

AS ITS CHANGING

Typical Viewpoint 2025



IMPULSE

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IMPULSE

01.08.2025

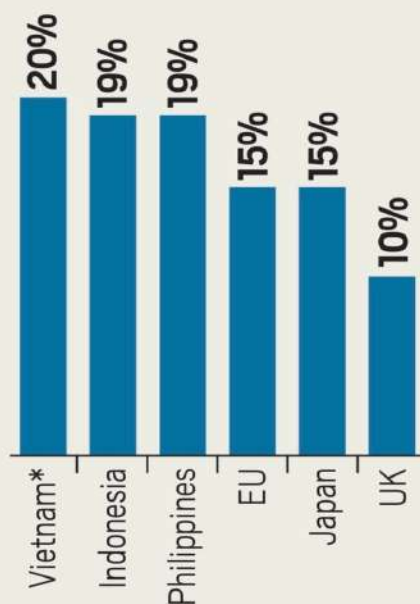
U.S. OFFICIALS TO COME TO INDIA IN AUGUST FOR NEXT ROUND OF TALKS ON TRADE PACT

Trump hits India with 25% tariff plus a Russia penalty

Trump announces 'deal' with Islamabad to develop Pakistan's oil reserves

Says maybe Pakistan will 'be selling oil to India some day'

TARIFFS AS PER INTERIM DEALS



*(40% for transshipment)

FOCUS ON BIG PICTURE

Trump's 25 per cent tariff and penalty raise stakes **for India**. It also presents a moment to seize the initiative, do the right thing

△ US President Donald Trump's announcement of 25% tariff on Indian imports, along with a penalty for procuring energy and military equipment from Russia, *is a shocker at first sight*. But, it also presents a moment for India to seize the initiative and do what is right without losing any more time. *A free trade agreement that allows greater access for Indian products to the world's largest market and, at the same time, opens up its economy to American goods and services, is a win-win for both sides.* India's exports to the US, at \$86.5 billion in 2024-25 (April-March), were higher than those to any other country. Imports from the US, at \$45.7 billion, were below only those from China (\$113.5 billion), Russia (\$63.8 billion) and the UAE (\$63.4 billion). *A no-deal, simply put, is not in India's interest. The effort should be to not just preserve, but enhance the gains from trade.*

✍ India's **export** to US → **HIGHEST** (FY 2024-25)

✍ India's **import** from US →

- 1) China
- 2) Russia
- 3) UAE
- 4) **India**

△ Trump, no doubt, has overturned the predictable rules and principles governing the global trading order that delivered high growth and lifted the fortunes of millions across countries.

→ His latest unilateral measure,
subjecting India to a higher tariff than

the UK (10%),

the European Union,
Japan and
Korea (15%),

Indonesia (19%) or

Vietnam (20%),

runs counter to the larger story of growing cooperation
between the two countries.

→ The last couple of years alone
have seen significant movement towards

the signing of a new 10-year defence partnership framework,

an MoU to expand and diversify critical mineral supply chains and

proposed amendments to India's nuclear liability law.

→ For all the jarring notes in Trump's imperious actions and pronouncements, **India must not lose sight of the big picture.** If anything, it must hasten the process of clinching a long-delayed agreement that will also give a push to much-needed domestic economic reforms. And the approach should be based on **export proactiveness rather than import defensiveness** – as was evident in the recent India-UK Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement.

△ While Trump's 25% import levy may be a pressure tactic for forcing India to lower both duties and non-tariff barriers on American products, his threatening to impose an additional "penalty" for the country buying Russian oil and defence hardware is unacceptable.

- Just as signing a trade deal with the US is in India's interest, securing the energy needs of its population – including by sourcing oil from any country offering crude at discounted prices – is non-negotiable.
- It is possible this may entail a cost in the form of secondary sanctions linked to Russian supplies, which India will have to factor in going ahead.
- Recognising this cost is as important as converting the Trump threat into an opportunity to be seized.

Too much in news on the context of ongoing EC drive in Bihar

SIR
Special Intensive Revision

2008 BLAST KILLED 6, INJURED NEARLY 100

‘Strong suspicion, no proof’: Court acquits Malegaon blast accused

SPECIAL COURT FLAGS PROCEDURAL LAPSES, NIA’S DROPPING OF MCOCA THAT RENDERED CONFESSIONS INADMISSIBLE

Hostile witnesses, unreliable proof: How case fell

The seven who were acquitted



PRAGYA SINGH THAKUR (55)

Accusation: ATS claimed an LML bike, on which the explosive device was planted, belonged to her. ATS accused her of having participated in conspiracy meetings, where she was alleged to have agreed to provide the individuals who would be needed to execute the plan. The NIA sought that she be dropped as accused but the court said that she will have to face trial.

What court said: No proof to show Thakur was bike owner. Investigators did not conduct proper identification of bike, serial number was incomplete.



RAMESH UPADHYAY (73)

Accusation: Retired Army Major agreed with Lt Col Prasad Purohit on idea of separate constitution for a "Hindu Rashtra", according to ATS. ATS claimed Upadhyay was working president of the Abhinav Bharat organisation. NIA said there was sufficient evidence to prosecute him and proof of his role in the form of "legally intercepted calls" among the co-accused.

What court said: Conspiracy meetings not proved as witnesses hadn't supported the prosecution's case. Calls intercepted without authorisation so cannot be relied on.



LT COL PRASAD PUROHIT (53)

Accusation: ATS claimed serving Army officer had role in founding Abhinav Bharat in 2006, through which funds were allegedly collected and the conspiracy planned. ATS claimed he participated in conspiracy meetings. It claimed he procured RDX during posting in J&K.

What court said: No evidence RDX was procured by Purohit or was stored at his residence. Transactions showed funds for Abhinav Bharat were utilised for personal use but no proof of group's link to terror activity.



AJAY RAHIKAR (56)

Accusation: ATS said Pune businessman was treasurer of Abhinav Bharat, and organisation was formed in Pune in 2006 at his address. He was booked for allegedly collecting funds for Abhinav Bharat and disbursing them to procure weapons on the directions of Purohit. The Bombay HC granted bail to Rahikar two years after he was arrested on November 9, 2011.

