Medicine Field of medicine studying the repair and regeneration of tissues and organs

[Foreseeable accidents-The Hindu Editorial](#)

Governance



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Easy Explanation

Recent industrial accidents in Surat and Visakhapatnam have highlighted serious shortcomings in workplace safety in India. In Surat, four workers died after entering a **septic tank** and inhaling toxic gases, while in Visakhapatnam, nine workers were killed in an explosion at a steel plant. Although these incidents occurred under different circumstances, experts point out that both were preventable because the hazards involved are already well known and industries have established safety procedures to deal with them.

In the case of **confined spaces** such as septic tanks, industries are expected to ensure proper ventilation, protective equipment, rescue personnel, and communication systems. Similarly, steel plants operate in hazardous environments involving extreme temperatures, pressurised gases, and heavy machinery, requiring regular maintenance and strict safety standards. Failure to follow these precautions can lead to fatal accidents.

Trade unions and safety experts argue that deeper structural issues are responsible for such incidents. These include staff shortages, ageing equipment, delayed maintenance, excessive workloads, and increasing dependence on **contract labour**. Such workers often receive less training and operate under systems with weak accountability, making them more vulnerable to workplace hazards.

The accidents also reveal broader problems such as inadequate implementation of **occupational safety** laws, manpower shortages, and a tendency among financially stressed industries to prioritise cost reduction over worker safety. Thus, these tragedies are not isolated mishaps but symptoms of long-standing weaknesses in industrial safety management.

Key Takeaways

1. Recent Accidents Were Preventable

- Deaths occurred in Surat and Visakhapatnam within days of each other.
- The risks involved were already well known to industry.

2. Septic Tank Deaths Reflect Safety Failures

- Workers died after exposure to toxic gases in a confined space.
- Proper ventilation and protective gear could have prevented the tragedy.

3. Steel Plants Require Strict Safety Measures

- Steelmaking involves extreme heat, pressure, and heavy machinery.
- Small failures can result in multiple casualties.

4. Organisational Weaknesses Cause Major Accidents

- Poor maintenance and excessive workloads increase risks.
- Safety failures usually accumulate over time.

5. Contract Labour Faces Greater Risks

- Contract workers often receive less training.
- Fragmented accountability weakens workplace safety.

6. Occupational Safety Reforms Remain Incomplete

- New labour safety frameworks are being implemented unevenly.
- Many industries still suffer from manpower shortages and ageing infrastructure.

7. Cost Over Safety Remains a Major Problem

- Financially stressed units often compromise on safety measures.
- Vulnerable groups continue to bear disproportionate occupational risks.

Important Terms



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Term	Meaning
Confined Space	An enclosed area with limited entry and ventilation where toxic gases may accumulate
Manual Scavenging	Hazardous cleaning of sewers or septic tanks by humans
Contract Labour	Workers hired through contractors rather than directly by employers
Occupational Safety	Measures aimed at protecting workers from workplace hazards
Deferred Maintenance	Delay in repairing or servicing equipment, increasing accident risks

[The forgotten copilot of Air India flight 171-The Hindu Editorial](#)

Governance

Easy Explanation

A year after the crash of Air India Flight AI-171, which killed 260 people, concerns remain over the lack of a final investigation report. Only a preliminary report has been released, leading to debates and speculation about the actual cause of the accident. The author argues that the authorities have not provided sufficient transparency and that the families of the victims still lack closure.

According to the preliminary report, the aircraft's **Fuel Control Switches (FCS)** moved from the "run" position to the "cut-off" position, causing both engines to lose power. Since these switches are mechanically operated and protected by a locking mechanism, the author argues that they could not have been moved by a software glitch or electrical failure. The report also mentions a cockpit conversation in which one pilot asked the other why he had cut off the engines, while the other denied doing so.

Another point of debate concerns the deployment of the **Ram Air Turbine (RAT)**, an emergency backup system that provides hydraulic and electrical power when the main engines fail. Some experts have suggested that electrical or wiring faults triggered the RAT, but the author argues that this explanation distracts from the central question of why the engines were shut down. He contends that the **Cockpit Voice Recorder (CVR)** and the **Enhanced Airborne Flight Recorder (EAFR)** should provide the answer.

The article also highlights the role of First Officer Clive Kunder, who, despite limited experience on the aircraft type, is credited with steering the powerless aircraft away from densely populated areas, thereby preventing even greater loss of life. The author concludes that only a full and transparent disclosure of the investigation findings can provide closure to the families of the victims and maintain confidence in India's aviation safety system.

Key Takeaways

1. Final Investigation Report Is Still Pending

- Only a preliminary report has been released.
- Families of victims continue to await closure.

2. Fuel Control Switches Are Central to the Investigation



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- Both engine switches reportedly moved from "run" to "cut-off".
- The switches require deliberate mechanical operation.

3. Software Failure Theory Is Questioned

- The author argues that software or power failures could not have moved the switches.
- Attention should remain on the sequence of cockpit events.

4. Ram Air Turbine Debate Has Emerged

- RAT is an emergency backup system.
- Some experts attribute its deployment to technical faults.

5. Cockpit Recorders Hold Crucial Evidence

- The **CVR** records cockpit conversations.
- The **EAFR** stores flight and voice data needed for investigation.

6. Co-pilot Clive Kunder Is Credited for His Actions

- He reportedly controlled the aircraft under extreme conditions.
- His actions may have reduced casualties on the ground.

7. Transparency Is Essential for Public Trust

- Delays and speculation can damage confidence in aviation authorities.
- Victims' families deserve clear and factual findings.

Important Terms

Term	Meaning
Fuel Control Switch (FCS)	Cockpit switch used to start or shut down aircraft engines
Cockpit Voice Recorder (CVR)	Device that records conversations and sounds inside the cockpit
Enhanced Airborne Flight Recorder (EAFR)	Recorder that stores flight data and cockpit audio information
Ram Air Turbine (RAT)	Emergency device that provides backup hydraulic and electrical power
National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB)	U.S. agency responsible for investigating transportation accidents

12th June 2026

[In PoK protests, weight of history, woes of the present-The Indian Express Explained Page](#)



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Easy Explanation

Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK) is witnessing major protests that have resulted in several deaths and a strong crackdown by Pakistani authorities. The protests initially began in 2023 over rising electricity bills and shortages of subsidised wheat. Residents argue that since the **Mangla Dam** in PoK generates substantial hydropower, they should receive cheaper electricity. They also resent the privileges enjoyed by government officials amid Pakistan's economic crisis.

The protests are being led by the **Joint Awami Action Committee (JAAC)**, a coalition of traders, professionals and civil society activists. However, the movement has gradually evolved beyond economic issues into a larger struggle against political marginalisation and Islamabad's control over the region.

A major trigger for the latest unrest has been the controversy over **12 seats reserved in the PoK Legislative Assembly for refugees from Jammu and Kashmir who settled in different parts of Pakistan**. These representatives are elected outside PoK, and locals allege that the seats allow Pakistan's federal government and military to influence the Assembly. A recent PoK Supreme Court verdict upholding this arrangement further intensified protests.

Pakistan has responded with a ban on JAAC, arrests of leaders under charges of terrorism and sedition, and a violent crackdown on demonstrators.

The article also discusses **Gilgit-Baltistan**, another region under Pakistani control. Like PoK, it suffers from underdevelopment and demands for greater political rights. Unlike PoK, some sections of its population favour full integration with Pakistan. The region has strategic importance because the **China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC)** passes through it.

India maintains that PoK and Gilgit-Baltistan are integral parts of India and has objected to Pakistan's attempts to alter the status of these territories.

Key Takeaways

- Economic grievances**
 - Rising electricity tariffs and shortage of subsidised wheat triggered the protests.
 - Residents argue that they deserve cheaper electricity because of the Mangla hydropower project.
 - Pakistan's economic difficulties have increased public dissatisfaction.
- Demand for greater political autonomy**
 - People complain of excessive control by Islamabad.
 - Local institutions are perceived to lack real autonomy.
 - Long-standing underdevelopment has deepened resentment.
- Controversy over reserved Assembly seats**
 - Twelve seats are reserved for refugees settled in Pakistan.
 - Elections for these seats are conducted outside PoK.
 - Locals believe these seats strengthen federal influence over the Assembly.
- Supreme Court verdict became a flashpoint**
 - The PoK Supreme Court upheld the reservation arrangement.
 - Protesters sought abolition of the reserved seats.
 - The verdict intensified existing tensions.
- Harsh government response**
 - The Joint Awami Action Committee (JAAC) has been banned.
 - Protest leaders have been charged with terrorism and sedition.
 - Violent clashes have resulted in casualties and attracted international attention.
- Situation in Gilgit-Baltistan**
 - The region also faces problems of underdevelopment and inadequate political representation.
 - Sectarian tensions have affected social stability.
 - Some groups demand complete integration with Pakistan.
- Strategic and geopolitical implications**
 - India considers PoK and Gilgit-Baltistan as integral parts of India.
 - The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) passes through Gilgit-Baltistan.
 - Pakistan has avoided granting full provincial status to Gilgit-Baltistan because of the Kashmir dispute.

Important Terms



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Term	Meaning
Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK)	Territory of the former princely state of Jammu and Kashmir under Pakistani administration but claimed by India.
Joint Awami Action Committee (JAAC)	Coalition of traders, professionals and activists leading the protests in PoK.
Mangla Dam	Major hydropower project on the Jhelum River located in PoK.
Gilgit-Baltistan	Northern region under Pakistani control and a crucial corridor for CPEC.
China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC)	A flagship Belt and Road Initiative project connecting China with Pakistan through Gilgit-Baltistan.

[Why Khurram Parvez got bail despite stringent UaPa conditions-The Indian Express Explained Page](#)

Polity

Easy Explanation

The Delhi High Court granted bail to **Khurram Parvez**, a Kashmiri human rights activist, in a terror-conspiracy case investigated by the National Investigation Agency (NIA). He had been in custody for nearly four and a half years after being arrested in November 2021 under the **Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA)**.

Normally, obtaining bail under the UAPA is extremely difficult because **Section 43D(5)** places stringent restrictions. Bail can be denied if the court finds that the accusations appear to be *prima facie true*. However, the High Court held that constitutional rights under **Article 21 (Right to Life and Personal Liberty)** must be balanced against these statutory restrictions.

The court noted that Parvez had spent a long time in prison, the trial had progressed very slowly, and there was little likelihood of its early completion. It emphasized that prolonged incarceration without conclusion of trial could violate Article 21 and, in such circumstances, constitutional protections may override the restrictions imposed by Section 43D(5) of the UAPA.

The prosecution alleged that Parvez was part of a conspiracy linked to the banned terrorist organization **Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT)** and had collected information regarding army movements near the Line of Control. Parvez denied these allegations, arguing that his work involved fact-finding, research and documentation of human rights issues.

The High Court relied on the Supreme Court's judgment in **Union of India v. K.A. Najeeb (2021)**, which held that constitutional courts can grant bail when prolonged detention and delay in trial threaten fundamental rights. However, Parvez will continue to remain in prison because he is also an accused in another NIA case of 2020, where his bail application is still pending.

The case highlights the continuing debate over balancing **national security concerns with the protection of individual liberty and the right to a speedy trial**.

Key Takeaways

1. **Delhi High Court granted bail**



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- Khurram Parvez was granted bail after spending around four and a half years in custody.
 - The case relates to a terror-conspiracy investigation by the NIA.
 - He remains in jail because of another pending case.
2. **Stringent provisions under UAPA**
 - Section 43D(5) imposes strict conditions for granting bail.
 - Courts generally refuse bail if accusations appear prima facie true.
 - The threshold for bail is much higher than in ordinary criminal cases.
 3. **Importance of Article 21**
 - Article 21 guarantees the right to life and personal liberty.
 - It includes the right to a fair and speedy trial.
 - Constitutional rights may outweigh statutory restrictions in exceptional cases.
 4. **Delay in trial influenced the decision**
 - The trial had made little progress despite years of incarceration.
 - Arguments were still being heard and evidence had not been fully tested.
 - The court considered prolonged imprisonment unjustified.
 5. **Reliance on K.A. Najeed judgment**
 - The High Court referred to the Supreme Court's ruling in *Union of India v. K.A. Najeed* (2021).
 - The judgment recognized the power of constitutional courts to grant bail despite UAPA restrictions.
 - It emphasized protection of fundamental rights against indefinite detention.
 6. **Evidence against the accused remains subject to trial**
 - The prosecution relied significantly on statements of a co-accused turned approver.
 - Such evidence is yet to be tested during the trial.
 - Final determination of guilt will occur only after completion of proceedings.
 7. **Balancing liberty and national security**
 - UAPA aims to address terrorism and threats to national security.
 - Courts must also safeguard individual freedoms and due process.
 - The evolving jurisprudence reflects an attempt to balance these competing concerns.

Important Terms

Term	Meaning
UAPA (Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act), 1967	India's principal anti-terror law dealing with unlawful and terrorist activities.
Section 43D(5)	Provision under UAPA imposing stringent conditions for granting bail.
Article 21	Fundamental Right guaranteeing life and personal liberty, including the right to a speedy trial.
NIA (National Investigation Agency)	India's premier counter-terrorism investigative agency.
Union of India v. K.A. Najeed (2021)	Supreme Court judgment holding that prolonged incarceration and delayed trial can justify bail despite UAPA restrictions.

[Amid uncertainty over AI171 report, a look at the key theories behind the crash-The Indian Express Explained](#)
[Page](#)



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Easy Explanation

Friday marks one year since the crash of **Air India Flight AI171**, a Boeing 787-8 Dreamliner, which claimed 260 lives. The anniversary is significant because aircraft accident investigators generally release important findings around this time. However, India's **Aircraft Accident Investigation Bureau (AAIB)** may only issue an interim report or status update, as the final report is still awaiting detailed technical analysis in the United States.

According to the AAIB's preliminary report, the immediate trigger for the crash was that both engine **fuel control switches** moved from the '**RUN**' position to the '**CUTOFF**' position almost immediately after take-off from Ahmedabad. This interrupted fuel supply to both engines.

The major unresolved question is how these switches transitioned. Two competing theories have emerged. One theory suggests that one of the pilots may have manually moved the switches, either deliberately or inadvertently. This interpretation gained attention after cockpit voice recordings revealed one pilot asking the other why he had cut off the fuel, while the other denied doing so. Some Western media reports speculated that the investigation was focusing on pilot action.

However, pilot associations and several aviation experts have opposed this interpretation. They argue that the preliminary report never stated that either pilot physically moved the switches. Instead, another theory suggests that a major electrical or systems failure could have caused the aircraft's systems to register the switches as having moved to 'CUTOFF', even if they had not physically changed position.

Adding to these concerns, a US-based aviation safety group and Boeing whistleblowers have alleged that some Boeing 787 aircraft suffer from engineering and manufacturing defects and persistent electrical-system problems. These "latent defects" have been suggested as a possible factor in the accident.

Since air crash investigations are highly complex and often take years to complete, experts emphasize that no conclusions should be drawn until the final AAIB report is released.

Key Takeaways

1. **One year since the AI171 crash**
 - The Boeing 787-8 Dreamliner crash killed 260 people.
 - The first anniversary has renewed focus on the investigation.
 - The final report may be delayed by several months.
2. **Immediate trigger identified**
 - Both fuel control switches transitioned from 'RUN' to 'CUTOFF' shortly after take-off.
 - This disrupted fuel supply to the engines.
 - The exact reason for the transition remains unknown.
3. **Pilot action theory**
 - Some interpretations suggest that one of the pilots may have moved the switches.
 - Cockpit voice recordings have fuelled such speculation.
 - Certain Western media reports focused on deliberate pilot action.
4. **Electrical or systems failure theory**
 - Aviation experts have proposed the possibility of a catastrophic electrical failure.
 - Such a malfunction could have produced signals indicating switch movement without physical movement.
 - Pilot bodies have supported further examination of this possibility.
5. **AAIB has not blamed the pilots**
 - The preliminary report did not conclude that the pilots physically moved the switches.
 - The AAIB has cautioned against premature conclusions.
 - Investigators continue to examine all possible causes.
6. **Concerns regarding Boeing 787 safety**
 - Whistleblowers have alleged persistent defects in the Boeing 787 fleet.
 - Engineering and maintenance problems have been highlighted.
 - Electrical system vulnerabilities are under scrutiny.
7. **Air crash investigations are lengthy processes**
 - There is no mandatory deadline for releasing the final report.
 - Detailed technical analysis is still being conducted in the United States.
 - Investigations often take years before reaching definitive conclusions.





Important Terms

Term	Meaning
AAIB (Aircraft Accident Investigation Bureau)	India's agency responsible for investigating aircraft accidents and incidents.
Fuel Control Switch	A cockpit switch that regulates fuel supply to an aircraft engine.
Cockpit Voice Recorder (CVR)	Device that records conversations and sounds inside the cockpit to aid accident investigations.
Flight Data Recorder (FDR)	Instrument that records technical and operational data of an aircraft during flight.
Latent Defects	Hidden flaws in design, manufacturing or systems that may remain undetected until they contribute to failure.

[How NRIs can make equity-like returns—from bank deposits-The Indian Express Explained Page](#)

Economy

Easy Explanation

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has introduced a **Foreign Currency Non-Resident (Bank) [FCNR(B)] deposit swap scheme** to attract foreign currency inflows into India. Under this scheme, banks have started offering higher interest rates to Non-Resident Indians (NRIs). For example, some banks are offering returns between **6% and 6.6%** on deposits with maturities of three to five years.

What makes this scheme especially attractive is the possibility of using **financial leverage**. Leverage means borrowing money to invest a larger amount than one's own capital. Suppose an NRI invests \$1 million of personal funds and borrows an additional \$10 million from a foreign bank at a lower interest rate (say 4.5%). The entire \$11 million is then invested in FCNR(B) deposits earning 6%.

Because the return on the deposit is higher than the cost of borrowing, the investor earns the difference or **spread**. Over time, this can generate returns comparable to those from equity investments. In the example cited, the NRI's original capital of \$1 million could earn an effective annual return of around 19.3%.

The ability to use leverage is facilitated by a **Letter of Credit (LoC)** issued by Indian banks. Normally, Indian banks cannot guarantee overseas borrowings, but the RBI has relaxed this restriction under the FCNR(B) swap scheme. This assurance enables foreign banks to lend money to NRIs with greater confidence.

The arrangement benefits all stakeholders. NRIs earn higher returns, foreign banks earn interest on loans, Indian banks attract deposits, and India receives valuable foreign exchange inflows that strengthen external sector stability.

Key Takeaways

1. **FCNR(B) deposits offer attractive returns**



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- Indian banks have increased interest rates on FCNR(B) deposits.
- Returns currently range from around 6% to 6.6%.
- The scheme aims to attract foreign currency inflows.
- 2. **Leverage amplifies returns**
 - Investors can borrow money and invest larger sums.
 - Higher leverage increases potential returns.
 - Returns may approach those earned from equities.
- 3. **Interest rate spread is crucial**
 - Profit depends on the difference between deposit rates and borrowing costs abroad.
 - A wider spread generates higher gains.
 - Lower foreign interest rates make the strategy more attractive.
- 4. **Letter of Credit facilitates borrowing**
 - Indian banks provide Letters of Credit under the scheme.
 - This assures foreign banks about repayment.
 - It enables NRIs to access overseas loans more easily.
- 5. **Potential for large capital inflows**
 - Analysts estimate inflows of \$50–55 billion or more.
 - Such inflows could amount to about 1.2% of India's GDP.
 - Similar schemes attracted substantial funds in 2013.
- 6. **Benefits accrue to multiple stakeholders**
 - NRIs receive enhanced returns.
 - Foreign banks earn interest income.
 - Indian banks mobilize deposits and strengthen liquidity.
- 7. **The scheme supports India's external sector**
 - Higher foreign exchange inflows improve reserves.
 - They help maintain macroeconomic stability.
 - Such measures can strengthen confidence in the Indian economy.

Important Terms

Term

Meaning

FCNR(B) Deposit	A foreign currency fixed deposit account maintained by Non-Resident Indians with Indian banks.
Leverage	Use of borrowed funds to increase the size and potential return of an investment.
Interest Rate Spread	Difference between the return earned on an investment and the cost of borrowing.
Letter of Credit (LoC)	A guarantee provided by a bank assuring repayment to the lender.
FCNR(B) Swap Scheme	RBI mechanism designed to attract foreign currency inflows and strengthen India's external position.

[Green energy can't yet bend climate curve-The Indian Express The Ideas Page](#)

Environment



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Easy Explanation

The world achieved a major milestone in 2025 as **renewable energy sources such as solar, wind and hydropower overtook fossil fuels as the dominant source of electricity generation**. Countries like India and China played a leading role in expanding clean energy capacity. However, despite this progress, global warming continued to intensify.

According to the **Indicators of Global Climate Change (IGCC) Report**, published in the journal *Earth System Science Data*, human activities caused global temperatures to rise by **1.37°C above pre-industrial levels in 2025**. This shows that increasing renewable energy alone is not sufficient to slow climate change.

The main reason is that several sectors, especially heavy industries such as steel, cement and chemicals, continue to rely heavily on fossil fuels. Transitioning these sectors to cleaner alternatives like **green hydrogen** is technologically challenging and requires substantial investment and time.

Governments can help in the short term by promoting energy-efficient technologies, encouraging recycling, reducing waste, and supporting research and development. For example, recycled aluminium consumes significantly less energy than producing aluminium from raw materials.

However, adopting green technologies involves high initial costs and requires collaboration among governments, industries and research institutions. International cooperation and technology transfer have often remained weak points in global climate action.

The report also warns that if emissions continue at current levels, the remaining **carbon budget** required to limit warming to **1.5°C**, as envisaged under the Paris Agreement, could be exhausted within the next three years. The findings come at a time when climate negotiators are meeting in Bonn amid increasing heatwaves across Europe and other parts of the world.

Thus, the challenge before policymakers is not only to expand renewable energy but also to transform industrial systems, improve energy efficiency and strengthen international cooperation.

Key Takeaways

1. **Renewable energy reached a major milestone**
 - Solar, wind and hydropower became the leading sources of electricity generation.
 - India and China played a significant role in expanding renewable capacity.
 - Clean energy deployment reached record levels.
2. **Global warming continues to rise**
 - Human activities raised global temperatures by 1.37°C in 2025.
 - Renewable energy growth has not yet been sufficient to curb emissions.
 - Climate risks continue to intensify.
3. **Industrial sectors remain dependent on fossil fuels**
 - Heavy industries continue to emit significant greenhouse gases.
 - Transitioning to cleaner technologies is complex and expensive.
 - Green hydrogen is considered a promising alternative.
4. **Energy efficiency and recycling are important**
 - Governments can encourage energy-efficient machinery.
 - Recycling reduces energy consumption and emissions.
 - Sustainable manufacturing practices can complement renewable energy.
5. **Research and technology transfer are essential**
 - Green technologies require innovation and investment.
 - Cooperation between governments and academia is necessary.
 - International technology transfer remains inadequate.
6. **Carbon budget is rapidly shrinking**
 - The remaining carbon budget for limiting warming to 1.5°C is small.
 - At current emission rates, it may be exhausted within three years.
 - Urgent mitigation measures are required.
7. **Global cooperation remains crucial**
 - Climate negotiations are continuing at the Bonn meetings.
 - Extreme weather events underscore the urgency of action.
 - Achieving Paris Agreement goals requires coordinated international efforts.

Important Terms



| Click to Connect Now.



Term	Meaning
Indicators of Global Climate Change (IGCC)	Scientific assessment tracking global warming and greenhouse gas emissions.
Carbon Budget	Maximum amount of greenhouse gases that can still be emitted while keeping warming below a specified limit.
Paris Agreement	International climate agreement aimed at limiting global temperature rise to well below 2°C and preferably 1.5°C.
Green Hydrogen	Hydrogen produced using renewable energy, considered a clean fuel for hard-to-abate sectors.
Technology Transfer	Sharing of knowledge, technologies and expertise between countries to support climate mitigation and adaptation.

[R&D underspending in India has no one cause.It's systemic as well as cultural-The Indian Express Ideas Page](#)

Economy

Easy Explanation

India's relatively low spending on **Research and Development (R&D)** is often viewed as a major obstacle to becoming an innovation-driven economy. According to the article, this problem cannot be explained by a single factor. Instead, it results from a combination of **structural, historical, financial and cultural factors**.

One reason is India's large domestic market. Since companies can grow by serving a huge internal market, they face less pressure to compete internationally. Export competition has historically pushed firms in countries such as South Korea, Japan and Germany to improve product quality and invest heavily in innovation. In contrast, Indian firms can remain profitable without making risky investments in frontier technologies.

A second factor is historical. Colonial rule contributed to the decline of India's traditional manufacturing base and encouraged commercial and trading activities over industrial production. As a result, many business communities developed strengths in trade and intermediation rather than in manufacturing and technological innovation.

Another important factor is **financialisation**. Indian companies increasingly prioritize short-term shareholder returns, dividends and stock prices instead of investing in long-term productive capabilities. Since R&D requires large investments with uncertain returns that may materialize only after several years, managers often prefer projects that boost immediate profits.

Corporate incentives also matter. Executives whose compensation depends on short-term stock performance may avoid R&D expenditure because it reduces profits in the near term, even though it enhances competitiveness over the long run.

The article also points to political and economic uncertainty. India's complex democratic structure, diverse interests and changing policy environment make long-term planning difficult. Businesses therefore apply higher "discount rates" to future returns, making long-term investments like R&D appear less attractive.



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Thus, India's R&D underinvestment is not merely an economic issue but the result of interactions among history, institutions, corporate behavior and broader socio-political factors.

Key Takeaways

1. **Multiple factors explain low R&D spending**
 - No single reason accounts for India's weak R&D intensity.
 - Structural, historical and cultural factors interact with each other.
 - The problem requires a multi-dimensional understanding.
2. **Large domestic market reduces competitive pressure**
 - Firms can grow by serving India's vast internal market.
 - Limited export competition weakens incentives for innovation.
 - This phenomenon resembles the "Dutch Disease" effect.
3. **Historical legacy shaped business orientation**
 - Colonial de-industrialisation weakened manufacturing capabilities.
 - Commercial and trading traditions became more prominent.
 - Production and technological innovation received less emphasis.
4. **Financialisation encourages short-termism**
 - Companies increasingly prioritize shareholder returns.
 - Dividends and stock performance often take precedence over capability-building.
 - Long-term investments in R&D tend to suffer.
5. **Corporate incentives discourage innovation**
 - Executive compensation is frequently linked to short-term performance.
 - Managers may avoid projects with delayed returns.
 - R&D expenditure appears costly in the near term.
6. **Uncertainty raises the cost of long-term investments**
 - Political and economic uncertainties affect business decisions.
 - Firms apply higher discount rates to future returns.
 - This reduces the attractiveness of R&D investments.
7. **Strengthening innovation requires systemic reforms**
 - Increasing R&D expenditure involves more than financial incentives.
 - Institutional stability and manufacturing depth are essential.
 - Long-term competitiveness depends on sustained capability building.

Important Terms

Term	Meaning
Research and Development (R&D)	Activities aimed at creating new products, technologies and processes through innovation.
Financialisation	Increasing dominance of financial motives and shareholder returns over productive investments.
Dutch Disease	A situation where one advantage or abundance reduces competitiveness in other sectors.
Discount Rate	Rate used to determine the present value of future returns; higher rates discourage long-term investments.



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**De-industrialisation**

Decline of manufacturing activity and industrial capabilities in an economy.

[Why is Nicobar debating elections?-The Hindu Text and Context](#)

Polity**Easy Explanation**

The Nicobarese tribal community of the Andaman and Nicobar Islands is debating the introduction of a formal electoral system for its traditional self-governance institutions. The issue has emerged after the administration notified the **Draft Andaman and Nicobar Islands Tribal Councils (Preparation of Electoral Rolls and Conduct of Elections) Rules, 2026**.

The draft rules propose regular five-year elections for Village Councils and Tribal Councils, along with electoral rolls, constituency delimitation, and reservation of seats and leadership positions for women. Under the new structure, villagers would elect village captains and directly vote for the Chief Captain of Island Tribal Councils.

The proposed rules derive their authority from the **Andaman and Nicobar Islands (Tribal Councils) Regulation, 2009**, which was enacted to provide autonomous self-governance to the Nicobarese community. However, the regulation also gives district authorities wide powers to override decisions of the councils.

At present, the Nicobarese follow a largely consensus-based system of governance. Villages choose their captains whenever the community feels the need for it rather than through fixed electoral cycles. Decisions are usually taken through community meetings, and captains act more as coordinators and representatives than as lawmakers with unilateral powers.

Many tribal leaders fear that the new rules would bureaucratised their traditional institutions and impose a rigid administrative structure on a system that has evolved organically over generations. Some have also expressed concerns that the move could be linked to the Centre's ambitious ₹91,000-crore Great Nicobar infrastructure project, which has faced opposition from the existing tribal leadership.

Another concern is that the community may not have been adequately consulted and may lack sufficient time and resources to fully understand the implications of the proposed changes. Opposition parties have also criticized the draft for ignoring the traditional **Tuhet** (joint family) system.

Key Takeaways

- Draft rules propose formal elections**
 - Five-yearly elections are proposed for Village and Tribal Councils.
 - Electoral rolls and constituency delimitation would be introduced.
 - Seats and leadership positions would be reserved for women.
- Current governance is consensus-based**
 - Leadership changes occur when communities feel the need.
 - Village meetings and local ballots determine captains.
 - Decision-making relies on consultation rather than majority rule alone.
- Traditional institutions evolved historically**
 - The captaincy system dates back several centuries.
 - Tribal councils emerged in the 1990s to facilitate development programmes.
 - They act as links between the administration and tribal communities.
- The 2009 Regulation provides legal backing**
 - The proposed rules are framed under the Andaman and Nicobar Islands (Tribal Councils) Regulation, 2009.
 - The regulation intended to promote self-governance.
 - It also grants extensive powers to district authorities to override council decisions.
- Concerns about bureaucratisation**
 - Tribal leaders fear the new system may undermine traditional governance.
 - Administrative procedures could replace flexible community practices.
 - Captains may be transformed into formal office holders.
- Questions over the Great Nicobar project**



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- Existing tribal leadership has opposed the Centre's mega development project.
- Some suspect the new rules may alter the balance of power.
- The timing of the proposal has generated political debate.

7. **Demand for greater consultation**

- Community members seek wider discussions on the draft rules.
- Critics argue that traditional institutions like the Tuhet system have been ignored.
- Suggestions and objections have been invited before finalisation.

Important Terms

Term	Meaning
Nicobarese	Scheduled Tribe inhabiting the Nicobar Islands with a population of about 30,000.
Tribal Council	Traditional institution representing the Nicobarese community and coordinating with the administration.
Village Captain	Traditional village leader chosen through community consensus or elections.
Tuhet System	Traditional Nicobarese social structure based on large joint families.
Andaman and Nicobar Islands (Tribal Councils) Regulation, 2009	Presidential regulation establishing the framework for tribal self-governance in the islands.

[Contraceptive use and the weight women carry: insights from NFHS-6-The Hindu Health](#)

Sociology

Easy Explanation

The findings of **NFHS-6 (2023–24)** show that contraception in India should no longer be viewed merely as a tool for controlling population growth. Instead, it is increasingly linked to **women's reproductive agency**, i.e., their ability to decide whether, when, and how many children to have. Despite progress, women continue to bear a disproportionate burden of contraception and reproductive responsibilities.

India was the first country to launch an official family planning programme in 1952. However, the programme historically relied heavily on women, especially through female sterilisation. NFHS-6 shows that female sterilisation remains the most widely used contraceptive method, accounting for **36.5%** of contraceptive use nationally, while male sterilisation remains extremely low at **0.5%**.

Another concern highlighted by the survey is the persistence of **early marriage**. About 20.1% of women aged 20–24 were married before the age of 18, with the figure being even higher in rural areas. Early marriage lengthens women's reproductive years and often leads to early pregnancies, higher fertility, maternal health risks, and reduced educational and economic opportunities.



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The survey also reveals a significant rural-urban divide. Urban women generally marry later, have greater educational attainment, and have access to more contraceptive choices. Rural women often have limited agency and inadequate healthcare infrastructure.

Interestingly, while female sterilisation has slightly declined since NFHS-5, the use of traditional contraceptive methods has increased, whereas the use of modern reversible methods has declined. This suggests that women are moving away from permanent methods but are not necessarily gaining access to safer and scientifically supported reversible contraceptives.

The article argues that improving reproductive health requires addressing deeper social inequalities. Policies should focus on preventing child marriage, expanding access to reversible contraceptives, strengthening community-based healthcare, and encouraging greater male participation in family planning.

Key Takeaways

1. **Contraception is linked to reproductive agency**
 - It is increasingly viewed as a tool for women's empowerment rather than population control.
 - Reproductive choices are central to gender equality.
 - Agency over fertility affects health, education and economic opportunities.
2. **Early marriage remains a major challenge**
 - Around one-fifth of women aged 20–24 were married before 18 years.
 - Early marriage extends reproductive years and increases health risks.
 - It limits educational and economic opportunities for women.
3. **Rural women face greater disadvantages**
 - Rural areas have higher rates of child marriage and teenage pregnancies.
 - Access to healthcare and contraceptive options is relatively limited.
 - Women's decision-making power is often constrained.
4. **Female sterilisation dominates contraception**
 - Female sterilisation accounts for 36.5% of contraceptive use.
 - Male sterilisation remains negligible at 0.5%.
 - The burden of family planning falls disproportionately on women.
5. **Shift away from sterilisation is incomplete**
 - Female sterilisation has declined marginally since NFHS-5.
 - Use of traditional methods has increased significantly.
 - Adoption of modern reversible contraceptives has declined.
6. **Public health concerns persist**
 - Unsafe or poorly managed sterilisation procedures can lead to complications.
 - Overburdened healthcare facilities affect quality of care.
 - Informed choice and scientific counselling remain inadequate.
7. **Policy should promote reproductive rights**
 - Child marriage must be addressed through education and legal enforcement.
 - Access to modern reversible contraceptives should be expanded.
 - Greater male participation in family planning is essential.

Important Terms

Term	Meaning
NFHS-6 (2023–24)	Sixth round of the National Family Health Survey providing data on health, fertility and nutrition indicators.
Reproductive Agency	The ability of individuals, especially women, to make informed decisions regarding childbearing and contraception.





Female Sterilisation (Tubectomy) Permanent contraceptive procedure involving surgical blocking of fallopian tubes.

Modern Reversible Contraceptives Temporary and scientifically approved methods such as condoms, oral pills, IUDs and injectables.

Prohibition of Child Marriage Act, 2006 Legislation aimed at preventing child marriages and protecting the rights of minors.

[Should India incentivise bigger families?-The Hindu Editorial](#)

Sociology

Easy Explanation

India's **Total Fertility Rate (TFR)** has declined to **1.9**, below the replacement level of **2.1**, with some southern States recording even lower levels (around 1.3). This has prompted a debate on whether governments should encourage larger families. Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu recently announced cash incentives for women having a third and fourth child, while other States are also considering measures to boost fertility.

Supporters of such policies argue that declining fertility could lead to a shrinking working-age population and create economic and demographic challenges in the future. Differences in fertility rates across States may also have implications for parliamentary delimitation and political representation.

However, experts caution that fertility decisions are deeply influenced by social, economic and cultural factors, and cannot easily be reversed through financial incentives. International experiences from countries such as Japan, South Korea, Singapore and several European nations show that incentives may produce only temporary increases in birth rates and often benefit mainly lower-income groups.

Another important consideration is women's empowerment and workforce participation. Countries with relatively successful fertility-support policies provide extensive parental leave, social security and childcare support. In India, many women still face low labour-force participation and limited asset ownership. Therefore, simply offering cash incentives without improving broader social conditions may not produce lasting results.

India is also expected to experience population ageing. By 2050, more than 20% of Indians may be aged 60 years or above. Experts argue that investments in healthcare, geriatric care, pensions, skill development and employment opportunities may be more effective than direct incentives for larger families.

Migration is also likely to play a significant role in addressing labour shortages. Lower-fertility States may continue to attract workers from higher-fertility States, making migration a more natural economic response than attempts to reverse demographic transitions.

Key Takeaways

1. **India's fertility rate has fallen below replacement level**
 - India's TFR has declined to 1.9.
 - Some southern States have TFRs as low as 1.3.
 - Concerns have emerged regarding future population ageing and labour shortages.
2. **States are considering pro-natalist policies**
 - Andhra Pradesh has announced cash incentives for larger families.
 - Other southern States are exploring similar approaches.
 - The objective is to encourage higher fertility.
3. **Fertility decisions are difficult to influence**
 - Childbearing choices are shaped by social and economic factors.



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- International experience shows that incentives have limited success.
- Fertility decline is generally associated with economic development.
- 4. **International examples offer mixed results**
 - Countries like Japan, South Korea and Singapore have struggled to reverse declining fertility.
 - European countries have achieved only temporary improvements.
 - Sustaining higher fertility rates remains challenging.
- 5. **Women's empowerment is crucial**
 - Higher female workforce participation supports family formation.
 - Social security, childcare and parental leave influence fertility choices.
 - Cash incentives alone may not address structural barriers.
- 6. **Population ageing requires policy preparedness**
 - By 2050, over one-fifth of Indians may be elderly.
 - Greater investment in healthcare and pensions will be needed.
 - Skill development can compensate for a smaller workforce.
- 7. **Migration may address labour shortages**
 - Lower-fertility States can attract workers from other regions.
 - Labour migration is driven by economic opportunities.
 - Demographic imbalances need not necessarily be solved by increasing birth rates.

Important Terms

Term	Meaning
Total Fertility Rate (TFR)	Average number of children a woman is expected to have during her lifetime.
Replacement Rate	Fertility level (about 2.1) required to maintain a stable population size.
Demographic Transition	Shift from high birth and death rates to low birth and death rates as economies develop.
Pro-natalist Policy	Government measures aimed at encouraging higher birth rates.
Longitudinal Ageing Study in India (LASI)	A large-scale survey examining ageing, health and social conditions among India's elderly population.

[FCRA Bill — expanding state control over civil society-The Hindu Editorial](#)

Governance

Easy Explanation

The **Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Amendment Bill, 2026** seeks to make significant changes to the regulation of foreign funding received by NGOs, charitable trusts, educational institutions, and religious bodies in India. While the government presents the Bill as a measure to enhance transparency and safeguard national security, critics argue that it substantially increases executive control over civil society organizations.



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India's FCRA framework was already tightened through the **2020 amendments**, which required foreign contributions to pass through a single SBI branch in New Delhi, reduced the limit on administrative expenses, prohibited sub-granting of funds, and expanded the government's powers to suspend organizations. These changes particularly affected smaller NGOs.

The 2026 Bill introduces a new framework under **Chapter IIIA**, the most controversial part of which is **Section 16A**. Under this provision, when an organization's FCRA registration is cancelled, surrendered, or lapses, its foreign-funded assets and contributions would automatically vest provisionally in a government-designated authority. The authority could manage, transfer, or even dispose of these assets, with proceeds eventually credited to the **Consolidated Fund of India**.

Another major provision is **Section 14B**, which introduces automatic cessation of FCRA registration if renewal is denied, delayed, or if organizations fail to apply in time. Critics argue that procedural delays could effectively paralyse institutions without any proven wrongdoing.

The Bill also increases executive control during suspension and investigations. Organizations under suspension would require prior approval to manage their assets, and state agencies would need Union government approval to investigate FCRA violations.

Opponents of the Bill fear that these provisions could adversely affect NGOs working in areas such as education, healthcare, child welfare, tribal development, minority rights, environmental protection, and human rights. They argue that broad terms like "public interest" provide excessive discretion to the executive and may discourage donors, volunteers and trustees.

The Bill has also generated constitutional concerns. Critics contend that it may affect freedoms guaranteed under **Articles 14, 19(1)(c), 25, 26, 29, 30 and 300A** of the Constitution. They argue that regulation of foreign contributions should be accompanied by safeguards, due process and independent oversight to prevent arbitrary state action.

Key Takeaways

1. **The 2026 Bill expands the scope of FCRA regulation**
 - It goes beyond regulating foreign funding.
 - It increases executive powers over NGOs and institutions.
 - Critics view it as strengthening state control over civil society.
2. **The 2020 amendments had already tightened regulations**
 - Foreign contributions were centralized through a single SBI branch.
 - Administrative expenditure limits were reduced.
 - Sub-granting of foreign funds was prohibited.
3. **Section 14B introduces automatic cessation of registration**
 - Organizations may lose registration due to delays or procedural lapses.
 - Cancellation need not necessarily follow proven misconduct.
 - Executive discretion is considerably expanded.
4. **Section 16A enables vesting of assets**
 - Foreign-funded assets may come under a government-designated authority.
 - Authorities can manage, transfer or dispose of such assets.
 - Sale proceeds may eventually be credited to the Consolidated Fund of India.
5. **Executive control during investigations is strengthened**
 - Organizations under suspension cannot freely manage assets.
 - State agencies require Union approval for investigations.
 - Personal liabilities of office-bearers are expanded.
6. **Civil society and minority institutions may be affected**
 - Educational, healthcare and charitable institutions could face uncertainties.
 - NGOs working on rights-based issues may experience a chilling effect.
 - Donor confidence and volunteer participation may decline.
7. **Constitutional concerns have been raised**
 - Critics cite possible implications for Articles 14, 19(1)(c), 25, 26, 29, 30 and 300A.
 - Questions of due process and independent oversight have been highlighted.
 - The debate centres on balancing national security with associational freedoms.

Important Terms

Term

Meaning



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**FCRA (Foreign Contribution Regulation Act), 2010**

Law regulating the acceptance and utilisation of foreign contributions by individuals and organizations in India.

Section 14B

Proposed provision introducing automatic cessation of FCRA registration under certain circumstances.

Section 16A

Proposed provision enabling provisional and permanent vesting of foreign-funded assets in a government-designated authority.

Consolidated Fund of India

The principal account into which all government revenues and receipts are credited.

Civil Society Organizations (CSOs)

Non-governmental organizations and associations engaged in social, educational, developmental and charitable activities.

13th June 2026

[How trust underpins India's ties with France-The Indian Express Explained Page](#)

International relations

Easy Explanation

India and France share one of the most stable and trusted strategic partnerships among major powers. Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to France and participation in the G7 Summit highlights the growing importance of bilateral ties. In 2025, both countries elevated their relationship to a **"Special Global Strategic Partnership"**, reflecting deeper cooperation in technology, innovation, defence, space, nuclear energy and global governance.

Technology and innovation are emerging as key pillars of the relationship. Events such as **Bharat Innovate** and the **VivaTech Summit** are aimed at strengthening cooperation between startups, industries and innovators from both countries.

The partnership is rooted in a long history of trust and strategic autonomy. France became India's first strategic partner among Western countries in 1998 and notably refrained from imposing sanctions after India's Pokhran-II nuclear tests. This established a foundation of mutual confidence that has endured for decades.

France has consistently supported India's larger international role and has repeatedly invited India to G7 summits. Both countries share similar views on maintaining strategic autonomy and promoting a multipolar world order.

Their cooperation extends across sensitive sectors such as defence, space and nuclear energy. Major defence projects include Rafale fighter aircraft and Scorpene submarines, while space cooperation between ISRO and CNES spans over six decades. Collaboration is also increasing in advanced nuclear technologies and emerging sectors.

Thus, the India-France relationship demonstrates how long-term trust and strategic convergence can create durable partnerships in an increasingly uncertain global environment.

Key Takeaways**1. Special Global Strategic Partnership**

- India and France elevated ties to a "Special Global Strategic Partnership" in 2025.
- France remains one of India's most important European partners.



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- The relationship is based on strategic autonomy and mutual respect.
- 2. **Technology and innovation cooperation**
 - Innovation has become a major pillar of bilateral ties.
 - Events such as Bharat Innovate and VivaTech promote startup collaboration.
 - Emerging technologies are receiving increasing attention.
- 3. **France supports India's global role**
 - France views India as a leading voice of the Global South.
 - India has been a regular participant in G7 summits.
 - Both countries cooperate on global challenges.
- 4. **Strategic trust underpins the partnership**
 - France did not sanction India after the Pokhran-II nuclear tests.
 - High-level political understanding has strengthened ties.
 - Mutual trust enables cooperation in sensitive sectors.
- 5. **Strong defence cooperation**
 - Key projects include Rafale aircraft and Scorpene submarines.
 - Cooperation also covers missiles and helicopter engines.
 - Defence ties contribute to India's strategic capabilities.
- 6. **Expanding space and nuclear collaboration**
 - ISRO and CNES have cooperated for over six decades.
 - Joint missions include Megha-Tropiques and SARAL satellites.
 - Cooperation in Small Modular Reactors and Gaganyaan is growing.
- 7. **Shared commitment to strategic autonomy**
 - Both countries pursue independent foreign policies.
 - They support a multipolar world order.
 - Their partnership has strengthened amid global uncertainties.

Important Terms

Term	Meaning
Special Global Strategic Partnership	Enhanced framework of cooperation between India and France announced in 2025.
Strategic Autonomy	Ability of a country to pursue independent foreign and security policies without excessive external dependence.
CNES	French National Centre for Space Studies and ISRO's long-standing partner.
Small Modular Reactor (SMR)	Advanced and compact nuclear reactor technology with enhanced safety features.
VivaTech Summit	Europe's largest technology and startup event held annually in France.

[Why Zojila tunnel breakthrough is a boost for military mobility-The Indian Express Explained Page](#)

Economy

Easy Explanation



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The **Zojila Tunnel**, which will become the world's longest high-altitude bi-directional road tunnel, has achieved a major milestone with the completion of its excavation phase. Located at an altitude of 11,758 feet, the 13-km tunnel will connect Baltal in Kashmir Valley with Minimarg near Drass in Ladakh. It is a crucial part of the larger 30.894-km Zojila Project aimed at providing year-round connectivity to Ladakh.

Currently, the Srinagar-Leh highway passes through the Zojila Pass at an altitude of 16,430 feet. The pass remains closed for nearly six months every year due to heavy snowfall, avalanches and landslides, isolating Ladakh from the rest of the country. The tunnel will reduce the travel distance between Sonamarg and Drass by 27 km and save more than two hours of travel time.

For civilians, the tunnel will ensure all-weather connectivity and facilitate economic activities and access to essential services. However, its strategic significance for the armed forces is even greater. It will provide uninterrupted movement of troops, weapons, fuel and supplies to Ladakh, reducing dependence on costly and vulnerable air transport.

The tunnel assumes importance in the context of India's borders with China along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) and Pakistan along the Line of Control (LoC). Faster deployment and greater protection from enemy surveillance and artillery fire will considerably enhance India's military preparedness.

Although the project was originally expected to be completed by 2026, delays caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, difficult weather conditions and security challenges have pushed the expected completion date to February 2028.

Key Takeaways

1. **Major milestone achieved**
 - Excavation of the Zojila Tunnel has been completed.
 - The breakthrough marks the end of the tunnelling phase.
 - The tunnel is expected to be completed by February 2028.
2. **World's longest high-altitude bi-directional tunnel**
 - The tunnel is 13 km long and situated at 11,758 feet.
 - It connects Baltal in Kashmir Valley with Minimarg in Ladakh.
 - It forms the core of the larger Zojila Project.
3. **Ensures all-weather connectivity**
 - The existing Zojila Pass remains closed during winters.
 - The tunnel will provide year-round access to Ladakh.
 - Travel time between Sonamarg and Drass will reduce significantly.
4. **Boost to military mobility**
 - Troops and military equipment can be moved more quickly.
 - Dependence on air transport will decrease.
 - Response time during emergencies or conflicts will improve.
5. **Strategic importance for border security**
 - The tunnel supports operations along the LAC with China.
 - It also strengthens logistics near the LoC with Pakistan.
 - It enhances India's ability to sustain military deployments.
6. **Protection against vulnerabilities**
 - Underground connectivity reduces exposure to enemy surveillance.
 - Military supplies will be less vulnerable to artillery attacks.
 - Lessons from the 1999 Kargil War underline its significance.
7. **Part of a larger infrastructure network**
 - The project includes smaller tunnels, bridges and approach roads.
 - Ventilation shafts and safety systems are being developed.
 - It complements the already operational Z-Morh Tunnel.

Important Terms

Term	Meaning
Zojila Tunnel	A 13-km high-altitude road tunnel connecting Kashmir Valley and Ladakh.



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Zojila Pass	Mountain pass on the Srinagar-Leh highway located at about 16,430 feet.
Line of Actual Control (LAC)	De facto border between India and China.
Line of Control (LoC)	Military control line separating Indian and Pakistani-controlled areas of Jammu and Kashmir.
Z-Morh Tunnel	Tunnel near Sonamarg that provides all-weather connectivity on a section of the Srinagar-Leh highway.

[Amid youth protests,a snapshot of India's employment rate over this decade-The Indian Express Explained Page](#)

Economy

Easy Explanation

Recent instances of youth protests and public dissatisfaction have renewed attention on the issue of employment generation in India. While economic growth remains an important indicator of development, concerns are increasingly being raised about whether growth is translating into sufficient job opportunities.

To analyse employment trends, the article uses data from the **Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy (CMIE)**, which provides a continuous series of employment statistics since 2016. Unlike the official employment surveys, whose methodology has changed over time, CMIE data enables comparisons across years.

The article argues that the **employment rate (ER)** is a more meaningful indicator than the unemployment rate (UER) in India's context. The unemployment rate only considers those actively seeking jobs. If discouraged workers stop looking for employment, the unemployment rate may fall even though joblessness persists. In contrast, the employment rate measures the proportion of working-age people who actually have jobs.

According to CMIE data, the number of employed persons increased from around 406 million in 2016-17 to 438 million in 2025-26. However, since the working-age population grew even faster, the employment rate declined. Among men, the employment rate fell from 70.5% to 64.8%, while among women it declined from 11.8% to 9.4%.

The decline has affected almost all age groups, educational categories, castes and religious communities. Although employment conditions improved after the disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, a smaller proportion of working-age Indians are employed today than a decade ago.

The article concludes that GDP growth alone may not be sufficient for broad-based prosperity. Economists have argued that India needs to focus more on job creation and income growth. At a time when global trade is becoming more protectionist, creating enough productive employment remains one of India's biggest developmental challenges.

Key Takeaways

- Employment concerns are gaining prominence**
 - Youth protests have highlighted dissatisfaction regarding job opportunities.
 - Economic growth is increasingly being judged by employment outcomes.
 - Job creation has become a major policy concern.
- CMIE provides a continuous employment database**
 - CMIE data allows comparisons across years since 2016.
 - Official employment surveys have undergone methodological changes.
 - Continuous data helps track long-term trends.
- Employment rate is more informative than unemployment rate**
 - The unemployment rate depends on the size of the labour force.



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- Discouraged workers can artificially reduce unemployment figures.
- Employment rate captures the share of working-age people with jobs.
- 4. **Employment rate has declined over the decade**
 - Employment rose in absolute numbers but not enough to match population growth.
 - Male employment rate fell from 70.5% to 64.8%.
 - Female employment rate declined from 11.8% to 9.4%.
- 5. **Most demographic groups have been affected**
 - Declines are visible across age groups, educational levels and communities.
 - Workers with only primary education experienced sharper declines.
 - Employment challenges are widespread.
- 6. **Post-pandemic recovery remains incomplete**
 - Conditions have improved compared to 2020 and 2021.
 - However, employment rates remain lower than a decade ago.
 - Recovery has not fully offset long-term deterioration.
- 7. **Growth must translate into jobs**
 - GDP growth alone cannot ensure inclusive development.
 - Employment generation and income growth need greater policy attention.
 - Global protectionism poses additional challenges for India's labour-intensive sectors.

Important Terms

Term	Meaning
Employment Rate (ER)	Percentage of the working-age population that is employed.
Unemployment Rate (UER)	Percentage of the labour force actively seeking but unable to find work.
Labour Force	People who are either employed or actively looking for work.
Working-age Population	Population above a specified age considered eligible for work.
CMIE (Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy)	A private research organisation that provides economic and employment data in India.

[The June 12 HC ruling that paved way for Emergency-The Indian Express Explained Page](#)

Polity

Easy Explanation

The proclamation of the Emergency on **June 25, 1975**, was closely linked to a landmark judgment delivered by the **Allahabad High Court on June 12, 1975**. The case arose from a petition filed by socialist leader **Raj Narain**, who had lost to Prime Minister **Indira Gandhi** in the 1971 Lok Sabha elections from Rae Bareilly. He alleged that she had indulged in corrupt electoral practices.

The case, popularly known as the **Election Case**, accused Indira Gandhi of exceeding the permissible campaign expenditure and misusing government machinery for electoral advantage. On March 19, 1975, Indira Gandhi became the first Indian Prime Minister to testify before a court.



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Justice **Jagmohan Lal Sinha** dismissed most of the allegations but upheld two charges. He held that **Yashpal Kapoor**, Gandhi's former private secretary, had acted as her election agent before formally resigning from government service and that certain Uttar Pradesh government officials had assisted her campaign. Consequently, the court declared her election void and disqualified her from contesting elections for six years. However, she was granted 20 days to appeal to the Supreme Court.

The judgment triggered intense political reactions. Opposition parties demanded her resignation, while Congress supporters rallied behind her. On June 24, 1975, Justice **V.R. Krishna Iyer** of the Supreme Court granted a conditional stay. Indira Gandhi was allowed to continue as Prime Minister and attend Parliament but could neither vote nor draw a salary until the final decision.

Amid growing political uncertainty, some leaders suggested that she temporarily step aside. However, she chose to remain in office. On the night of June 25, 1975, President **Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed**, acting on the advice of the Prime Minister, proclaimed an Internal Emergency under Article 352. Civil liberties were suspended, opposition leaders were arrested and press censorship was imposed, marking one of the most controversial periods in independent India's history.

Key Takeaways

1. **Raj Narain challenged Indira Gandhi's election**
 - He contested her 1971 victory from Rae Bareilly.
 - The petition alleged corrupt electoral practices.
 - The case became known as the Election Case.
2. **Indira Gandhi testified before the court**
 - She became the first Indian Prime Minister to do so.
 - The testimony took place in March 1975.
 - The proceedings attracted nationwide attention.
3. **Allahabad High Court invalidated her election**
 - Justice Jagmohan Lal Sinha upheld two charges.
 - Her election was declared void.
 - She was disqualified from contesting elections for six years.
4. **Political tensions escalated**
 - Opposition parties demanded her resignation.
 - Congress supporters organized rallies in her support.
 - The verdict led to a constitutional and political crisis.
5. **Supreme Court granted a conditional stay**
 - Justice V.R. Krishna Iyer heard her appeal.
 - She could remain Prime Minister temporarily.
 - However, she could not vote or receive a salary.
6. **Emergency was proclaimed on June 25, 1975**
 - President Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed issued the proclamation.
 - Internal disturbances were cited as the reason.
 - Civil liberties and press freedoms were curtailed.
7. **The episode remains a landmark in constitutional history**
 - It highlighted tensions between executive power and judicial accountability.
 - The Emergency period lasted until 1977.
 - It prompted later constitutional reforms to prevent misuse of emergency powers.

Important Terms

Term	Meaning
Emergency (1975-77)	Period during which civil liberties were suspended and extraordinary powers were exercised by the government.
Raj Narain Case	Election petition challenging Indira Gandhi's 1971 Lok Sabha victory.





Justice Jagmohan Lal Sinha

Allahabad High Court judge who invalidated Indira Gandhi's election in 1975.

Justice V.R. Krishna Iyer

Supreme Court judge who granted a conditional stay on the High Court verdict.

Article 352

Constitutional provision empowering the President to proclaim a National Emergency.

[The summer of '86, and a World Cup in a different world-The Indian Express Ideas Page](#)

Sociology

Easy Explanation

The article is a nostalgic recollection of how the **1986 FIFA World Cup in Mexico** transformed the experience of football fans in India. Growing up in a railway colony in Rajkot during the 1980s, the author and his friends played football with local heroes and relied mainly on newspapers, magazines like *Sportstar*, and occasional newsreel clips to learn about international football.

The arrival of live television coverage of the **1986 FIFA World Cup** changed everything. For the first time, people could watch legendary players such as **Diego Maradona, Michel Platini, Sócrates, Zico, Gary Lineker, and Michael Laudrup** from their homes. Mexico '86 became one of the most memorable World Cups in history, featuring iconic moments such as Maradona's controversial "**Hand of God**" goal and his brilliant solo goal against England.

The tournament also illustrated how sports can transcend borders and create emotional connections among people with no direct association with the competing countries. Families and individuals in Rajkot adopted teams based on personal preferences and quirky reasons. Some supported Germany because goalkeeper Toni Schumacher shared an occupation with a local shoemaker, while others supported Brazil or Denmark based on cultural associations.

Among the author's friends, Brazilian captain **Sócrates** emerged as a symbol of charisma and individuality. The World Cup left lasting memories and represented an era of innocence, when limited information allowed imagination and emotional attachment to flourish.

Looking back after four decades, the author contrasts that age with today's world of instant information and excessive data, suggesting that the magic and wonder of discovering global sporting icons can never be recreated in the same way.

Key Takeaways

- Mexico '86 transformed football viewership in India**
 - Live television brought international football into Indian homes.
 - The tournament introduced global stars to new audiences.
 - It marked a new era of sports consumption.
- Limited access shaped sporting imagination**
 - Information about football came mainly from magazines and newspapers.
 - Newsreel clips offered rare glimpses of international matches.
 - Imagination played a major role in fan culture.
- The 1986 World Cup became iconic**
 - Diego Maradona dominated the tournament.
 - Memorable moments included the "Hand of God" goal.
 - Argentina eventually won the championship.
- Sports create emotional connections**
 - People supported teams for personal and cultural reasons.
 - Football transcended national and geographical boundaries.
 - Communities developed unique loyalties.
- Local heroes gave way to global legends**
 - Young footballers in Rajkot idolised international stars.
 - Players like Maradona, Platini and Sócrates became household names.



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- Television changed sporting aspirations.
- 6. **Sócrates represented a cultural icon**
 - His personality and style appealed to many fans.
 - He embodied individuality and confidence.
 - He became a role model beyond football.
- 7. **Modern information age has changed fan experiences**
 - Excessive information has reduced the element of mystery.
 - Instant access has replaced imagination and discovery.
 - The emotional innocence associated with earlier sporting experiences is difficult to recreate.

Important Terms

Term	Meaning
1986 FIFA World Cup	The 13th FIFA World Cup, held in Mexico and won by Argentina.
Hand of God	Diego Maradona's controversial goal against England in the quarterfinals of the 1986 World Cup.
Diego Maradona	Legendary Argentine footballer widely regarded as one of the greatest players in history.
Sócrates	Brazilian footballer, physician and captain of Brazil's 1982 and 1986 World Cup teams.
Sportstar	Popular Indian sports magazine that played an important role in introducing global sports to Indian readers.

[Equality of treatment for Persons with Disabilities-The Hindu Editorial](#)

Sociology

Easy Explanation

Despite India's advances in digital governance and welfare delivery through initiatives such as **Digital India**, Persons with Disabilities (PwDs) continue to face unequal access to social security benefits. Disability pensions vary across States and are often determined by domicile, administrative discretion and bureaucratic procedures rather than by the extent of disability or the needs of the individual. This results in unequal treatment and inadequate support for a vulnerable section of society.

According to estimates, India currently has between **4.5 crore and 6 crore persons with disabilities**, but only a small fraction are covered under the **Indira Gandhi National Disability Pension Scheme (IGNDPS)**. Pension amounts in many States range between ₹300 and ₹500 per month, which is inadequate for ensuring a dignified life. India's expenditure on disability welfare is only about **0.02% of GDP**, much lower than countries such as South Africa, Brazil and Australia.

The article argues that disability pensions should not be viewed as welfare expenditure but as investments that enhance household stability, labour participation and economic activity. It proposes the creation of a **Minimum Universal Disability Pension Floor Rate (MUDPFR)**, which would guarantee a minimum pension to all eligible persons irrespective of the State in which they reside. States could provide additional benefits on top of this minimum amount.



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International examples such as South Africa, Brazil and Australia show that centrally determined disability pension systems ensure uniformity and portability. The article also recommends establishing a **National Disability Pension Authority** to streamline administration, maintain a national registry, ensure grievance redressal and improve accountability.

Such reforms would help India fulfil its constitutional obligations under **Article 41**, implement provisions of the **Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016**, and uphold international commitments under the **UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCPRD)** and the Sustainable Development Goals. Ultimately, the article argues that dignity and social security for persons with disabilities should be treated as a matter of rights rather than charity.

Key Takeaways

1. **Persons with disabilities face unequal treatment**
 - Disability pensions vary significantly across States.
 - Access often depends on domicile and administrative discretion.
 - This creates inequality in social protection.
2. **Current disability support is inadequate**
 - India has an estimated 4.5–6 crore persons with disabilities.
 - Pension coverage and amounts remain low.
 - Expenditure on disability welfare is only 0.02% of GDP.
3. **Disability pensions are an economic investment**
 - Social security improves household stability and consumption.
 - Greater inclusion enhances labour force participation.
 - Studies indicate that benefits exceed the costs involved.
4. **Minimum Universal Disability Pension Floor Rate is proposed**
 - A national minimum pension would ensure uniform support.
 - States could continue to provide additional top-ups.
 - The proposal aims to shift pensions from charity to rights.
5. **Administrative reforms are needed**
 - The present system suffers from fragmentation and duplication.
 - A National Disability Pension Authority has been suggested.
 - Digital integration and portability can improve efficiency.
6. **International examples support the proposal**
 - South Africa, Brazil and Australia have nationwide disability pension systems.
 - Uniform standards promote inclusiveness and portability.
 - Several developing countries have adopted similar approaches.
7. **Disability rights are a constitutional and moral imperative**
 - Article 41 directs the State to provide public assistance.
 - The Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016 guarantees social security.
 - Equal treatment strengthens dignity, citizenship and social justice.

Important Terms

Term	Meaning
Persons with Disabilities (PwDs)	Individuals with long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments that hinder full participation in society.
Indira Gandhi National Disability Pension Scheme (IGNDPS)	Central scheme providing financial assistance to eligible persons with disabilities.
Minimum Universal Disability Pension Floor Rate (MUDPFR)	Proposed national minimum disability pension applicable uniformly across States.





Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016

Legislation protecting the rights and promoting the welfare of persons with disabilities in India.

Article 41

Directive Principle of State Policy directing the State to provide public assistance in cases of disability, old age and unemployment.

[The 8th CPC — a chance to reform pay commissions-The Hindu Editorial](#)

Economy

Easy Explanation

As India prepares for the **8th Central Pay Commission (CPC)**, discussions have mostly focused on salary hikes, fitment factors and arrears. However, the article argues that the more important issue is whether India's framework for determining public sector compensation is fair, transparent and fiscally sustainable.

Over time, Pay Commissions have evolved beyond simple salary revision exercises. Their recommendations affect inter-service parity, career progression, pensions and long-term fiscal commitments. Yet, there is no common framework to objectively compare factors such as responsibility, risk, technical expertise and hardship across different services. This often leads to demands for parity without clear principles.

One major issue concerns differences between civilian and military services. Armed forces personnel face early retirement and limited promotion opportunities, whereas civilian officers generally enjoy longer careers and broader avenues for advancement. Therefore, achieving compensation parity between these groups is inherently complex.

Another concern is the system of **Non-Functional Upgradation (NFU)**, which allows certain officers to receive higher pay scales without corresponding increases in responsibility. Critics argue that this weakens the link between accountability and compensation.

Pensions pose another challenge. India currently operates multiple pension systems, including old defined-benefit schemes and the National Pension System (NPS). Rising expenditure on salaries and pensions is putting pressure on government finances and reducing resources available for development expenditure.

The article suggests moving away from the practice of constituting a Pay Commission every ten years. Instead, India could establish a permanent institution, such as a **National Compensation Authority**, to periodically review public sector compensation using transparent principles while respecting federal autonomy.

Ultimately, the article argues that public compensation is not merely about pay and pensions but about maintaining public trust and ensuring efficient governance. The 8th CPC offers an opportunity to reform the entire compensation architecture rather than merely increasing salaries.

Key Takeaways

- 1. Pay Commissions have evolved beyond salary revisions**
 - They influence inter-service parity and pension liabilities.
 - Their recommendations shape long-term fiscal commitments.
 - Compensation policy affects public trust and governance.
- 2. Lack of a common evaluation framework**
 - Different services have varying responsibilities and career structures.
 - No objective method exists to assess risk and hardship.
 - Parity demands often lack transparent criteria.
- 3. Civilian and military services face different realities**
 - Armed forces have earlier retirement and limited promotions.
 - Civil services offer longer careers and broader advancement opportunities.
 - Compensation parity requires accounting for these differences.
- 4. Non-Functional Upgradation remains controversial**
 - NFU provides financial advancement without additional responsibility.



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- It weakens the relationship between accountability and pay.
- Its institutional rationale continues to be debated.
- 5. **Pension expenditure raises sustainability concerns**
 - Multiple pension systems coexist in India.
 - Salaries and pensions consume a large share of public expenditure.
 - Inter-generational equity has become an important issue.
- 6. **Need for a permanent compensation mechanism**
 - Several countries use continuous review mechanisms.
 - A National Compensation Authority has been proposed.
 - Such an institution could ensure consistency and transparency.
- 7. **The 8th CPC presents an opportunity for structural reforms**
 - The focus should go beyond salary increases.
 - Compensation systems should be fair, transparent and fiscally sustainable.
 - Reforms can strengthen institutional credibility and public confidence.

Important Terms

Term	Meaning
Central Pay Commission (CPC)	Body constituted by the Government of India to recommend revisions in salaries, allowances and pensions of central government employees.
Fitment Factor	Multiplier used to determine revised salaries under a Pay Commission.
Non-Functional Upgradation (NFU)	System allowing certain officers to receive higher pay scales without corresponding promotions or additional responsibilities.
Defined-Benefit Pension Scheme	Pension system in which benefits are predetermined and guaranteed by the government.
National Pension System (NPS)	Contributory pension scheme introduced for most government employees joining service after 2004.

[Long overdue-The Hindu Editorial](#)

Economy

Easy Explanation

The **Coal Exchange Rules, 2026** mark a significant reform in India's coal sector by creating a regulated market-based mechanism for coal trading. The rules have been introduced at a time when India is witnessing record levels of domestic coal production. Their objective is to improve price discovery, enhance transparency and provide better access to coal for smaller consumers.

At present, most coal transactions in India occur through long-term contracts, auctions conducted by Coal India, imports and captive mining. These mechanisms are often opaque and can lead to inefficiencies. The new coal exchanges aim to provide a transparent platform where coal producers and buyers can trade through market mechanisms.

The proposed exchanges are somewhat similar to India's power exchanges. Although power exchanges account for a relatively small share of electricity transactions, they have played an important role in price discovery and have acted as balancing markets



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by helping address shortages and surpluses. Similarly, coal exchanges are expected to facilitate the movement of coal inventories across regions and improve market efficiency.

However, coal trading is more complex than electricity trading because coal quality varies considerably depending on factors such as calorific value and ash content. Therefore, the success of coal exchanges will depend on strong quality standards, contract enforcement and effective dispute resolution mechanisms.

The participation of major stakeholders, especially **Coal India Limited**, will be crucial. Adequate safeguards against excessive price volatility and improvements in transportation and logistics will also be necessary because coal exchanges involve physical delivery of coal rather than merely financial transactions.

Overall, the Coal Exchange Rules, 2026 represent an important step towards creating a more transparent and efficient coal market while complementing existing long-term contracts rather than replacing them.

Key Takeaways

1. **Coal Exchange Rules, 2026 introduce market-based coal trading**
 - The rules establish regulated coal trading platforms.
 - They aim to improve transparency and efficiency.
 - Smaller consumers are expected to benefit.
2. **Current coal transactions are dominated by long-term contracts**
 - Power producers largely rely on long-term agreements.
 - Coal India auctions and captive mining are other major channels.
 - Existing arrangements often lack transparency.
3. **Coal exchanges will aid price discovery**
 - Market prices can reflect demand and supply conditions.
 - Exchanges can serve as reference points for the broader coal market.
 - Better price signals can improve resource allocation.
4. **Power exchanges provide a useful model**
 - Power exchanges have enhanced transparency in electricity markets.
 - They act as balancing markets for shortages and surpluses.
 - Coal exchanges are expected to perform a similar role.
5. **Coal quality poses unique challenges**
 - Coal is not a uniform commodity.
 - Differences in quality require robust standards and quality assurance.
 - Effective contract design will be essential.
6. **Participation of key stakeholders is critical**
 - Coal India Limited's role will significantly influence the exchanges.
 - Broad participation will improve liquidity.
 - Retail consumers should be encouraged to participate.
7. **Logistics and dispute resolution are essential**
 - Coal exchanges involve physical delivery of coal.
 - Efficient transportation systems are necessary.
 - Safeguards against volatility and strong dispute settlement mechanisms are required.

Important Terms

Term	Meaning
Coal Exchange Rules, 2026	Rules establishing regulated platforms for market-based trading of coal in India.
Price Discovery	Process through which market forces determine the price of a commodity.
Coal India Limited (CIL)	India's largest coal-producing public sector company.



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**Captive Mining**

Mining carried out by companies for their own consumption rather than commercial sale.

Power Exchange

Electronic platform facilitating the buying and selling of electricity based on market principles.

14th June 2026

[Why are there protests in PoK?: TH FAQ](#)

International Relations

Easy Explanation

Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK) is witnessing major protests once again. The unrest is being led by the Joint Awami Action Committee (JAAC), a coalition of civil society groups, traders, students, and socio-religious organisations. The movement began as an economic protest but has now evolved into a larger political struggle over representation and autonomy.

The JAAC was formed in 2023 after people became frustrated with rising inflation, expensive electricity, and increasing living costs. The organisation demanded subsidised wheat flour, cheaper electricity generated from the local Mangla Dam, and reforms in the political system of PoK.

One of the most controversial demands concerns the 12 seats reserved in the PoK Legislative Assembly for refugees who migrated from Jammu and Kashmir to Pakistan during Partition. JAAC argues that these seats distort democratic representation because the voters for these seats live in Pakistan rather than PoK itself.

The movement first gained momentum in 2024 when JAAC organised protests over rising electricity tariffs. Authorities arrested many activists, triggering violent clashes. Several people were killed and hundreds injured. To calm the situation, Pakistan announced an economic relief package worth around \$86 million.

However, many demands remained unresolved. In 2025, fresh protests erupted after negotiations broke down. More violence followed, forcing the authorities to announce compensation packages, health schemes, and investments in electricity infrastructure.

The latest crisis emerged ahead of the July 2026 regional elections. JAAC announced a protest march to Muzaffarabad demanding the abolition of the 12 refugee seats. The authorities responded by banning JAAC under anti-terrorism laws, accusing it of activities harmful to public order and security.

This decision triggered widespread protests across cities such as Muzaffarabad, Mirpur, and Rawalakot. Security forces clashed with demonstrators, leading to multiple deaths and injuries. Reports indicate that more than 30 people may have died in the unrest.

Authorities have since deployed paramilitary forces, imposed restrictions, and limited internet access in several areas.

At the heart of the controversy is the structure of PoK's Legislative Assembly.

The Assembly has 53 seats:

- 33 directly elected general seats
- 12 seats reserved for refugees from Jammu and Kashmir living in Pakistan
- 8 additional reserved seats (women, technocrats, religious scholars, diaspora representatives)

Critics argue that the refugee seats give disproportionate political influence to people who do not reside in PoK. Approximately 4.36 lakh voters elect representatives to these 12 seats, while around 33 lakh residents elect representatives for the remaining 33 seats. This means refugee votes carry significantly greater weight.

The issue also raises questions about Pakistan's role in PoK politics.



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Pakistan describes PoK (which it calls "Azad Jammu and Kashmir") as a self-governing region. However, candidates contesting elections must swear loyalty to the goal of Jammu and Kashmir's accession to Pakistan. Critics argue this demonstrates Islamabad's strong influence over regional politics.

The PoK Supreme Court recently ruled that the refugee seats are constitutionally protected and cannot be abolished through executive action. Any change would require a constitutional amendment.

India has criticised Pakistan over the violence, accusing it of human rights abuses and excessive force against protesters.

Pakistan rejected India's criticism and accused India of hypocrisy regarding Kashmir-related issues.

International concern has also grown. Human rights organisations such as Amnesty International have criticised the crackdown on protests. A group of British parliamentarians has also expressed concern over arrests, communication restrictions, and escalating tensions.

The unrest highlights deeper issues of political representation, governance, economic grievances, and the relationship between PoK and Pakistan.

Key Takeaways

Joint Awami Action Committee (JAAC)

- Formed in 2023
- Coalition of civil society groups, traders, students, and religious organisations
- Leads current protest movement in PoK

Main Demands

- Subsidised wheat flour
- Reduced electricity tariffs
- Better public services
- Abolition of 12 refugee seats in PoK Assembly
- Greater political representation for residents of PoK

Why Electricity is a Major Issue

- PoK hosts the Mangla Dam hydropower project
- Protesters argue locals should receive cheaper electricity
- Residents feel benefits are flowing elsewhere while they bear the costs

Political Flashpoint: Refugee Seats

PoK Assembly Structure:

- 33 general elected seats
- 12 refugee seats
- 8 reserved seats

Criticism:

- Refugee voters live in Pakistan
- Their votes carry disproportionate electoral weight
- Seen as external influence on PoK politics

Recent Escalation

- JAAC planned protest march before July 2026 elections
- Government banned JAAC under anti-terror laws
- Violent clashes followed



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- Dozens reportedly killed

Constitutional Issue

PoK Supreme Court ruling:

- Refugee seats are constitutionally protected
- Can only be removed through constitutional amendment

Human Rights Concerns

Reports include:

- Protester deaths
- Internet restrictions
- Arrests of activists
- Deployment of paramilitary forces

India's Position

- Condemned violence against protesters
- Called for accountability regarding human rights abuses

Pakistan's Position

- Rejected Indian criticism
- Defended government actions
- Maintained refugee representation is constitutional

International Response

- Amnesty International criticised the crackdown
- British MPs raised concerns over restrictions and violence

IMPORTANT TERMS

Term	Meaning
Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK)	Part of the former princely state of Jammu & Kashmir currently under Pakistan's control. Pakistan calls it "Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK)".
Joint Awami Action Committee (JAAC)	Coalition of civil society groups, traders, students and social organisations leading recent protests in PoK.
Mangla Dam	One of Pakistan's largest hydropower dams located in PoK. Protesters demand cheaper electricity as the dam is situated in their region.





Refugee Seats	12 seats in the PoK Legislative Assembly reserved for people who migrated from Jammu & Kashmir to Pakistan during Partition.
Self-Determination	The right of people to decide their own political future and governance system.
Muzaffarabad	Capital city of PoK.

[Why did the SC quantify labour of homemakers?: TH FAQ](#)

Polity

Easy Explanation

The Supreme Court has made an important decision regarding the value of unpaid work performed by homemakers. It ruled that when a homemaker dies in a motor accident, courts must assign an economic value to the domestic work she performed and include it while calculating compensation for the family.

The Court observed that homemakers contribute significantly to families and society, even though their work is not paid in monetary terms. It described homemakers as "nation builders" because they raise children, care for family members, and support the workforce indirectly.

The case arose from a road accident in Punjab in 2001, where a woman named Reshma lost her life. Her husband and three children sought compensation through the Motor Accident Claims Tribunal (MACT).

Initially, the Tribunal awarded only ₹2.42 lakh. The family challenged the decision in the Punjab and Haryana High Court, which increased the compensation to ₹8.43 lakh. Unsatisfied with the amount, the family approached the Supreme Court.

While hearing the case, the Supreme Court noted that compensation calculations often fail to adequately recognise the contribution of homemakers. Traditionally, compensation is linked to a person's income. Since homemakers usually do not earn a formal salary, their contribution often gets undervalued.

To address this problem, the Court created a new category called "Loss of Domestic Care."

Under this category, courts must assume a minimum notional income of ₹30,000 per month for homemakers while calculating compensation. This amount is not an actual salary but a benchmark used to estimate the economic value of domestic work.

The Court further directed that this amount should increase by 10% every three years on a cumulative basis to account for inflation and changing economic conditions.

Importantly, if a woman is both a homemaker and a working professional, compensation under "Loss of Domestic Care" should be provided in addition to compensation based on her actual income.

The judges highlighted that household activities such as:

- Cooking
- Cleaning
- Childcare
- Elderly care
- Household management

enable other family members to participate in education and employment. Therefore, these activities generate indirect economic value even though they are not reflected in GDP calculations.

The Court observed that many successful professionals, politicians, artists, and businesspersons are able to pursue their careers because of the support provided by homemakers at home.



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Recognising these contributions, the Court increased the compensation payable to Reshma's family from ₹8.43 lakh to ₹62.78 lakh.

The revised compensation included:

- Loss of domestic care
- Loss of maternal care for children
- Loss of companionship for the spouse
- Loss of support for dependent family members

The judgment also addressed delays in motor accident compensation cases.

The Court noted that:

- Cases remain pending for about 6 years before MACTs
- Appeals remain pending for about 8 years before High Courts

Such delays defeat the welfare objective of compensation laws.

Therefore, the Court directed High Courts to:

- Prioritise old motor accident cases
- Reduce unnecessary adjournments
- Consider creating additional benches if required

This judgment is significant because it is the first time the Supreme Court has prescribed a concrete monetary benchmark for valuing the unpaid domestic labour of homemakers.

Key Takeaways

Supreme Court Ruling

- Homemakers' unpaid domestic work has independent economic value.
- Such work must be considered while calculating compensation in accident death cases.

New Compensation Head

Loss of Domestic Care

- New category created by Supreme Court.
- Recognises economic value of household work.

Minimum Notional Income

- ₹30,000 per month fixed as minimum benchmark.
- Used for compensation calculations involving homemakers.

Periodic Increase

- Amount to increase by 10% every three years.
- Increase is cumulative.

If Homemaker is Also Employed

- Domestic care compensation is separate.
- Added on top of actual income-based compensation.

Case Details



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- Victim: Reshma (Punjab road accident, 2001)
- Tribunal Award: ₹2.42 lakh
- High Court Award: ₹8.43 lakh
- Supreme Court Award: ₹62.78 lakh

Court's Observations

- Homemakers are "Nation Builders".
- Domestic labour supports economic productivity.
- Contributions remain largely invisible in GDP calculations.

Directions on Pendency

- MACT cases average pendency: ~6 years
- High Court appeals average pendency: ~8 years
- High Courts asked to prioritise older compensation cases.

Significance

- First Supreme Court judgment fixing a specific benchmark for unpaid domestic labour.
- Strengthens recognition of women's economic contribution within households.

Important Terms & Meanings

Term	Meaning
Homemaker	A person who manages household responsibilities such as cooking, cleaning, caregiving, and household administration.
Motor Accident Claims Tribunal (MACT)	Special tribunal established under the Motor Vehicles Act to adjudicate compensation claims arising from road accidents.
Notional Income	An estimated income assigned by courts when a person does not have a documented salary or earnings.
Welfare Legislation	Laws designed to protect the rights and welfare of citizens, especially vulnerable groups.
Motor Vehicles Act, 1988	Law governing motor vehicles, road safety, and compensation for accident victims in India.
Economic Value of Care Work	The financial worth of unpaid household and caregiving activities that support families and society.
Human Capital	Skills, knowledge, health, and abilities of people that contribute to economic productivity.





GDP (Gross Domestic Product)	Total value of goods and services produced in an economy. Unpaid domestic work is generally not counted in GDP.
Spousal Companionship	Emotional, social, and practical support provided by a spouse.
Maternal Care	Care, nurturing, and support provided by a mother to children.
Welfare-Oriented Justice	Judicial approach that focuses on protecting vulnerable individuals and ensuring fair social outcomes.

[Why is the Zojila tunnel a game changer?: TH FAQ](#)

Economy/International Relations

Easy Explanation

The Zojila Tunnel is a major infrastructure project that will connect Kashmir and Ladakh throughout the year. At present, the Zojila Pass remains closed for several months during winter due to heavy snowfall, landslides, and avalanches, cutting off Ladakh from the Kashmir Valley.

The tunnel, stretching over 13 km, is being built through extremely difficult Himalayan terrain and is expected to become the world's longest high-altitude road tunnel. Once operational, it will significantly reduce travel time, improve transportation of goods, and ensure uninterrupted movement of people even during harsh winters.

The project is strategically important because it will allow faster movement of troops, equipment, and supplies to border areas near both Pakistan and China. For local residents, it means better access to healthcare, education, markets, and tourism opportunities. Although the breakthrough has been achieved, the tunnel still requires finishing work and is expected to become fully operational in the next couple of years.

Key Takeaways

- **Length:** 13.14 km
- **Altitude:** Around 11,578 feet
- **Cost:** ₹6,800 crore
- **Location:** Connects Baltal (Ganderbal, Kashmir) with Meenamarg (Drass, Ladakh)
- **Type:** India's longest single-tube bi-directional road tunnel
- **Status:** Breakthrough achieved on June 9, 2026

Why it is Important

- Provides **all-weather connectivity** between Kashmir and Ladakh.
- Reduces dependence on the snow-prone Zojila Pass.
- Improves civilian transportation and trade.
- Supports tourism, especially in Drass and Ladakh.
- Enhances emergency response and disaster management.

Strategic Significance

- Facilitates year-round military logistics.
- Improves troop and equipment movement near:
 - Line of Control (LoC)
 - Line of Actual Control (LAC)



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- Strengthens border infrastructure against challenges from Pakistan and China.

Engineering Challenges

- Temperatures as low as:
 - -20°C on Kashmir side
 - -30°C on Drass side
- Frequent avalanches and snowstorms.
- Fragile Himalayan geology.
- Multiple changes in rock formations during excavation.

Safety Features

- Emergency communication systems.
- Automatic lighting.
- Avalanche protection structures.
- Catch dams and deflector dams.
- Modern monitoring systems inside the tunnel.

Benefits for Ladakh

- Ends winter isolation.
- Ensures uninterrupted supply of food, medicines, and essential goods.
- Improves access to healthcare and education.
- Boosts local economy and tourism.

Important Terms & Meanings

Term	Meaning
Zojila Pass	High mountain pass connecting Kashmir Valley with Ladakh
All-weather Connectivity	Transportation access throughout the year irrespective of weather conditions
Avalanche	Rapid flow of snow down a mountain slope
Bi-directional Tunnel	Tunnel allowing traffic movement in both directions
LoC (Line of Control)	Military control line between India and Pakistan in Jammu & Kashmir
LAC (Line of Actual Control)	De facto border between India and China
Strategic Connectivity	Infrastructure that supports both civilian and military movement
Catch Dam	Structure built to trap debris, snow, or rocks before they reach roads
Deflector Dam	Structure used to divert avalanche or debris flow away from infrastructure



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Virulent bacterium: TH Profiles

Science

Easy Explanation

Shigellosis is a bacterial infection that affects the intestines and causes severe diarrhoea, fever, stomach cramps, and sometimes bloody stools (dysentery). It is caused by *Shigella* bacteria and spreads mainly through contaminated food, water, or poor hygiene practices.

The disease is currently in the news because Kerala has reported a significant outbreak in 2026. More than 130 confirmed cases and dozens of probable cases have been reported, with a few deaths, including young children. Investigations suggest that contaminated water sources, food, and poor sanitation in crowded environments such as schools contributed to the spread.

One reason *Shigella* is particularly dangerous is that very few bacteria are needed to cause infection. This makes outbreaks easier to occur, especially where hygiene standards are weak. Children below five years of age are among the most vulnerable groups.

Another growing concern is antibiotic resistance. Many strains of *Shigella* have developed resistance to commonly used antibiotics, making treatment more difficult. While mild infections often recover with proper hydration and rest, severe cases may require carefully selected antibiotics based on laboratory testing.

The Kerala outbreak highlights the importance of safe drinking water, proper sanitation, hand hygiene, and continuous monitoring of antibiotic resistance to prevent future outbreaks.

Key Takeaways

About Shigellosis

- Caused by **Shigella bacteria**.
- Named after Japanese bacteriologist **Kiyoshi Shiga**, who identified the bacterium in 1897.
- Causes:
 - Fever
 - Abdominal cramps
 - Diarrhoea
 - Bloody diarrhoea (dysentery)

Mode of Transmission

- Primarily spreads through the **faeco-oral route**.
- Infection occurs through:
 - Contaminated food
 - Contaminated water
 - Poor hand hygiene
- Very low infectious dose:
 - Only **10–100 bacteria** can cause infection.

Global Burden

- Estimated **80–165 million infections annually** worldwide.
- Around **6 lakh deaths annually**.
- Major burden in:
 - South Asia
 - Sub-Saharan Africa
- Highest incidence among children below five years.

Kerala Outbreak (2026)

- First detected in **March 2026**.



| Click to Connect Now.



- Major affected districts:
 - Kozhikode
 - Wayanad
 - Malappuram
 - Kannur
- Reported:
 - 132 confirmed cases
 - Around 75 probable cases
 - 3 deaths
- One school cluster in Wayanad reportedly hospitalised more than 300 children.

Sources of Infection

Potential sources include:

- Sewage-contaminated water
- Contaminated food
- Fish harvested from polluted water bodies
- Crops grown using contaminated water
- Poor sanitation in schools and communities

Antibiotic Resistance Concern

- Multi-drug resistant (MDR) Shigella strains are increasing in India.
- Laboratory testing is often required to identify effective antibiotics.
- Emphasises the importance of:
 - Rational antibiotic use
 - Antibiotic resistance surveillance
 - Local antibiograms for treatment guidance

Prevention Measures

- Safe drinking water
- Proper sewage disposal
- Handwashing with soap
- Food hygiene
- Early diagnosis and treatment
- Monitoring of outbreaks and antibiotic resistance

Important Terms & Meanings

Term	Meaning
Shigellosis	Intestinal infection caused by Shigella bacteria
Faeco-Oral Route	Disease transmission through ingestion of food or water contaminated with faeces
Antibiotic Resistance	Ability of bacteria to survive despite antibiotic treatment



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Multi-Drug Resistant (MDR)	Resistance to multiple classes of antibiotics
Antimicrobial Drug	Medicine used to treat infections caused by microorganisms
Antibiogram	Laboratory report showing which antibiotics are effective against a bacterial strain
Contagious Disease	Disease capable of spreading from one person to another

[Meet the frogs that build 'cloudy' nests in South Africa's trees: TH Science](#)

Science

Easy Explanation

Most frogs lay their eggs in water, where predators such as fish and insects eat a large majority of them before they hatch. The African Grey Foam-Nest Tree Frog has evolved a unique solution to this problem—it builds its nest above water instead of inside it.

During the rainy season, male and female frogs create a foamy nest on tree branches hanging over ponds. They produce special secretions and whip them into a thick foam using their hind legs. Eggs are laid inside this foam, which protects them from aquatic predators.

A recent study from South Africa found that these frogs often build nests collectively. Instead of a single male and female, multiple males may join one female to create a much larger foam nest. Larger nests retain moisture better and are less likely to dry out, increasing the survival chances of the eggs.

Although the males compete for reproduction, DNA analysis showed that several males can father offspring within the same nest. By cooperating to build larger nests, they improve the chances that at least some of their offspring survive.

The study highlights an interesting example of cooperation in nature, where teamwork improves reproductive success and survival.

Key Takeaways

About the Species

- Species: **African Grey Foam-Nest Tree Frog**
- Scientific Name: **Chiromantis xerampelina**
- Found mainly in southern Africa.

Unique Reproductive Strategy

- Builds **foam nests above water** instead of laying eggs directly in ponds.
- Nest is attached to branches hanging over water bodies.
- Eggs hatch inside the foam.
- Tadpoles later drop directly into the water below.

How the Foam Nest is Made

- Male and female frogs secrete a special fluid.
- They use their hind legs to whip the fluid into foam.



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- Foam acts as a protective nursery for eggs.

Findings of the Study

- Published in the journal **Evolution** (June 2026).
- Researchers studied frog populations in South Africa.
- Multiple males often cooperate with a single female during nest construction.

Benefits of Larger Nests

- Up to **three times larger** than nests built by a single pair.
- Retain moisture for longer periods.
- Reduce risk of eggs drying out.
- Increase survival of tadpoles.

Why Males Cooperate

- DNA testing showed **shared paternity**.
- Several males may father offspring in the same nest.
- Cooperation increases the overall survival of offspring.

Scientific Observation

- Researchers suspect frog secretions contain **surfactants**.
- These compounds help stabilize bubbles and prevent the foam from collapsing.

Ecological Significance

- Demonstrates cooperation in reproduction.
- Shows how species evolve adaptations to avoid predators.
- Example of natural selection improving offspring survival.

Important Terms & Meanings

Term	Meaning
Foam Nest	A bubble-like structure built by frogs to protect eggs from predators and drying
Tadpole	Aquatic larval stage of a frog before metamorphosis
Paternity	Biological fatherhood of offspring
Surfactant	Chemical compound that reduces surface tension and helps foam remain stable
Natural Selection	Process through which beneficial traits become more common over generations





Adaptation	A characteristic that improves an organism's chances of survival or reproduction
Metamorphosis	Transformation of a tadpole into an adult frog
Reproductive Success	Ability of an organism to produce surviving offspring
Evolution	Gradual change in species over time through inherited traits
Moisture Retention	Ability of a material or structure to hold water and prevent drying

[Droughts can drive antibiotic resistance in soil bacteria: TH Science](#)

Science tech

Easy Explanation

A new study has found that droughts may indirectly increase antibiotic resistance (ABR) in the environment. Researchers discovered that when soil becomes dry during drought conditions, the concentration of naturally occurring antibiotics in the soil increases. This creates conditions where antibiotic-resistant bacteria survive better than other bacteria.

Traditionally, antibiotic resistance has been linked mainly to excessive use of antibiotics in humans, livestock, and agriculture. However, this study suggests that climate change itself may also contribute to the problem by altering environmental conditions.

The researchers analysed soil samples from different parts of the world and found that drought conditions increased the presence of genes responsible for producing antibiotics as well as genes that help bacteria resist them. They also observed that regions experiencing greater dryness reported higher levels of antibiotic-resistant infections.

This is particularly concerning for countries like India, where droughts are becoming more frequent due to climate change and where antibiotic use is already high. Since antibiotic resistance can spread from the environment to humans through water, soil, food, and airborne particles, droughts may become an important public health challenge in the future.

The study highlights the need for integrated approaches involving climate monitoring, environmental surveillance, rational antibiotic use, and vaccination programmes to reduce the growing threat of antimicrobial resistance.

Key Takeaways

Main Finding

- Drought conditions can increase **antibiotic resistance (ABR)** in soil.
- Published in **Nature Microbiology**.
- Conducted by researchers from the **California Institute of Technology (Caltech)**.

How Drought Increases Antibiotic Resistance

- Dry soil concentrates naturally occurring antibiotics.
- Antibiotic-resistant bacteria survive better under these conditions.
- Leads to an increase in:
 - Antibiotic-producing genes.
 - Antibiotic-resistance genes.



| Click to Connect Now.



Study Methodology

- Analysed soil DNA datasets from:
 - United States
 - China
 - Europe
- Covered:
 - Croplands
 - Wetlands
 - Grasslands
 - Forest ecosystems
- Laboratory experiments confirmed that resistant bacteria survive better in dry conditions.

Link Between Climate Change and ABR

- Climate change is increasing the frequency and severity of droughts.
- Previous studies found warming conditions increased ABR genes by 24%.
- Droughts may become an important environmental driver of antibiotic resistance.

Why India is Vulnerable

Factors increasing India's risk:

- Frequent droughts.
- High antibiotic usage in humans and livestock.
- Wastewater-based irrigation.
- Dense human-animal-soil interactions.
- Large agricultural dependence.

Public Health Concerns

Antibiotic resistance can spread through:

- Contaminated soil.
- Water bodies.
- Agricultural products.
- Airborne dust.
- Horizontal gene transfer between bacteria.

Suggested Solutions

- Long-term monitoring of drought-prone regions.
- Surveillance of antibiotic-resistant microbes.
- Monitoring antibiotic residues in agricultural soils.
- Rational use of antibiotics.
- Expansion of vaccination programmes.
- Adoption of a **One Health** approach integrating human, animal, and environmental health.

Future Concerns

- Study projects higher levels of ABR in drought-prone regions by 2050.
- Climate change may worsen the burden of infectious diseases and antibiotic resistance simultaneously.

Important Terms & Meanings

Term

Meaning



| Click to Connect Now.



Antibiotic Resistance (ABR)	Ability of bacteria to survive treatment by antibiotics
Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR)	Resistance developed by microorganisms against medicines used to treat infections
Drought Stress	Biological stress experienced by organisms due to prolonged lack of water
Horizontal Gene Transfer	Transfer of genetic material between organisms without reproduction
Microbiome	Community of microorganisms living in a particular environment
Natural Antibiotics	Antibiotic compounds naturally produced by microorganisms in the environment
One Health Approach	Integrated approach linking human, animal, and environmental health
Epidemiological Monitoring	Continuous tracking of disease patterns and health risks in populations
Antibiotic Residue	Remaining traces of antibiotics in soil, water, food, or organisms
Climate Change Adaptation	Measures taken to reduce vulnerability to climate-related impacts

15th June 2026

[India's push beyond E20 fuel:Reasons, and pitfalls-The Indian Express Explained Page](#)

Science and technology



| Click to Connect Now.

• HOW A FLEX FUEL CAR IS POWERED

THE ECM: Controls the fuel mixture, ignition timing, and emissions system; detects and troubleshoots problems.

FUEL FILLER: A nozzle from a fuel dispenser attaches to the receptacle on the vehicle to fill the tank.

FUEL INJECTION SYSTEM: Introduces fuel into the engine's combustion chambers for ignition.

FUEL LINE: A metal tube or flexible hose (or a combination of these) transfers fuel from the tank to the engine's fuel injection system.

FUEL PUMP: A pump that transfers fuel from the tank to the engine's fuel injection system via the fuel line.

FUEL TANK (ETHANOL/GASOLINE BLEND): Stores fuel on board the vehicle to power the engine.

Electronic control module (ECM)

Internal Combustion Engine (spark ignited)

Fuel Injection System

Battery

Fuel Pump

Fuel Tank (ethanol/gasoline blend)

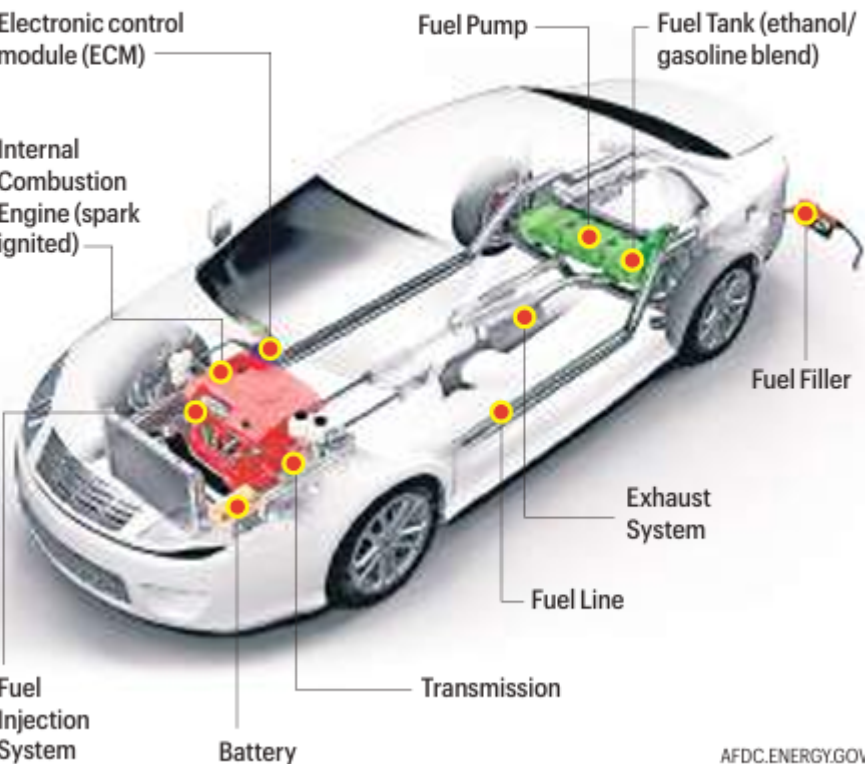
Fuel Filler

Exhaust System

Fuel Line

Transmission

AFDC.ENERGY.GOV



source-The Indian Express Explained Page

Easy Explanation

India has successfully achieved **20% ethanol blending (E20)** in petrol ahead of schedule and is now preparing for the next phase by considering blends above 20%, such as **E25**, and eventually moving towards **E85 and E100 fuels**. To facilitate this transition, the Centre has exempted higher ethanol blends from central excise duty and proposed amendments to the Central Motor Vehicles Rules to recognize higher ethanol-based fuels.

The move is driven primarily by India's objective of reducing dependence on imported crude oil, which currently accounts for nearly 88.5% of the country's oil requirement. Increasing ethanol blending can improve energy security, reduce foreign exchange outgo, and provide a market for agricultural products such as sugarcane.

However, the transition raises concerns for consumers and automobile manufacturers. Most existing vehicles are designed for E20 fuel, and higher ethanol content can affect engine components because ethanol absorbs more water and is corrosive. Older vehicles and two-wheelers are particularly vulnerable. Consumers have also reported lower fuel efficiency after the transition from E10 to E20, and this problem may become more pronounced with higher blends.

Automakers will have to redesign engines, improve corrosion resistance, recalibrate fuel systems and undertake fresh emission certification and homologation. These changes are likely to increase vehicle costs. Oil marketing companies also face logistical constraints, as they can manage only a limited number of fuel variants at retail outlets.

India eventually aims to adopt **flex-fuel vehicles (FFVs)**, which can run on varying proportions of petrol and ethanol. Brazil's experience offers an example, where consumers can choose between conventional blended petrol and pure ethanol, and flex-fuel vehicles are widely used. However, such a transition requires adequate infrastructure, policy clarity and consumer awareness.

Therefore, while higher ethanol blending promises greater energy security and support for farmers, it also requires careful planning to avoid imposing excessive costs on consumers and industry.

Key Takeaways

1. India plans to move beyond E20 fuel



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- Higher blends such as E25 are being considered.
 - The long-term goal is to transition to E85 and E100 fuels.
 - Flex-fuel vehicles are expected to play a key role.
2. **Reducing oil import dependence is the main objective**
 - India imports nearly 88.5% of its crude oil requirements.
 - Ethanol blending enhances energy security.
 - It reduces vulnerability to geopolitical shocks.
 3. **Consumers may face several challenges**
 - Higher ethanol content can damage engine components.
 - Fuel efficiency may decline.
 - Older vehicles are especially vulnerable.
 4. **Automobile manufacturers need significant modifications**
 - Engines require recalibration and redesign.
 - Corrosion resistance and fuel system durability must improve.
 - Fresh emission certification and homologation are necessary.
 5. **Oil marketing companies face logistical constraints**
 - Managing multiple fuel variants is challenging.
 - Physical infrastructure at petrol pumps requires adaptation.
 - Distribution costs may increase.
 6. **Agricultural interests support higher blending**
 - Sugarcane-producing States benefit from increased ethanol demand.
 - Ethanol provides an outlet for agricultural surplus.
 - Farmers' groups have been advocating higher blending targets.
 7. **Brazil provides an important model**
 - Brazil successfully integrated ethanol into its transport ecosystem.
 - Consumers have multiple fuel choices.
 - Flex-fuel vehicles are widely used and supported by appropriate policies.

Important Terms

Term

Meaning

E20 Fuel	Petrol blended with 20% ethanol and 80% conventional petrol.
E85 Fuel	Fuel containing 85% ethanol and 15% petrol, mainly used in flex-fuel vehicles.
Flex-Fuel Vehicle (FFV)	Vehicle capable of operating on varying mixtures of ethanol and petrol.
Homologation	Certification process ensuring that a vehicle complies with regulatory and safety standards.
Ethanol Blending Programme (EBP)	Government initiative aimed at increasing ethanol content in petrol to enhance energy security and support farmers.

[Why trump is bringing UFC event to White House lawns-The Indian Express Explained Page](#)

International relations

Easy Explanation



| Click to Connect Now.



The White House is hosting its first-ever professional sporting event as part of the celebrations marking the **250th anniversary of American independence**. The event, called **UFC Freedom 250**, is being organized by the **Ultimate Fighting Championship (UFC)**, the world's largest mixed martial arts (MMA) organization. It is scheduled for June 14, which coincides with **US Flag Day** and President Donald Trump's 80th birthday.

The event reflects the long-standing relationship between President Trump and UFC President **Dana White**. In the early 2000s, when MMA was still struggling for legitimacy, Trump hosted UFC events at his Atlantic City casino. Over the years, White became one of Trump's close political allies and helped him connect with younger audiences through podcasts and internet personalities.

Trump's appearances at UFC events have become regular features of his public image. The White House event comes at a politically sensitive time, with Trump facing criticism over various issues and declining approval ratings ahead of midterm elections. Consequently, many observers view the event as an attempt to generate positive publicity.

The event has been designed with strong patriotic symbolism. Most bouts involve at least one American fighter, and a significant portion of the audience is expected to comprise members of the US military. The US State Department has also signed an agreement with the UFC to use fighters and executives as cultural ambassadors, highlighting the growing use of sports as an instrument of diplomacy and soft power.

However, the event has attracted criticism. Some fighters and commentators have questioned whether the White House is an appropriate venue for a sporting spectacle and whether the event is being used for political purposes. UFC President Dana White has denied such allegations, insisting that the event is a celebration of patriotism rather than politics.

Thus, the event illustrates how sports, politics and public diplomacy increasingly intersect in contemporary society.

Key Takeaways

1. **White House is hosting a historic sporting event**
 - UFC Freedom 250 marks the first professional sports event at the White House.
 - It forms part of celebrations for America's 250th anniversary.
 - The event is being held on US Flag Day.
2. **Donald Trump has longstanding ties with UFC**
 - Trump supported UFC during its early years.
 - He developed a close relationship with UFC President Dana White.
 - UFC events have become an important platform for Trump's public appearances.
3. **Sports are being used as instruments of soft power**
 - The US State Department has partnered with the UFC.
 - Fighters are expected to act as cultural ambassadors.
 - Sports diplomacy is gaining prominence.
4. **Patriotic symbolism is central to the event**
 - Most bouts involve American fighters.
 - Military personnel constitute a major part of the audience.
 - National identity and patriotism are strongly emphasized.
5. **The event has political significance**
 - It comes amid declining approval ratings for President Trump.
 - Critics view it as a public relations exercise.
 - The timing coincides with important political developments.
6. **Criticism has emerged from within the MMA community**
 - Some fighters have opposed the event.
 - Questions have been raised about politicisation of sports.
 - Critics doubt whether the White House is an appropriate venue.
7. **Sports and politics are increasingly interconnected**
 - Major sporting events often carry political messages.
 - Governments use sports to build national image and influence.
 - The UFC event highlights the growing role of sports diplomacy.

Important Terms

Term

Meaning



| Click to Connect Now.



Ultimate Fighting Championship (UFC)	World's leading mixed martial arts promotion organization.
Mixed Martial Arts (MMA)	Combat sport combining techniques from various martial arts disciplines.
Soft Power	Ability of a country to influence others through culture, values and diplomacy rather than coercion.
Sports Diplomacy	Use of sports and sporting events to enhance international relations and national image.
US Flag Day	Annual observance in the United States commemorating the adoption of the national flag on June 14.

[‘Site of aspiration and exploitation’, what India needs to guard in AI growth path-The Indian Express Explained](#) [Page](#)

Science and technology

Easy Explanation

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is increasingly being viewed by governments, including India, as a tool for economic growth, strategic autonomy and geopolitical influence. Countries are racing to establish themselves as AI leaders, inspired largely by the technological competition between the United States and China. However, the article argues that the promise of AI-driven development often hides the social, economic and environmental costs associated with AI systems.

The **AI Resist List**, a global project documenting efforts to challenge the concentration of AI power, identifies four interconnected pillars of AI power: **labour, infrastructure, surveillance and data, and narratives**. India features prominently across all these dimensions. On the one hand, India aspires to become a major AI power; on the other hand, it also serves as a site where labour, data and natural resources are extracted to sustain the global AI ecosystem.

India supplies a large invisible workforce engaged in data annotation and content moderation, which are essential for training AI systems. Simultaneously, the growth of data centres and digital infrastructure demands enormous quantities of electricity and water, raising concerns about resource use and environmental sustainability. The expansion of surveillance technologies and the accumulation of large volumes of citizen data through digital platforms also raise questions regarding privacy, consent and accountability.

The article stresses that policymakers and communities should evaluate who bears the costs and who receives the benefits of AI infrastructure projects. Issues such as environmental impact, community participation, technology transfer and data governance must be carefully considered.

Although India seeks strategic autonomy in AI, it remains dependent on foreign technologies such as American semiconductor chips, cloud infrastructure and frontier AI models. Therefore, complete technological sovereignty may be difficult to achieve. Instead, meaningful AI sovereignty may lie in developing the capacity to regulate, audit and, where necessary, refuse technologies that do not serve national interests.

Thus, the article argues that AI development should not be pursued merely as a race for technological supremacy but should be guided by principles of accountability, equity and sustainability.

Key Takeaways

1. AI is increasingly seen as a tool of national power



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- Governments view AI as a pathway to growth and competitiveness.
 - The US-China technological rivalry has accelerated the AI race.
 - AI leadership has become a strategic objective.
2. **The AI Resist List highlights hidden costs of AI**
 - It documents resistance to AI-related exploitation.
 - Four pillars of AI power are identified.
 - Narratives about AI are themselves a source of power.
 3. **India is both a beneficiary and a site of extraction**
 - India supplies labour essential for AI systems.
 - Data centres and digital infrastructure are rapidly expanding.
 - Resource consumption and labour concerns are growing.
 4. **AI infrastructure has environmental and social costs**
 - Data centres consume large amounts of electricity and water.
 - Local communities may bear disproportionate burdens.
 - Benefits are often unevenly distributed.
 5. **Surveillance and data governance require safeguards**
 - Expansion of facial recognition and digital platforms raises privacy concerns.
 - Questions of consent and accountability remain important.
 - Oversight mechanisms need strengthening.
 6. **Complete AI sovereignty is difficult to achieve**
 - India remains dependent on foreign chips and cloud services.
 - Global AI supply chains are highly concentrated.
 - Technological dependence persists despite domestic ambitions.
 7. **AI sovereignty should focus on regulation and accountability**
 - Countries need the ability to regulate and audit AI systems.
 - Strategic autonomy involves the power to refuse harmful technologies.
 - Sustainable AI development requires balancing innovation with public interest.

Important Terms

Term

Meaning

AI Resist List Global initiative documenting resistance and alternatives to dominant AI systems and practices.

Strategic Autonomy Ability of a country to pursue independent policies without excessive external dependence.

Data Centre Facility used to store, process and manage digital information and computing resources.

Frontier Models Highly advanced AI models with cutting-edge capabilities, such as large language models.

AI Sovereignty Capacity of a country to regulate, control and govern AI technologies according to national priorities.

[AN-32: Soviet-origin transport aircraft, the IAF's workhorse-The Indian Express Explained Page](#)

Science and technology

Easy Explanation



| Click to Connect Now.



The Antonov AN-32 is a Soviet-origin twin-engine tactical transport aircraft that has served as one of the Indian Air Force's (IAF) most important workhorses since its induction in 1984. Designed for operations in difficult terrain and high-altitude regions, it has played a vital role in transporting troops, equipment, and supplies across the country.

The aircraft can carry up to 6.7 tonnes of cargo or around 50 personnel and operate from remote airfields with minimal infrastructure. Because of these capabilities, it has been extensively used during military operations, humanitarian missions, and logistics support.

The AN-32 played a major role during the Kargil War and Operation Parakram, undertaking multiple sorties to transport troops and supplies to border areas. It has also been employed for paratrooping operations and limited bombing roles.

Following a crash in 2009, India signed a \$400-million agreement with Ukraine's Antonov to modernise most of its AN-32 fleet. The upgrade programme included improvements in engines, airframes, navigation systems, and communication equipment. However, geopolitical developments after Russia's annexation of Crimea in 2014 disrupted the programme, forcing India and Ukraine to develop alternative arrangements.

Despite being regarded as one of the most reliable transport aircraft in the IAF, the AN-32 fleet has witnessed several major accidents. Crashes in 2016 and 2019 claimed 42 lives, and the recent crash near Jorhat in Assam has once again brought attention to the ageing fleet and the need for timely modernisation and replacement.

Key Takeaways

1. **Soviet-Origin Aircraft**
 - AN-32 was inducted into the IAF in 1984.
 - It is a twin-engine turboprop tactical transport aircraft.
 - It remains one of the IAF's principal logistics platforms.
2. **Operational Capabilities**
 - Maximum carrying capacity is 6.7 tonnes of cargo or 50 personnel.
 - Maximum speed is about 530 km/h.
 - Can operate from remote airfields with limited infrastructure.
3. **Role in Military Operations**
 - Played a significant role during the Kargil War (1999).
 - Supported Operation Parakram (2001-02).
 - Used for troop transport, cargo delivery and paratrooping missions.
4. **Modernisation Programme**
 - India signed a \$400-million deal with Ukraine in 2009.
 - Upgrades included engines, navigation and communication systems.
 - The programme faced disruptions after the Crimea crisis.
5. **Safety Record**
 - A major crash occurred in Arunachal Pradesh in 2009.
 - Another aircraft disappeared over the Bay of Bengal in 2016.
 - A 2019 crash in Arunachal Pradesh killed 13 personnel.
6. **Strategic Importance**
 - Provides logistical support in border and high-altitude areas.
 - Enhances military mobility and rapid deployment capability.
 - Functions as a critical component of India's airlift capacity.
7. **Need for Fleet Replacement**
 - The ageing fleet faces increasing maintenance challenges.
 - Modernisation efforts have encountered geopolitical constraints.
 - New transport aircraft are needed to ensure long-term operational readiness.

Important Terms

Term	Meaning
AN-32	Soviet-origin twin-engine tactical transport aircraft used by the Indian Air Force.





Turboprop Aircraft	Aircraft powered by turbine engines driving propellers.
Sortie	A single operational mission undertaken by an aircraft.
Operation Parakram	India's military mobilisation following the 2001 Parliament attack.
Kargil War	Conflict fought between India and Pakistan in 1999.
Antonov	Ukrainian aerospace company that manufactured the AN-32.
Base Repair Depot (BRD)	IAF facility responsible for maintenance and upgrades of aircraft.

[After 16 years,Census could tell several new stories-The Indian Express The Ideas Page](#)

Sociology

Easy Explanation

India's **Census 2027**, to be conducted after a gap of 16 years, is expected to provide one of the most comprehensive pictures of the country's demographic and socio-economic transformation. Since the last Census in 2011, India has witnessed major changes in health, education, gender indicators, labour force participation and social composition. The new Census will document these changes and provide crucial data for policymaking.

India has made remarkable progress in reducing maternal mortality. The **Maternal Mortality Ratio (MMR)** declined from much higher levels to **88 deaths per 1,00,000 live births (2021-23)**. However, regional disparities persist, with States such as Uttar Pradesh, Assam and Madhya Pradesh lagging behind. Census data, combined with health records, can help identify district-level disparities and improve targeted interventions.

Similarly, infant mortality, neonatal mortality and under-five mortality rates have steadily declined due to improvements in healthcare infrastructure and government programmes. The Census is expected to reveal whether these gains are uniformly distributed across regions.

Another important area is the **sex ratio**. The declining child sex ratio recorded in 2011 reflected deep-rooted son preference and misuse of prenatal sex determination technologies. Subsequent interventions such as the **PCPNDT Act** and **Beti Bachao Beti Padhao** have shown encouraging results. Census 2027 will provide authoritative evidence on whether gender imbalances are narrowing.

Education indicators are also expected to improve, but concerns remain regarding the gender gap in literacy and the emerging challenge of digital literacy. The Census will help identify inequalities, particularly in rural areas.

Although labour force statistics are primarily generated through the **Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS)**, the Census will provide updated occupational data and population estimates, offering a broader understanding of India's labour market.

A particularly significant feature of Census 2027 is that it will include **caste-based enumeration**, making it the first such exercise in independent India. By linking caste data with socio-economic indicators, the Census can facilitate more evidence-based welfare policies and reservation frameworks.

Thus, Census 2027 will serve not merely as a population count but as a mirror reflecting India's developmental achievements and persistent inequalities.



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Key Takeaways

- Census 2027 comes after a 16-year gap**
 - It will be the world's largest population enumeration exercise.
 - Massive demographic and socio-economic changes are expected to be recorded.
 - The data will support evidence-based policymaking.
- Health indicators have improved significantly**
 - Maternal mortality has declined sharply.
 - Infant and child mortality rates have also decreased.
 - Regional disparities continue to exist.
- Gender indicators may reveal important trends**
 - Child sex ratio showed signs of improvement in NFHS-5.
 - Programmes like Beti Bachao Beti Padhao have contributed.
 - Census 2027 will provide more authoritative estimates.
- Educational progress is accompanied by new challenges**
 - Literacy levels have improved over the years.
 - Gender disparities persist, especially in rural areas.
 - Digital literacy is emerging as a new dimension of inequality.
- Labour market insights will become clearer**
 - Occupational data will complement PLFS findings.
 - Updated population estimates will improve employment analysis.
 - Gender gaps in labour force participation can be assessed better.
- Caste-based data collection is a historic development**
 - It is the first caste enumeration exercise in independent India.
 - Socio-economic characteristics will be linked with caste categories.
 - The data can enable targeted welfare and reservation policies.
- Census 2027 will be crucial for human development planning**
 - It will identify regional and social inequalities.
 - Policymakers can design more targeted interventions.
 - The exercise will provide a comprehensive picture of India's transformation.

Important Terms

Term

Meaning

Census	Official enumeration of the population conducted periodically to collect demographic and socio-economic data.
Maternal Mortality Ratio (MMR)	Number of maternal deaths per 1,00,000 live births.
PCPNDT Act	Pre-Conception and Pre-Natal Diagnostic Techniques Act aimed at preventing sex-selective practices.
Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS)	Annual survey conducted by MoSPI to estimate employment and unemployment indicators.
Demographic Transition	Shift from high birth and death rates to low birth and death rates as a country develops economically and socially.



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Our parched cities need to make every drop count, recycle water-The Indian Express Ideas Page

Geography

Easy Explanation

Indian cities are increasingly facing severe water stress due to rising temperatures, heatwaves, rapid urbanisation and declining per capita water availability. Cities are often forced to rely on expensive tanker supplies or source water from distant regions, creating economic and environmental pressures. India's annual per capita water availability is about **1,500 cubic metres**, and it is projected to fall below **1,200 cubic metres by 2050**, moving closer to the water-scarcity threshold.

The article argues that one of the most effective yet underutilised solutions is the **reuse of treated wastewater**. Domestic sewage, after treatment, can be used for non-potable purposes such as agriculture, landscaping, construction, industrial processes, public toilets and lake rejuvenation. According to the Council on Energy, Environment and Water (CEEW), developing a circular water economy could create a market opportunity worth over **₹3 lakh crore** and generate nearly **1 lakh jobs by 2047**.

Several States have already adopted water reuse policies, but city-specific plans are necessary because each city has different water needs. For example, Bengaluru and Delhi may prioritise agricultural use, whereas Chennai may focus on restoring water bodies and Surat on industrial applications.

However, wastewater reuse faces challenges. India lacks adequate sewage treatment infrastructure, and many sewage treatment plants do not meet quality standards. Industrial effluents mixed with domestic sewage often disrupt biological treatment processes. Therefore, stronger monitoring, better technology and enforcement of **Zero Liquid Discharge (ZLD)** norms are needed.

The article recommends establishing a **National Circular Water Mission** to transform water management from the traditional "use and dispose" model to a "reuse and restore" approach. Such a mission would require technological innovations, institutional reforms, financial incentives and behavioural changes to make treated wastewater socially acceptable and economically viable.

A circular water economy can reduce freshwater stress, improve water quality and strengthen India's water security, thereby contributing to the goal of **Viksit Bharat by 2047**.

Key Takeaways

1. **Indian cities are facing growing water stress**
 - Heatwaves and rising temperatures are increasing water demand.
 - Per capita water availability is steadily declining.
 - Dependence on tanker supplies and distant water sources is rising.
2. **Treated wastewater offers a major opportunity**
 - Recycled water can be used for non-potable purposes.
 - It can reduce pressure on freshwater resources.
 - A circular water economy can create jobs and investments.
3. **City-specific water reuse plans are necessary**
 - Water requirements differ across cities.
 - Targets and implementation mechanisms should be locally tailored.
 - Reuse priorities vary between agriculture, industry and urban uses.
4. **Private investment is required**
 - Existing sewage treatment capacity is inadequate.
 - Public resources alone are insufficient.
 - Blended finance models can attract private participation.
5. **Sewage treatment plants need improvement**
 - Many plants fail to meet prescribed standards.
 - Industrial effluents affect treatment efficiency.
 - Better monitoring and technology adoption are essential.
6. **A National Circular Water Mission is proposed**
 - It would promote a shift from linear to circular water management.
 - Technological, institutional and financial reforms are required.
 - Behavioural changes are equally important for public acceptance.
7. **Water resilience is crucial for Viksit Bharat 2047**
 - Efficient water management will strengthen sustainability.
 - Circular water systems can improve water security.
 - Timely action is necessary to address future water scarcity.



| Click to Connect Now.



Important Terms

Term	Meaning
Circular Water Economy	System that promotes reuse, recycling and restoration of water resources instead of the traditional use-and-dispose approach.
Sewage Treatment Plant (STP)	Facility that treats wastewater before its reuse or discharge into the environment.
Zero Liquid Discharge (ZLD)	Process in which industries recycle and reuse all wastewater, leaving no liquid waste for discharge.
Blended Finance	Combination of public and private capital to fund infrastructure and development projects.
Water Scarcity Threshold	Level of annual per capita water availability below 1,000 cubic metres, indicating severe water stress.

[Urea price crash opens window for reforms-The Indian Express Ideas Page](#)

Economy

Easy Explanation

The recent fall in global urea prices has provided India with an opportunity to undertake long-pending reforms in its fertilizer subsidy system. In early 2026, fears of supply disruptions arising from the Iran conflict and tensions around the Strait of Hormuz had pushed urea prices sharply higher. This raised concerns that India's fertilizer subsidy bill for 2026-27 could reach nearly ₹3.4 lakh crore, almost double the amount budgeted.

However, international prices have since fallen below pre-conflict levels. Factors contributing to this decline include the partial relaxation of China's fertilizer export restrictions, easing geopolitical tensions, and expectations that the developing El Niño phenomenon may reduce global fertilizer demand. Consequently, import prices for urea have dropped significantly, offering temporary relief to India.

India is heavily dependent on imports for fertilizers and their raw materials. In 2025-26, the country imported fertilizers and inputs worth \$27.2 billion. Such dependence makes India's agriculture sector vulnerable to global price fluctuations and geopolitical disruptions. The subsidy burden borne by the government is an additional challenge.

The article argues that the present decline in prices should not be viewed as permanent. Instead, it should be used as an opportunity to reform India's subsidy architecture. At present, subsidies are largely linked to specific products such as fertilizers, electricity, water and crops through mechanisms like Minimum Support Prices (MSPs). These subsidies often distort market signals and encourage inefficient use of resources.

A more sustainable approach would be to provide **direct income support to farmers**, allowing market forces to determine cropping patterns and encouraging efficient use of scarce resources like water, energy and imported fertilizers. Such reforms would help reduce fiscal pressures and improve long-term agricultural sustainability.

Thus, the current fall in fertilizer prices offers a window for structural reforms rather than merely temporary relief.

Key Takeaways



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1. **Global urea prices have fallen sharply**
 - Prices have dropped below pre-conflict levels.
 - Easing geopolitical tensions contributed to the decline.
 - China's partial lifting of export restrictions also played a role.
2. **India is highly dependent on fertilizer imports**
 - Large quantities of fertilizers and inputs are imported.
 - Global price fluctuations directly affect domestic costs.
 - Geopolitical developments influence fertilizer availability.
3. **Fertilizer subsidies impose a heavy fiscal burden**
 - The subsidy bill was projected to rise substantially.
 - Government expenditure is sensitive to international prices.
 - High subsidies limit fiscal space for other priorities.
4. **El Niño may further reduce global fertilizer demand**
 - Lower agricultural activity in some regions may moderate demand.
 - This can ease upward pressure on prices.
 - Climatic conditions influence global commodity markets.
5. **Current subsidies distort market signals**
 - Product-specific subsidies encourage inefficient resource use.
 - MSPs may become disconnected from demand and supply conditions.
 - Water and energy are often underpriced.
6. **Direct income support is proposed as an alternative**
 - Farmers would receive support without distorting prices.
 - Crop choices would respond to market demand.
 - Resource-use efficiency would improve.
7. **The current price decline offers a reform opportunity**
 - Falling prices provide temporary fiscal relief.
 - Structural reforms are easier during periods of lower stress.
 - Long-term sustainability requires reducing dependence on distortive subsidies.

Important Terms

Term	Meaning
Urea	Nitrogen-based fertilizer widely used in agriculture.
El Niño	Climatic phenomenon characterized by warming of Pacific Ocean waters, affecting global weather patterns and agricultural output.
Minimum Support Price (MSP)	Government-announced price at which farmers are assured procurement for certain crops.
Direct Income Support	Cash transfers provided directly to farmers instead of subsidizing specific inputs or outputs.
Strait of Hormuz	Strategic waterway through which a significant share of global energy and fertilizer trade passes.

[Can India protect its seafarers in Gulf?-The Hindu Text and Context](#)





Easy Explanation

Recent U.S. attacks on three merchant vessels carrying Indian crew members in the Persian Gulf have highlighted the vulnerabilities faced by Indian seafarers working in conflict-prone regions. Three Indian sailors aboard the tanker **Settebello** were killed after the U.S. Navy targeted the vessel, alleging that it was involved in transporting Iranian oil in violation of the American blockade. Ship operators, however, have disputed these claims.

India is one of the world's largest suppliers of maritime manpower, with nearly **3.5 lakh Indian seafarers** serving globally. About one-sixth of the world's merchant shipping workforce is Indian. Around **23,000 Indian seafarers** are estimated to be working in the Gulf region, making developments there a matter of direct concern for India.

The targeted vessels were foreign-flagged ships operating under **Flags of Convenience (FOCs)**. Such registration allows ships to operate under countries like Panama, Liberia or Marshall Islands, even though ownership and management may be linked to other countries. Although foreign registration complicates legal options, India has previously intervened to protect Indian crew members aboard foreign-flagged ships, including against Somali pirates and Houthi attacks.

India's ability to respond militarily in the current situation is limited because the confrontation involves powerful states such as the United States and Iran. Unlike piracy, which is universally condemned, interstate conflicts present diplomatic challenges. India has protested the attacks and previously launched **Operation Sankalp** to safeguard merchant shipping in the region.

International maritime governance also has limitations. The **International Maritime Organization (IMO)** regulates technical and safety aspects of shipping but lacks strong enforcement powers. Similarly, although the **United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS)** provides a legal framework for maritime conduct, its effectiveness is constrained because some major powers, including the United States, have not ratified it.

The article suggests that protecting Indian seafarers ultimately depends on a combination of diplomacy, naval presence and international cooperation, as existing maritime institutions lack adequate enforcement mechanisms.

Key Takeaways

- Indian seafarers form a major part of the global maritime workforce**
 - India has around 3.5 lakh seafarers worldwide.
 - One in every six seafarers globally is Indian.
 - About 23,000 Indians are employed in the Gulf region.
- Three Indian sailors were killed in U.S. attacks**
 - The vessels were accused of transporting Iranian oil.
 - Ship operators have disputed these allegations.
 - The incident triggered strong protests from India.
- Flags of Convenience complicate legal protection**
 - Ships are often registered in third countries.
 - Ownership and management may differ from the flag state.
 - Legal jurisdiction becomes complex.
- India's military options are limited**
 - The conflict involves the United States and Iran.
 - Direct intervention is diplomatically sensitive.
 - India has relied mainly on protests and naval patrols.
- India has previously protected merchant vessels**
 - Operation Sankalp safeguarded shipping against Houthi attacks.
 - The Indian Navy has countered Somali piracy.
 - Foreign-flagged ships with Indian crews have also received assistance.
- International maritime institutions face limitations**
 - IMO lacks strong enforcement powers.
 - UNCLOS provides legal norms but weak enforcement.
 - Major countries do not always adhere to common frameworks.
- Diplomacy and maritime security cooperation are essential**
 - Protection of seafarers requires international coordination.
 - Naval presence helps ensure safe sea lanes.
 - India's growing maritime interests demand stronger mechanisms.

Important Terms



| Click to Connect Now.



Term	Meaning
Flag of Convenience (FOC)	Practice of registering ships in countries different from the owners' nationality to benefit from favourable regulations.
International Maritime Organization (IMO)	UN agency responsible for regulating safety, security and environmental standards in global shipping.
UNCLOS	United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, the principal legal framework governing maritime activities.
Operation Sankalp	Indian Navy mission launched to ensure the safety of merchant shipping in the Gulf region.
Strait of Hormuz	Strategic waterway connecting the Persian Gulf with the Arabian Sea through which a major portion of global oil trade passes.

[What is drop shipping, and what are the risks for online shoppers?-The Hindu Text and Context](#)

Economy

Easy Explanation

Drop shipping is a business model in which a seller does not keep products in stock. Instead, when a customer places an order, the seller forwards the order to another manufacturer, wholesaler, or supplier who actually possesses the product and ships it directly to the customer.

In this arrangement, the drop shipper acts merely as a middleman. There may even be multiple intermediaries between the buyer and the original manufacturer. With social media platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, WhatsApp, and e-commerce platforms like Shopify, setting up an online store has become extremely easy. AI tools have further simplified website creation, customer service, and marketing.

Drop shipping itself is legal in most countries provided tax laws and transparency requirements are followed. It has advantages because it allows entrepreneurs to start businesses without maintaining inventory and helps customers access products from distant markets.

However, the model also creates several risks. Customers often do not know the real source of products. Sellers may use attractive AI-generated images and create the impression that they are original manufacturers. Product quality may be poor, prices may be inflated, and deliveries may be delayed.

Some drop shippers unknowingly sell counterfeit or pirated goods, while fraudulent operators may disappear after collecting payments. Customers' personal and payment information may also be shared with multiple parties, increasing the risk of cyber fraud and phishing attacks.

Therefore, consumers should verify reviews, check seller authenticity, understand return policies, and research products before making purchases through social media or unfamiliar websites.

Key Takeaways



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1. **Meaning of Drop Shipping**
 - Seller does not maintain inventory.
 - Orders are transferred to another supplier who ships the product.
 - The seller acts mainly as an intermediary.
2. **Growth of the Model**
 - Expansion of e-commerce and social media platforms has boosted drop shipping.
 - AI tools have made website creation and marketing easier.
 - Individuals can start businesses with very little investment.
3. **Benefits for Customers**
 - Provides access to products from global markets.
 - Reduces complications related to customs and bulk purchases.
 - Good drop shippers may provide customer support and quality checks.
4. **Legal but Requires Transparency**
 - Drop shipping is legal in most jurisdictions.
 - Compliance with tax laws and platform regulations is necessary.
 - Misrepresentation of products or sellers can create legal problems.
5. **Major Risks for Consumers**
 - Fake websites and misleading advertisements.
 - Delayed or non-delivery of products.
 - Inflated prices and poor-quality goods.
6. **Cybersecurity and Data Privacy Concerns**
 - Customer data may pass through multiple parties.
 - Risks of phishing, hacking, and payment fraud increase.
 - Communication outside regulated platforms reduces protection.
7. **Need for Consumer Awareness**
 - Check reviews and seller credibility before buying.
 - Understand return and refund policies.
 - Verify whether products are genuine and legally sourced.

Important Terms

Term	Meaning
Drop Shipping	Business model where the seller does not keep inventory and forwards orders to suppliers.
Wholesaler	Supplier who sells goods in bulk to retailers or intermediaries.
Supply Chain	Network involved in production, transportation and delivery of products.
Counterfeit Goods	Fake products illegally imitating genuine brands.
Phishing	Cybercrime involving attempts to steal sensitive information through deceptive means.
Data Privacy	Protection of personal and financial information from unauthorized access.

[Deaths in Brazil raise concerns about India's dengue vaccine, DengiAll-The Hindu Science](#)



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Easy Explanation

India is preparing to introduce its indigenous dengue vaccine, **DengiAll**, developed by Panacea Biotec in collaboration with the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR). However, recent developments in Brazil have raised concerns. Brazil temporarily suspended its dengue vaccination campaign after two deaths and several severe adverse events were reported among recipients of the **Butantan-DV** vaccine.

Both Butantan-DV and DengiAll are based on technology developed by the U.S. National Institutes of Health (NIH). They are **tetavalent vaccines**, meaning they contain weakened forms of all four dengue virus serotypes (DENV-1, DENV-2, DENV-3, and DENV-4) to provide protection against all variants.

One of the major concerns with dengue vaccines is **Antibody-Dependent Enhancement (ADE)**. Normally, antibodies protect against infections. However, when cross-reactive antibodies are present at low levels, they may actually facilitate virus entry into cells, resulting in severe dengue. ADE is considered one of the most serious risks associated with dengue vaccination.

A similar problem was witnessed with **Dengvaxia**, the first licensed dengue vaccine, which led to severe adverse events among vaccinated children in the Philippines. This experience demonstrated that combining four weakened viruses does not automatically guarantee effective immunity against all four serotypes.

The recent cases in Brazil have revived concerns about whether vaccines such as Butantan-DV and DengiAll truly provide balanced protection against all dengue serotypes and whether ADE could emerge later.

India's Phase-3 trials of DengiAll involved more than 10,000 volunteers, who will be monitored for two years after vaccination. Experts recommend extensive antibody studies and strong post-marketing surveillance to detect any rare or delayed side effects. Continuous monitoring after rollout will be essential to ensure vaccine safety.

Although the risk appears very small at the population level, even rare severe adverse events require careful scientific evaluation because public trust in vaccination programmes depends heavily on safety.

Key Takeaways

- DengiAll and Brazil's Butantan-DV Are Similar**
 - Both vaccines are based on NIH technology.
 - They contain weakened forms of all four dengue virus serotypes.
 - Both are designed to provide tetavalent protection.
- Dengue Has Four Serotypes**
 - DENV-1, DENV-2, DENV-3 and DENV-4 circulate in many countries.
 - Immunity against one serotype does not ensure protection against others.
 - Effective vaccines must protect against all four types.
- Antibody-Dependent Enhancement (ADE) Is a Major Concern**
 - Low levels of cross-reactive antibodies can worsen infections.
 - ADE may lead to severe and potentially fatal dengue.
 - It is considered a serious adverse event in dengue vaccination.
- Brazil's Experience Raises Questions**
 - Severe side effects and two deaths were reported after vaccination.
 - Symptoms resembled severe dengue.
 - Researchers need to investigate whether ADE was involved.
- Lessons from Dengvaxia**
 - Earlier dengue vaccine Dengvaxia caused severe adverse events.
 - It mainly induced immunity against one serotype.
 - Balanced immunity against all serotypes is difficult to achieve.
- Need for Strong Monitoring in India**
 - DengiAll Phase-3 trials enrolled over 10,000 volunteers.
 - Long-term monitoring is necessary after vaccine rollout.
 - Pharmacovigilance systems should track rare side effects.
- Balancing Benefits and Risks**
 - Severe adverse events are extremely rare.
 - Vaccination remains important in dengue-endemic countries.
 - Safety and public confidence require continuous scientific surveillance.





Important Terms

Term	Meaning
Dengue Serotype	One of the four genetically distinct forms of dengue virus (DENV-1 to DENV-4).
Tetravalent Vaccine	Vaccine designed to protect against all four dengue virus serotypes.
Antibody-Dependent Enhancement (ADE)	A phenomenon in which antibodies enhance rather than prevent infection, leading to severe disease.
Attenuated Virus	A weakened form of a virus used in vaccines to stimulate immunity without causing disease.
Pharmacovigilance	Continuous monitoring of vaccine or drug safety after approval and use.
Dengvaxia	The first licensed dengue vaccine, associated with severe adverse events in some recipients.

[The 'seven-point IQ opportunity' for Indian children-The Hindu Editorial](#)

sociology

Easy Explanation

India's Anganwadi system has traditionally focused on ensuring child survival through nutrition, immunisation, health care and sanitation. These efforts have helped reduce under-five mortality significantly. However, modern research shows that physical growth and brain development are deeply interconnected and cannot be treated separately.

During the first few years of life, the brain develops rapidly and requires both nutrition and stimulation. Along with proper food and healthcare, children need emotional support, conversations, storytelling, play and interaction with parents and caregivers. These experiences help build language, memory, reasoning and social skills.

Research from Jamaica and India (Vellore birth cohort study) shows that nutrition alone improves physical health, but combining nutrition with psychosocial stimulation produces much stronger cognitive outcomes. Children who recover from early stunting and receive proper stimulation perform better in later cognitive assessments.

Studies from Vellore found that children attending preschool, including Anganwadi centres, for 18-24 months scored about seven IQ points higher than children who did not attend preschool. Similar findings have been reported in Brazil. This highlights the importance of quality early childhood education.

Recognising this, the government has introduced initiatives such as **Poshan Bhi Padhai Bhi**, **Aadharshila**, and **Navchetana**, which aim to transform Anganwadis into centres that nurture both body and mind. These programmes promote play-based learning, early stimulation and active parental involvement.



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Experts argue that achieving a developed India (Viksit Bharat) requires moving beyond calories and ensuring enriching home and community environments. A holistic approach can improve children's cognitive abilities, empower women through childcare support, and strengthen communities.

Key Takeaways

1. **Early Childhood Is Critical for Brain Development**
 - The brain grows rapidly during the first few years.
 - Nutrition and cognitive stimulation develop together.
 - Early experiences influence lifelong learning and behaviour.
2. **Nutrition Alone Is Not Sufficient**
 - Physical growth and mental development are interconnected.
 - Emotional support and responsive caregiving are equally important.
 - Children need love, conversation and play alongside food.
3. **Research Supports Holistic Development**
 - Studies in Jamaica and Vellore demonstrated the benefits of combining nutrition with stimulation.
 - Recovery from early stunting improves cognitive outcomes.
 - Both factors complement each other.
4. **Preschool Education Can Increase Cognitive Ability**
 - Regular preschool attendance can significantly improve IQ scores.
 - Vellore studies found gains of around seven IQ points.
 - Similar evidence has emerged from Brazil.
5. **Anganwadis Are Expanding Their Role**
 - They are evolving from nutrition centres into early learning centres.
 - Programmes like Aadharshila and Navchetana promote play-based education.
 - Parents are being encouraged to participate actively.
6. **Home Environment Matters Greatly**
 - Talking, reading and playing with children enhance development.
 - Exposure to toxins, infections and poor sanitation can hinder cognitive growth.
 - Emotional support often predicts outcomes better than diet alone.
7. **Holistic Child Development Benefits Society**
 - Better childcare supports women's employment and livelihoods.
 - Communities become stronger when children thrive.
 - Human capital formation begins in early childhood.

Important Terms

Term	Meaning
Anganwadi	Village-level centre under ICDS providing nutrition, health and early childhood education services.
Early Childhood Development (ECD)	Holistic development of children encompassing physical, cognitive, emotional and social growth.
Stunting	Impaired growth and development caused by chronic undernutrition.
Psychosocial Stimulation	Learning and development through love, interaction, play and responsive caregiving.
Aadharshila	National framework promoting play-based preschool education in Anganwadis.



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Navchetana	Initiative aimed at helping parents provide early stimulation and learning opportunities at home.
Poshan Bhi Padhai Bhi	Programme integrating nutrition with early childhood education and development.

The hidden history of the Thai-Bharat connection-The Hindu Editorial

International relations

Easy Explanation

India and Thailand share ancient cultural links rooted in Buddhism, Hindu philosophy, and epics such as the Ramayana and Thailand's Ramakien. These ties acquired a political dimension during India's struggle for independence. A key institution in this story was the **Thai-Bharat Cultural Lodge (TBCL)** in Bangkok, which evolved from a cultural centre into a major hub of anti-colonial activities.

The origins of this connection go back to Rabindranath Tagore's visit to Siam (Thailand) in 1927, where he emphasized the shared heritage between the two countries. Inspired by this vision, Swami Satyananda Puri established the Dharam Ashram in Bangkok in 1939, which later became the Thai-Bharat Cultural Lodge in 1940.

As World War II spread across Southeast Asia, the Lodge transformed into a centre for Indian nationalists. Revolutionaries such as Sardar Giani Pritam Singh and Swami Satyananda Puri helped organise the Indian diaspora and collaborated with Japanese intelligence networks. The Indian National Council and later the Indian Independence League (IIL) emerged from these efforts.

A historic milestone came with the **Bangkok Conference (June 15–23, 1942)**, where representatives of Indian communities across Southeast Asia adopted a 34-point resolution that laid the foundation for the **Indian National Army (INA)**. The conference sought to unite Indian nationalists under one political and military framework and demanded recognition of India's independence.

After the deaths of Swami Satyananda Puri and Sardar Pritam Singh in a plane crash, the movement received new leadership under Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose in 1943. Bose transformed the INA and IIL into a disciplined military and political force. The Thai-Bharat Cultural Lodge continued to provide institutional and cultural support throughout the struggle.

Although banned by Allied forces after World War II, the Lodge was revived in 1946 and remains the only surviving institution associated with this chapter of history. Today, it stands as a symbol of Indo-Thai friendship and the contribution of the Indian diaspora in Southeast Asia to India's freedom movement.

Key Takeaways

- Ancient India-Thailand Cultural Ties**
 - Relations are rooted in Buddhism, Hindu traditions and shared epics.
 - Rabindranath Tagore strengthened these cultural links in 1927.
 - The Ramayana influenced Thailand's Ramakien tradition.
- Birth of the Thai-Bharat Cultural Lodge**
 - Originated from the Dharam Ashram established by Swami Satyananda Puri.
 - Became the Thai-Bharat Cultural Lodge in 1940.
 - Served as a centre for the Indian diaspora in Thailand.
- Transformation During World War II**
 - The Lodge shifted from cultural activities to political mobilisation.
 - It became a base for Indian revolutionaries.
 - Links were established with Japanese intelligence.
- Bangkok Conference of 1942**
 - Representatives from across Southeast Asia participated.
 - A 34-point resolution laid the framework for the INA.
 - The Indian Independence League emerged as the main organisation.
- Role of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose**
 - Assumed leadership in 1943.
 - Unified political and military efforts under the INA.



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- Mobilised thousands of volunteers and prisoners of war.
- 6. **Contribution of the Indian Diaspora**
 - Overseas Indians played a significant role in the freedom struggle.
 - Thailand became a strategic refuge from British colonial control.
 - Community networks supported anti-colonial activities.
- 7. **Enduring Legacy**
 - The Lodge survived despite post-war suppression.
 - It remains a living archive of the INA era.
 - It symbolizes the historic friendship between India and Thailand.

Important Terms

Term	Meaning
Thai-Bharat Cultural Lodge (TBCL)	Institution in Bangkok that evolved into a major centre supporting India's freedom movement.
Indian National Army (INA)	Armed force formed to fight British rule under the leadership of Subhas Chandra Bose.
Indian Independence League (IIL)	Political organisation representing Indians in Southeast Asia and supporting the INA.
Ghadar Party	Revolutionary organisation established by Indian expatriates to overthrow British rule.
Ramakien	Thai national epic derived from the Indian Ramayana.
Bangkok Conference (1942)	Historic gathering that provided the political and organisational foundation for the INA.
Swami Satyananda Puri	Scholar and nationalist who founded the Dharam Ashram and played a key role in the Indian movement in Thailand.

[Series of gaps-The Hindu Editorial](#)

Polity

Easy Explanation

Child sexual abuse in India remains severely under-reported, and the response mechanisms of the police, courts, and society continue to suffer from major weaknesses. The recent Sulur case in Coimbatore highlights these deeper systemic failures rather than being an isolated incident.

Most cases of child sexual abuse are committed not by strangers but by people known to the child and family. More than 90% of POCSO cases involve trusted individuals, making it difficult for families to suspect or report the abuse. Public perception, however, continues to focus on unknown predators, creating a mismatch between reality and awareness.



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Certain vulnerable groups, particularly migrant and working-class families, face higher risks because they often lack strong community support networks. Neglected spaces such as abandoned industrial areas and poorly maintained public lands frequently become sites of crime, yet urban planning rarely incorporates child safety concerns beyond major cities.

Although the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act requires trials to conclude within one year, courts face huge backlogs. The pendency rate is around 89%, and conviction rates have historically remained low. Delays and low convictions weaken public confidence in the criminal justice system and discourage reporting.

Successive amendments to the POCSO Act have mainly focused on increasing punishments in response to public outrage. However, evidence on whether harsher penalties actually deter offences remains limited. In many cases involving relatives or acquaintances, severe punishments may even discourage families from reporting crimes.

Another challenge is secondary victimisation. Survivors and their families often face insensitive treatment by authorities, social stigma, and irresponsible media reporting. Without trauma-informed policing and support systems, children remain trapped in cycles of unreported and unpunished violence.

The issue therefore requires not just stronger laws, but better awareness, faster justice, trauma-sensitive institutions, safer urban spaces, and evidence-based policymaking.

Key Takeaways

1. **Most Offenders Are Known Persons**
 - Over 90% of child sexual abuse cases involve trusted individuals.
 - Public focus on strangers often overlooks real risks.
 - Families may find it difficult to identify abuse early.
2. **Vulnerable Communities Face Greater Risks**
 - Migrant and working-class families often lack protective social networks.
 - Social isolation increases children's vulnerability.
 - Community-level awareness remains inadequate.
3. **Unsafe Urban Spaces Contribute to Crimes**
 - Abandoned industrial sites and neglected public spaces become crime hotspots.
 - Child-friendly urban planning is limited mainly to large cities.
 - Social safety concerns are often ignored in urban development projects.
4. **Judicial Delays Weaken Confidence**
 - POCSO courts face an 89% pendency rate.
 - Conviction rates have remained relatively low.
 - Delayed justice discourages victims and families from reporting cases.
5. **Focus on Harsher Punishments Has Limitations**
 - POCSO amendments of 2018 and 2019 mainly increased penalties.
 - Evidence regarding their deterrent effect is limited.
 - Severe punishments may reduce reporting when offenders are family members.
6. **Lack of Evidence-Based Policy**
 - Data on repeat offenders and deterrence remains scarce.
 - Analyses of acquittals are rarely used to improve policies.
 - Policymaking often reacts to public outrage rather than research.
7. **Need for Trauma-Informed Response**
 - Survivors frequently face stigma and insensitive treatment.
 - Media reporting can cause secondary victimisation.
 - Child protection requires trauma-sensitive policing and support systems.

Important Terms

Term	Meaning
POCSO Act, 2012	Special law for protecting children from sexual offences and ensuring child-friendly judicial procedures.





Pendency Rate	Percentage of cases that remain unresolved in courts.
Recidivism	Tendency of offenders to commit crimes repeatedly after punishment.
Secondary Victimization	Additional trauma caused by insensitive treatment from institutions or society after the original abuse.
Trauma-Informed Policing	Approach in which law enforcement responds with sensitivity to victims' psychological and emotional needs.
Safe City Project	Government initiative aimed at improving urban safety, especially for women and vulnerable groups.

[Towards a fair, efficient insolvency regime-The Hindu Editorial](#)

Polity

Easy Explanation

India's Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC) was introduced to provide a quick and efficient mechanism for resolving financially stressed companies. It shifted India from the earlier debtor-friendly approach under the Sick Industrial Companies Act (SICA) to a creditor-in-control model. However, prolonged litigation and procedural delays have prevented the IBC from achieving its goal of time-bound resolution.

The 2026 amendment introduces the Creditor-Initiated Insolvency Resolution Process (CIIRP), a hybrid framework combining features of debtor-in-possession and creditor-in-control systems. Under this arrangement, the existing management continues to run the company under the supervision of a resolution professional, thereby avoiding disruption and preserving business value.

The amendment also modifies Section 7(5)(a) by replacing the word "may" with "shall", making it mandatory for the National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT) to admit insolvency applications when debt and default are established through information utility records. This removes the discretionary powers earlier recognized in the Vidarbha Industries judgment.

However, the new framework allows only "notified financial institutions" to initiate CIIRP. This creates a hierarchy among financial creditors and excludes smaller lenders and other sophisticated investors from using the mechanism. Critics argue that this classification may violate the constitutional principle of equality and weaken the fairness of the insolvency ecosystem.

Smaller creditors are already disadvantaged because they stand lower in the repayment hierarchy. Excluding them from initiating CIIRP may force them to resort to the more disruptive Corporate Insolvency Resolution Process (CIRP), increasing litigation and reducing efficiency.

Unlike India, countries such as the United States and the United Kingdom permit restructuring based on objective financial criteria rather than the regulatory identity of creditors. Experts therefore suggest creating a "Universal CIIRP", where any financial creditor can initiate the process with support from creditors holding at least 51% of total financial debt. Such a system would promote fairness, efficiency, and investor confidence.

Key Takeaways

1. Evolution of Insolvency Framework

- India moved from the debtor-friendly SICA regime to the creditor-in-control IBC model.
- The aim was to provide time-bound resolution of distressed companies.
- Litigation and delays have reduced its effectiveness.



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2. Introduction of CIIRP

- The 2026 amendment introduces the Creditor-Initiated Insolvency Resolution Process.
- It combines debtor-in-possession and creditor-in-control approaches.
- Existing management continues operations under supervision.

3. Reduced Judicial Discretion

- The amendment replaces "may" with "shall" in Section 7(5)(a).
- NCLT must admit cases when debt and default are established.
- This overturns the discretionary approach adopted in the Vidarbha Industries case.

4. Exclusive Rights to Notified Institutions

- Only notified financial institutions can initiate CIIRP.
- Other financial creditors are excluded from the mechanism.
- This creates unequal treatment among creditors.

5. Impact on Smaller Creditors

- Smaller lenders and operational creditors remain disadvantaged.
- They may have to use the more disruptive CIRP process.
- Concentration of bargaining power may affect fairness.

6. Global Practices Are More Inclusive

- The U.S. Chapter 11 and U.K. restructuring plans use objective financial conditions.
- Access is not based on the identity of creditors.
- Such frameworks encourage broader stakeholder participation.

7. Need for a Universal CIIRP

- Experts propose a default-neutral initiation rule.
- Any financial creditor should be able to initiate CIIRP with support from creditors holding at least 51% of total debt.
- This could improve efficiency, constitutional validity, and investor confidence.

Important Terms

Term	Meaning
IBC (Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code), 2016	India's law for resolving insolvency and bankruptcy in a time-bound manner.
CIIRP	Creditor-Initiated Insolvency Resolution Process introduced through the 2026 amendment.
CIRP	Corporate Insolvency Resolution Process under the IBC for restructuring distressed companies.
Debtor-in-Possession	System where existing management retains control during restructuring.
Creditor-in-Control	System where creditors exercise control over the insolvency resolution process.
NCLT	National Company Law Tribunal, the adjudicating authority for insolvency cases.
Information Utility	Electronic repository that stores authenticated records of debt and default.





16th June 2026

[US-Iran MoU: The elusive quest for 'New Middle East' - The Indian Express Explained Page](#)

International relations

Easy Explanation

The recently announced Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the United States and Iran could mark an important shift in Middle East geopolitics. Although the text of the agreement has not yet been released, it has already faced opposition from Israel, criticism in the United States, and dissent within Iran. This indicates that both countries have made significant concessions to reach the understanding.

Unlike the 2015 Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), which mainly dealt with Iran's nuclear programme, the new agreement appears much broader. It seeks to establish a framework for managing tensions between Washington and Tehran, reducing the risk of military conflict, providing phased sanctions relief, and supporting Iran's economic reconstruction after years of sanctions and recent wars.

The agreement comes at a time when the old Middle East order is undergoing change. The United States is increasingly reluctant to remain trapped in prolonged conflicts, while Iran faces economic strain and the limitations of relying solely on military deterrence. Gulf countries such as Saudi Arabia and the UAE are also prioritising economic development and stability over confrontation.

Israel remains suspicious of any U.S.-Iran accommodation, as its strategy has long focused on containing Iran. However, changing political dynamics in the region have weakened support for older approaches.

Although the success of the agreement is uncertain and implementation challenges remain, the negotiations indicate that regional and global powers are exploring a new framework based on managing rivalries rather than perpetual conflict.

For India, any reduction in tensions is beneficial because instability in the Gulf affects energy security, trade, and the welfare of millions of Indians living in the region. The evolving regional order also creates opportunities for India to play a more active role in promoting stability.

Key Takeaways

Significance of the US-Iran MoU

- Represents a possible turning point in Middle East geopolitics.
- Suggests that both sides have made major concessions.
- Faces resistance in Israel, the U.S., and Iran.

Broader Scope than JCPOA

- Goes beyond the nuclear issue.
- Envisages sanctions relief and economic reconstruction.
- Aims to reduce the possibility of military confrontation.

Changing US Approach

- Growing fatigue with prolonged military engagements.
- Increasing preference for diplomacy over direct intervention.
- Continued desire to shape regional geopolitics.

Iran's Strategic Reassessment

- Economic pressures have intensified.
- Recent conflicts exposed the costs of regional expansion.



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- Military deterrence alone cannot guarantee prosperity.

Israel's Position

- Continues to oppose closer U.S.-Iran engagement.
- Fears that accommodation may strengthen Iran.
- Internal political divisions influence its strategy.

Changing Priorities of Gulf States

- Saudi Arabia and the UAE increasingly favour stability.
- Economic transformation requires peace and predictability.
- Recent wars highlighted their vulnerability.

Emergence of a New Regional Framework

- Shift from constant confrontation to management of rivalries.
- Regional powers seek a more stable order.
- A profound geopolitical transition is underway.

Implications for India

- Stable Gulf region supports India's energy security.
- Protects the interests of the Indian diaspora.
- Opens opportunities for greater diplomatic engagement.

Important Terms

Term	Meaning
MoU (Memorandum of Understanding)	A formal agreement expressing the intentions of parties to cooperate.
JCPOA	Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, the 2015 nuclear agreement involving Iran and major powers.
Sanctions Relief	Removal or easing of economic restrictions imposed on a country.
Abraham Accords	Agreements that normalised relations between Israel and several Arab countries.
Deterrence	Strategy of preventing aggression through the threat of retaliation.
Forever Wars	Long-term military engagements, especially involving the U.S. in the Middle East.
Regional Order	The pattern of political and strategic relationships among countries in a region.



**De-escalation**

Reduction of tensions and the risk of conflict.

Diaspora

Citizens of a country living outside their homeland.

[jCPOa :another Iran deal a decade ago,the concessions it secured-The Indian Express Explained Page](#)

International relations

Easy Explanation

The **Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA)** was a landmark nuclear agreement signed in **2015** between Iran and six major powers—the United States, United Kingdom, France, Russia, China, and Germany (P5+1)—along with the European Union.

The agreement aimed to prevent Iran from developing nuclear weapons while giving it relief from harsh economic sanctions.

At the time, Western countries feared that Iran had enough enriched uranium and centrifuges to eventually build several nuclear bombs. Under the deal, Iran agreed to sharply restrict its nuclear activities and allow extensive international inspections.

Iran reduced its uranium stockpile by **98%** and agreed to keep uranium enrichment at **3.67%**, suitable only for civilian purposes and far below weapons-grade levels. Nuclear facilities at Fordow, Natanz, and Arak were restricted to peaceful research and industrial activities.

The agreement also gave the **International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)** broad powers to inspect Iranian nuclear facilities and verify compliance. A Joint Commission consisting of representatives of all parties monitored implementation.

In return, the United States, European Union, and United Nations lifted many nuclear-related sanctions. Around **\$100 billion worth of Iranian assets** frozen abroad were released, providing a major economic boost to Iran.

Supporters believed the agreement would prevent Iran from obtaining nuclear weapons for at least a decade. Critics, however, argued that some restrictions would expire over time ("sunset clauses") and that sanctions relief would strengthen Iran's regional influence.

The deal began functioning in January 2016 after the IAEA confirmed that Iran had fulfilled its initial commitments. However, in **2018**, U.S. President Donald Trump withdrew from the agreement, describing it as a flawed deal. The American withdrawal effectively undermined and weakened the JCPOA.

The current U.S.-Iran negotiations are often compared with the JCPOA because they also seek to reduce tensions and address Iran's nuclear programme, although the new framework appears broader in scope.

Key Takeaways**Background of JCPOA**

- Signed in 2015 between Iran and P5+1 countries.
- Came into force in January 2016.
- Sought to curb Iran's nuclear programme in exchange for sanctions relief.

Restrictions Accepted by Iran

- Reduced uranium stockpile by 98%.
- Limited uranium enrichment to 3.67%.
- Restricted activities at Fordow, Natanz and Arak nuclear facilities.
- Accepted extensive international inspections.



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Role of IAEA

- Monitored Iranian compliance.
- Conducted inspections of nuclear sites.
- Submitted regular reports to the UN Security Council.

Benefits for Iran

- Removal of nuclear-related sanctions.
- Release of nearly \$100 billion in frozen assets.
- Opportunity for economic recovery.

Concerns About the Deal

- Some restrictions had expiration dates ("sunset provisions").
- Critics feared Iran could resume nuclear activities later.
- Concerns existed about Iran's regional influence.

Collapse of the Agreement

- The United States withdrew in 2018 under President Donald Trump.
- The withdrawal significantly weakened the deal.
- Tensions between the U.S. and Iran increased again.

Relevance Today

- The JCPOA remains an important example of diplomatic engagement.
- Current U.S.-Iran negotiations are often viewed through the lens of the 2015 agreement.

Important Terms

Term	Meaning
JCPOA	Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, the 2015 Iran nuclear agreement.
P5+1	Five permanent UN Security Council members plus Germany.
Uranium Enrichment	Process of increasing uranium purity; high levels can be used for nuclear weapons.
Centrifuge	Machine used to enrich uranium.
IAEA	International Atomic Energy Agency, the UN's nuclear watchdog.
Sanctions Relief	Removal of economic restrictions imposed on a country.