What the court said: No evidence that Abhinav Bharat funds used for terrorist activities.

SUDHAKAR DHAR DWIVEDI (56)

Accusation: ATS claimed laptop seized from him had audio and video clips of some conspiracy

ROAD TO ACQUITTAL

SEP 29, 2008: Blast near Bhiku Chowk in Malegaon at about 9.35 pm, killing six persons, injuring over 100

OCT 23, 2008: Pragya Singh Thakur arrested, ATS claims motorcycle used was registered in her name

NOV 5, 2008: Lt Col Prasad Purohit arrested from Army headquarters in Mumbai

NOV 26, 2008: Then ATS chief Hemant Karkare, who was leading probe, killed in Mumbai terror attack

APR 1, 2011: Case transferred to NIA

MAY 13, 2016: NIA files chargesheet, drops MCOCA, says no evidence against six accused, including Thakur.

APR 25, 2017: Bombay HC grants bail to Thakur; other accused get bail August-October 2017

DEC 27, 2017: Special trial court drops MCOCA but says seven will face trial under UAPA and other charges, rejects NIA's claim of no evidence against Thakur.

DEC 3, 2018: Trial begins in special court, Mumbai

JUL 31, 2025: Special Court acquits all 7 accused.

meetings. It also recorded voice samples of the accused and a witness to confirm their presence in the meetings.

What court said: Laptop unsealed in custody of investigators for over 24 hours before being sent to forensic analysis, hence contents can't be relied upon.



SUDHAKAR CHATURVEDI (53)

Accusation: Was a source of Military Intelligence officials of Army. ATS claimed he was working full-time with Abhinav Bharat. It claimed traces of RDX were found at his home.

What court said: The court said based on statements of two Army officers who said they spotted an ATS officer in his home in November 2008, days before claim that traces of RDX were found, house search was not reliable as evidence.



SAMEER KULKARNI (53)

Accusation: Pune-based social worker was accused of being in agreement with other co-accused on the formation of "Aryawrat" and had participated in discussions in conspiracy meetings.

What court said: Conspiracy meetings not proved.

Language & division of states

TN Governor R N Ravi has criticised the linguistic division of states. But language was not the only basis of reorganisation in 1956. Scholars have long argued that linguistic states helped ensure India's unity

ON JANUARY 26, 1950

States: Part A Part B Part C



Maps not to scale. Indicative only.

AFTER 1956 REORGANISATION

 States Union Territories



Before first reorganisation

△ The British had administered India with *two systems* running in parallel –

a system of **direct control** in its **provinces**,

and

a system of **indirect control** across **565 princely states**.

→ The provisional boundaries India inherited in 1947 were thus products of colonial administrative exigencies and the historical process integration or erstwhile principalities and kingdoms into the Empire.

△ The **Constitution**, which came into force on January 26, 1950, declared India to be a “**Union of States**”.

→ The country at the time was divided into

28 states under **4 categories**.

Category	Numbers	Ruled by
Part A governors' provinces in British India	9	which were ruled by elected legislatures;
Part B former princely states or groups of princely states	8	which were ruled by elected legislatures and rajpramukh;
Part C both the former chief commissioners' provinces and some princely states	10	were governed by a chief commissioner appointed by the President.
Part D the Andaman and Nicobar Islands	1	which was governed by a lieutenant governor appointed by the President.

The Reorganisation of 1956

▪ 1947 – 50 :-

Congress	
Pre-Independence	Post-Independence
the Congress had supported the formation of linguistic provinces.	But after witnessing Partition , the government was not keen on immediately creating further linguistic divisions.
	The so-called JVP committee set up in 1949 , comprising ⇒ Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru, ⇒ head of the States Ministry Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, and ⇒ Congress president Pattabhi Sittaramaya, cautioned against the “disintegrative effects of reorganisation” .

▪ 1950s :-

⇒ But by the early 1950s, there was **momentum** in many regions for the creation of linguistic states.

On **October 19, 1952**, **Potti Sriramulu**, a 51-year-old railway engineer, went on a **hunger strike** demanding the creation of a **Telugu-speaking Andhra state**.

His **death, after a 58-day-long fast**, triggered widespread public outcry and protests.

Two days later, on **December 17**, **Nehru announced the creation of Andhra**, which would **officially become a state** on October 1, **1953**.



States Reorganisation Commission (SRC)		
Formed	Dec, 1953	
Led by	Justice Fazl Ali	
Report	Submitted :- Sept, 1955	
	Recommended the reorganization of Indian state boundaries, primarily based on ▪ linguistic and cultural factors, while also considering • national unity, • financial viability, and • the welfare of the people.	the political map of India was redrawn to compromise 14 states and 6 Union Territories (UTs).

At the time of independence India was comprised of	17 Provinces and 565 Princely States.
States Reorganization Act, 1956 –	14 states and 6 UTs
Presently	28 states and

Language not the only criteria

- In its December 1953 resolution on the SRC in Parliament, the Centre had made it clear that language would not be the only criterion for the reorganization of states.
- “The language and culture of an area have an undoubted importance as they represent a pattern of living which is common in that area... [but] there are other important factors which have also to be borne in mind. The first essential consideration is the preservation and strengthening of the unity and security of India,” it had said.
- The Second Administration Reforms Commission (ARC) report of 2008 stated: “The resolution of linguistic conflicts was one of the major achievements after Independence... Continuance of a common language has provided the basis for administrative unity and efficiency within the State.”

[This portion (above) is related to Essay or GS (Mains)]

Surrogacy Law in India

<u>Existing Law</u>	
the Assisted Reproductive Technology (Regulation) Act, 2021	<i>Prescribe the legal framework for surrogacy</i>
The Surrogacy (Regulation) Act, 2021	

<u>Intending</u>	<u>Age</u>
Woman (married)	23-50 years
Father	26-55 years
Woman (single)	35-45 years

Only widows or divorcees

**Unmarried Women –
EXCLUDED**

Certificate of
essentiality,
which include
proof of
infertility.....**MUST**

✍ Challenges in front of SC on the ground of **Art 14 and Art 21**

- Verdict reserved

Grandfather Clauses

- ◆ Regulatory laws usually offer transitional safeguards for those navigating compliance during a legislative shift.
 - ✓ These provisions are called “grandfather clauses”, which “grandfather in” certain existing situations.
- ◆ The Surrogacy Act has no such transitional clauses.