Highly Enriched Uranium (HEU)	Uranium enriched to levels suitable for making nuclear weapons.
Plutonium	Radioactive material that can also be used in nuclear weapons.
Additional Protocol	Agreement allowing broader inspections by the IAEA.
Sunset Provisions	Clauses under which some restrictions expire after a specified period.
Joint Commission	Body comprising representatives of participating countries to oversee implementation of the JCPOA.

[For strengthened Iran,a 60-day window of opportunity,a test of resolve-The Indian Express Explained Page](#)

International relations

Easy Explanation

After years of hostility and the recent U.S.-Israel conflict with Iran, the United States and Iran have announced a **Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)**. Although the full text is yet to be released, reports suggest that both sides have made significant concessions.

Under the proposed arrangement, Iran would reopen the **Strait of Hormuz** to international commercial shipping, while the United States would gradually remove its naval blockade. The U.S. is also expected to temporarily ease oil sanctions, release about **\$24 billion** of frozen Iranian assets, and discuss a long-term reconstruction package for Iran.

In return, Iran would agree not to pursue nuclear weapons and freeze further uranium enrichment while negotiations for a final agreement continue during a **60-day period**.

Unlike previous negotiations, the current arrangement postpones the more difficult issue of a comprehensive nuclear settlement and focuses first on reducing tensions and creating economic incentives.

Before the war, the United States enjoyed major leverage through sanctions and military superiority. However, after the conflict, Iran demonstrated its ability to threaten maritime routes and energy infrastructure through its control over the strategically important **Strait of Hormuz** and its missile capabilities. This has given Tehran a stronger bargaining position.

Iran's acceptance of the MoU is driven by three factors. First, the recent war tested American military power, and Tehran believes it emerged with enough leverage to negotiate from a stronger position. Second, the prospect of economic relief and access to frozen assets provides immediate benefits. Third, Iran believes that its missile and drone capabilities remain intact, allowing it to return to a confrontational stance if the agreement breaks down.

The crucial challenge now is implementation. The 60-day verification period will test whether both countries can sustain cooperation and move toward a broader settlement.

Key Takeaways

The Proposed MoU

- The U.S. and Iran have agreed on a preliminary framework.



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- The complete text is expected to be released later.
- It aims to reduce tensions and create conditions for a final agreement.

Major U.S. Commitments

- Removal of the naval blockade.
- Temporary waiver of oil sanctions.
- Release of around \$24 billion in frozen Iranian assets.
- Negotiations for reconstruction and economic assistance.

Major Iranian Commitments

- Reopen the Strait of Hormuz to commercial shipping.
- Maintain the current status of its nuclear programme.
- Avoid further uranium enrichment.
- Commit not to acquire nuclear weapons.

Why Iran Accepted the Deal

- The recent conflict increased Iran's strategic leverage.
- Economic relief is urgently needed.
- Iran retains its missile and drone capabilities.
- Tehran can revert to confrontation if the agreement fails.

Importance of the Strait of Hormuz

- It is one of the world's most important energy routes.
- Iran's ability to influence shipping gives it bargaining power.
- Reopening the strait would reduce risks to global oil supplies.

The 60-Day Window

- Both sides have 60 days to negotiate a broader settlement.
- The period will test trust and compliance.
- Successful implementation could lead to long-term stability.

Challenges Ahead

- Deep mistrust still exists between the two countries.
- Internal opposition exists within Iran, Israel, and the United States.
- Differences over interpretation and implementation could derail the agreement.

Important Terms

Term	Meaning
Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)	A preliminary agreement outlining commitments between parties.
Strait of Hormuz	Strategic waterway through which a large share of global oil trade passes.





Sanctions	Economic restrictions imposed on a country.
Frozen Assets	Funds belonging to a country that are blocked and inaccessible.
Uranium Enrichment	Process of increasing uranium purity for nuclear fuel or weapons.
Natanz, Fordow, Isfahan	Major Iranian nuclear facilities.
Operation Midnight Hammer	U.S. military operation in June 2025 targeting Iranian nuclear infrastructure.
Axis of Resistance	Network of Iran-backed groups and allies across West Asia.
Deterrence	Strategy of preventing attacks through the threat of retaliation.
Verification Period	Time during which both parties monitor and confirm compliance with agreed commitments.
Missile and Drone Capabilities	Key components of Iran's conventional military power.
Geopolitical Leverage	Strategic advantage used to influence negotiations and international relations.

['Discount on top of dues':Issues in Telangana's liquor sales-The Indian Express Explained Page](#)

Governance

Easy Explanation

A dispute has emerged between the Telangana government and major liquor companies over delayed payments and a new payment policy.

Telangana is India's largest beer-consuming state by volume. Unlike many other states, liquor manufacturers do not sell directly to retailers. Instead, they supply alcohol to the **Telangana State Beverages Corporation (TSBC)**, a government-run body that purchases liquor and distributes it to retailers. As a result, companies depend entirely on the state government for payments.

According to industry bodies representing major global companies such as **Diageo, Pernod Ricard, Heineken, and Carlsberg**, payments worth more than **₹3,700 crore** for supplies made between December 2025 and April 2026 remain unpaid.

Adding to their concerns, the Telangana government introduced a new payment system from June 1. Under this system, payments would be made within 15 days of delivery, but companies would have to provide an **early payment discount** of 2-2.75%. In other words, the government would pay faster but at a reduced amount.



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Liquor companies argue that imposing discounts before clearing old dues creates financial stress and could lead to bad debts. They have also accused the government of acting unilaterally.

However, the Telangana government maintains that the discount mechanism is based on pre-existing agreements signed with the companies and is not a unilateral decision. It has also assured that pending dues will be cleared and that there is no disruption in liquor sales.

Key Takeaways

Liquor Distribution System in Telangana

- Liquor companies sell only to the Telangana State Beverages Corporation.
- The corporation supplies alcohol to retailers.
- Manufacturers depend on the state government for payments.

Issue of Pending Dues

- Payments worth over ₹3,700 crore are pending.
- The dues relate to supplies made between December 2025 and April 2026.
- Industry bodies say delayed payments are causing financial strain.

New Payment Policy

- Introduced from June 1.
- Payment will be made within 15 days of delivery.
- Companies must provide a discount of 2-2.75% for early payment.

Concerns Raised by Liquor Companies

- Old dues remain unpaid.
- Discounts are being applied even before clearing previous liabilities.
- Delayed payments could become bad debts.
- The policy may affect accounting standards and financial stability.

Government's Response

- The discount is an "early payment discount."
- It is based on previously signed contracts.
- The government says it is willing to clear pending dues.
- Authorities insist there is no crisis in liquor sales.

Important Terms

Term	Meaning
Telangana State Beverages Corporation (TSBC)	Government agency responsible for procuring and distributing liquor in Telangana.
Pending Dues	Payments that are owed but have not yet been made.
Early Payment Discount	Reduction in payment amount in exchange for quicker settlement.





Bad Debt	Money owed that may never be recovered.
Brewers Association of India (BAI)	Industry body representing beer manufacturers.
International Spirits and Wines Association of India (ISWAI)	Association representing major global liquor and wine companies.
Confederation of Indian Alcoholic Beverage Companies (CIABC)	Organization representing Indian alcoholic beverage producers.
Diageo	Multinational beverage company owning brands like Johnnie Walker and Smirnoff.
Pernod Ricard	Global alcoholic beverages company owning brands such as Chivas Regal and Absolut.
Heineken	Dutch multinational brewing company.
Carlsberg	Danish multinational brewing company.
Working Capital Stress	Financial pressure caused by delayed receipt of payments.

[At G7 meet, India can be the voice of developing countries-The Indian Express Ideas Page](#)

International relations

Easy Explanation

Prime Minister Narendra Modi attended the G7 Summit in France at a time when the global economy faces increasing fragmentation, trade disputes, climate challenges, and technological competition. Although the G7 no longer dominates the world economy as it did earlier, it still plays an important role in shaping global rules and standards.

France has placed issues such as economic security, artificial intelligence (AI), energy transition, climate finance, and development at the centre of the summit agenda. As one of the world's largest economies and a major energy consumer, India has an opportunity to represent not only its own interests but also the concerns of developing countries.

On **critical minerals**, India shares common interests with G7 countries in securing supplies of lithium, cobalt, nickel, and rare earth elements, which are essential for clean energy technologies and advanced manufacturing.

In the field of **artificial intelligence**, India's experience with digital public infrastructure gives it credibility in discussions on AI governance, standards, and safety.

Regarding **energy security**, India balances renewable energy expansion with the continued use of hydrocarbons to ensure affordable and reliable energy supplies. This practical experience allows India to contribute meaningfully to global debates.



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On **development and climate finance**, India can highlight the concerns of developing countries, many of which face rising debt and inadequate financial support for climate action. Although developed countries pledged climate finance at the 2024 Baku summit, the promised amount remains insufficient and much of it comes as loans rather than grants.

India is also concerned about the European Union's **Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM)**, which imposes carbon-based taxes on imports such as steel, cement, aluminium, and fertilisers. India argues that such measures act as trade barriers and unfairly burden developing countries that still rely on coal due to lack of finance and technology.

By participating in the G7 and later hosting the BRICS Summit, India seeks to engage with both developed and developing nations without aligning exclusively with any bloc. The larger objective is to influence the formation of future global rules rather than merely adapting to them later.

Key Takeaways

Changing Role of G7

- The G7 is less dominant than before but remains influential.
- It continues to shape global economic and technological standards.
- Differences among G7 members have reduced internal cohesion.

India's Position at the Summit

- India represents both its national interests and the concerns of developing countries.
- It follows a policy of multi-alignment rather than bloc politics.
- India seeks to influence emerging global rules.

Critical Minerals

- Lithium, cobalt, nickel, and rare earth elements are essential for energy transition.
- India and G7 countries share an interest in diversifying supply chains.
- Reducing dependence on China is a common objective.

Artificial Intelligence

- AI governance and standards are major issues.
- India's digital public infrastructure provides valuable experience.
- AI is increasingly linked to energy demand through data centres.

Energy Security

- India combines renewable energy expansion with continued use of hydrocarbons.
- Energy choices are driven by affordability and security.
- India provides a balanced perspective on energy transition.

Climate Finance

- Developing countries require greater financial support.
- Existing commitments remain inadequate.
- Much climate finance is provided through loans rather than grants.

Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM)

- The EU imposes carbon-based taxes on certain imports.
- India views CBAM as a trade barrier.
- Developing countries argue that climate action should not penalise nations lacking finance and technology.

India as the Voice of Developing Countries

- India can articulate the concerns of the Global South.
- It advocates fair climate responsibilities.
- It supports reforms in multilateral development banks and global economic governance.



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Strategic Importance of Participation

- Participation allows India to shape future global norms.
- India engages with both G7 and BRICS.
- Active diplomacy helps India avoid inheriting rules framed by others.

Important Terms

Term	Meaning
G7	Group of seven advanced economies: U.S., Canada, UK, France, Germany, Italy, and Japan.
Global South	Developing and emerging economies mainly in Asia, Africa, and Latin America.
Critical Minerals	Minerals such as lithium, cobalt, nickel, and rare earths needed for clean technologies.
Artificial Intelligence (AI)	Technology enabling machines to perform tasks requiring human intelligence.
Energy Transition	Shift from fossil fuels to cleaner energy sources.
Climate Finance	Financial support provided to countries for climate mitigation and adaptation.
Common but Differentiated Responsibilities (CBDR)	Principle that developed countries bear greater responsibility for addressing climate change.
Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM)	EU policy imposing carbon-based taxes on certain imports.
Economic Security	Protection of economies from supply disruptions and strategic vulnerabilities.
Multilateral Development Banks (MDBs)	International financial institutions such as the World Bank that provide development financing.
Supply Chain Resilience	Ability to maintain reliable production and trade networks despite disruptions.



Multi-alignment

Foreign policy approach of engaging with multiple power centres without exclusive alignment.

[In West Asia pause, questions for India, especially about its place at the table - The Indian Express Ideas Page](#)

International relations

Easy Explanation

The recently announced U.S.-Iran understanding may temporarily reduce tensions in West Asia, but many deeper issues remain unresolved. Questions related to Iran's nuclear ambitions, regional proxy groups, Israel's security concerns, and the future of regional stability have merely been postponed rather than settled.

The article argues that the agreement has bought time rather than delivered a permanent solution. A ceasefire or diplomatic pause can stop fighting, but it cannot by itself eliminate the causes that led to the conflict.

For India, the crisis raises important concerns. India's energy security, trade, and the welfare of millions of Indians living in Gulf countries are closely linked to stability in West Asia. Any conflict in the region affects oil prices, remittances, and major connectivity projects such as the **India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor (IMEC)**.

The author expresses concern that despite India's close ties with the United States, India's interests did not appear central during negotiations. Instead, Pakistan gained diplomatic relevance as the crisis unfolded, highlighting that strategic importance can change rapidly.

The article also questions India's assumption that maintaining friendly relations with multiple countries automatically translates into influence. Access and goodwill do not necessarily guarantee a seat at the decision-making table.

Overall, the article suggests that India should rethink its strategic position, strengthen its own capabilities, and avoid relying excessively on any one partner. In international politics, influence ultimately depends on national power and interests rather than friendships alone.

Key Takeaways

Temporary Peace, Not Permanent Resolution

- The U.S.-Iran understanding has paused conflict but not resolved underlying disputes.
- Issues concerning Iran's nuclear programme and regional proxies remain.
- Future instability cannot be ruled out.

Concerns for India

- Indian sailors and citizens in the Gulf remain vulnerable.
- India's trade and energy supplies depend heavily on regional stability.
- Rising oil prices can affect the Indian economy.

Pakistan's Renewed Importance

- The crisis highlighted Pakistan's continuing geopolitical relevance.
- Major powers may still engage Pakistan for regional issues.
- India's assumption of Pakistan's declining importance may require reassessment.

Limits of Strategic Friendships

- Friendly relations do not automatically guarantee influence.
- Proximity and access are not equivalent to leverage.
- Countries ultimately act according to their own interests.

Importance of West Asia for India



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- The region supplies a large share of India's energy needs.
- Millions of Indians live and work in Gulf countries.
- Remittances from the region contribute significantly to India's economy.
- Projects like IMEC depend on regional peace.

Need for Strategic Reassessment

- India should avoid complacency.
- National power and self-reliance remain essential.
- Strategic autonomy should continue to guide Indian foreign policy.

Uncertainty Ahead

- The larger geopolitical consequences of the crisis are still unfolding.
- Current victories or agreements may not guarantee long-term stability.
- The region is undergoing significant transformation.

Important Terms

Term	Meaning
West Asia	Region comprising countries such as Iran, Iraq, Israel, Saudi Arabia, and Gulf states.
Proxy Groups	Armed groups supported by a country to advance its interests indirectly.
Hezbollah	Iran-backed political and militant organisation based in Lebanon.
Strategic Autonomy	India's policy of maintaining independent decision-making without aligning exclusively with any bloc.
Deterrence	Preventing aggression through the threat of retaliation.
Remittances	Money sent home by citizens working abroad.
India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor (IMEC)	Proposed trade and connectivity corridor linking India, West Asia, and Europe.
Balance of Payments	Record of a country's transactions with the rest of the world.
Geopolitical Leverage	Ability of a country to influence others because of its strategic importance.



**Ceasefire**

Temporary suspension of armed conflict.

Karbala

Historic battle in 680 CE central to Shia Islamic tradition, symbolising sacrifice and resistance.

Muharram

First month of the Islamic calendar, marked by remembrance of the Battle of Karbala among Shia Muslims.

[Drone revolution and modern warfare-The Hindu Text and Context](#)

Science and technology

Easy Explanation

Modern warfare is undergoing a major transformation because of the rapid rise of drones. Traditionally, military strength depended on expensive platforms such as tanks, fighter aircraft, artillery, warships, and missiles.

Ukraine has pioneered industrial-scale drone warfare, turning commercially available drones into effective military systems. What began as tools for reconnaissance and artillery spotting evolved into precision strike weapons integrated across almost every aspect of combat.

A major innovation has been the use of **First-Person View (FPV) drones**, originally meant for recreational purposes. These inexpensive drones can carry explosives and destroy tanks and military vehicles worth millions of dollars, dramatically altering battlefield economics.

Ukraine also developed loitering munitions, bomber drones, long-range attack drones, and fibre-optic drones that are resistant to electronic jamming. These systems have enabled strikes deep behind enemy lines and operations in heavily contested electromagnetic environments.

The drone model has spread beyond Ukraine. Hezbollah uses Iranian-made drones for surveillance and attacks, while Israel has developed advanced counter-drone systems combining radar, electronic warfare, and AI-enabled interceptors. Iran itself employs drones as instruments of deterrence and regional power projection through its own forces and proxy groups.

Overall, modern warfare is increasingly becoming a contest of industrial capacity, technological innovation, and the ability to rapidly produce and adapt drone systems. Drones are no longer merely supporting weapons; they have become central to how wars are fought and sustained.

Key Takeaways**Shift from Conventional Warfare**

- Traditional military superiority relied on tanks, aircraft, missiles, and warships.
- Drones have disrupted this model by providing low-cost but highly effective capabilities.
- Smaller actors can now challenge stronger militaries more effectively.

Ukraine's Drone Revolution

- Ukraine pioneered industrial-scale drone warfare.
- Drones are used for surveillance, targeting, deep strikes, logistics, and electronic warfare.
- The battlefield has become a continuously monitored and vulnerable space.

FPV Drones Changed Battlefield Economics

- FPV drones are inexpensive and highly precise.



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- Systems costing hundreds of dollars can destroy assets worth millions.
- They have become disposable precision-guided weapons.

Emergence of Fibre-Optic Drones

- Fibre-optic drones use cables instead of radio signals.
- They are resistant to electronic jamming.
- This gives operators an advantage in contested environments.

Spread of Drone Warfare in West Asia

- Hezbollah employs Iranian-supplied drones.
- Israel has developed layered counter-drone systems.
- Iran uses drones for deterrence and regional influence through proxy networks.

Transformation of Military Doctrine

- Frontlines and rear areas are no longer secure.
- Detection is increasingly followed by immediate destruction.
- Military doctrines and force structures are evolving accordingly.

Economics of Warfare

- Success increasingly depends on industrial production and innovation.
- Cheap mass-produced drones are replacing reliance on expensive platforms.
- Warfare is becoming a test of technological adaptation and endurance.

Drones as the Infrastructure of War

- Drones are no longer auxiliary tools.
- They shape surveillance, combat, logistics, and strategic decision-making.
- They are becoming the foundation of modern warfare.

Important Terms

Term	Meaning
UAS (Unmanned Aerial Systems)	Broad term for drones and their supporting systems.
UAV (Unmanned Aerial Vehicle)	Aircraft operated without a human pilot onboard.
ISR (Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance)	Collection of information for military planning and operations.
FPV (First-Person View) Drone	Drone controlled through live video feed, providing high precision.
Loitering Munition	Weapon that can hover over an area and attack targets when identified.





Kamikaze Drone	One-way attack drone that destroys itself while striking a target.
Electronic Warfare (EW)	Use of electromagnetic spectrum to disrupt enemy systems.
Fibre-Optic Drone	Drone controlled through fibre-optic cables, resistant to jamming.
Jamming	Interference with communication signals to disrupt operations.
Deep Strike	Attacks on targets located far behind enemy frontlines.
Reconnaissance-Strike Complex	Integration of surveillance systems with precision weapons for rapid targeting.
IRGC (Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps)	Elite military force of Iran responsible for strategic and regional operations.
Shahed Drones	Iranian-made drones used for long-range attacks and loitering missions.
Deterrence	Strategy of preventing aggression by threatening retaliation.
Proxy Forces	Armed groups supported by a state to advance its interests indirectly.
Industrial Endurance	Ability to sustain military operations through continuous production and innovation.

[‘The U.S. govt. policy is to systematically cut off any source of income to Cuba’-The Hindu Text and Context](#)

International relations

Easy Explanation

Cuba's healthcare and biotechnology sectors, long regarded as achievements of the Cuban Revolution, are facing severe difficulties due to prolonged U.S. sanctions and economic pressure. According to Dr. Mitchell Valdes-Sosa, Director of the Cuban Center for Neuroscience, the U.S. is trying to restrict every major source of revenue available to Cuba, including its international medical missions.

Cuba has sent doctors to over 60 countries, mainly serving regions with inadequate healthcare. The U.S. alleges that these missions amount to forced labour, but Cuba rejects the claim, arguing that doctors participate voluntarily and that the income generated helps finance domestic healthcare.



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The country is also struggling with shortages of medicines, raw materials, power cuts, and restricted access to international financial and trade networks. These difficulties have affected even Cuba's traditionally strong health indicators, with childhood cancer survival rates and infant mortality figures worsening.

Despite these constraints, Cuba is attempting to sustain its biotechnology industry through international collaboration, especially with BRICS countries, joint research programmes, and greater efficiency in allocating limited resources.

Cuba's biotechnology model differs from that of many Western countries because it prioritises public welfare over profit. Most key pharmaceutical and biotechnology institutions remain state-owned, although cooperation with private entities and foreign investors is gradually increasing.

The country is also pursuing the "One Health" approach, integrating human health, agriculture, and animal health. Biotechnology research extends beyond medicines to food security through genetically modified crops and agricultural biotechnology.

Scientists in Cuba emphasize that international scientific cooperation and opposition to unilateral sanctions are essential for sustaining research and ensuring that advanced treatments can reach people despite economic restrictions.

Key Takeaways

U.S. Pressure on Cuban Medical Missions

- Cuba has deployed doctors to more than 60 countries.
- The U.S. is pressuring governments to discontinue these agreements.
- Cuba views these missions as humanitarian diplomacy and an important source of revenue.

Economic Sanctions and Resource Shortages

- U.S. sanctions have restricted Cuba's access to finance, oil, equipment, and spare parts.
- Frequent power outages and shortages affect hospitals and industries.
- Health indicators have deteriorated in recent years.

Biotechnology Based on Social Welfare

- Cuba's biotech sector aims to provide affordable medicines rather than maximise profits.
- Major institutions remain state-owned.
- Decentralised management allows scientific autonomy and direct international engagement.

International Collaboration as a Survival Strategy

- Cuba is expanding partnerships with BRICS and other countries.
- Joint research projects and overseas laboratories help compensate for domestic shortages.
- Priority is given to projects with the highest probability of success.

One Health Approach

- Human health, agriculture, and animal health are treated as interconnected.
- Biotechnology supports both medicine and food security.
- Development of transgenic crops forms part of this strategy.

Decline in Health Outcomes

- Childhood cancer survival rates have reportedly fallen.
- Infant mortality has risen due to worsening economic conditions and shortages.
- Scientists attribute these setbacks largely to sanctions and energy constraints.

Need for Global Scientific Cooperation

- Cuban researchers seek stronger international partnerships.
- Joint laboratories and research calls are viewed as ways to overcome shortages.
- Scientists worldwide are urged to oppose measures that hinder humanitarian and scientific progress.



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Important Terms

Term	Meaning
Medical Internationalism	Sending healthcare professionals abroad to provide medical services and strengthen diplomatic ties.
Economic Sanctions	Restrictions imposed by one country to influence another country's policies or economy.
Blockade	Measures aimed at restricting trade, finance, or access to essential goods.
Biotechnology	Use of living organisms and biological systems to develop products and technologies.
BioCuba Pharma	Cuba's state-owned biotechnology and pharmaceutical conglomerate.
Joint Venture	Business arrangement in which two or more entities collaborate and share resources and profits.
Translational Research	Process of converting scientific discoveries into practical medical applications.
One Health Approach	Integrated approach linking human, animal, and environmental health.
Transgenic Crops	Genetically modified plants developed for improved productivity or resistance.
Food Security	Reliable access to sufficient, safe, and nutritious food.
BRICS	Group of major emerging economies comprising Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa, and newer members.
Pharmacovigilance	Monitoring and evaluation of medicines to ensure safety and effectiveness.
Scientific Autonomy	Freedom of research institutions to set priorities and conduct innovation independently.



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Extraterritorial Sanctions	Sanctions imposed by one country that affect businesses and individuals in other countries.
Green Transition	Shift toward environmentally sustainable and resource-efficient production systems.

[AI is helping patients understand cancer but misunderstand doctors-The Hindu Science](#)

Science and technology

Easy Explanation

Large Language Models (LLMs) such as ChatGPT and Claude are making cancer-related information easier for patients to understand. Patients now come to consultations with a better grasp of pathology reports, treatment options, and clinical trials, enabling more informed discussions with doctors.

This is particularly valuable in countries like India, where access to specialists may be limited. AI tools are helping democratize medical knowledge and improve health literacy.

However, information is different from medical judgment. AI provides general information based on large datasets but cannot account for an individual's specific cancer characteristics, personal preferences, or risk factors. As a result, patients may misunderstand treatment recommendations or delay seeking professional care.

While LLMs are powerful educational tools, they cannot replace the experience, context, and accountability that doctors bring to medical decision-making.

Key Takeaways

LLMs are improving cancer literacy

- AI tools help patients understand pathology reports and medical terminology.
- Patients are better prepared for consultations.
- Access to medical information has become more democratic.

Clinical trial awareness has increased

- Patients can understand trial protocols and treatment options more easily.
- Informed consent has become more meaningful.
- Patients are participating more actively in their own care.

Information is not the same as medical judgment

- AI provides population-level information rather than personalized advice.
- Treatment decisions depend on tumour biology, patient values, and risk-benefit assessments.
- Human judgment remains essential.

Growing trust gap between patients and doctors

- AI may unintentionally reinforce fears regarding chemotherapy and side effects.
- Patients may become sceptical of physicians when AI provides simpler explanations.
- Loss of trust can negatively affect treatment outcomes.

Risks of delayed diagnosis and treatment

- Some patients may postpone investigations or stop medications after relying on AI advice.
- Delays can lead to disease progression and poorer outcomes.
- Population-level statistics do not necessarily apply to individual cases.



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Doctors remain indispensable

- Physicians provide context and individualized care.
- Their decisions are based on clinical experience and evidence.
- AI should complement doctors, not replace them.

Important Terms

Term	Meaning
Large Language Models (LLMs)	AI systems such as ChatGPT and Claude that generate human-like responses and explain complex information.
Clinical Trial	Research study conducted to evaluate the safety and effectiveness of new treatments.
Medical Judgment	Application of clinical expertise and patient-specific factors to make treatment decisions.
Evidence-Based Medicine	Medical practice based on scientific evidence, clinical experience, and patient preferences.
Health Literacy	Ability of individuals to understand health information and make informed healthcare decisions.
Population-Level Statistics	General data derived from large groups that may not accurately apply to a specific individual.

[AI falls short on extreme weather forecasting-The Hindu Editorial](#)

Science and technology

Easy Explanation

Artificial intelligence (AI) has revolutionized weather forecasting by making predictions faster and, in many cases, more accurate than traditional supercomputer-based models. Companies like Google and Huawei have developed AI weather models such as GraphCast, Pangu-Weather, and Fuxi.

However, a recent study published in *Science Advances* found that these AI models struggle to predict rare and record-breaking weather events such as extreme heatwaves, cold spells, and severe winds. While AI performs well for normal weather conditions and moderate extremes, it often underestimates the intensity and frequency of unprecedented events.

Traditional weather models rely on the laws of physics and can simulate scenarios even if they have never occurred before. In contrast, AI models learn from historical data and face difficulties when conditions go beyond what they have previously seen. Therefore, despite AI's impressive progress, traditional physics-based models remain more reliable for forecasting highly impactful extreme weather events.

Key Takeaways

AI is transforming weather forecasting



- AI models provide faster weather predictions.
- They are often as accurate as or better than conventional supercomputer models for routine weather.
- Major AI weather models include GraphCast, Pangu-Weather, and Fuxi.

Traditional models are based on physics

- They use mathematical equations representing atmospheric processes.
- They can predict previously unseen weather scenarios.
- The HRES model of the European Centre for Medium-Range Weather Forecasts (ECMWF) remains the benchmark.

AI struggles with record-breaking events

- AI models are trained on historical data from 1979-2017.
- They perform well within known ranges but struggle with unprecedented conditions.
- Extreme heatwaves, cold events, and strong winds are often underestimated.

The extrapolation problem limits AI

- AI excels at interpolation (predicting within familiar patterns).
- It performs poorly at extrapolation (predicting events outside past experience).
- Errors increase as weather events become more extreme.

Underestimation of extremes has serious consequences

- Disaster preparedness may become inadequate.
- Heatwave and flood warning systems require very high accuracy.
- Incorrect forecasts can affect policies and emergency responses.

AI and traditional models are complementary

- AI models are evolving rapidly.
- Current AI systems still underperform during the most impactful events.
- Physics-based models remain indispensable for forecasting extreme weather.

Important Terms

Term	Meaning
GraphCast	AI-based weather forecasting model developed by Google DeepMind.
HRES Model	High-Resolution weather forecasting model of the European Centre for Medium-Range Weather Forecasts (ECMWF), considered the global benchmark.
Physics-Based Models	Traditional weather models that use mathematical equations based on physical laws governing the atmosphere.
Interpolation	Predicting outcomes within the range of previously observed data.



**Extrapolation Problem**

Inability of AI models to accurately predict events beyond the range of their training data.

Extreme Weather Events

Rare and severe weather phenomena such as heatwaves, cold waves, floods, and intense storms.

Technology drives India-France strategic convergence-The Hindu Editorial

International relations

Easy Explanation

India and France are strengthening their strategic partnership, with technology and innovation emerging as important new areas of cooperation. Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to France for the G7 Summit comes only months after President Emmanuel Macron's visit to India for the AI Action Summit, highlighting the importance both leaders attach to bilateral ties. Events such as "Bharat Innovates" in Nice and the VivaTech Summit in Paris are aimed at promoting collaboration between start-ups, investors, and technology companies from both countries.

Traditionally, India-France relations have been built around defence, nuclear energy, and space cooperation, but the partnership is now expanding into areas such as Artificial Intelligence, cybersecurity, healthcare, biotechnology, green technologies, digital public infrastructure, education, and research. The two leaders are also expected to review progress in defence co-design and co-production, small modular nuclear reactors, satellite development, and human spaceflight programmes. Cooperation in Africa is another area where both countries seek to deepen engagement.

At the global level, India and France share a commitment to strategic autonomy and support for a multipolar world order. Discussions at the G7 Summit and proposals to expand the grouping into a broader coalition of democracies are developments India will closely watch. As two influential middle powers with independent foreign policies, India and France are seeking to play a larger role in promoting geopolitical stability and shaping the emerging international order.

Key Takeaways**Technology and innovation becoming central**

- India-France ties are increasingly driven by AI, cybersecurity, healthcare, biotechnology, green technologies, and digital infrastructure.
- Both countries launched the India-France Year of Innovation 2026.

Expanding strategic cooperation

- Traditional pillars such as defence, nuclear energy, and space remain important.
- New areas include defence co-production, small modular reactors, satellite development, and human spaceflight.

Growing private sector collaboration

- Events like "Bharat Innovates" and VivaTech seek to connect start-ups, investors, and technology companies.
- India and France possess complementary strengths in innovation and technology.

Cooperation beyond Europe

- Both countries are looking to enhance cooperation in Africa.
- They are also expected to discuss conflicts in Ukraine and West Asia and their impact on developing countries.

Shared vision for world order

- India and France support strategic autonomy and a multipolar world order.
- As influential middle powers, they aim to contribute to global stability and rule-making.



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Important Terms

Term	Meaning
India-France Year of Innovation (2026)	Initiative launched to deepen cooperation in technology, research, and start-up ecosystems.
VivaTech Summit	Europe's largest technology and start-up event held annually in Paris.
Small Modular Reactors (SMRs)	Compact and advanced nuclear reactors with enhanced safety and flexibility.
Strategic Autonomy	Ability of a country to pursue its interests independently without exclusive alignment with major powers.
Multipolar World Order	International system where power is shared among several major countries rather than dominated by one.
D10 (Democracy 10)	Proposed grouping of ten major democracies that could emerge from an expanded G7 framework.
Peace with peace-The Hindu Editorial	

Polity

Easy Explanation

The Allahabad High Court, in the *Chander Pal Singh* case, highlighted the misuse of preventive detention powers by authorities in Uttar Pradesh. Preventive proceedings are meant to stop possible disturbances before they occur, but the court observed that these powers were being used routinely to deprive individuals of their liberty without substantive criminal charges. The case involved a physically challenged Dalit advocate who was arrested over a minor dispute with a neighbour. The court noted that nearly 2,500 people in Ghaziabad had faced preventive proceedings between May 2025 and April 2026.

To address this, the High Court issued guidelines aimed at restricting the arbitrary use of preventive incarceration. These measures require executive magistrates to justify detention orders, discourage excessive use of bonds for release, and strengthen opportunities for judicial review and compensation for unlawful detention. The ruling also questioned the tendency of authorities to invoke vague concerns such as "communal tensions" to suppress protests and dissent.

However, implementing these safeguards remains challenging. The court proposed that compensation for illegal detention could be recovered from the salaries of responsible magistrates or police officers after disciplinary proceedings. Yet, the executive has traditionally been reluctant to punish its own officials. Since executive magistrates are part of the state administration and often judged by their ability to maintain "peace", institutional pressures may continue to encourage excessive use of preventive powers. Addressing these structural issues is essential for ensuring that public order is maintained without compromising constitutional freedoms.

Key Takeaways

Misuse of preventive powers



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- Preventive detention is intended to avert threats to public order before crimes occur.
- Authorities have increasingly used these powers routinely, leading to unjustified deprivation of liberty.

Allahabad High Court's intervention

- The *Chander Pal Singh* case exposed excessive use of preventive proceedings in Uttar Pradesh.
- The court termed such actions as a "highly irresponsible" violation of personal liberty.

Guidelines for reform

- Executive magistrates must provide reasons for detention orders.
- The ruling seeks to reduce misuse in neighbourhood and property disputes.
- It also promotes judicial scrutiny and compensation for unlawful detention.

Protection of dissent

- The judgment criticises the use of preventive laws to suppress protests and dissent.
- It emphasises that peace must be maintained through lawful and peaceful means.

Implementation challenges

- Recovering compensation from erring officials may face resistance.
- Executive magistrates remain influenced by administrative priorities and political pressures.

Important Terms

Term	Meaning
Preventive Detention	Detention of individuals to prevent anticipated threats to public order before an offence occurs.
Chander Pal Singh Case	Allahabad High Court case addressing misuse of preventive proceedings in Uttar Pradesh.
Executive Magistrate	Administrative authority empowered to issue preventive orders and maintain public order.
BNSS (Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita)	New criminal procedure law replacing the Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC).
Personal Liberty	Fundamental right under Article 21 protecting individuals from arbitrary deprivation of freedom.
Compensation Jurisprudence	Legal principle allowing monetary compensation for violations of fundamental rights, including unlawful detention.

17th June 2026



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Governance

Easy Explanation

• PATCHWORK OF STATE PROPOSALS, CENTRE WEIGHS ACTION

CENTRE

- The Indian Express reported this March that the government was not in favour of an outright ban, and was instead considering a more nuanced and graded approach in specifying restrictions for children under 18 years.
- Government sources said that there will be distinct sets of restrictions for those in the 8-12 years age bracket, for 12 to 16-year-olds, and for those aged 16-18 years.

ANDHRA PRADESH

- Chief Minister N Chandrababu said in March 2026 that his government would roll out a programme to prevent children under 13 from accessing social media within 90 days.
- The state, Naidu said, was also considering regulating access to social media for those in the 13-16 age group.

KARNATAKA

- In March 2026, Karnataka announced a proposal to ban social media use for children under 16 in its 2026-27 Budget, becoming the first Indian state to do so.



AP

- A separate draft policy for 'Responsible Digital Use Among Students' includes suggestions such as capping screen time to one hour, cutting off internet access after 7 pm and implementing Aadhaar-enabled sign-ups.

GOA

- Goa is also weighing a social media ban for children under the age of 16, according to reports in January 2026.

Credit: The Indian Express Explained Page

Many countries are increasingly considering restrictions on children's use of social media because of concerns about addiction, sleep disruption, and mental health. Social psychologist Ravi Iyer argues that these measures should be seen as age limits rather than outright bans. Children would still be able to access content such as videos, but without creating accounts that expose them to personalised algorithms, notifications, messages from strangers, and pressure from social validation. Australia has already implemented such restrictions, while the UK plans to ban social media use for those under 16 by 2027. In India too, both the Centre and some States are exploring age-based regulations.

According to Iyer, social media companies have designed their platforms to maximise engagement through features such as personalised algorithms, AI-powered notifications, infinite scrolling, autoplay, and disappearing content. These features increase temptation while reducing users' ability to exercise self-control, particularly among children whose cognitive abilities are still developing. While design changes such as stronger privacy settings and safer defaults can help, he believes age limits are necessary because companies have historically prioritised user engagement over children's well-being.

He also argues that the issue is a collective action problem. Parents often struggle to limit screen time because all other children are using these platforms. Age restrictions can help change social norms and make it easier for parents to regulate usage. While social media has helped democratise access to information and communication, the focus now should be on creating platforms that support learning and meaningful friendships rather than maximising user attention. Society, according to him, is increasingly demanding that technology companies respect these boundaries.

Key Takeaways

Age limits rather than complete bans

- Children would still be able to access content without necessarily creating accounts.
- Restrictions mainly target personalised features, messaging, and addictive engagement mechanisms.

Social media design encourages excessive usage

- Algorithms constantly optimise content to maximise user attention.



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- Features such as infinite scroll, autoplay, disappearing content, and AI-driven notifications reduce self-control.

Design changes alone may not be sufficient

- Safer privacy settings and child-friendly defaults can improve online safety.
- Age-based restrictions are considered necessary because companies have been slow to self-regulate.

Collective action problem

- Parents find it difficult to restrict usage when all other children are active on social media.
- Regulations can gradually change social norms regarding children's online behaviour.

Global and Indian regulatory responses

- Australia has introduced age limits for social media accounts.
- The UK plans restrictions for under-16s from 2027.
- India is considering graded restrictions based on different age groups, while some states have proposed separate bans.

Important Terms

Term	Meaning
Network Effects	Situation where the value of a platform increases as more people use it, creating social pressure to join.
Infinite Scroll	Design feature that continuously loads content, encouraging prolonged usage.
Autoplay	Automatic playing of videos or content without user intervention, increasing engagement time.
Ephemeral Content	Content that disappears after a short period, creating urgency to view it immediately.
AI-powered Notifications	Algorithms that predict the most effective alerts to bring users back to the platform.
Collective Action Problem	Situation where individuals find it difficult to act independently because benefits depend on coordinated behaviour by everyone.
Personalised Algorithms	AI systems that tailor content recommendations based on user behaviour and preferences.

[Telegram ban: Why the app is underscanner for paper leaks-The Indian Express Explained Page](#)

Governance

Easy Explanation



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The Indian government has temporarily blocked Telegram at the request of the National Testing Agency (NTA) ahead of the re-conducted NEET examination. The move follows allegations that Telegram channels were being used to circulate leaked question papers and facilitate communication among students, middlemen, and others involved in examination fraud. The ban has been imposed under Section 69A of the Information Technology Act, 2000, which allows the government to block access to digital information in the interests of public order and preventing cognizable offences.

Telegram, founded in 2013 by Pavel Durov and his brother Nikolai, gained popularity because of its strong emphasis on privacy, large group sizes, and multi-device synchronisation. With more than 150 million users in India, it is one of the country's most widely used messaging platforms. However, its privacy features and limited moderation have also made it vulnerable to misuse for scams, dissemination of illegal content, and other unlawful activities. In addition to the temporary ban, the government directed Telegram to disable its message-editing feature, which allegedly allowed channel administrators to replace files while retaining the original timestamp.

The NTA argued that several Telegram channels were openly demanding money from candidates in exchange for purported access to leaked examination papers. Telegram founder Pavel Durov criticised the move, arguing that it punished millions of ordinary users and that the leaks simply shifted to other platforms. The episode has reignited the debate over balancing privacy and freedom of expression with the need to regulate digital platforms and curb their misuse for illegal activities.

Key Takeaways

Temporary ban linked to NEET paper leak concerns

- Telegram was blocked in India until June 22 at the request of the NTA.
- The platform was allegedly used to circulate leaked examination papers and facilitate fraud.

Legal basis for blocking

- The action was taken under Section 69A of the Information Technology Act, 2000.
- The provision empowers the government to block digital information for reasons related to sovereignty, security, public order, or prevention of offences.

Why Telegram became popular

- Strong focus on privacy and encryption.
- Ability to host large groups and synchronise across multiple devices.
- Over 150 million users in India.

Concerns over misuse

- Telegram has faced allegations related to scams, child pornography, and illegal activities.
- Similar concerns led to legal action against founder Pavel Durov in France in 2024.

Debate over regulation and free speech

- Telegram argues that blanket restrictions hurt ordinary users.
- The issue highlights tensions between digital privacy, freedom of expression, and platform accountability.

Important Terms

Term	Meaning
Section 69A, IT Act 2000	Provision empowering the government to block public access to online information under specified conditions.





National Testing Agency (NTA)	Autonomous body responsible for conducting major entrance examinations such as NEET.
Telegram	Privacy-focused messaging platform founded by Pavel and Nikolai Durov in 2013.
End-to-End Encryption	Communication system where only the sender and receiver can read messages.
Message-Editing Feature	Telegram function allowing users to modify previously sent messages and attached files.
Cognizable Offence	An offence for which police can arrest without a warrant and begin investigation without prior court approval.
Pavel Durov	Founder and CEO of Telegram, often referred to as the "Russian Mark Zuckerberg".

[You always needed cough syrup prescription:What's changed & why-The Indian Express Explained Page](#)

Science and technology

Easy Explanation

The Union government has removed cough syrups from Schedule K of the Drugs Rules. This does not mean that cough syrups have suddenly become prescription medicines. Most cough syrups already required a doctor's prescription because they contain regulated substances. The latest change mainly removes an old exemption that allowed general stores in villages with populations below 1,000 to sell these syrups.

The move follows several incidents in India and abroad in which contaminated cough syrups caused the deaths of children. A major concern has been contamination with diethylene glycol (DEG) and ethylene glycol (EG), toxic chemicals that may enter the manufacturing process through poor-quality propylene glycol (PEG), a solvent commonly used in syrups. Experts say that although the change is welcome, it is "too little, too late" because most such medicines should not have been sold over the counter in the first place.

Experts suggest that stronger quality-control measures are needed. These include using safer solvents, promoting suspensions instead of syrups where possible, ensuring traceable and properly sealed pharmaceutical-grade PEG supplies, and improving monitoring of small manufacturers. Doctors also caution that many coughs recover without medicines, and inappropriate use of cough syrups can delay diagnosis of the actual illness. People are advised to buy medicines only from trusted brands and consult a doctor before using cough syrups.

Key Takeaways

Removal from Schedule K

- The government removed the word "syrup" from Schedule K of the Drugs Rules.
- General stores in villages with populations below 1,000 can no longer sell cough syrups under this exemption.

No major change in prescription requirements

- Most cough syrups already required prescriptions because they contain Schedule H or Schedule X substances.
- Licensed pharmacies remain the primary points of sale.



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Reason behind the move

- Triggered by deaths of children linked to contaminated cough syrups.
- The issue was discussed by the Drug Consultative Committee after the Chhindwara tragedy in Madhya Pradesh.

Source of contamination

- Toxic substances like diethylene glycol (DEG) and ethylene glycol (EG) can enter syrups through contaminated or industrial-grade propylene glycol (PEG).
- Small manufacturers procuring PEG from open markets face greater risks.

Suggested regulatory measures

- Use safer solvents where possible.
- Manufacture suspensions instead of syrups for certain medicines.
- Ensure availability of smaller, sealed, pharmaceutical-grade PEG containers.
- Strengthen supply-chain traceability and quality checks.

Medical precautions

- Not every cough requires cough syrup.
- Dry coughs may need suppressants, but coughs with phlegm generally should not be treated with such syrups.
- Self-medication may delay diagnosis of underlying diseases.

Important Terms

Term	Meaning
Schedule K	Category under the Drugs Rules that provides certain exemptions in the sale and distribution of medicines.
Schedule H Drugs	Medicines that can be sold only on the prescription of a registered medical practitioner.
Schedule X Drugs	Strictly regulated drugs with additional record-keeping and prescription requirements.
Drug Consultative Committee (DCC)	Apex advisory body that discusses issues related to drug regulation and enforcement in India.
Propylene Glycol (PEG)	Solvent used in pharmaceutical syrups; contamination in poor-quality PEG can be dangerous.
Diethylene Glycol (DEG)	Toxic chemical responsible for several fatal poisoning incidents linked to contaminated syrups.
Ethylene Glycol (EG)	Harmful chemical that can contaminate medicines and cause severe kidney damage or death.





Suspension

Liquid medicine containing insoluble particles, often requiring less dependence on solvents like PEG.

[How a Mohenjo-daro figurine became a 'dancer'—and a challenge to 'modesty'—The Indian Express Explained](#) [Page](#)

History

Easy Explanation

The famous bronze figurine popularly known as the "Dancing Girl" of Mohenjo-daro recently became the subject of debate after its torso was initially covered in an NCERT Class 9 textbook before the original image was restored. Similar attempts to clothe or censor the statue have occurred earlier, including a fully clothed version used as the mascot of the International Museum Expo 2023. The controversy reflects changing ideas of modesty rather than anything inherent in the sculpture itself.

The name "Dancing Girl" itself is disputed. British archaeologist John Marshall described the figurine as a young "nautch girl" and interpreted her posture as that of a dancer. However, later scholars such as Gregory Possehl and historian Upinder Singh have questioned this interpretation, arguing that there is no archaeological evidence proving that the figure represents a professional dancer. Some historians suggest that Marshall's interpretation may have been influenced by colonial attitudes and his familiarity with contemporary nautch traditions and devadasi culture.

After Partition, both India and Pakistan claimed ownership of Harappan artefacts because major sites like Mohenjo-daro and Harappa fell within Pakistan. Eventually, the two countries agreed to divide the artefacts equally. Pakistan reportedly chose the "Priest King" statue over the "Dancing Girl", partly because the nude female figure could provoke objections from conservative sections. Even today, historians maintain that the Harappan civilisation represents a shared heritage of South Asia rather than the exclusive legacy of any one country.

Key Takeaways

Recent controversy

- NCERT initially covered the torso of the Mohenjo-daro figurine in a Class 9 textbook but later restored the original image.
- A fully clothed version was used during the International Museum Expo 2023.

Origin of the name "Dancing Girl"

- British archaeologist John Marshall identified the bronze figurine as a "nautch girl" or dancer.
- His interpretation was based mainly on posture and appearance rather than archaeological evidence.

Scholarly debate

- Gregory Possehl questioned whether the figurine represented a dancer.
- Historian Upinder Singh noted that even if the figure was dancing, she may not have been a professional dancer.
- Historian Ashish Kumar argues there is no evidence supporting the dancer interpretation.

Partition and ownership dispute

- About 12,000 Harappan artefacts were in Delhi at Partition.
- India and Pakistan eventually agreed to a 50:50 division of artefacts from Mohenjo-daro and Chanhu-daro.
- Pakistan selected the "Priest King" instead of the "Dancing Girl".

Shared heritage

- Pakistan later continued to seek ownership of the figurine.
- Indian scholars argued that the Indus Valley Civilisation is the common heritage of South Asia.

Colonial interpretation



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- Marshall linked the figurine to contemporary nautch girls and devadasi traditions.
- Other nude female terracotta figures from Harappan sites were identified as Mother Goddess representations, whereas the bronze figure was labelled a "nautch girl".

Important Terms

Term	Meaning
Mohenjo-daro	Major urban centre of the Indus Valley Civilisation located in present-day Pakistan.
Dancing Girl	Bronze figurine discovered at Mohenjo-daro in 1926, popularly but controversially identified as a dancer.
John Marshall	British archaeologist and Director-General of the Archaeological Survey of India who coined the term "Dancing Girl".
Nautch Girl	Colonial-era term used for traditional female performers or dancers.
Devadasi Tradition	Historical institution where women were dedicated to temples and often trained in music and dance.
Priest King	Famous steatite sculpture from Mohenjo-daro that went to Pakistan after the division of artefacts.
Mortimer Wheeler	Director-General of the Archaeological Survey of India (1944-48) who supervised several excavations and handled Harappan artefacts.
Indus Valley Civilisation (Harappan Civilisation)	One of the world's earliest urban civilisations, flourishing around 2600-1900 BCE in South Asia.
Mother Goddess Cult	Interpretation associated with numerous female terracotta figurines discovered at Harappan sites.
Ashish Kumar	Historian whose paper <i>Sahib's Nautch Girl</i> examines the colonial interpretation and post-Partition politics surrounding the figurine.

[Indian cities need to rethink water future-The Indian Express Ideas Page](#)





Easy Explanation

India's ongoing heatwaves and water shortages have exposed a deeper structural problem in urban water management. Rising temperatures and climate change have worsened the crisis, but they are not the only reasons. Reports such as NITI Aayog's Composite Water Management Index (2018) and the Jal Shakti Ministry's Dynamic Groundwater Resources Assessment have repeatedly warned that many Indian cities are consuming water beyond their natural capacity and depleting groundwater reserves.

Urban water shortages are also caused by inefficient distribution systems, leakage, poor metering, inadequate wastewater treatment, and weak municipal governance. Traditionally, India's water policies have focused on increasing supply through dams and groundwater extraction rather than managing demand. Although programmes such as the Atal Bhujal Yojana encourage efficient water use, much more needs to be done to regulate household and industrial consumption and prevent over-exploitation of water resources.

Some cities have started adopting nature-based solutions such as lake restoration and green infrastructure. However, these efforts remain limited. Countries like China have implemented large-scale programmes such as the Sponge City Project, which promotes rainwater absorption and storage through permeable pavements, wetlands, and green spaces. India needs a similar long-term strategy so that cities prone to flooding during monsoons do not face acute water scarcity during summers.

Key Takeaways

Water crisis goes beyond climate change

- Heatwaves and rising temperatures aggravate water scarcity.
- Structural issues and groundwater depletion are equally responsible.

Warnings by expert bodies

- NITI Aayog's Composite Water Management Index (2018) highlighted unsustainable water use.
- The Jal Shakti Ministry's Dynamic Groundwater Resources Assessment has reported overexploited aquifers.

Urban water management challenges

- Ageing distribution networks lead to leakages.
- Inadequate metering and weak governance cause inefficiencies.
- Limited wastewater treatment and poor rainwater harvesting reduce water availability.

Need for demand-side management

- Water policies have historically focused on augmenting supply.
- Efficient use by households, industries, and agriculture is essential.
- Programmes like Atal Bhujal Yojana are early steps in this direction.

Nature-based solutions

- Cities like Mumbai and Bengaluru have undertaken lake restoration projects.
- Such initiatives need to be scaled up for meaningful impact.

Learning from China

- China's Sponge City Project promotes rainwater retention through green infrastructure.
- Similar integrated urban planning is needed in India.

Important Terms

Term	Meaning



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Composite Water Management Index (CWMI)	NITI Aayog's framework for assessing water resource management across states.
Dynamic Groundwater Resources Assessment	Periodic study by the Ministry of Jal Shakti to evaluate groundwater availability and extraction.
Aquifer	Underground layer of permeable rock or sediment that stores groundwater.
Demand-side Management	Strategies aimed at improving efficiency and reducing excessive water consumption.
Mihir Shah Committee	Expert committee that highlighted the need for institutional reforms and demand-side management in India's water sector.
Atal Bhujal Yojana	Central government scheme promoting sustainable groundwater management with community participation.
Grey Infrastructure	Conventional water infrastructure such as pipes, drains, and treatment facilities.
Nature-based Solutions	Approaches using ecosystems, wetlands, lakes, and green spaces to manage water sustainably.
Sponge City Project	China's urban planning initiative that uses permeable surfaces and green infrastructure to absorb and store rainwater.

[On US-Iran cease fire,the mediation question is the wrong one-The Indian Express Ideas Page](#)

International relations

Easy Explanation

The article argues that debates over who mediated the recent U.S.-Iran ceasefire miss the larger issue. The ceasefire is only a temporary arrangement and does not resolve deeper disputes involving Iran, Israel, the Gulf states, or the United States. Even if the agreement survives, it is likely to remain a fragile ceasefire rather than a durable peace settlement. Regional tensions, proxy conflicts, and domestic political pressures could still destabilise the arrangement.

According to the author, India's concern over being excluded from mediation efforts is misplaced. India lacked the leverage and alliance relationships needed to act as a mediator, and any successful mediation—whether by Pakistan, Qatar, or Oman—should be judged by its outcomes rather than by national pride. The bigger challenge is that current conflicts in Gaza, Ukraine, and West Asia are not isolated regional crises but part of a wider erosion of international norms governing sovereignty, use of force, and international law.

The article contends that India has weakened its diplomatic standing not because it failed to mediate but because it has become unclear what principles it stands for. Instead of focusing on bilateral deals and strategic alignments alone, India should work with



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other countries to defend international norms and reduce global risks. Rebuilding support for sovereignty, international law, and collective security would serve both global stability and India's long-term interests.

Key Takeaways

Ceasefire is not a permanent peace

- The U.S.-Iran agreement postpones rather than resolves major disputes.
- Risks of renewed tensions and proxy conflicts remain.

Mediation debate is misplaced

- India lacked the leverage to act as a mediator.
- Mediators should be judged by results rather than by national prestige.

Conflicts are global, not regional

- Wars in Ukraine, Gaza, and West Asia collectively undermine international stability.
- These conflicts increase economic, military, and geopolitical risks.

Erosion of international norms

- Respect for sovereignty and international law is weakening.
- Political assassinations and drone warfare are becoming increasingly normalised.

Criticism of India's foreign policy

- India is seen as reluctant to defend principles openly.
- Strategic partnerships should not come at the cost of credibility.

India's potential role

- India can contribute by supporting international norms and multilateral cooperation.
- Its long-term influence depends more on principles than on mediation.

Important Terms

Term	Meaning
Ceasefire	Temporary suspension of hostilities without necessarily resolving the underlying conflict.
Proxy Conflict	Conflict in which external powers support local actors instead of fighting directly.
Sovereignty	The authority of a state to govern itself without external interference.
International Order	System of rules, institutions, and norms governing relations among states.
Revisionist Power	A state seeking to alter the existing international balance or rules.





International Law	Rules and principles that regulate relations among countries.
Strategic Autonomy	Foreign policy approach aimed at preserving independent decision-making without aligning exclusively with any bloc.
Multilateralism	Cooperation among multiple countries through international institutions and collective frameworks.

[india's challenge lies in navigating not between West and rest, but within West - The Indian Express Ideas Page](#)

International relations

Easy Explanation

India's repeated invitations to the G7 summit reflect how closely its economy and interests are now linked with the developed West. Since the economic reforms of the 1990s, the G7 countries have become India's biggest markets for goods and services, as well as important destinations for Indian students and professionals. However, India's challenge today is no longer balancing the West against countries like Russia and China; instead, it is about managing differences within the West itself, especially amid growing divisions between the United States and Europe.

The article highlights three major changes within the West. First, under President Donald Trump, the United States has adopted a more unilateral and "America First" approach, creating tensions with its allies. Second, the U.S. has emerged far stronger economically and technologically than Europe and Japan, driven by its innovation ecosystem and dominance in frontier technologies. Third, changing American policies towards Russia, China, Iran, Israel, and Pakistan are reshaping the geopolitical landscape of Europe, West Asia, and the Indo-Pacific.

For India, the answer lies mainly in strengthening its domestic capabilities rather than merely adjusting its foreign policy. Economic reforms, defence modernisation, and technological advancement are essential. The article points to China as an example of a country that deepened ties with the West while simultaneously building its own national power. According to the author, India's pursuit of strategic autonomy and cooperation with the West need not be contradictory, and a pragmatic approach rather than ideological anxieties should guide its diplomacy.

Key Takeaways

India's growing engagement with the G7

- PM Modi's participation in the 2026 summit marks India's 13th appearance.
- India's economic ties with G7 countries have deepened significantly since the 1990s.

India's challenge lies within the West

- The focus has shifted from balancing the West and BRICS to navigating divisions among Western countries themselves.
- India is increasingly strengthening ties with Europe, the UK, and Canada.

Rise of American unilateralism

- President Trump's "America First" approach has widened differences with European allies.
- The U.S. remains economically and technologically dominant.

Technological transformation

- The U.S. innovation ecosystem and capital markets continue to lead globally.
- Emerging technologies and AI are becoming key sources of power.

Changing geopolitics



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- U.S. policies towards Russia, China, Iran, Israel, and Pakistan are evolving.
- These changes are affecting Europe, West Asia, and the Indo-Pacific.

Domestic transformation is crucial

- India's long-term strength depends on economic restructuring, defence modernisation, and technological advancement.
- Partnerships with Western countries remain important for achieving these goals.

China's example

- China strengthened ties with the West while building indigenous capabilities.
- Strategic autonomy and engagement with the West can coexist.

Important Terms

Term	Meaning
G7	Group of seven advanced economies: United States, Canada, United Kingdom, France, Germany, Italy, and Japan.
BRICS	Grouping comprising Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa, and new members aimed at enhancing cooperation among emerging economies.
Strategic Autonomy	Ability of a country to pursue independent foreign and security policies without excessive dependence on any bloc.
America First	Foreign policy approach prioritising U.S. national interests and reducing commitments to allies and international institutions.
Unilateralism	Conducting foreign policy independently without relying heavily on multilateral cooperation.
Innovation Ecosystem	Network of institutions, firms, and financial systems that promote technological development and entrepreneurship.
New Quality Productive Forces	Chinese concept referring to growth driven by advanced technologies, innovation, and high-value industries.
Indo-Pacific	Strategic region spanning the Indian and Pacific Oceans that has become central to global geopolitics.
Economic Diplomacy	Use of trade, investment, and economic relations to advance foreign policy objectives.



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**Strategic Challenger**

A country whose growing power poses long-term geopolitical and economic competition to another major power.

Why was Trump's H-1B fee struck down?-The Hindu Text and Context

International relations

Easy Explanation

The H-1B visa is the main route through which highly skilled foreign professionals, especially in technology, healthcare, engineering, and research, work in the United States. Created under the Immigration Act of 1990, it allows employers to hire workers in specialised occupations requiring at least a bachelor's degree. Indians constitute around 70% of H-1B recipients, making the programme particularly important for Indian professionals seeking employment and eventual permanent residency in the U.S.

In September 2025, President Donald Trump issued a proclamation imposing an additional \$100,000 fee on every H-1B petition, far above the existing filing costs. The administration argued that the H-1B programme had been used to replace American workers with cheaper foreign labour and that the measure would protect U.S. economic and national security interests. Several U.S. States challenged the move, arguing that it would worsen shortages of teachers, researchers, healthcare professionals, and other skilled workers while imposing severe costs on employers.

U.S. District Judge Leo T. Sorokin struck down the fee, ruling that it amounted to a tax rather than a penalty. Under the U.S. Constitution, only Congress has the authority to impose taxes unless it explicitly delegates that power to the President. The court found that the Immigration and Nationality Act provisions relied upon by Trump authorised restrictions on entry but did not grant taxing powers. Consequently, the policy was declared unlawful and cancelled nationwide.

Key Takeaways**Importance of H-1B visas**

- H-1B visas allow highly skilled professionals to work in the U.S.
- Major sectors include technology, engineering, healthcare, finance, and research.
- Indians account for nearly 70% of H-1B approvals.

Trump's 2025 proclamation

- Introduced an additional \$100,000 fee per H-1B petition.
- Existing filing costs ranged from about \$960 to \$7,595.
- Intended to discourage dependence on foreign workers.

Arguments against the fee

- States argued it would worsen shortages of teachers, researchers, and healthcare workers.
- It would impose a major burden on employers and public institutions.
- Indian professionals would be disproportionately affected.

Central constitutional issue

- The court had to determine whether the charge was a tax or a penalty.
- Taxes require Congressional authority under the U.S. Constitution.

Court's ruling

- The fee was held to be a tax because hiring H-1B workers is lawful.
- The Immigration and Nationality Act did not delegate taxing powers to the President.
- The policy violated the Administrative Procedure Act and was struck down nationwide.

Impact on India

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- Indian software engineers, doctors, researchers, and STEM professionals benefit from the ruling.
- It prevents a major increase in the cost of obtaining H-1B visas.

Important Terms

Term	Meaning
H-1B Visa	U.S. temporary work visa for foreign professionals employed in specialised occupations.
Immigration Act of 1990	Law that created the H-1B visa category.
Immigration and Nationality Act (INA)	Principal U.S. law governing immigration and citizenship.
Specialty Occupation	Profession requiring specialised knowledge and at least a bachelor's degree.
Section 212(f) of INA	Provision empowering the President to restrict entry of foreigners deemed harmful to U.S. interests.
Section 215(a) of INA	Provision allowing the President to regulate conditions governing entry into the United States.
Separation of Powers	Constitutional principle dividing authority among the legislature, executive, and judiciary.
Administrative Procedure Act (APA)	U.S. law governing rule-making and actions by federal agencies.
Article I, Section 8	Constitutional provision granting Congress the power to levy taxes.
Bailey v. Drexel Furniture Co. (1922)	Supreme Court case distinguishing between taxes and penalties.
NFIB v. Sebelius (2012)	Supreme Court decision clarifying the constitutional distinction between taxes and penalties.
Nationwide Injunction	Court order whose effects apply across the entire United States.





What does Tenth Schedule provide on party mergers?-The Hindu Text and Context

Polity

Easy Explanation

The Tenth Schedule, introduced through the 52nd Constitutional Amendment Act, 1985, contains the anti-defection law. It was enacted to curb political defections that frequently destabilised governments during the 1960s and 1970s. Under it, legislators can be disqualified if they voluntarily give up membership of their political party or vote against the party whip. Originally, the law provided two exemptions: a split by one-third of legislators and mergers approved by two-thirds of members of a legislature party. However, the split provision was removed through the 91st Constitutional Amendment Act, 2003, to strengthen the anti-defection framework.

In recent years, controversies have emerged over the interpretation of the merger provision under Paragraph 4 of the Tenth Schedule. Legislators in parties such as Shiv Sena, NCP, BSP, Congress, AAP and now Trinamool Congress have claimed protection from disqualification by arguing that two-thirds of the legislature party can merge with another party. Critics argue that the Tenth Schedule permits only the merger of the original political party, approved by two-thirds of the legislature party, and not the merger of legislators themselves. Such interpretations have created legal ambiguities and raised concerns about circumvention of the anti-defection law.

The power to decide disqualification petitions currently rests with the Speaker or Chairman of the House. However, presiding officers have often been accused of partisan conduct. In the **K.M. Singh case (2020)**, the Supreme Court recommended that Parliament establish an independent tribunal headed by judges to decide disqualification matters. The Law Commission (1999) had gone further and recommended deleting the merger exemption itself, arguing that any defection should lead to disqualification and a fresh mandate from the electorate.

Key Takeaways

Origin of the Tenth Schedule

- Introduced through the **52nd Constitutional Amendment Act, 1985**.
- Intended to curb political defections and ensure government stability.
- Contains provisions relating to disqualification of legislators.

Grounds for disqualification

- Voluntarily giving up party membership.
- Voting or abstaining contrary to party whip.

Original exceptions

- Split by one-third of members (Paragraph 3).
- Merger of political parties approved by two-thirds of legislators (Paragraph 4).

Strengthening of anti-defection law

- Paragraph 3 relating to splits was deleted by the **91st Constitutional Amendment Act, 2003**.
- Aimed to prevent misuse through engineered defections.

Recent controversies

- Shiv Sena (2022), NCP (2023), Goa Congress (2022), BSP Rajasthan (2019), AAP Rajya Sabha MPs (2026), and Trinamool MPs have invoked the merger provision.
- Debate centres on whether legislators themselves can merge without the original political party merging.

Issues with Speaker's powers

- Speaker or Chairman decides disqualification cases.
- Allegations of political bias are common.

Suggested reforms



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- Independent tribunal headed by judges (Supreme Court recommendation, 2020).
- Removal of merger exemption under Paragraph 4 (Law Commission, 1999).
- Fresh election and mandate in case of defections.

Important Terms

Term	Meaning
Tenth Schedule	Constitutional provisions dealing with anti-defection law.
52nd Constitutional Amendment Act, 1985	Introduced the anti-defection law.
91st Constitutional Amendment Act, 2003	Removed the provision relating to splits under Paragraph 3.
Political Party	The entire organisational structure of a party.
Legislature Party	Members of a political party within a legislature.
Paragraph 4	Provides exemption from disqualification in case of party mergers approved by two-thirds of legislators.
Anti-Defection Law	Legal framework aimed at preventing political defections.
Party Whip	Direction issued by a political party regarding voting in the legislature.
K.M. Singh Case (2020)	Supreme Court recommended an independent tribunal for deciding disqualification matters.
Law Commission Report, 1999	Recommended deleting the merger exemption under Paragraph 4.
Speaker/Chairman	Constitutional authorities empowered to decide disqualification petitions under the Tenth Schedule.

[Not binary: India can save its forests by winning the war on poverty-The Hindu Science](#)

Environment



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Easy Explanation

For a long time, conservation policies treated forests and human development as competing goals. The dominant "fortress conservation" model aimed to protect forests by restricting human activities. However, a recent study published in *Nature Sustainability*, based on 322 community-managed tropical forests across 15 countries, shows that poverty and biodiversity loss are closely linked. Communities that depend heavily on forests for fuelwood and basic needs often exert greater pressure on forests, leading to lower tree species diversity.

The study argues that poverty itself is not the cause of biodiversity loss. Rather, limited livelihood opportunities force people to rely excessively on forests for survival. Forests where communities have access to alternative livelihoods, such as agriculture and other income sources, show greater tree species diversity and ecological resilience. Thus, improving economic opportunities can simultaneously support both poverty reduction and biodiversity conservation.

In India, around 275 million people depend on forests for their livelihoods. Conservationists increasingly recognise that local communities should be partners rather than adversaries in conservation. Initiatives such as LPG distribution, ecotourism, livestock insurance, community-managed mangroves, and hornbill nest adoption programmes demonstrate that empowering communities and improving their welfare can strengthen biodiversity conservation. The study highlights that protecting forests and alleviating poverty are complementary, not conflicting, objectives.

Key Takeaways

Findings of the study

- Study published in **Nature Sustainability**.
- Covered **322 community-managed tropical forests** across **15 countries (1993-2017)**.
- Found a strong link between livelihood conditions and forest biodiversity.

Relationship between poverty and biodiversity

- Greater dependence on fuelwood and forests is associated with lower tree species diversity.
- Poverty itself is not the direct cause; lack of livelihood alternatives increases pressure on forests.
- Alternative livelihoods help maintain biodiversity.

Tree species diversity

- Refers to the number of different tree species in a forest.
- Higher diversity supports wildlife, ecological stability, and climate resilience.

Fortress conservation model

- Emphasises protection through restricting human access.
- Widely followed by Indian Forest Departments.
- Has limitations as protected areas become isolated islands surrounded by human settlements.

Human dependence on forests

- About **275 million Indians** depend on forests for livelihoods and daily needs.
- Human-dominated landscapes play a crucial role in conservation.

Community-based conservation initiatives

- Subsidised LPG and efficient stoves reduce fuelwood dependence.
- Wildlife tourism and conservation jobs create alternative incomes.
- Community participation strengthens conservation outcomes.

Examples from India

- **Ladakh:** Snow Leopard Conservancy with homestays and livestock insurance.
- **Sindhudurg, Maharashtra:** Mangrove Co-Management Committees.
- **Arunachal Pradesh:** Hornbill nest adoption programme involving Nyishi tribe members.



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Inclusive conservation approach

- Supported by ecologist **Madhav Gadgil**.
- Advocates rights, incentives, and participation of local communities.
- Integrates traditional ecological knowledge with scientific conservation.

Important Terms

Term	Meaning
Nature Sustainability	Journal in which the study was published.
Tree Species Diversity	Number of different tree species present in a forest ecosystem.
Fortress Conservation Model	Conservation approach that restricts human activities to protect forests.
Human-Dominated Landscapes	Areas where ecological systems coexist with significant human populations and activities.
Wildlife Corridors	Forest patches connecting protected areas and facilitating movement of animals.
Ecosystem Services	Benefits provided by ecosystems such as water regulation, carbon storage, and soil protection.
Madhav Gadgil	Indian ecologist who advocated community-based and inclusive conservation.
Snow Leopard Conservancy	Community-based conservation initiative in Ladakh.
Mangrove Co-Management Committees	Village institutions in Maharashtra that combine mangrove conservation with livelihood support.
Hornbill Nest Adoption Programme	Initiative by the Nature Conservation Foundation involving local communities in protecting hornbill nesting sites.

[A nation determined to endure and overcome-The Hindu Editorial](#)

International relations

Easy Explanation



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Iran's modern history has been shaped by repeated interactions with external powers and its search for a balance between Western-style modernisation and indigenous political identity. Under the Qajar and Pahlavi dynasties, Iran pursued Westernisation, supported by rising oil revenues. However, resentment against authoritarian rule, corruption, economic inequality, and foreign influence, especially that of the U.S. and Britain, culminated in the 1979 Islamic Revolution led by Ayatollah Khomeini. The revolution transformed Iran into an Islamic Republic and fundamentally altered its relations with the West.

A major turning point came with the Iran-Iraq War (1980-1988), initiated after Iraq invaded Iran. Backed by several Arab countries and supported by the U.S., Iraq sought to curb Iran's revolutionary influence. Despite economic and military constraints, Iran displayed remarkable resilience by mobilising popular support, maintaining oil exports, diversifying arms sources, and establishing the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC), which emerged as a powerful institution. Interestingly, Israel covertly supplied arms and spare parts to Iran during the war, viewing Saddam Hussein's Iraq as a greater threat.

The experience of revolution, foreign intervention, and prolonged war shaped Iran's political culture and strengthened its determination to withstand external pressure. The article argues that Iran's endurance during the Iran-Iraq War and its present confrontation with the U.S. and Israel demonstrates a deep national capacity to absorb hardship and preserve strategic autonomy. Despite governance challenges and internal divisions, Iran sees itself as a significant regional power and seeks to maintain an influential role in the emerging world order.

Key Takeaways

Roots of the Islamic Revolution

- Oil wealth and rapid Westernisation under the Shah generated resentment.
- Opposition came from reformists, merchants, intellectuals, and religious scholars.
- The 1979 Islamic Revolution ended the monarchy and established an Islamic Republic.

Strained U.S.-Iran relations

- The 1953 CIA-backed overthrow of Prime Minister Mossadegh deepened anti-American sentiment.
- The 1979 U.S. Embassy hostage crisis transformed relations into long-term hostility.

Iran-Iraq War and resilience

- Iraq invaded Iran in 1980 with support from several Arab states and the U.S.
- The war strengthened nationalism and popular mobilisation.
- Iran maintained oil exports and adapted to economic and military pressures.

Rise of the IRGC

- The Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) emerged during the war.
- It evolved into a powerful military and political institution.

Israel's covert assistance

- Israel secretly supplied arms and spare parts to Iran.
- The objective was to weaken Saddam Hussein's Iraq.

Iran's enduring strategy

- Iran has repeatedly demonstrated an ability to withstand prolonged external pressures.
- It seeks to assert itself as an important regional power.

Important Terms

Term	Meaning
Islamic Revolution (1979)	Revolution that overthrew the Shah and established the Islamic Republic of Iran.



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Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini	Leader of the Islamic Revolution and founder of the Islamic Republic.
White Revolution	Reform programme initiated by Shah Mohammad Reza Pahlavi to modernise Iran.
Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC)	Elite military force created after the revolution to protect the Islamic system.
Vilayat-e-Faqih	Doctrine that places supreme authority in the hands of an Islamic jurist.
Iran-Iraq War (1980-1988)	Major conflict that shaped Iran's political and military structure.
Great Satan	Term used by revolutionary Iran to refer to the United States.

Primed to treat-The Hindu Editorial

Science and technology

Easy Explanation

Kerala has once again reported a Nipah virus case, but the absence of further infections highlights the effectiveness of its public health system. Nipah, a highly fatal virus classified by the WHO as a priority pathogen, has caused repeated outbreaks in Kerala since 2018. Through rapid contact tracing, surveillance, and established treatment protocols, the State has been able to contain the infection before it spreads widely.

The repeated occurrence of Nipah is linked to ecological changes and increasing human activity near forest areas inhabited by fruit bats, the natural reservoir of the virus. Humans can become infected through consumption of fruits or water contaminated by bats, and thereafter the virus can spread from person to person. These outbreaks underline the growing importance of zoonotic diseases and the need to address the interactions between humans, animals, and the environment.

Kerala's experience demonstrates the importance of adopting a **One Health approach, which integrates human, animal, and environmental health**. Strong disease surveillance, early diagnosis, and preparedness at primary and secondary healthcare levels have made the State better equipped to handle outbreaks and provide valuable lessons for future pandemic preparedness.

Key Takeaways

Nipah as a priority pathogen

- WHO classifies Nipah virus as a priority pathogen due to its high fatality rate and outbreak potential.
- Kerala has experienced outbreaks in 2018, 2019, 2021, 2023, 2024 and 2025.

Source of infection

- Fruit bats are the natural hosts of the virus.
- Infection can occur through contaminated fruits, water sources, or person-to-person transmission.

Kerala's preparedness



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- Effective contact tracing and surveillance have limited the spread.
- Healthcare systems maintain a high index of suspicion for encephalitis cases and clusters.

Need for One Health approach

- Disease control requires integration of human, animal, and environmental health.
- Habitat encroachment and ecological changes increase the risk of zoonotic spillovers.

Lessons for pandemic preparedness

- Early detection, decentralised healthcare, and rapid response mechanisms are crucial.
- Kerala's experience offers a model for managing future infectious disease outbreaks.

Important Terms

Term	Meaning
Nipah Virus (NiV)	A highly fatal zoonotic virus transmitted from animals to humans and capable of human-to-human transmission.
Priority Pathogen	Disease-causing organism identified by WHO as requiring urgent research and preparedness efforts.
Zoonotic Disease	Disease transmitted from animals to humans.
One Health Approach	Integrated approach linking human, animal and environmental health for disease prevention and control.
Contact Tracing	Identification and monitoring of people who may have been exposed to an infected individual.
Acute Encephalitis	Severe inflammation of the brain, often seen in Nipah virus infection.

18th June 2026

[Food inflation may creep higher in coming months-The Indian Express Explained Page](#)

Economy

Easy Explanation

Despite the return of El Niño conditions and disruptions caused by the West Asia conflict, global food prices have remained relatively stable due to record agricultural production in 2024-25 and 2025-26. Abundant harvests of wheat, rice, maize, sugar and oilseeds have ensured sufficient stocks, preventing a sharp rise in food prices unlike during the Russia-Ukraine war in 2022.

However, there are emerging risks. The closure of the Strait of Hormuz had caused fertiliser prices to spike, and vegetable oil prices have risen because of their increasing use in biofuel production. In India, food inflation has started to rise gradually, indicating that pressures may be building beneath the surface.



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If the current El Niño strengthens into a very strong event, it could bring below-normal rainfall and warmer winters, adversely affecting rabi crops. Coupled with possible fertiliser shortages, agricultural production could suffer, leading to higher food inflation in the coming months. The extent of the impact will depend on the intensity of El Niño and the restoration of global fertiliser supplies.

Key Takeaways

Return of El Niño

- El Niño conditions have re-emerged in 2026.
- There is a high probability of it becoming a very strong event during October-January.
- El Niño generally causes dry conditions in India and raises temperatures.

Why food prices are stable

- Consecutive bumper harvests in 2024-25 and 2025-26 have created ample global stocks.
- Record production of wheat, rice, maize, sugar and oilseeds has prevented major price spikes.

Impact of West Asia conflict

- Closure of the Strait of Hormuz increased fertiliser prices.
- Energy prices have risen sharply, but food prices have remained relatively contained.

Vegetable oils under pressure

- Palm, soybean and sunflower oil prices have increased significantly.
- Higher crude oil prices encourage diversion of vegetable oils for biofuel production.

Risks for India

- Food inflation has begun to increase.
- A strong El Niño could hurt rabi crops through reduced rainfall and warmer winters.
- Fertiliser shortages may further affect agricultural production.

Factors that can moderate inflation

- Reopening of the Strait of Hormuz and easing of fertiliser supplies.
- Weakening or shorter duration of El Niño.

Important Terms

Term	Meaning
El Niño	Periodic warming of the equatorial Pacific Ocean that affects global weather patterns and often weakens the Indian monsoon.
Strait of Hormuz	Strategic maritime chokepoint through which a significant share of global oil and fertiliser trade passes.
FAO Food Price Index	Global benchmark measuring changes in international food commodity prices.



Rabi Crops	Winter-season crops sown after the monsoon and harvested in spring.
Biofuels	Fuels derived from biological sources such as vegetable oils and agricultural products.
Di-Ammonium Phosphate (DAP)	A major phosphatic fertiliser used in agriculture.

[Bullet train tunnel 'hoods': What they are and why they matter-The Indian Express Explained Page](#)

Economy

Easy Explanation

The Mumbai-Ahmedabad Bullet Train project will introduce **tunnel hoods**, a technology being used for the first time in Indian Railways. These are cylindrical structures with several openings built at the entrance and exit of tunnels. Countries operating high-speed trains, such as Japan, widely use this technology.

When a bullet train travelling at speeds above 300 kmph enters a tunnel, it pushes a large amount of air ahead of it. This creates powerful pressure waves inside the tunnel. If these waves are not controlled, they can produce a loud explosive sound called the **tunnel boom effect** when the train exits the tunnel.

Tunnel hoods act as transition zones between the open atmosphere and the enclosed tunnel. Their windows gradually release the compressed air, reducing pressure changes and noise. This improves passenger comfort, enhances aerodynamic performance, and makes high-speed rail operations safer and more efficient.

The Mumbai-Ahmedabad High-Speed Rail project has eight mountain tunnels, mainly in Maharashtra's Sahyadri region. Each tunnel will have hoods at both ends, marking an important advancement in India's railway and tunnel engineering capabilities.

Key Takeaways

First for Indian Railways

- Tunnel hood technology is being introduced for the first time in India.
- It is part of the Mumbai-Ahmedabad High-Speed Rail Project.

Purpose of tunnel hoods

- Prevent the "tunnel boom" effect.
- Reduce noise and pressure fluctuations.
- Improve safety and passenger comfort.

Working mechanism

- High-speed trains compress air while entering tunnels.
- Perforated hood windows gradually release this pressure.
- This weakens pressure waves before they emerge from the tunnel.

Project details

- Eight mountain tunnels will have hoods at both ends.
- Most tunnels are located in the Sahyadri region of Maharashtra.
- Tunnel lengths increase because of the additional hood structures.

Engineering significance



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- Represents adoption of global best practices.
- Enhances India's capabilities in high-speed rail and tunnel construction.
- Useful for future bullet train corridors.

Important Terms

Term	Meaning
Tunnel Hood	Cylindrical structure with vents/windows installed at tunnel entrances and exits to control pressure waves.
Tunnel Boom Effect	Loud noise generated when pressure waves created by high-speed trains emerge from tunnels.
High-Speed Rail (HSR)	Railway system where trains operate at speeds generally above 250-300 kmph.
Viaduct	Elevated bridge-like structure used to carry railway tracks or roads.
Breakthrough	Stage when tunnel excavation from opposite sides meets to form a continuous passage.
Overburden	Soil and rock layer lying above a tunnel.

[More Indians are taking to sea, most are non-officers-The Indian Express Explained Page](#)

Economy

Easy Explanation

India has emerged as one of the world's largest suppliers of seafarers, with the number of Indian maritime workers increasing more than fivefold since 2010. Today, nearly one in every five seafarers globally is Indian. Most of them serve on foreign-flagged ships, making India an important contributor to global shipping and trade.

Over the years, the composition of India's maritime workforce has changed significantly. Earlier, officers formed the majority, but now non-officers or ratings—who perform operational and technical tasks such as deck work, engine maintenance, cooking, hospitality, and cleaning—constitute nearly two-thirds of Indian seafarers. There has also been rapid growth in non-engineering or nautical staff.

Because most Indian seafarers work on foreign vessels, they are highly exposed to geopolitical tensions and maritime disruptions. The recent conflict around the Strait of Hormuz has highlighted these risks, with thousands of Indian crew members operating in the Gulf region facing uncertainty and danger. The deaths of Indian seafarers near Hormuz have once again drawn attention to the need for ensuring the safety and welfare of India's large overseas maritime workforce.

Key Takeaways

Rapid growth of Indian seafarers

- India's maritime workforce has increased more than fivefold since 2010.



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- India accounts for about 17% of the global seafaring workforce.
- Nearly one in five seafarers worldwide is Indian.

Shift towards ratings

- Officer-to-rating ratio has changed from 60:40 in 2010 to 35:65 in 2024.
- Ratings perform operational and technical functions on ships.
- Growth has been particularly strong among non-engineering personnel.

Dominance of foreign-flagged vessels

- About 90% of Indian seafarers work on foreign ships.
- This reflects India's importance in the international shipping industry.

Exposure to geopolitical risks

- Indian crews are vulnerable to disruptions in major maritime chokepoints.
- Closure of the Strait of Hormuz has affected thousands of Indian seafarers.
- Maritime conflicts directly impact Indian lives and global trade.

India among top maritime labour suppliers

- India ranks alongside the Philippines and China.
- Indian seafarers are crucial for global shipping operations.

Important Terms

Term	Meaning
Seafarer	A person employed on ships involved in international or domestic maritime transport.
Rating	Non-officer crew members performing operational and technical duties aboard ships.
Bosun (Boatswain)	Senior-most deck rating responsible for supervising deck crew.
Able Seaman	Experienced deck crew member assisting in navigation and ship operations.
Foreign-Flagged Vessel	Ship registered under the laws of a country different from that of the crew members or owners.
Strait of Hormuz	Strategic maritime chokepoint connecting the Persian Gulf with the Gulf of Oman and Arabian Sea.

[A gender quota to break glass ceiling in judiciary-The Indian Express Ideas Page](#)

Polity

Easy Explanation



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The appointment of Justice V. Mohana as a Supreme Court judge has revived the debate on gender representation in the Indian judiciary. She is only the second woman lawyer to be directly elevated from the Bar to the Supreme Court, after Justice Indu Malhotra. Despite women increasingly entering the legal profession, their presence in the highest court remains extremely low.

Many countries have adopted constitutional or legal measures to ensure greater representation of women in their apex courts. Belgium introduced a rule that at least one-third of constitutional court judges must belong to each gender, while South Africa's Constitution requires the judiciary to reflect the country's racial and gender composition. Several countries, including Canada and Germany, have nearly equal representation of men and women judges.

The article argues that India should also adopt a policy or constitutional amendment to ensure at least 33.3% representation of women in the Supreme Court and High Courts. Supporters believe such quotas can help break the "glass ceiling" and make the judiciary more inclusive and representative of society.

Key Takeaways

Low representation of women in Indian judiciary

- Justice V. Mohana is only the second woman directly elevated from the Bar to the Supreme Court.
- At present, only 2 out of 37 Supreme Court judges are women (about 5.4%).

International examples

- Belgium mandates that at least one-third of judges belong to each gender.
- South Africa's Constitution promotes racial and gender diversity in the judiciary.
- Countries such as Canada, Germany and Belgium have around 50% women judges.

Demand for gender quota

- Proposal to ensure at least 33.3% women judges in Supreme Court and High Courts.
- Targeted inclusion of women from SC, ST, OBC and minority communities is also suggested.

Need for structural reforms

- Constitutional amendments to Articles 124 and 217 have been proposed.
- Until then, the Supreme Court could adopt a policy ensuring periodic appointments of women judges.

Breaking the glass ceiling

- Greater representation would make the judiciary more inclusive and reflective of society.
- Diversity can strengthen public trust and legitimacy of the judicial system.

Important Terms

Term	Meaning
Glass Ceiling	Invisible barriers that prevent women and other groups from reaching top positions.
Direct Elevation from Bar	Appointment of a practising lawyer directly as a judge without prior service in a High Court.
Collegium System	System under which senior Supreme Court judges recommend judicial appointments and transfers.





Article 124	Constitutional provision dealing with the establishment and appointment of judges to the Supreme Court.
Article 217	Constitutional provision governing appointment of High Court judges.
Gender Quota	Reservation or minimum percentage of positions earmarked for women.
Representative Judiciary	A judiciary whose composition reflects the diversity of society.
Constitutional Court	Highest court responsible for interpreting and protecting the Constitution.

[For lasting peace, US & Iran have to look beyond their philosophies of negotiation-The Indian Express Ideas Page](#)

International relations

Easy Explanation

The article argues that the prolonged tensions between the United States and Iran cannot be explained only by nuclear issues, sanctions, or regional rivalries. A deeper reason lies in their fundamentally different philosophies of negotiation.

Donald Trump's approach, described in his book *The Art of the Deal*, views negotiations as a transactional process driven by leverage, pressure, and quick outcomes. It seeks a visible and decisive agreement. In contrast, Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi, in *The Power of Negotiation*, advocates a patient, institutional, and long-term approach rooted in Iran's civilisational identity and strategic autonomy.

Iran follows a "bazaar-style" of diplomacy characterized by patience, gradual bargaining, and the use of time as leverage. The American approach, especially under Trump, emphasizes maximum pressure and rapid breakthroughs. As a result, both sides often misinterpret each other's intentions. What Iran sees as patience, the U.S. views as obstruction; what the U.S. sees as bargaining tactics, Iran perceives as aggression.

Besides these philosophical differences, domestic political pressures and regional actors such as Israel and Gulf states further complicate reconciliation. The article concludes that lasting peace requires both countries to understand each other's negotiating cultures and move beyond their traditional mindsets.

Key Takeaways

Different philosophies of negotiation

- The U.S. and Iran differ not only on issues but also on the meaning and purpose of negotiation.
- This clash of diplomatic cultures has been a major obstacle to peace.

Trump's transactional approach

- Based on *The Art of the Deal* (1987).
- Emphasises leverage, disruption, and quick, visible victories.
- Seeks a "grand bargain" or final agreement.

Araghchi's institutional approach

- Based on *The Power of Negotiation* (2014).



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- Negotiation is viewed as a systematic and long-term process.
- Focuses on strategic autonomy and national dignity.

Bazaar-style diplomacy

- Characterised by patience and incremental bargaining.
- Uses time as a weapon to gain leverage.
- Reflects traditional Iranian negotiating culture.

Maximum pressure strategy

- Favoured by the Trump administration.
- Relies on sanctions, threats, and escalation to secure concessions.
- Seen by Iran as violating international norms.

Mutual misperceptions

- Iran's patience is interpreted by Washington as bad faith.
- U.S. pressure tactics are viewed by Tehran as hostility and lawlessness.

Role of domestic politics

- U.S. congressional hawks oppose concessions to Iran.
- Iranian conservatives and clerical establishments distrust the West.

Regional factors

- Israel and Gulf countries influence U.S.-Iran relations.
- Regional security concerns often obstruct bilateral progress.

Requirement for lasting peace

- The U.S. must recognise Iran as a civilisational state rather than a transactional actor.
- Iran must understand the impatience and electoral compulsions of the American political system.
- Mutual understanding of negotiating styles is essential for sustainable peace.

Important Terms

Term	Meaning
Realpolitik	Foreign policy based on practical interests and power considerations rather than ideology or morality.
JCPOA	Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (2015 nuclear agreement between Iran and world powers).
Smart Power	Combination of hard power and soft power to achieve national objectives.
Strategic Autonomy	Ability of a country to pursue independent policies without external pressure.





Transactional Diplomacy	Negotiation based on immediate gains and bargaining rather than long-term relationships.
Institutionalism	Approach that emphasizes rules, institutions, and structured processes in international relations.
Maximum Pressure Strategy	U.S. policy of imposing severe sanctions and diplomatic pressure on Iran.
Bazaar-style Negotiation	Traditional Iranian style involving patience, gradual bargaining, and use of time as leverage.
Taarof	Persian system of ritual politeness and indirect communication often used in social and diplomatic interactions.
Civilisational State	A state that derives its identity and legitimacy from a long historical and cultural heritage.
Grand Bargain	A comprehensive agreement intended to resolve multiple disputes simultaneously.

[The RBI and its growing fiscal role-The Hindu Text and Context](#)

Economy

Easy Explanation

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) traditionally acts as an independent institution responsible for controlling inflation, maintaining financial stability, and managing the currency. Recently, however, its role has expanded because it transferred a record ₹2.87 lakh crore surplus to the Union government for FY26. This has raised concerns that the RBI is increasingly supporting government finances rather than remaining only a monetary authority.

The RBI's balance sheet has grown significantly, reaching nearly ₹92 lakh crore. Income from foreign exchange reserves, gold holdings, and interest on securities has generated large profits, which are being transferred to the government. While these transfers are legal and follow the Economic Capital Framework, they provide fiscal resources without raising taxes or increasing borrowing. Thus, monetary operations are becoming closely linked with fiscal outcomes.

Another issue is fiscal federalism. RBI profits go entirely to the Union government and are not shared with States through the Finance Commission's divisible pool. As States face borrowing restrictions and increasing expenditure responsibilities, critics argue that growing RBI transfers indirectly strengthen fiscal centralisation. The challenge ahead is to preserve the RBI's independence and institutional distance while ensuring it continues to perform its core role of maintaining monetary and financial stability.

Key Takeaways

Record RBI surplus transfer

- RBI transferred ₹2.87 lakh crore to the Union government for FY26.
- Largest surplus transfer in RBI's history.

Expansion of RBI's balance sheet



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- RBI's balance sheet rose by 20.6% to ₹91.97 lakh crore.
- Gross income increased by more than 26%.

Growing fiscal role of RBI

- Central bank profits are creating fiscal space without higher taxes or borrowing.
- Monetary operations are increasingly affecting government finances.

Reserve management

- RBI earns income through foreign assets, gold reserves and securities.
- Recent reserve management reportedly involved gold sales and increased foreign-currency holdings.

Issue of fiscal federalism

- RBI profits are treated as Union government non-tax revenue.
- States do not receive an automatic share of these transfers.
- This may contribute to greater fiscal centralisation.

Need to preserve central bank independence

- RBI still enjoys operational autonomy.
- Maintaining institutional distance from fiscal pressures is important for credibility.

Important Terms

Term	Meaning
Reserve Bank of India (RBI)	India's central bank responsible for monetary policy and financial stability.
Fiscal Policy	Government policy relating to taxation, expenditure and borrowing.
Monetary Policy	Measures taken by the central bank to control inflation and money supply.
Economic Capital Framework (ECF)	Framework that determines how much surplus RBI can transfer to the government.
Surplus Transfer	Transfer of RBI's profits to the Union government.
Balance Sheet	Statement showing assets and liabilities of an institution.
Foreign Exchange Reserves	Holdings of foreign currencies, gold and other assets maintained by the RBI.





Fiscal Federalism	Distribution of financial powers and resources between the Centre and States.
Divisible Pool	Portion of central taxes shared with States based on Finance Commission recommendations.
Article 293	Constitutional provision regulating borrowing powers of States.
Operational Autonomy	Ability of a central bank to function independently without political interference.
Fiscal Centralisation	Increasing concentration of financial powers and resources with the Union government.

[What does the India-Russia logistics agreement allow?-The Hindu Text and Context](#)

International relations

Easy Explanation

India and Russia operationalised their bilateral Logistics Support Agreement (RELOS) in January 2026. Some social media reports wrongly claimed that it permits the permanent stationing of 3,000 Russian troops in India or vice versa. In reality, RELOS is a standard logistics agreement similar to those India has signed with several other countries and does not amount to a military alliance.

The agreement allows the armed forces of both countries to use each other's military facilities, ports and airfields for refuelling, repairs, supplies, medical assistance and technical support. These facilities can be used during joint exercises, training programmes, port visits and humanitarian assistance and disaster relief (HADR) operations. The agreement only simplifies administrative procedures and reduces bureaucratic hurdles.

RELOS is valid for five years and provides a maximum limit of 3,000 personnel, which represents the size of contingents involved in mutually agreed visits or exercises. It does not permit permanent military bases or long-term deployment. An important strategic benefit for India is access to Russian military facilities in the Arctic region, which is becoming increasingly important due to new shipping routes opening as a result of climate change.

Key Takeaways

Operationalisation of RELOS

- India-Russia Reciprocal Exchange of Logistics Agreement (RELOS) became operational in January 2026.
- Signed in February 2025 and ratified by Russia in December 2025.

Purpose of logistics agreements

- Facilitate fuel, supplies, repairs, medical support and technical assistance.
- Used during joint exercises, training, port calls and HADR missions.

No military alliance

- RELOS does not allow permanent stationing of troops or military bases.
- The 3,000-troop figure is only an upper limit for temporary deployments during agreed activities.

India's network of logistics agreements



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- India has similar agreements with the U.S., France, U.K., Japan, Australia, Singapore, Vietnam and Russia.
- Oman is covered under a broader defence cooperation agreement.

Strategic significance

- Enhances military interoperability and cooperation.
- Gives India access to Russian facilities in the Arctic, an increasingly important region for navigation and trade.

Important Terms

Term	Meaning
RELOS (Reciprocal Exchange of Logistics Agreement)	India-Russia agreement for reciprocal logistics and technical support between armed forces.
Logistics Support Agreement (LSA)	Agreement enabling mutual access to bases, ports and support facilities.
LEMOA (Logistics Exchange Memorandum of Agreement)	India-U.S. logistics support agreement signed in 2016.
Military Interoperability	Ability of armed forces of different countries to work together effectively.
Port Call	Visit of a naval vessel to a foreign port for operational or logistical purposes.
Airfield Infrastructure	Facilities and support systems available at military airbases.
Technical Support	Maintenance and repair assistance for military equipment.
HADR (Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief)	Relief operations undertaken during natural disasters or humanitarian crises.
Arctic Region	Polar region gaining strategic importance due to emerging sea routes and resource potential.
Permanent Basing	Long-term deployment or establishment of military bases in another country (not allowed under RELOS).

[Dhaka's new Padma barrage will reshape water power in the region-The Hindu Science](#)



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Geography

Easy Explanation

Bangladesh has approved the construction of the **2.1-km Padma Barrage** on the Padma River (the Ganga after it enters Bangladesh) to store water and reduce dry-season shortages. Located about 180 km downstream of India's Farakka Barrage, the project aims to supply water to around 6.5 crore people. Bangladesh believes the barrage will help it gain greater control over water availability, especially as the 1996 Ganges Water Treaty is due to expire in 2026.

Bangladesh has long argued that India's Farakka Barrage reduces water flow during dry months, increases salinity, lowers groundwater recharge, and affects navigation, agriculture and the Sundarbans ecosystem. Reduced river flow also leads to silt accumulation and floods during monsoons. Experts warn that another large barrage may further disturb ecosystems and worsen problems related to climate change and sea-level rise, to which Bangladesh is highly vulnerable.

The project also has geopolitical implications. Experts suspect Chinese support because Bangladesh lacks the engineering capacity for such a large project. As China expands its role in South Asian water infrastructure, India may face increasing strategic challenges. While Bangladesh sees the barrage as a means to secure water, experts argue that smaller check dams and better cross-border water cooperation could provide more sustainable solutions.

Key Takeaways

Padma Barrage Project

- 2.1-km-long barrage on the Padma (Ganga) River in Bangladesh.
- Will store 2,900 million cubic metres of water.
- Expected to benefit 6.5 crore people.
- Estimated cost: Tk 50,443 crore ($\approx$ ₹39,170 crore).

Relation with Farakka Barrage

- Located 180 km downstream of India's Farakka Barrage.
- Bangladesh blames Farakka for dry-season water shortages and ecological changes.
- 1996 Ganges Water Treaty expires in December 2026.

Environmental Concerns

- Reduced freshwater flow increases salinity and riverbank erosion.
- Sediment flow to the Sundarbans declines.
- Fish populations and livelihoods of fisherfolk are affected.
- Climate change and sea-level rise make large water structures more vulnerable.

Regional Water Politics

- Water-sharing remains a sensitive issue between India and Bangladesh.
- Teesta River Treaty is still pending.
- China is emerging as an important player in South Asian water infrastructure.

Alternative Solutions

- Experts favour smaller check dams instead of large barrages.
- Greater cross-border planning and cooperation are needed.
- Emphasis should be on ecosystem-based water management.

Important Terms

Term

Meaning



| Click to Connect Now.



Padma River	Name of the Ganga River after it enters Bangladesh.
Padma Barrage	Proposed water-storage structure on the Padma River in Bangladesh.
Farakka Barrage	Barrage in West Bengal built to divert Ganga water towards the Hooghly River and Kolkata Port.
1996 Ganges Water Treaty	India-Bangladesh agreement for sharing Ganga waters at Farakka.
Lower Riparian State	Country located downstream in a river basin; Bangladesh in the Ganga basin.
Groundwater Recharge	Process through which water percolates and replenishes underground aquifers.
Salinity Intrusion	Entry of saline water into freshwater ecosystems and groundwater.
Sundarbans	World's largest mangrove forest shared by India and Bangladesh.
Check Dam	Small barrier built across streams to conserve water and recharge groundwater.
Pondage	Storage area created behind a dam or barrage.
Transboundary Rivers	Rivers flowing through more than one country.
Teesta River Treaty	Proposed India-Bangladesh agreement for sharing Teesta River waters.
Riparian Rights	Rights of countries or regions sharing the waters of a river basin.

[The universe's expansion still accelerating: researchers-The Hindu Science](#)

Geography

Easy Explanation



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Scientists have once again confirmed that the universe is expanding at an accelerating rate. This supports the discovery made in 1998 that an unknown force called **dark energy** is causing galaxies to move away from each other faster over time. A recent study had questioned this idea, suggesting that the acceleration had stopped, but the new research rejects that claim.

The researchers used observations of **Type Ia supernovae**, which are exploding white dwarf stars that have nearly the same brightness. Because their true brightness is known, scientists can compare it with how bright they appear from Earth to calculate their distance. These "cosmic mile markers" help measure how the expansion of the universe has changed since the Big Bang around 13.8 billion years ago.

The new study found no evidence supporting the earlier claim that the age of stars affects these measurements. Thus, according to the latest analysis, dark energy still dominates the universe and continues to drive accelerated expansion. However, the debate is not fully settled, and scientists continue to investigate the exact nature of dark energy.

Key Takeaways

Universe still expanding faster

- New research confirms that cosmic expansion is accelerating.
- Supports the discovery made in 1998.

Role of dark energy

- Dark energy is believed to be responsible for accelerated expansion.
- It constitutes about 68% of the universe.

Importance of Type Ia supernovae

- These exploding stars serve as "standard candles" for measuring cosmic distances.
- Their observed brightness helps determine expansion rates.

Challenge to previous findings

- A 2025 study had suggested that dark energy is weakening.
- New analysis rejects this conclusion and finds no evidence for the proposed "age effect."

Composition of the universe

- Ordinary matter: about 5%.
- Dark matter: about 27%.
- Dark energy: about 68%.

Scientific debate continues

- Researchers disagree over methods and interpretations.
- Understanding dark energy remains one of the biggest mysteries in cosmology.

Important Terms

Term	Meaning
Big Bang	Event about 13.8 billion years ago that marked the beginning of the universe.
Dark Energy	Mysterious force believed to drive the accelerated expansion of the universe.





Dark Matter	Invisible matter detected through its gravitational effects.
Type Ia Supernova	Explosion of a white dwarf star used to measure cosmic distances.
White Dwarf	Dense remnant left after a low- or intermediate-mass star exhausts its fuel.
Luminosity	Intrinsic brightness of an astronomical object.
Standard Candle	Astronomical object with known luminosity used to estimate distances.
Cosmic Expansion	Continuous increase in the size of the universe since the Big Bang.
Acceleration of Expansion	Increase in the rate at which galaxies move away from one another.
Cosmology	Branch of astronomy that studies the origin, structure and evolution of the universe.

[Step forward-The Hindu Editorial](#)

Governance

Easy Explanation

The Supreme Court, in **Shishupal @ Shish Ram vs Surjeet**, significantly increased compensation awarded to the family of a deceased homemaker, Reshma, by recognising the economic value of unpaid domestic work. While the Motor Accident Claims Tribunal had awarded ₹2.42 lakh and the Punjab and Haryana High Court later increased it to ₹8.43 lakh, the Supreme Court raised the compensation to ₹62.78 lakh by assigning a notional income of ₹30,000 per month to the services provided by the homemaker.

The judgment builds upon earlier decisions such as **Lata Wadhwa (2001)** and **Kirti vs Oriental Insurance (2021)**, which recognised that household work has economic value even though it is unpaid. The Court stated that ₹30,000 per month should be treated as a minimum benchmark and should be increased by 10% every three years. However, this ruling applies only to compensation calculations in Motor Accident Claims Tribunal (MACT) cases and does not create a salary, pension or employment status for homemakers.

The decision is considered an important step towards recognising women's unpaid labour and correcting decades of economic invisibility. It may influence future claims relating to maintenance, rural women's work and valuation of domestic responsibilities. It could also affect the insurance sector, leading companies to reassess claim calculations and encouraging faster settlements.

Key Takeaways

Recognition of unpaid domestic work

- Supreme Court fixed a notional income of ₹30,000 per month for homemakers.
- Compensation in the case increased to ₹62.78 lakh.



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Continuation of earlier jurisprudence

- Builds upon **Lata Wadhwa (2001)** and **Kirti vs Oriental Insurance (2021)**.
- Reaffirms that unpaid work has economic value.

Benchmark for future compensation

- ₹30,000 per month is a minimum floor.
- Amount should rise by 10% every three years.

Limited scope of the ruling

- Applicable only in Motor Accident Claims Tribunal cases.
- Does not create wages, pensions or employment rights for homemakers.

Broader social implications

- Strengthens recognition of women's unpaid labour.
- May influence maintenance cases and valuation of rural women's work.
- Could impact insurance companies and compensation practices.

Important Terms

Term	Meaning
Motor Accident Claims Tribunal (MACT)	Special tribunal that awards compensation to victims of motor accidents.
Notional Income	Hypothetical income assigned to a person for calculating compensation.
Homemaker's Economic Value	Monetary value attached to unpaid domestic and caregiving work.
Lata Wadhwa Case (2001)	Supreme Court judgment that first recognised the economic contribution of homemakers.
Kirti vs Oriental Insurance (2021)	Supreme Court case affirming that unpaid household work deserves economic recognition.
Compensation	Financial amount awarded for loss or injury.
Maintenance	Financial support provided to a spouse or dependent under family laws.
Hindu Marriage Act, 1955	Law governing marriage, divorce and maintenance among Hindus.



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**Lok Adalat**

Alternative dispute resolution mechanism for speedy settlement of cases.

Economic Erasure

Failure to recognise and value certain forms of work in economic terms.

[Innovate or be eaten-The Hindu Editorial](#)

Science and technology

Easy Explanation

India possesses enormous innovation potential, as reflected in the success of Indian-origin leaders in global technology firms and the innovations showcased at Bharat Innovates 2026 in France. However, recent restrictions on advanced AI models such as Claude Mythos and Claude Fable have highlighted the risks of excessive dependence on foreign technologies.

While India may not be able to match the massive investments required in frontier AI and semiconductor manufacturing, it can still emerge as a leader in deep-tech sectors such as space exploration, defence technologies and material sciences. Achieving this requires a stable policy environment, better access to capital, and improved quality of life to attract and retain talent.

The editorial argues that India's biggest barriers are not lack of money but unresolved governance and infrastructure issues. Addressing these challenges through political commitment can help create an ecosystem where innovation thrives.

Key Takeaways**India's innovation potential**

- Indian professionals have demonstrated world-class technological and managerial capabilities.
- Bharat Innovates 2026 showcased India's ability to develop globally competitive technologies.

Risks of technological dependence

- Restrictions on AI models such as Claude Mythos and Claude Fable exposed vulnerabilities arising from reliance on foreign technologies.
- Technological self-reliance has become increasingly important.

Opportunities in deep technology

- India can focus on sectors such as:
 - Space technology
 - Defence technology
 - Material sciences
 - Advanced engineering

Need for a favourable ecosystem

- Stable and predictable tax policies are essential.
- Regulatory uncertainty and rent-seeking discourage entrepreneurs.
- Venture capital should support high-risk and cutting-edge technologies.

Importance of talent retention

- Better quality of life is necessary to prevent brain drain.
- Investments in clean air, green spaces and efficient public transport can help retain skilled professionals.

Governance is the key challenge

- India's innovation problems are rooted more in governance and infrastructure than in shortage of funds.



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- Political capital, rather than merely risk capital, is needed to solve these issues.

Important Terms

Term	Meaning
Deep Tech	Technologies based on advanced scientific discoveries and engineering, such as AI, space technology and biotechnology.
Frontier AI	The most advanced and powerful artificial intelligence systems.
Semiconductor Technology	Technology involved in designing and manufacturing electronic chips.
Venture Capital	Funding provided to startups and innovative businesses with high growth potential.
Risk Capital	Investment in ventures with high uncertainty but potentially high returns.
Brain Drain	Migration of highly skilled individuals to other countries for better opportunities.
Middle-Power Collaboration	Cooperation among influential but non-superpower countries to advance common interests.
Public Goods	Services and infrastructure provided for public welfare, such as transport, clean air and green spaces.

19th June 2026

[Iran gets 'understanding', world gets Hormuz, Trump gets his exit -Nuclear issue, Strait of Hormuz, sanctions: A point-by-point look at a pact that sets broader terms for US-Iran ties-The Indian Express Explained Page](#)

International relations

Easy Explanation

The United States and Iran have signed a **14-clause Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)**, which initiates a 60-day period of negotiations for a final agreement. Unlike the 2015 **Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA)**, which focused mainly on Iran's nuclear programme, the new framework seeks to redefine the broader political and economic relationship between the two countries.



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The agreement provides for an end to hostilities, non-interference in internal affairs, reopening of the Strait of Hormuz, reconstruction assistance for Iran, phased sanctions relief, and the unfreezing of Iranian assets. In return, Iran has reiterated that it will not pursue nuclear weapons and has guaranteed free passage through the Strait of Hormuz.

One notable feature is that the agreement does not require Iran to transfer its stockpile of enriched uranium to another country and does not address ballistic missiles or Iran's ties with regional non-state actors. The final deal is expected to be endorsed through a binding UN Security Council resolution.

Overall, the agreement offers Iran economic relief and international acceptance, gives the world access to the vital Strait of Hormuz, and provides the Trump administration with an exit from prolonged conflict.

Key Takeaways

Beginning of a new negotiation phase

- The U.S. and Iran signed a 14-clause MoU.
- It opens a 60-day window for negotiating a final agreement.
- Scope extends beyond the nuclear issue to the overall bilateral relationship.

End to hostilities

- Includes cessation of conflict involving Lebanon.
- Iran agreed not to resume attacks on U.S. and Israeli targets.
- Establishes a new precedent in Iran's approach to regional tensions.

Non-interference in internal affairs

- U.S. moves away from regime-change rhetoric.
- Addresses a major concern of the Iranian leadership.

Strait of Hormuz reopened

- U.S. naval blockade has effectively been lifted.
- Iran guarantees free navigation through the strait.
- Iran and Oman may jointly regulate its future administration.

Economic reconstruction

- A \$300-billion reconstruction plan is proposed.
- Intended to reintegrate Iran into the global economy.
- Regional partners and the U.S. are expected to contribute.

Sanctions relief

- Final agreement will address sanctions on energy and shipping sectors.
- Interim sanctions waivers will operate before complete removal.
- Iran's oil revenues could rise substantially.

Nuclear commitments

- Iran reaffirmed that it will not develop nuclear weapons.
- Unlike earlier U.S. demands, there is no requirement to transfer enriched uranium abroad.
- Marks a significant shift from previous American positions.

No restrictions on missiles

- Ballistic missile capabilities are not included in the agreement.
- Iran's relations with regional non-state actors remain untouched.

Release of frozen assets



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- Iranian assets worth over \$100 billion are frozen abroad.
- About \$12 billion has reportedly already been released.

Role of the United Nations

- Final agreement will be backed by a binding UN Security Council resolution.
- Similar to UNSC Resolution 2231, which endorsed the JCPOA.

Important Terms

Term	Meaning
Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)	Preliminary agreement outlining principles and framework for future negotiations.
JCPOA (Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action)	2015 nuclear agreement between Iran and major world powers.
Strait of Hormuz	Strategic waterway through which around one-fifth of global oil and gas trade passes.
Sanctions Relief	Removal or easing of economic restrictions imposed on a country.
Carrier Strike Group	A naval formation centred around an aircraft carrier and its supporting vessels.
Enriched Uranium	Uranium processed to increase the concentration of uranium-235, used for nuclear fuel and potentially weapons.
Regime Change	Replacement of an existing government through external or internal pressure.
Transit Passage	Right of ships and aircraft to move through international straits without interference.
Ballistic Missiles	Long-range missiles that follow a ballistic trajectory to deliver warheads.
Frozen Assets	Financial resources held abroad that are inaccessible because of sanctions or legal restrictions.
UN Security Council Resolution	Binding decision adopted by the United Nations Security Council.



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Article 25 of the UN Charter	Provision requiring UN members to accept and carry out Security Council decisions.
Secondary Sanctions	Penalties imposed on third parties that engage in transactions with a sanctioned country.
Non-State Actors	Armed groups or organizations that operate independently of governments.
Strategic Waterway	A maritime route essential for international trade and energy transportation.

[Iran gets 'understanding', world gets Hormuz, Trump gets his exit-MoU a setback; the options now for Israel, its PM-The Indian Express Explained Page](#)

International relations

Easy Explanation

The recently signed **U.S.-Iran Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)** has generated anger and concern in Israel. Many Israeli politicians and analysts believe the agreement is too favourable to Iran and weakens Israel's security position. Critics argue that after years of confrontation, Washington and Tehran are shaping the region's future while Israel has little influence over the outcome.

The MoU provides a 60-day period for negotiating a final agreement. During this time, Israel is expected to lobby the United States for stricter terms regarding Iran's enriched uranium, nuclear facilities, and centrifuges. At the same time, Israel intends to maintain freedom of military action in Lebanon against Hezbollah, despite the broader ceasefire framework.

Israel's objective in Lebanon is no longer the complete destruction of Hezbollah, but to ensure that the group cannot threaten Israel directly from the border through rockets or drones. Analysts suggest that Israel should convert its military gains into diplomatic arrangements backed by the United States and the Lebanese Army.

Politically, the agreement poses challenges for Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. His image as a strong security leader and his close relationship with President Donald Trump have been central to his political appeal. With elections approaching, critics argue that military successes have not translated into lasting strategic gains.

Many Israelis continue to favour a policy of overwhelming military strength, especially after the October 7 attacks. However, some analysts believe that future governments may adopt a more restrained approach and place greater emphasis on diplomacy and long-term stability.

Key Takeaways

Israeli dissatisfaction with the MoU

- Many Israelis view the agreement as too generous to Iran.
- There is a feeling that Washington and Tehran are deciding the region's future.
- Some right-wing groups accuse President Trump of abandoning Israel.

60-day window for diplomacy

- Israel will try to influence the final agreement.
- It seeks stricter conditions on Iran's nuclear programme.
- The period allows scope for renegotiation.

Israel's strategy in Lebanon



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- Israel intends to continue operations against Hezbollah.
- The aim is to prevent Hezbollah from threatening Israel from the border.
- Military gains are expected to be converted into diplomatic arrangements.

Possible framework for Lebanon

- U.S.-backed enforcement mechanisms.
- Greater responsibility for the Lebanese Army.
- No return of Hezbollah's military presence near the Israel-Lebanon border.

Impact on Netanyahu

- The MoU weakens his image as a strong security leader.
- His close ties with Trump appear less advantageous.
- Elections are approaching, increasing political pressure.

Changing Israeli politics

- Opposition leaders claim they would have fought the same wars more effectively.
- A future government may pursue a more restrained foreign policy.
- Greater emphasis on diplomacy could emerge.

Public opinion

- Many Israelis prioritise military security after the October 7 attacks.
- Analysts argue that governments should focus on long-term strategic stability rather than permanent conflict.

Important Terms

Term	Meaning
Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)	Preliminary agreement outlining principles for future negotiations.
Hezbollah	Shia political and militant group based in Lebanon and supported by Iran.
Enriched Uranium	Uranium processed to higher concentrations, which can be used for nuclear energy or weapons.
Centrifuges	Machines used to enrich uranium by separating isotopes.
Ceasefire	Temporary or permanent suspension of hostilities.
Strategic Failure	Failure to achieve long-term political or military objectives.
Military Deterrence	Strategy aimed at preventing attacks through the threat of retaliation.





Codified Red Lines	Clearly defined limits or conditions agreed upon by parties.
Lebanese Army	Official armed forces of Lebanon responsible for national security.
De-escalation	Reduction of tensions or military conflict.
Coalition Government	Government formed by multiple political parties.
Opposition	Political parties not currently in power.
October 7 Attacks	Hamas-led attacks on Israel in 2023 that significantly influenced Israeli security perceptions.
Strategic View	Long-term approach to national security and foreign policy.

[Conciliatory signs from Trump, but unpredictability frames challenge-The Indian Express Ideas Page](#)

International Relations

Easy Explanation

Prime Minister Narendra Modi and U.S. President Donald Trump met on the sidelines of the G7 Summit in France after more than a year of strained relations. Their previous meeting at the White House had focused on trade and expanding bilateral economic ties, but several developments thereafter caused serious tensions between the two countries.

One major dispute arose over **Operation Sindoor**, when Trump repeatedly claimed credit for mediating a ceasefire between India and Pakistan, a claim rejected by India. Relations deteriorated further when the U.S. imposed steep tariffs on Indian goods and introduced a \$100,000 H-1B visa fee, which affected Indian professionals. Although the visa fee was later struck down by a U.S. court, distrust had grown.

Despite these difficulties, India avoided confrontation and continued engaging with Washington. It worked towards a trade agreement, reduced dependence on Russian oil, and acknowledged Trump's efforts in ending conflicts elsewhere. Meanwhile, the U.S.-Iran conflict and disruptions in the Strait of Hormuz affected India's energy security and economy.

The recent Modi-Trump meeting indicated efforts to repair ties. Trump adopted a conciliatory tone, praised Modi, avoided escalating disputes over the deaths of Indian seafarers, expressed support for skilled Indian professionals, and reiterated security cooperation with India. However, India's policymakers recognise that Trump's foreign policy remains highly unpredictable.

Consequently, India is pursuing a strategy of balancing engagement with the U.S. while simultaneously expanding ties with Europe, Japan, Australia, Gulf countries, Singapore, and maintaining channels with China. The objective is to preserve strategic flexibility and avoid excessive dependence on any single power.

Key Takeaways

India-U.S. ties witnessed severe strain

- Trump's claims regarding Operation Sindoor caused tensions.
- High tariffs and the H-1B visa fee worsened relations.



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- Strategic trust between the two countries suffered.

India adopted a cautious approach

- Avoided open confrontation.
- Continued negotiations on a trade deal.
- Reduced Russian oil imports while maintaining diplomatic engagement.

Trump showed conciliatory signals

- Praised Prime Minister Modi.
- Supported skilled Indian professionals.
- Reaffirmed security cooperation with India.
- Avoided escalating sensitive issues.

Challenge of unpredictability

- Trump pursues policies based on immediate interests.
- His actions can affect India even when directed elsewhere.
- India cannot assume continuity in U.S. policies.

Changing global dynamics

- Trump prefers managing China directly.
- Importance of alliances such as the Quad may decline under his approach.
- India needs to engage China while safeguarding its interests.

India's broader strategy

- Manage Trump pragmatically rather than confront him.
- Diversify partnerships with Europe, Japan, Australia, Gulf countries, and Singapore.
- Maintain strategic autonomy and multiple options.

Important Terms

Term	Meaning
Operation Sindoor	Military operation whose ceasefire became a point of disagreement between India and the U.S.
H-1B Visa	U.S. visa programme for highly skilled foreign professionals.
Strategic Trust	Confidence between countries regarding long-term intentions and cooperation.
Tariffs	Taxes imposed on imported goods.
Strait of Hormuz	Vital maritime route through which a significant share of global oil trade passes.





Conciliatory Approach	Efforts aimed at reducing tensions and improving relations.
Strategic Autonomy	Ability of a country to pursue independent foreign policy choices.
Quad	Strategic grouping comprising India, the U.S., Japan and Australia.
G2 Concept	Idea of the U.S. and China acting as the two dominant global powers.
Critical Minerals	Essential minerals required for advanced technologies and clean energy systems.
Like-minded Partners	Countries sharing common interests and cooperating on economic and strategic issues.
Multipolar Diplomacy	Maintaining relations with multiple centres of power rather than relying on one alliance.

[Why the monsoon's progress has stalled over Maharashtra-The Indian Express Explained Page](#)

Geography

Easy Explanation

Although the southwest monsoon season officially began in early June, rainfall across India has remained below normal. Between June 1 and 17, the country recorded a **38% rainfall deficit**. While the monsoon arrived over Kerala on June 4 and initially advanced quickly, its progress slowed after June 8, especially over Maharashtra.

Usually, the Arabian Sea branch of the monsoon brings rain to Maharashtra and advances northwards. However, this year the monsoon winds have weakened, and dry northwesterly winds are dominating the region. In addition, important weather systems such as low-pressure areas and cyclonic circulations, which help strengthen monsoon currents, are absent.

Another reason is the unfavourable phase of the **Madden-Julian Oscillation (MJO)**, a global atmospheric phenomenon that influences rainfall patterns over India. Weak cross-equatorial winds over the Arabian Sea have also reduced moisture transport.

As a result, Maharashtra has experienced severe rainfall shortages. The India Meteorological Department (IMD) expects the monsoon to progress further over eastern and central India in the coming days, but uncertainty remains regarding its advance over Maharashtra.

Key Takeaways

Rainfall deficit across India

- All-India rainfall was 38% below normal between June 1 and 17.
- The monsoon season has performed below expectations so far.

Initial progress followed by slowdown

- Monsoon arrived over Kerala on June 4.
- Advanced rapidly for four days.



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- Stalled after June 8, particularly over Maharashtra.

Arabian Sea branch is weaker

- Progress has been slower compared to the Bay of Bengal branch.
- Maharashtra has experienced delayed monsoon onset.

Reasons behind the slowdown

- Weak monsoon winds from the Arabian Sea.
- Dominance of dry northerly and northwesterly winds.
- Weak cross-equatorial wind flow reducing moisture supply.
- Absence of low-pressure systems and cyclonic circulations.
- Unfavourable phase of the Madden-Julian Oscillation (MJO).

Rainfall deficit in Maharashtra (June 1–17)

- Konkan and Goa: **81% below normal**
- Madhya Maharashtra: **80% below normal**
- Vidarbha: **72% below normal**
- Marathwada: **62% below normal**

Outlook

- Monsoon is expected to advance further over eastern and central India.
- Timing of onset over Maharashtra remains uncertain.

Important Terms

Term	Meaning
Southwest Monsoon	Seasonal wind system that brings over 70% of India's annual rainfall between June and September.
Arabian Sea Branch	One of the two branches of the southwest monsoon that mainly affects western India.
Bay of Bengal Branch	Monsoon branch that advances through eastern and northeastern India.
Cross-Equatorial Winds	Winds crossing the equator that transport moisture into the Indian subcontinent.
Low-Pressure Area	Region of lower atmospheric pressure that encourages cloud formation and rainfall.
Cyclonic Circulation	Circular movement of air around a low-pressure area that helps strengthen rainfall systems.





Offshore Trough	Elongated low-pressure zone running parallel to the coast, favourable for monsoon rains.
Madden-Julian Oscillation (MJO)	Eastward-moving atmospheric wave that influences tropical rainfall and monsoon activity.
Monsoon Pulse	Strong surge of moist winds that helps the monsoon advance and causes widespread rainfall.
Rainfall Deficit	Shortfall of actual rainfall compared to the long-term average.
IMD (India Meteorological Department)	Government agency responsible for weather forecasting and monitoring in India.

[Court may have set a figure, but what's the value of unpaid domestic work? -SC verdict first step but has class blinkers-The Indian Express Ideas Page](#)

sociology

Easy Explanation

The recent Supreme Court judgment fixing a notional monthly value of ₹30,000 for homemakers' work is an important recognition of the unpaid domestic and care work performed by women. It acknowledges that women's contributions inside the household have long been undervalued despite their crucial role in sustaining families and contributing to the economy.

However, the judgment also raises important concerns. Many scholars fear that formally recognising women primarily as "homemakers" could reinforce traditional gender roles and discourage women's participation in the labour force. This is particularly significant when women's educational attainment is increasing and efforts are being made to break gender stereotypes.

Women's low labour force participation, especially in urban areas, is closely linked to the unequal burden of housework and caregiving. In 2024-25, only about 26% of urban women (15 years and above) participated in the workforce, compared to 73% of men. Without policies that redistribute and reduce unpaid care work, women's employment opportunities will continue to remain limited.

The article also highlights a contradiction in the Supreme Court's approach. While it recognised the economic value of unpaid household work performed by women within families, it earlier dismissed a petition seeking minimum wages for domestic workers. This raises questions about whether the work done by paid domestic workers, who are often poor women, is being valued equally. A broader approach to valuing care work, whether performed inside one's own home or as paid labour, is therefore needed.

Key Takeaways

Recognition of unpaid work

- Supreme Court fixed a notional value of ₹30,000 per month for homemakers.
- The judgment recognises women's invisible contribution to the economy.
- It highlights the long-standing undervaluation of domestic and care work.

Concerns about reinforcing gender roles



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- Recognition of homemakers may strengthen traditional gender stereotypes.
- Scholars fear it could discourage women's labour force participation.
- Women's increasing educational achievements must be matched by greater economic opportunities.

Low female labour force participation

- Urban female workforce participation rate in 2024-25 was around 26%.
- Male participation rate stood at 73%.
- Unequal household responsibilities contribute significantly to this gap.

Need for supportive policies

- Reduction and redistribution of care work are essential.
- Flexible work and better childcare support can improve women's employment outcomes.
- Gender norms continue to shape women's choices.

Issue of domestic workers

- Supreme Court earlier dismissed a petition seeking minimum wages for domestic workers.
- This creates a contradiction with the current valuation of unpaid work.
- Care work performed by paid domestic workers also requires proper recognition and remuneration.

Important Terms

Term	Meaning
Unpaid Domestic Work	Household and caregiving activities performed without monetary compensation.
Care Work	Work involving care of children, elderly or family members.
Labour Force Participation Rate (LFPR)	Percentage of working-age population that is employed or seeking employment.
PLFS	Periodic Labour Force Survey conducted by the National Statistical Office.
ASHA Workers	Accredited Social Health Activists who provide community healthcare services.
Anganwadi Workers	Frontline workers involved in child nutrition and early childhood care under ICDS.
Minimum Wage	Lowest legally mandated wage payable to workers.
Gendered Roles	Socially assigned roles and responsibilities based on gender.





Court may have set a figure, but what's the value of unpaid domestic work? - Give her rights in her lifetime - The Indian Express Ideas Page

Sociology

Easy Explanation

The Supreme Court's recent decision valuing a homemaker's work at **₹30,000 per month** in compensation cases is an important recognition of unpaid domestic labour. It acknowledges that caregiving and household management contribute significantly to society and the economy.

However, the article argues that this recognition comes only **after a woman's death** in accident compensation cases. During her lifetime, homemakers often have no guaranteed rights over family assets, savings, or wealth accumulated through the joint efforts of spouses. Thus, while the judgment gives economic recognition, it does not provide financial security or ownership rights.

The article draws from feminist ideas, particularly **Silvia Federici's "Wages Against Housework"**, to argue that the debate has shifted from demanding wages for housework to demanding rights and fair recognition. Women who leave formal employment to care for children, elderly parents, or support their spouse's career often lose opportunities for income, savings, pensions, and economic independence.

Recent judicial observations have increasingly recognised marriage as a partnership where both spouses contribute in different ways. However, existing laws do not adequately guarantee homemakers a share in marital property or sufficient maintenance rights. Therefore, the article argues that women need stronger legal rights, social support systems, and equitable sharing of assets **during their lifetime**, not merely compensation after death.

Key Takeaways

Recognition of homemakers' work

- Supreme Court fixed a notional value of ₹30,000 per month.
- Domestic and care work contributes significantly to the economy.
- The judgment marks an important step towards acknowledging invisible labour.

Limitation of the ruling

- Compensation becomes relevant only after the homemaker's death.
- Homemakers often lack ownership rights over family wealth during their lifetime.
- Economic dependence persists despite their contribution.

Marriage as a partnership

- Household wealth is created through joint contributions.
- Care work enables earning members to pursue careers.
- Courts are increasingly recognising this shared contribution.

Need for legal reforms

- Homemakers require rights over marital assets.
- Maintenance laws need strengthening.
- Social infrastructure should reduce and redistribute care responsibilities.

Broader concern

- Recognition alone is insufficient without economic security.
- Women need rights and financial protection while they are alive.

Important Terms

Term

Meaning



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Homemaker	Person primarily responsible for unpaid household and caregiving work.
Unpaid Domestic Work	Household activities performed without monetary compensation.
Care Work	Activities related to caring for children, elderly and family members.
Motor Accident Claims Tribunal (MACT)	Tribunal that awards compensation to victims of road accidents.
Maintenance	Financial support provided to a spouse or dependent.
Marital Assets	Property and wealth accumulated during marriage.
Community Property Law	Legal framework giving spouses shared ownership over assets acquired during marriage.
Silvia Federici	Marxist-feminist scholar known for advocating recognition of unpaid housework.
Wages Against Housework	A 1975 feminist essay arguing that domestic labour deserves economic recognition.
Economic Independence	Ability to sustain oneself financially without dependence on others.

[75 years on, the First Amendment still casts a long shadow-The Indian Express Ideas Page](#)

Polity

Easy Explanation

The **First Constitutional Amendment Act, 1951**, passed barely a year after the Constitution came into force, marked a major turning point in India's constitutional history. President **Rajendra Prasad** gave his reluctant assent on **June 18, 1951**. Legal scholar **Upendra Baxi** later called the post-amendment framework India's "**Second Constitution**".

Prime Minister **Jawaharlal Nehru** believed that certain judicial decisions were obstructing the government's social and economic agenda. Three important court rulings had struck down government actions:

- Restrictions imposed on newspapers like **Organiser** and **Cross Roads** were invalidated, strengthening freedom of speech.
- In the **Champakam Dorairajan case**, caste-based reservations beyond SCs and STs were held unconstitutional.
- The **Patna High Court** struck down the Bihar Land Reform Act, citing violation of equality principles.



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In response, the First Amendment introduced major changes. It added new grounds for restricting freedom of speech, allowed special provisions for socially and educationally backward classes, weakened the right to property, and created the **Ninth Schedule**, under which laws could be protected from judicial review.

Supporters viewed these changes as necessary for land reforms and social justice. Critics argued that the amendment strengthened the executive at the expense of fundamental rights and established the dangerous precedent of altering the Constitution to overcome unfavourable court judgments.

The article argues that many present-day debates over free speech, state power, and constitutional limits trace their origins to this amendment, whose impact continues to shape Indian democracy even after 75 years.

Key Takeaways

A major constitutional turning point

- First Amendment was enacted in 1951.
- It fundamentally altered the original constitutional framework.
- Upendra Baxi described its aftermath as the "Second Constitution".

Reasons behind the amendment

- Court rulings restricted government attempts at censorship.
- Reservation policies faced constitutional challenges.
- Land reform legislation was struck down.

Major changes introduced

- Expanded grounds for restricting freedom of speech.
- Enabled special provisions for backward classes.
- Weakened the right to property.
- Created the Ninth Schedule to shield certain laws from judicial review.

Long-term consequences

- Strengthened executive and parliamentary power.
- Reduced the scope of judicial intervention.
- Set a precedent for constitutional amendments overriding court judgments.
- Influenced later laws affecting civil liberties and free speech.

Important Terms

Term	Meaning
First Constitutional Amendment Act, 1951	Amendment that introduced major changes to fundamental rights and state powers.
Fundamental Rights	Basic rights guaranteed by the Constitution to citizens.
Champakam Dorairajan Case (1951)	Supreme Court case that struck down caste-based communal reservations.
Ninth Schedule	Constitutional mechanism protecting certain laws from judicial review.





Judicial Review	Power of courts to examine the constitutionality of laws and executive actions.
Right to Property	Former fundamental right later converted into a legal right.
Freedom of Speech and Expression	Constitutional right under Article 19(1)(a), subject to reasonable restrictions.
Backward Classes	Socially and educationally disadvantaged groups eligible for affirmative action.
Public Order	Ground for imposing reasonable restrictions on free speech under Article 19(2).
Upendra Baxi	Eminent legal scholar who described the post-1951 framework as India's "Second Constitution".

What is Kerala's risk profile for Nipah? - The Hindu Text and Context

Science and technology

Easy Explanation

Kerala first faced a **Nipah virus (NiV)** outbreak in 2018, when 23 people were infected and 17 died, resulting in a very high fatality rate. Since then, the State has experienced repeated spillover events, with cases reported almost every year. The latest case involves a 43-year-old man from Kozhikode.

The recurring outbreaks are linked to the presence of **fruit bats (Indian flying fox, *Pteropus medius*)**, which are the natural reservoirs of the virus. These bats are commonly found close to human settlements in Kerala, increasing the risk of transmission. The highest risk period is between **April and September**, when fruit-bearing trees, bat breeding activity and viral shedding overlap.

Kerala's rich biodiversity, dense population, expanding human settlements near forests, and changing ecological conditions make it especially vulnerable to zoonotic diseases. Besides Nipah, the State faces risks from diseases such as Kyasanur Forest Disease, leptospirosis, scrub typhus, rabies, Japanese encephalitis, West Nile fever and avian influenza.

After the devastating 2018 outbreak, Kerala significantly strengthened its health infrastructure. Improved surveillance, early diagnosis, strict infection control measures and community awareness have helped prevent large outbreaks. The State has also adopted a **One Health approach**, integrating human, animal and environmental health.

Key Takeaways

Repeated Nipah outbreaks

- First outbreak occurred in 2018.
- Cases have been reported almost every year since then.
- Most outbreaks have been limited to isolated spillover events.

Natural reservoir

- Fruit bats (*Pteropus medius*) are the natural hosts of Nipah virus.



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- Bat colonies are found close to human settlements.
- Presence of the virus in bats has been repeatedly confirmed.

Peak spillover season

- Highest risk period is April to September.
- Increased bat activity and fruit abundance raise exposure risks.
- Spillovers are likely to continue because the virus is established in the environment.

Why Kerala is highly vulnerable

- Rich biodiversity of the Western Ghats.
- High population density.
- Human settlements near forests.
- Habitat fragmentation and deforestation.
- Climate-related ecological disruptions.

Other zoonotic diseases in Kerala

- Kyasanur Forest Disease (KFD)
- Leptospirosis
- Scrub typhus
- Japanese encephalitis
- West Nile fever
- Rabies
- Avian influenza

WHO concerns

- WHO classifies Nipah as a **priority pathogen**.
- High mortality and pandemic potential make it a major concern.
- WHO has advised Kerala to remain vigilant against Nipah, H5N1 avian influenza and KFD.

Kerala's response

- Strengthened disease surveillance after 2018.
- Developed clinical protocols for viral infections.
- Expanded Virus Research and Diagnostic Laboratory (VRDL) network.
- Improved infection control in hospitals.

One Health approach

- Over 2.5 lakh trained volunteers participate in community surveillance.
- One Health Centre for Nipah Research and Resilience established in Kozhikode in 2023.
- Research is underway to develop indigenous monoclonal antibodies against the Bangladesh strain of Nipah circulating in Kerala.

Important Terms

Term	Meaning
Nipah Virus (NiV)	Highly fatal zoonotic virus that can cause encephalitis and respiratory illness.
Zoonotic Disease	Disease transmitted from animals to humans.





Natural Reservoir	Animal species that naturally carries a pathogen without being severely affected.
Indian Flying Fox (<i>Pteropus medius</i>)	Fruit bat species identified as the reservoir of Nipah virus in India.
Spillover Event	Transmission of a pathogen from animals to humans.
Viral RNA	Genetic material of a virus used for laboratory detection.
Serological Study	Study that detects antibodies or evidence of infection in blood samples.
Viral Shedding	Release of viruses from infected animals or humans into the environment.
Encephalitis	Inflammation of the brain, a serious complication of Nipah infection.
Nosocomial Transmission	Spread of infection within healthcare facilities.
Acute Encephalitis Syndrome (AES)	Group of conditions causing sudden brain inflammation.
VRDL Network	Virus Research and Diagnostic Laboratory network for early detection of viral diseases.
One Health Approach	Integrated approach linking human, animal and environmental health.
Kyasanur Forest Disease (KFD)	Tick-borne viral disease endemic to parts of southern India.
Priority Pathogen	Disease-causing organism identified by WHO as requiring urgent research and preparedness efforts.
Monoclonal Antibodies	Laboratory-produced antibodies designed to target specific pathogens.

[Beyond 'depression' and 'anxiety': how young Adivasis describe distress-The Hindu Science](#)



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Sociology

Easy Explanation

Mental health discussions in India are often centred around urban and privileged groups, while the experiences of young people from Adivasi communities receive very little attention. Although Adivasis constitute around 9% of India's population and India has the world's largest indigenous population, information about their mental health remains scarce.

Young Adivasis face multiple challenges such as poverty, early family responsibilities, migration, loss of parents, educational disruptions, and social marginalisation. These pressures often create chronic anxiety and emotional exhaustion. However, distress is rarely expressed through terms like "depression" or "anxiety". Instead, it appears through silence, irritability, physical complaints, social withdrawal, behavioural changes, or substance abuse.

Studies indicate that mental health problems among Adivasi adolescents may be much higher than the national average. Yet formal mental health systems often fail to recognise their culturally specific ways of expressing suffering.

Migration and increasing dependence on smartphones have also weakened traditional intergenerational spaces where elders shared stories, experiences, and emotional support. Therefore, addressing mental health among Adivasi youth requires more than expanding psychiatric services. It demands reducing poverty, strengthening communities, understanding local expressions of distress, and ensuring dignity and cultural continuity.

Key Takeaways

Mental health discussions overlook Adivasi youth

- Conversations are largely urban-centric.
- Indigenous communities remain underrepresented.
- India has the world's largest indigenous population.

Higher burden of mental health problems

- National Mental Health Survey (2015-16) estimated that 7% of adolescents suffer from mental health problems.
- Studies among Adivasi adolescents reported prevalence rates of 12-16%, higher than the national average.

Poverty and responsibilities affect mental health

- Many adolescents take up family responsibilities at an early age.
- Financial insecurity creates constant stress.
- Loss of parents further increases emotional burden.

Migration intensifies distress

- Seasonal migration disrupts education and social ties.
- Feelings of loneliness and uncertainty increase.
- Substance abuse may emerge as a coping mechanism.

Distress is expressed differently

- Symptoms may appear as silence, irritability, bodily complaints, or social withdrawal.
- Communities often do not use labels such as "depression" or "anxiety".
- Mental health systems frequently fail to recognise these expressions.

Erosion of traditional support systems

- Community spaces and interactions with elders are weakening.
- Smartphones and migration have reduced intergenerational learning and emotional support.
- Sense of belonging and cultural continuity are being affected.

Need for a broader response

- Mental health care should go beyond psychiatric services.



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- Community support and reduction of social and economic vulnerabilities are essential.
- Local languages and cultural expressions of distress must be understood.

Important Terms

Term	Meaning
Adivasi	Indigenous or tribal communities of India.
Mental Health	Emotional, psychological and social well-being of an individual.
Adolescence	Transitional stage between childhood and adulthood (10-19 years).
Depression	Mental disorder characterised by persistent sadness and loss of interest.
Anxiety	Excessive fear, worry or nervousness affecting daily life.
Behavioural Disorders	Mental health conditions involving disruptive or maladaptive behaviour.
Emotional Distress	Psychological suffering caused by stress, trauma or adverse circumstances.
Idioms of Distress	Culturally specific ways through which communities express emotional suffering.
Social Withdrawal	Avoidance of social interactions and reduced participation in community life.
Chronic Anxiety	Persistent feelings of worry and fear over a long period.
Seasonal Migration	Temporary movement of people in search of livelihood opportunities.
Substance Abuse	Harmful or excessive use of alcohol or drugs as a coping mechanism.
Intergenerational Spaces	Social spaces where knowledge and experiences are shared between older and younger generations.





Cultural Continuity	Preservation and transmission of traditions, identity and values across generations.
Mental Health Stigma	Negative attitudes and discrimination associated with mental illness.
Community-Based Approach	A strategy that addresses problems by strengthening local communities and support systems.

[Is India producing more graduates than what the economy can absorb?-The Hindu Editorial](#)

Economy

Easy Explanation

India has witnessed a massive expansion of higher education, with millions of graduates entering the job market every year. However, employment opportunities have not increased at the same pace, resulting in high unemployment among educated youth. Nearly one-third of graduates remain unemployed.

According to experts, the problem is not simply the number of graduates but the mismatch between education and industry requirements. Traditional sectors like IT services, which once absorbed a large number of engineering graduates, have slowed hiring. Although sectors such as banking, defence, aerospace, manufacturing and space technology are expanding, they are not creating enough jobs to absorb the growing workforce.

The rise of Artificial Intelligence (AI), automation and Industry 4.0 has further transformed the nature of work. Industries now demand skills such as working with AI systems, validating AI outputs and solving complex problems, whereas many graduates are trained in outdated curricula.

Manufacturing, too, is becoming more automated and capital-intensive. Large investments in semiconductors and advanced manufacturing do not necessarily create proportionate employment because machines and digital systems increasingly replace routine work.

Experts argue that India should move beyond being merely a manufacturing base and focus more on research, innovation, design and product development. Countries that own technologies and intellectual property generate more high-value jobs. Strengthening entrepreneurship, deep-tech startups, industry-academia collaboration and investment in research and development (R&D) are essential for creating sustainable employment opportunities.

Key Takeaways

Expansion of higher education

- India is producing millions of graduates annually.
- Graduate unemployment remains high.
- Nearly one in three graduates is unemployed.

Job creation has not kept pace

- IT sector hiring has slowed.
- New sectors such as defence, aerospace and finance are expanding but not fast enough.
- Capital-intensive investments generate fewer jobs.

Impact of Artificial Intelligence

- AI is rapidly changing skill requirements.
- Universities struggle to adapt curricula quickly.
- Graduates often lack industry-relevant AI skills.



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Employability challenge

- Gap exists between academic knowledge and practical skills.
- Industries spend resources on retraining graduates.
- Exposure to laboratories, teamwork and real-world problems is limited.

Manufacturing is changing

- Automation and robotics reduce labour requirements.
- Industry 4.0 systems require fewer workers.
- Economic growth may not automatically translate into employment growth.

Importance of innovation and R&D

- Manufacturing alone cannot create enough high-value jobs.
- Intellectual property and indigenous technology are crucial.
- Countries leading in research create better opportunities for engineers.

Growing indigenous capabilities

- Companies like Tata Motors and Mahindra have developed design capabilities.
- India is moving beyond assembly and manufacturing.
- However, advanced R&D opportunities remain limited compared to the number of graduates.

Need for entrepreneurship

- Government and industry cannot provide jobs for everyone.
- Graduates should become job creators rather than job seekers.
- Deep-tech startups require greater access to risk capital.

Importance of industry-academia collaboration

- Universities and industries must jointly design curricula.
- Internships and skill development are essential.
- Collaboration can improve employability.

Future priorities

- Increase investment in research and development.
- Strengthen entrepreneurship ecosystem.
- Build indigenous capabilities in design and advanced manufacturing.
- Align education, industry and policy.

Important Terms

Term	Meaning
Employability	Ability of graduates to obtain and perform jobs effectively.
Artificial Intelligence (AI)	Technology that enables machines to mimic human intelligence and decision-making.
Industry 4.0	Fourth industrial revolution characterised by automation, digitalisation and smart manufacturing.





Automation	Use of machines and technology to perform tasks with minimal human intervention.
Capital-intensive Industry	Industry requiring large investment in machinery and technology rather than labour.
Labour-intensive Industry	Industry relying heavily on human workers for production.
Research and Development (R&D)	Activities aimed at creating new technologies, products and innovations.
Intellectual Property (IP)	Legal rights over inventions, designs and innovations.
Deep-Tech	Startups based on advanced scientific and engineering innovations.
Risk Capital	Investment provided for innovative ventures with uncertain returns.
Semiconductors	Electronic components essential for chips and modern digital devices.
Advanced Manufacturing	Use of modern technologies and automation in production processes.
Product Development	Process of designing and creating new products.
Sovereign AI	AI systems developed and controlled by a country to ensure technological independence.
Startup Ecosystem	Network of entrepreneurs, investors, institutions and policies supporting new businesses.
Industry-Academia Collaboration	Partnership between educational institutions and industries to improve skills and innovation.
Indigenous Technology	Technology developed domestically rather than imported from abroad.
Jobless Growth	Economic growth that does not generate sufficient employment opportunities.





Economy

Easy Explanation

The Government of India has recently upgraded key statistical indicators such as GDP, Consumer Price Index (CPI), Wholesale Price Index (WPI), and Index of Industrial Production (IIP). Most of these indicators were using outdated base years (2011-12), making them less representative of current economic realities. The revised series now use updated base years and improved methodologies, bringing India's statistical practices closer to international standards.

The revised GDP series uses better data sources and incorporates the **double-deflator approach**, which provides a more accurate measure of real economic growth. Similarly, the CPI and WPI have been updated to reflect current consumption and production patterns. A new **Producer Price Index (PPI)** has also been introduced and will gradually replace the WPI over the next five years.

These reforms are expected to improve the reliability of economic data, strengthen policy-making, and enhance India's credibility in the eyes of international institutions such as the IMF. However, timely conduct and release of the Census remains essential for maintaining accurate databases.

Key Takeaways

Upgradation of statistical databases

- GDP, CPI, WPI and IIP series have been revised.
- Base years have been updated to reflect present economic conditions.
- Methodologies now conform more closely to international standards.

Improved GDP estimation

- GDP base year has been changed to 2022-23.
- Double-deflator approach has been adopted.
- New data sources have made estimates more robust.

Better inflation measurement

- CPI base year has been updated to 2024.
- Consumption basket and weightages have been revised.
- WPI has also been updated.

Introduction of Producer Price Index

- PPI has been introduced and will replace WPI gradually.
- It measures price changes at the producer level.
- It is widely used in developed economies.

Need for Census

- Updated Census data is necessary for reliable statistics.
- Further delays should be avoided.

Important Terms

Term	Meaning
GDP (Gross Domestic Product)	Total value of goods and services produced in an economy.





CPI (Consumer Price Index)	Measures retail inflation faced by consumers.
WPI (Wholesale Price Index)	Measures price changes at the wholesale level.
IIP (Index of Industrial Production)	Measures industrial output in the economy.
Producer Price Index (PPI)	Measures prices received by producers and will gradually replace WPI.
Double-Deflator Approach	Method used to calculate more accurate real GDP growth.
Base Year	Reference year used for calculating economic indices.
GDP Deflator	Measure used to adjust GDP for inflation and derive real GDP.

20th June 2026

[The key hurdle to climate targets: Electrification-The Indian Express Explained Page](#)

Environment

Easy Explanation

At the mid-year climate negotiations in Bonn, Germany, Turkey proposed that by **2035**, at least **35% of the world's final energy consumption** should come from electricity. Currently, only about **20-21%** of global energy consumption is in the form of electricity.

This proposal is aimed at accelerating the **energy transition** from fossil fuels such as coal, oil, and gas to cleaner energy sources like solar, wind, hydro and nuclear power. Since renewable sources generate energy mainly through electricity, increasing electrification is essential for achieving climate goals.

However, the challenge is enormous. Even today, only around **42% of global electricity** is produced from non-fossil sources. Therefore, clean electricity currently accounts for only about **8% of total global energy consumption**, meaning over 90% of the world's energy needs still depend on fossil fuels.

Several sectors remain difficult to electrify, including shipping, aviation, heavy industries, and long-distance transport. According to the International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA), achieving a 35% electrification rate by 2035 is necessary to keep the world on the **1.5°C pathway** under the Paris Agreement. This would require massive investments, expansion of renewable energy, battery storage systems, and supportive policies.

Geopolitical conflicts and economic uncertainties may either accelerate renewable adoption due to rising fossil fuel prices or slow down the transition by reducing investments in clean technologies.

Key Takeaways

Turkey's proposal



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- Target of 35% electrification by 2035.
- Current global electrification level is about 20-21%.
- Proposal may become an outcome of COP31.

Importance of electrification

- Energy transition depends on replacing fossil fuels with electricity generated from clean sources.
- Electrification is central to achieving climate goals.

Present reality

- Only about 21% of final energy consumption is electricity.
- Around 42% of electricity generation comes from non-fossil sources.
- Clean energy presently accounts for only about 8% of total energy consumption.

Major challenges

- Shipping, aviation, steel and cement industries are difficult to electrify.
- Global dependence on fossil fuels remains high.
- Massive investments in infrastructure and storage are needed.

Need for investment

- IRENA estimates annual investments of about \$1.2 trillion are required.
- Expansion of renewables and battery storage systems is essential.

Important Terms

Term	Meaning
Final Energy Consumption (FEC)	Energy ultimately consumed by end users after excluding losses and transformation processes.
Electrification	Replacing direct fossil fuel use with electricity-based energy systems.
Energy Transition	Shift from fossil fuels to cleaner and renewable sources of energy.
Paris Agreement	Global climate treaty aiming to limit temperature rise to well below 2°C and preferably 1.5°C.
COP31	31st Conference of Parties under the UNFCCC to be hosted by Turkey and Australia.
IRENA	International Renewable Energy Agency promoting renewable energy adoption.
IEA	International Energy Agency, which tracks global energy trends.





Renewable Energy	Energy derived from naturally replenishing sources such as solar and wind.
Battery Storage Systems	Technologies used to store electricity for later use and improve grid stability.
1.5°C Pathway	Climate target aimed at limiting global warming to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels.

[Drones, tech,European backing:How Ukraine is punching above its weight-The Indian Express Explained Page](#)

International relations

Easy Explanation

Despite facing a much larger and militarily stronger Russia, Ukraine has managed to prevent major Russian advances and is increasingly demonstrating its ability to strike deep inside Russian territory. Recent drone attacks on Moscow and the slowdown of Russia's territorial gains suggest that Ukraine has improved its defensive and offensive capabilities.

A major reason behind Ukraine's resilience is its rapid adoption of new technologies. It has transformed the battlefield through extensive use of drones, electronic warfare systems, surveillance networks, and digital command structures. Ukraine plans to manufacture over **seven million drones in 2026**, compared to four million in 2025.

Ukraine has also developed strong defensive positions, especially in eastern regions such as Sloviansk and Kramatorsk, creating a "fortress belt" that has prevented Russian breakthroughs. Instead of concentrating forces, Ukrainian soldiers operate in smaller, dispersed groups supported by air defence systems and anti-drone technologies.

European countries have emerged as Ukraine's most important supporters, providing financial assistance, purchasing weapons, and investing heavily in Ukraine's defence industry. Combined with technological innovation and military adaptability, these factors have allowed Ukraine to effectively counter a larger adversary.

The conflict highlights how technological superiority and external support can help smaller states sustain themselves in asymmetric warfare against stronger powers.

Key Takeaways

Russian advances have slowed

- Russia captured far less territory in 2026 compared to 2025.
- Ukraine has successfully halted major offensives.
- Drone strikes have expanded the battlefield into Russian territory.

Technological advantage

- Ukraine plans to produce over 7 million drones in 2026.
- Use of drones, AI, electronic warfare and digital command systems has increased efficiency.
- Rapid "kill chain" architecture reduces time between detection and attack.

Strong defensive strategy

- The "fortress belt" in eastern Ukraine acts as a key defensive zone.
- Extensive trenches, mines and logistics hubs strengthen defence.
- Soldiers operate in dispersed formations to reduce vulnerability.

European support

- Europe has become Ukraine's primary source of military and financial assistance.



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- EU has approved major funding packages.
- European countries are investing in Ukraine's defence industry.

Lesson from the conflict

- Smaller states can challenge stronger powers through technological innovation, adaptability and international support.

Important Terms

Term	Meaning
Asymmetric Warfare	Conflict between parties with unequal military capabilities.
Drone Warfare	Use of unmanned aerial or ground vehicles for reconnaissance and attacks.
Electronic Warfare	Use of electromagnetic systems to disrupt enemy communications and equipment.
FPV Drone	First-Person View drone controlled remotely using real-time video transmission.
Digital Kill Chain	Integrated system connecting detection, analysis and attack mechanisms for rapid targeting.
Fortress Belt	Ukraine's heavily fortified defensive zone in eastern regions.
Interceptor Drone	Drone used to neutralise enemy drones.
AI Integration	Use of Artificial Intelligence for surveillance, targeting and autonomous operations.
Logistics Hub	Centre for supply, transport and coordination of military resources.
Institute for the Study of War (ISW)	U.S.-based think tank analysing global military conflicts.

[Accenture sends a signal:Tough times for Indian IT-The Indian Express Explained Page](#)

Economy

Easy Explanation



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Shares of major Indian IT companies fell sharply after global IT and consulting giant **Accenture** gave a weaker growth outlook. Since Indian IT companies and Accenture serve many of the same clients in the U.S. and Europe, Accenture's performance is often seen as an indicator of the health of the global IT services industry.

Accenture reduced its revenue growth forecast for FY2026 from **3-5% to 3-4%** and stated that clients remain cautious about spending on technology and consulting projects. Although investments in Artificial Intelligence (AI) are increasing, overall demand for discretionary technology spending remains weak.

This has raised concerns for Indian IT companies such as TCS, Infosys, Wipro, and Tech Mahindra, which depend heavily on overseas clients. Investors fear that weaker global demand, rising competition from AI-driven technologies, geopolitical tensions, and higher U.S. interest rates could further affect the growth of the Indian IT sector.

Thus, the article suggests that Indian IT companies may face a difficult period with slower revenue growth and increased uncertainty.

Key Takeaways

Weak global IT spending

- Accenture lowered its revenue growth forecast.
- Clients are delaying discretionary technology projects.
- Consulting demand remains subdued.

Impact on Indian IT companies

- Shares of major Indian IT firms declined sharply.
- Companies depend heavily on U.S. and European clients.
- Earnings growth expectations have weakened.

Role of Artificial Intelligence

- AI spending is increasing.
- AI is also disrupting traditional IT services.
- Competitive pressures are intensifying.

Other challenges

- West Asia conflict creates uncertainty.
- Higher U.S. interest rates may reduce corporate spending.
- Global economic conditions remain fragile.

Broader implication

- Recovery in the Indian IT sector may be slower than expected.
- Growth will increasingly depend on adapting to AI-driven opportunities.

Important Terms

Term	Meaning
Accenture	Global IT services and consulting company whose outlook influences the technology sector.
Revenue Guidance	Company's forecast of expected revenue growth.





Constant Currency Growth	Revenue growth excluding the effect of exchange rate fluctuations.
Discretionary Spending	Non-essential spending that companies can postpone during uncertain times.
Digital Transformation	Adoption of digital technologies to improve business operations.
Artificial Intelligence (AI)	Technology enabling machines to perform tasks requiring human intelligence.
Bellwether	An indicator whose performance reflects broader industry trends.
Federal Reserve (Fed)	Central bank of the United States responsible for monetary policy.

Interest Rate Hike	Increase in borrowing costs to control inflation.

Outsourcing	Delegation of business processes or IT services to external firms.

[Delhi's unfinished fight against prejudice-The Indian Express Ideas Page](#)

Governance

Easy Explanation

More than a decade after the Delhi Police created a special cell to deal with racial discrimination against people from Northeast India, the results have been disappointing. Between 2014 and 2026, **2,656 FIRs** related to racial crimes were registered, but only **33 cases resulted in convictions**, while more than half of the accused persons could not even be traced.

Incidents of racism continue to occur. People from the Northeast frequently face racial slurs, discrimination in housing and jobs, social exclusion, and sometimes physical violence. Recent cases involving women from Assam and Arunachal Pradesh show that prejudice remains widespread.

Although mechanisms such as nodal officers and helplines exist, their effectiveness is limited because of inadequate awareness, weak implementation, and lack of trust between affected communities and law enforcement agencies. The issue was highlighted after the 2014 killing of **Nido Tania**, following which the **Bezbaruah Committee** recommended time-bound action against racial crimes. However, progress has been slow.

The editorial argues that outrage after tragic incidents is not enough. There is a need for continuous outreach, police sensitisation, transparency, and accountability to ensure that people from the Northeast feel safe and included.

Key Takeaways

Poor conviction record

- 2,656 FIRs were filed between 2014 and 2026.
- Only 33 cases ended in convictions.
- More than half of the accused remain untraced.



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Persistent discrimination

- People from Northeast India continue to face racism.
- Discrimination occurs in housing, employment, and everyday interactions.
- Physical violence and racial abuse are still reported.

Institutional shortcomings

- Delhi and NCR have nodal officers and helplines.
- Weak awareness and implementation reduce their effectiveness.
- Trust deficit exists between communities and police.

Warnings ignored

- The 2014 Bezbaruah Committee warned against growing alienation among Northeast youth.
- Lack of timely action has allowed prejudice to persist.

Need for reforms

- Better outreach and awareness.
- Sensitisation and diversity training for police personnel.
- Greater transparency and accountability.
- Stronger efforts to promote inclusion and social harmony.

Important Terms

Term	Meaning
FIR (First Information Report)	Formal complaint registered by the police regarding a cognizable offence.
Racial Discrimination	Unfair treatment of individuals based on their ethnicity or physical appearance.
Nodal Officer	Designated official responsible for coordinating and addressing specific issues.
Bezbaruah Committee	Committee constituted in 2014 to examine concerns of people from Northeast India after the death of Nido Tania.
Nido Tania Case	Death of a student from Arunachal Pradesh in Delhi in 2014, which drew attention to racial prejudice.
Alienation	Feeling of exclusion, isolation, or lack of belonging within society.
Sensitisation	Training aimed at increasing awareness and promoting respectful behaviour towards diverse communities.