04.08.2025



ONCE IN MANY LIFETIMES

A helicopter shot shows the eruption of the Krasheninnikov Volcano in Russia's Kamchatka region on Sunday. The head of the volcano response team said this is the first confirmed eruption in 600 years whereas the US-based Smithsonian's Global Volcanism Program lists its last eruption as occurring 475 years ago in 1550. *AP*

05.08.2025

INDIA PULL OFF THRILLING WIN TO DRAW SERIES WITH ENGLAND 2-2

Miracles do happen



An injured Chris Woakes comes out to bat with his arm in a sling, Monday. *AP*

His quest to ace Test cricket in England began in earnest, even when he was leading Gujarat Titans in the IPL. Shubman's life goal, since his wonder years in Punjab's border town of Fazilka, has been to perfect his technique. And it showed, as he topped the batting chart in the series.



754

Shubman Gill's series tally of 754 runs stands as the second-highest total by any captain in a single series in Test cricket history. It is only behind Don Bradman's of 810 against England in 1936-37.

4

Gill hit four hundreds, including a double hundred, in the five-match series. Bradman (against India in 1947-48) and Sunil Gavaskar (against West Indies in 1978-79) are the only other captains to have ever done so before.

269

Before the England tour began, Gill's highest Test score was 128. In the series, three of his four tons were higher scores: 147, 269, 161. His 430 runs at Edgbaston is the 2nd most in a single Test match ever.

41.35

That Gill hadn't quite figured out consistency in Test cricket was reflected in his pre-England average of 35.05. But at the end of Anderson-Tendulkar Trophy his average has crossed 40 for the first time since his 4th Test.



Before the series, Shubman Gill was under pressure both as a new captain and a batter waiting to prove his Test mettle.

AP/ANI

Essay Perspective:-

GURUJI SHIBU SOREN

He revived the Jharkhand statehood movement and gave a new life to Adivasi politics

△ On a winter day in 1957, a 15-year-old boy in Gola block in undivided Hazaribagh district in Jharkhand was waiting for his father, who never returned. **School teacher Sobaran Manjhi was killed by moneylenders, and young Shivcharan's life changed forever.** The teenager pledged to end the exploitation by moneylenders and to fight for his people, the Adivasis. In the coming decades, the young man who came to be known as Shibu Soren and later affectionately called Guruji became the fulcrum of Adivasi politics. Shibu Soren, 81, who died on Monday, leaves behind a legacy of inspiring political vision and indefatigable grit mixed with some persistent controversies.

△ After his father's death, Soren led a band of youth in Santhal Pargana and **initiated a movement called Dhan Kati.** The group encouraged Adivasis to harvest crops from lands that were illegally grabbed by moneylenders when they failed to pay off the debt. Soon, this movement became an organised **struggle for the recognition of Adivasi rights over jal, jungle, zameen.** In 1972, Soren, along with AK Roy, a Marxist leader, and Binod Bihari Mahato, founded the **Jharkhand Mukti Morcha (JMM) and revived the movement for statehood.** To bring the industrial workers, sadans, the non-tribal natives of Jharkhand, and Adivasis together was not an easy task. Soren realised that the dream of a separate Jharkhand would not be fulfilled without the participation of non-tribal communities. He **sought to change the definition of Diku – for him, the term no longer only meant "outsiders", but referred to those who exploited Jharkhand's resources.** **His dream of a separate state materialised only in 2000.**

△ **Political instability,** allegations of corruption and violence didn't let any of the CMs complete their tenure in the new state until **2014, when the BJP made Raghubar Das the first non-Adivasi chief minister.**

△ **Soren's own political life was also shadowed by controversies.**

- ◆ In 2004, within two months of becoming Union minister of coal and mines,
 - ⇒ he had to resign due to an arrest warrant for his alleged role in the Chirudih massacre of 1975, in which 10 people were killed.
- ✓ In 2008, a fast-track court acquitted him, citing lack of evidence.
- ◆ He faced allegations of taking bribes to save the minority government of PV Narasimha Rao in 1993.
 - ⇒ The SC in 1998 ruled that legislators enjoy impunity from criminal prosecution in bribery cases related to their votes and speeches in Parliament –
 - ⇒ the judgment was overruled in 2024.

△ However, controversies could not take away from Soren's achievements. After Marang Gomke Jaipal Singh Munda, Dishom Guru Shibu Soren was the leader who successfully reimagined Adivasi politics beyond the limits of identity, sub-nationalism and language.

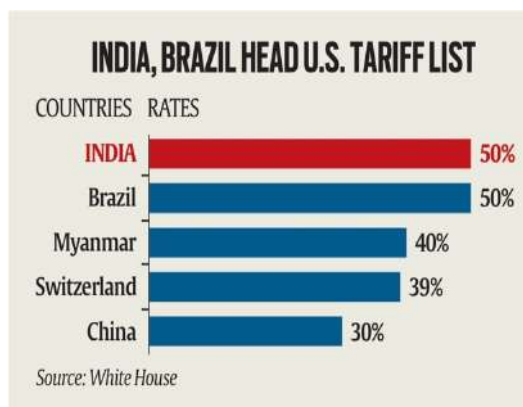
07.08.2025

U.S. NEGOTIATORS EXPECTED IN DELHI LATER THIS MONTH

Trump doubles India tariff to 50%, opens 21-day window

Trump's 50% tariffs a bid to bully, economic blackmail: Rahul

Failure of Modi's headline-grabbing style of huglomacy: Jairam Ramesh



✍ Actually the word is “**hugplomacy**”

INDIA, U.S. AGRICULTURE EXPORTS

Total Exports	2022	2023	2024	Jan-Jun 2024	Jan-Jun 2025	Growth in %
US	2,348.5	2,040.7	2,378.8	1,135.8	1,693.2	49.1
India	6,658.8	5,811.5	6,211.9	2,798.9	3,472.7	24.1

Exports in millions of dollars; Source: US Department of Agriculture

INDIA AGRICULTURE EXPORTS TO U.S.