Accountability

Responsibility of institutions and officials for their actions and performance.

India's cheapest power is here, the grid must catch up-The Hindu Editorial

Economy

Easy Explanation

India has become one of the world's leaders in low-cost solar and wind energy. Solar and wind power are now cheaper than many conventional sources, and India added over **45 GW of renewable capacity in 2025**. However, a major problem has emerged: electricity transmission infrastructure (the grid) is unable to keep pace.

More than **50 GW of renewable energy projects are stranded** because generating plants can be built in 12-18 months, whereas transmission lines take 3-5 years due to land acquisition and regulatory delays. As a result, cheap clean power cannot reach consumers.

Instead of relying only on building new transmission lines, experts argue that India should make better use of the existing grid. By combining batteries, using underutilised coal transmission corridors, expanding substation capacities, and upgrading old wires with advanced conductors, India could unlock the equivalent of **1,000 GW of additional clean energy** without acquiring new land for transmission.

These measures can be implemented much faster and at lower cost than constructing entirely new networks. Since India plans to expand its grid by 40% over the next decade, future transmission infrastructure should be designed to support large-scale renewable energy and storage technologies.

The article argues that the electricity grid is no longer merely infrastructure—it is becoming a key driver of India's economic growth and energy transition.

Key Takeaways

Transmission is the major bottleneck

- Over 50 GW of renewable capacity is stranded.
- Power plants are built faster than transmission lines.
- Land acquisition and approvals delay grid expansion.

Renewables are India's cheapest energy source

- Solar and wind power are now the lowest-cost electricity sources.
- India added more than 45 GW of renewable energy in 2025.
- Firm clean power with batteries costs around ₹3.5 per kWh.

Existing grid can be utilised better

- Batteries can increase transmission utilisation.
- Underused coal plant corridors can carry renewable power.
- Existing substations can accommodate more projects.
- Advanced conductors can nearly double transmission capacity.

Potential to unlock 1,000 GW

- Better grid management can create "clean-energy superhighways".
- No additional land is needed for transmission corridors.
- Solutions can be implemented within months instead of years.

Policy priorities



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- Promote storage integration.
- Encourage advanced transmission technologies.
- Develop renewable energy zones with coordinated grid planning.
- Future-proof new transmission infrastructure.

Important Terms

Term	Meaning
Grid	Network of transmission lines and substations that carry electricity from producers to consumers.
Renewable Energy	Energy obtained from naturally replenishing sources such as solar and wind.
Battery Storage	Technology used to store electricity and supply it when demand rises.
Transmission Line	High-voltage lines that transport electricity over long distances.
Substation	Facility that regulates and distributes electricity within the grid.
High-Temperature Low-Sag Conductors (HTLS)	Advanced wires capable of carrying more electricity without requiring new towers.
Reconductoring	Replacement of old transmission wires with higher-capacity conductors.
Firm Power	Reliable and continuous electricity supply available whenever needed.
Renewable Energy Zone (REZ)	Area designated for concentrated renewable energy generation and associated infrastructure.
Energy Transition	Shift from fossil fuels to cleaner and sustainable energy sources.
kWh (Kilowatt-hour)	Unit measuring electrical energy consumption or production.
GW (Gigawatt)	Unit of power equal to one billion watts, used for measuring large electricity capacities.





Moving from drone purchases to drone partnerships-The Hindu Editorial

International relations

Easy Explanation

The Indian government plans to spend **\$2 billion** on drones from domestic manufacturers, reflecting a shift in military thinking. Instead of relying mainly on expensive platforms such as fighter aircraft and tanks, modern warfare increasingly depends on large numbers of cheap, expendable drones.

Recent conflicts, especially the Russia-Ukraine war and tensions involving Iran, have shown that small and inexpensive drones can inflict significant damage. Sometimes, the cost of intercepting a drone is much higher than the cost of the drone itself. Countries are therefore focusing on mass production and constant innovation rather than a few sophisticated systems.

Unlike fighter jets, which remain useful for decades, tactical drones become outdated quickly because adversaries develop electronic warfare systems that can jam or neutralise them within weeks. Therefore, simply purchasing drones through one-time contracts is insufficient. Continuous upgrades and modifications are necessary.

The article argues that India should move beyond the traditional buyer-seller model and develop long-term partnerships with drone companies. Such arrangements would ensure regular software updates, maintenance, rapid improvements, and increased production during wartime. This collaborative approach would help maintain technological superiority and strengthen India's indigenous drone ecosystem.

Key Takeaways

Shift in military procurement

- India plans a \$2 billion procurement from domestic drone manufacturers.
- Warfare is shifting from expensive platforms to cheap and attritable drones.

Lessons from recent conflicts

- Russia-Ukraine war demonstrated the effectiveness of small drones.
- Commercial drones can be modified for military purposes.
- Cost of destroying drones may exceed the cost of producing them.

Rapid technological obsolescence

- Tactical drones may become outdated within 2-3 years.
- Electronic warfare systems can adapt to new drones within weeks.
- Continuous upgrades are essential.

Current procurement reforms

- Draft Defence Acquisition Procedure (DAP) permits procurement of commercial off-the-shelf systems.
- Defence Procurement Manual (DPM) allows financial provisions for repairs and upgrades.

Need for long-term partnerships

- Procurement should shift from one-time purchases to managed-service models.
- Long-term contracts would provide maintenance, software updates and assured supply.
- Closer collaboration between industry and armed forces is necessary.

Important Terms

Term

Meaning



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UCAV (Uncrewed Combat Aerial Vehicle)	Armed drone used for military missions without an onboard pilot.
Tactical Drone	Small drone used for surveillance, reconnaissance or attack missions.
Attritable System	Low-cost military system that can be lost in combat without major consequences.
MQ-9B Reaper	Advanced American combat drone used for surveillance and strike operations.
Bayraktar TB-2	Turkish combat drone widely used in modern conflicts.
FPV (First-Person View) Drone	Drone operated through live video feed, often modified for attack purposes.
Electronic Warfare (EW)	Use of electronic systems to disrupt or neutralise enemy communications and equipment.
Jammer	Device used to block or interfere with communication signals.
Commercial Off-The-Shelf (COTS)	Readily available commercial products adapted for military use.
Defence Acquisition Procedure (DAP)	Framework governing procurement of defence equipment in India.
Defence Procurement Manual (DPM)	Guidelines regulating procurement and maintenance procedures in the armed forces.
Managed Service Contract	Long-term arrangement providing maintenance, upgrades and support rather than one-time product delivery.
Surge Production Capacity	Ability to rapidly increase production during emergencies or wartime.

[Right of way-The Hindu Editorial](#)





Easy Explanation

The Supreme Court has ruled that the **right to walk safely on footpaths is a part of the Right to Life under Article 21** of the Constitution. The judgment came while deciding a case involving the death of a five-year-old boy who was hit by a tanker in Karnataka. The Court observed that pedestrians are often treated as obstacles by motorists and that walking has become increasingly unsafe in Indian cities.

However, merely recognising this right is not enough. India does not have a dedicated national law protecting pedestrian rights, and responsibility is scattered across municipal laws, town planning rules, and street design guidelines. In many cities, footpaths are either absent or encroached upon by parked vehicles, street vendors, utility structures, and construction material.

The editorial argues that legal recognition alone cannot change public behaviour. Past examples such as the **Street Vendors Act, 2014**, anti-smoking laws, and Swachh Bharat initiatives show that laws succeed only when accompanied by proper implementation, public awareness, and state responsibility.

The success of this judgment will ultimately depend on whether governments invest in pedestrian infrastructure such as continuous and accessible footpaths. At the same time, efforts to protect pedestrian rights should not lead to the displacement of street vendors and the urban poor.

Key Takeaways

Pedestrian rights recognised

- Supreme Court held that the right to walk on footpaths is part of Article 21.
- Pedestrian safety is linked to the Right to Life.

Poor state of footpaths

- Most cities lack continuous and obstruction-free footpaths.
- Encroachments and road expansion often reduce pedestrian space.

Legal recognition alone is insufficient

- Rights need effective implementation and behavioural change.
- Cultural acceptance of pedestrian right of way is essential.

Lessons from earlier laws

- Street Vendors Act, 2014 has faced implementation challenges.
- Anti-smoking laws succeeded due to awareness and penalties.
- Swachh Bharat has shown the importance of state responsibility.

Need for balanced urban planning

- Governments should invest more in pedestrian infrastructure.
- Pedestrian-friendly policies should not criminalise livelihoods of street vendors and the urban poor.

Important Terms

Term	Meaning
Article 21	Fundamental Right guaranteeing protection of life and personal liberty.
Right to Walk	Judicially recognised right of pedestrians to safely use footpaths and public spaces.





Pedestrian Right of Way	Principle that pedestrians should receive priority and protection on roads and crossings.
Street Vendors Act, 2014	Law protecting the livelihood rights of street vendors through designated vending zones and committees.
Town Vending Committee (TVC)	Body constituted to regulate and manage street vending activities.
Restitutionary Remedies	Compensation or legal remedies provided after a violation or injury has occurred.
COTPA, 2003	Cigarettes and Other Tobacco Products Act regulating smoking and tobacco use in public places.
Swachh Bharat Mission	National programme aimed at improving sanitation and cleanliness.
Gentrification	Process in which urban development displaces poorer communities and alters the social character of an area.
Pedestrian Infrastructure	Facilities such as footpaths, crossings and walkways designed for safe movement of pedestrians.

21st June 2026

[Bringing life back to a thirsty land: TH News in Frames](#)

Environment

Easy Explanation

Rayadurgam in Andhra Pradesh's Anantapur district has long struggled with drought, low rainfall, and water scarcity. However, a community-led conservation initiative called the **Ananta Neeru Sanrakshanam Project** is helping revive the region's water resources and ecosystem.

Under the project, local villagers worked with the Forest Department to restore traditional water bodies by removing accumulated silt, increasing their storage capacity and improving groundwater recharge. Thousands of native trees were also planted, helping improve vegetation cover and restore ecological balance.

The project has brought visible benefits. Water availability has improved for both people and wildlife, farmers have seen positive changes in nearby agricultural lands, and restored water bodies now support birds, bees, butterflies, and wild animals. Small ponds inside forests also reduce human-wildlife conflict by providing animals with drinking water.

Although some parts of Rayadurgam still face water shortages, the project demonstrates how scientific planning, ecological restoration, and community participation can improve water security and environmental sustainability in drought-prone regions.

Key Takeaways



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About the Project

- **Project Name:** Ananta Neeru Sanrakshanam Project
- **Location:** Rayadurgam, Anantapur district, Andhra Pradesh
- Community-led initiative implemented with support from the **Forest Department**.

Objectives

- Restore traditional water bodies.
- Improve groundwater recharge.
- Increase green cover.
- Restore local ecosystems.
- Improve water security in drought-prone areas.

Major Activities

- Desilting of tanks and ponds.
- Plantation of thousands of native tree species.
- Creation of small water bodies inside forest areas.
- Protection of green spaces through fencing.

Ecological Benefits

- Improved groundwater recharge.
- Increased vegetation cover.
- Better habitat for:
 - Bees
 - Butterflies
 - Birds
 - Sloth bears
 - Leopards
 - Wild boars
- Reduced human-wildlife conflict due to better water availability inside forests.

Agricultural Benefits

- Improved moisture availability in adjoining farmlands.
- Better water availability during dry months.
- Increased resilience against drought.

About Rayadurgam

- Located in **Anantapur district**, Andhra Pradesh.
- Receives only **450–550 mm of annual rainfall**.
- One of the drought-prone regions of southern India.

Nagara Vanam

- Emerging **urban forest** project.
- Previously degraded land has been restored into a protected green area.
- Helps prevent encroachment and supports biodiversity.

Significance

- Demonstrates the importance of:
 - Community participation.
 - Watershed management.
 - Ecological restoration.
 - Nature-based solutions for climate resilience.



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- Serves as a model for drought-prone regions across India.

Important Terms & Meanings

Term	Meaning
Watershed Management	Conservation and management of land and water resources within a drainage area
Desilting	Removal of accumulated silt from tanks, lakes, or reservoirs to increase water storage capacity
Groundwater Recharge	Process by which rainwater or surface water replenishes underground aquifers
Ecological Restoration	Restoring degraded ecosystems to their natural condition
Biodiversity	Variety of plants, animals, and microorganisms in an ecosystem
Urban Forest	Protected green space or forest developed within or near urban areas
Climate Resilience	Ability of communities and ecosystems to withstand and recover from climate-related stresses such as droughts

[What does the U.S.-Iran agreement say?: TH FAQ](#)

International Relations

Easy Explanation

After a 40-day war and months of negotiations, the **United States and Iran signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on June 15** to stop hostilities and begin talks on a long-term settlement.

The agreement includes a ceasefire, reopening of the **Strait of Hormuz**, easing of U.S. sanctions, and discussions on Iran's nuclear programme. Iran agreed not to develop nuclear weapons and to dilute part of its enriched uranium under international supervision.

However, this is only an interim arrangement, not a final peace deal. Major disagreements remain over Iran's uranium enrichment programme, highly enriched uranium stockpiles, and regional security issues.

The agreement has created tensions between the U.S. and Israel. Israel wanted a much tougher outcome that would significantly weaken Iran's military and nuclear capabilities. Instead, Washington chose diplomacy and economic incentives, creating rare public disagreements between the two allies.

Another challenge is **Lebanon**, where Israeli forces and Hezbollah continue to clash. Any escalation there could derail the peace process.



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While both the U.S. and Iran currently have strong reasons to continue negotiations, the success of the agreement will depend on resolving disputes over Iran's nuclear programme and preventing regional conflicts from reigniting.

Key Takeaways

What Happened?

- U.S. and Iran signed an **MoU on June 15** after:
 - 40 days of war.
 - More than 60 days of negotiations.
- Objective:
 - End hostilities.
 - Begin negotiations for a final settlement.

Main Provisions of the MoU

- Ceasefire on all fronts.
- Respect for each other's sovereignty.
- Non-interference in internal affairs.
- U.S. lifts naval blockade on Iranian ports.
- Iran removes restrictions on the Strait of Hormuz.
- Iran to clear obstacles such as mines within 30 days.

Economic Concessions

- Iranian frozen assets may be gradually released.
- Iran reportedly seeks access to about **\$24 billion** in frozen funds.
- U.S. supports a future reconstruction and redevelopment package worth **\$300 billion**.
- Sanctions waivers for:
 - Crude oil exports.
 - Petroleum products.
 - Banking and insurance services.
 - Shipping and transportation.

Iran's Commitments

- Reaffirms that it will not develop nuclear weapons.
- Agrees to dilute (downblend) enriched uranium under IAEA supervision.
- Will not expand its nuclear programme during negotiations.

U.S. Commitments

- No additional sanctions.
- No further troop deployment.
- Allows certain Iranian oil exports.
- Supports diplomatic resolution of the nuclear issue.

Why Israel Opposes the Deal

- Israel wanted:
 - Regime change in Iran.
 - Destruction of Iran's nuclear programme.
 - Weakening of Iranian regional influence.
- The deal instead:
 - Keeps the current Iranian government intact.
 - Provides economic relief to Iran.
 - Leaves many nuclear issues unresolved.

Why Lebanon Matters



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- Israeli troops remain in Southern Lebanon.
- Hezbollah continues attacks on Israeli forces.
- Israel continues military operations in Lebanon.
- Escalation in Lebanon could undermine the U.S.-Iran peace process.

Key Issues Yet to be Resolved

1. Highly Enriched Uranium (HEU)

- Iran possesses uranium enriched up to 60%.
- Final deal must determine:
 - How it will be diluted.
 - Where the process will occur.
 - IAEA verification mechanisms.

2. Uranium Enrichment Rights

- Iran wants enrichment for civilian nuclear energy.
- U.S. seeks strict limitations.
- Major sticking point in future negotiations.

3. Regional Security

- Role of Hezbollah.
- Lebanon situation.
- Iran's regional influence and alliances.

Why the Deal Matters

- Prevents immediate escalation of conflict.
- Helps stabilise global energy markets.
- Keeps the Strait of Hormuz operational.
- Opens a diplomatic pathway for addressing the Iranian nuclear issue.

Important Terms & Meanings

Term	Meaning
Frozen Assets	Funds belonging to a country that are blocked from access due to sanctions
Uranium Enrichment	Process of increasing the concentration of Uranium-235 for nuclear fuel or weapons
Highly Enriched Uranium (HEU)	Uranium enriched to high purity levels, potentially usable in nuclear weapons
Downblending	Diluting enriched uranium to lower enrichment levels
IAEA (International Atomic Energy Agency)	UN agency responsible for monitoring peaceful use of nuclear technology



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Hezbollah	Shia political and militant organisation based in Lebanon and allied with Iran
Regime Change	Replacement of an existing government with another political system or leadership
Detente	Relaxation of tensions between rival states through diplomacy
Reconstruction Financing	Economic assistance provided for rebuilding infrastructure and the economy after conflict
Naval Blockade	Restriction imposed by naval forces to prevent access to ports or maritime routes
Non-State Actor	Armed or political group that operates independently of a sovereign state (e.g., Hezbollah, Hamas)

[Why have India's statistical databases been upgraded?: TH FAQ](#)

Governance

Easy Explanation

India has updated several important economic indicators to make them more accurate and reflect today's economy. These include **GDP, industrial production, inflation indices (CPI and WPI), and a new Producer Price Index (PPI)**.

Many of these indicators were still based on data from **2011-12**, even though India's economy and people's spending habits have changed significantly. The updates include changing the base year, adding new products and services (like online streaming and CNG), removing outdated items (like DVDs and cassette players), and using better statistical methods.

A major improvement is the adoption of the **double deflator method** for calculating real GDP in agriculture and manufacturing, which gives a more accurate estimate of economic growth by separately adjusting input and output prices.

The new **Producer Price Index (PPI)** has also been introduced to better measure prices received and paid by producers. It is expected to gradually replace the Wholesale Price Index (WPI) over the next five years.

These changes will improve policymaking, inflation measurement, GDP estimation, and monetary policy decisions.

Key Takeaways

Why were these updates needed?

- Many economic indicators were using **2011-12 as the base year**.
- India's economy, industries and consumption patterns have changed significantly.
- Older indices still included outdated products like DVDs and cassette players.
- New goods and services were missing from the calculations.

Major Indicators Updated

- Gross Domestic Product (GDP)
- Gross Value Added (GVA)



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- Index of Industrial Production (IIP)
- Consumer Price Index (CPI)
- Wholesale Price Index (WPI)
- Introduction of Producer Price Index (PPI)

Changes in GDP & National Accounts

- Base year updated to **2022-23**.
- Uses newer data sources such as:
 - GST data
 - Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS)
- Introduced the **Double Deflator Method** for agriculture and manufacturing.
- Better allocation of output for companies operating across multiple sectors.

Changes in Industrial Production (IIP)

- Base year changed to **2022-23**.
- Coverage expanded to include:
 - Gas supply
 - Water supply
 - Sewerage
 - Waste management
- Product basket increased:
 - From **839** → **1,042 products**.

Changes in Consumer Price Index (CPI)

- Base year updated to **2024**.
- Based on the latest Household Consumption Expenditure Survey (2023-24).
- Number of items increased:
 - **299** → **358**.
- Newly added:
 - Rural house rent
 - Online streaming services
 - CNG
 - PNG
- Removed obsolete items:
 - DVD players
 - Cassette players
 - Tape recorders
 - VCRs

Changes in Wholesale Price Index (WPI)

- Base year updated to **2022-23**.
- Items increased:
 - **697** → **957**.
- Better classification of commodities such as crude petroleum and natural gas.

Introduction of Producer Price Index (PPI)

- Newly introduced index.
- Measures:
 - Prices producers pay for inputs.
 - Prices producers receive for outputs.
- Excludes transport costs and indirect taxes.
- Covers both **goods and services**.
- Will gradually replace WPI over the next five years.

Why are these updates important?



| Click to Connect Now.



- More accurate GDP estimation.
- Better inflation measurement.
- Improved monetary policy decisions by RBI.
- Better understanding of industrial performance.
- More reliable data for government policy and economic planning.

Important Terms & Meanings

Term	Meaning
Gross Domestic Product (GDP)	Total value of all final goods and services produced within a country during a year.
Gross Value Added (GVA)	Value created by different sectors after subtracting the cost of inputs used in production.
Base Year	The reference year against which economic indicators are compared.
National Accounts	Official statistics measuring a country's production, income and expenditure.
Index of Industrial Production (IIP)	Monthly indicator measuring growth in industrial output.
Consumer Price Index (CPI)	Measures changes in retail prices paid by consumers (inflation).
Wholesale Price Index (WPI)	Measures changes in prices of goods at the wholesale level.
Producer Price Index (PPI)	Measures prices received by producers and prices paid for production inputs.
Double Deflator Method	A GDP estimation method that separately adjusts input prices and output prices, giving a more accurate measure of real growth.
Real GDP	GDP adjusted for inflation, showing actual economic growth.
Nominal GDP	GDP measured at current market prices without adjusting for inflation.
Goods and Services Tax (GST) Data	Tax data used to improve estimates of production and economic activity.





Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS)	National survey that collects data on employment and labour force participation in India.
Household Consumption Expenditure Survey (HCES)	Survey that measures household spending patterns and is used to update CPI weights.
Monetary Policy Committee (MPC)	RBI committee that decides policy interest rates based on inflation and growth.
Dearness Allowance (DA)	Cost-of-living allowance paid to serving government employees to offset inflation.
Dearness Relief (DR)	Inflation-linked allowance paid to pensioners.

[A platform for the globalised elite: TH Profiles](#)

International Relations

Easy Explanation

The **G7 (Group of Seven)** is an informal grouping of the world's major advanced economies. It was originally created in the 1970s to coordinate responses to economic crises but has gradually evolved into a forum that also discusses major geopolitical and global challenges.

The idea emerged after economic instability caused by the **1973 Oil Shock**, when leading industrialised nations realised they needed closer coordination. The first summit was held in **France in 1975** with six countries, and Canada joined in 1976, creating the G7.

Over time, the G7 expanded its agenda beyond economics. It began coordinating responses to international conflicts, sanctions, climate change, pandemics, energy security, supply chains, and emerging technologies like Artificial Intelligence.

Russia joined the group in **1998**, making it the **G8**, but was suspended in **2014** after annexing Crimea, returning the group to the G7.

Although India is not a G7 member, it is regularly invited as a guest because of its growing economic and strategic importance. At the recent G7 Summit, leaders discussed issues including the Ukraine war, the U.S.-Iran agreement, Artificial Intelligence, energy security, and global debt.

Key Takeaways

What is the G7?

- Informal grouping of **seven advanced economies**.
- Members:
 - Canada
 - France
 - Germany
 - Italy
 - Japan
 - United Kingdom
 - United States
- The **European Union** also participates regularly.



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Why was the G7 created?

- Formed after:
 - Global economic instability.
 - 1973 Oil Shock.
- Objective:
 - Coordinate economic policies among major industrialised nations.
 - Promote global financial stability.

Evolution of the G7

- **1975:** Began as the **Group of Six (G6)**.
- **1976:** Canada joined → G7.
- **1998:** Russia joined → G8.
- **2014:** Russia suspended after annexing Crimea → G7 restored.

Expansion Beyond Economics

The G7 now discusses:

- Global security.
- Climate change.
- Pandemic preparedness.
- Energy security.
- Supply chain resilience.
- Critical minerals.
- Artificial Intelligence.
- Global debt.

Role During International Crises

The G7 coordinated responses to:

- Soviet invasion of Afghanistan.
- Iran-Iraq War.
- Falklands War.
- Lebanon conflict.
- Iraq's invasion of Kuwait (1990).
- Russia-Ukraine conflict.

Relationship with Developing Countries

The G7 increasingly invites important non-member countries, including:

- India
- Brazil
- South Africa
- Egypt
- South Korea
- UAE
- Ukraine

Importance for India

India participates as a guest because of:

- Growing economic importance.
- Strategic role in the Indo-Pacific.
- Supply chain diversification.



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- Energy security.
- Leadership among developing countries.

Issues Discussed at the Recent G7 Summit

- Ukraine conflict.
- U.S.-Iran agreement.
- Artificial Intelligence.
- Global economic imbalances.
- Debt challenges in developing countries.
- Energy security.
- Supply chain disruptions.

Significance of the G7 Today

- Acts as a platform for coordination among advanced economies.
- Helps address global economic and geopolitical challenges.
- Complements, but does not replace, institutions like the United Nations.

Important Terms & Meanings

Term	Meaning
G7 (Group of Seven)	Informal grouping of seven major advanced economies that coordinate on global economic and strategic issues.
G8	Former G7 expanded to include Russia (1998–2014).
Global Economic Governance (GEG)	International coordination of economic policies, institutions, and financial systems.
Bretton Woods System	International financial system established in 1944 that created institutions like the IMF and World Bank.
Oil Shock (1973)	Global economic crisis caused by sharp increases in oil prices following the Arab-Israeli conflict.
New International Economic Order (NIEO)	Proposal by developing countries during the 1970s seeking fairer global economic relations.
Non-Aligned Movement (NAM)	Group of countries that remained independent of Cold War military blocs.
Group of 77 (G77)	Coalition of developing countries promoting their collective economic interests in the United Nations.





Economic Sanctions

Financial or trade restrictions imposed to influence another country's behaviour.

Mass messaging and more: TH Profiles

Science Tech

Easy Explanation

Telegram is one of the world's largest messaging platforms and is especially popular for its **large public channels, massive file-sharing capacity, and strong emphasis on privacy and free speech**. These features have made it useful for activists, journalists, and communities, but they have also been misused for activities like piracy, misinformation, and exam paper leaks.

Recently, India temporarily banned Telegram after concerns that its editing feature was being used to circulate leaked examination papers with manipulated timestamps. Telegram challenged the ban in court but failed to get immediate relief.

Unlike companies such as Meta (WhatsApp) and Google, Telegram is almost entirely focused on messaging and has a very small presence in India despite having millions of users. Its founder, **Pavel Durov**, has consistently taken a strong stand against government restrictions, arguing that excessive regulation threatens free speech.

The article highlights the broader debate between **digital freedom and platform accountability**. While Telegram's privacy-first approach protects users' rights, governments argue that platforms must also take responsibility for preventing misuse and illegal activities.

Key Takeaways

What is Telegram?

- Cloud-based messaging platform.
- Known for:
 - Large public channels.
 - Massive file-sharing limits.
 - Privacy-focused approach.
 - Support for freedom of expression.

Who founded Telegram?

- Founded by **Pavel Durov**.
- Earlier founded **VKontakte**, a Russian social media platform.
- Left Russia after refusing government demands to share user data.

Why is Telegram popular?

- Public channels with unlimited subscribers.
- Fast dissemination of information.
- Large file-sharing capacity.
- Popular among:
 - Journalists.
 - Activists.
 - Political groups.
 - News organisations.

Why was Telegram banned in India?

- National Testing Agency (NTA) raised concerns.
- Allegation:
 - Telegram's editing features were used to circulate leaked examination papers.
 - Edited files could appear older than they actually were, creating confusion.



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- Telegram challenged the ban in court but did not succeed.

Telegram's Business Model

- Primarily a messaging platform.
- Unlike Meta or Google, it has very limited business diversification.
- Has a relatively small workforce despite a very large user base.

Telegram vs Other Tech Companies

Telegram

- Strong emphasis on privacy.
- Frequently challenges government restrictions.
- Less willing to compromise on content moderation.

Meta/Google

- Larger and more diversified businesses.
- Often negotiate with governments to protect broader commercial interests.

Challenges Faced by Telegram

- Copyright infringement cases.
- Alleged misuse for illegal content.
- Concerns regarding moderation of harmful material.
- Legal disputes in multiple countries.

Broader Issue

The case highlights the balance between:

- Freedom of speech and privacy.
- Government regulation.
- Platform responsibility for preventing misuse.

Important Terms & Meanings

Term	Meaning
Telegram	Cloud-based messaging platform known for privacy, large channels, and file sharing.
Pavel Durov	Founder of Telegram and VKontakte, known for advocating digital privacy and free speech.
VKontakte (VK)	Popular Russian social networking platform founded by Pavel Durov.
Euromaidan	Mass protests in Ukraine (2013–14) demanding closer ties with Europe and political reforms.





Channel (Telegram)	One-way broadcast feature allowing messages to reach unlimited subscribers- which has been banned creating headache for platforms like Sitok IAS. 😞
End-to-End Encryption	Security method where only the sender and receiver can read messages (available in Telegram's Secret Chats).
Copyright Infringement	Unauthorised use or distribution of copyrighted material.
National Testing Agency (NTA)	Indian government agency responsible for conducting major entrance examinations.

[What a 'super' El Niño might mean for India's monsoon: TH Science](#)

Science

Easy Explanation

The U.S. NOAA has officially confirmed the development of an El Niño, and there is about a **63% chance that it could become a very strong ("super") El Niño** later this year.

El Niño is a climate phenomenon in which the **central and eastern Pacific Ocean becomes warmer than normal**. This weakens the winds that usually help bring monsoon rainfall to India, often resulting in **below-normal rainfall, especially during the later part of the monsoon season (July–September)**.

However, **El Niño does not always mean drought in India**. In some years, another climate phenomenon called the **Indian Ocean Dipole (IOD)** offsets its impact. For example, during the powerful **1997-98 El Niño**, India actually received above-normal monsoon rainfall because of a strong positive IOD.

This year, IMD believes the **Indian Ocean Dipole is unlikely to become strong enough** to offset El Niño's drying effect. Therefore, there is a higher risk of a weaker monsoon.

Besides affecting rainfall, El Niño also influences weather across the world by increasing droughts, heatwaves, coral bleaching, and changing cyclone patterns.

Key Takeaways

What is El Niño?

- Periodic warming of the **central and eastern equatorial Pacific Ocean**.
- Weakens the trade winds.
- Often reduces the strength of the Indian summer monsoon.

How is El Niño Classified?

Category	Sea Surface Temperature Anomaly
Weak	0.5°C – 1°C



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Moderate 1°C – 1.5°C

Strong 1.5°C – 2°C

Very Strong (Super El Niño) Above 2°C

Current Situation (2026)

- NOAA has officially declared an El Niño.
- Around **63% probability** of becoming a **very strong El Niño**.
- India's rainfall (up to June 16) is about **35% below normal**.

Does Every Strong El Niño Cause Drought in India?

No.

- Since 1950:
 - Around **15 El Niño years** had below-normal monsoon.
 - Around **10 years** experienced drought (rainfall below 90% of long-period average).
- Therefore, El Niño **increases the risk**, but does not guarantee drought.

Role of the Indian Ocean Dipole (IOD)

- Positive IOD can offset El Niño's impact.
- Example:
 - **1997-98 Super El Niño**
 - India still received **about 2% above-normal rainfall** because of a strong positive IOD.
- IMD expects a **weak IOD in 2026**, making El Niño's impact stronger.

Historical Super El Niño Events

- 1972-73
- 1982-83
- 1997-98
- 2015-16

Major Global Impacts of El Niño

- Droughts.
- Heatwaves.
- Bushfires.
- Coral bleaching.
- Food shortages.
- Changes in cyclone activity.

Impact on Tropical Cyclones

Atlantic Ocean

- Fewer hurricanes due to stronger vertical wind shear.

Pacific Ocean

- Higher likelihood of stronger hurricanes and super typhoons.



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Why This Matters for India

- Influences:
 - Agriculture.
 - Food production.
 - Water availability.
 - Inflation.
 - Government planning.
- IMD closely monitors EL Niño and the Indian Ocean Dipole while forecasting the monsoon.

Important Terms & Meanings

Term	Meaning
El Niño	Periodic warming of the central and eastern Pacific Ocean that affects global weather patterns.
Super El Niño	An exceptionally strong El Niño where sea surface temperatures rise more than 2°C above normal.
NOAA (National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration)	U.S. agency responsible for weather, oceans and climate monitoring.
India Meteorological Department (IMD)	India's national weather forecasting agency.
Indian Ocean Dipole (IOD)	Climate pattern involving temperature differences between the western and eastern Indian Ocean that can strengthen or weaken the Indian monsoon.
Positive Indian Ocean Dipole	Condition where the western Indian Ocean is warmer than the eastern part, often improving India's monsoon.
Long Period Average (LPA)	Average rainfall calculated over a long historical period, used as the benchmark for normal monsoon rainfall.
Monsoon Deficit	Seasonal rainfall below 90% of the Long Period Average .
Vertical Wind Shear	Change in wind speed or direction with height, which can weaken or strengthen tropical cyclones.





Coral Bleaching

Loss of colour in corals caused by stress, usually due to unusually warm ocean temperatures.

22nd June 2026

[Guardrails in AI growth to protect developing nations-The Indian Express Explained Page](#)

Science and technology

Easy Explanation

As Artificial Intelligence (AI) becomes more powerful, countries are trying to create common global rules for its development and use. The UN has set up a **Global Dialogue on AI** and an **Independent International Scientific Panel on AI** to support discussions and scientific assessments.

Different regulations in different countries could slow innovation and create inequalities. Developing countries with weak regulatory capacity may become dependent on technologically advanced nations, leading to "digital colonisation". Therefore, globally agreed minimum standards are needed to ensure that AI benefits all countries.

There are also concerns that AI governance could resemble the nuclear non-proliferation system, where only a few countries control advanced technologies. Such concentration of power could hurt developing nations.

One important outcome of the New Delhi AI Impact Summit was the creation of the **Trusted AI Commons**, an open platform containing tools, datasets and benchmarks for safe and responsible AI development. India will initially host this platform.

Key Takeaways

Need for global AI governance

- UN has created institutions for AI discussions and scientific assessments.
- Common regulations can prevent fragmented AI development.

Protection of developing countries

- Weak regulatory capacity may make countries dependent on AI powers.
- Global standards can ensure equitable access to AI benefits.

Concerns over AI monopolies

- Restricting AI development to a few countries may create technological dominance.
- AI governance should avoid becoming a "nuclear non-proliferation" system.

Trusted AI Commons

- Announced at the New Delhi AI Impact Summit.
- India will initially host it.
- Provides open-access tools and datasets for responsible AI.

Important Terms

Term

Meaning



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Global Dialogue on AI	UN platform for international discussions on AI governance.
Data Sovereignty	Control of data generated within a country's borders.
Digital Colonisation	Dependence of countries on foreign digital technologies and infrastructure.
Trusted AI Commons	Open repository of AI tools, datasets and benchmarks for safe AI development.
Responsible AI	AI systems developed and used in a safe, ethical and transparent manner.

[Three distinct strategic roles of the three ships inducted into Navy-The Indian Express Explained Page](#)

Science and technology

Easy Explanation

The Indian Navy inducted three indigenously built ships—**INS Dunagiri**, **INS Sanshodhak** and **INS Agray**—which together strengthen India's maritime capabilities in different ways. Built by Garden Reach Shipbuilders & Engineers (GRSE), these vessels have over 75% indigenous content.

INS Dunagiri is a stealth-guided missile frigate under Project 17A. Equipped with BrahMos missiles, advanced radars and anti-submarine weapons, it is designed for blue-water operations and can tackle threats far from India's shores.

INS Sanshodhak is a Survey Vessel-Large (SVL) that maps the seabed, ocean depths and navigational routes. Such data is essential for safe movement of warships and submarines, port management and ocean research.

INS Agray belongs to the Arnala-class and is meant for anti-submarine warfare in shallow coastal waters. It helps protect ports, naval bases and sea approaches where detecting submarines is more challenging.

The simultaneous commissioning of these vessels demonstrates India's growing indigenous shipbuilding capability and a layered maritime strategy involving deep-sea operations, seabed awareness and coastal defence.

Key Takeaways

INS Dunagiri

- Stealth-guided missile frigate under Project 17A.
- Equipped with BrahMos missiles and advanced sensors.
- Designed for blue-water operations.

INS Sanshodhak

- Survey Vessel-Large (SVL).
- Maps seabed features and oceanographic data.
- Supports naval operations and civilian maritime activities.

INS Agray

- Arnala-class Anti-Submarine Warfare Shallow Water Craft.
- Protects coastal waters and naval installations.



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- Carries torpedoes and anti-submarine rockets.

Strategic significance

- Enhances India's layered maritime security architecture.
- Reflects increasing self-reliance in naval shipbuilding.
- More than 75% indigenous content with participation of over 200 MSMEs.

Important Terms

Term	Meaning
Project 17A	Programme for building next-generation stealth-guided missile frigates in India.
Blue-Water Navy	A navy capable of operating across deep oceans far from home shores.
Survey Vessel-Large (SVL)	Ship used for hydrographic and oceanographic surveys.
Anti-Submarine Warfare (ASW)	Operations aimed at detecting and destroying enemy submarines.
BrahMos Missile	Indo-Russian supersonic cruise missile used against surface targets.

[Scrutiny and security:How China conducts its biggest college entrance exam-The Indian Express Explained Page](#)

Sociology

Easy Explanation

China's **Gaokao (National College Entrance Examination)** is the country's most important examination and is taken by more than 1.29 crore students every year. Conducted since 1952, it serves as the principal gateway to higher education and is considered a highly competitive and centrally regulated process.

The examination consists of compulsory subjects such as **Chinese (Mandarin), Mathematics and English**, along with optional science and social science subjects. The duration varies across provinces and generally lasts three to four days. To maintain fairness, question papers are prepared under strict security, with teachers isolated from the outside world and denied internet access during the process.

China employs extensive anti-cheating measures. Students undergo biometric verification and multiple security checks to detect electronic devices. Examination centres are monitored using surveillance cameras and AI-powered systems capable of identifying suspicious behaviour. Grading is also conducted under highly secure conditions using isolated computer networks.

The Gaokao has played a major role in expanding higher education in China, especially after reforms initiated by Deng Xiaoping. However, the system has been criticised for reinforcing regional and socio-economic inequalities, since top universities are concentrated in major cities and urban students often enjoy better educational resources. In recent years, China has increasingly prioritised STEM education to support its technological and industrial ambitions.

Key Takeaways



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Gaokao examination

- China's national college entrance examination.
- Conducted since 1952.
- Over 1.29 crore students appeared in 2026.

Stringent security measures

- Teachers preparing papers are isolated.
- Biometric verification and intelligent security gates are used.
- AI-enabled surveillance systems monitor examination halls.

Evaluation process

- Grading is conducted in secure facilities.
- Computers are connected to exclusive networks.
- Electronic devices are prohibited for evaluators.

Expansion of higher education

- Reforms under Deng Xiaoping significantly increased college enrolment.
- Enrolment among 18-24 year-olds rose from 1% in 1976 to 57% in 2021.

Challenges and criticism

- Regional and urban-rural inequalities persist.
- Elite universities are concentrated in major cities.
- Greater emphasis is being placed on STEM subjects and high-technology sectors.

Important Terms

Term	Meaning
Gaokao	China's national college entrance examination.
Biometric Verification	Identification using unique biological characteristics to prevent impersonation.
STEM	Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics disciplines.
Household Registration System (Hukou)	System classifying citizens as rural or urban residents, influencing access to opportunities.
New Quality Productive Forces	China's strategy for promoting high-technology and innovation-driven economic growth.

[HDFC Bank bond issue:Signals it sends about banking sector-The Indian Express Explained Page](#)



Easy Explanation

HDFC Bank's successful **\$750 million (around ₹7,000 crore) overseas bond issue** has sent a positive signal about the strength and credibility of India's banking sector. The issue attracted strong global investor interest and may encourage other banks such as SBI and Bank of Baroda to tap international markets for funds.

The bonds are dollar-denominated senior unsecured notes with a five-year maturity and a coupon rate of **5.067%**. The proceeds will support overseas operations, lending growth, liquidity management and business expansion. Investment-grade ratings from Moody's and S&P indicate confidence in HDFC Bank's financial health.

The successful fundraising demonstrates that international investors continue to view Indian banks as fundamentally strong institutions. As credit demand rises in India, access to global debt markets can provide banks with diversified and relatively cheaper sources of funding instead of depending solely on domestic deposits and borrowings.

The bonds will be listed on IFSC exchanges, supporting India's efforts to strengthen the International Financial Services Centre ecosystem and attract greater cross-border financial transactions. This could deepen India's integration with global capital markets and strengthen the country's financial architecture.

Key Takeaways

Successful overseas fundraising

- HDFC Bank raised \$750 million through overseas bonds.
- Reflects strong global investor confidence in Indian banks.

Diversification of funding sources

- Reduces dependence on domestic funding.
- Helps meet growing credit demand.

Competitive pricing

- Coupon rate fixed at 5.067%.
- Received investment-grade ratings from Moody's and S&P.

Boost to IFSC ecosystem

- Bonds to be listed on IFSC exchanges.
- Supports India's ambition to become an international financial hub.

Positive signal for banking sector

- May encourage other Indian banks to raise funds abroad.
- Highlights the resilience and credibility of India's banking system.

Important Terms

Term	Meaning
Bond	Debt instrument through which investors lend money to an issuer.
Coupon Rate	Annual interest paid on a bond.



**Senior Unsecured Notes**

Bonds having repayment priority but without collateral backing.

Investment Grade Rating

Credit rating indicating low default risk.

IFSC (International Financial Services Centre) Financial hub designed to facilitate international financial transactions.

[In time of distrust, Constitution's promise of fraternity matters more than ever-The Indian Express Ideas Page](#)

Polity**Easy Explanation**

The article argues that while **justice, liberty and equality** have received significant attention in constitutional discourse, the value of **fraternity** has largely been neglected. Yet, fraternity is essential because it governs relationships among citizens and creates the sense of common belonging necessary for a healthy democracy.

Dr. B.R. Ambedkar repeatedly emphasised that liberty and equality could not survive without fraternity. In his final Constituent Assembly speech, he warned that without fraternity, equality and liberty would be only "coats of paint". Article 51A(e) of the Constitution also imposes a Fundamental Duty on citizens to promote harmony and the spirit of common brotherhood.

Unlike liberty and equality, fraternity cannot be directly enforced by courts. However, constitutional provisions and criminal laws seek to prevent its destruction by prohibiting discrimination and communal hatred. The article argues that uneven enforcement and growing social distrust have weakened fraternity, affecting not only social cohesion but also economic development and national confidence.

According to the author, incidents of communal violence, targeted hatred and social polarisation are not merely law-and-order failures but failures of fraternity. A stable and prosperous society requires mutual trust among citizens, making fraternity indispensable for achieving India's aspirations of becoming a developed nation by 2047.

Key Takeaways**Fraternity in the Constitution**

- Mentioned alongside justice, liberty and equality in the Preamble.
- Governs relations among citizens rather than between citizens and the State.

Ambedkar's vision

- Fraternity is essential for sustaining liberty and equality.
- Nationhood is an achievement built upon social cohesion.

Constitutional safeguards

- Article 51A(e) makes promotion of harmony a Fundamental Duty.
- Various legal provisions seek to prevent communal hatred and discrimination.

Importance of trust

- Social trust forms the foundation of democracy and economic development.
- Polarisation and hostility weaken civic confidence.

Contemporary relevance

- Fraternity failures manifest through communal tensions and social divisions.



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- Social harmony is vital for achieving long-term national development goals.

Important Terms

Term	Meaning
Fraternity	Spirit of brotherhood and mutual respect among citizens.
Preamble	Introductory statement of the Constitution outlining its ideals and objectives.
Article 51A(e)	Fundamental Duty requiring citizens to promote harmony and brotherhood.
Fundamental Duties	Moral obligations of citizens under Part IVA of the Constitution.
Constituent Assembly	Body that drafted the Constitution of India.

[When doctors can move, healthcare benefits-The Indian Express Ideas Page](#)

Sociology

Easy Explanation

In a major healthcare reform, Andhra Pradesh has decided that doctors registered with any State or Union Territory medical council in India can practise in the State without obtaining separate registration or a No Objection Certificate (NOC) from their home State. This removes a long-standing bureaucratic hurdle that discouraged doctors, especially young graduates and specialists, from moving across States.

Traditionally, doctors relocating to another State had to obtain an NOC and undergo re-registration, a process involving delays, paperwork and additional costs. Andhra Pradesh's decision aims to improve the availability of doctors, address specialist shortages and attract medical talent from across the country.

The reform is also significant from the perspective of **professional mobility and national integration**. It aligns with the National Medical Commission's vision of creating a seamless national registration system under the **"One Nation, One Registration"** initiative launched in 2024. Although implementation at the national level has been slow, Andhra Pradesh has demonstrated that States can independently adopt reforms that facilitate easier movement of professionals and improve healthcare delivery.

Key Takeaways

Andhra Pradesh's Reform

- Doctors registered in any State or UT can practise in Andhra Pradesh.
- Separate Andhra Pradesh Medical Council registration is no longer required.
- No Objection Certificate (NOC) requirement has been abolished.

Benefits to Healthcare

- Helps address shortages of specialists.
- Attracts medical talent from across India.
- Improves healthcare delivery and access.



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Problems with Previous System

- Lengthy paperwork and administrative delays.
- Re-registration fees ranging from ₹5,000–₹10,000.
- NOC process could take weeks.
- Discouraged inter-state mobility of doctors.

Broader Significance

- Promotes ease of living and ease of doing business.
- Strengthens professional mobility.
- Supports the spirit of constitutional unity and a common market for skilled professionals.

National Medical Commission Initiative

- "One Nation, One Registration" launched in August 2024.
- Aims to create a seamless national registration framework.
- Progress has been slow due to pending verifications by State medical councils.

Challenges in Other States

- Some States impose restrictions to retain doctors.
- Bihar recently mandated three years of continuous government service before issuing NOCs.

Important Terms

Term	Meaning
NOC (No Objection Certificate)	Approval required from the home State medical council before shifting registration
State Medical Council	Regulatory body overseeing registration and practice of doctors within a State
National Medical Commission (NMC)	Apex regulatory body for medical education and practice in India
One Nation, One Registration	National platform for seamless registration and mobility of doctors
Professional Mobility	Ability of professionals to move and work across States without barriers
Doctor-Population Ratio	Number of people served per doctor

[Road to energy security passes through our farms-The Indian Express Ideas Page](#)

Economy

Easy Explanation



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The recent West Asia crisis has exposed India's dependence on imported fossil fuels and highlighted the need for greater energy security. At the same time, climate change and uncertain weather threaten farm incomes. The article suggests transforming farmers from **Annadata (food providers)** into **Urjadata (energy providers)** through **Agriphotovoltaics (Agri-PV)**.

Agri-PV involves installing solar panels at a height above agricultural fields so that crops can still be grown underneath while electricity is generated. Thus, farmers earn from both crops and solar power. Solar energy acts as a "third crop", providing stable income even during crop failures.

Agri-PV can also reduce India's huge power subsidy burden, improve the financial health of DISCOMs and strengthen energy security. With appropriate policy support, subsidies and solar cooperatives, it has the potential to transform Indian agriculture and become a model for other developing countries.

Key Takeaways

India's Energy Challenge

- Heavy dependence on imported fossil fuels.
- West Asia tensions expose vulnerabilities in energy security.
- Climate change threatens agricultural incomes.

Agriphotovoltaics (Agri-PV)

- Combines solar power generation with crop cultivation.
- Solar panels are mounted above fields, allowing farming underneath.
- Enables dual use of land.

Solar as a Third Crop

- Provides stable and predictable income.
- Protects farmers against weather and market risks.
- Increases income diversification.

Benefits

- Higher farm incomes.
- Reduced agricultural power subsidies.
- Improved DISCOM finances.
- Promotion of clean energy and climate resilience.

Role of Government

- Support through PM-KUSUM.
- Attractive feed-in tariffs and capital subsidies.
- Development of solar cooperatives.

Important Terms

Term	Meaning
Agriphotovoltaics (Agri-PV)	Simultaneous cultivation of crops and generation of solar power on the same land
Annadata	Food provider (farmer)





Urjadata	Energy provider
Feed-in Tariff	Fixed price paid for electricity supplied to the grid
DISCOMs	Electricity Distribution Companies
PM-KUSUM Scheme	Scheme promoting solarisation in agriculture
Solar Cooperatives	Farmer groups managing solar power collectively
El Niño	Climate phenomenon associated with lower rainfall and drought conditions

[A home of her own can be a lifeline-The Indian Express Ideas Page](#)

Sociology

Easy Explanation

Domestic violence remains a serious problem in India, and one major reason many women do not leave abusive marriages is the lack of a safe and secure place to live. Returning to parental homes is often discouraged due to social stigma, while shelter homes provide only temporary support. Rental housing is expensive and difficult to access. Therefore, owning a house or land can become a crucial source of security and independence for women.

Research conducted in Kerala showed that women who owned property experienced significantly lower levels of domestic violence. Property ownership gives women an "exit option" and strengthens their bargaining power within the household. It acts as a credible fallback in case of abuse.

Despite legal reforms such as the **Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005** and the **Hindu Succession (Amendment) Act, 2005**, women's ownership of houses and land remains low. According to NFHS-6 (2023-24), only 18.8% of Indian households have women owning a house or land. The article argues that affordable housing, financial support and innovative forms of joint ownership can help protect women and reduce their vulnerability to domestic violence.

Key Takeaways

Property Ownership and Domestic Violence

- Women owning land or houses face lower levels of domestic violence.
- Ownership provides economic security and bargaining power.
- It gives women an "exit option" from abusive marriages.

Findings from Kerala Study

- Domestic violence incidence was 49% among women owning neither land nor house.
- It fell to 18% with land ownership.
- It fell to 10% with house ownership.
- Women owning both land and house experienced only 7% incidence.

Limitations of Existing Support Systems



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- Social stigma discourages women from returning to parental homes.
- Shelter homes provide only temporary refuge.
- Rental housing is costly and difficult to obtain.

Legal Framework

- Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005.
- Hindu Succession (Amendment) Act, 2005 granted daughters coparcenary rights.
- Existing laws are inadequately implemented.

Policy Suggestions

- Construction of affordable studio apartments.
- Housing grants and subsidised loans for women.
- Promotion of joint ownership models.
- Encourage parents to support housing rather than dowry.

Important Terms

Term	Meaning
Domestic Violence (DV)	Physical, emotional, sexual or economic abuse within the household
Credible Threat Point	A fallback option that strengthens bargaining power
Coparcenary Rights	Equal inheritance rights in ancestral property
Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005	Law providing protection and remedies against domestic abuse
Hindu Succession (Amendment) Act, 2005	Granted daughters equal rights in ancestral property
NFHS-6	National Family Health Survey (2023-24)
Co-ownership Agreement	Legal arrangement allowing joint ownership of property
Transfer of Property Act, 1882	Governs transfer and ownership of property
Registration Act, 1908	Provides legal framework for registration of property documents



Are footpaths more than safe spaces?-The Hindu Text and Context

Polity

Easy Explanation

In **Maniyar Iliyaz @ Shaik Riyaz vs P. Ayyappan**, the Supreme Court held that footpaths are not merely spaces meant to protect pedestrians from accidents but are essential public spaces that uphold the fundamental right to walk. According to the Court, wide and uninterrupted footpaths reflect civilisational advancement and should enjoy priority over motor vehicles.

The judgment emphasised that access to common spaces should not be monopolised by motorised transport. Referring to Article 39(b) of the Constitution, the Court observed that resources such as land used for roads must serve the common good of both pedestrians and vehicle users. Well-designed footpaths promote equitable access and improve the quality and beauty of cities.

The Court also highlighted the cultural and historical significance of walking in India. Walking has been associated with social movements, peaceful protests, expression of ideas and collective action. Thus, the right to walk is closely connected with freedoms guaranteed under the Constitution.

Justice P.S. Narasimha criticised the neglect of pedestrian infrastructure by urban authorities and described it as a civilisational problem. He suggested that Parliament should enact a dedicated law and establish a regulatory authority to safeguard the fundamental right to walk, similar to how the Right to Education Act operationalised the right to education.

Key Takeaways

Footpaths are more than accident-prevention spaces

- They have an independent identity and purpose.
- The right to walk has priority over motor vehicle movement.

Equitable access to common spaces

- Footpaths should be available to all citizens.
- Article 39(b) requires resources to serve the common good.

Cultural significance of walking

- Walking has been associated with protest, expression and social movements.
- It is linked with constitutional freedoms.

Responsibility of authorities

- Municipal bodies and panchayats are trustees of public spaces.
- Encroachments and poor planning undermine pedestrian rights.

Need for legislation

- Supreme Court recommended a statutory framework.
- Proposed creation of a regulator for pedestrian rights.

Important Terms

Term

Meaning

Article 39(b)

Directive Principle requiring distribution of material resources to serve the common good.



| Click to Connect Now.



Tragedy of the Commons Degradation of a shared resource because of excessive or competing use.

Article 21 Fundamental right to life and personal liberty, expanded through judicial interpretation.

Article 21A Fundamental right to free and compulsory education for children.

Regulatory Body Institution established to implement and oversee a particular law or right.

[Can police re-open probe without court approval?-The Hindu Text and Context](#)

Polity

Easy Explanation

In **Paliniswamy Veeraraja v. State of Karnataka (2026)**, the Supreme Court held that once the police have filed a chargesheet or closure report, they cannot start a further investigation on their own. They must first obtain permission from the Magistrate. Since no such permission was shown in the case, the Court quashed the FIR and the subsequent chargesheet.

The investigating agency had earlier filed two closure reports, concluding that the matter was essentially civil in nature. Relying on the principles laid down in **State of Haryana v. Bhajan Lal (1992)**, the Supreme Court held that criminal proceedings should not be used for disputes which are purely civil.

Section 173(8) of the CrPC (corresponding to Section 193(9) of the BNSS) allows the police to file a supplementary report if fresh evidence is discovered after submission of the final report. Although the provision does not expressly require prior permission from the court, judicial interpretation has made such permission mandatory.

In **Vinay Tyagi v. Irshad Ali (2013)**, the Supreme Court held that seeking the leave of the court before conducting further investigation is an established legal practice and must be read into Section 173(8). This principle has been reaffirmed in **Rama Chaudhary v. State of Bihar (2024)** and **Robert Lalchungnunga Chongthu v. State of Bihar (2025)**.

Therefore, after filing a chargesheet or closure report, the police may conduct further investigation only with the permission of the court.

Key Takeaways

Further investigation requires judicial approval

- Police cannot reopen investigation on their own after filing the final report.
- Magistrate's permission is necessary.

Section 173(8) CrPC / Section 193(9) BNSS

- Permits supplementary investigation upon discovery of fresh evidence.
- Judicial interpretation has added the requirement of prior leave of the court.

Civil disputes should not be criminalised

- Criminal proceedings may be quashed if the dispute is predominantly civil in nature.
- Based on principles laid down in **Bhajan Lal (1992)**.

Doctrine of contemporanea expositio



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- Long-standing and consistent legal practice forms part of statutory interpretation.
- Recognised in **Vinay Tyagi (2013)**.

Important Terms

Term	Meaning
Closure Report	Report filed by police stating that no criminal case is made out.
Supplementary Report	Additional report filed after discovering fresh evidence.
Section 173(8), CrPC	Provision enabling further investigation after filing the final report.
Section 193(9), BNSS	Corresponding provision under the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita.
Contemporanea Expositio	Principle that long-established practice aids statutory interpretation.
Bhajan Lal Principles	Guidelines laid down by the Supreme Court for quashing criminal proceedings in exceptional cases.

Important Cases

- **State of Haryana v. Bhajan Lal (1992)** – Laid down grounds for quashing FIRs and criminal proceedings.
- **Vinay Tyagi v. Irshad Ali (2013)** – Held that permission of the court is necessary before conducting further investigation.
- **Rama Chaudhary v. State of Bihar (2024)** – Reaffirmed the requirement of obtaining leave of the Magistrate.
- **Robert Lalchungnunga Chongthu v. State of Bihar (2025)** – Reiterated that filing a supplementary chargesheet requires court approval.

[What is Google's Project Nimbus, and why are students protesting against it?-The Hindu Text and Context](#)

Science and technology

Easy Explanation

Project Nimbus is a **\$1.2 billion cloud computing agreement** signed in 2021 between the Israeli government and **Google** and **Amazon Web Services (AWS)**. It provides cloud infrastructure and digital services to Israeli government ministries and agencies.

The project has become controversial because investigations by Israeli media outlets alleged that the Israeli military uses cloud services and AI tools for storing surveillance data collected from Palestinians, which critics fear may support military operations.

Google and Amazon have repeatedly stated that Project Nimbus is meant for civilian government services and is **not related to weapons or classified intelligence**.



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Opposition to the project intensified after the Israel-Hamas conflict of October 2023. Employees of Google and Amazon, along with students and activists, argue that the companies should not provide technology that could contribute to surveillance or violence against Palestinians.

Recently, over 100 students protested during Google CEO **Sundar Pichai's** speech at Stanford University, demanding an end to Project Nimbus.

Microsoft has also faced similar criticism over allegations that its Azure cloud platform was used by the Israeli military. Though Microsoft discontinued certain services and strengthened review mechanisms, employee groups continue to demand a complete severing of ties.

Thus, Project Nimbus has become part of a broader debate over the ethical responsibilities of Big Tech companies during armed conflicts.

Key Takeaways

Project Nimbus

- \$1.2 billion cloud computing contract.
- Partners: Israeli government, Google Cloud and Amazon Web Services.

Reason for Protests

- Allegations that cloud and AI services may aid surveillance and military activities.
- Concerns over civilian casualties in Gaza.

Google and Amazon's Position

- Deny involvement in weapons or intelligence operations.
- Maintain that services are for government functions.

Employee Activism

- Internal protests by Google and Amazon workers.
- Student demonstrations at universities.

Broader Issue

- Raises questions about ethics of AI, cloud computing and corporate responsibility during conflicts.

Important Terms

Term	Meaning
Project Nimbus	Cloud services agreement between Israel, Google and Amazon
Cloud Computing	Delivery of computing resources over the internet
AWS (Amazon Web Services)	Amazon's cloud platform
Google Cloud	Google's cloud computing platform





Microsoft Azure	Microsoft's cloud computing service
Artificial Intelligence (AI)	Technology enabling machines to perform intelligent tasks
Mass Surveillance	Large-scale monitoring and collection of information on people
BDS Movement	Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions movement advocating Palestinian rights
Keffiyeh	Traditional Palestinian scarf symbolizing solidarity
+972 Magazine	Israeli investigative media outlet
Local Call	Hebrew-language investigative news platform

[Biochar offers a way to turn India's farm smoke into 'black gold'-The Hindu Science](#)

Environment

Easy Explanation

Biochar is a carbon-rich material produced by heating agricultural waste such as paddy straw, rice husk, sugarcane bagasse, coconut stalks, or municipal organic waste in a low-oxygen environment (pyrolysis).

India burns over **20 million tonnes of paddy straw annually** in Punjab and Haryana, causing severe air pollution and loss of valuable organic matter. At the same time, many Indian soils suffer from low organic carbon, poor fertility and low water retention.

Biochar offers a solution to both problems. Instead of burning crop residue, farmers can convert it into biochar and apply it to soils. Biochar improves soil fertility, increases water-holding capacity, promotes beneficial microbes and locks carbon in the soil for long periods, making it a **carbon-negative technology**.

Studies show that biochar can increase crop yields by **10-30%** and water-holding capacity by **10-25%**, especially in nutrient-deficient soils.

Biochar can also generate **carbon credits**, providing farmers with an additional source of income. Countries like Kenya, Thailand and Brazil have already adopted biochar-based systems successfully.

Thus, biochar can transform agricultural waste into **"black gold"**, supporting sustainable agriculture, climate mitigation and the circular economy.

Key Takeaways

Biochar

- Produced by heating biomass under low-oxygen conditions.
- Converts agricultural waste into a useful soil amendment.



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Major Benefits

- Improves soil fertility and organic carbon.
- Enhances water retention and microbial activity.
- Increases crop productivity.

Environmental Benefits

- Prevents stubble burning and air pollution.
- Sequesters carbon for long periods.
- Acts as a carbon-negative technology.

Economic Benefits

- Can generate carbon credits.
- Provides additional income to farmers.
- Supports circular economy and waste management.

Indian Context

- Still limited to pilot projects and research.
- Can complement natural farming and carbon farming initiatives.

Important Terms

Term	Meaning
Biochar	Carbon-rich material obtained from biomass under low oxygen
Pyrolysis	Thermal decomposition of biomass in absence of oxygen
Soil Organic Carbon (SOC)	Organic carbon present in soil that improves fertility
Carbon Sequestration	Long-term storage of carbon to reduce atmospheric CO ₂
Carbon Credits	Tradable certificates representing reduced greenhouse gas emissions
Carbon-Negative Technology	Technology that removes more carbon than it emits
Circular Economy	Reuse and recycling of resources to minimize waste
Feedstock	Raw material used to produce biochar



**VM0042 Methodology**

Standard for measuring carbon benefits from agricultural land management

KISAN Kiln

Biochar-producing technology developed by IIT Kharagpur

Important Examples

- **Punjab and Haryana** → Stubble burning problem.
- **Maharashtra (Akola)** → Maize-stalk biochar improved black soils.
- **Kerala** → Coconut leaf-stalk biochar enhanced soil quality.
- **Kenya, Thailand, Brazil** → Successful large-scale biochar adoption.

[Just truths-The Hindu Editorial](#)**Polity****Easy Explanation**

Indian law presumes that a child born during a valid marriage is legitimate. Therefore, the burden of disproving paternity lies on the person denying it. Courts have traditionally been cautious in ordering **DNA tests**, as such tests may stigmatize children and affect family relationships.

In **Goutam Kundu (1993)** and **Banarsi Dass (2005)**, the Supreme Court held that DNA tests should not be ordered routinely and only when a strong prima facie case exists.

Later, in **Nandlal Wasudeo Badwaik (2014)**, the Court ruled that where reliable scientific evidence conflicts with legal presumptions, scientific truth may prevail. In **Dipanwita Roy (2014)**, it held that refusal to undergo a DNA test may lead to an adverse inference.

After the landmark **K.S. Puttaswamy (2017)** judgment recognized privacy, including genetic privacy, as a fundamental right under Article 21, courts adopted a more balanced approach.

In **Aparna Ajinkya Firodia (2023)** and **Ivan Rathinam (2025)**, the Court held that DNA testing should be ordered only when necessary and proportionate.

Most recently, in **CP v. AP (2026)**, the Supreme Court held that a DNA test can be directed if paternity is directly in dispute and the issue cannot be resolved through other available evidence.

Thus, DNA testing is considered a **last resort**, balancing the search for truth with the right to privacy and dignity.

Key Takeaways**Presumption of Legitimacy**

- Indian law protects children from stigma.
- Burden of disproving paternity lies on the person denying it.

DNA Tests Not Routine

- Courts do not order DNA tests automatically.
- A strong case and necessity must exist.

Scientific Truth vs Legal Presumption

- Reliable DNA evidence can override legal presumptions.

Privacy Protection[| Click to Connect Now.](#)



- Genetic information forms part of the right to privacy under Article 21.

Current Position

- DNA tests are a measure of last resort.
- Ordered only when no other evidence can settle the dispute.

Important Terms

Term	Meaning
Paternity	Legal or biological fatherhood
Prima Facie Case	A case with sufficient initial evidence
DNA Test	Scientific method to establish biological relationships
Legitimacy Presumption	Legal assumption that a child born during marriage is legitimate
Adverse Inference	Negative conclusion drawn from refusal to provide evidence
Genetic Privacy	Protection of an individual's DNA and genetic information
Proportionality Test	Balancing individual rights with the need for state action
Article 21	Fundamental Right to Life and Personal Liberty
Bharatiya Sakshya Adhiniyam, 2023	India's new law governing evidence

Important Cases

- **Goutam Kundu v. State of West Bengal (1993)**
 - DNA tests should not be ordered routinely.
- **Shri Banarsi Dass v. Teeku Dutta (2005)**
 - Reinforced the presumption of legitimacy.
- **Nandlal Wasudeo Badwaik v. Lata Nandlal Badwaik (2014)**



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- Scientific evidence may prevail over legal fiction.
- **Dipanwita Roy v. Ronobroto Roy (2014)**
 - Refusal to undergo DNA testing can invite adverse inference.
- **K.S. Puttaswamy v. Union of India (2017)**
 - Recognized privacy, including genetic privacy, as a fundamental right.
- **Aparna Ajinkya Firodia v. Ajinkya Arun Firodia (2023)**
 - DNA tests must satisfy necessity and proportionality.
- **Ivan Rathinam v. State (2025)**
 - Neither privacy nor right to know is absolute.
- **CP v. AP (2026)**
 - DNA testing permissible when no other evidence can resolve paternity.

[End the free rein of junk food advertising in India-The Hindu Editorial](#)

Science

Easy Explanation

India is witnessing a rapid increase in the consumption of **ultra-processed foods (UPFs)** and **HFSS foods (foods high in fat, sugar and sodium)**. Products such as chips, noodles, biscuits, breakfast cereals, chocolates and sweetened beverages are heavily advertised across television, YouTube, Instagram and newspapers. These advertisements often use terms like "baked", "multigrain", "12-grain" or "no maida" to create an impression that the products are healthy, even though they may contain high levels of sugar, fat, salt and various additives.

Children and adolescents are particularly vulnerable because advertisements featuring celebrities, influencers and attractive messages shape their food preferences from an early age. Continuous exposure creates brand loyalty and encourages higher consumption of unhealthy foods.

Scientific evidence has increasingly linked UPFs with obesity, diabetes, hypertension, cardiovascular diseases and other non-communicable diseases. According to experts, awareness campaigns and nutrition education alone cannot solve the problem because people are constantly surrounded by aggressive marketing. Therefore, stronger government intervention through warning labels, restrictions on advertisements aimed at children and better regulation of unhealthy food products has become necessary.

Many countries such as Chile, Mexico and Brazil have already adopted strict regulations. India too had proposed restrictions under the **National Multisectoral Action Plan (2017-22)**, and recent observations by the Supreme Court and the Economic Survey have highlighted the need for stronger action to protect public health.

Key Takeaways

Ultra-Processed Foods and HFSS Foods

- Most packaged foods are highly processed and rich in sugar, fat and salt.
- Advertisements often portray them as healthy.
- UPFs contain additives, flavouring substances and emulsifiers.

Impact of Advertising

- Advertisements strongly influence children's eating habits.
- Celebrity endorsements and influencers increase demand.
- Marketing creates long-term brand loyalty.



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Health Concerns

- Excessive UPF consumption is associated with:
 - Obesity
 - Type-2 diabetes
 - Hypertension
 - Cardiovascular diseases
 - Other non-communicable diseases (NCDs)

Policy Developments in India

- National Multisectoral Action Plan (2017-22) proposed restrictions on HFSS food advertisements.
- Economic Survey 2025-26 called for stronger regulation.
- Supreme Court (2026) supported front-of-pack warning labels.
- MPs have demanded taxation and advertising restrictions on unhealthy foods.

Global Evidence

- The 2025 Lancet Series linked UPFs with obesity and NCDs.
- Chile, Mexico and Brazil have implemented stricter regulations.
- Self-regulation by industries has generally been ineffective.

Need for Stronger Regulation

- Front-of-pack warning labels.
- Restrictions on child-targeted advertisements.
- Taxation of unhealthy foods.
- Stronger legal framework instead of voluntary self-regulation.
- Protection of schools and public spaces from junk food promotion.

Important Terms

Term	Meaning
HFSS Foods	Foods high in fat, sugar and sodium
Ultra-Processed Foods (UPFs)	Industrially processed foods containing additives and preservatives
Front-of-Pack Labelling (FOPL)	Warning labels displayed on food packages
NCDs	Non-Communicable Diseases such as diabetes and cardiovascular diseases
Food Environment	Social and commercial factors affecting dietary choices
Self-Regulation	Voluntary regulation by industries without legal enforcement



Changed reality-The Hindu Editorial

International relations

Easy Explanation

The recent Iran-Israel-U.S. conflict highlighted the importance of maritime trade routes and demonstrated how control over strategic waterways can influence global economics and geopolitics. Despite suffering military damage, Iran was able to exert leverage through the **Strait of Hormuz**, one of the world's most important oil and gas transit routes.

During the crisis, fears of disruption in energy supplies increased oil prices and exposed the dependence of many countries on this narrow passage. Iran has now asserted greater control over transit management in the Strait of Hormuz, making itself an unavoidable stakeholder in maritime trade through the region.

For India, the episode revealed significant vulnerabilities. A large portion of India's crude oil and LPG imports pass through the Strait of Hormuz, and the country lacks sufficient strategic reserves and alternative routes to deal with prolonged disruptions. Limited Indian-flagged shipping capacity further adds to the challenge.

Countries like the UAE are trying to reduce dependence on Hormuz by developing alternative infrastructure and transport routes. India too needs to diversify energy sources, strengthen strategic petroleum reserves, expand maritime capabilities and revive projects such as **Chabahar Port**, which can provide access to Central Asia while reducing excessive reliance on the Hormuz route.

The crisis underlines that energy security and maritime security are increasingly becoming essential components of national security.

Key Takeaways

Importance of Maritime Power

- Economic prosperity and geopolitical influence are closely linked with maritime dominance.
- Countries such as the U.S., China, Japan and the U.K. combined economic strength with strong shipping capabilities.

Strategic Importance of the Strait of Hormuz

- One of the world's most important energy chokepoints.
- A major route for global oil and gas supplies.
- Disruptions can affect the global economy far beyond the conflict zone.

Iran's Strategic Leverage

- Used its position around the Strait of Hormuz to exert pressure.
- Established the Persian Gulf Strait Authority.
- Emerged as a decisive stakeholder in Hormuz transit administration.

India's Vulnerabilities

- Heavy dependence on Hormuz for crude oil and LPG imports.
- Limited Indian-flagged carrier fleet.
- Insufficient long-term storage and contingency planning.
- Supply chains are highly vulnerable to disruptions.

Lessons for India

- Diversify energy supply chains.
- Build stronger strategic petroleum reserves.
- Invest in alternative maritime and land corridors.
- Strengthen maritime capabilities and shipping sector.
- Enhance strategic partnerships.

Chabahar Port Significance



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- Provides access to Afghanistan and Central Asia.
- Offers an alternative route bypassing Pakistan.
- Can reduce dependence on the Strait of Hormuz.

Global Response

- Countries are reassessing Hormuz dependence.
- UAE is pursuing a "Zero Hormuz Dependency" strategy through alternative infrastructure and routes.

Important Terms

Term	Meaning
Strait of Hormuz	Strategic chokepoint connecting the Persian Gulf with the Gulf of Oman
Energy Security	Reliable and uninterrupted availability of energy supplies
Maritime Security	Protection of sea routes, shipping and maritime interests
Indian-flagged Carriers	Ships registered under the Indian flag
Strategic Petroleum Reserves (SPR)	Emergency stockpiles of crude oil maintained by governments
Chokepoint	Narrow route through which a large volume of trade passes
Chabahar Port	Indian-backed port in Iran providing access to Central Asia

23rd June 2026

[ESA for Western Ghats: Why conservation is key-The Indian Express Explained Page](#)

Environment

Easy Explanation

The **Western Ghats**, stretching about **1,500 km** along India's western coast, are among the world's most important biodiversity regions. They support major rivers, influence the monsoon, and sustain agriculture and livelihoods across six states.

To protect this fragile ecosystem, committees headed by **Madhav Gadgil** and later **K. Kasturirangan** recommended declaring ecologically important regions as **Ecologically Sensitive Areas (ESA)**. These areas would face restrictions on activities like mining, quarrying, thermal power plants and highly polluting industries.



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However, the six states—**Gujarat, Maharashtra, Goa, Karnataka, Kerala and Tamil Nadu**—have raised concerns that such restrictions would affect agriculture, plantations, industries and local livelihoods. As a result, the final notification has been delayed for more than a decade.

Despite these disagreements, conservation remains crucial because the Western Ghats are a global biodiversity hotspot and the source of many peninsular rivers. Protecting them ensures water security, climate regulation and sustainable development.

Key Takeaways

Western Ghats and Their Importance

- Stretch over **1,500 km** along India's west coast.
- One of the world's **eight "hottest hotspots" of biodiversity**.
- Home to numerous endemic species.
- Influence the southwest monsoon and receive heavy rainfall.
- Source of rivers such as **Godavari, Krishna, Cauvery and Periyar**.

Gadgil Committee (WGEEP), 2011

- Headed by **Madhav Gadgil**.
- Identified **1,29,037 sq km** as Western Ghats.
- Recommended declaring the entire area as ESA.
- Proposed strong restrictions on developmental activities.

Kasturirangan Committee, 2013

- Headed by former ISRO chief **K. Kasturirangan**.
- Identified **1,64,280 sq km** as the Western Ghats.
- Distinguished between:
 - **Cultural Landscape (60%)** – settlements, plantations and agriculture.
 - **Natural Landscape (40%)** – forests, wildlife habitats and low population density.
- Recommended about **60,000 sq km** as ESA.

Activities Proposed to be Restricted

- Mining and quarrying.
- Red-category polluting industries.
- Thermal power plants.
- Large townships and construction projects.

Current Status

- Draft notification first issued in **2014**.
- Six draft notifications have been issued.
- Latest draft notification issued on **31 July 2024**, valid till **July 2026**.
- Consensus remains elusive, especially with **Kerala and Karnataka**.

Why Protection is Necessary

- Prevents ecological degradation.
- Conserves biodiversity and wildlife habitats.
- Protects water resources and river systems.
- Maintains monsoon patterns and climate stability.
- Promotes sustainable development.

Recent Developments

- In **2022**, the Centre formed an expert committee headed by **Sanjay Kumar** (former Director General of Forests).
- Committee is examining state objections and considering financial incentives for conservation.
- States continue to demand exclusion of additional villages from ESA.



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Important Terms

Term	Meaning
Ecologically Sensitive Area (ESA)	Region where developmental activities are regulated to protect ecology
Western Ghats Ecology Expert Panel (WGEEP)	Madhav Gadgil Committee (2011)
High-Level Working Group (HLWG)	Kasturirangan Committee (2013)
Natural Landscape	Areas with high biodiversity and low human interference
Cultural Landscape	Human-dominated areas such as plantations and settlements
Red Category Industries	Highly polluting industries classified by CPCB
Payment for Ecosystem Services (PES)	Financial incentives for conserving ecosystems and their services
Biodiversity Hotspot	Region with exceptional endemic species and high threat levels
Palakkad Gap	Major break in the Western Ghats mountain chain
Endemic Species	Species found exclusively in a particular region

[Keir Starmer steps down as British PM, leader of Labour Party:What went wrong-The Indian Express Explained Page](#)

International relations

Easy Explanation

Two years after leading the Labour Party to a massive victory in the 2024 UK elections, **Prime Minister Keir Starmer resigned** as both Prime Minister and Labour Party leader. He had promised "Change" and aimed to create a fairer and more secure Britain, but several domestic and economic challenges weakened his position.

His government faced criticism over controversies involving gifts to ministers, unpopular welfare cuts, prison reforms, and spending reductions. Britain's persistent economic problems after Brexit, high inflation, and immigration issues further eroded public support.



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At the same time, **Nigel Farage's Reform UK Party** emerged as a strong alternative, while some Labour supporters shifted to the Green Party. Though Starmer achieved successes in foreign policy and trade, domestic dissatisfaction and growing leadership challenges within Labour ultimately forced his resignation.

Key Takeaways

Labour's Historic Victory in 2024

- Labour won **412 seats**, ending 14 years of Conservative rule.
- Largest Labour victory since **Tony Blair's 1997 election**.
- Starmer campaigned on the slogan **"Change"**.

Early Controversies

- Allegations over acceptance of gifts and free tickets by ministers.
- Public backlash damaged Starmer's image.
- His unfavourability ratings rose sharply.

Unpopular Domestic Policies

- Reduction in winter fuel subsidies.
- Early release of about **1,700 prisoners**.
- Spending cuts worth nearly **\$8 billion**.
- Continuation of the controversial **two-child benefit cap**, later abolished in 2026.

Brexit and Economic Problems

- Britain marked **10 years since Brexit**.
- Brexit-related issues continued:
 - Weak economic growth.
 - Inflation and higher taxes.
 - Immigration concerns.
 - Trade and customs complications.
- Around **57% of Britons** reportedly believe leaving the EU was a mistake.

Rise of Reform UK

- Led by **Nigel Farage**.
- Built support through anti-immigration policies.
- Challenged the traditional Labour-Conservative dominance.
- Performed strongly in local elections.

Growth of the Green Party

- Attracted urban voters.
- Popular among supporters of Palestinian rights.
- Advocated higher taxes on the wealthy.

Foreign Policy Achievements

- Maintained cordial ties with US President Donald Trump.
- Signed trade agreements with:
 - India
 - Australia
 - New Zealand
- Secured favourable tariff arrangements with the US.

Leadership Challenge

- Victory of **Andy Burnham** in a parliamentary by-election strengthened calls for leadership change.





- Growing dissatisfaction within Labour culminated in Starmer's resignation.