	2022	2023	2024	Jan-Jun 2024	Jan-Jun 2025	% Growth
Seafood	3016.5	2545.1	2483.8	1062.5	1407.9	32.5
Spices	333.9	359.3	410.2	194.7	206.9	6.3
Rice	301	347.4	391.2	176.8	199.6	12.9
Processed F&V	206.5	202.5	227.6	102.8	134.6	30.9
Baked Goods*	190.3	219.4	247.5	115.4	123.5	7.1
Essential Oils	228.9	180	212.1	109	114.2	4.8
Sugars**	218.5	174.6	171	84.6	119	40.8
Vegetable Oils	208.2	151.3	174.8	76.4	77.9	2
Food Preparations	81.1	105.2	137.9	62.5	58.7	-6
TOTAL	6,658.8	5,811.5	6,211.9	2,798.9	3,472.7	24.1

Exports in millions of dollars *Includes Cereals & Pasta; **Includes Sweeteners & Beverage Bases.
Source: US Department of Agriculture

U.S. AGRICULTURE EXPORTS TO INDIA

	2022	2023	2024	Jan-Jun 2024	Jan-Jun 2025	Growth in %
Tree Nuts	1,001.4	1,095.5	1,116.1	532	759.6	42.8
Ethanol	182.7	245.9	420.9	213.7	246	15.1
Soyabean Oil	207.6	0.2	37.5	0.1	212.4	1,42,997.6
Cotton	491.2	223.7	209	86.9	181.5	108.8
TOTAL	2,348.5	2,040.7	2,378.8	1,135.8	1,693.2	49.1

Exports in millions of dollars Source: US Department of Agriculture

In Maharashtra port, ship waits to be sunk, start new life as artificial reef

THE PLAN

■ Once submerged, *INS Gudar* will sit on the seabed, around 15 km off the coast of Sindhudurg



■ Scuba divers will be allowed to dive down to where the ship is: non-certified divers can go to a depth of 12 metres; certified divers up to 18 metres; advanced divers to the deepest part of the ship

■ Non-divers can opt for a submarine ride to view the shipwreck

■ MTDC hopes that in a year or two, an artificial reef will come up at the site

EXPLAINED

E

A first for India

THE MAHARASHTRA Tourism Development Corporation hopes to transform *INS Gudar* into an underwater tourist attraction. Scuttling is usually a wartime tactic involving the deliberate sinking of a vessel — in case of an emergency or to prevent it from falling into enemy hands.

Supreme Court bans hand-pulled rickshaws in Matheran

"Permitting such an inhuman practice, which hits at the basic concept of human dignity in a country like India, which is a developing country, belittles the constitutional promise of social and economic justice," the court added.

△ The Supreme Court on Wednesday banned hand-pulled rickshaws in the ecologically sensitive Matheran near Mumbai, a destination which draws tourists in large numbers, saying that the practice "is against the basic concept of human dignity" and needs to be done away with completely.

△ A bench of Chief Justice of India B R Gavai and Justices Vinod Chandran and N V Anjaria said that those plying it are not doing so by choice but because they have no other source of livelihood.

△ "Permitting such an inhuman practice, which hits at the basic concept of human dignity in a country like India, *which is a developing country, belittles the constitutional promise of social and economic justice,*" the court added.

△ The bench pointed out that the SC had in the case People of India for Democratic Rights v. Union of India (1982), given an expanded meaning to Article 23,

holding that it was intended to abolish every form of forced labour and said that even if remuneration is paid, labour supplied by a person will be hit by Article 23 if it is forced labour.

△ It referred to the SC's 1980 ruling in the case

Azad Rickshaw Pullers Union (Regd.) vs State Of Punjab & Others

which dealt with the rehabilitation of cycle rickshaw pullers in Punjab.



The bench said it was then held that
the practice of allowing cycle-pulled rickshaws was
inconsistent with the preambular promise of social justice.

- △ The bench said, “it is really unfortunate that after 45 years of the observations made by this Court in the case of Azad Rickshaw Pullers Union, the inhuman practice of a human being pulling another human being is still prevalent in the town of Matheran.”
- △ *It said that allowing manual rickshaws today would be a betrayal of the promise of social and economic justice that the people of India promised to themselves.* “The question that we ask ourselves is as to whether this practice is alive to the Constitutional promise of social and economic equality and social and economic justice. The answer, unfortunately, will have to be in the negative. To continue such human practice even after 78 years of the country getting freedom and after 75 years of the Constitution being enacted and promising social and economic Justice to its citizens, however, would be betraying the promise given by the people of India given to themselves,” the order said.
-

Essay Perspective:-

In censuring Rahul Gandhi and laying down a singular definition of Indianness, Supreme Court goes against its own record

That the oral observations of the Court are not legally binding, that they are only part of the deliberative process, is not a mitigating factor. The Court must recognise that it is a measure of the enormous respect for the institution of the judiciary that what it says is taken seriously

△ While granting him a reprieve on Monday in a defamation case over his alleged remarks on the armed forces in the wake of the **2020 Galwan clash with China**, the Supreme Court censured Leader of Opposition Rahul Gandhi for speaking out on the issue. It also doled out a **prescription for being a “true Indian”** — *“If you are a true Indian, you would not say all these things”*, it said.

➤ Only days earlier, the **Bombay High Court questioned the Left parties’ patriotism** *while upholding Mumbai Police’s denial of permission to the CPM and CPI to hold a protest rally at Azad Maidan in solidarity with Gaza*. The court criticised the prioritising of foreign affairs over national concerns — *“You are looking at issues in Gaza and Palestine. Look at your own country”*, it said. The observations by the apex court and the high court are disquieting.

△ For one, they mark an **institutional overstepping**. It is not the court’s remit to define, and to circumscribe Indianness, or to hand out certificates of patriotism, or to decide the LoP’s responsibilities and the political party’s priorities.

- In a climate of political polarisation, in which the right to freedom of speech is often in need of constitutional protection, and when “anti-national” is a label frequently used to demonise the dissenter and delegitimise dissent, the restrictive strictures of the Supreme Court in particular — on which questions can be asked of the government in times of conflict, and which can’t, and on who is and who is not a “true Indian” — are especially dispiriting.
- The SC, after all, is the custodian of the constitutional letter and spirit. As such, it is the bulwark against any encroachment of fundamental rights, including and especially free expression.

 - In fact, the Court only has to look back on its own record to see why its current stance touches off concerns. It has established a rich tradition of checking executive overreach and protecting and upholding civil liberties.
 - In earlier judgments, it has underlined, for instance, that **“national security” cannot be invoked as a ground to curb fundamental rights.**

 - In the **2021** case involving the alleged use of **Pegasus** malware against citizens, the SC held that while there are limits to judicial review when it comes to national security, “this does not mean that the state gets a free pass every time the spectre of ‘national security’ is raised”. And that “National security cannot be the bugbear that the judiciary shies away from, by virtue of its mere mentioning”.

△ The Constitution of India is distinctive for its capaciousness, for enlarging spaces for expressions of diversity and difference. It accommodates and enables plurality, while enforcing rights and accountability.

- By laying down a singular definition of Indianness, by turning a restrictive eye on questions asked of the dominant narrative and the government, the Court goes against its own past record and does a disservice to the Constitution.
 - That the oral observations of the Court are not legally binding, that they are only part of the deliberative process, is not a mitigating factor.
 - The Court must recognise that it is a measure of the enormous respect for the institution of the judiciary that what it says is taken seriously — and that, by the same token, in an argumentative democracy, it can have an undesirable chilling effect.
-

Rise of the herbicides

The growth in India's pesticide market is being led by not insecticides or fungicides, but herbicides. In recent years, the demand for this chemical has increased due to a shortage of labour for manual weeding

INDIA'S CROP PROTECTION CHEMICALS MARKET

	Market Size	Annual Growth
Insecticides	₹10,706 cr	5.3%-5.5%
Fungicides	₹5,571 cr	5.5%-6%
Herbicides	₹8,209 cr	10%-11%

Source: Industry estimates for 2024-25. Growth is for last five years.

△ Crop protection chemicals

- are **commonly** known as “**pesticides**”.
- These are basically substances sprayed on crops to protect against insects (“pests”) that cause damage,

whether directly (by feeding on them)	or	indirectly (by transmitting disease).
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- But crop protection chemical **aren't limited to insecticides**.

They also include

fungicides	and	herbicides
(to control fungal diseases such as blast and sheath blight in rice or powdery mildew and rusts in wheat)		(to kill or inhibit the growth of weeds).

⌵ Much of that is controlled by multinational companies:

- 1) China (Highest)
- 2) German
- 3) US
- 4) Japanese

◆ However, the herbicide segment has Indian players, with a total 10% share.

(such as **Dhanuka** Agritech (estimated 6% share) and **Crystal** Crop Protection Ltd (CCPL: 4%).)

◆ CCPL recently purchased the rights to

Ethoxysulfuron,

a herbicide used against

broad-leaved weeds and sedges in rice and sugarcane,

from Bayer AG (German) for sales in

India
Pakistan
Bangladesh
Southeast Asian countries.

◆ The growth driver → → farm labour shortage

08.08.2025

Uttarkashi tragedy is a warning.

Respect the mountain

Development can ill afford to hurt the fragile ecology of Himalaya

△ Three days after flash floods wreaked havoc in Uttarkashi district in Uttarakhand, more than 50 people from Dharali village, the epicentre of the disaster, are reported missing.

- At least four people have lost their lives as mountainsides collapsed and floodwater inundated homes and destroyed shops, hotels and other commercial establishments.
- Authorities have reportedly said that it will take about a week to gauge the scale of the calamity. However, it's clear that the devastation underlines multiple challenges for policymakers, including planning development in ways that do not hurt Western Himalaya's ecology.

△

Reason behind	
Central Water Commission	India Meteorological Department
initially ascribed the flash floods to a <u>cloudburst</u> .	officials have reportedly <u>contradicted this hypothesis</u> , and the jury is out on the exact cause of the disaster.

Role : Nature

→ Uttarkashi's topography —

much of the district is located on the southern slope of the Himalaya —		
combined with continuous rainfall,		
does make the region vulnerable to mudslides and flash floods.		
mudslides	and	flash floods.

- ✓ In the mountains, even **small streams** are known to **swell up during the monsoons**, change course and turn treacherous.
- ✓ In recent years, the **melting of glaciers** has *exacerbated such risks*.

Role : Other than Nature

Nature's vagaries, however, are only a part of the reason for the sufferings of Uttarkashi's residents.

- ✓ The region is a part of the **Bhagirathi Ecosensitive Zone (ESZ)**. The ESZ status, **notified in 2012**, was meant to provide a security net against unregulated development to a 4,100 sq km expanse between Gangotri and Uttarkashi town.
- ✓ The **purpose of the notification has been defeated** → → because the rights of passage of the region's rivers have been constantly violated.

- ✓ In their zeal to expand tourism, the **Centre and the Uttarakhand government** appear to have shown *inadequate sensitivity to the vulnerabilities of the area*, and repeatedly ignored the **red flags** raised by **members** of the **committee that monitors** the implementation of the **ESZ norms**.
- ✓ Experts reckon that the **chipping away at rocks to widen roads and constructions on the floodplains** could have made Tuesday's disaster more severe.

Rescue Challenges

- ✓ Constant rainfall and huge mounds of muck, almost like quicksand, have made the task of the rescue workers difficult.

Redressal

- ✓ Bolstering climate resilience would require creating *swifter and more effective responses* to such exigencies.
- ✓ It would also call for establishing *more automatic weather stations and utilising data from satellite-based observation systems to create early warning mechanisms*.

Conclusion:-

- **The writing on the wall has been clear since the disastrous flash floods of 2013 in Uttarakhand: Policymakers need to join the dots between climate change, the risks faced by people in the Himalayan region, early warning and disaster management systems and developmental initiatives.** Tuesday's tragedy is a warning that this imperative cannot be put off for long.