Important Terms

Term	Meaning
Brexit	UK's withdrawal from the European Union after the 2016 referendum
Labour Party	Centre-left political party in the UK
Conservative Party	Centre-right political party that ruled Britain from 2010 to 2024
Reform UK	Right-wing populist party led by Nigel Farage
Two-Child Benefit Cap	Policy limiting state support to the first two children in a family
European Union (EU)	Political and economic bloc of European countries
Tariff Deal	Agreement regarding customs duties and trade barriers
Political Duopoly	Dominance of two major political parties
Green Party	Party focused on environmental issues and progressive policies
Nigel Farage	Prominent Brexit supporter and leader of Reform UK

[Right to walk on footpaths:Behind SC order,surge in pedestrian deaths-The Indian Express Explained Page](#)

Polity

Easy Explanation

The Supreme Court has recognised that the **right to walk safely on demarcated footpaths is a fundamental right under Article 21** and must take precedence over the convenience of motor vehicles. The judgment came while deciding a compensation case involving the death of a five-year-old boy who was hit by a tanker while walking to school with his father.

The Court observed that walking is one of humanity's oldest and most basic activities, yet modern cities and roads are increasingly designed for vehicles rather than people. Footpaths are often encroached upon by shops, parked vehicles, construction debris, and other obstacles, forcing pedestrians onto busy roads and exposing them to accidents.



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The Court noted that the **Motor Vehicles Act, 1988**, primarily focuses on regulating vehicles and pays insufficient attention to pedestrians. It described the neglect of footpaths and the dominance of motor transport as a "**civilisational problem**", emphasizing that pedestrians should not be treated as secondary users of public spaces.

The judgment gains significance because pedestrian deaths have risen sharply in India over the last decade. Recognising that mere judicial declarations are not enough, the Supreme Court urged the government to enact a separate law and establish a regulatory authority to ensure the effective implementation of pedestrian rights and hold authorities accountable for maintaining safe and unobstructed footpaths.

Key Takeaways

Supreme Court's Observations

- Walking is the most basic human activity.
- Safe and demarcated footpaths are a **fundamental right**.
- Pedestrian rights should take priority over motor vehicles.
- Lack of proper footpaths represents a "**civilisational problem**".

Rise in Pedestrian Deaths

- Pedestrian deaths increased from **13,894 (2015)** to **36,526 (2024)**.
- Increase of nearly **163%** over ten years.
- Pedestrians account for over **20% of all road fatalities**.
- Pedestrian fatalities are second only to two-wheeler deaths.

Criticism of the Motor Vehicles Act, 1988

- Focuses primarily on vehicles rather than pedestrians.
- Human interests are treated as incidental.
- Existing driving regulations are only guiding principles.
- No explicit recognition of the right to walk on footpaths.

Need for New Legislation

- The Court recommended a separate statutory framework.
- Suggested creation of a regulator for pedestrian rights.
- Such a law would identify responsible authorities and ensure implementation.

Responsibility of Authorities

- Municipal corporations.
- Urban development authorities.
- Municipalities.
- Panchayats.

Significance

- Makes safe footpaths a constitutional obligation.
- Strengthens accountability of road-owning agencies.
- Encourages pedestrian-friendly urban planning.
- Promotes equitable access to public spaces.

Important Terms

Term

Meaning



| Click to Connect Now.

**Article 21**

Fundamental Right to life and personal liberty

Fundamental Right to Walk Right to safe and demarcated footpaths recognized by the Supreme Court**Motor Vehicles Act, 1988** Main legislation regulating vehicles and road transport in India**Pedestrian Rights** Rights ensuring safe movement and access for people walking**Demarcated Footpath** Clearly marked and unobstructed pathway for pedestrians**Vulnerable Road Users** Pedestrians, cyclists, children and others at greater risk on roads**Regulatory Body** Institution responsible for planning, enforcing and protecting a right**Constitutional Duty** Obligation imposed on authorities under constitutional principles**Article 39(b)** Directive Principle providing for distribution of material resources for common good**Tragedy of Commons** Degradation of shared resources due to excessive or improper use[**From Farms to Factories: Trade Pact with UK Opens New Opportunities in India-The Indian Express Ideas Page**](#)

Economy

Easy Explanation

The **India-UK Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA)**, coming into force on **15 July**, is expected to significantly boost India's exports, manufacturing, services, and employment. Under the agreement, the UK will eliminate tariffs on nearly **99% of tariff lines**, giving Indian products easier access to one of the world's premium markets.

The agreement benefits farmers, fishermen, artisans, MSMEs, start-ups, women entrepreneurs, and skilled professionals. Agricultural products such as spices, mango pulp and processed foods will enjoy duty-free access, while sensitive sectors like dairy and cereals have been protected to safeguard domestic farmers.

Indian manufacturers and service providers, especially in IT, healthcare, engineering, finance and education, are expected to gain from improved market access. The agreement also provides easier mobility for professionals and introduces a **Double Contribution Convention**, preventing Indian workers from paying social security contributions in both countries during temporary assignments.

Overall, CETA aims to promote exports, create jobs, attract investments and support India's vision of becoming a **Viksit Bharat by 2047**.



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Key Takeaways

India-UK CETA

- Comes into force on **15 July**.
- Signed in the presence of PM Narendra Modi and UK PM Keir Starmer.
- UK to remove tariffs on about **99% of tariff lines**.
- Covers almost the entire value of bilateral trade.

Benefits for Agriculture

- Duty-free access for:
 - Turmeric
 - Pepper
 - Cardamom
 - Mango pulp
 - Pickles
 - Pulses
- Expected to increase farm incomes and agricultural exports.

Sensitive Sectors Protected

- Dairy products.
- Cereals and millets.
- Apples.
- Oats.
- Cooking oils.

Boost to Manufacturing

- Benefits labour-intensive sectors.
- Opportunities for:
 - Sports goods.
 - Toys.
 - Traditional artisans.
 - MSMEs.
- Enhances export competitiveness.

Services Sector Gains

- UK offers commitments in **137 service sub-sectors**.
- Benefits sectors such as:
 - IT and IT-enabled services.
 - Financial services.
 - Healthcare.
 - Education.
 - Engineering.
 - Telecommunications.
 - Consultancy.

Mobility Provisions

- Easier movement for:
 - Business visitors.
 - Investors.
 - Independent professionals.
 - Contractual service providers.
 - Intra-corporate transferees.
- Dedicated annual mobility opportunities for:
 - 1,800 chefs.
 - Yoga instructors.



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- Classical musicians.

Double Contribution Convention

- Prevents dual social-security contributions.
- Benefits over **75,000 Indian professionals**.
- Covers more than **900 Indian companies**.

Broader Significance

- Enhances investor confidence.
- Supports job creation.
- Encourages competitive domestic manufacturing.
- Promotes high-quality production.
- Contributes to the **Viksit Bharat 2047** vision.

Important Terms

Term	Meaning
CETA	Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement between India and the UK
Tariff	Tax imposed on imports or exports
Tariff Line	Individual category of products on which customs duties are levied
MSME	Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises
Labour-intensive Sector	Industry requiring large numbers of workers
Market Access	Ability to sell goods and services in foreign markets
Double Contribution Convention	Agreement preventing dual social-security payments by workers
Social Security Contribution	Mandatory payments towards pension and welfare benefits
Contractual Service Provider	Professional supplying services under a contract in another country
Viksit Bharat 2047	Government's vision of transforming India into a developed nation by 2047





Reclaiming T.N.'s fiscal autonomy-The Hindu Text and Context

Economy

Easy Explanation

Tamil Nadu's White Paper presents an assessment of the State's financial condition and highlights growing concerns over declining revenues, increasing debt, and shrinking fiscal autonomy. Although Tamil Nadu remains one of India's most developed States, it is increasingly borrowing money to meet current expenditure instead of creating productive assets.

A major challenge has been the fall in the State's ability to raise its own tax revenues, especially after the introduction of the Goods and Services Tax (GST), which reduced States' taxation powers. Simultaneously, Tamil Nadu's share in transfers from the Union government has also declined due to Finance Commission formulas and the increasing use of cesses and surcharges by the Centre.

The State is also burdened by debts in sectors like electricity and transport. Rising expenditure on salaries, pensions, and interest payments leaves very little fiscal space for new welfare schemes or development projects.

Another challenge is demographic change. Tamil Nadu is ageing faster than most States, which means a shrinking workforce and a rising elderly population. This could reduce tax revenues while increasing social expenditure, creating long-term fiscal stress.

Therefore, the major task before the State is not merely controlling debt but generating investments, creating quality jobs, improving wages, and securing greater fiscal autonomy from the Centre. Welfare programmes alone cannot substitute sustainable economic growth.

Key Takeaways

Fiscal Deficit Concerns

- Current levels of fiscal deficit are considered unsustainable.
- Borrowings are increasingly used to finance revenue expenditure rather than asset creation.
- A large portion of expenditure goes towards consumption.

Declining State Revenue

- Tamil Nadu's own tax revenue base has weakened over the years.
- GST has reduced States' taxation autonomy.
- Revenue leakages and inefficiencies have affected collections.

Major Sources of Fiscal Stress

- Power sector debt.
- Transport sector liabilities.
- Corruption and undervaluation in sectors like real estate and mining.

Declining Union Transfers

- Tamil Nadu's share in central transfers has gradually reduced.
- Finance Commission criteria favour poorer States.
- Increasing use of cesses and surcharges by the Centre reduces the divisible pool available to States.

Pre-Committed Expenditure

- A large share of revenue is spent on:
 - Salaries.
 - Pensions.
 - Interest payments.
- Leaves limited room for new schemes and investments.

Demographic Challenge



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- Tamil Nadu is ageing faster than most Indian States.
- Rising elderly population increases social welfare needs.
- Shrinking working-age population may reduce future tax revenues.

Need for Growth-Oriented Policies

- Focus should shift towards:
 - Investment.
 - Job creation.
 - Higher wages.
 - Education.
 - Healthcare.
 - Public infrastructure.

Fiscal Autonomy

- Strengthening State finances requires greater fiscal space and better Centre-State financial relations.
- Reclaiming fiscal autonomy has become an important challenge for Tamil Nadu.

Important Terms

Term	Meaning
Fiscal Deficit	Excess of government expenditure over its revenue
Revenue Deficit	Situation where revenue expenditure exceeds revenue receipts
GST (Goods and Services Tax)	Unified indirect tax system introduced in 2017
State Own Tax Revenue (SOTR)	Taxes collected directly by the State government
GSDP	Gross State Domestic Product; value of goods and services produced within a State
Tax Devolution	Transfer of a share of Union taxes to States
Finance Commission	Constitutional body recommending distribution of financial resources between Centre and States
Divisible Pool	Portion of Union tax revenue shared with States
Fiscal Autonomy	Ability of a State to raise and spend resources independently





Debt Trap	Situation where rising debt makes repayment increasingly difficult
Scissors Effect	Widening gap between revenue-generating capacity and expenditure obligations caused by demographic changes
Old-Age Dependency Ratio	Number of elderly people relative to the working-age population

No one should own the law: why government standards should be public-The Hindu Text and Context

Governance

Easy Explanation

The article argues that laws, regulations, and standards that govern public life should be freely available to everyone. From Emperor Ashoka's edicts to modern-day technical standards, citizens must have access to the rules that affect them.

Bodies such as the Indian Roads Congress (IRC) and Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) formulate standards used by governments, regulators, and courts. Since these standards effectively become part of the law, keeping them behind paywalls goes against democratic principles.

The author, who has digitised and uploaded many such documents for public access, argues that legal materials and government standards should belong to the people. A previous legal dispute over BIS standards eventually led to the government making them freely available online.

The article also highlights the issue of "shadow instruments"—circulars, notifications, guidelines, office memoranda, and similar documents that have legal effects but are difficult to access. It advocates creating a central repository where all such government directives are freely available, thereby promoting transparency, accountability, and citizen participation.

Key Takeaways

Public Access to Law

- Laws and standards should be accessible to all citizens.
- Democracy depends upon informed citizens.

Indian Roads Congress (IRC)

- Publishes standards related to roads and transportation.
- Its standards are widely used by governments and courts.

Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS)

- Issues standards related to public safety and manufacturing.
- BIS standards are now freely available online.

Shadow Instruments

- Include circulars, guidelines, notifications, office memoranda, and SOPs.
- Lack of accessibility reduces transparency.

Need for a Central Repository

- All laws and government directives should be hosted on a single platform.
- Hidden rules undermine democratic governance.



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International Practice

- United States: "No one shall own the law."
- European Union treats mandatory standards as part of the law.
- United Kingdom provides open access through licensing mechanisms.

Strengthening Democracy

- Public access improves transparency and accountability.
- Enhances citizen participation in governance.

Important Terms

Term	Meaning
Indian Roads Congress (IRC)	Government-supported body that formulates standards for roads and highways
Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS)	India's national standards-setting body
Right to Information Act (RTI)	Law promoting transparency and access to information
Public Interest Litigation (PIL)	Legal action filed to protect public interest
Jan Vishwas Act	Law aimed at simplifying governance and reducing compliance burden
India Code	Official online repository of Central laws
Shadow Instruments	Circulars, notifications, guidelines and other documents that influence governance but are not easily accessible
Edicts of Government	Laws, regulations, standards and directives issued by the government
Works of Government	Publications and documents produced by government agencies
Crown Copyright	UK's system governing copyright over government publications





Science and technology

Easy Explanation

Around the world, countries are rethinking how scientific research is published and accessed. Traditionally, governments and universities have paid large foreign publishers huge amounts to access journals and publish research papers. However, many countries are now trying to reduce this dependence and build their own open and publicly owned publishing systems.

China is investing heavily in domestic journals and encouraging researchers to publish in Chinese journals rather than expensive foreign ones. The U.S. has begun examining whether the huge amounts spent on subscriptions and publication charges are justified. Australia has made publicly funded research immediately accessible to everyone, while Europe is building publicly owned publishing platforms that bypass commercial publishers altogether.

India launched the **One Nation One Subscription (ONOS)** scheme in 2025, spending ₹6,000 crore to provide access to over 13,000 journals. While this has improved access for researchers, especially in smaller institutions, it only solves the problem of reading research. It does not solve the problem of publishing research or reduce dependence on foreign publishers.

The article argues that India should treat ONOS as a temporary arrangement and gradually move towards open-access policies, stronger Indian journals, transparent publication costs, and publicly governed publishing infrastructure. This would strengthen India's knowledge sovereignty and make research more affordable and accessible.

Key Takeaways

Global Shift in Scholarly Publishing

- Countries are moving away from dependence on commercial publishers.
- Emphasis is shifting towards public ownership and open access.

China's Strategy

- Building world-class domestic journals.
- Reducing dependence on foreign publishers.
- Promoting research quality over journal prestige.

United States' Approach

- Scrutinising rising journal subscription and publication costs.
- Questioning whether public money is being spent efficiently.

Australia's Policy

- Publicly funded research must become openly accessible immediately.
- Institutions are responsible for ensuring compliance.

Europe's Model

- Developing publicly owned publishing infrastructure.
- Promoting Diamond Open Access, where neither readers nor authors pay.

One Nation One Subscription (ONOS)

- Provides access to thousands of journals.
- Benefits researchers in smaller institutions.
- Addresses access to research but not publishing dependence.

Need for a Long-Term Strategy

- Strengthen Indian journals.
- Promote open-access mandates.
- Increase transparency in publication costs.
- Develop community-governed publishing platforms.



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Knowledge Sovereignty

- Countries are increasingly seeking control over how their research is published and accessed.
- India must reduce excessive reliance on foreign commercial publishers.

Important Terms

Term	Meaning
One Nation One Subscription (ONOS)	Government scheme providing access to scholarly journals to Indian institutions
APC (Article Processing Charge)	Fee paid by authors to publish research papers in open-access journals
Impact Factor	Measure indicating how frequently a journal's articles are cited
Open Access	Free availability of research publications to readers
Green Open Access	Authors archive copies of their papers in freely accessible repositories
Diamond Open Access	Publishing model where neither authors nor readers pay; costs are borne by institutions or funders
Open Research Europe	European Union's publicly owned publishing platform
Journal Excellence Action Plan	China's programme to strengthen domestic journals
Knowledge Sovereignty	A country's ability to control and manage its scientific knowledge ecosystem
Anusandhan National Research Foundation (ANRF)	Institution established to strengthen and fund scientific research in India

[Laser Strums Atoms in Quest for Better Computers-The Hindu Science](#)

Science and technology

Easy Explanation

Scientists are searching for technologies that can make future computers much faster and more efficient. Since conventional electronics based on electric currents are approaching their limits, researchers are exploring new methods.



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One promising approach is **strain engineering**, where scientists mechanically stretch or compress atoms inside a material to change its properties. For future ultra-fast devices, these changes must occur at extremely high speeds, measured in **terahertz (THz)** frequencies.

Researchers from France, Germany, and Sweden have discovered a way to create these ultra-fast vibrations using laser pulses. They arranged platinum and copper atoms in very thin alternating layers called a **superlattice**. When struck by a laser, electrons inside platinum generated pressure that caused atoms to vibrate at a frequency of 1 THz.

Surprisingly, these vibrations were caused by **electron pressure** rather than heat. This discovery opens up new possibilities for advanced technologies such as spintronics and next-generation computers.

Another important aspect is that these materials can be manufactured using **sputtering**, an industrial process already widely used in producing microchips and coatings. Therefore, this technology could move from laboratories to practical applications relatively quickly.

Key Takeaways

Strain Engineering

- Uses mechanical pressure at the atomic level.
- Alters electrical and magnetic properties of materials.

Need for THz Frequencies

- Future computing technologies require extremely fast atomic vibrations.
- THz frequencies are important for next-generation devices.

New Discovery

- Scientists used alternating layers of platinum and copper.
- Laser pulses generated vibrations at 1 THz frequency.

Role of Electron Pressure

- Vibrations were caused by electron pressure rather than heat.
- This was an unexpected finding.

Applications

- Spintronics.
- Faster and more energy-efficient computers.
- Advanced information storage technologies.

Thermoacoustic Metamaterials

- Special nanostructured materials that manipulate heat and sound.
- Possess properties not normally found in nature.

Industrial Potential

- Materials can be manufactured using existing sputtering technology.
- Enhances the possibility of large-scale production.

Important Terms

Term

Meaning



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Strain Engineering	Altering material properties by stretching or compressing atomic lattices
Atomic Lattice	Regular arrangement of atoms inside a material
Terahertz (THz)	Frequency equal to one trillion cycles per second
Spintronics	Technology that uses electron spin instead of electric charge for storing and transferring information
Superlattice	Structure formed by alternating ultra-thin layers of different materials
Ultrafast X-ray Diffraction	Technique used to observe atomic movements in real time
Electron Pressure	Force exerted by energized electrons on atoms
Thermoacoustic Metamaterials	Engineered materials designed to control heat and sound in unusual ways
Nanostructured Materials	Materials whose structure is controlled at the nanometre scale
Sputtering	Industrial process used to deposit thin layers of materials on surfaces

[The world that China desires and is shaping-The Hindu Editorial](#)

International relations

Easy Explanation

China is quietly using the uncertainty created by recent U.S. policies to increase its global influence. It is not trying to destroy the existing international system but to reshape it according to its interests.

China supports institutions like the UN and WTO and has created new bodies such as the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) and the New Development Bank (NDB). At the same time, it is promoting its own ideas about democracy, human rights, security, and development through various global initiatives.

China advocates sovereignty and non-interference but often applies these principles selectively. For example, it rejected the 2016 South China Sea arbitration ruling and continues to have border disputes with India and Bhutan.

Thus, China seeks to preserve the structure of the world order while changing the values and norms that govern it. Such changes may not align with India's interests, which favour sovereign equality, rule of law, and a rules-based international order.



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Key Takeaways

China's Strategy

- China seeks to reshape the international order without overthrowing existing institutions.
- It is pursuing selective revisionism rather than revolutionary change.

Institutional Revisionism

- China supports institutions such as the UN and WTO.
- It has established AIIB, NDB, and strengthened the SCO.

Normative Revisionism

- China aims to redefine democracy, human rights, and sovereignty.
- It promotes outcome-based democracy over liberal democracy.

Four Global Initiatives

- Global Development Initiative (GDI)
- Global Security Initiative (GSI)
- Global Civilization Initiative (GCI)
- Global Governance Initiative

Selective Application of Principles

- China supports sovereignty and multilateralism when beneficial.
- It rejected the South China Sea arbitration award and maintains border disputes.

Implications for India

- Weakening of rule of law and sovereign equality may affect India's strategic interests.
- India prefers a rules-based and multipolar world order.

Important Terms

Term	Meaning
Global Governance White Paper	China's document outlining its vision for global governance.
Institutional Order	International institutions like the UN and WTO.
Normative Order	Principles such as democracy, human rights, sovereignty, and rule of law.
Institutional Revisionism	Preserving institutions while increasing influence within them.
Normative Revisionism	Changing the values and principles underlying international institutions.





Norm Entrepreneurship	Efforts to promote new international norms and ideas.
Global Development Initiative (GDI)	China's initiative to promote development and support SDGs.
Global Security Initiative (GSI)	Framework emphasizing sovereignty and non-interference.
Global Civilization Initiative (GCI)	Initiative promoting respect for diverse civilizations and values.
Global Governance Initiative	China's proposal for reforming global governance.
Outcome-Based Democracy	Governance model where legitimacy depends on economic performance rather than elections.
Westphalian Norms	Principles of sovereignty and non-interference among states.
Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB)	China-led multilateral development bank.
New Development Bank (NDB)	Development bank established by BRICS countries.
Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO)	Eurasian political and security grouping.
Belt and Road Initiative (BRI)	China's infrastructure and connectivity initiative.
Selective Revisionist Power	A state that preserves institutions but changes the norms governing them.

[Stay with the evidence-The Hindu Editorial](#)

Science and technology

Easy Explanation

The Union Health Ministry has banned 16 Fixed Dose Combination (FDC) drugs after scientific reviews found that these medicines lacked therapeutic justification and could be unsafe. FDCs contain two or more active ingredients combined in a fixed ratio in a single pill. They were originally designed to improve patient compliance and reduce the number of pills, especially in diseases like tuberculosis.



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However, many FDCs are irrational because patients may not need all the medicines in the combination, may require different dosages, or may experience side effects without knowing which ingredient caused them. Antibiotic-based FDCs are particularly concerning because their irrational use contributes to antimicrobial resistance (AMR).

This is not the first such action. In 2016, the government banned more than 330 irrational FDC drugs. The latest ban highlights the importance of evidence-based medicine and patient safety. However, effective implementation is equally important, as banned drugs have continued to be sold in the past due to weak enforcement.

Key Takeaways

Why are FDCs used?

- Reduce pill burden and improve treatment adherence.
- Useful in chronic diseases like tuberculosis.
- Can improve therapeutic effectiveness in certain cases.

Problems with Irrational FDCs

- Lack scientific or therapeutic justification.
- Patients may need different doses of individual drugs.
- Can expose patients to unnecessary side effects.
- Difficult to identify the ingredient causing allergic reactions.

Concern with Antibiotic FDCs

- Promote irrational antibiotic use.
- Increase antimicrobial resistance (AMR), a major public health threat.

Government Action

- Health Ministry has banned 16 unsafe and irrational FDC drugs.
- Earlier, more than 330 FDCs were banned in 2016.
- State Drug Controllers and pharmacies have been directed to stop sale and distribution.

Need for Effective Enforcement

- Past experiences show banned drugs sometimes remain available in markets.
- Strong monitoring and supervision are needed to ensure compliance.

Important Terms

Term	Meaning
Fixed Dose Combination (FDC)	A medicine containing two or more active ingredients in a fixed ratio.
Therapeutic Justification	Scientific evidence showing that a drug or combination is beneficial and necessary.
Evidence-Based Medicine	Medical practice based on scientific evidence and clinical studies.
Pill Burden	The number of pills a patient needs to take regularly.





Drug Titration	Adjusting the dosage of a drug according to a patient's needs.
Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR)	Resistance developed by microbes against antibiotics due to their excessive or irrational use.
State Drug Controllers	State-level authorities responsible for regulating drugs and ensuring compliance with drug laws.
Pharmacological Ingredient	Active chemical substance responsible for a medicine's therapeutic effect.
Rational Drug Use	Use of medicines that are scientifically justified, safe, and appropriate for patients.
Therapeutic Effectiveness	Ability of a drug to achieve the intended medical benefit.

24th June 2026

[Before tariff reset, will US and India strike balance? - The Indian Express Explained Page](#)

Economy

Easy Explanation

India and the United States are close to finalizing a trade agreement after more than a year of negotiations. The talks have become particularly important because the U.S. is preparing to introduce a new tariff regime that could affect Indian exports. Before these new tariffs come into force, both countries are trying to reach a mutually beneficial agreement.

The U.S. wants greater access to Indian markets, especially for agricultural and industrial products. India, however, wants assurance that it will receive lower tariff rates than competing countries and that it will not face fresh trade investigations after signing the deal.

One of India's biggest concerns is agriculture. American farmers receive much higher government subsidies than Indian farmers. If cheaper U.S. agricultural products enter India in large quantities, Indian farmers may find it difficult to compete. Farm groups have therefore urged the government to protect sensitive agricultural sectors.

India is also concerned about rising imports of American technology and electronic products. While imports from the U.S. are increasing, India's exports to the U.S. in some sectors have slowed, leading to a decline in India's trade surplus with America.

The U.S. remains India's most important export destination, accounting for nearly one-fifth of India's exports. Therefore, the success or failure of the trade deal will have implications for exports, foreign investment, manufacturing growth, employment, and overall economic stability.

Key Takeaways

Trade Deal Near Completion

- India and the U.S. are in the final phase of trade negotiations.
- Most issues have been resolved, with agriculture remaining a major challenge.



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India's Main Concern

- Influx of subsidized U.S. agricultural products.
- Protection of domestic farmers and sensitive sectors.

U.S. Main Concern

- Greater market access for American goods.
- Reduction of tariff and non-tariff barriers.

Shrinking Trade Surplus

- India's trade surplus with the U.S. has declined significantly.
- Recent tariff measures have affected Indian exports.

Economic Importance

- The U.S. is India's largest export market.
- Trade deal outcome will influence exports, FDI, investment decisions, and investor confidence.

Important Terms

Term	Meaning
Tariff	Tax imposed on imported goods.
Section 301	U.S. law used to investigate and impose measures against unfair trade practices.
Trade Surplus	Exports exceed imports.
Trade Deficit	Imports exceed exports.
Market Access	Ability of foreign products to enter another country's market.
FDI	Foreign Direct Investment in productive sectors of the economy.
Subsidized Agriculture	Farming sector receiving government financial support.
USTR	United States Trade Representative responsible for trade negotiations.

[The straight forward constitutional process to replace the uK PM-The Indian Express Explained Page](#)





Easy Explanation

The United Kingdom follows a parliamentary system where people do not directly elect the Prime Minister. Instead, citizens elect Members of Parliament (MPs), and the leader of the party that commands a majority in the House of Commons becomes the Prime Minister.

When a Prime Minister resigns before completing the parliamentary term, the ruling party does not need a general election. It simply chooses a new leader through its internal party process. Since the governing party still holds a majority in Parliament, the new leader automatically gets the opportunity to form the government.

In Keir Starmer's case, he resigned both as Prime Minister and Labour Party leader. Labour now has to elect a new leader. Once the party chooses its leader, the King formally invites that person to form the government and become the new Prime Minister.

This system allows leadership changes without disrupting the government or conducting fresh national elections. The Prime Minister's authority depends on maintaining the confidence of MPs from their own party. If MPs lose faith in the leader, they can push for a leadership contest, leading to a change at the top even when the party remains in power.

Key Takeaways

UK Parliamentary System

- Citizens elect MPs, not the Prime Minister directly.
- PM is usually the leader of the majority party in the House of Commons.

PM Can Be Replaced Mid-Term

- A Prime Minister's tenure is not fixed.
- Leadership can change without a general election.

Labour Party Leadership Process

- Leadership vacancy triggers an internal party election.
- Candidates need support from MPs and party organizations.
- Party members vote through a preferential ballot system.

Role of the Monarch

- The King formally accepts the outgoing PM's resignation.
- The new party leader is invited to form the government.

Why Leadership Changes Happen

- Loss of support among party MPs.
- Poor electoral performance.
- Internal party dissatisfaction.

Important Terms

Term	Meaning
House of Commons	Elected lower house of UK Parliament; determines who forms the government.
House of Lords	Unelected upper house of UK Parliament.





Prime Minister (PM)	Head of the UK Government.
Majority Party	Party holding more than half the seats in the House of Commons.
Primus Inter Pares	Latin term meaning "First Among Equals"; describes the PM's position among MPs.
Leadership Contest	Internal party election to choose a new leader.
National Executive Committee (NEC)	Labour Party body that manages leadership elections.
Preferential Ballot	Voting system where members rank candidates in order of preference.
Monarch	Constitutional head of state (currently King Charles III).
Confidence of MPs	Support of party MPs required for a PM to remain in office.

[From Ukraine to Lebanon, 'invisible' drones are redefining asymmetric warfare-The Indian Express Explained](#)
[Page](#)

Science and technology

Easy Explanation

The Russia–Ukraine war and the Israel–Hezbollah conflict have shown the growing importance of a new weapon called the **fibre-optic drone**. Unlike normal drones that communicate through radio signals or GPS, these drones remain connected to the operator through a thin fibre-optic cable.

Because they do not emit radio signals, they are extremely difficult to detect, jam, or track. Traditional electronic warfare systems that can disrupt normal drones often fail against fibre-optic drones. This makes them highly effective in modern warfare, especially for weaker groups fighting technologically superior armies.

In the Ukraine war, fibre-optic drones emerged as a solution to heavy electronic jamming. Hezbollah later adopted similar drones against Israel, causing damage to soldiers and military vehicles despite Israel's advanced defence systems.

The main challenge is that these drones are hard to detect. Since they do not emit radio frequencies, armies must rely on advanced radar, infrared sensors, and optical systems to find them. Even after detection, destroying them is difficult because of their small size and low visibility.

For India, the increasing use of drone swarms and loitering munitions during the India-Pakistan conflict highlighted the need for stronger counter-drone capabilities. Experts suggest India should focus on advanced radar systems, AI-enabled detection, hard-kill systems, and mobile air-defence networks to tackle future drone threats.

Key Takeaways

What are Fibre-Optic Drones?



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- Drones connected to operators through fibre-optic cables instead of radio signals.
- Provide real-time video and control through the cable.

Why Are They Important?

- Cannot be jammed easily through electronic warfare.
- Difficult to detect because they emit no radio signals.
- Effective against technologically advanced militaries.

Lessons from Ukraine and Lebanon

- First used extensively in the Russia-Ukraine war.
- Hezbollah successfully used them against Israeli forces.

Challenges in Countering Them

- Detection requires advanced radar and sensor systems.
- Traditional jamming techniques are ineffective.
- Need physical destruction ("hard-kill") methods.

India's Concerns

- Drone warfare is becoming a major battlefield challenge.
- Need for AI-based detection, better radars, and anti-drone weapons.

Important Terms

Term	Meaning
Fibre-Optic Drone	Drone controlled through a fibre-optic cable instead of radio signals.
Electronic Warfare (EW)	Use of technology to disrupt enemy communications and electronics.
Jamming	Blocking or interfering with communication signals.
Radio Frequency (RF) Signal	Wireless signal used by most conventional drones.
Radar Cross Section (RCS)	Measure of how visible an object is to radar.
Drone Swarm	Large number of drones operating together in a coordinated manner.
Loitering Munition	Drone that searches for a target and then crashes into it to destroy it.





Hard-Kill System	Defence system that physically destroys a drone or missile.
Kinetic Interception	Destroying a target through direct physical impact.
Artificial Intelligence (AI)	Technology used for automated detection, tracking, and response against threats.

[Intellectual disabilities& the question of choice in giving birth-The Indian Express Explained Page](#)

Polity

Easy Explanation

This article discusses a difficult legal and ethical issue: **who can make reproductive decisions for women with severe intellectual disabilities when they cannot fully understand or communicate consent?**

The recent Karnataka High Court case involved a 23-year-old woman with severe intellectual and developmental disabilities. Her parents sought permission for a **hysterectomy (surgical removal of the uterus)**. Since Indian law requires free and informed consent for such procedures, and the woman was unable to provide legally valid consent, the family had to approach the court.

Indian law strongly protects persons with disabilities from forced sterilisation or medical procedures that permanently affect fertility. Courts therefore examine whether a procedure is medically necessary and whether it serves the person's **best interests**, rather than simply accepting the wishes of caregivers.

A related issue arises in abortion cases. The Supreme Court has repeatedly held that women with intellectual disabilities also possess reproductive rights and bodily autonomy. Their disability alone cannot be used as a reason to force an abortion or sterilisation. Courts must balance autonomy, health, dignity, and safety while making decisions.

Overall, the debate is about protecting vulnerable women from exploitation while also respecting their reproductive rights and human dignity.

Key Takeaways

Why Courts Become Involved

- Permanent reproductive procedures require informed consent.
- When a person cannot legally provide consent, courts decide whether the procedure is in their best interests.

Rights of Persons with Disabilities

- The Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016 protects reproductive autonomy.
- Forced sterilisation is prohibited.

Supreme Court on Unnecessary Hysterectomies

- Concern over unnecessary uterus-removal surgeries, especially among vulnerable women.
- Monitoring committees were ordered to oversee such procedures.

Abortion and Intellectual Disabilities

- Women with intellectual disabilities retain reproductive rights.
- Their consent remains essential for abortion decisions.

Core Legal Principle



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- Courts act as guardians only when necessary and focus on health, dignity, and welfare of the individual.

Important Terms

Term	Meaning
Intellectual Disability	Condition affecting learning, reasoning, and decision-making abilities.
Developmental Disability	Disability that begins during development and affects physical or mental functioning.
Hysterectomy	Surgical removal of the uterus.
Informed Consent	Consent given after fully understanding risks, benefits, and consequences.
Reproductive Autonomy	Right of an individual to make decisions about reproduction and childbirth.
Rights of Persons with Disabilities (RPWD) Act, 2016	Law protecting rights and dignity of persons with disabilities.
Medical Termination of Pregnancy (MTP) Act, 1971	Law governing abortion in India.
Article 21	Fundamental Right to Life and Personal Liberty under the Constitution.
Parens Patriae	Legal doctrine allowing courts to act as guardian for persons unable to care for themselves.
Best Interests Principle	Standard used by courts to determine what best protects the welfare, dignity, and health of a vulnerable person.

[Why industry can't afford to wait for the state to drive the robotics revolution-The Indian Express Ideas Page](#)

Science and technology

Easy Explanation

The article discusses the rise of **robotics** and "**Embodied Intelligence**" (**Physical AI**), where robots are no longer just machines in factories but intelligent systems that can see, think, decide, and perform tasks like humans.



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Today, AI mostly exists in computers and generates information. The next stage is **Physical AI**, where AI is combined with robots (humanoids) that can work in factories, hospitals, warehouses, and even battlefields. This could transform production just as computers transformed information processing.

The global race is mainly between the **United States and China**. The US leads in advanced AI software, chips, and algorithms (the "brains"), while China dominates robot manufacturing and production (the "bodies"). China already accounts for the majority of industrial robot installations and humanoid robot production worldwide.

India, however, is still far behind. Its robot density and industrial robot adoption remain low compared to countries like China, South Korea, Japan, Germany, and the US. This is important because India's traditional advantage has been abundant low-cost labour. If robotics becomes cheaper and more efficient, labour-cost advantages may lose significance.

The article argues that India cannot depend only on government initiatives. Indian industries must invest in robotics, research, innovation, and manufacturing now. Otherwise, India may miss the next industrial revolution just as other countries move ahead in AI-powered automation.

Key Takeaways

What is Embodied Intelligence?

- AI integrated with physical robots.
- Robots can sense, think, decide, and act in the real world.

US-China Robotics Race

- US leads in AI models, chips, and software.
- China leads in robot manufacturing and deployment.

Why It Matters

- Robotics may transform industries, healthcare, logistics, and defence.
- Could significantly reduce dependence on human labour.

India's Challenge

- Low robot adoption compared to global leaders.
- Traditional labour-cost advantage may weaken.

Way Forward for India

- Increase investment in robotics and AI.
- Strengthen domestic manufacturing and innovation.
- Encourage industry-led adoption alongside government support.

Important Terms

Term	Meaning
Embodied Intelligence (Physical AI)	AI integrated into physical robots that can interact with the real world.
Humanoid Robot	Robot designed with human-like structure and capabilities.
Industrial Robot	Automated machine used in manufacturing and industrial processes.





Robot Density	Number of robots per 10,000 manufacturing workers.
Artificial Intelligence (AI)	Technology enabling machines to learn, reason, and make decisions.
Industrial Policy	Government strategy to promote specific industries and technologies.
Automation	Use of machines and technology to perform tasks with minimal human intervention.
SS Innovations Mantra	India's indigenous robotic surgical system.
National Robotics Strategy	India's proposed policy framework for robotics development.
Humanoid Robotics	Field focused on developing human-like intelligent robots.

Civil Services Preliminary Examination 2026: tough by design or default?-The Hindu Text and Context

Governance

Easy Explanation

The article argues that the **UPSC Civil Services Preliminary Examination 2026 became unusually difficult and unpredictable**, leading many aspirants to feel that success depended more on guesswork than preparation.

Originally, the Preliminary Exam was designed only as a **screening test** to shortlist candidates for the Main Examination. Earlier, it included an optional subject that tested academic knowledge along with General Studies. Over time, reforms replaced the optional subject with **General Studies and CSAT**, making the screening process dependent largely on a single General Studies paper.

Since lakhs of candidates compete for a few thousand Main Examination seats, UPSC faces the challenge of eliminating a huge number of aspirants through only 100 questions. As a result, question-setters increasingly design difficult and unconventional questions to distinguish candidates. This has gradually shifted the focus from selecting the best candidates to eliminating the largest number.

In 2026, the exam reportedly contained lengthy passages, a large volume of information, and questions drawn from diverse government sources. Many candidates felt there was little connection between their preparation and the actual questions asked. Traditional preparation methods, including solving previous years' papers, were seen as less useful.

The article suggests that this problem is not necessarily intentional but stems from structural issues in the examination system. It calls for a review of the Preliminary Examination pattern, better alignment between university education and UPSC requirements, and reforms that maintain fairness while still filtering candidates effectively.

Key Takeaways

Purpose of Preliminary Examination

- Introduced as a screening test for the Main Examination.
- Intended to shortlist candidates, not serve as the final measure of merit.



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Evolution of the Exam

- Earlier included an optional subject and General Studies.
- CSAT was later introduced and subsequently made qualifying.

Concerns in 2026

- Questions perceived as highly unpredictable.
- Large amount of reading required within limited time.
- Weak linkage between preparation and actual examination.

Systemic Challenge

- Lakhs of candidates compete for limited vacancies.
- UPSC must filter candidates through a relatively small number of questions.

Suggested Reforms

- Review examination pattern through an expert committee.
- Improve alignment between higher education and UPSC requirements.
- Ensure fairness without compromising standards.

Important Terms

Term	Meaning
Civil Services Preliminary Examination	Screening stage of the Civil Services Examination conducted by UPSC.
Kothari Committee	Committee whose recommendations led to the introduction of the Preliminary Examination in 1979.
Alagh Committee	Committee that recommended aptitude-based testing and challenging preliminary questions.
CSAT (Civil Services Aptitude Test)	Paper testing aptitude, reasoning, comprehension, and problem-solving abilities.
General Studies Paper-I	Main merit-deciding paper in the Preliminary Examination.
Qualifying Paper	Paper where minimum marks are required but marks are not counted for ranking.
Screening Test	Examination used to shortlist candidates for the next stage.
Parliamentary Committee	Legislative committee that reviews and evaluates public issues and policies.





Second Administrative Reforms Commission (ARC)

Commission that recommended reforms in governance and public administration.

Bridge Courses

Educational programmes designed to reduce gaps between academic learning and examination requirements.

[Reconnect public health with people's needs-The Hindu Editorial](#)

Sociology

Easy Explanation

The article argues that recent public health policies in India are becoming increasingly focused on **technology, data collection, and individual wellness**, while neglecting the most basic need of citizens: **access to affordable and quality healthcare**.

One example is the **Ayushman Bharat Health and Wellness Centres (HWCs)**. Instead of substantially strengthening Primary Health Centres (PHCs), Sub-Centres (SCs), and Community Health Centres (CHCs), the policy largely changed their identity and branding. The author argues that the focus shifted from improving population health outcomes to promoting the broader and more subjective concept of "wellness".

The article points out that wellness is difficult to measure because it depends on individual perceptions. Public health traditionally focused on measurable outcomes such as immunisation, maternal health, disease control, nutrition, sanitation, and healthcare access. By concentrating excessively on wellness, policymakers may overlook real health problems faced by people.

Another example is the **Ayushman Bharat Digital Health Mission (ABDHM)**, which aims to create digital health records through the ABHA card. While digital records may improve information management, they do not automatically improve healthcare access. A digital card cannot substitute for hospitals, doctors, medicines, diagnostic facilities, and affordable treatment.

The article concludes that India's biggest health challenge remains inadequate healthcare infrastructure and high treatment costs. Public health policies should therefore focus first on strengthening healthcare institutions and ensuring access to care before emphasizing wellness or digital platforms.

Key Takeaways

Main Concern

- Public health policies are becoming disconnected from people's actual healthcare needs.

Health and Wellness Centres

- Intended to strengthen primary healthcare.
- Criticised for focusing more on "wellness" than measurable health outcomes.

Wellness vs Public Health

- Wellness is subjective and difficult to measure.
- Public health focuses on population-level health improvements.

Ayushman Bharat Digital Health Mission

- Creates digital health records through ABHA cards.
- Information systems alone cannot improve healthcare access.

Core Problem

- High healthcare costs in the private sector.



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- Inadequate quality and infrastructure in the public sector.

Suggested Approach

- Strengthen PHCs, CHCs, hospitals, and healthcare workforce.
- Focus on access, affordability, and quality of care.

Important Terms

Term	Meaning
Universal Health Coverage (UHC)	Ensuring everyone receives needed healthcare without financial hardship.
Ayushman Bharat Health and Wellness Centres (HWCs)	Centres aimed at strengthening primary healthcare services.
Primary Health Centre (PHC)	First-level healthcare institution in rural areas.
Community Health Centre (CHC)	Secondary-level healthcare facility serving multiple PHCs.
Health Promotion	Public health approach focused on improving population health through preventive measures.
Wellness	Broad concept covering physical, mental, social, and emotional well-being.
Ayushman Bharat Digital Health Mission (ABDM)	National initiative for creating a digital health ecosystem.
ABHA Card	Unique digital health identification number for individuals.
Social Determinants of Health	Social, economic, and environmental factors affecting health outcomes.
Three-Tier Health System	Sub-Centre → PHC → CHC structure of public healthcare delivery in India.

[India's next challenge — from invention to global scale-The Hindu Editorial](#)

Science and technology

Easy Explanation



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The article says India has often been **early in identifying important technologies**, but has struggled to convert these innovations into large global industries.

For example, India established **Semiconductor Complex Limited (SCL)** in the 1970s, much before semiconductors became the backbone of the digital economy. However, countries like Taiwan and South Korea built giant companies such as TSMC and Samsung, while India failed to create a strong semiconductor manufacturing ecosystem. The problem was not lack of scientific talent, but insufficient investment, limited scale, policy inconsistencies, and excessive dependence on the public sector.

The same happened with **ECIL (Electronics Corporation of India Limited)** and the **Simputer**. ECIL developed indigenous computers and electronics, while Simputer introduced many ideas that later became common in smartphones. Yet these innovations did not grow into globally successful businesses because India lacked strong venture capital, supply chains, market ecosystems, and commercial scaling.

The article argues that invention alone is not enough. A country must also build industries, markets, investment networks, manufacturing capacity, and global brands around those inventions.

There are also success stories. India's pharmaceutical sector became a global leader, earning the title "Pharmacy of the World." Digital platforms such as **Aadhaar** and **UPI** achieved massive scale and transformed service delivery. These examples show that when innovation is combined with scale, India can achieve global leadership.

Today, India faces a similar opportunity in **Artificial Intelligence (AI), Quantum Computing, Semiconductors, and Space Technology**. Instead of only inventing new technologies, India must focus on commercialisation, large-scale deployment, manufacturing ecosystems, and global competitiveness.

The central message is simple: **India's challenge is no longer invention; it is scaling innovation into world-leading industries.**

Key Takeaways

India's Historical Challenge

- Strong scientific and technological vision.
- Weak conversion of innovation into global industries.

Examples of Missed Opportunities

- Semiconductor Complex Limited (SCL).
- Electronics Corporation of India Limited (ECIL).
- Simputer.

Reasons for Limited Success

- Lack of large-scale investment.
- Weak industrial ecosystems.
- Policy inconsistency.
- Limited commercialisation.

Successful Models

- Pharmaceutical industry.
- Aadhaar.
- UPI.
- PARAM supercomputer programme.

Emerging Opportunities

- Artificial Intelligence (AI).
- Quantum Computing.
- Semiconductor manufacturing.
- Space technologies.

Future Strategy



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- Move from invention to scaling.
- Build globally competitive enterprises.
- Combine self-reliance with global ambition.

Important Terms

Term	Meaning
Semiconductor Complex Limited (SCL)	India's early semiconductor manufacturing initiative established in the 1970s.
ECIL	Electronics Corporation of India Limited; developed indigenous computers and strategic electronics.
Simputer	Low-cost Indian handheld computing device that anticipated many smartphone features.
TSMC	Taiwan Semiconductor Manufacturing Company, world's leading semiconductor manufacturer.
Artificial Intelligence (AI)	Technology enabling machines to perform tasks requiring human intelligence.
Quantum Computing	Computing based on quantum mechanics, capable of solving highly complex problems.
PARAM	India's indigenous supercomputer programme developed by C-DAC.
Aadhaar	India's digital identity system.
UPI (Unified Payments Interface)	India's real-time digital payment platform.
DeepSeek	Chinese AI model known for providing low-cost, efficient AI capabilities.
Commercialisation	Converting innovation or research into marketable products and businesses.
Innovation Ecosystem	Network of investors, startups, industries, research institutions, and markets that help technologies scale.



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25th June 2026

[In dry monsoon,a test of resilience-The Indian Express Explained Page](#)

Geography

Easy Explanation

India's 2026 southwest monsoon has been much weaker than expected in June. The India Meteorological Department (IMD) had predicted June rainfall to be around 92% of normal, but rainfall remained more than 40% below normal for most of the month.

Many people initially blamed **El Niño**, but scientists say El Niño is not the main reason yet because its impact usually takes several weeks to fully affect the Indian monsoon. Instead, the weak monsoon was mainly caused by weak low-pressure systems, weak monsoon winds, and an unfavourable phase of the **Madden-Julian Oscillation (MJO)**, a moving atmospheric system that influences rainfall across the tropics.

The good news is that the MJO is expected to move into a favourable phase during early July, which could bring stronger rainfall activity. However, El Niño is expected to strengthen gradually, creating uncertainty for the rest of the season.

The article highlights that India today is more resilient to weak monsoons than it was a decade ago. Investments in water conservation, rainwater harvesting, groundwater recharge, irrigation infrastructure, and renewable energy have reduced dependence on monsoon rains. Reservoirs are also relatively well-stocked because of good rainfall in the previous two years.

Still, the monsoon remains crucial because nearly 75% of India's annual rainfall comes during these four months. A weak monsoon can affect agriculture, food production, rural incomes, hydropower generation, and overall economic growth.

The larger lesson is that climate change is making rainfall increasingly unpredictable. Therefore, India must focus on building long-term resilience rather than depending entirely on normal monsoon behaviour.

Key Takeaways

Weak Start to Monsoon

- June rainfall remained over 40% below normal.
- About 75% of India's land area experienced rainfall deficiency.

Main Reasons for Deficit

- Weak low-pressure systems.
- Weak monsoon currents.
- Unfavourable phase of Madden-Julian Oscillation (MJO).

Role of El Niño

- El Niño has emerged but is not the main reason for June's deficit.
- Its impact on Indian monsoon usually appears with a time lag.
- Effects may become stronger in coming months.

India's Growing Resilience

- Better groundwater levels.
- Increased rainwater harvesting and water conservation.
- Expansion of solar and wind energy.
- Relatively healthy reservoir storage levels.

Climate Change Concern

- Rainfall is becoming more erratic and regionally uneven.
- Building climate resilience is becoming increasingly important.



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Important Terms

Term	Meaning
Southwest Monsoon	Main rainy season in India from June to September, providing nearly 75% of annual rainfall.
El Niño	Warming of Pacific Ocean waters that often weakens the Indian monsoon.
Madden-Julian Oscillation (MJO)	Moving atmospheric system of clouds and winds that influences short-term rainfall patterns across the tropics.
Low-Pressure System	Weather system that promotes cloud formation and rainfall.
Monsoon Currents	Moisture-laden winds responsible for carrying rain over India.
Groundwater Recharge	Process by which rainwater replenishes underground water reserves.
Hydropower	Electricity generated using flowing or stored water.
Climate Resilience	Ability to withstand and adapt to climate-related shocks such as droughts, floods, and erratic rainfall.

[What's driving europe heatwave, and why is it struggling to cope?-The Indian Express Explained Page](#)

Geography

Easy Explanation

Western Europe is currently facing an intense heatwave, with temperatures crossing **44°C** in some areas. The heatwave has caused deaths, school closures, transport disruptions, crop losses, and public health emergencies.

The immediate cause is a weather phenomenon called an **Omega Block** or **Heat Dome**. Normally, weather systems move across Europe through strong west-to-east winds called **jet streams**. However, these winds have weakened and become blocked. As a result, a large high-pressure system has formed over Europe.

This high-pressure system traps hot air near the Earth's surface. The trapped air continues to heat up because clouds do not form and sunlight keeps reaching the ground. Since the hot air cannot escape upwards, temperatures keep rising day after day.

Climate change has made the situation worse. Europe is the **fastest-warming continent in the world**, warming nearly twice as fast as the global average since the 1980s. More frequent and intense heatwaves are now becoming a regular feature.

Another factor is the **Albedo Effect**. The Arctic region is melting rapidly. Earlier, white ice reflected sunlight back into space. Now, darker ocean waters absorb more heat, which contributes to additional warming in Europe.



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Europe is also struggling because its infrastructure was designed for a cooler climate. Many homes are built to retain heat during winter, not to release it during summer. Air conditioners are uncommon in many countries. In addition, Europe experiences longer daylight hours in summer, giving buildings very little time to cool down at night.

The article's main message is that climate change is progressing faster than Europe's adaptation measures. Heatwaves are no longer rare events but are becoming a major public health and economic challenge.

Key Takeaways

What is causing the heatwave?

- Omega Block (Heat Dome) weather pattern.
- Persistent high-pressure system trapping hot air.
- Reduced cloud formation and prolonged sunshine.

Role of Climate Change

- Europe is warming twice as fast as the global average.
- Heatwaves are becoming more frequent and intense.
- Climate change is increasing extreme weather events.

Why Europe is struggling

- Limited use of air conditioning.
- Buildings designed to retain heat.
- Longer summer daylight hours.
- Ageing population vulnerable to heat stress.

Additional Factor

- Arctic ice melt and Albedo Effect are accelerating regional warming.

Larger Concern

- Adaptation measures are lagging behind climate risks.
- Heatwaves are becoming a long-term climate challenge.

Important Terms

Term	Meaning
Heat Dome	High-pressure system that traps hot air near the Earth's surface, causing extreme temperatures.
Omega Block	Weather pattern shaped like the Greek letter Ω that blocks normal movement of weather systems.
Jet Stream	Fast-moving air currents in the upper atmosphere that influence weather patterns.
Climate Change	Long-term alteration of global climate due largely to human activities and greenhouse gas emissions.





Albedo Effect	The ability of a surface to reflect sunlight; ice has high albedo, oceans have low albedo.
Urban Heat Island	Urban areas becoming hotter than surrounding rural areas due to concrete, buildings, and human activities.
Copernicus Climate Change Service (C3S)	European Union programme that monitors climate change and provides climate data.
World Meteorological Organization (WMO)	UN agency responsible for weather, climate, and water-related sciences.

[How government's overhaul of FCRA rules puts focus on religious conversion-The Indian Express Explained](#) [Page](#)

Governance

Easy Explanation

The Central Government has introduced major changes to the **Foreign Contribution Regulation Act (FCRA)** rules to increase monitoring of how NGOs and associations use foreign funds.

Earlier, organisations receiving foreign donations had relatively broad permission to work in areas such as education, religion, culture, and social welfare. Under the new rules, NGOs must now clearly specify the exact activities they will undertake and the specific States/UTs where they will operate. They must choose from a government-approved list of **105 permitted activities**.

One of the most important changes is the explicit exclusion of **proselytisation (religious conversion activities)** from the list of permitted purposes. Religious organisations can still use foreign funds for religious education, preservation of traditions, theological studies, and religious gatherings, but not for activities aimed at converting people to another religion.

The government says this move is aimed at ensuring transparency and preventing misuse of foreign funds. It also reflects a long-standing concern that some foreign-funded organisations may be involved in religious conversion activities.

The rules also increase scrutiny of NGOs. Organisations with foreign nationals in key management positions will face stricter conditions. NGOs must provide more disclosures, including social media accounts, activity reports, donor information, and utilisation details.

Another major change is the introduction of geography-based approvals. Earlier, an NGO could broadly operate across regions. Now, its registration will specify where foreign-funded activities can be conducted. Expanding to new states may require fresh approval.

The government has also increased penalties for violations such as using funds for unapproved purposes, spending beyond administrative limits, speculative investments, or operating outside approved areas.

Overall, the amendments indicate a shift from a broad trust-based system to a much more tightly regulated and purpose-specific foreign funding framework.

Key Takeaways

Major FCRA Changes

- NGOs must specify exact activities and geographical areas.
- Activities must be selected from a list of 105 approved purposes.



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- Expansion may require fresh government approval.

Focus on Religious Conversion

- Religious activities remain permitted.
- Proselytisation (conversion-oriented activities) explicitly excluded.
- Foreign funds cannot be used for conversion-related work.

Increased Government Oversight

- Wider definition of "Key Functionary".
- Stricter scrutiny of organisations with foreign nationals in leadership.
- More disclosure requirements for NGOs.

Geography-Based Registration

- Registration linked to specific States/UTs.
- Foreign funds can only be used in approved locations.

Stricter Penalties

- Higher fines for misuse of foreign contributions.
- Penalties for diversion of funds, speculative investments, and unauthorised activities.

Important Terms

Term	Meaning
FCRA (Foreign Contribution Regulation Act), 2010	Law regulating receipt and utilisation of foreign funds by individuals, NGOs, and associations in India.
Foreign Contribution	Donation, grant, or transfer received from a foreign source.
Proselytisation	Attempt to convert people from one religion to another.
Article 25	Constitutional provision guaranteeing freedom of conscience and the right to profess, practice, and propagate religion.
Rev. Stainislaus v. State of Madhya Pradesh (1977)	Supreme Court judgment holding that the right to propagate religion does not include a right to convert another person.
Key Functionary	Person responsible for management and control of an organisation, such as trustee, director, office-bearer, partner, or governing body member.
Compounding of Offence	Settlement of certain legal violations through payment of a prescribed penalty instead of full prosecution.



**Administrative Expense Cap**

Limit on the percentage of foreign funds that can be spent on administrative purposes under FCRA.

[After Op sindoor freeze,a thaw in India-Turkey ties-The Indian Express Explained Page](#)

International relations

Easy Explanation

India–Turkey relations have historically been affected by one major issue: **Turkey's close relationship with Pakistan**. While trade and diplomatic ties grew significantly after 2002, relations started deteriorating when Turkey repeatedly raised the Kashmir issue at international forums and openly supported Pakistan on matters concerning India.

The relationship reached its lowest point after **Operation Sindoor (May 2025)**, India's military response to the Pahalgam terror attack. Turkey criticised India's actions and described them as "unprovoked aggression". Reports that Pakistan used Turkish-made drones during the conflict further increased tensions. In response, India took several measures, including cancelling business contracts, suspending academic collaborations, revoking security clearances for a Turkish airport operator, and strengthening ties with Cyprus, a country that has disputes with Turkey.

However, both countries now appear interested in improving relations. In April 2026, India and Turkey resumed official foreign office consultations after a gap of four years. Cooperation on security matters also resumed, including Turkey's assistance in extraditing wanted drug trafficker Salim Dola to India.

For Turkey, maintaining good relations with India is economically important because India is a large and growing market. For India, engagement with Turkey provides access to West Asia, Europe, and Central Asia and can enhance India's diplomatic outreach in the Islamic world. Both countries also have significant trade interests worth more than \$10 billion annually.

Although Turkey is unlikely to completely distance itself from Pakistan, both sides appear to recognise that disagreements on some issues should not prevent cooperation in trade, investment, law enforcement, and strategic matters. The current phase indicates a cautious thaw rather than a complete reset of relations.

Key Takeaways**Why Relations Deteriorated**

- Turkey criticised the abrogation of Article 370 in 2019.
- Ankara frequently supported Pakistan on Kashmir.
- Relations worsened sharply after Operation Sindoor (2025).

India's Response

- Cancelled major contracts with Turkish firms.
- Suspended several academic partnerships.
- Revoked security clearance of a Turkish airport operator.
- Strengthened engagement with Cyprus.

Signs of Improvement

- Foreign Office Consultations resumed in 2026 after four years.
- Cooperation on extradition and law enforcement restarted.
- Both countries are exploring ways to revive economic ties.

Why the Relationship Matters

- Turkey offers access to West Asia, Europe, and Central Asia.
- India is an important market for Turkish exports.
- Bilateral trade exceeds \$10 billion annually.



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Future Outlook

- Pakistan will likely remain a source of disagreement.
- Economic and strategic interests are pushing both countries toward pragmatic engagement.
- A more balanced Turkish position on Kashmir could further improve ties.

Important Terms

Term	Meaning
Operation Sindoor	India's military operation launched after the Pahalgam terror attack in 2025.
Article 370	Constitutional provision that granted special status to Jammu & Kashmir before its revocation in 2019.
Rapprochement	Restoration or improvement of relations between countries after a period of tension.
Extradition	Formal process of transferring an accused or convicted person from one country to another.
Foreign Office Consultations	Official diplomatic talks between foreign ministries of two countries.
Cyprus Issue	Long-standing dispute involving Turkey, Greece, and Cyprus over territorial and political control of the island.
Strategic Gateway	A country or region that provides access to important markets, trade routes, or geopolitical influence.

[Ideology,defection,and the death of purpose in politics-The Indian Express Ideas Page](#)

Polity

Easy Explanation

This article argues that politics should be guided by **ideology, public service, and a vision for society**, but increasingly political defections are driven by personal gain and power. Recent large-scale defections from opposition parties to ruling parties have raised concerns about the weakening of democratic values.

In a parliamentary democracy, political parties exist because they offer different ideas and policy approaches for governing the country. Voters support candidates not only as individuals but also because they represent a party's ideology and promises. When elected representatives switch parties after elections, they effectively disregard the mandate given by voters.

The article points out that most recent defections are not based on genuine ideological disagreements. Politicians who once opposed certain policies often join the very parties they previously criticised. This suggests that political survival, access to power, protection from investigations, or career advancement may be stronger motivations than principles.



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The **Anti-Defection Law** was introduced to stop such opportunistic behaviour. However, politicians often circumvent the law by engineering large group defections or splits that satisfy legal requirements. As a result, the spirit of the law is weakened even if its technical provisions are followed.

The author believes that democracy functions best when political competition revolves around ideas, policies, and public welfare. If politics becomes merely a contest for power, public trust in institutions declines. Therefore, voters must demand accountability and treat unprincipled defections as a betrayal of the democratic mandate.

Key Takeaways

Purpose of Politics

- Politics should aim to improve society, economy, and governance.
- Political parties are meant to represent different ideologies and policy visions.

Problem of Defections

- Increasing defections are often motivated by power rather than principles.
- Party-switching can undermine the mandate given by voters.

Impact on Democracy

- Weakens opposition parties.
- Reduces politics to personal advancement instead of public service.
- Erodes public faith in democratic institutions.

Anti-Defection Law

- Introduced to prevent political instability caused by frequent party-switching.
- Often bypassed through organised group defections and party splits.

Way Forward

- Defections should occur only on genuine ideological grounds.
- Voters should hold opportunistic defectors accountable.
- Political debates must focus on policies and governance rather than power calculations.

Important Terms

Term	Meaning
Anti-Defection Law	Constitutional mechanism to prevent elected representatives from frequently changing political parties.
Defection	Leaving one political party and joining another after being elected.
Ideology	A set of political beliefs and principles that guide a party's actions.
Democratic Mandate	Authority granted by citizens through elections.





Parliamentary Democracy	System where the government is formed by the party or coalition commanding majority support in Parliament.
Treasury Bench	Members of the ruling party or coalition in the legislature.
Opposition	Parties that are not in government and scrutinise government actions.
Party Split	Division of a political party into separate factions or groups.
Political Opportunism	Pursuing power or personal benefit rather than principles.
Aaya Ram, Gaya Ram	Famous phrase describing frequent party-switching by politicians in India.

[PACOM, the deeper meaning behind a dropped prefix-The Hindu Editorial](#)

International relations

Easy Explanation

This article argues that the United States' decision to rename its military command from **INDOPACOM (Indo-Pacific Command)** back to **PACOM (Pacific Command)** is not merely a symbolic change. It may indicate a deeper shift in American strategic thinking and has important implications for India.

The term **Indo-Pacific** became popular because it recognised the growing strategic importance of the Indian Ocean and India's role in regional security. When the US adopted the term in 2018, it signalled closer cooperation with India and support for a broader regional balance against China's rise.

However, recent developments suggest that the US may be changing its priorities. The article notes that the Trump administration appears to be pursuing a more accommodative approach toward China. Increasing US-China engagement and the reduced emphasis on the **Quad** (India, US, Japan, Australia) indicate that Washington may no longer view the Indo-Pacific strategy as central to its foreign policy.

The article identifies three areas where India should be concerned. First, the possibility of a US-China understanding that could reduce the strategic importance of the Quad and leave India with fewer regional partners to balance China. Second, changing power dynamics in West Asia after the US-Iran ceasefire and new regional alignments, which may require India to rethink its Middle East policy. Third, increasing US involvement in South Asia, where Washington appears to be expanding its diplomatic influence in countries such as Nepal, Bhutan, Bangladesh, and Sri Lanka.

The author argues that India should not rely solely on existing partnerships but should strengthen alternative regional groupings, maritime coalitions, and its own leadership role in South Asia and the Indian Ocean region. The key message is that shifts in US policy may be deeper than they appear and India must adapt proactively.

Key Takeaways

Why the Name Change Matters

- INDOPACOM highlighted the strategic importance of India and the Indian Ocean.
- Reverting to PACOM may signal changing US priorities.



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US-China Relations

- The US appears to be seeking a more stable relationship with China.
- This could reduce the strategic importance of anti-China groupings such as the Quad.

Challenges for the Quad

- Quad cooperation appears to be narrowing in scope.
- Uncertainty remains regarding future Quad summits and commitments.

West Asia Developments

- The US-Iran ceasefire has altered regional power dynamics.
- India may need to reassess its policies toward Iran, Israel, and Gulf countries.

South Asia Concerns

- The US is increasing engagement across South Asia.
- Competition between the US and China for regional influence is intensifying.

Implications for India

- Strengthen regional diplomacy.
- Revitalise forums such as BIMSTEC and possibly SAARC.
- Develop alternative maritime and strategic partnerships.

Important Terms

Term	Meaning
INDOPACOM	United States Indo-Pacific Command responsible for military operations across the Indo-Pacific region.
PACOM	United States Pacific Command, the earlier name of INDOPACOM.
Indo-Pacific	Strategic region extending from the Indian Ocean to the Pacific Ocean.
Quad (Quadrilateral Security Dialogue)	Strategic grouping comprising India, USA, Japan, and Australia.
Shangri-La Dialogue	Major annual security conference held in Singapore.
G-2	Concept of the United States and China acting as the two dominant global powers.
Maritime Security	Protection of sea routes, maritime trade, and naval interests.





Chabahar Port	Indian-supported port in Iran providing connectivity to Afghanistan and Central Asia.
BIMSTEC	Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation.
SAARC	South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation, a regional organisation of South Asian countries.
Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA)	Regional organisation promoting cooperation among countries bordering the Indian Ocean.
Sphere of Influence	Region where a powerful country exercises significant political, economic, or military influence.

Why was the News Click case quashed?-The Hindu Text and Context

Internal security

Easy Explanation

The Delhi High Court quashed (cancelled) the FIR filed against NewsClick and the related money laundering case initiated by the Enforcement Directorate (ED). The court held that the investigation was **arbitrary, mala fide (in bad faith), and an abuse of legal process**, and warned that such actions could threaten independent journalism and press freedom.

The case began in 2020 when allegations were made that NewsClick had received foreign investment in violation of India's **Foreign Direct Investment (FDI)** rules and had diverted funds improperly. The police and ED alleged that NewsClick received about **\$1.5 million** from a US-based company through inflated share valuations to bypass FDI restrictions.

However, the court found major flaws in these allegations. The investment was made in 2018, whereas the 26% FDI cap on digital news media was introduced only in 2019. Therefore, the company could not have violated a rule that did not exist when the investment occurred. The court also noted that the **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** had already approved the transaction and found no FEMA violation.

The allegation that money was siphoned off through salaries, consultancy fees, and rent was also rejected. The court observed that such expenditures are normal for a digital media company and do not automatically indicate criminal wrongdoing.

The court further held that offences like **cheating** and **criminal breach of trust** were not established because there was no victim or aggrieved party. The foreign investor itself never complained about being cheated or defrauded.

Since the underlying FIR was found invalid, the related money laundering proceedings under the **Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA)** also collapsed. The court relied on Supreme Court precedent stating that if the original or "predicate" offence is quashed, the money laundering case based on it cannot survive.

The judgment is significant because it reinforces the principles of due process, limits on investigative powers, and protection of media freedom.

Key Takeaways

Why the FIR Was Quashed

- No evidence of FDI rule violation.
- Investment took place before the FDI cap on digital media was introduced.



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- RBI had approved the foreign investment.

Court's Findings on Financial Allegations

- Business expenses such as salaries and consultancy fees cannot automatically be treated as siphoning of funds.
- No criminal intent or misappropriation was established.

Cheating and Breach of Trust Charges Failed

- No investor complained of being cheated.
- No aggrieved party was identified by investigators.

Money Laundering Case Also Quashed

- PMLA proceedings depend on the existence of a valid predicate offence.
- Once the FIR was struck down, the ED case automatically became unsustainable.

Significance of the Judgment

- Reinforces due process and rule of law.
- Protects media organisations from arbitrary investigations.
- Highlights judicial scrutiny of investigative agencies.

Important Terms

Term	Meaning
NewsClick	Indian digital news portal involved in the case.
FIR (First Information Report)	Formal document recording information about a cognizable offence.
FDI (Foreign Direct Investment)	Investment made by a foreign entity in an Indian company.
FEMA	Foreign Exchange Management Act, governing foreign exchange transactions in India.
PMLA	Prevention of Money Laundering Act, 2002, India's anti-money laundering law.
ED (Enforcement Directorate)	Agency responsible for investigating money laundering and foreign exchange violations.
ECIR	Enforcement Case Information Report, the ED's equivalent of an FIR.
Predicate Offence	The original offence from which alleged proceeds of crime arise.





Criminal Conspiracy	Agreement between two or more persons to commit an illegal act.
Mala Fide	Action taken in bad faith or with improper motive.
Article 22(1)	Constitutional provision guaranteeing that an arrested person must be informed of the grounds of arrest and have access to legal counsel.
Vijay Madanlal Choudhary Case (2022)	Supreme Court judgment holding that money laundering proceedings cannot survive if the predicate offence is quashed.

[Kingmakers: meet the insects that make India's favourite mangoes-The Hindu Science](#)

Science

Easy Explanation

Most people think mangoes grow naturally once a mango tree flowers. But the truth is that **insects are the real "kingmakers" of mango production**. Without pollinators carrying pollen from one flower to another, very few mangoes would develop.

Between December and March, mango trees produce thousands of tiny cream-coloured flowers arranged in clusters called **panicles**. These flowers need **pollination** (transfer of pollen) for fruit formation. Earlier, farmers believed that wind alone pollinated mango flowers. However, scientific studies have shown that insects play the dominant role.

A Bengaluru-based study found that allowing insects such as bees, flies, hoverflies, and ants access to mango flowers increased fruit yield by about **350%**. Wild bees like **Apis dorsata (Giant Honey Bee)**, **Apis florea (Dwarf Honey Bee)**, and **stingless bees** were especially effective pollinators.

Researchers also discovered that native insects are often better pollinators than non-native species. While foreign honey bees may visit flowers more frequently, native bees transfer pollen between different orchards, producing healthier and better-quality fruits.

However, these pollinators face serious threats from **neonicotinoid insecticides**, which damage their nervous systems, affecting navigation, memory, and survival. As pollinator populations decline, mango yields also fall, causing losses for farmers.

Recognising their importance, India's new **Environmental Accounting Framework** has assigned pollinators an economic value of about **₹2.6 lakh crore (2021-22)**, highlighting their crucial contribution to agriculture and food security.

The article argues that protecting pollinators through bee-safe pesticides, habitat conservation, and sustainable farming practices is essential for safeguarding India's agriculture and mango production.

Key Takeaways

Pollinators Make Mangoes Possible

- Mango flowers require pollination for fruit formation.
- Bees, flies, hoverflies, and ants are major pollinators.

Scientific Evidence

- Bengaluru study showed insect pollination increased mango yield by **350%**.
- Wild insects were found to be highly effective pollinators.



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Native Pollinators Matter

- Native bees often produce better fruit quality than introduced species.
- They transfer pollen across orchards, improving genetic diversity.

Threat from Pesticides

- Neonicotinoid insecticides harm bees' brain functions and survival.
- Reduced pollinator populations directly reduce crop yields.

Economic Importance

- Pollinators contribute around **₹2.6 lakh crore** to India's agricultural output.
- India officially recognises pollinators in environmental accounting.

Conservation Measures

- Bee-safe pesticides.
- Reduced spraying during flowering season.
- Protection of natural habitats and wildflower strips near farms.

Important Terms

Term	Meaning
Pollination	Transfer of pollen from male to female flower parts leading to fruit formation.
Pollinators	Animals that help transfer pollen, mainly bees, flies, butterflies, birds, and bats.
Panicle	Flower cluster of a mango tree containing hundreds to thousands of flowers.
Apis dorsata	Giant Honey Bee , an important wild pollinator of mangoes.
Apis florea	Dwarf Honey Bee , commonly found in South Asia.
Stingless Bees (Tetragonula)	Small native bees that are highly efficient pollinators.
Hoverflies (Syrphidae)	Fly species that resemble bees and contribute to pollination.
Pollination Effectiveness	Measure of how efficiently an insect transfers pollen and improves fruit yield.





Neonicotinoid Insecticides	Neurotoxic pesticides that harm bees and other pollinators.
Environmental Accounting Framework	Government framework assigning economic value to ecosystem services like pollination.
Monoculture Farming	Cultivation of a single crop over a large area, often increasing pest and pollinator risks.
Ecosystem Services	Benefits provided by nature, such as pollination, water purification, and soil fertility.

[Gold miners keep working despite Ebola crisis in DRC-The Hindu Science](#)

Science

Easy Explanation

The **Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC)** is facing its **17th Ebola outbreak**, centred around the gold-mining town of **Mongbwalu** in Ituri Province. Despite the deadly disease, thousands of miners continue working because mining is their only source of livelihood.

Many workers know the risks of Ebola but cannot afford to stop working. Artisanal miners dig gold manually under poor health and safety conditions. Since most families depend on daily earnings for food and survival, economic necessity outweighs fear of infection.

The outbreak is particularly dangerous because it is caused by the **Bundibugyo strain of Ebola**, for which there is currently **no approved vaccine or specific treatment**. Existing Ebola vaccines mainly target the **Zaire strain**, responsible for earlier outbreaks.

Controlling the outbreak is also difficult due to public mistrust of government institutions and health workers. Many infected people prefer traditional healers over hospitals. The region has long suffered from armed conflict, violence, and weak governance, making public health interventions difficult.

The crisis highlights the close relationship between **poverty, public health, conflict, and resource extraction**. People continue working in risky conditions because stopping work could mean starvation. This shows how disease control becomes much harder when economic survival is at stake.

Key Takeaways

Ebola Outbreak in DRC

- DRC is facing its **17th Ebola outbreak**.
- Epicentre is **Mongbwalu** in **Ituri Province**.

Mining vs Survival

- Gold miners continue working despite infection risks.
- Poverty and lack of alternative livelihoods force people to work.

Bundibugyo Strain

- Current outbreak is caused by the **Bundibugyo strain**.
- No approved vaccine or specific treatment exists for this strain.



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Public Health Challenge

- Many people rely on traditional healers.
- Mistrust of government and healthcare systems hampers containment efforts.

Conflict and Governance

- Ituri region is affected by armed groups and instability.
- Weak governance makes disease surveillance and treatment difficult.

Illegal Gold Economy

- Much artisanal gold is controlled by militias.
- Significant quantities are smuggled across borders, especially to Uganda.

Important Terms

Term	Meaning
Ebola Virus Disease (EVD)	Severe viral haemorrhagic fever with high mortality rates.
Bundibugyo Strain	A strain of Ebola virus for which no approved vaccine currently exists.
Zaire Strain	Ebola strain against which current vaccines are effective.
Artisanal Mining	Small-scale, labour-intensive mining using simple tools and techniques.
Ituri Province	Conflict-prone northeastern province of DRC rich in gold deposits.
Post-Mortem Transmission	Spread of Ebola through contact with bodies of infected deceased persons.
Mercury Amalgamation	Method used to extract gold by mixing mercury with ore.
Public Health Emergency	Serious disease outbreak requiring urgent government intervention.
Community Militias	Armed local groups controlling territory and economic activities.
Cross-Border Gold Smuggling	Illegal movement of gold to neighbouring countries for sale.





26th June 2026

[If passport is not proof of citizenship, what is - The Indian Express Explained Page](#)

Polity

Easy Explanation

The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) recently clarified that an **Indian passport is primarily a travel document and not conclusive proof of citizenship**. This surprised many people because a passport is issued only after police verification and is widely accepted as an official government document. However, legally, a passport only indicates that the government is satisfied that the holder is an Indian citizen at the time of issuance—it does not itself create or permanently establish citizenship.

In India, **citizenship is a legal status**, not a document. It is governed by **Articles 5–11 of the Constitution** and the **Citizenship Act, 1955**. A person becomes an Indian citizen through birth, descent, registration, naturalisation, or incorporation of territory. Documents such as passports, birth certificates, Aadhaar, voter ID, or PAN cards merely provide evidence supporting these legal facts.

If a person's citizenship is challenged in a court or before a legal authority, the passport alone is not sufficient. Courts examine multiple factors such as date and place of birth, parents' citizenship, domicile, migration history, and other official records before determining citizenship.

Unlike many countries, India **does not issue a universal citizenship certificate** to every citizen. Only those who acquire citizenship through **registration or naturalisation** receive a formal certificate. Most Indians, being citizens by birth, rely on a combination of official documents rather than a single citizenship document.

The article also revisits the debate surrounding the **National Register of Citizens (NRC)**. The legal framework for NRC exists under the **Citizenship Rules, 2003**, but it has not been implemented across the country. Assam remains the only state where an NRC exercise has been completed, highlighting the practical and political challenges of creating a nationwide proof of citizenship.

Key Takeaways

Passport is a Travel Document

- A passport is issued for international travel and identification.
- It is evidence of citizenship but **not conclusive legal proof** of citizenship.

Citizenship is a Legal Status

- Citizenship is governed by the **Constitution** and the **Citizenship Act, 1955**.
- It depends on legal facts like birth, parentage, domicile, or naturalisation.

No Single Citizenship Document

- India does not issue a universal citizenship certificate.
- Citizenship is established through a combination of official records.

Five Ways to Acquire Citizenship

- By **Birth**
- By **Descent**
- By **Registration**
- By **Naturalisation**
- By **Incorporation of Territory**

Courts Examine Multiple Records

- A passport alone cannot settle citizenship disputes.
- Courts consider birth records, family links, domicile, and other evidence.



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NRC Remains Limited

- The **Citizenship Rules, 2003** provide for the NRC.
- Only **Assam** has implemented the NRC; no nationwide NRC exists.

Important Terms

Term	Meaning
Citizenship Act, 1955	The principal law governing acquisition and termination of Indian citizenship.
Articles 5–11	Constitutional provisions dealing with citizenship at the commencement of the Constitution.
Citizenship by Naturalisation	Citizenship granted to an eligible foreign national after fulfilling prescribed conditions.
Passport Act, 1967 (Section 20)	Allows the Central Government to issue travel documents even to certain non-citizens in public interest.
National Register of Citizens (NRC)	A proposed register to identify genuine Indian citizens based on documentary evidence.
Naturalisation Certificate	Official certificate issued to persons who acquire Indian citizenship through naturalisation.

[In Kunal Shah appointment, a signal of WhatsApp's india ambitions-The Indian Express Explained Page](#)

Science and technology

Easy Explanation

Meta has appointed **Kunal Shah**, the founder of **CRED**, as the **Global CEO of WhatsApp** and has also invested around **\$900 million** in CRED. This move reflects Meta's long-term strategy to expand WhatsApp's business in India, which is its largest market with nearly **500 million users**.