Know Yourself :-

Instead of ‘alpha males’, be like female gorillas

*Most primates change groups and locations. **Rather than aggression, however, female gorillas rely on past ties with other females for survival.***

Perhaps it's time humans emulate the reality of the friendly females

- For too long, too much of culture has been in the grip of metaphor, based on a misunderstanding of how social dynamics operate among social mammals. Since at least the second half of the last century, a crass social Darwinism has wormed its way into pop culture, backed by pseudo-science.
- Boys and men have been sold the myth of the “alpha male” and “beta male”

Alpha male	Beta male
aggressive, domineering and with predatory undertones — as being at the top of the social pyramid.	are weak creatures, more social than aggressive.

These misconceptions were based on studies	
of wolves and, more importantly,	simian cousins of homo sapiens such as chimpanzees and gorillas.

As it turns out, primates were setting a better example all along.

- Research based on 20 years of data on gorillas in Rwanda, shows how females, even when they move between social groups, search for and maintain friendships.
 - ✓ Most primates **change groups and locations**, likely as a defence against inbreeding.
 - ✓ **New members** are usually at the **bottom of the hierarchy** and can face aggression and ostracisation from more established, dominant females.
 - ✓ Rather than aggression, however, they **rely on past ties with other females**, some of whom they have not seen since childhood.
 - ✓ And the **“friendly females” build more enduring ties and provide more safety than alpha males do.**
 - This latest piece of research is of a piece with a growing body of work that shows that **social skills, empathy, grooming, etc**, are far more important in achieving status and success among primates.
 - **Bonobos**, *genetically as close to humans as chimps*, are known as the **“loving ape”** because of how non-violent they are.
 - Even among **chimpanzees**, the **dominant male** is often the one with the **most social and political skills** — *with brains rather than brawn.*
 - Perhaps it's time that humans emulate the reality of the friendly females rather than the myth of the alpha male.
-

12.08.2025

MAKE SHELTERS, REPORT IN 8 WEEKS: COURT

Situation grim, move all stray dogs in NCR from streets to shelters: SC

Warns of action against individuals, organisations who 'come in the way' '8 lakh' strays, no govt shelters,

WHAT DATA SHOWS

STERILISATION, IMMUNISATION BY MCD OVER YEARS

91,326

2021-2022

59,076

2022-2023

79,959

2023-2024

1,31,137

2024-2025

65,000

2025 (Jan-July)

DOG BITE CASES

6,691

2022

17,874

2023

25,210

2024

Source: Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry & Dairying

Most shelters in the city managed by the nonprofits can accommodate only a few hundred strays

Rules & rulings on stray dogs

SC has directed local authorities in Delhi-NCR to pick up and take all stray dogs to shelters. Govt policy and previous court rulings prescribe in situ management of strays through immunisation and sterilisation

DOG BITES IN INDIA

THE LARGEST population of stray dogs is in India; numbers are not known, but are estimated to run into crores. In 2019, the government told Lok Sabha that stray dogs numbered 1.53 crore; it repeated this data in 2022.

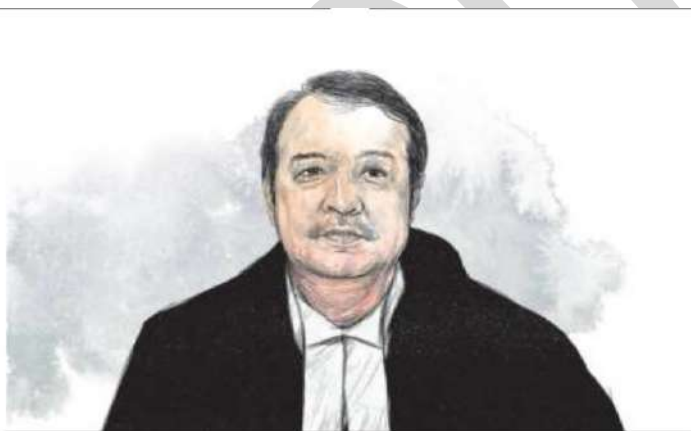
MORE THAN 37 LAKH cases of dog bites were reported in the country in 2024, up from 30.5 lakh in 2023 and 21.9 lakh in 2022, according to government data from February this year. Nearly 4.3 lakh dog bites were reported in January this year.

IF THE DOG IS RABID, its bite can infect the victim with rabies, a viral disease that affects the central

nervous system and is almost always fatal if not treated immediately.

According to government data from February 2025, 54 people died from rabies in 2024, up from 50 deaths in 2023 and 21 deaths in 2022.

36% OF RABIES DEATHS in the world occur in India, according to estimates by the World Health Organization. Dog bites are responsible for about 96% of the mortality and morbidity associated with rabies in India, the WHO says. 30-60% of reported rabies cases and deaths in India occur in children under the age of 15 years, according to WHO.



TIME TO ACT

DIRECTING DELHI-NCR authorities to relocate all strays from streets to shelters, Justice J B Pardiwala, while presiding over a two-judge Supreme Court bench, on Monday recalled a famous dialogue from the Western film *The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly* to convey the message. "Have you seen that film... the ugly is having (a) bath when all of a sudden one man gets in saying I have been looking for you... The ugly shoots him and says 'when you have to shoot, shoot. Don't talk'." Drawing a parallel with the stray dog problem, he said, "This is the time to act."

13.08.2025

Mains GS

THE MUNIR SHOW

Given the clearly staged nature of his provocations, India would do well to not take them too seriously

△ **Issuing Nuclear Threats seems to be an easy way to grab global headlines.** A former Russian president did it twice in recent weeks. Joining him now is Pakistan's Chief of Army Staff, the newly promoted Field Marshal, Asim Munir. Addressing the Pakistani diaspora in the United States, on his second visit in under two months, he reportedly declared: "We are a nuclear nation. If we think we are going down, we'll take half the world down with us." Incidentally, Munir's remark came on the 80th anniversary of the atomic bombing of Nagasaki during the World War II- the last time nuclear weapons were used in warfare. For now, though, for all his undisguised bombast, Munir appears to be enjoying a moment in the sun, having lunch with the US President, theatrically threatening India. **New Delhi's officials reaction** to what it has described as his "**nuclear sabre-rattling**" was to reaffirm its refusal to yield to nuclear blackmail and assert that India would take all measures necessary to safeguard national security. Yet, given the clearly staged nature of Munir's provocations – he also repeated the "**jugular vein**" remark on Kashmir that he had made ahead of the Pahalgam attack – delivered on the soil of a nation friendly to India despite the recent trade-related turbulence, New Delhi would do well to not take them too seriously.

△ Munir's tirade does offer a window to understanding the **Pakistani military's inclination towards economic warfare.**

- ⇒ He reportedly vowed to target **Reliance Industries' Jamnagar refinery in Gujarat**, the largest single-site refining complex in the world, in the event of a future conflict.
- ⇒ He invoked the **Indus Waters Treaty**, which New Delhi placed in abeyance after the Pahalgam attack, **threatening missile strikes should India proceed with dam construction.**
- ⇒ Far from projecting strength, these remarks present a sorry picture of a Field Marshal straining to cast Pakistan as a viable rival to India.

△ The reality is different: **India's GDP is roughly 10 times Pakistan's, and the gap is widening**, not just economically but also in terms of the two countries' global standing.

➤ Munir's own analogy likening **India to a Mercedes and Pakistan to a dump truck** is telling of the military establishment's mindset:

That, in a conflict, India has far more to lose.

- Yet, much like three decades ago, when Rawalpindi invested significant time and effort in nefarious cross-border activities aimed at destabilisation,
- India should continue to press ahead with

- diplomatic partnerships,
- accelerate economic reforms,
- strengthen technological capabilities, and
- foster internal unity.

△ Ultimately, Field Marshal Asim Munir can only become as big for India as **India allows him to be**. Pakistan is far more than the folie de grandeur of one man bent on forcing India-Pakistan hyphenation on the international stage – unsuccessfully. **India must keep its eye on the big picture, and focus on partnerships with nations pivotal to its rise as an economic power.**

14.08.2025

SC on revision of rolls: 'Voter-friendly, not exclusionary... more documents accepted'

A bench of Justices Surya Kant and Joymalya Bagchi also said that according to

The Representation Of the People Act, 1950,

Section 21

“it is **totally within the subjective domain**” of the EC on

“how, when” it would “go for a special (intensive) revision”.

△ “See, it is **seven items** (last in 2003).....

And now there are **11 items** from which you can identify yourself as a citizen,” the judge said.

Art 324

EC’s power of superintendence of elections

Art 326

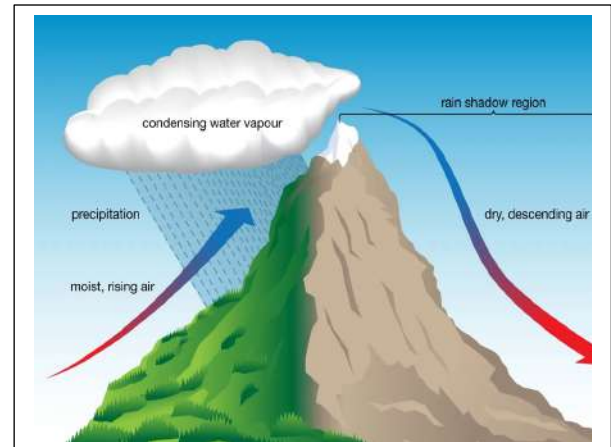
the right to vote

15.08.2025

**46 people killed in massive
cloudburst in Jammu and
Kashmir's Kishtwar, rescue
operations underway**

Kishtwar cloudburst: Houses crumpled like a pack of cards, trapping people in mounds of rubble while boulders crashed down, blocking roads and hampering rescue efforts

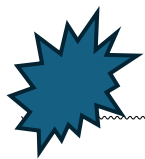
△ This year, cloudbursts, flash floods, and landslides have caused havoc in parts of **Northeast India, Uttarakhand, Himachal Pradesh,** and, most recently, in **Jammu and Kashmir.**



△ The loss of more than **60 lives in Jammu and Kashmir** to cloudbursts in less than a week has exposed the frailties of the country's climate information system.

- ⇒ The complex processes that go into the making of cloudbursts have exacerbated the challenges.
- ⇒ The interaction between monsoon winds and cold winds combines with the idiosyncrasies of Himalayan topography to create huge clouds.
- ⇒ In a region historically prone to cloudbursts, the effects of global warming seem to have been treacherous.
- ⇒ **When the clouds can no longer hold the water, they unleash rain bombs over relatively small areas.**
- ⇒ Meteorologists define a cloudburst as → → rain falling at a rate of 100 mm or more per hour → → over an area of about 30 sq km.
- ⇒ **Such small tracts** → → often lack rainfall-measuring instruments.
- ⇒ The effects of the downpour, however, are not localised — they
 - trigger landslides and
 - flash floods and
 - cause destruction downstream.
- ⇒ Theoretically, it is not impossible to forecast rainfall over a very small area, → → but it requires a dense network of weather instruments and computing capabilities.
- ⇒ Increasingly, it's also becoming evident that timely warning can reduce the loss of lives and minimise damage during extreme weather events.

- Anticipating nature’s vagaries requires accurate and timely data and effective communication channels.
- Work on building such mechanisms has just begun in the country.
- The India Meteorological Department (IMD) is reportedly **stepping up initiatives** to fill information gaps as well as make maximum use of data.



Essay ingredient

A woman’s hands are never empty.

Here’s why

*More than a social media phenomenon, the **'claw grip'** trend shows how a woman makes room for herself in a world that often ignores her needs*

△ **A woman walks into her day with her hands full.** Keys and phone, wallet and sunglasses, book and coffee, and other minutiae of life clutched in her hands with the sort of effortlessness that only comes from having perfected a job over long years of practice. **This phenomenon, now crowned on social media as the “claw grip”,** has become more than a meme or a visual send-up.