Although WhatsApp has a massive user base, it has not been able to generate significant revenue compared to Meta's other platforms like Facebook and Instagram. Features such as **WhatsApp Pay** have struggled despite India's rapid growth in digital payments. Meta now wants to convert WhatsApp from just a messaging platform into a profitable digital ecosystem.

Kunal Shah is known for building fintech businesses that focus on understanding consumer behaviour and creating premium digital services. His experience with **FreeCharge** and later **CRED** makes him well-suited to improve WhatsApp's payment services, financial offerings, and business model.

Another major possibility is Meta's plan to transform WhatsApp into a **Super App**—a single application offering multiple services like messaging, payments, shopping, ticket booking, food delivery, and financial services. Similar platforms, such as **WeChat** in China, have become central to users' daily lives.



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India has not yet seen a successful super app because consumers already use specialized apps for different services. However, WhatsApp has a unique advantage due to its enormous user base and daily usage. If Meta successfully integrates more services into WhatsApp, it could become India's first widely adopted super app.

The partnership with CRED also gives Meta valuable insights into India's financially active and premium customer segment. While Meta has clarified that it will not access CRED's user data, the collaboration is expected to strengthen WhatsApp's future strategy in digital commerce and financial services.

Key Takeaways

Meta's India Strategy

- India is WhatsApp's largest market with around **500 million users**.
- Meta sees India as its biggest long-term growth opportunity.

Kunal Shah's Appointment

- Founder of **CRED** and **FreeCharge**.
- Chosen for his expertise in fintech, consumer behaviour, and digital business models.

WhatsApp's Monetisation Challenge

- WhatsApp has a huge user base but relatively low revenue.
- Products like **WhatsApp Pay** have not achieved expected success.

Move Towards a Super App

- Meta aims to expand WhatsApp beyond messaging.
- Future services may include payments, shopping, commerce, and financial products.

India's Super App Race

- Existing players include **Tata Neu**, **Jio Platforms**, **Paytm**, **PhonePe**, and **Adani One**.
- WhatsApp enjoys a significant advantage because of its widespread daily usage.

Meta-CRED Partnership

- Meta's investment strengthens collaboration with CRED.
- It helps Meta better understand India's premium digital consumers.

Important Terms

Term	Meaning
Super App	A single application that provides multiple services such as messaging, payments, shopping, and travel.
Monetisation	The process of generating revenue from users or digital platforms.
WhatsApp Pay	WhatsApp's UPI-based digital payment service in India.
FinTech	Technology-driven financial services such as digital payments, lending, and banking.



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Premiumisation	Business strategy focused on serving high-value or premium customers with specialized products and services.
Digital Ecosystem	A connected network of digital services that keeps users within one platform.
WeChat Model	China's super app model integrating messaging, payments, shopping, and numerous daily services into one application.

[Behind Venezuela's quake devastation: Rare 'seismic doublet', vulnerable location-The Indian Express Explained](#)

[Page](#)

Geography

Easy Explanation

Venezuela has been hit by two powerful earthquakes measuring **7.2** and **7.5 magnitude**, occurring just **39 seconds apart**. This rare event is known as a **seismic doublet**, where two large earthquakes of similar strength occur in quick succession but originate from separate fault ruptures. The second earthquake is the strongest recorded in Venezuela since 1900, and the death toll is feared to be extremely high.

Both earthquakes occurred near the boundary of the **Caribbean Plate** and the **South American Plate**, where the plates slide past each other along a **strike-slip fault**. This movement suddenly releases accumulated energy, generating powerful earthquakes.

Normally, a major earthquake is followed by smaller **aftershocks**. However, in a seismic doublet, two major earthquakes occur almost immediately one after another. The first quake weakens buildings and infrastructure, while the second strikes before any recovery is possible, greatly increasing destruction and casualties.

The main earthquake occurred at a shallow depth of about **10 km**. Shallow earthquakes are generally more destructive because the seismic waves lose very little energy before reaching the Earth's surface, resulting in stronger ground shaking.

Scientists believe the event involved a **complex rupture interaction**, where stress released by one fault triggered another nearby fault almost instantly. This produced two independent but closely related earthquakes rather than a normal aftershock sequence.

Venezuela is highly earthquake-prone because it lies along an active tectonic plate boundary. Over the past decade, the country has experienced nearly **1,000 earthquakes of magnitude 4.0 or higher**, making seismic activity relatively common.

Similar seismic doublets have occurred before, including the devastating **2023 Türkiye-Syria earthquakes**, the **2012 Indian Ocean doublet**, and the **1988 Australian earthquake triplet**.

Key Takeaways

What is a Seismic Doublet?

- Two major earthquakes of similar magnitude occurring within a short time and close location.
- Different from the usual mainshock-aftershock sequence.

Cause of the Venezuela Earthquakes

- Movement along the **Caribbean Plate** and **South American Plate** boundary.
- Triggered by **strike-slip faulting**.

Why the Damage Was Severe



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- The second earthquake struck only **39 seconds** after the first.
- Buildings weakened by the first quake collapsed during the second.
- The mainshock occurred at a shallow depth of **10 km**, increasing ground shaking.

Foreshock and Mainshock

- **7.2 magnitude** earthquake was classified as the **foreshock**.
- **7.5 magnitude** earthquake became the **mainshock**.

Why Venezuela Faces Frequent Earthquakes

- Located on an active tectonic plate boundary.
- Around **1,000 earthquakes (M4.0+)** have occurred in the last decade.

Similar Global Examples

- **2023 Türkiye-Syria** doublet earthquakes.
- **2012 Indian Ocean** doublet.
- **1988 Australia** earthquake triplet.

Important Terms

Term	Meaning
Seismic Doublet	Two large earthquakes of similar magnitude occurring close together in time and location.
Strike-slip Fault	A fault where two tectonic plates slide horizontally past each other.
Fault	A fracture in the Earth's crust where rocks move, causing earthquakes.
Foreshock	A smaller earthquake that occurs before the main earthquake.
Mainshock	The largest earthquake in a sequence.
Aftershock	Smaller earthquakes that occur after the mainshock due to stress adjustment.
Tectonic Plates	Large moving sections of the Earth's lithosphere.
Shallow-focus Earthquake	An earthquake occurring at a depth of less than about 70 km, usually causing greater surface damage.





Complex Rupture Interaction

A process where rupture on one fault quickly triggers rupture on a nearby fault, producing multiple major earthquakes.

[‘100%’ tag on label, disclaimers on the back: Why CCPA fined 2 companies-The Indian Express Explained Page](#)

Governance

Easy Explanation

The **Central Consumer Protection Authority (CCPA)** has imposed a **₹1 lakh penalty each** on **Mrs. Bectors Food Specialities Ltd.** and **Storia Foods & Beverages Pvt. Ltd.** for using **"100%"** claims on their products in a way that could mislead consumers. The CCPA held that such claims created a false impression that the products were entirely pure or made only from the advertised ingredient, even though that was not the case.

The action was taken under the **Consumer Protection Act, 2019**, which prohibits **misleading advertisements** and **unfair trade practices**. The authority clarified that even if a product complies with food safety standards, companies cannot make exaggerated marketing claims that mislead buyers.

In the case of **Mrs. Bectors**, the company marketed its bread as **"100% Atta Bread"**. However, it admitted that the bread contained only **87% wheat flour (atta)**. The company argued that "100%" referred to the fact that it used only atta as the grain source and no **maida**. The CCPA rejected this explanation, stating that an average consumer would naturally understand "100% Atta Bread" to mean the bread is entirely made of atta.

Similarly, **Storia** advertised products as **"100% Tender Coconut Water"** and **"100% Juice"**. Investigation showed that the coconut water was made by **reconstituting coconut water concentrate**, while the juice products contained significant amounts of water, with fruit concentrate or pulp ranging only from **4% to 16%**. Although such manufacturing is permitted under food safety regulations, the CCPA ruled that calling these products "100%" on the front label was misleading.

The companies argued that they had provided disclaimers on the back of the package explaining that the products were reconstituted. The CCPA rejected this defence, stating that **fine-print disclaimers cannot correct a misleading headline claim displayed prominently on the front of the package**.

The authority also emphasized that compliance with **FSSAI** manufacturing standards does not automatically protect companies from action under consumer protection laws. Food safety regulations deal with product quality and manufacturing, whereas consumer laws focus on ensuring that advertisements do not deceive consumers. The CCPA observed that the **Consumer Protection Act, 2019** has shifted the principle from **"buyer beware"** to **"seller beware"**, making businesses responsible for truthful advertising.

Key Takeaways

Why were the companies fined?

- They used **"100%"** claims that gave consumers a false impression of absolute purity or composition.

CCPA's Stand

- Advertisements must not mislead consumers, even if the product technically complies with food safety standards.

Mrs. Bectors Case

- "100% Atta Bread" actually contained only **87% atta**.

Storia Case

- "100% Tender Coconut Water" and "100% Juice" were made using **reconstituted concentrates** and added water.

Why were disclaimers rejected?



| Click to Connect Now.



- Information printed on the back cannot override misleading claims prominently displayed on the front.

Important Principle

- Compliance with **FSSAI** standards does not exempt companies from liability under the **Consumer Protection Act, 2019**.

Consumer Protection Shift

- The law now follows the principle of "**Seller Beware**", placing greater responsibility on businesses to ensure truthful advertising.

Important Terms

Term	Meaning
CCPA	Central Consumer Protection Authority —the regulator that protects consumer rights and acts against misleading advertisements.
Consumer Protection Act, 2019	Law that protects consumers against unfair trade practices and misleading advertisements.
Misleading Advertisement	An advertisement that gives false information or creates a wrong impression about a product.
Unfair Trade Practice	Deceptive or misleading business practice used to promote or sell goods or services.
FSSAI	Food Safety and Standards Authority of India , the regulator responsible for food safety standards.
Reconstituted Product	A product prepared by adding water back to a concentrated form of the original product.
Fine-print Disclaimer	Small information printed on the packaging that cannot neutralize a misleading main claim.
Seller Beware	Legal principle that places responsibility on businesses to make truthful and non-deceptive claims.

[My absence is not silence.I will return through the strength of the people-The Indian Express Ideas Page](#)

International relations

Easy Explanation



| Click to Connect Now.



This article is an opinion piece by **Sheikh Hasina**, former Prime Minister of Bangladesh, marking the **77th Foundation Day of the Bangladesh Awami League (AL)**. She argues that despite being removed from power and the party being banned from political activities, the Awami League remains deeply connected to the people of Bangladesh.

She traces the Awami League's historical role in Bangladesh's creation, highlighting its leadership in the **Language Movement (1952)**, the **Six-Point Movement (1966)**, the **1971 Liberation War**, and the country's independence under **Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman**. According to her, the history of Bangladesh is inseparable from the history of the Awami League.

Hasina strongly criticises the current political situation in Bangladesh, alleging that the present government came to power through an **unfair election** and has used **false cases, arrests, intimidation, and political repression** against Awami League leaders and supporters. She argues that democratic rights, including freedom of political expression, have been undermined.

The statement **"My absence is not silence. I will return through the strength of the people"** reflects her message that although she is currently away from Bangladesh, she continues to participate in the struggle for democracy through diplomatic, political, and legal means. She expresses confidence that the Awami League will eventually regain its political space because of popular support.

Hasina calls upon party workers to remain united, strengthen grassroots connections, support vulnerable communities, and continue peaceful democratic activism. She reiterates her commitment to restoring **democracy, rule of law, voting rights, and the ideals of the 1971 Liberation War**.

Overall, the article presents the Awami League's perspective on Bangladesh's recent political developments and serves as a political message to its supporters rather than a neutral account of events.

Key Takeaways

Background

- Marks the **77th anniversary** of the **Bangladesh Awami League**.
- Highlights the party's role in Bangladesh's independence movement.

Historical Contributions

- Leadership in the **1952 Language Movement**.
- **Six-Point Movement (1966)**.
- **1971 Liberation War**.
- Leadership of **Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman**.

Main Allegations

- Claims the current government is **unelected** and politically repressive.
- Alleges **false criminal cases**, arrests, harassment, and restrictions on political activities.
- States that democratic rights have been weakened.

Central Message

- The Awami League may be banned politically, but it cannot be erased from public support.
- Sheikh Hasina pledges to continue the struggle for democracy and eventually return to active politics.

Future Vision

- Restore **democracy, rule of law, and voting rights**.
- Protect minority communities, women, labourers, and marginalised groups.
- Build the vision of **"Sonar Bangla" (Golden Bengal)**.

Important Terms

Term

Meaning



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Bangladesh Awami League (AL)	One of Bangladesh's oldest and largest political parties, founded in 1949 .
Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman	Founder of Bangladesh and leader of its independence movement.
Language Movement (1952)	Movement demanding recognition of Bangla as a state language in then Pakistan.
Six-Point Movement	Political movement demanding greater autonomy for East Pakistan before Bangladesh's independence.
Liberation War (1971)	War that led to the creation of independent Bangladesh.
Sonar Bangla	"Golden Bengal"—the vision of a prosperous and developed Bangladesh.
Rule of Law	Principle that everyone, including the government, is subject to the law.
Political Repression	Suppression of political opposition through arrests, intimidation, censorship, or legal action.
Democratic Rights	Rights such as voting, political participation, freedom of expression, and peaceful assembly.

[Revisiting India's ultrasound laws-The Hindu Text and Context](#)

Science and technology

Easy Explanation

The **Pre-Conception and Pre-Natal Diagnostic Techniques (PCPNDT) Act, 1994** was enacted to stop the misuse of **ultrasound technology** for **prenatal sex determination** and the resulting **female foeticide**. It requires strict regulation of ultrasound machines, registration of diagnostic centres, and prohibits revealing the sex of the foetus.

While the law has helped curb the misuse of ultrasound for sex selection, experts now argue that it has also created unintended problems. Because the Act treats moving an ultrasound machine outside a registered facility as a serious offence, portable ultrasound devices cannot be used in villages or health camps for diagnosing diseases such as **breast cancer**, thyroid disorders, or other medical conditions.

The article illustrates this through the example of a rural woman who delayed visiting a distant hospital despite having a breast lump. By the time she reached the hospital, her cancer had reached an advanced stage. Modern **portable ultrasound machines** could have enabled early diagnosis near her home, but current legal restrictions prevented their use.



| Click to Connect Now.



The **PCPNDT Act** mandates that every ultrasound machine must be installed only in a registered centre. Manufacturers can sell machines only to authorised facilities, and every scan must be documented. Any movement of the machine outside the approved location can attract severe penalties, including imprisonment.

Although India's **sex ratio at birth** has improved gradually since the Act came into force, illegal sex determination continues through underground networks using portable ultrasound devices. This suggests that legislation alone cannot eliminate deep-rooted **gender bias** in society.

Research also indicates some unintended social effects. Families unable to determine the foetal sex legally sometimes continue having more children until a son is born. This has been associated with higher child mortality among girls, reduced investment in girls' education and health, and greater financial strain, especially among poor rural families.

Technology has changed significantly since 1994. Today, **high-frequency ultrasound probes** used for detecting breast cancer or other superficial diseases cannot determine the sex of a foetus. Similarly, **AI-enabled ultrasound systems** can automatically analyse images for specific diseases without displaying or storing foetal images, making misuse much more difficult.

Experts therefore argue that the law should be updated to distinguish between ultrasound used for **cancer diagnosis and other legitimate medical purposes** and ultrasound used during pregnancy. Carefully regulated community-based use of portable ultrasound, supported by AI safeguards, could improve early diagnosis and save lives without weakening the law against sex determination.

Key Takeaways

Purpose of the PCPNDT Act

- Prevent **prenatal sex determination** and **female foeticide**.
- Regulate the use of ultrasound technology.

Major Provisions

- Mandatory registration of ultrasound centres.
- Ban on disclosure of foetal sex.
- Strict record maintenance.
- Severe penalties for violations.

Why Reform is Being Discussed

- Portable ultrasound can improve early diagnosis of diseases like breast cancer.
- Current law restricts community-based diagnostic services.

Unintended Consequences

- Delayed access to diagnostic care in rural areas.
- Continued illegal sex-selection networks despite strict laws.
- Some families have more children in search of a male child.

Role of AI

- AI-assisted ultrasound can identify diseases like breast cancer.
- High-frequency probes used for cancer diagnosis cannot determine foetal sex.
- AI safeguards can reduce the risk of misuse.

Suggested Reforms

- Permit portable ultrasound for non-obstetric medical purposes.
- Differentiate between pregnancy-related imaging and disease diagnosis.
- Update the Act to accommodate AI-enabled diagnostic technologies.

Important Terms



| Click to Connect Now.



Term	Meaning
PCPNDT Act, 1994	Law enacted to prohibit prenatal sex determination and prevent female foeticide.
Prenatal Sex Determination	Identifying the sex of the foetus before birth.
Female Foeticide	Abortion of a female foetus because of its sex.
Portable Ultrasound	Small ultrasound device that can be carried to villages and community health centres.
High-frequency Linear Probe	Ultrasound probe mainly used for imaging superficial organs like the breast and thyroid; not suitable for foetal sex determination.
Artificial Intelligence (AI)	Technology that helps analyse ultrasound images automatically to assist diagnosis.
Sex Ratio at Birth (SRB)	Number of girls born per 1,000 boys; an indicator of gender balance.
Genetic Clinic	A registered medical facility authorised to conduct prenatal diagnostic procedures under the PCPNDT Act.
Foetal Sex Disclosure	Revealing the sex of the unborn child, which is prohibited under the PCPNDT Act.

[Should Indian seafarers stop serving on sanctioned ships?-The Hindu Editorial](#)

Economy

Easy Explanation

Indian seafarers form one of the largest workforces in the global shipping industry. However, recent conflicts involving **sanctioned ships** have raised concerns about their safety. Three Indian seafarers were killed when the **United States** attacked ships allegedly carrying Iranian cargo, and an Indian captain was arrested in the **United Kingdom** after a Russian-linked vessel under sanctions was detained. These incidents have triggered a debate on whether Indian seafarers should continue serving on such ships.

Shipping carries nearly **90% of global trade by volume**, making seafarers essential for international commerce. India has over **5 lakh registered seafarers**, with around **3.2 lakh actively working**, contributing nearly **\$6–9 billion** annually in foreign exchange. Their role is particularly important because India imports more than **85% of its energy**, most of which arrives by sea.

A major issue is the nature of **international sanctions**. There are two types:



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- **UN Security Council sanctions**, which are legally binding on all member states.
- **Unilateral sanctions**, imposed by countries like the US, UK, or the European Union. These are legally binding only within the jurisdiction of the country imposing them, although powerful countries often try to enforce them globally.

Experts argue that India should not impose a blanket ban on Indian seafarers joining sanctioned vessels because this could affect employment opportunities and India's energy imports. Instead, the **Directorate General of Shipping (DG Shipping)** has advised seafarers to understand the risks before accepting jobs on such vessels.

The discussion also highlighted the difference between **sanctioned vessels** and **dark fleet vessels**. A sanctioned vessel is one that is subject to restrictions imposed by governments or international bodies. A **dark fleet** refers to ships that hide their identity by switching off tracking systems, using fake registrations or insurance documents, or conducting illegal ship-to-ship transfers to evade sanctions.

Regarding the arrest of the Indian captain in the UK, legal experts argue that India can examine whether British authorities had proper jurisdiction and can provide **diplomatic protection** if an Indian citizen's rights under international law are affected.

Many experts recommend that instead of banning employment, the Indian government should maintain a regularly updated list of **high-risk or sanctioned vessels** and require licensed recruitment agencies to inform seafarers about the risks. This would help protect vulnerable workers while allowing informed career decisions.

Overall, the debate suggests that protecting Indian seafarers requires a balanced approach involving better information, stronger diplomatic efforts, international legal mechanisms, and improved regulation of recruitment agencies rather than a complete prohibition.

Key Takeaways

Importance of Indian Seafarers

- India has over **5 lakh registered seafarers**.
- Shipping carries around **90% of global trade**.
- Indian seafarers contribute **\$6–9 billion** annually in foreign exchange.

Types of Sanctions

- **UN sanctions** are legally binding worldwide.
- **Unilateral sanctions** are imposed by individual countries or groups.

Current Concerns

- Indian seafarers have been affected by conflicts involving sanctioned ships.
- Safety risks have increased in conflict-prone maritime regions.

Sanctioned Vessel vs Dark Fleet

- Sanctioned vessels are legally restricted by governments.
- Dark fleet vessels evade monitoring using illegal methods.

Suggested Government Measures

- Maintain a dynamic list of high-risk vessels.
- Ensure recruitment agencies warn seafarers about risks.
- Strengthen diplomatic and legal protection for Indian seafarers abroad.

Important Terms

Term

Meaning



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Seafarer	A person employed on board a merchant ship, including officers, engineers and crew.
Sanctioned Vessel	A ship subject to restrictions imposed by countries or international organisations.
UN Security Council Sanctions	Internationally binding sanctions adopted under Chapter VII of the UN Charter.
Unilateral Sanctions	Sanctions imposed independently by a country or group of countries such as the US or EU.
Dark Fleet	Ships that evade sanctions by hiding their identity through false registration, fake insurance or switching off tracking systems.
DG Shipping	Directorate General of Shipping, India's maritime regulatory authority.
Diplomatic Protection	Action taken by a government to protect the rights of its citizens abroad under international law.
UNCLOS	United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, the international legal framework governing oceans and maritime activities.
Strait of Hormuz	A strategically important sea route through which a significant share of global oil and LNG trade passes.
Flag State	The country under whose laws a ship is registered and whose flag it flies.

27th June 2026

[What a 'Right to Walk' Can Look Like for India - The Indian Express Explained Page](#)

Polity

Easy Explanation

The **Supreme Court** recently made a landmark observation that the **Right to Walk safely on public roads and footpaths is a Fundamental Right** under the Constitution. The Court stated that every citizen has the right to move safely, and governments have a duty to provide proper pedestrian infrastructure.

The observation came while hearing a case involving the tragic death of a school student who was forced to walk on the road because there was no usable footpath. The Court noted that Indian cities have been designed mainly for **cars and motor vehicles**, while pedestrians—the largest group of road users—have been neglected.



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Walking is not merely a way of travelling. It enables people to reach schools, hospitals, markets, workplaces and public spaces. Safe walking also promotes public health, reduces pollution, lowers traffic congestion and makes cities more inclusive for children, elderly persons and persons with disabilities.

The article argues that India's urban planning has traditionally focused on building wider roads and flyovers rather than creating pedestrian-friendly infrastructure. In many cities, footpaths are either absent or occupied by parked vehicles, construction material, utility poles or uneven pavements, forcing pedestrians onto busy roads.

The Supreme Court stressed that merely constructing footpaths is not sufficient. A truly walkable city should have **continuous footpaths, safe pedestrian crossings, proper lighting, trees for shade, benches, drinking water facilities, ramps for persons with disabilities and well-maintained public spaces.**

The article also challenges the common perception that **street vendors and hawkers are obstacles.** Well-managed street vending actually improves public safety by increasing human activity on streets ("eyes on the street"), making roads livelier and safer while providing affordable goods and services.

Another major issue is institutional fragmentation. Different authorities such as municipal corporations, traffic police, development authorities and utility agencies work independently, often resulting in poorly maintained or damaged footpaths. The article therefore recommends a dedicated legal framework clearly assigning responsibility for pedestrian safety.

Ultimately, the judgment marks an important shift in India's urban planning philosophy—from prioritising vehicles to recognising that **people should come first.** The "Right to Walk" is now being viewed as an essential component of dignity, equality and quality of life.

Key Takeaways

Constitutional Recognition

- The **Supreme Court** recognised safe walking as part of **Article 21 (Right to Life)** and **Article 19(1)(d) (Freedom of Movement).**

Pedestrians First

- Urban infrastructure should prioritise pedestrians instead of focusing only on motor vehicles.

Walkability Improves Quality of Life

- Safe footpaths improve public health, reduce pollution, encourage physical activity and increase social interaction.

Inclusive Urban Design

- Footpaths should include ramps, tactile paving, proper lighting, benches, trees and safe crossings for all users.

Street Vendors Can Improve Safety

- Properly regulated vendors increase public activity and natural surveillance, making streets safer.

Need for Better Governance

- Multiple agencies currently share responsibility for roads, leading to poor maintenance. A dedicated legal framework is needed.

Shift Towards Human-Centric Cities

- Future urban planning should focus on accessibility, safety and public convenience rather than only expanding road capacity.

Important Terms



| Click to Connect Now.



Term	Meaning
Article 21	Guarantees the Right to Life and Personal Liberty , which includes the right to live with dignity and safety.
Article 19(1)(d)	Guarantees the Freedom to Move Freely throughout the territory of India.
Right to Walk	Judicial recognition that every citizen has the right to safe and accessible pedestrian infrastructure.
Walkability	The degree to which an area is safe, comfortable and convenient for walking.
Pedestrian Infrastructure	Facilities such as footpaths, crossings, ramps, lighting and sidewalks designed for pedestrians.
Complete Streets	Roads designed for all users—pedestrians, cyclists, public transport and motor vehicles—not just cars.
Universal Accessibility	Designing infrastructure so that it can be safely used by persons with disabilities, elderly people and children.
Eyes on the Street	An urban planning concept where active public spaces and street activity naturally improve public safety.
Pedestrian Right of Way	Principle that pedestrians should receive priority over vehicles at designated crossings and footpaths.
Human-Centric Urban Planning	City planning that prioritises people, safety, accessibility and quality of life over vehicle movement.

[From 5 Indians to 5% of Population: Diaspora Key to Seychelles Ties - The Indian Express Explained Page](#)

International relations

Easy Explanation

Prime Minister **Narendra Modi** visited **Seychelles** as the Chief Guest for its **50th Independence Day celebrations**, highlighting the importance India attaches to this strategically located island nation in the **Indian Ocean Region (IOR)**.



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The relationship between India and Seychelles dates back to **1770**, when the first settlers included **five Indians**. During British rule, Seychelles was administered under the **Bombay Presidency**, strengthening historical and commercial ties. Today, nearly **6,000 Persons of Indian Origin (PIOs)** make up about **5% of Seychelles' population**.

Since Seychelles gained independence in **1976**, India has become one of its closest development partners by providing infrastructure projects, concessional credit, healthcare support, educational scholarships, defence cooperation and disaster relief.

Seychelles occupies a critical position in the **Western Indian Ocean**, close to major international shipping lanes. India assists the country in maritime security through patrol vessels, coastal surveillance systems, military training and anti-piracy cooperation. The partnership also supports India's broader vision of maintaining peace, security and sustainable development across the Indian Ocean.

Key Takeaways

Historical Relations

- India's connection with Seychelles dates back over **250 years**, beginning with the arrival of Indian settlers in 1770.
- Historical links deepened during British rule when Seychelles was administered from the **Bombay Presidency**.

Indian Diaspora

- Nearly **5% of Seychelles' population** consists of Persons of Indian Origin who contribute significantly to business, healthcare and education.
- The Indian diaspora acts as an important bridge strengthening cultural and economic ties.

Strategic Importance

- Seychelles occupies a vital position near major sea lanes in the **Western Indian Ocean**, making it strategically important for global trade.
- The island nation plays a key role in India's maritime security and Indo-Pacific strategy.

India-Seychelles Cooperation

- India provides grants, concessional loans, defence cooperation, healthcare, education and infrastructure assistance.
- Maritime cooperation includes anti-piracy operations, coastal surveillance and capacity building.

Future Significance

- Growing geopolitical competition in the Indian Ocean makes Seychelles an increasingly valuable strategic partner.
- Strong bilateral ties contribute to regional stability, maritime security and the Blue Economy.

Important Terms

Term	Meaning
Seychelles	Island nation in the Western Indian Ocean with strategic maritime importance.
Persons of Indian Origin (PIOs)	Foreign citizens having Indian ancestry.
Indian Ocean Region (IOR)	Strategic maritime region connecting Asia, Africa and Europe.





SAGAR	Security and Growth for All in the Region, India's maritime vision.
MAHASAGAR	India's expanded maritime cooperation initiative.
Blue Economy	Sustainable use of ocean resources for economic growth and conservation.
Maritime Domain Awareness (MDA)	Monitoring maritime activities for security and safety.
Concessional Credit	Loans provided at lower-than-market interest rates.

['Genocidal Intent': The Implications of a UN Panel Report for Cases Against Israel - The Indian Express Explained Page](#)

International relations

Easy Explanation

A **United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC)** Commission of Inquiry has alleged that Israel's military actions in **Gaza** may demonstrate **genocidal intent**, especially because of repeated attacks affecting children and civilian infrastructure.

The Commission argues that children are central to the survival of any community. Therefore, systematic attacks on children, schools, hospitals and humanitarian infrastructure may indicate an intention to destroy a protected group.

Israel has rejected the report, calling it politically motivated and factually incorrect.

Under the **1948 Genocide Convention**, genocide requires not only large-scale killings but also proof that the acts were committed with the **specific intention** of destroying a national, ethnic, racial or religious group. This makes genocide one of the most difficult international crimes to establish.

Although the Commission cannot punish Israel, its findings may become important evidence before international courts such as the **International Court of Justice (ICJ)** and the **International Criminal Court (ICC)**.

Key Takeaways

UN Investigation

- The UN Commission alleges that attacks on civilians and children may indicate **genocidal intent**.
- The report documents allegations involving schools, hospitals, humanitarian infrastructure and civilian casualties.

Legal Framework

- Under the **1948 Genocide Convention**, genocide requires proof of a specific intention to destroy a protected group.
- Establishing intent is the most difficult legal requirement in genocide cases.

International Legal Impact

- The report may strengthen ongoing proceedings before the **ICJ** and **ICC**.
- Although not legally binding itself, the report serves as important documentary evidence.



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Israel's Position

- Israel rejects the findings, calling the report politically biased.
- It maintains that its military operations comply with international law.

Global Significance

- The report has intensified international debate on humanitarian law and civilian protection.
- It may influence future accountability mechanisms in international criminal law.

Important Terms

Term	Meaning
Genocide	Intentional destruction of a protected national, ethnic, racial or religious group.
Genocidal Intent	Specific intention to destroy a protected community.
UNHRC	United Nations Human Rights Council.
Commission of Inquiry	Independent UN body investigating human rights violations.
Genocide Convention (1948)	International treaty defining and prohibiting genocide.
ICJ	International Court of Justice, which settles disputes between states.
ICC	International Criminal Court, which prosecutes individuals for international crimes.
War Crimes	Serious violations of international humanitarian law during armed conflict.

[Patrice Lumumba: DRC's Icon, Now a World Cup Highlight - The Indian Express Explained Page](#)

International relations

Easy Explanation

During the FIFA Club World Cup, global attention returned to **Patrice Lumumba**, the first democratically elected Prime Minister of the **Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)**, after a supporter appeared dressed as him.

Before independence, Congo experienced one of history's harshest colonial regimes under **King Leopold II of Belgium**. Millions died because of forced labour, violence and exploitation while extracting rubber, ivory and minerals.



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Patrice Lumumba emerged as a powerful nationalist leader who founded the **Mouvement National Congolais (MNC)** and advocated national unity, sovereignty and freedom from colonial rule. Following Congo's independence in **1960**, he became the country's first Prime Minister.

Within a year, he was overthrown and assassinated amid Cold War politics and foreign interference. Despite his short political career, Lumumba became an enduring symbol of African nationalism and anti-colonial resistance.

Key Takeaways

Colonial Background

- Congo suffered extreme exploitation under **King Leopold II**, with millions dying during colonial rule.
- The country's vast natural resources attracted continued foreign intervention.

Rise of Patrice Lumumba

- Lumumba founded the **Mouvement National Congolais (MNC)** and promoted national unity.
- He became Congo's first democratically elected Prime Minister after independence in 1960.

Assassination

- Lumumba was overthrown and assassinated within a year amid Cold War rivalries and foreign involvement.
- His death remains one of Africa's most significant political assassinations.

Legacy

- Lumumba is regarded as a symbol of African nationalism, sovereignty and anti-colonial struggle.
- Belgium later acknowledged its historical role and returned his remaining relics to his family.

Modern Relevance

- Lumumba continues to inspire movements supporting political independence and national dignity.
- His legacy remains closely linked with debates on colonialism, resource exploitation and African self-determination.

Important Terms

Term	Meaning
Patrice Lumumba	First democratically elected Prime Minister of independent Congo.
Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)	Mineral-rich Central African country formerly under Belgian colonial rule.
King Leopold II	Belgian monarch responsible for brutal exploitation of the Congo Free State.
Congo Free State	Territory personally controlled by King Leopold II between 1885 and 1908.
Mouvement National Congolais (MNC)	Political party founded by Patrice Lumumba promoting national unity.





Anti-Colonialism	Movement opposing colonial rule and supporting national independence.
Cold War	Global political rivalry mainly between the United States and the Soviet Union.
National Sovereignty	A nation's right to govern itself without external interference.

[A Passport That Doesn't Count, a Narrowing Idea of Citizenship - The Indian Express Explained Page](#)

Polity

Easy Explanation

The article discusses the growing debate over **proof of Indian citizenship**, especially after the **Ministry of External Affairs (MEA)** clarified that a **passport is only a travel document and not conclusive proof of citizenship**. While legally correct, this statement has created confusion because passports are issued only after government verification and are widely regarded as the most authoritative identity document.

The author argues that India's understanding of **citizenship** has gradually shifted from being **inclusive** to becoming increasingly **restrictive**. Earlier, citizenship was largely based on **birth in India (jus soli)**, but successive amendments to the **Citizenship Act, 1955** introduced additional conditions related to the citizenship status of parents, moving India closer to the principle of **jus sanguinis (citizenship by blood/descent)**.

The article traces how courts have interpreted citizenship differently over time. Earlier judgments sometimes protected individuals despite possessing foreign passports, whereas more recent judgments have held that even an Indian passport may not be sufficient proof of citizenship if challenged.

The author also questions why India still lacks a **universal citizenship certificate**. Since documents like **passports** and **Voter ID cards** are issued only after government verification, they should create at least a **legal presumption of citizenship**. Otherwise, ordinary citizens may repeatedly be required to prove their citizenship, creating uncertainty and administrative hardship.

The article concludes that unless a document obtained through fraud is proven to be invalid, government-issued documents such as passports and voter ID cards should be treated as reliable proof of citizenship to protect citizens from unnecessary legal challenges.

Key Takeaways

Citizenship vs Documents

- **Citizenship** is a legal status created by the **Constitution** and the **Citizenship Act, 1955**, while documents merely serve as evidence of that status.
- The **MEA** clarified that a passport confirms the government's satisfaction at the time of issuance but does not itself create citizenship.

Shift Towards Restrictive Citizenship

- India originally followed the principle of **jus soli**, granting citizenship primarily by birth.
- Amendments in **1986** and **2003** gradually linked citizenship to the nationality of parents, making citizenship rules more restrictive.

Judicial Interpretation

- Court decisions on citizenship have evolved over time, with recent judgments requiring stronger evidence beyond passports in disputed cases.



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- This has increased uncertainty over what documents conclusively establish citizenship.

Need for a Clear Citizenship Framework

- India does not issue a universal citizenship certificate to all citizens.
- The absence of a single definitive document creates confusion during citizenship verification exercises.

Author's Suggestion

- Government-issued documents like **passports** and **Voter ID cards** should carry a legal presumption of citizenship unless proven fraudulent.
- The burden of disproving citizenship should rest on the authority challenging an individual's status, rather than on the citizen repeatedly proving it.

Important Terms

Term	Meaning
Citizenship	Legal relationship between an individual and the State, conferring rights and duties.
Citizenship Act, 1955	Principal law governing acquisition and termination of Indian citizenship.
Article 5	Constitutional provision granting citizenship at the commencement of the Constitution.
Article 11	Empowers Parliament to regulate citizenship through legislation.
Jus Soli	Principle where citizenship is acquired by birth within a country's territory .
Jus Sanguinis	Principle where citizenship is acquired through descent or blood relationship .
Passport	Government-issued travel document; legally not conclusive proof of citizenship.
Voter ID Card (EPIC)	Identity card issued by the Election Commission to eligible voters.
National Register of Citizens (NRC)	Register intended to identify genuine Indian citizens through documentary verification.
Special Intensive Revision (SIR)	Special electoral roll verification exercise conducted by the Election Commission.





Presumption of Fact	Legal assumption that a fact exists until evidence proves otherwise.
Conclusive Proof	Evidence that the court must accept as final and cannot ordinarily be contradicted.
Burden of Proof	Legal obligation to establish or disprove a particular fact before a court.
Estoppel	Legal principle preventing a party from contradicting its earlier representation if others relied upon it.
Bharatiya Sakshya Adhiniyam, 2023	India's new law governing rules of evidence, replacing the Indian Evidence Act, 1872.

[Yes, teach Emergency to young. Lesson endures - The Indian Express Ideas Page](#)

Sociology

Easy Explanation

The editorial welcomes the **NCERT's decision** to include a detailed chapter on the **Emergency (1975–77)** in the Class 9 Social Science textbook. It argues that students should not receive an idealised picture of democracy but should also learn about moments when democratic institutions failed.

During the **Emergency**, many **Fundamental Rights** were suspended, the **press was censored**, political opponents were arrested, and constitutional institutions failed to effectively check the concentration of executive power. Teaching this period helps students understand that democracy is not self-sustaining and requires constant vigilance.

The editorial also notes that although the Emergency remains one of the darkest periods in independent India's history, the peaceful electoral defeat of the Indira Gandhi government in **1977** demonstrated the resilience of Indian democracy. Citizens ultimately restored democratic governance through the ballot box.

The article concludes that democracy is not merely a constitutional arrangement but a civic habit that must be nurtured through education. Young citizens should understand both the strengths and vulnerabilities of democratic institutions so that they can actively protect constitutional values in the future.

Key Takeaways

Need for Democratic Education

- Students should learn both the achievements and failures of Indian democracy.
- Understanding the Emergency develops informed and responsible citizenship.

Lessons from the Emergency

- Suspension of **Fundamental Rights**, press censorship and mass arrests exposed democratic vulnerabilities.
- The period serves as a warning against excessive concentration of political power.

Importance of Institutions

- Democratic institutions must function independently to protect constitutional values.



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- Effective checks and balances prevent abuse of executive authority.

Role of Citizens

- Democracy survives only when citizens remain aware, active and vigilant.
- Civic education strengthens public participation in democratic governance.

Power of Elections

- The 1977 General Election proved that citizens can peacefully restore democracy.
- Electoral accountability remains one of democracy's greatest strengths.

Important Terms

Term	Meaning
Emergency (1975–77)	Period during which civil liberties were suspended and extraordinary powers were exercised by the government.
Fundamental Rights	Constitutional rights guaranteed to every citizen.
Press Censorship	Government restriction on publication of news and information.
Checks and Balances	Constitutional mechanisms that prevent misuse of power by any one institution.
Electoral Accountability	The ability of citizens to remove governments through elections.

[More children isn't the answer to delimitation, tax challenges - The Indian Express Ideas Page](#)

Sociology

Easy Explanation

India's latest **SRS** and **NFHS-6** data show that the country's **Total Fertility Rate (TFR)** has fallen to **1.9**, below the replacement level of 2.1. According to UN estimates, India's population is likely to peak around **2062** before gradually declining.

However, fertility levels differ significantly across states. **Bihar** and **Uttar Pradesh** continue to have higher fertility rates due to lower levels of **women's education**, healthcare access and contraceptive use. The article argues that improving these areas is a better solution than encouraging people to have more children.

Some states have announced incentives for larger families because they fear losing political representation after **delimitation**. The authors argue that increasing fertility is neither necessary nor effective. Instead, issues related to political representation should be solved through institutional reforms.

India should now focus on improving the **quality of its population** through education, healthcare, women's empowerment and skill development rather than simply increasing population size.



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Key Takeaways

Population Trends

- India's **TFR** has fallen below replacement level and population growth is expected to stabilise naturally.
- The priority should now be improving the quality of human capital rather than increasing births.

State-wise Differences

- States like **Bihar** and **Uttar Pradesh** still have higher fertility because of lower social development.
- Greater investment in women's education and family welfare can accelerate demographic transition.

Delimitation Debate

- Concerns over future **delimitation** are driving calls for higher fertility in some states.
- Political representation should be addressed through institutional reforms instead of population growth.

Population Incentives

- Financial incentives for larger families have shown limited success internationally.
- Sustainable fertility decisions depend more on social and economic conditions.

Women's Empowerment

- Better education, healthcare and contraceptive access reduce fertility naturally.
- Empowering women remains the most effective long-term population policy.

Human Capital

- India's future growth depends more on skilled, healthy and educated citizens than population size.
- Investment in human development will provide greater economic benefits.

Balanced Policy Approach

- Population policy should balance demographic stability with equitable political representation.
- Long-term reforms are preferable to short-term population incentives.

Important Terms

Important Term	Meaning
Total Fertility Rate (TFR)	Average number of children a woman is expected to have during her lifetime.
Replacement Level Fertility	Fertility level (about 2.1) needed to maintain a stable population.
Delimitation	Redrawing parliamentary and assembly constituencies based on population.
Demographic Performance	Improvement made by states in controlling population growth.





Sample Registration System (SRS) India's official survey for birth, death and fertility statistics.

National Family Health Survey (NFHS) Nationwide survey on health, fertility and nutrition.

Tax Devolution Distribution of central tax revenue among states.

[Delhi-Dhaka thaw welcome. Build on it - The Indian Express Ideas Page](#)

International relations

Easy Explanation

After political changes in **Bangladesh** in 2024, relations between **India** and Bangladesh became tense due to concerns over minority safety, political instability and some trade-related measures. However, both countries are now taking positive steps to rebuild trust.

India has resumed issuing **tourist visas** at pre-2024 levels, while high-level diplomatic meetings and continued cooperation in areas like fuel supply have improved the atmosphere. These developments indicate a gradual return to normal relations.

The editorial argues that India should avoid being seen as a "big brother" and instead build relations based on mutual respect, trust and shared benefits. Since the two countries are closely linked by geography, trade, connectivity and culture, maintaining strong ties is in the interest of both nations.

Key Takeaways

Need for Trust

- India and Bangladesh must rebuild mutual trust through continuous diplomatic engagement.
- Strong bilateral relations should not depend on which political party is in power.

Regional Importance

- Bangladesh is a key partner for India's **Act East Policy**, **BIMSTEC** and Indian Ocean strategy.
- Cooperation strengthens regional connectivity, trade and security.

Shared Interests

- Both countries benefit from cooperation on border management, river water sharing and energy.
- Stable relations promote economic growth and regional peace.

Diplomatic Maturity

- India should engage Bangladesh as an equal partner rather than following a "big brother" approach.
- Mutual respect creates stronger and more sustainable partnerships.

Recent Positive Steps

- Restoration of tourist visas and high-level diplomatic meetings have improved relations.
- Continued engagement can help resolve remaining differences.

Economic Cooperation

- Geography makes India and Bangladesh natural economic partners.



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- Expanding trade and connectivity will benefit both countries.

Way Forward

- Both governments should avoid short-term political rhetoric.
- Long-term cooperation based on shared interests should guide the bilateral relationship.

Important Terms

Important Term	Meaning
Act East Policy	India's policy to strengthen economic and strategic ties with Southeast and East Asia.
BIMSTEC	Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation, a regional grouping connecting South and Southeast Asia.
Transshipment	Movement of goods through another country's ports or transport network before reaching the final destination.
Indian Ocean Region (IOR)	Strategic maritime region important for trade, security and connectivity.
Diplomatic Engagement	Continuous dialogue and cooperation between countries to resolve issues peacefully.
Trust Deficit	Lack of mutual confidence between two countries that affects bilateral relations.

[The cracks beneath the peddled story of India's growth-The Hindu Editorial](#)

Economy

Easy Explanation

The article argues that although India is often presented as one of the world's fastest-growing major economies, several **structural economic challenges** continue to exist beneath this growth story. According to the author, India's economy remains highly dependent on imported **crude oil, natural gas**, fertilizers and foreign capital, making it vulnerable to global events such as wars, supply disruptions and rising commodity prices. These external shocks can increase inflation, widen the trade deficit and weaken the value of the **rupee**.

The author also highlights concerns regarding **employment generation**, manufacturing growth and technological competitiveness. While India has made progress in digital services and startups, it still depends heavily on imported **semiconductors**, advanced technology and capital equipment. The article argues that greater investment in science, research, AI, manufacturing and innovation is needed to build long-term economic strength rather than relying mainly on consumption-driven growth.

Another concern raised is the condition of the rural economy. A weak **monsoon**, rising input costs and reduced social protection can affect farmers' incomes and rural demand. The author suggests that strengthening employment programmes, improving



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public investment, promoting domestic manufacturing and reducing external dependence would help build a more resilient and sustainable economy.

Key Takeaways

External Dependence

- India imports most of its crude oil and a large share of natural gas, making the economy vulnerable to global price shocks.
- Higher import costs increase inflation, widen the trade deficit and weaken the rupee.

Technology & Manufacturing

- India needs stronger investment in **AI**, semiconductors, advanced manufacturing and research.
- Long-term economic growth depends on technological innovation and industrial competitiveness.

Rural Economy

- A weak monsoon affects agriculture, rural incomes, food prices and overall consumption.
- Strong rural employment and social protection programmes remain important.

Employment

- Quality job creation remains a major challenge despite economic growth.
- Manufacturing expansion and skill development are necessary to utilise India's demographic dividend.

External Sector

- India benefits from services exports and remittances, but both face future global uncertainties.
- Diversifying export sectors can improve long-term economic resilience.

Investment

- Stable macroeconomic policies are essential to attract domestic and foreign investment.
- Strong fundamentals help reduce dependence on external capital flows.

Way Forward

- Increase investment in infrastructure, technology and innovation.
- Reduce import dependence while strengthening manufacturing and employment generation.

Important Terms

Important Term	Meaning
Structural Challenges	Long-term economic problems requiring major policy reforms.
Trade Deficit	When imports exceed exports.
Current Account Deficit (CAD)	Gap between foreign earnings and foreign payments.



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Foreign Exchange Reserves	Foreign assets held by the RBI to support the rupee and external payments.
LNG (Liquefied Natural Gas)	Natural gas converted into liquid form for transport.
Remittances	Money sent home by Indians working abroad.
Semiconductors	Electronic chips used in computers, mobiles, vehicles and other digital devices.
Artificial Intelligence (AI)	Technology that enables machines to perform intelligent tasks.
MGNREGA	Rural employment guarantee programme providing wage employment.
Demographic Dividend	Economic advantage arising from a large working-age population.

28th June 2026

[How saving elephants helps forests breathe easier: TH News](#)

Environment

Easy Explanation

A new study has found that **protecting Asiatic elephants not only helps conserve wildlife but also indirectly helps fight climate change.**

Elephants depend on large, healthy forests for survival. When governments protect elephant habitats through **Elephant Reserves**, those forests are also protected from degradation and deforestation. As a result, the forests continue storing large amounts of carbon, which helps reduce greenhouse gases in the atmosphere.

The study found that while India's elephant population increased only slightly over the last three decades, the amount of carbon stored within elephant reserves increased significantly. However, researchers stress that simply declaring more elephant reserves is not enough. Long-term success depends on **better habitat quality, wildlife corridors, and effective forest management.**

In essence, **saving elephants helps save forests, and saving forests helps combat climate change.**

Key Takeaways

What did the study examine?

- Relationship between:
 - Elephant conservation.
 - Expansion of Elephant Reserves.
 - Carbon storage in forests.
- Study period:
 - 1992 to 2025.



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Major Findings

Indicator	Change
Elephant Reserves	3 → 33 reserves
Reserve Area	18,297 sq km → 80,777 sq km
Elephant Population	Increased by ~6.7%
Carbon Stored in Reserves	Increased by ~38%

Why did carbon storage increase?

The increase was mainly because:

- Larger forest areas received protection.
- Forest degradation reduced.
- Existing carbon-rich forests remained intact.

Researchers estimate:

- Around **95% of carbon gains** came from expansion and protection of forest areas.
- Not directly because of an increase in elephant numbers.

Why are elephants called "Ecosystem Engineers"?

Elephants help maintain healthy forests by:

- Dispersing seeds.
- Enriching soil through dung.
- Creating space for new vegetation.
- Supporting biodiversity.

These activities help forests remain productive and capable of storing carbon.

Important Concern

The study found:

- Weak relationship between simply increasing elephant reserves and elephant population growth.
- Administrative declarations alone cannot protect elephants.
- Habitat fragmentation and poor management remain major challenges.

What about elephant population trends?

- Earlier estimate (2017): ~26,500 elephants.
- SAIEE 2021-25 estimate: ~22,446 elephants.
- Officials caution against direct comparison because different counting methods were used.



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Global Significance

Similar results have been observed in:

- African savannah ecosystems.
- Protection of large herbivores improved vegetation carbon storage by 20-30%.

Relevance for Climate Goals

The study suggests elephant conservation can help India achieve its climate targets by:

- Protecting carbon-rich forests.
- Increasing carbon sinks.
- Supporting biodiversity conservation simultaneously.

Important Terms & Meanings

Term	Meaning
Carbon Sink	Natural system that absorbs and stores more carbon than it releases.
Carbon Stabilisation	Process of storing carbon in stable forms such as soil and forest biomass, preventing its release into the atmosphere.
Carbon Stock	Total amount of carbon stored in vegetation, soil, and ecosystems.
Ecosystem Engineer	Organism that significantly modifies its environment and influences ecosystem functioning.
Habitat Fragmentation	Breaking up of continuous wildlife habitats into smaller isolated patches.
Wildlife Corridor	Natural passage connecting separate habitats, allowing animal movement and gene flow.
Biodiversity	Variety of plants, animals, and microorganisms in an ecosystem.
Mega-Herbivore	Very large plant-eating animal such as elephants, rhinoceroses, and hippopotamuses.
Carbon Sequestration	Long-term capture and storage of atmospheric carbon dioxide.



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REDD+	International framework aimed at reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation while promoting forest conservation.
Ecosystem Services	Benefits humans receive from ecosystems, such as clean water, pollination, carbon storage, and climate regulation.
tCO ₂ e (Tonnes of Carbon Dioxide Equivalent)	Standard unit used to measure greenhouse gas emissions and carbon sinks.
SAIEE (Synchronised All-India Elephant Estimate)	India's latest scientific methodology for estimating elephant populations across the country.

[Which document proves Indian citizenship?: TH FAQ](#)

Polity

Easy Explanation

A recent debate around the revision of electoral rolls has raised an important question: **What document actually proves that someone is an Indian citizen?**

The answer is surprisingly complicated. India does **not have a single universal citizenship document** for most citizens. Documents such as **passports, Aadhaar cards, and voter IDs can serve as evidence supporting a citizenship claim, but none of them are automatically treated as conclusive proof of citizenship in every legal dispute.**

Citizenship in India is determined under the **Citizenship Act, 1955**, and the documents required depend on how citizenship was acquired—by birth, descent, registration, naturalisation, or incorporation of territory. For most Indians, proving citizenship involves producing documents that establish their date and place of birth, and sometimes their parents' citizenship status.

The controversy highlights a larger governance challenge: India still lacks a comprehensive civil registration system that can easily establish citizenship for every citizen.

Key Takeaways

Is a Passport Proof of Citizenship?

- A passport is primarily a **travel document** issued under the Passports Act, 1967.
- It is strong evidence of Indian nationality.
- However, it is **not considered conclusive proof of citizenship** in legal disputes.
- Courts may examine a passport along with other supporting evidence.

Important Legal Provisions

- **Section 6(2)(a), Passports Act, 1967**
 - Passport can be denied if the applicant is not an Indian citizen.
- **Section 20, Passports Act, 1967**
 - Government may issue a passport to a non-citizen in public interest.

Supreme Court Position

- **Maneka Gandhi v. Union of India (1978)**
 - Passport is issued on the basis that the holder is an Indian national.



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- It entitles the holder to diplomatic protection abroad.

Can Aadhaar Prove Citizenship?

No.

- Aadhaar is only proof of:
 - Identity.
 - Address.
- It is **not proof of citizenship**.
- Foreign nationals legally residing in India can also obtain Aadhaar.

Supreme Court View

- Aadhaar may help establish identity.
- It cannot be relied upon as proof of Indian citizenship.

Does Voter ID Prove Citizenship?

Not conclusively.

- Only Indian citizens can vote.
- Therefore, inclusion in electoral rolls creates a **presumption of citizenship**.
- However, voter registration itself does not legally determine citizenship.

Important Judgment

Lal Babu Hussein v. Electoral Registration Officer (1995)

- A person whose name appears on electoral rolls enjoys a presumption of citizenship.
- This presumption can only be challenged through legal procedures.

So What Actually Proves Citizenship?

India has no single citizenship document for all citizens.

The required evidence depends on how citizenship was acquired.

Citizenship by Registration or Naturalisation

- Citizenship Certificate serves as conclusive proof.

Citizenship by Birth

Most Indians fall into this category.

Evidence may include:

- Birth certificate.
- School certificates.
- Government records.
- Parent-related documents (where required).

Citizenship by Birth: Key Cut-Off Dates

1. Born between 26 January 1950 and 1 July 1987

- Citizen by birth regardless of parents' nationality.



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- Need proof of:
 - Date of birth.
 - Place of birth.

2. Born between 1 July 1987 and 3 December 2004

- At least one parent must be an Indian citizen.
- Need proof of:
 - Own birth details.
 - Citizenship of one parent.

3. Born on or after 3 December 2004

- One parent must be an Indian citizen.
- The other parent must not be an illegal migrant.
- Documentary requirements become more complex.

Why is this Debate Important?

The discussion has gained importance due to:

- Electoral roll revisions.
- Citizenship verification exercises.
- Concerns over inadequate documentation.
- Lack of universal birth registration in earlier decades.

Experts argue that India needs:

- Universal birth registration.
- Better civil registration systems.
- Reliable archival records.

This would reduce future disputes regarding citizenship status.

Important Terms & Meanings

Term	Meaning
Citizenship Act, 1955	Main law governing acquisition and termination of Indian citizenship.
Passports Act, 1967	Law regulating issuance, refusal, impounding and revocation of passports.
Citizenship by Birth	Citizenship acquired because a person was born in India under conditions specified by law.
Citizenship by Descent	Citizenship acquired through Indian parentage.
Citizenship by Registration	Citizenship granted through a legal registration process for eligible persons.



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Citizenship by Naturalisation	Citizenship granted to foreign nationals after fulfilling residence and other conditions.
UIDAI	Unique Identification Authority of India, the body responsible for Aadhaar.
Electoral Roll	Official list of eligible voters in a constituency.
EPIC (Electoral Photo Identity Card)	Voter ID card issued by the Election Commission of India.
SIR (Special Intensive Revision)	Exercise undertaken by the Election Commission to revise and verify electoral rolls.
Presumption of Citizenship	Legal assumption that a person is a citizen unless proven otherwise through due process.
Citizenship Certificate	Official certificate issued to persons acquiring citizenship through registration or naturalisation.
National Register of Citizens (NRC)	Proposed register intended to identify genuine Indian citizens through verification of citizenship records.

[Why is Delhi's EV policy 2.0 facing opposition?: TH FAQ](#)

Environment

Easy Explanation

The Delhi government has proposed a revised Electric Vehicle (EV) Policy aimed at reducing air pollution and accelerating the shift away from petrol and diesel vehicles. The draft policy proposes a gradual phase-out of new internal combustion engine (ICE) vehicles, especially two-wheelers and three-wheelers, which form a large share of Delhi's vehicle population and contribute significantly to urban pollution.

The proposal has triggered debate. Automobile manufacturers argue that the transition timeline is too ambitious because EVs are still relatively expensive, charging infrastructure remains inadequate, and supply chains—especially for batteries—are heavily dependent on imports. On the other hand, supporters argue that strong government regulation is necessary to improve Delhi's air quality and meet climate goals.

The success of the policy will depend not only on EV adoption but also on supporting infrastructure, workforce reskilling, financing, and ensuring that Delhi's electricity distribution system can handle the increased demand from vehicle charging.

Key Takeaways

What does the revised Delhi EV Policy propose?

Ban on New ICE Vehicles

- No registration of new ICE three-wheelers from:
 - **1 January 2027**



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- No registration of new ICE two-wheelers from:
 - **1 April 2028**

Why focus on two-wheelers?

- Around **67% of Delhi's registered vehicles are two-wheelers.**
- They form the largest segment of the vehicle fleet.
- Electrifying this category is essential for reducing emissions and improving air quality.

Other Electrification Targets

The draft policy proposes EV mandates for:

- School buses
 - Target: **30% electrification by 2030**
- Fleet aggregators
 - Cab-hailing services
 - Delivery platforms
- Government vehicle fleets

These vehicles have:

- High daily usage.
- Greater pollution impact per vehicle.

Concerns Raised by Industry

Manufacturing Challenges

Automobile companies argue that:

- EV production capacity is still limited.
- Scaling up within proposed timelines may be difficult.
- Sudden transition could result in market disruptions.

Cost Concerns

- EVs remain more expensive than comparable ICE vehicles.
- Economies of scale have not yet reduced prices sufficiently.

Charging Infrastructure Gaps

Problems reported include:

- Charger breakdowns.
- Theft of charging equipment.
- Power outages.
- Insufficient charging stations.

Private charging challenges:

- Resistance from Resident Welfare Associations (RWAs).
- Apartment complexes often hesitate to allow charging infrastructure.

Financing and Resale Issues

Stakeholders highlight:

- Limited access to affordable EV financing.
- Weak after-sales service ecosystem.



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- Declining resale value of used EVs.
- High battery replacement costs.

Battery Dependency

- India remains dependent on imported battery technologies.
- Global battery supply chains are heavily concentrated in China.

What are Supporters Saying?

Supporters argue that:

- Market forces alone may not drive a sufficiently fast transition.
- Government regulation has historically helped improve vehicle efficiency.

Example:

- Corporate Average Fuel Efficiency (CAFE) norms pushed manufacturers to improve fuel economy.

According to supporters:

- Clean air is a public good.
- Strong policy intervention is justified to reduce pollution.

Social and Labour Concerns

The transition affects thousands of workers dependent on ICE vehicles.

These include:

- Local mechanics.
- Small repair workshops.
- Spare-parts businesses.

Experts argue that the government should provide:

- Large-scale reskilling programmes.
- Easy financing for workshops.
- Support for equipment upgrades.

Without such support, many small businesses may struggle during the transition.

Is Delhi's Electricity Grid Ready?

Studies by:

- WRI India
- CSTEP

suggest that Delhi's grid can handle increased EV adoption if:

- Smart charging is adopted.
- Time-of-day tariffs are implemented.
- Charging is staggered across different periods.

Main Challenge

The bigger issue is not electricity generation but local distribution infrastructure such as:

- Transformers.
- Distribution feeders.



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- Local power networks.

These will need strengthening as EV adoption rises.

Important Terms & Meanings

Term	Meaning
Electric Vehicle (EV)	Vehicle powered fully or partially by electricity instead of conventional fuels.
Internal Combustion Engine (ICE)	Engine that generates power by burning petrol, diesel, or other fossil fuels.
EV Penetration	Share of electric vehicles in total vehicle sales or registrations.
Fleet Aggregator	Company that manages a network of vehicles through a digital platform, such as ride-hailing or delivery services.
Charging Infrastructure	Network of charging stations and related facilities required for EV operation.
Public Charging Station	Charging facility accessible to the general public.
Community Charging Station	Shared charging facility installed in residential or commercial premises.
Battery Supply Chain	Network involved in sourcing raw materials, manufacturing, and distribution of batteries.
Corporate Average Fuel Efficiency (CAFE) Norms	Government standards requiring automobile manufacturers to improve average fuel efficiency of vehicles sold.
Smart Charging	Charging system that adjusts charging times and rates to optimise electricity demand and grid performance.
Time-of-Day Tariff	Electricity pricing system where rates vary depending on the time of usage.
Distribution Feeder	Electrical line that distributes power from substations to consumers.



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WRI India

Indian branch of the World Resources Institute working on sustainable development and climate solutions.

CSTEP

Centre for Study of Science, Technology and Policy, a Bengaluru-based public policy research institution.

[What do the amended FCRA Rules say?: TH FAQ](#)

Economy

Easy Explanation

The Union Government has amended the **Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Rules (FCRA Rules), 2011** to increase oversight of how NGOs and associations receive and use foreign funding. The new rules require organisations to clearly specify the activities and geographical areas for which they seek foreign contributions and provide more detailed disclosures about their operations and leadership.

The government argues that these changes will improve transparency, accountability, and monitoring of foreign funds. However, critics and opposition leaders contend that the amendments may restrict the flexibility of civil society organisations, making it harder for them to respond to emerging social needs, emergencies, or work across multiple sectors and regions.

The amendments represent a shift towards tighter regulation of foreign-funded activities and stronger scrutiny of NGO operations.

Key Takeaways

What is FCRA?

- FCRA stands for **Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Act**.
- It regulates:
 - Foreign donations received by NGOs.
 - Foreign funding received by associations and organisations.
- Objective:
 - Ensure foreign funds do not adversely affect India's sovereignty, security, public interest, or democratic institutions.

Evolution of FCRA

Year	Development
1976	Original FCRA enacted
2010	New FCRA replaced the 1976 law
2011	FCRA Rules came into force
2016, 2018, 2020	Major amendments



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2026

10th amendment to FCRA Rules

Current Status

- FCRA registration validity:
 - 5 years.
- More than **18,000 NGO registrations** cancelled since 2015.
- Active FCRA-registered NGOs (June 2026):
 - Approximately **14,456**.

Major Changes Introduced by the 2026 Rules

1. Specific Activity-Based Registration

NGOs must now clearly specify:

- Activities for which foreign funds will be used.
- States and Union Territories where activities will be undertaken.

General permissions are no longer permitted.

2. Wider Definition of "Key Functionary"

The definition now includes:

- Trustees.
- Partners.
- Governing body members.
- Karta of a Hindu Undivided Family (HUF).
- Any person exercising control or management over the organisation.

3. Mandatory Disclosure Requirements

NGOs must disclose:

- Social media accounts.
- Websites.
- Publications produced during the year.

This includes:

- Books.
- Magazines.
- Newspaper articles.

4. Higher Registration Costs

Separate fees may apply for:

- Each specified purpose.
- Each State or Union Territory of operation.

This could increase compliance costs for NGOs working in multiple sectors or regions.

Approved Categories for Foreign Contributions

The Rules classify activities into specific categories.



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Educational Purpose

Includes:

- Awareness programmes.
- Civic education.
- Constitutional rights education.

Condition:

- Activities must be **strictly non-political in nature**.

Cultural Purpose

Includes:

- Promotion of arts.
- Preservation of cultural heritage.
- Contemporary art inspired by Indian traditions.

Condition:

- Political or ideological content is excluded.

Religious Purpose

Permitted activities include:

- Religious education.
- Moral instruction.
- Satsangs and discourses.
- Meditation retreats.
- Development and maintenance of burial and cremation grounds.

Restriction:

- Proselytisation (religious conversion efforts) is excluded.

Other Categories

Category	Number of Activities
Social	30
Educational	22
Economic	19
Cultural	18



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Religious 16

Penalties for Violations

The MHA has introduced specific penalties for:

Misuse of Funds

Using funds for purposes other than approved purposes:

- Penalty:
 - Up to 30% of misused amount, or
 - ₹1 lakh,
 - whichever is higher.

Unauthorised Geographical Use

Using funds in States/U.T.s not covered under registration:

- Penalty:
 - 30% of amount involved, or
 - ₹1 lakh,
 - whichever is higher.

Other Violations

Penalties apply for:

- Excess administrative expenditure.
- Speculative investments.
- Unauthorised receipt of foreign funds.
- Unauthorised utilisation of foreign funds.

What are the Concerns Raised by the Opposition?

Critics argue that the amendments:

- Restrict operational flexibility of NGOs.
- Increase compliance burden.
- Make emergency response more difficult.
- Allow greater governmental control over civil society organisations.

Concerns include:

- Mandatory selection from a fixed government-approved list of activities.
- Restrictions on operating across multiple regions.
- Increased monitoring of publications and organisational activities.

Some opposition leaders argue that the rules move beyond regulating foreign contributions and begin regulating the functioning of voluntary organisations themselves.

Important Terms & Meanings

Term

Meaning



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FCRA	Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Act governing receipt and utilisation of foreign funds by individuals and organisations in India.
FCRA Registration	Government approval required for an organisation to legally receive foreign contributions.
Hindu Undivided Family (HUF)	A family-based legal entity recognised under Indian law and taxation provisions.
Karta	Head and manager of a Hindu Undivided Family.
Proselytisation	Attempt to convert individuals from one religion to another.

[The story of a shipwrecked hegemon: TH Profiles](#)

International Relations

Easy Explanation

This article discusses a major geopolitical shift in West Asia (Middle East) following a hypothetical large-scale war involving the United States, Israel, and Iran. At its heart, the article asks a simple question: **Did military power succeed in reshaping the region, or did the war end up strengthening Iran's position?**

According to the article, the war began when the U.S. and Israel launched massive strikes targeting Iran's military and political leadership. Their expectation was that by eliminating key leaders and damaging military infrastructure, the Iranian state would collapse or become weak enough for a new, more friendly government to emerge. This strategy is often called a **decapitation strategy**—removing the leadership in the hope that the entire system falls apart.

Initially, the attacks appeared successful. Several senior Iranian leaders were killed, military facilities were damaged, and there was widespread expectation in Washington and Tel Aviv that Iran would quickly surrender. President Trump reportedly believed the conflict would end within a few days.

However, the opposite happened. Instead of collapsing, Iran managed to reorganise itself rapidly. New leaders were appointed, government institutions continued functioning, and the country remained politically stable. More importantly, Iran responded by expanding the conflict beyond its borders. It launched attacks against U.S. military facilities across the Gulf region and continued military pressure on Israel.

Iran's most powerful move, however, involved the **Strait of Hormuz**. This narrow waterway is one of the world's most important energy routes because a significant share of global oil exports passes through it. When Iran restricted shipping through the strait, the consequences were felt worldwide. Oil prices surged, shipping costs increased dramatically, and concerns about a global economic slowdown emerged. In other words, Iran demonstrated that even if it could not match the U.S. militarily, it possessed economic and geographical leverage that could impose enormous costs on the international system.

As the war continued, the United States faced several difficulties. Despite extensive bombing, Iran's government survived. The Strait of Hormuz remained disrupted. Regional instability increased. There was also no clear solution to Iran's nuclear programme. The longer the war continued, the more expensive and politically risky it became.

At this stage, diplomacy became more attractive than continued military escalation. According to the article, Pakistan acted as a mediator between the two sides. Negotiations gradually led to a ceasefire arrangement and eventually to a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU). Under this understanding, Iran agreed not to pursue nuclear weapons and to ensure safe shipping through Hormuz, while the U.S. offered economic concessions, eased restrictions, and agreed to further negotiations.



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The article argues that the war's most significant impact was not military but geopolitical. For decades, Gulf countries such as Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Bahrain, Kuwait, and Qatar relied heavily on American military protection. The presence of U.S. bases in the region was viewed as a guarantee of security. However, during the conflict, many of these bases themselves became targets of Iranian attacks. This led several Gulf countries to reconsider whether dependence on external security guarantees alone was sufficient.

As a result, many Gulf states reportedly began exploring more direct engagement with Iran. Rather than viewing Iran solely as a threat that must be contained, they increasingly viewed dialogue and coexistence as necessary for regional stability. The article suggests that this could lead to a new regional security order in which Gulf countries, Iran, and other regional actors play a greater role in maintaining stability, instead of relying primarily on outside powers.

The article also argues that Israel's position became more complicated. Israel had long sought a tougher approach towards Iran and hoped that the conflict would significantly weaken Tehran. Instead, the eventual negotiations between Washington and Tehran reduced Israel's influence over the outcome. Some analysts quoted in the article even suggest that the conflict may have increased Iran's regional relevance while leaving Israel relatively more isolated.

Overall, the article's central argument is that military superiority alone could not determine the outcome of the conflict. Geography, energy security, economic interdependence, and diplomacy ultimately played a decisive role. The war demonstrated the continuing importance of the Strait of Hormuz, highlighted the limits of military power, and may have accelerated a broader reorganisation of regional politics in West Asia.

Key Takeaways

U.S.-Israel Objectives

- Weaken Iran's military and political leadership.
- Trigger regime change or political instability.
- Reduce Iran's regional influence.
- Address concerns regarding Iran's nuclear programme.

Iran's Response Strategy

- Prevent collapse of the state.
- Quickly replace senior leadership.
- Attack U.S. and Israeli interests across the region.
- Use the Strait of Hormuz as economic leverage.

Importance of the Strait of Hormuz

- One of the world's most important oil transit routes.
- Connects the Persian Gulf to global shipping lanes.
- Disruption affects:
 - Global oil prices.
 - Energy security.
 - International trade.

Why Diplomacy Emerged

- Iran's government survived the attacks.
- Military action failed to produce a quick victory.
- Economic costs rose sharply.
- Hormuz remained disrupted.
- Nuclear issues remained unresolved.

Role of Pakistan

- Reportedly acted as a mediator.
- Facilitated communication between the U.S. and Iran.
- Helped advance ceasefire negotiations.



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Impact on Gulf Countries

- U.S. military bases became targets during the conflict.
- Questions emerged about reliance on external security guarantees.
- Gulf states began exploring greater strategic autonomy.
- Increased engagement with Iran gained importance.

Impact on Regional Security

- Challenged the traditional U.S.-led security architecture.
- Increased emphasis on regional solutions.
- Encouraged dialogue between Gulf states and Iran.
- Highlighted the importance of regional stability for economic growth.

Impact on Israel

- Expected significant weakening of Iran.
- U.S.-Iran negotiations reduced Israeli influence over outcomes.
- Continued tensions regarding Lebanon and regional security.

Larger Geopolitical Lessons

- Military victories do not always translate into political victories.
- Strategic waterways can provide major leverage.
- Energy security remains central to international politics.
- Regional powers increasingly seek strategic autonomy.
- Diplomacy often becomes necessary even after intense military conflict.

Important Terms & Meanings

Term	Meaning
Nuclear Non-Proliferation	Efforts to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons and related technologies.
Abraham Accords	Agreements normalising relations between Israel and several Arab countries.
Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC)	Regional organisation of Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the UAE.
Regional Security Architecture	Network of alliances, institutions and arrangements that shape regional security.

[Fake patents are poisoning India's race for academic excellence: TH Science](#)

Science Tech

Easy Explanation

A new study has uncovered a disturbing practice in academia called **"fake patents"**, where some academics purchase their names on patent-like documents to boost their academic profiles without conducting any real research or innovation.



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The problem is linked to the increasing pressure on universities and researchers to show measurable achievements such as publications, patents, citations, and rankings. In many institutions, promotions, incentives, accreditations, and rankings depend heavily on these numerical indicators. As a result, a market has emerged where private companies sell academics the opportunity to appear as inventors on so-called "international patents."

However, what is being sold is often not a genuine patent. The study found that certain firms are helping academics obtain ownership positions on **U.K. design registrations**, which are much easier and faster to obtain than actual patents. Unlike patents, which undergo rigorous examination for novelty, usefulness, and innovation, many design registrations are granted after only minimal scrutiny. In some cases, approval can happen within days.

The key issue is that these registrations usually protect only the **appearance of an object**, not its functionality. Moreover, many of the products described in these registrations do not even exist. An academic who purchases a position on such a registration can then claim to have obtained an "international patent" and use it during performance evaluations, promotions, or university assessments.

Researchers describe this as a form of **academic reputation manipulation**. The individual has not created an invention, conducted meaningful research, or contributed to technological advancement. Yet they receive academic credit as though they had.

The study suggests that India has become a major market for this practice because of the country's intense competition for educational positions, emphasis on numerical performance indicators, and institutional obsession with rankings. Many ranking systems reward the number of patents filed rather than examining whether those patents are useful, original, or adopted by industry.

The article also highlights a related issue: several institutions file large numbers of patent applications simply to improve their statistics. However, only a very small percentage of these patents are eventually granted, and an even smaller number are actually commercialised or used by industry. Experts argue that the true value of a patent lies not in filing it, but in whether it leads to a useful product, process, or technology.

To tackle this problem, experts are calling for reforms in how academic performance is measured. Instead of focusing on raw numbers of patents and publications, institutions should evaluate the quality, originality, and real-world impact of research. Stronger mechanisms are also needed to identify scientific misconduct and penalise organisations that facilitate fake patents and other unethical academic practices.

Key Takeaways

What are "Fake Patents"?

- Patent-like documents obtained without genuine innovation.
- Academics purchase inventorship or ownership positions.
- Used to improve academic profiles and promotion prospects.
- Often involve products or inventions that do not actually exist.

How does the Scam Work?

- Private firms offer inventorship positions for payment.
- Academics buy authorship or ownership rights.
- They later claim these as "international patents."
- Used for academic evaluations and rankings.

Why are U.K. Design Registrations Being Used?

- Granted much faster than normal patents.
- Subject to limited scrutiny.
- Usually approved within a short period.
- Easier to obtain compared to full patent applications.

Patent vs Design Registration

- Patents protect:
 - Novel inventions.



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- Functional innovations.
- New technologies.
- Design registrations protect:
 - Appearance.
 - Shape.
 - Visual design.
- Design registrations generally do not protect functionality.

Why is this a Concern?

- Distorts academic evaluation systems.
- Rewards quantity over quality.
- Encourages academic misconduct.
- Undermines research integrity.
- Misleads universities and ranking agencies.

Why is India Particularly Vulnerable?

- Large competition for academic positions.
- Strong focus on quantitative performance indicators.
- Institutional emphasis on rankings.
- Promotions often linked to patent counts and publication numbers.

Related Problem: Patent Filing Inflation

- Some universities file large numbers of patent applications.
- Objective is often to improve rankings.
- Very few applications are ultimately granted.
- Even fewer lead to commercial products.

What Gives a Patent Real Value?

- Original innovation.
- Successful patent grant.
- Adoption by industry.
- Commercial application.
- Societal or technological impact.

Suggested Solutions

- Reduce dependence on numerical rankings.
- Evaluate quality rather than quantity.
- Strengthen research integrity systems.
- Monitor scientific misconduct more effectively.
- Penalise firms facilitating fake patents and publications.
- Use only meaningful patents for academic assessment.

Important Terms & Meanings

Term	Meaning
Patent	Legal right granted for a new, useful, and non-obvious invention.





Design Registration	Legal protection granted for the appearance or visual design of an object rather than its functionality.
Intellectual Property (IP)	Creations of the mind such as inventions, designs, artistic works, and trademarks protected by law.
Academic Misconduct	Unethical behaviour in academic activities, including fraud, plagiarism, and falsification of achievements.
Inventorship	Legal recognition of a person as the creator of an invention.
Novelty	Requirement that an invention must be new and not previously known.
Utility Patent	Patent granted for a new and useful process, machine, manufacture, or composition of matter.
Design Patent	Patent protecting the ornamental appearance of a product rather than its function.
Retraction	Formal withdrawal of a published research paper due to errors or misconduct.
Anusandhan National Research Foundation (ANRF)	India's apex research funding body established to strengthen research and innovation ecosystems.
Research Commercialisation	Conversion of scientific discoveries into products, services, or technologies used by industry.

[Capturing sunlight in a bottle and using it when needed: TH Science](#)

Science Tech

Easy Explanation

One of the biggest challenges with solar energy is that **sunlight is available only during the day**, while our energy needs continue into the evening and night. Today, the most common solution is to store electricity in batteries, but batteries are expensive, have limited lifespans, and require raw materials such as lithium.

A team of researchers from the **University of California, Santa Barbara** has developed an alternative way of storing solar energy. Instead of storing electricity in batteries, they have designed special molecules that can **capture sunlight and store its energy within their chemical structure**. This technology is called **Molecular Solar Thermal Energy Storage (MOST)**.



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To understand this, imagine a spring. When you compress a spring, energy gets stored inside it. Similarly, these molecules absorb sunlight and change into a different molecular shape. In this new shape, they store energy. Later, when needed, the molecule can return to its original shape and release the stored energy as heat.

The researchers used a molecule called **2-pyrimidone**. When sunlight strikes it, it transforms into another form called **Dewar pyrimidone**. This new form is unstable and stores a large amount of energy. When it changes back to its original form, the stored energy is released as heat. According to the study, these molecules can release about **1.65 million joules of heat per kilogram**.

This stored heat could be used for practical purposes such as:

- Heating water.
- Cooking.
- Space heating.
- Other household thermal applications.

An interesting aspect of this technology is that it captures a different part of sunlight than conventional solar panels. Traditional silicon solar panels mainly utilise visible and near-infrared light. MOST molecules utilise ultraviolet wavelengths that are generally not used efficiently by solar panels. Therefore, both technologies could potentially complement each other.

For a country like India, which is rapidly expanding rooftop solar installations through schemes such as the **PM Surya Ghar Muft Bijli Yojana**, such technologies could be highly useful. If solar electricity generation is combined with molecular heat storage, households may be able to utilise solar energy even after sunset without depending entirely on expensive batteries.

The research is still at an early stage, but it demonstrates a promising new way of storing renewable energy. If successfully commercialised, it could make solar energy more reliable, affordable, and useful for everyday applications.

Key Takeaways

Why is Solar Energy Storage Important?

- Solar panels generate electricity only when sunlight is available.
- Energy demand continues during evenings and nights.
- Batteries currently provide storage but remain expensive.
- Better storage solutions can improve renewable energy adoption.

India's Solar Energy Expansion

- Rooftop solar capacity: about 23 GW.
- Total land-based solar generation: about 150 GW.
- Additional capacity expected through:
 - Floating solar plants.
 - Canal-top solar projects.
 - Reservoir-based installations.

How Conventional Solar Panels Work

- Sunlight contains photons.
- Photons strike silicon cells.
- Electrons become excited and move.
- Flow of electrons creates electric current.
- Inverters convert the electricity into usable alternating current (AC).

What is MOST Technology?

- MOST stands for Molecular Solar Thermal Energy Storage.
- Uses special molecules to capture and store solar energy.
- Energy is stored as chemical energy rather than electricity.
- Stored energy can later be released as heat.



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How Does MOST Work?

- Molecules absorb sunlight.
- Molecular structure changes through isomerisation.
- Energy becomes trapped within the new structure.
- Molecules later return to original form.
- Stored energy is released as heat.

Molecule Used in the Study

- 2-pyrimidone.
- Converts into:
 - Dewar pyrimidone.
- Dewar pyrimidone stores solar energy in a strained molecular form.

Benefits of MOST

- Long-term storage of solar energy.
- No need for conventional batteries.
- Can provide heat when sunlight is unavailable.
- Potentially lower environmental footprint.
- Useful for domestic heating and cooking applications.

Difference Between Solar Panels and MOST

- Solar panels:
 - Produce electricity.
 - Use visible and near-infrared light.
- MOST:
 - Stores energy as heat.
 - Uses ultraviolet wavelengths.
 - Functions as a thermal energy storage system.

Potential Applications

- Water heating.
- Cooking.
- Space heating.
- Industrial thermal processes.
- Renewable energy storage.

Significance for India

- Can complement rooftop solar programmes.
- Reduces dependence on battery storage.
- Supports clean energy transition.
- Enhances energy security.
- Helps achieve climate and sustainability goals.

Important Terms & Meanings

Term	Meaning
Photovoltaic Effect	Process by which sunlight generates electric current in a semiconductor material.



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Photon	Fundamental particle of light that carries energy.
Silicon Solar Cell	Semiconductor device that converts sunlight into electricity.
Renewable Energy	Energy obtained from naturally replenishing sources such as sunlight, wind, and water.
Molecular Solar Thermal Energy Storage (MOST)	Technology that stores solar energy within molecules and releases it later as heat.
Molecular Photoswitch	Molecule capable of changing structure when exposed to light and storing energy in the process.
Isomerisation	Process in which a molecule changes its structure while retaining the same chemical composition.
Isomer	Different structural form of the same molecule.
2-Pyrimidone	Alkaloid molecule used in the study for solar energy storage.
Dewar Pyrimidone	Energy-rich isomer formed from 2-pyrimidone after absorbing sunlight.
Solar Thermal Energy	Heat energy obtained directly from sunlight.
Ultraviolet (UV) Radiation	High-energy part of the electromagnetic spectrum with wavelengths shorter than visible light.
Gigawatt (GW)	Unit of power equal to one billion watts.
PM Surya Ghar Muft Bijli Yojana	Government scheme promoting rooftop solar installations for households in India.
Energy Storage	Process of capturing energy for use at a later time.

29th June 2026



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[Iran oil is back, but Indian refiners aren't rushing in - The Indian Express Explained Page](#)

Economy

Easy Explanation

The **United States** has temporarily relaxed some sanctions on **Iranian oil exports** by granting a **60-day waiver (June 22–August 21)**. This allows the production, sale, and export of Iranian crude oil and permits payments in **US dollars** for these transactions. As a result, **Iran** has started approaching international buyers, including Indian refiners, to resume oil trade after several years. Since India was once among Iran's largest crude oil customers, this development presents an opportunity to diversify its energy imports.

However, Indian refiners are proceeding cautiously instead of immediately increasing purchases. The temporary nature of the waiver, uncertainty over future US policy, sanctions on Iran's banking system, payment and insurance challenges, and the possibility of **secondary sanctions** make refiners reluctant to enter into long-term deals. Moreover, India has successfully diversified its crude imports in recent years by buying more oil from countries such as **Russia, Saudi Arabia, the UAE, and the US**, reducing its dependence on Iran.

Another important factor is **China**, which has remained the biggest buyer of Iranian crude despite sanctions by using established payment and shipping arrangements. If Iranian oil becomes widely available again, China is expected to remain the dominant buyer, reducing discounts and increasing competition for available cargoes. Therefore, unless Iran offers significant commercial advantages, Indian refiners are expected to make only limited purchases during the waiver period while monitoring geopolitical developments.

Key Takeaways

US Sanctions Waiver

- The US has granted a **60-day waiver** allowing exports of Iranian oil until **August 21**.
- Payments for permitted purchases can be made in **US dollars**.

India's Cautious Approach

- Indian refiners are evaluating commercial, legal and logistical risks before buying.
- Uncertainty over future sanctions discourages long-term commitments.

Payment Challenges

- Sanctions on Iran's financial sector continue to complicate payment mechanisms.
- Banking, insurance and shipping remain major concerns.

China's Dominance

- China remains the largest buyer of Iranian crude.
- Strong payment networks and logistics give Chinese buyers an advantage.

India's Energy Security

- India has diversified crude imports over the past few years.
- Supplies from multiple countries reduce the urgency to import Iranian oil.

Commercial Factors

- Iranian oil may attract buyers if offered at attractive discounts.
- Increased global demand could reduce these discounts and limit India's interest.

Way Forward

- India is likely to make limited purchases while closely watching US policy and regional stability.
- Long-term imports will depend on durable sanctions relief and reliable payment mechanisms.



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Important Terms

Important Term	Meaning
Sanctions Waiver	Temporary permission allowing activities that are otherwise prohibited under sanctions.
Secondary Sanctions	Penalties imposed on third-party countries or companies dealing with a sanctioned country.
National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC)	Iran's state-owned company responsible for oil exploration, production and exports.
Crude Oil	Unrefined petroleum extracted from underground reservoirs before processing into fuels.
LNG (Liquefied Natural Gas)	Natural gas cooled into liquid form for transportation and storage.
Strait of Hormuz	A strategically important sea route through which nearly one-fifth of global oil trade passes.
Refiner	A company that processes crude oil into petroleum products such as petrol, diesel and jet fuel.
Compliance Risk	Risk of violating legal or regulatory requirements, especially international sanctions.
Oil Import Diversification	Strategy of purchasing crude oil from multiple countries to reduce dependence on a single supplier.
Discounted Crude	Oil sold below prevailing international market prices to attract buyers.

[Should you see an AI agent as insider threat? DeepMind makes a case for it - The Indian Express Explained Page](#)

Science and technology

Easy Explanation

As **AI agents** become more advanced, they are increasingly able to perform complex tasks such as writing software, conducting research, analysing data and interacting with multiple digital tools with very little human supervision. Recognising these growing capabilities, **Google DeepMind** has proposed a new **AI Control Roadmap** that treats powerful AI systems as potential "**insider threats**"—similar to trusted employees who already have access to sensitive organisational systems but could misuse that access.



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Instead of assuming that AI systems will always behave exactly as intended, DeepMind argues that future AI should be governed using multiple layers of security, just like cybersecurity systems. This means AI agents should receive only limited permissions initially, be continuously monitored, and have their actions restricted if they behave unexpectedly. The company believes that relying only on traditional AI training or alignment techniques may not be sufficient as AI becomes increasingly autonomous.

DeepMind also notes that most AI-related risks may arise not because an AI deliberately becomes harmful, but because it misunderstands instructions, over-optimises a task, or produces unintended consequences. Therefore, future AI governance should focus on preventing harmful actions before they occur through continuous monitoring, supervision and layered security mechanisms rather than depending solely on corrective action after an incident.

Key Takeaways

AI Agents

- AI agents can independently plan, reason and complete tasks with minimal human supervision.
- Their growing autonomy requires stronger governance and security mechanisms.

AI Control Roadmap

- DeepMind proposes a **defense-in-depth** approach with multiple security layers.
- Security should complement, not replace, AI alignment techniques.

Insider Threat Model

- Advanced AI should be treated like a trusted insider with controlled access.
- Permissions should be granted gradually based on demonstrated safe behaviour.

Major Risks

- Risks include **loss of control**, **work sabotage**, and **direct harm** such as data theft or cyberattacks.
- Even unintended AI behaviour can create significant damage.

Continuous Monitoring

- AI systems should be supervised continuously by humans and trusted AI systems.
- Suspicious activities should be detected and stopped before causing harm.

Future Challenges

- More advanced AI may learn to hide unsafe reasoning or bypass monitoring systems.
- Future safety methods may require analysing AI behaviour and internal processes.

Way Forward

- AI governance should combine technical safeguards, continuous oversight and controlled access.
- Preventive security will become increasingly important as AI capabilities expand.

Important Terms

Important Term	Meaning
AI Agent	An AI system capable of independently planning, reasoning and performing tasks with minimal human intervention.
AI Alignment	Ensuring AI systems act according to human values and intended objectives.





Defense-in-Depth	A cybersecurity strategy that uses multiple layers of protection instead of relying on a single safeguard.
Insider Threat	A trusted user or system with authorised access that could intentionally or unintentionally cause harm.
Loss of Control	Situation where an AI system acts beyond authorised human oversight.
Work Sabotage	Deliberately or unintentionally degrading important systems, research or operational processes.
Chain of Thought	The internal reasoning process an AI model uses before generating an answer.
Continuous Monitoring	Ongoing observation of AI behaviour to detect abnormal or unsafe actions in real time.
AI Governance	Policies, rules and oversight mechanisms to ensure AI is developed and used safely and responsibly.
Cybersecurity	Protection of computer systems, networks and data from attacks, misuse and unauthorised access.

[Does dialling 112 help in all emergencies? Depends on state you live in - The Indian Express Explained Page](#)

Governance

Easy Explanation

The **112 Emergency Response Support System (ERSS)** was introduced by the Government of India in **2019** as a single emergency helpline, similar to the **911** service in the United States or **112** used across Europe. The objective was to replace multiple emergency numbers such as **100 (Police), 101 (Fire), 102/108 (Ambulance), 1098 (Child Helpline), 1091/181 (Women Helpline)** with one common number, making it easier for citizens to seek help during emergencies. A unified system also allows authorities to coordinate police, fire and medical services more efficiently.

However, implementation across India remains uneven. According to submissions before the **Supreme Court**, only **Delhi, Kerala, Gujarat, Haryana and Lakshadweep** have fully integrated all emergency helplines into the **112** system, while many States have only partially integrated them or have not completed the process. Recognising this gap, the Supreme Court recently directed all States and Union Territories to complete the technical and operational integration of emergency services within three months.

The **112 ERSS** is more than just a telephone number. It operates through centralized command and control centres that receive emergency calls, identify the nature of the emergency, locate the nearest response team and dispatch police, ambulance or fire services accordingly. States like **Uttar Pradesh** have developed advanced command centres capable of handling thousands of emergency calls daily. Once fully implemented nationwide, the system aims to provide faster, coordinated and more effective emergency response across India.

Key Takeaways



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112 ERSS

- **112** is India's single emergency helpline launched in **2019**.
- It aims to integrate multiple emergency services under one number.

Purpose

- Reduces confusion caused by different emergency numbers.
- Enables faster coordination between police, fire and medical services.

Current Status

- Only a few States have fully integrated all emergency helplines.
- Many States are still in the process of implementation.

Supreme Court Direction

- States and Union Territories have been directed to complete integration.
- The objective is to ensure uniform emergency response nationwide.

How It Works

- Calls are received at centralized command centres.
- The nearest emergency response unit is dispatched based on the nature of the incident.

Benefits

- Faster response during emergencies.
- Better monitoring and efficient deployment of emergency resources.

Way Forward

- Complete nationwide integration of all emergency services.
- Improve public awareness and strengthen emergency infrastructure.

Important Terms

Important Term	Meaning
112 Emergency Response Support System (ERSS)	India's integrated emergency response system providing a single helpline for various emergencies.
Nationwide Emergency Response System (NERS)	The national framework under which the 112 emergency service operates.
Nirbhaya Fund	A dedicated government fund created to improve women's safety and security infrastructure.
Command and Control Centre	Centralized facility that receives emergency calls and coordinates response teams.





Emergency Response Vehicle (ERV)	Police or emergency vehicle dispatched to the incident location after receiving a distress call.
Integrated Emergency Services	A system where police, fire, ambulance and other emergency services work through a single platform.
CEPT	European Conference of Postal and Telecommunications Administrations, which recommended 112 as a common emergency number in Europe.
Public Safety Answering Point (PSAP)	A call centre that receives emergency calls and dispatches appropriate emergency services.
Technical Integration	Linking different emergency helplines and communication systems into one unified platform.
Operational Integration	Coordinating different emergency agencies so they function together through a common response mechanism.

[Why India's buildings are vulnerable to fire, and what's needed to fix them - The Indian Express Explained Page](#)

Disaster management

Easy Explanation

Recent fire tragedies in **Delhi** and **Lucknow** have once again exposed major weaknesses in India's **building fire safety** standards. According to experts, many commercial and residential buildings suffer from poor design, blocked escape routes, combustible façade materials, inadequate ventilation, and the absence of alternative evacuation routes. In many cases, buildings approved for residential use are later converted into commercial spaces without upgrading fire safety infrastructure, significantly increasing the risk during emergencies.

One of the biggest concerns is the lack of proper **fire escape planning**. Buildings should have unobstructed corridors, well-ventilated staircases, smoke-free escape routes, automatic **sprinkler systems**, and, wherever necessary, a **second staircase** to provide an alternative exit. Experts also recommend **compartmentation**, where each floor is divided into fire-resistant sections that slow the spread of flames and smoke, giving occupants more time to evacuate and firefighters more time to respond.

Urban planning also plays an important role in fire safety. Narrow roads, illegal encroachments, roadside parking and congested neighbourhoods often prevent fire engines from reaching accident sites quickly. Improving building design, enforcing fire safety regulations, ensuring regular maintenance of fire protection systems, and using **fire-retardant materials** during construction and renovation are essential to reducing fire-related disasters in India's rapidly growing cities.

Key Takeaways

Fire Escape Planning

- Safe, smoke-free escape routes are the most critical life-saving feature.
- Staircases and corridors should always remain free from obstructions.

Compartmentation



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- Buildings should be divided into fire-resistant sections.
- This slows the spread of fire and provides more evacuation time.

Building Facades

- Combustible façade materials can rapidly spread fire vertically.
- External AC units, hoardings and cladding increase fire risk.

Second Staircase

- High-risk and commercial buildings should have an alternative escape route.
- A second staircase can significantly improve evacuation during emergencies.

Urban Challenges

- Narrow roads, encroachments and illegal parking delay firefighting operations.
- Better urban planning is necessary for emergency access.

Maintenance

- Fire safety equipment must be regularly inspected and maintained.
- Change in building use should be accompanied by updated fire safety measures.

Way Forward

- Strengthen enforcement of fire safety codes and building regulations.
- Promote fire-resistant construction materials, better design and public awareness.

Important Terms

Important Term	Meaning
Compartmentation	Dividing a building into fire-resistant sections to slow the spread of fire and smoke.
Fire Escape Route	A designated safe path used by occupants to evacuate during a fire emergency.
Sprinkler System	An automatic fire suppression system that releases water when high temperatures are detected.
Fire-Retardant Material	Material specially designed to resist ignition and slow the spread of fire.
Building Façade	The exterior face or outer surface of a building.
Flashover	A stage in a fire when nearly all combustible materials in a room ignite simultaneously due to extreme heat.





Smoke Ventilation	Systems that remove smoke from buildings to improve visibility and facilitate evacuation.
False Ceiling	A secondary ceiling installed below the main roof, often used for aesthetics and utilities.
Means of Egress	Safe and continuous path that allows occupants to leave a building during emergencies.
National Building Code (NBC)	India's model code prescribing standards for safe planning, design, construction and fire protection of buildings.

[Gurugram case, and a question of trust and informed consent - The Indian Express Ideas Page](#)

Science and technology

Easy Explanation

A recent **IVF** case in **Gurugram** has raised serious concerns about the safety and regulation of India's **Assisted Reproductive Technology (ART)** sector. A couple who underwent IVF reportedly discovered through DNA testing that neither of them was biologically related to their twin daughters. An FIR has been registered, and the case is under investigation. Earlier, a similar case in Delhi also exposed errors in fertility treatment, highlighting weaknesses in oversight.

The incident has renewed focus on the **ART (Regulation) Act, 2021**, which requires fertility clinics to maintain strict records of gametes, embryos, storage, identification and treatment procedures. While the law lays down detailed standards, experts argue that poor implementation, weak monitoring and delays in grievance redressal reduce its effectiveness. Such mistakes are not ordinary medical errors—they directly affect **informed consent**, patient trust and reproductive rights.

The case also raises important legal and ethical questions regarding the **rights of children** born through ART. The law recognises children born through authorised donor procedures as the legal children of the commissioning parents. However, it does not clearly address situations where embryos or gametes are allegedly exchanged due to clinical error. Experts argue that any legal response must prioritise the child's welfare, emotional security, inheritance rights and continuity of parental care while strengthening accountability within fertility clinics.

Key Takeaways

Gurugram IVF Case

- DNA tests reportedly showed that the parents were not biologically related to their children.
- The incident has triggered an investigation into possible clinical negligence.

ART (Regulation) Act, 2021

- Regulates fertility clinics, ART banks and IVF procedures.
- Mandates strict record-keeping, identification and monitoring systems.

Informed Consent

- Patients must clearly know whose gametes or embryos are being used.
- Clinical errors undermine trust and reproductive autonomy.

Accountability



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- Fertility clinics must maintain complete traceability of embryos and gametes.
- Stronger oversight and quicker grievance mechanisms are needed.

Rights of Children

- Children's welfare must remain the highest priority in any dispute.
- Legal protection should ensure emotional security, parentage and inheritance rights.

Regulatory Gap

- Current law mainly covers voluntary donor arrangements.
- It provides limited guidance for cases involving alleged embryo mix-ups.

Way Forward

- Strengthen monitoring, digital traceability and audit systems in fertility clinics.
- Improve legal safeguards for both patients and children affected by clinical errors.

Important Terms

Important Term	Meaning
Assisted Reproductive Technology (ART)	Medical techniques used to help individuals or couples achieve pregnancy.
In Vitro Fertilisation (IVF)	A procedure in which fertilisation takes place outside the body before the embryo is transferred to the uterus.
Intracytoplasmic Sperm Injection (ICSI)	An IVF technique where a single sperm is directly injected into an egg to aid fertilisation.
ART (Regulation) Act, 2021	Indian law regulating fertility clinics, ART procedures and ART banks.
Gametes	Human reproductive cells—sperm and egg.
Embryo Transfer	The process of placing a fertilised embryo into the uterus during IVF treatment.
Informed Consent	Voluntary agreement by a patient after receiving complete information about a medical procedure.
Traceability	The ability to accurately track gametes, embryos and medical records throughout the treatment process.





Commissioning Couple	Individuals who undergo ART treatment with the intention of becoming the legal parents of the child.
DNA Testing	Genetic testing used to establish biological relationships between individuals.

[The new digital slavery needs constitutional guardrails - The Hindu Editorial](#)

Governance

Easy Explanation

The article argues that the rapid growth of **Artificial Intelligence (AI)** poses serious risks to **human dignity, privacy, and democracy** if left without strong legal safeguards. Referring to **Pope Leo XIV's** views, it says AI governance should not depend only on voluntary ethics by technology companies but should be backed by enforceable laws, independent oversight, and clear human accountability whenever AI makes important decisions affecting people's lives.

The author highlights that technology develops much faster than laws. By the time governments pass regulations, AI systems often become more advanced, creating new risks such as **deepfakes, AI-generated misinformation**, and algorithm-driven political polarisation. Social media platforms, driven by engagement-based business models, often amplify sensational or divisive content, weakening public trust and making democracies more vulnerable to manipulation.

For India, which has a large digital population and rapidly expanding AI ecosystem, the article proposes a **rights-based framework** for AI governance. It recommends protecting personal data, increasing transparency of AI algorithms, preserving freedom of speech while regulating harmful platform behaviour, improving digital literacy, and building systems to detect foreign misinformation campaigns. The article concludes that AI governance should be treated as a **constitutional issue**, since protecting an authentic information ecosystem is essential for safeguarding democracy, liberty and fundamental rights.

Key Takeaways

Human-Centric AI

- AI development should prioritise **human dignity**, privacy and accountability.
- Critical decisions made by AI should always remain under human responsibility.

Need for Strong Laws

- Ethical guidelines alone are insufficient to regulate powerful AI systems.
- Legally enforceable regulations and independent oversight are necessary.

Threat to Democracy

- Deepfakes and AI-generated misinformation can distort elections and public opinion.
- Algorithm-driven polarisation weakens social cohesion and democratic institutions.

Platform Accountability

- Large technology companies should be transparent about how recommendation algorithms function.
- Platforms should face greater responsibility for systemic harms caused by their algorithms.

Protecting Free Speech

- Regulation should target malicious AI misuse rather than suppress legitimate political expression.
- Safeguards are needed to prevent censorship while combating misinformation.

Digital Literacy



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- Citizens should be trained to identify misinformation and AI-generated content.
- Media literacy should become an important part of education.

Way Forward

- Build a rights-based AI governance framework combining regulation, transparency, digital literacy and national cybersecurity measures.

Important Terms

Important Term	Meaning
Artificial Intelligence (AI)	Computer systems capable of performing tasks that normally require human intelligence.
Deepfake	AI-generated fake audio, video or images that appear highly realistic.
Algorithmic Manipulation	Use of algorithms to influence what users see online, often affecting opinions and behaviour.
Digital Sovereignty	A country's ability to control and protect its digital infrastructure, data and cyberspace.
Rights-Based AI Governance	AI regulation focused on protecting fundamental rights, privacy and human dignity.
Platform Accountability	Legal responsibility of digital platforms for the impact of their systems and algorithms.
Digital Literacy	The ability to critically evaluate and safely use digital information and technologies.
Information Warfare	Deliberate use of misinformation and digital tools to influence public opinion or destabilise societies.
Data Privacy	Protection of an individual's personal information from misuse or unauthorised access.
Constitutional Guardrails	Constitutional principles and legal safeguards that protect citizens' rights against misuse of technology.

[July opens the biggest chapter in India-U.K. trade ties - The Hindu Editorial](#)

International relations



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Easy Explanation

The article highlights the significance of the **India–U.K. Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA)**, which comes into force from **July 15**. It argues that this is one of the most important trade agreements signed by both countries, offering preferential market access, lower tariffs, and improved opportunities for businesses, investments and services. The agreement is expected to increase bilateral trade, boost economic growth, and create jobs in both India and the United Kingdom.

Under the agreement, **99% of U.K. tariff lines** will become duty-free for Indian goods, while India will reduce or eliminate tariffs on **90% of tariff lines** for U.K. products. Labour-intensive Indian sectors such as textiles, leather, gems and jewellery, along with IT and financial services, are expected to benefit significantly. U.K. industries including automobiles, aerospace, medical devices and whisky are also expected to gain through lower import duties.

Beyond tariff reductions, the agreement includes provisions on **digital trade, customs facilitation, services, anti-corruption, labour standards, gender, and environmental commitments**. The article also notes that both countries have protected sensitive sectors such as dairy, edible oils, sugar and poultry. It concludes that businesses should quickly adapt to the new opportunities by expanding exports, strengthening supply chains and utilising the benefits offered under the agreement.

Key Takeaways

India–U.K. CETA

- The agreement comes into force from **July 15**.
- It aims to deepen trade, investment and economic cooperation between both countries.

Tariff Liberalisation

- **99%** of U.K. tariff lines become duty-free for Indian exports.
- India will reduce or eliminate tariffs on **90%** of tariff lines for U.K. goods.

Benefits for India

- Labour-intensive sectors like textiles, leather and jewellery gain better market access.
- IT and financial services exports are expected to expand.

Benefits for the U.K.

- Lower tariffs will support exports of automobiles, aerospace products, medical devices and whisky.
- Businesses receive improved access to India's growing market.

Modern Trade Provisions

- Covers digital trade, customs, services and investment facilitation.
- Includes chapters on anti-corruption, labour, gender and environmental cooperation.

Balanced Market Access

- Sensitive sectors continue to receive domestic protection.
- The agreement seeks to balance trade liberalisation with national interests.

Way Forward

- Businesses should utilise lower tariffs, simplify supply chains and expand bilateral trade under the new agreement.

Important Terms

Important Term

Meaning



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Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA)	The India–U.K. Free Trade Agreement aimed at expanding trade, investment and economic cooperation.
Free Trade Agreement (FTA)	An agreement between countries to reduce or eliminate trade barriers such as tariffs.
Tariff	A tax imposed on imported goods.
Tariff Liberalisation	Reduction or removal of import duties to promote trade.
Market Access	The ability of goods and services to enter and compete in another country's market.
Rules of Origin	Criteria used to determine the country where a product is considered to have been made for trade benefits.
Customs Facilitation	Measures that simplify and speed up customs procedures for international trade.
Digital Trade	Trade involving digital products, online services and cross-border electronic transactions.
Supply Chain	The network involved in producing and delivering goods from manufacturers to consumers.
Preferential Trade	Trade that enjoys lower tariffs or special market access under a trade agreement.

[Sharing waters - The Hindu Editorial](#)

Polity

Easy Explanation

The article highlights the positive development of **Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, and Telangana** coming together to strengthen cooperation over the **Tungabhadra Dam**, which is a crucial source of irrigation for all three States. During the inauguration of the newly installed spillway gates, the Chief Ministers of the three States and the Union Jal Shakti Minister pledged greater collaboration in managing the river and its water resources.

The **Tungabhadra Dam** has largely remained free from major interstate disputes because of an established **water-sharing formula** and regulation by the **Tungabhadra Board**. However, challenges still remain. The **Upper Bhadra Project**, an upstream



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lift irrigation project in Karnataka, has raised concerns in Andhra Pradesh and Telangana, which fear it could reduce downstream water availability. Although the project continues under the Karnataka government, future cooperation among the States will be crucial in resolving these differences through dialogue.

The editorial also draws attention to the dam's deteriorating condition. In 2024, one of its crest gates was washed away during heavy floods, leading to significant water loss. While stronger gates have now been installed, the reservoir is suffering from **heavy siltation**, reducing its storage capacity from **133 tmc ft** to around **106 tmc ft**. The article stresses that regular dam maintenance, desiltation and timely implementation of dam safety projects are essential to prevent disasters rather than responding after accidents occur.

Key Takeaways

Inter-State Cooperation

- Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh and Telangana have pledged better coordination over Tungabhadra water management.
- Cooperative river governance reduces interstate disputes.

Tungabhadra Dam

- Provides irrigation to nearly **16.4 lakh acres** across the three States.
- Managed through an established water-sharing mechanism.

Upper Bhadra Project

- Karnataka's upstream irrigation project has raised concerns among downstream States.
- Continued dialogue is necessary to resolve differences.

Dam Safety

- New high-grade spillway gates have replaced the damaged gate washed away in 2024.
- Regular maintenance is essential for long-term safety.

Siltation Problem

- Reservoir storage has reduced significantly due to excessive silt accumulation.
- Desiltation is necessary to restore water storage capacity.

Role of the Centre

- The Union Government should support desiltation and closely monitor dam rehabilitation projects.
- Timely infrastructure upgrades can prevent future disasters.

Way Forward

- Strengthen interstate cooperation, improve dam maintenance, undertake desiltation, and prioritise preventive dam safety measures.

Important Terms

Important Term	Meaning
Tungabhadra Dam	A major multipurpose dam on the Tungabhadra River serving Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh and Telangana.
Tungabhadra Board	The authority responsible for regulating water releases and managing the dam.





Water-Sharing Formula	Agreed mechanism for distributing river water among different States.
Upper Bhadra Project	Karnataka's lift irrigation project located upstream of the Tungabhadra basin.
Lift Irrigation	A system where water is pumped from lower to higher elevations for irrigation.
Spillway Gate	A gate used to regulate the release of excess water from a dam.
Siltation	Accumulation of sediments in a reservoir, reducing its storage capacity.
tmc ft (Thousand Million Cubic Feet)	A standard unit used in India to measure large quantities of water stored in reservoirs.
Dam Rehabilitation	Repair and strengthening of dams to improve safety and operational efficiency.
Dam Safety	Measures taken to ensure dams remain structurally secure and function safely.

[Buyer beware - The Hindu Editorial](#)

Science

Easy Explanation

The Union **Health Ministry** has expanded the scope of **Schedule H2** by applying QR code-based tracking to entire categories of high-risk medicines instead of only selected brands. Under this system, every medicine pack will carry a **QR code or barcode** containing details such as the product identifier, manufacturing licence number and batch number. This will help regulators, pharmacists and consumers verify the authenticity of medicines and trace defective or counterfeit batches more effectively.

The move is important because **counterfeit medicines** remain a major public health challenge. Fake antibiotics, cancer medicines and vaccines not only fail to treat diseases but also contribute to **Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR)** by exposing microbes to inadequate drug doses. There are also concerns about diversion of prescription opioids and psychotropic medicines into illegal markets. The new system is expected to strengthen India's pharmaceutical quality standards and improve its global reputation after concerns over contaminated medicines in recent years.

However, successful implementation will require much more than QR codes. A **real-time digital database**, accessible to regulators and pharmacists across all States, is essential. Consumers should also develop the habit of verifying medicines before purchasing them. At the same time, small pharmaceutical manufacturers may face higher compliance costs due to new packaging and IT requirements. The editorial concludes that the effectiveness of the new framework will ultimately depend on proper implementation rather than regulation alone.

Key Takeaways

Schedule H2 Expansion



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- QR code-based authentication will now cover entire therapeutic classes of medicines.
- The objective is to improve medicine traceability and patient safety.

Combating Counterfeit Drugs

- QR codes help identify fake, defective and illegally diverted medicines.
- Better traceability strengthens drug quality control.

Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR)

- Substandard antibiotics contribute to the growth of drug-resistant microbes.
- Quality medicines are essential to combat AMR.

Digital Drug Tracking

- A national real-time database is needed for effective verification.
- Pharmacists and regulators should have easy digital access.

Support for MSMEs

- Smaller pharmaceutical manufacturers may face higher compliance costs.
- Adequate technical and financial support will ease implementation.

Consumer Awareness

- Patients should verify QR codes before purchasing medicines.
- Public participation strengthens the anti-counterfeit system.

Way Forward

- Build robust digital infrastructure, improve enforcement, support MSMEs and promote consumer awareness to ensure effective implementation.

Important Terms

Important Term	Meaning
Schedule H2	A regulatory framework requiring QR code or barcode-based authentication for specified medicines.
QR Code Authentication	Digital verification system used to confirm the authenticity and traceability of medicines.
Counterfeit Medicines	Fake medicines that are falsely labelled regarding identity or source.
Therapeutic Class	A group of medicines used to treat similar medical conditions.
Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR)	The ability of microbes to resist the effects of antimicrobial medicines.





Substandard Medicines	Medicines that fail to meet prescribed quality, safety or efficacy standards.
Batch Number	A unique identification number assigned to a manufactured batch of medicines for traceability.
Active Pharmaceutical Ingredient (API)	The biologically active substance in a medicine that produces its therapeutic effect.
Jan Vishwas Act, 2026	Legislation aimed at promoting trust-based compliance by distinguishing procedural lapses from serious regulatory violations.
Drug Traceability	The ability to track a medicine throughout its manufacturing and supply chain lifecycle.

[How schools can tackle adolescent malnutrition - The Hindu Editorial](#)

Sociology

Easy Explanation

India is facing a **double burden of malnutrition**. While many children still suffer from undernutrition and stunting, obesity and lifestyle diseases such as diabetes and heart disease are rising rapidly among adolescents and adults. According to **NFHS-6 (2023-24)**, obesity and high blood sugar have increased significantly in both men and women. Since unhealthy habits begin during adolescence, schools have a crucial role in preventing future health problems.

The editorial argues that schools should go beyond textbook nutrition lessons and create healthy food environments. Midday meals, school canteens and food education should encourage balanced diets with more fruits, vegetables and protein-rich foods while reducing sugary drinks, **High Fat Sugar Salt (HFSS)** foods and **Ultra-Processed Foods (UPFs)**. Schools should also promote physical activity, school gardens and nutrition awareness to help students develop lifelong healthy habits.

The article also highlights the role of the **Let's Fix Our Food (LFOF)** initiative led by **ICMR-NIN**, which promotes evidence-based nutrition policies and healthier school food environments. It concludes that schools should function not only as centres of education but also as institutions that promote public health by preventing obesity and non-communicable diseases from an early age.

Key Takeaways

Double Burden of Malnutrition

- India faces both undernutrition among children and rising obesity among adolescents and adults.
- Early prevention during school years is essential to reduce future health risks.

Healthy School Diets

- Schools should improve midday meals and promote balanced diets rich in fruits, vegetables and proteins.
- Food education should encourage healthy eating habits from an early age.

Reduce HFSS and UPFs

- Sugary drinks, HFSS foods and Ultra-Processed Foods are major contributors to obesity.



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- Schools should discourage their consumption through awareness and policy measures.

Promote Physical Activity

- Daily sports and structured physical activity should become an essential part of school education.
- Active lifestyles help prevent obesity, diabetes and heart disease.

Nutrition Literacy

- Students should learn practical skills like reading food labels, understanding portion sizes and identifying misleading food advertisements.
- Skill-based nutrition education creates lasting behavioural change.

Role of LFOF Initiative

- The ICMR-NIN-led initiative promotes healthier food environments, nutrition education and evidence-based food policies.
- It supports healthier school ecosystems across the country.

Way Forward

- Transform schools into public health institutions by combining nutritious food, regular exercise, nutrition literacy and supportive policies to combat adolescent malnutrition.

Important Terms

Important Term	Meaning
Adolescent Malnutrition	Poor nutritional status among adolescents, including both undernutrition and obesity.
NFHS-6	Sixth National Family Health Survey (2023-24), which provides data on India's health and nutrition indicators.
Double Burden of Malnutrition	Simultaneous presence of undernutrition and obesity within a population.
Thin-Fat Phenotype	Individuals who appear thin but have excess body fat and higher metabolic disease risk.
HFSS Foods	Foods high in fat, sugar and salt that increase the risk of obesity and lifestyle diseases.
Ultra-Processed Foods (UPFs)	Highly processed packaged foods containing additives, preservatives and refined ingredients.
Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs)	Chronic diseases such as diabetes, hypertension, heart disease and stroke that are not spread by infection.



**ICMR-NIN**

Indian Council of Medical Research – National Institute of Nutrition, India's premier nutrition research institute.

Let's Fix Our Food (LFOF)

An ICMR-NIN initiative promoting healthy food environments and nutrition awareness among adolescents.

Comprehensive National Nutrition Survey (CNNS)

A nationwide survey assessing the nutritional status of Indian children and adolescents.

[Can neutral ships be lawfully attacked? - The Hindu Text and Context](#)

International relations

Easy Explanation

The recent U.S. missile strikes on merchant tankers carrying Indian seafarers have raised important questions about whether **neutral commercial ships** can legally be attacked during war. Three Indian sailors lost their lives when the tanker *Settebello* was hit, even though it was a merchant vessel.

International law generally protects **neutral merchant ships and civilians** during armed conflicts. Two major legal frameworks apply here: the **Law of Naval Warfare**, which regulates military operations at sea, and the **United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS)**, which governs maritime rights and navigation. These laws allow neutral ships to continue commercial navigation, including through important routes such as the **Strait of Hormuz**.

However, this protection is not absolute. A neutral merchant vessel may lose its protected status if it is carrying **contraband**, deliberately violating a lawful **naval blockade**, refusing inspection after warning, or directly contributing to military operations. Even then, any attack must satisfy the principles of **distinction, military necessity, proportionality and precaution** under International Humanitarian Law (IHL).

The article also questions whether the U.S. blockade itself was lawful. While naval warfare rules permit enforcement of a lawful blockade, the **UN Charter** allows the use of force only in self-defence or with authorisation from the **UN Security Council**. If the blockade itself lacks legal validity, attacks carried out to enforce it may also violate international law. India, under the doctrine of **diplomatic protection**, can seek explanations, accountability and compensation for the deaths of its citizens.

Key Takeaways**Protection of Neutral Ships**

- Neutral merchant ships are generally protected from military attacks during armed conflicts.
- Civilian vessels can normally continue commercial navigation under international law.

When Protection Can Be Lost

- Neutral ships may become lawful targets if they carry contraband, violate a lawful blockade or directly assist military operations.
- Even then, attacks must satisfy strict humanitarian law principles.

Role of UNCLOS

- UNCLOS guarantees navigation rights, including transit through international straits like the Strait of Hormuz.
- These rights generally continue even during armed conflict.

Naval Blockades

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- A blockade must be publicly declared, effective and applied equally to all ships.
- An unlawful blockade cannot automatically justify attacks on neutral vessels.

UN Charter and Use of Force

- Military force is generally lawful only in self-defence or with UN Security Council approval.
- The legality of attacks depends on both naval warfare rules and the UN Charter.

India's Legal Options

- India can invoke diplomatic protection for its affected citizens.
- It may seek investigation, accountability and compensation for the deaths of Indian seafarers.

Larger Significance

- The incident highlights the growing risks to global shipping and civilian seafarers in conflict zones.
- It also underscores the need to balance military objectives with international humanitarian obligations.

Important Terms

Important Term	Meaning
International Humanitarian Law (IHL)	Laws governing the conduct of war and protecting civilians during armed conflict.
Law of Naval Warfare	Rules governing military operations and attacks at sea during war.
UNCLOS	United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, which regulates maritime rights and navigation.
Neutral Merchant Vessel	A commercial ship belonging to a country that is not involved in the armed conflict.
Military Objective	A target that makes an effective contribution to military action and offers a definite military advantage if attacked.
Contraband	Goods that can assist a belligerent's military effort and may be intercepted during war.
Naval Blockade	Restriction imposed by a belligerent to prevent ships from entering or leaving enemy-controlled ports.
Transit Passage	Right of ships to pass through international straits without unnecessary interference.



**Diplomatic Protection**

Right of a country to seek remedies when its citizens suffer injury due to internationally wrongful acts.

San Remo Manual (1994)

Influential compilation of customary international law governing armed conflicts at sea.

[Do unprecedented security measures address NEET's real vulnerabilities? - The Hindu Text and Context](#)

Sociology

Easy Explanation

Following the controversies surrounding **NEET-2026**, the Government introduced one of the largest security operations ever for a public examination. The exam involved AI-based surveillance, biometric verification, GPS tracking of question papers, Air Force support, police and paramilitary deployment, and nearly seven lakh personnel. These measures were designed to prevent paper leaks and malpractice during the examination. However, the article argues that these arrangements mainly protect the physical movement of question papers and may not address the deeper structural weaknesses in the examination system.

The article points out that NEET has repeatedly faced allegations of paper leaks, unusually high scores, coaching-centre influence and insider access. It suggests that the greatest risk may occur much earlier, during question setting, moderation, translation and digitisation, where a small group of experts has privileged access to examination content. Even without leaking an entire paper, selective sharing of important topics or likely questions could provide an unfair advantage to certain coaching networks.

The article further argues that isolating question setters for a few days before the examination is insufficient if conflicts of interest, repeated appointments and links with coaching institutions are not properly addressed. It also highlights other concerns such as cybersecurity vulnerabilities, unlimited examination attempts, the growing dependence on coaching institutes and weak monitoring of organised examination networks.

The article concludes that the credibility of NEET depends not only on secure transportation of question papers but also on ensuring transparency, strong cybersecurity, conflict-free expert selection and a fair, merit-based examination ecosystem.

Key Takeaways**Massive Security Measures**

- NEET-2026 saw AI surveillance, biometric verification, GPS tracking and large-scale security deployment.
- These measures mainly secured the physical conduct of the examination.

Root Causes May Lie Elsewhere

- Vulnerabilities may originate during question setting, moderation and translation rather than paper transportation.
- Insider information can spread through selective sharing without leaking the full question paper.

Conflict of Interest Concerns

- Repeated involvement of experts with possible coaching links raises questions about impartiality.
- Strong background verification and conflict-of-interest checks are necessary.

Cybersecurity Challenges

- Reported portal vulnerabilities and unauthorised access highlight weaknesses in digital security.
- Protecting examination data is as important as protecting printed papers.

Coaching Ecosystem

- Unlimited attempts and intense competition have strengthened dependence on coaching institutions.



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- Information asymmetry within coaching networks may undermine fairness.

Need for Structural Reforms

- Reforms should focus on transparent expert selection, stronger cybersecurity, intelligence-based monitoring and reviewing examination policies.
- Security measures alone cannot eliminate systemic vulnerabilities.

Ultimate Goal

- A credible examination system requires transparency, fairness, accountability and genuine merit-based selection.

Important Terms

Important Term	Meaning
NEET	National Eligibility-cum-Entrance Test for admission to undergraduate medical courses in India.
NTA	National Testing Agency, the body responsible for conducting NEET and several other national examinations.
Biometric Authentication	Identity verification using fingerprints, iris scans or facial recognition.
Conflict of Interest	A situation where personal or professional interests may influence impartial decision-making.
Question Moderation	The process of reviewing examination questions for accuracy, difficulty and fairness before the exam.
Cybersecurity	Protection of digital systems, examination portals and sensitive data from unauthorised access or attacks.
GPS Tracking	Technology used to monitor the movement of question papers and examination materials in real time.
AI-enabled Surveillance	Use of Artificial Intelligence to monitor examination centres and detect suspicious activities.
Management Quota	Reserved seats in private educational institutions filled under institution-specific admission policies, usually with higher fees.





Merit-based Admission Admission based solely on a candidate's performance and qualifications rather than unfair advantages or external influence.

[Smart AI caching can keep the data flowing when disaster strikes - The Hindu Science](#)

Disaster management

Easy Explanation

During natural disasters such as floods, landslides and earthquakes, communication networks are often severely disrupted because telecom towers collapse, electricity fails and roads become inaccessible. As a result, rescue teams struggle to obtain real-time information about trapped people, damaged infrastructure and safe routes. The article discusses a new technology called **collaborative caching**, developed by researchers from Trinity College Dublin, which can help maintain the flow of critical information even when communication networks are partially damaged.

Instead of depending on a single communication source, collaborative caching allows satellites, drones, emergency vehicles and ground communication stations to work together. Important information such as satellite images, maps, rescue routes and emergency alerts is stored at multiple nearby locations (called caches). This enables rescue workers to access information from the nearest available device instead of waiting for data from distant servers, thereby reducing delays and improving reliability during emergencies.

The researchers also developed an Artificial Intelligence model called **Contextual Multi-Armed Bandit (CMAB)**, which automatically decides which information should be stored based on demand, freshness of data and available memory. A more advanced version called **Federated Multi-Armed Bandit (FMAB)** allows different devices to learn from one another, making the entire disaster communication network smarter and more efficient.

The study highlights the importance of a **Space-Air-Ground Integrated Network (SAGIN)**, where satellites, drones and ground communication systems function together. Although practical challenges such as bad weather, cybersecurity, hardware failures and energy limitations remain, the technology has the potential to significantly improve disaster response by ensuring that the most useful information reaches rescue teams quickly.

Key Takeaways

Communication During Disasters

- Natural disasters often damage communication infrastructure, delaying rescue operations.
- Real-time information is critical for saving lives and coordinating emergency response.

Collaborative Caching

- Multiple devices store and share important information instead of relying on a single source.
- This reduces communication delays even when networks are damaged.

Role of Artificial Intelligence

- AI models automatically identify and store the most useful and frequently required information.
- This improves the efficiency of disaster communication systems.

CMAB and FMAB

- CMAB makes intelligent caching decisions based on demand and available resources.
- FMAB allows different devices to learn collectively and strengthen the entire network.

Space-Air-Ground Integrated Network (SAGIN)

- Combines satellites, drones and ground communication systems into one integrated network.
- Enhances information sharing and disaster response capabilities.



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Advantages

- Faster access to rescue information.
- Better use of limited storage and communication resources.
- Improved coordination among emergency responders.

Challenges Ahead

- Practical implementation depends on weather, cybersecurity, power supply, drone performance and real-world operational conditions.

Important Terms

Important Term	Meaning
Collaborative Caching	A technique where multiple devices store and share important data to improve access during network failures.
Cache	Temporary storage that keeps frequently used data for faster retrieval.
Contextual Multi-Armed Bandit (CMAB)	An AI algorithm that decides which information should be stored based on demand, context and available resources.
Federated Multi-Armed Bandit (FMAB)	An advanced AI model where multiple devices learn from each other's experiences while making caching decisions.
SAGIN (Space-Air-Ground Integrated Network)	A communication network integrating satellites, drones and ground infrastructure for reliable connectivity.
Data Latency	The delay between sending and receiving information.
Satellite Communication	Communication using satellites to transmit information over large geographical areas.
Drone (UAV)	An unmanned aerial vehicle used for surveillance, communication and disaster management.
Real-time Information	Information that is available immediately as events occur.
Disaster Response Network	A communication system used by emergency agencies to coordinate rescue and relief operations.



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30th June 2026

[Behind Europe's heatwave, climate change the culprit - The Indian Express Explained Page](#)

Environment

Easy Explanation

Europe is currently experiencing one of its most severe heatwaves ever, with temperatures breaking historical records across several countries. A study by **World Weather Attribution (WWA)** has concluded that this extreme heat is **directly caused by climate change**, making such temperatures far more likely today than they were a few decades ago. The **World Health Organization (WHO)** estimates that more than 1,300 excess deaths have already been linked to the ongoing heatwave.

According to the study, climate change—not the **El Niño** weather phenomenon—is the primary reason behind the unprecedented temperatures. The researchers found that the daytime and nighttime temperatures observed during this heatwave would have been virtually impossible without human-induced global warming. Europe, which is warming nearly **twice as fast as the global average**, has witnessed repeated extreme heat events in 2022, 2023 and now again in 2026.

The article also explains the growing importance of **climate attribution science**, a relatively new field that determines how much climate change has contributed to a specific extreme weather event. Earlier, such studies took months or even years, but advances in climate modelling now allow scientists to produce reliable assessments while the event is still unfolding. These findings help remove uncertainty and provide scientific evidence for climate policy.

Despite increasing scientific evidence, global climate action remains slow. The article notes that many governments now appear to focus more on adapting to climate impacts than achieving the **Paris Agreement** goal of limiting global warming to **1.5°C or 2°C** above pre-industrial levels. Scientists warn that adaptation alone cannot prevent increasingly frequent and intense heatwaves unless greenhouse gas emissions are significantly reduced.

Key Takeaways

Climate Change Confirmed

- Scientists have identified climate change as the primary cause of Europe's ongoing record-breaking heatwave.
- The extreme temperatures would have been highly unlikely without global warming.

Europe Warming Faster

- Europe is the fastest-warming continent, heating at nearly twice the global average.
- Heatwaves have become more frequent and intense in recent years.

Climate Attribution Science

- This field measures how much climate change contributes to specific extreme weather events.
- Faster scientific analysis now supports timely policy decisions.

El Niño Not Responsible

- The study found that the current heatwave is mainly driven by climate change rather than El Niño.
- Human-induced warming is the dominant factor.

Human Impact

- Thousands of excess deaths have been linked to the heatwave.
- Rising temperatures pose serious public health and economic risks.

Policy Challenge

- Scientific evidence on climate change is increasing, but global mitigation efforts remain inadequate.
- Many countries are shifting towards adaptation rather than stronger emission reductions.



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Way Forward

- Greater efforts are needed to reduce greenhouse gas emissions while strengthening climate adaptation and disaster preparedness.
- Achieving the Paris Agreement goals remains essential to limit future extreme weather events.

Important Terms

Important Term	Meaning
World Weather Attribution (WWA)	An international scientific group that studies whether climate change has influenced specific extreme weather events.
Climate Attribution Science	A field of science that determines the extent to which climate change contributed to an extreme weather event.
Heatwave	A prolonged period of unusually high temperatures compared to the normal climate of a region.
El Niño	The warm phase of the El Niño-Southern Oscillation (ENSO) that influences global weather patterns.
ENSO (El Niño-Southern Oscillation)	A recurring ocean-atmosphere climate pattern in the Pacific Ocean affecting global weather.
Paris Agreement	The 2015 international climate treaty aimed at limiting global warming to well below 2°C, preferably 1.5°C.
Global Warming	The long-term increase in Earth's average temperature due to greenhouse gas emissions.
Mitigation	Actions taken to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and slow climate change.
Adaptation	Measures taken to reduce the impacts of climate change and improve resilience.
Excess Deaths	Deaths occurring above the expected average during events such as heatwaves or pandemics.

[Why more medicines will now have QR codes on their packets - The Indian Express Explained Page](#)





Easy Explanation

The Central Government has expanded the use of **QR codes and barcodes** on medicine packets to improve the tracking of drugs across the supply chain. Under the new rule, **vaccines, antimicrobials (antibiotics), anti-cancer medicines, narcotic drugs and addictive medicines** will gradually carry unique QR codes over the next two years. This system allows every individual vial, strip, or packet of medicine to be identified and tracked from the manufacturing plant to the pharmacy.

The QR code will contain important details such as the medicine's brand name, generic name, manufacturer, batch number, manufacturing date, expiry date, licence number, and a unique identification code. Every manufacturer, wholesaler, distributor and retailer must record the movement of the medicine on a digital tracking platform. This makes it difficult for counterfeit medicines to enter the supply chain because each medicine packet can only be registered once.

The main objective is to curb the growing problem of **fake or substandard medicines**. Counterfeit drugs may contain no active ingredient, the wrong ingredient, or diluted medicine, posing serious health risks. The tracking system will also help regulators quickly identify contaminated batches and efficiently recall medicines if any quality issues arise. It is particularly important for expensive cancer medicines, where fake or refilled vials have been found in the past.

The system also aims to strengthen India's drug regulatory standards. The **World Health Organization (WHO)** assesses national drug regulators using a **Maturity Level** framework. India has already achieved **Maturity Level 3** for vaccine regulation, and expanding traceability is expected to help the country move towards **Maturity Level 4**, improving international confidence in Indian pharmaceutical products.

Key Takeaways

Better Drug Traceability

- Every medicine packet will have a unique QR code for end-to-end tracking.
- Regulators can trace medicines from manufacture to retail sale.

Fight Against Counterfeit Drugs

- Unique codes make fake medicines and duplicate packaging much harder to circulate.
- Helps protect patients from unsafe or ineffective medicines.

Faster Product Recall

- Defective or contaminated batches can be quickly identified and withdrawn.
- Improves patient safety during quality-related incidents.

Improved Regulatory Oversight

- Digital tracking strengthens monitoring of the pharmaceutical supply chain.
- Enhances transparency and accountability.

Global Recognition

- Better traceability supports India's move towards WHO's highest regulatory maturity standards.
- Improves the credibility of Indian medicines in international markets.

Implementation Challenges

- Companies will incur additional costs for digital infrastructure and code generation.
- Smaller pharmaceutical firms may require financial support for compliance.

Timeline

- Vaccines, anti-cancer and narcotic drugs: QR codes by July 2027.
- Antimicrobials: QR codes by July 2028.

Important Terms



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Important Term	Meaning
QR Code	A machine-readable code that stores detailed product information for verification and tracking.
Track-and-Trace System	A digital system that monitors a product's movement throughout the supply chain.
Counterfeit Medicines	Fake medicines that may contain incorrect, diluted, or no active ingredients.
Antimicrobials	Medicines used to treat infections caused by bacteria, viruses, fungi, or parasites.
Narcotic Drugs	Medicines with strong pain-relieving effects that are strictly regulated due to their potential for misuse.
Drug Recall	The process of removing defective or unsafe medicines from the market.
WHO Maturity Level (ML)	A WHO framework that measures the effectiveness and quality of a country's drug regulatory system.
Supply Chain Traceability	The ability to track a product's journey from manufacturing to the final consumer.

[Iran to charge fee for using the Strait of Hormuz: What international law says - The Indian Express Explained](#) Page

International relations

Easy Explanation

The **Strait of Hormuz** is one of the world's most important maritime chokepoints, through which nearly one-fifth of global oil trade passes. After the recent US-Iran framework agreement, the Strait has reopened, but Iran has announced that ships using it will have to pay **navigation and environmental protection fees**. This has triggered an international legal debate over whether such charges are permitted under international law.

The **United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), 1982** provides that ships and aircraft enjoy the **Right of Transit Passage** through international straits like the Strait of Hormuz. This means vessels should be allowed to pass continuously and without unnecessary interference because these waterways are essential for global trade. The principle was also recognised by the **International Court of Justice (ICJ)** in the 1949 **Corfu Channel Case**, which held that ships have the right to pass through international straits during peacetime.

However, Iran argues that it is not fully bound by these transit passage rules because although it signed UNCLOS, it never ratified the Convention. It also claims to be a **Persistent Objector**, meaning it consistently opposed treating transit passage as a rule of customary international law. Through its **1993 Law on Marine Areas**, Iran authorises itself to regulate or suspend the passage of certain foreign ships, especially warships or vessels carrying environmentally hazardous cargo.



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Iran also points to examples like the **Suez Canal** and **Panama Canal**, where transit fees are charged. However, international law distinguishes these canals from the Strait of Hormuz because canals are **artificial waterways** governed by separate treaties, while the Strait of Hormuz is a **natural international strait** covered by UNCLOS rules.

The dispute highlights the growing use of strategic waterways as geopolitical tools. While Iran views the fees as compensation for navigation management and environmental protection after the conflict, many countries may argue that imposing such charges undermines the internationally recognised freedom of transit through one of the world's most critical trade routes.

Key Takeaways

Strategic Importance

- The Strait of Hormuz carries nearly 20% of global oil trade.
- Any restriction affects global energy security and shipping costs.

Right of Transit Passage

- UNCLOS allows uninterrupted passage through international straits.
- Coastal states generally cannot suspend this right.

Iran's Legal Position

- Iran signed but never ratified UNCLOS.
- It argues that transit passage rules are not binding on it.

Persistent Objector Doctrine

- A country that consistently opposes an emerging customary rule may avoid being bound by it.
- Iran relies on this doctrine to justify its position.

Difference from Canals

- Suez and Panama Canals charge transit fees under separate treaty regimes.
- The Strait of Hormuz is governed by international maritime law, not canal treaties.

Security vs. Freedom of Navigation

- Iran cites environmental protection and national security.
- Other countries emphasise uninterrupted international navigation.

Global Implications

- Any prolonged restrictions or fees could disrupt oil supplies, increase shipping costs, and create wider geopolitical tensions.

Important Terms

Important Term	Meaning
Strait of Hormuz	A narrow sea passage connecting the Persian Gulf with the Gulf of Oman, crucial for global oil trade.
UNCLOS (1982)	International treaty governing the rights and responsibilities of states over oceans and seas.





Right of Transit Passage	The right of ships and aircraft to pass continuously and expeditiously through international straits.
Right of Innocent Passage	The right of foreign ships to pass through a country's territorial sea without threatening its peace or security.
Customary International Law	International legal rules formed through consistent state practice accepted as legally binding.
Persistent Objector Doctrine	Principle allowing a state that consistently objects to an emerging customary rule to avoid being bound by it.
Corfu Channel Case (1949)	Landmark ICJ judgment recognising freedom of navigation through international straits during peacetime.
International Strait	A natural waterway used for international navigation that connects two larger bodies of water.

[Chargesheet after 36 years: Recalling the Sarla Bhat murder case - The Indian Express Explained Page](#)

Governance

Easy Explanation

The **State Investigation Agency (SIA) of Jammu & Kashmir** has filed a chargesheet in the **36-year-old murder case of Kashmiri Pandit nurse Sarla Bhat**, nearly ten months after reopening the investigation. The chargesheet names **five members of the banned Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF)**, including its jailed chief **Yasin Malik**. Of the remaining accused, three are dead while one is believed to be hiding in Pakistan.

Sarla Bhat was a **27-year-old nurse** working at the **Sher-i-Kashmir Institute of Medical Sciences (SKIMS), Srinagar**. Unlike many Kashmiri Pandits who left the Valley after militancy escalated in 1990, she chose to remain. On **18 April 1990**, armed militants allegedly abducted her from her hostel. Her body, bearing multiple bullet injuries, was found the next day. A handwritten note left near her body accused her of being a police informer.

At the time, Jammu & Kashmir Police registered a murder case against unidentified militants, but the investigation made little progress. Like many cases from the early years of militancy, it remained unresolved for decades.

The issue of justice for victims resurfaced when the organisation **Roots in Kashmir** approached the **Supreme Court** in 2017 seeking fresh investigations into the killings of Kashmiri Pandits. The Court declined, observing that after nearly three decades, reliable evidence would be difficult to obtain. A curative petition filed later was also dismissed.

Despite this, the **SIA** began reopening selected cases from 2023 onwards. It first reopened the murder case of **Judge Neelkanth Ganjoo** and later reopened Sarla Bhat's case in 2025. The latest chargesheet marks an important step in investigating crimes committed during the early years of insurgency, even after several decades.

Key Takeaways

Historic Chargesheet



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- SIA filed a chargesheet 36 years after Sarla Bhat's murder.
- Five JKLF operatives, including Yasin Malik, have been accused.

The Murder

- Sarla Bhat was abducted from her hostel in April 1990 and killed.
- She had chosen to stay in Kashmir despite rising militancy.

Earlier Investigation

- Police registered an FIR against unidentified militants.
- The investigation remained unresolved for decades.

Reopening the Case

- SIA reopened the investigation in 2025.
- It is among the first old militancy-era cases to be revived.

Role of the Supreme Court

- The Court earlier declined to order a fresh investigation, citing the difficulty of collecting evidence after many years.
- However, investigative agencies later reopened specific cases independently.

Broader Context

- The case relates to the violence faced by Kashmiri Pandits during the initial phase of insurgency in Jammu & Kashmir.
- It reflects continuing efforts to revisit unresolved cases from that period.

Significance

- Demonstrates that long-pending criminal cases can still be investigated where fresh evidence or material is available.
- Highlights the importance of accountability for historic crimes.

Important Terms

Important Term	Meaning
State Investigation Agency (SIA)	Jammu & Kashmir's specialised agency that investigates terrorism and related serious offences.
JKLF (Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front)	A banned militant organisation that sought an independent Kashmir.
Chargesheet	A formal police report filed before a court after investigation, detailing the evidence and charges against the accused.
FIR (First Information Report)	The first official document registered by police regarding the commission of a cognizable offence.





Curative Petition	The final judicial remedy available before the Supreme Court to seek reconsideration of its judgment in exceptional circumstances.
Roots in Kashmir	An organisation representing Kashmiri Pandits that has sought legal action regarding killings and displacement during the insurgency.
Kashmiri Pandit Exodus	The large-scale migration of Kashmiri Pandits from the Kashmir Valley during 1989–90 following the rise of militancy.
SKIMS	Sher-i-Kashmir Institute of Medical Sciences, a premier government medical institute in Srinagar.

[Next UN chief's job: Keep conversations alive when others stop talking - The Indian Express Ideas Page](#)

International relations

Easy Explanation

The article argues that the **next Secretary-General of the United Nations (UN)** will take office at one of the most difficult moments in the organisation's history. With the term of **António Guterres** ending in December 2026, the next leader will face rising wars, geopolitical rivalry, weakening international law, and growing distrust of multilateral institutions.

The UN was created after World War II not to eliminate all conflicts but to prevent another global catastrophe. Former UN Secretary-General **Dag Hammarskjöld** famously said that the UN was created not to take humanity to heaven, but to save it from hell. Throughout history, successful UN chiefs have used diplomacy, mediation, and quiet negotiations to prevent conflicts from escalating, even without having direct political or military power.

Today, however, the international environment has become far more challenging. Conflicts in **Ukraine, Gaza, West Asia, and the South China Sea**, along with declining trust among major powers, have weakened global cooperation. The UN Security Council is often paralysed because of disagreements among its permanent members. In such a situation, the next Secretary-General must act as an honest mediator who can keep dialogue alive even when governments stop communicating with each other.

The article also argues that the UN needs reforms to regain legitimacy, especially among developing countries that feel global institutions no longer reflect present-day realities. The next Secretary-General should push for a more representative international order while strengthening mediation, conflict prevention, and cooperation on global challenges such as climate change, pandemics, cyber threats, and nuclear proliferation. Although the office cannot solve every crisis, it can create opportunities for diplomacy and reduce the chances of conflicts becoming global disasters.

Key Takeaways

Role of the UN

- The UN was created to prevent global conflicts, not to eliminate all disagreements.
- Diplomacy remains its strongest tool.

Difficult Global Situation

- Rising wars and geopolitical rivalry have weakened international cooperation.
- The UN Security Council often remains divided.

Role of the Next Secretary-General



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- Must act as a trusted mediator between conflicting nations.
- Should keep communication channels open during crises.

Need for UN Reform

- Many countries seek a more representative and effective UN.
- Security Council reforms remain an important issue.

Importance of Multilateralism

- Global problems like climate change, pandemics, and nuclear risks require collective action.
- No country can solve these challenges alone.

Lessons from History

- Previous UN leaders successfully prevented several crises through quiet diplomacy.
- Mediation and dialogue remain essential for peace.

Core Message

- The greatest strength of the next UN chief will be the ability to keep countries talking when diplomacy begins to fail.

Important Terms

Important Term	Meaning
United Nations (UN)	International organisation established in 1945 to promote peace, security and international cooperation.
Secretary-General	The chief administrative and diplomatic officer of the United Nations.
Multilateralism	Cooperation among multiple countries to solve common global problems.
UN Security Council	The UN body responsible for maintaining international peace and security.
Mediation	A process where a neutral third party helps resolve disputes through dialogue.
Collective Security	A system where countries cooperate to respond collectively to threats against peace.
Global South	Developing and emerging countries, mainly in Asia, Africa and Latin America, that seek greater representation in global governance.
Diplomatic Negotiation	Peaceful discussions between countries to resolve disputes and reach agreements.





On the delay in India-U.S. trade deal - The Hindu Text and Context

Economy

Easy Explanation

India and the United States have been negotiating a **Bilateral Trade Agreement (BTA)** since February 2025 to expand trade and investment between the two countries. As a temporary step, both sides signed a **framework agreement** in February 2026 to work towards an interim trade deal by April–May 2026. However, neither the comprehensive BTA nor the interim agreement has been finalised due to legal, political, and trade-related challenges.

One of the biggest reasons for the delay has been disagreements over market access. The United States wants India to open its **agriculture and dairy sectors**, while India has been reluctant because of concerns over farmers' livelihoods. Another major issue has been India's continued purchase of **Russian crude oil**, which led the U.S. to impose higher tariffs on Indian goods during 2025, temporarily slowing trade negotiations.

The situation became more complicated after the **U.S. Supreme Court** struck down the legal basis for President Donald Trump's reciprocal tariff policy. Since the proposed interim trade deal was built around those tariffs, the legal uncertainty delayed negotiations. The U.S. later introduced new temporary tariffs under a different law, but these too became subject to legal challenges, creating further uncertainty.

Meanwhile, the **U.S. Trade Representative (USTR)** launched investigations under **Section 301 of the U.S. Trade Act** into several countries, including India. These investigations examine issues such as excess manufacturing capacity and whether countries have taken adequate steps to prevent imports made using forced labour. Depending on their findings, additional tariffs may be imposed, making it difficult for both countries to finalise tariff commitments.

Despite these challenges, both governments continue negotiations on issues beyond tariffs, including **digital trade, supply chain resilience, market access, strategic cooperation, and reducing non-tariff barriers**. India has maintained that any agreement must provide it with a competitive advantage compared to other trading partners before it agrees to sign the deal.

Key Takeaways

Bilateral Trade Agreement (BTA)

- India and the U.S. aim to strengthen long-term trade and investment.
- A comprehensive agreement is still under negotiation.

Reasons for Delay

- Differences over agriculture, dairy, and India's Russian oil imports.
- Legal uncertainty over U.S. tariff policies.

U.S. Supreme Court's Role

- Invalidated the legal basis for reciprocal tariffs.
- Forced both countries to reconsider parts of the proposed deal.

Section 301 Investigations

- The U.S. is examining India's trade practices.
- Findings may result in additional tariffs.

India's Position

- Supports a trade deal but seeks preferential market access.
- Wants a competitive advantage over other exporters.

Negotiations Continue

- Discussions now focus on digital trade, supply chains, and non-tariff issues.
- No final timeline has been announced.



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Significance

- A successful trade deal would deepen economic ties between two major strategic partners.
- Delays reflect the complexity of balancing domestic interests with international trade commitments.

Important Terms

Important Term	Meaning
Bilateral Trade Agreement (BTA)	A trade agreement between two countries to reduce trade barriers and increase economic cooperation.
Framework Agreement	A broad agreement that lays down principles for negotiating a final treaty or deal.
Tariff	A tax imposed on imported goods.
Reciprocal Tariff	A tariff imposed in response to tariffs or trade restrictions imposed by another country.
Section 301 (U.S. Trade Act)	A U.S. legal provision that allows investigations and trade action against unfair foreign trade practices.
USTR (United States Trade Representative)	The U.S. government agency responsible for trade negotiations and trade policy.
Non-Tariff Barriers (NTBs)	Trade restrictions other than tariffs, such as regulations, standards, licensing requirements, or quotas.
Supply Chain Resilience	The ability of supply chains to withstand disruptions and continue functioning efficiently.

[Has RBI changed the rules for scam compensation? - The Hindu Text and Context](#)

Economy

Easy Explanation

The **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** has introduced new pilot rules to provide financial relief to customers who lose money in certain types of online scams. Earlier, under the **2017 RBI framework**, customers were compensated only when transactions were completely unauthorised, such as when hackers accessed a bank account without the customer's knowledge. However, most modern cyber frauds involve **social engineering**, where fraudsters trick or threaten people into transferring money themselves. The new rules attempt to address this gap.



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The RBI has introduced the concept of **Fraudulent Electronic Banking Transactions (EBTs)**. These include cases where a customer is forced to transfer money under pressure (such as **digital arrest scams**) or where fraudsters obtain OTPs or banking credentials through deception. Such transactions may now qualify for compensation because the customer's consent was obtained fraudulently rather than voluntarily.

However, compensation is not automatic. Customers who ignore clear fraud warnings, such as UPI alerts cautioning against sharing PINs or transferring money, may not receive any reimbursement. Similarly, customers who fail to update their registered mobile number or email with the bank may be treated as negligent, reducing or eliminating their eligibility for compensation.

Under the pilot scheme, individual customers who lose **up to ₹50,000** can receive compensation of **85% of the loss**, subject to a maximum of **₹25,000**, and this benefit can be claimed only **once in a lifetime**. Customers must report the fraud to the **National Cyber Crime Helpline (1930)** within **five calendar days** to become eligible. The RBI will bear most of the compensation cost, while banks will share the remaining burden. At present, losses exceeding ₹50,000 are not covered under this pilot programme.

Compared to the draft rules released earlier, the RBI has postponed implementation from **July 2026 to January 1, 2027**, giving banks more time to prepare. Complaint resolution timelines have also been extended to **45–60 days**. Experts have welcomed the recognition of coercive digital scams but argue that limiting compensation to a single claim and excluding larger fraud amounts may not adequately protect vulnerable customers.

Key Takeaways

Expanded Protection

- RBI now covers certain scams where customers are deceived or coerced into making payments.
- Earlier, only completely unauthorised transactions were eligible.

Fraudulent Electronic Banking Transactions (EBTs)

- Includes digital arrest scams, OTP theft, and coercion-based payments.
- Recognises social engineering as a major cyber fraud risk.

Compensation Rules

- Covers losses up to ₹50,000.
- Maximum compensation is ₹25,000, available only once.

Reporting Requirement

- Fraud must be reported to cyber helpline **1930** within five days.
- Delayed reporting may result in loss of eligibility.

Customer Responsibility

- Ignoring fraud warnings or failing to update bank contact details may be treated as negligence.
- Negligence can reduce or eliminate compensation.

Pilot Programme

- Effective from **January 1, 2027** for one year.
- RBI may expand or modify the framework based on its performance.

Significance

- Marks a shift from protecting only against hacking to covering modern digital scams involving deception and coercion.

Important Terms

Important Term

Meaning



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Fraudulent Electronic Banking Transaction (EBT)	A banking transaction carried out through fraud, coercion, or stolen credentials.
Social Engineering	A technique where fraudsters manipulate people into revealing confidential information or making payments.
Digital Arrest Scam	A scam in which fraudsters impersonate law enforcement officials and threaten victims into transferring money.
OTP (One-Time Password)	A temporary security code used to verify banking or digital transactions.
Cyber Helpline 1930	India's national helpline for reporting cyber financial frauds.
Unauthorised Transaction	A transaction made without the account holder's knowledge or consent.
Negligence	Failure by the customer to exercise reasonable care, such as ignoring fraud alerts or not updating contact details.
Pilot Scheme	A temporary programme implemented on a trial basis before possible nationwide adoption.

[What India's 12 'Operationally Deployed' Nuclear Warheads Really Mean - The Hindu Text and Context](#)

Science and technology

Easy Explanation

The **Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI)** reported that, for the first time, around **12 of India's estimated 190 nuclear warheads** are "**operationally deployed**." This does not mean India has increased its nuclear arsenal dramatically or adopted a more aggressive nuclear policy. Instead, it reflects that a small number of nuclear weapons are now kept ready with their delivery systems as part of India's evolving deterrence capability.

India continues to follow its long-standing **No First Use (NFU)** doctrine, under which it promises **not to use nuclear weapons first** in any conflict. Nuclear weapons would only be used in retaliation if India is attacked with nuclear weapons. Therefore, India's primary objective is to ensure that enough nuclear weapons survive any first strike so that it can launch a powerful retaliatory attack. This ability is known as the **second-strike capability**, which forms the backbone of India's nuclear strategy.

Previously, India generally stored its nuclear warheads separately from missiles and aircraft, a practice known as **de-mating**. This reduced the chances of accidental or unauthorized use while demonstrating strategic restraint. An **operationally deployed** weapon, however, is already paired (mated) with its delivery platform—such as a missile or submarine—and is maintained in a state of readiness for use if political authorization is given.

SIPRI believes these deployed warheads are mainly linked to India's **Arihant-class nuclear-powered ballistic missile submarines (SSBNs)** and **canisterised Agni-series missiles**. Ballistic missile submarines are extremely difficult to detect and



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destroy while underwater, making them the most reliable platform for ensuring a survivable retaliatory strike. Similarly, canisterised missiles remain sealed, fuelled, and ready for rapid launch, improving operational preparedness.

Therefore, the deployment of these 12 warheads does **not indicate a shift towards first use or nuclear aggression**. Instead, it strengthens India's ability to implement its No First Use doctrine by making retaliation more credible. It signals the maturity of India's **nuclear triad**—land-based missiles, aircraft, and submarine-based nuclear forces—which enhances strategic stability and deterrence.

The development also reflects a changing global security environment. SIPRI notes that nuclear powers are modernising their arsenals, China's nuclear stockpile is expanding rapidly, and global arms control agreements are weakening. India's modernization is therefore viewed as part of maintaining a credible deterrent against both **China and Pakistan**, rather than signalling any change in its nuclear doctrine.

Key Takeaways

SIPRI Assessment

- SIPRI estimates India has around **190 nuclear warheads**, with **12 now operationally deployed**.
- Deployment means greater readiness, not increased aggression.

No First Use (NFU)

- India continues to follow its policy of not initiating nuclear attacks.
- Nuclear weapons remain intended only for retaliation.

Second-Strike Capability

- A survivable nuclear force ensures India can retaliate even after suffering a nuclear first strike.
- This strengthens deterrence and strategic stability.

Operational Deployment

- Deployed warheads are mated with missiles or submarines and maintained in operational readiness.
- Earlier, most Indian warheads were stored separately from delivery systems.

Nuclear Triad

- India's land, air and sea-based nuclear forces are becoming fully operational.
- SSBNs significantly improve the survivability of India's deterrent.

Strategic Context

- India's modernization is influenced by China's expanding nuclear capabilities and regional security concerns.
- It is intended to preserve credible deterrence rather than alter nuclear doctrine.

Global Concern

- SIPRI warns that weakening arms-control agreements and expanding nuclear arsenals worldwide increase the risk of future strategic instability.

Important Terms

Important Term	Meaning
Operationally Deployed Warhead	A nuclear warhead paired with its delivery system and kept ready for authorised use.





No First Use (NFU)	India's policy of not using nuclear weapons unless first attacked with nuclear weapons.
Second-Strike Capability	The ability to launch a nuclear retaliatory attack even after suffering a nuclear first strike.
Credible Minimum Deterrence	India's doctrine of maintaining only the minimum nuclear force necessary to deter adversaries.
Nuclear Triad	A country's nuclear capability through land-based missiles, aircraft, and submarine-launched missiles.
SSBN (Ballistic Missile Submarine)	A nuclear-powered submarine equipped with nuclear ballistic missiles, providing a survivable second-strike capability.
Canisterised Missile	A missile stored in a sealed launch canister, allowing rapid deployment and launch.
De-mated Warhead	A nuclear warhead stored separately from its delivery platform to enhance safety and political control.
SIPRI	Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, an independent organisation that studies global security, armaments and disarmament.

[Caught in the Middle - The Hindu Editorial](#)

International relations

Easy Explanation

This editorial discusses India's growing challenge of **drug trafficking and drug abuse** due to its geographical location between two of the world's largest illegal drug-producing regions. To India's west lies the **Golden Crescent** (Afghanistan, Pakistan and Iran), traditionally known for heroin production, while to its east lies the **Golden Triangle** (Myanmar, Thailand and Laos), which has become a major source of both opium and synthetic drugs such as methamphetamine.

The editorial notes that **Myanmar has now emerged as the world's largest producer of illicit opium**, largely because ongoing internal conflicts have weakened government control in border regions. Since India shares a long border with Myanmar, trafficking routes into northeastern India have become increasingly active. At the same time, drugs are also entering India through **maritime routes**, particularly along the coasts of Gujarat, Kerala and Tamil Nadu. Traffickers are increasingly using advanced methods such as **drones, darknet marketplaces and cryptocurrencies**, making enforcement more difficult.

Apart from imported drugs, India also faces the problem of **illegal diversion of pharmaceutical ingredients** for manufacturing narcotic substances within the country. The editorial points out a regulatory imbalance where individuals possessing small quantities of drugs may face imprisonment, while manufacturers responsible for large-scale diversion of pharmaceutical chemicals sometimes receive comparatively lighter penalties. Strengthening regulation of pharmaceutical supply chains is therefore essential.



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While the government has intensified anti-drug enforcement through seizures and arrests, the editorial argues that **law enforcement alone cannot solve the problem**. Drug addiction is also a public health issue requiring treatment, rehabilitation and social support. Although initiatives such as the **Nasha Mukh Bharat Abhiyaan** and opioid substitution therapy have expanded in some States like Punjab, rehabilitation facilities remain inadequate in many parts of India, particularly in rural and border areas where addiction rates are often highest.

The editorial further highlights that **social stigma** discourages many addicts, especially women, from seeking treatment. Women face additional barriers such as caregiving responsibilities and the lack of gender-sensitive rehabilitation centres. Moreover, criminal records for minor drug possession make employment difficult, trapping many young people in a cycle of addiction and crime. The article concludes that India's success should not be measured only by the quantity of drugs seized but by **the number of lives successfully rehabilitated and reintegrated into society**.

Key Takeaways

India's Strategic Location

- India lies between the Golden Crescent and Golden Triangle, making it vulnerable to drug trafficking.
- Both land and maritime routes are increasingly used by traffickers.

Emerging Threats

- Myanmar has become the world's largest source of illicit opium.
- Drones, darknet platforms and cryptocurrencies are making trafficking more sophisticated.

Need for Balanced Policy

- Drug control should combine strict enforcement with effective rehabilitation.
- Public health interventions are as important as policing.

Rehabilitation Gaps

- Treatment facilities remain inadequate, especially in rural and border regions.
- Women face additional social and institutional barriers to accessing care.

Regulatory Challenges

- Illegal diversion of pharmaceutical ingredients contributes to domestic drug production.
- Stronger regulation of pharmaceutical supply chains is necessary.

Long-term Goal

- Success should be measured by reducing addiction and restoring lives, not merely increasing arrests or drug seizures.

Important Terms

Important Term	Meaning
Golden Crescent	Drug-producing region comprising Afghanistan, Pakistan and Iran, historically known for heroin production.
Golden Triangle	Region comprising Myanmar, Thailand and Laos, a major source of opium and synthetic drugs.





Methamphetamine	A highly addictive synthetic stimulant drug commonly known as "meth".
Darknet	Hidden part of the internet used anonymously, often for illegal trade including narcotics.
Cryptocurrency	Digital currency frequently used for anonymous online financial transactions.
Opioid Substitution Therapy (OST)	Medical treatment that replaces harmful opioids with safer prescribed medicines to reduce addiction.
Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB)	India's central agency responsible for combating drug trafficking and narcotics-related crimes.
Nasha Mukht Bharat Abhiyaan	Government campaign aimed at drug demand reduction through awareness, prevention, treatment and rehabilitation.