- It is a representation of how women adapt to environments that ignore their needs:
 - Clothes that lack pockets, or which, when present, are more symbolic than utilitarian; handbags that sacrifice functionality for fashion, that aren’t roomy enough for the multitudes that count as essentials.
 - The claw grip distils the essence of multitasking in a world built on single-task defaults.

△ The weight of the literal, of course, is not the only thing nestling in a woman's hands. The claw grip also represents a kind of unintentional protest against an imbalance that bleeds into the broader architecture of daily life.

➤ From the layout of cities to the structure of working hours, women are constantly negotiating a world that wasn't built with them in mind.

○ Consider, for instance, the temperature settings in offices. In the 1960s, **Fanger's thermal comfort equation** was put to use to figure out what might be the ideal air-conditioning setting in workplaces. One important variable that was factored in was the **metabolic rate** of an average 40-year-old man in a formal suit — a representation of the largely male employment pool of the time. But in the decades since, even as women have come to represent nearly half of the global workforce, office temperatures continue to be set to male metabolic comfort.

16.08.2025

 Just for one look:

PM Modi's Independence Day speech: Hope, not fear

PM's call for reform and self-reliance struck the right note; the spectre of the 'intruder' one of disquiet

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Independence Day speech, his **12th in a row**, was delivered against the backdrop of a global economy roiled by unpredictability, turmoil and upheaval. PM Modi did not name him but Donald Trump and the tariff regime the US President has unleashed, lurked, between the

lines, as both presence and shadow. For the most part, the PM spoke of how India needs to enliven the “Make in India” and “Vocal for Local” mantras, and install self-reliance at the heart of the country’s development strategy and growth model. The message was: In times when the Trump tariff regime is impacting exports, and when disruptions in global supply chains are threatening to squeeze imports, India must focus on strengthening the domestic economy by pursuing the path of self-sufficiency or “aatmanirbharta”. PM Modi reminded the nation of India’s proven “samarthyā” or capability — when it took the lead in manufacturing the coronavirus vaccine, not only for itself, but also for the world; and more recently, when, powered by indigenous weapon systems, it conducted Operation Sindoor.

This is not the first time that PM Modi has spoken of the need to Make in India, or extolled the virtues of aatmanirbharta. But this I-day speech was remarkable for the urgency with which it sought to connect the dots from **Atmanirbhar Bharat to Viksit Bharat** and national security, framing it as a matter not merely of import-export but as a test of a nation’s very “aatma samman” or self-respect: “Hum nahin banayenge? Hum nirbhar rahenge? (Why will we remain dependent on others)?” He exhorted the young and the entrepreneurs, the scientists and the private sector, to come forward and fill the gaps with ideas and innovations — **to make India’s own fertiliser and semiconductor, and to be self-reliant in clean energy and critical minerals.** The government, he said, would encourage and enable them through the next generation of reforms, for which he announced a special task force.

But as much as the PM sought to exhort and energise, and even as he tapped into his countrymen and women’s ambitions and optimism — he announced a special **Diwali bonanza of GST reform, a Rs 1 lakh crore Rozgar Yojana for the young,** invoked the symbolism of **naari shakti, space start-ups** and Shubhanshu Shukla’s odyssey — he also painted a gathering spectre. **Illegal immigrants or “ghuspaithiye”,** he said, are snatching Indians’ jobs, taking away land from tribal populations, endangering India’s “behan-beti” or women. His government would, therefore, set up a high powered **Demography Mission.** While illegal immigration is a resonant issue that is becoming bigger across the world, riding on the back of nationalist politics and populist movements, the PM’s highlighting of it has a disquieting domestic backdrop — of **growing incidents of violence against Bengali-speaking migrants in states, and the ongoing controversy over voters’ lists.** The BJP’s defeat in the Jharkhand assembly election may have pointed to the limits of “illegal immigration” as an electoral plank, but in a diverse

country, it is still an issue that is fraught, one that can propel a politics of distrust and fear. The PM's playing up of the dark motif of the "ghuspaithiya", coupled with his tribute to the RSS from the ramparts of Red Fort, showed an unmistakable ideological layering of his message. For the nation, they frame the challenge that lies ahead: Of finding a way forward that sidesteps the fear and embraces the hope.

SC ordering EC to publish details of 65 lakh deleted voters during Bihar SIR is welcome

The SC order recognises the complexity of the exercise, both in scale and due to its constricted timelines in the poll-bound state

The Supreme Court's directive to the Election Commission to be transparent on the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls in Bihar is significant and welcome. The Court asked the EC to publish detailed district-wise lists of the 65 lakh voters whose names had been omitted from the draft electoral roll published on August 1. **These lists must specify the precise reason for each deletion, be it death, migration, or duplication, and be both physically available at local administrative offices and searchable online.** The Court mandated that news of these deletions be widely publicised in Bihar through both vernacular and English newspapers, as well as electronic and social media. Amid the confusion and apprehensions unleashed by the SIR exercise in Bihar, the Court's intervention is reassuring.

The SC order recognises the complexity of the exercise, both in scale and due to its constricted timelines in the poll-bound state. At the same time, it sends a message that the EC's conduct is being watched. For Bihar's migrant workers, Dalits, small farmers, daily wagers and poor, the demand for relatively difficult to procure documents from those who do not feature in the 2003 electoral roll, is an onerous one. As it has been highlighted in a series of ground reports, the

shifting of the burden of proof on to the vulnerable voter in what has morphed into a citizenship test has sparked widespread fears of disenfranchisement. The **EC's refusal to accept the Court's suggestion to consider Aadhaar, Voter ID and ration card as proof underlines the challenge.** But the Court's insistence on full transparency on the deletions in the face of the EC's resistance is heartening.

The SC has not stayed or stopped the SIR process in Bihar, recognising the EC's constitutional mandate and authority, but it has instituted a check: "The powers (to do so) are prima facie traceable, so we do not wish to interdict... but your manner has to be reasonable, has to give certain comfort to citizens. Should not strain a person to become eligible," it said. **Article 324 of the Constitution**

gives the EC the powers of superintendence, direction and control of

elections. However, it cannot hide behind that Article and those powers and view transparency as an inconvenience. The EC's conduct of the SIR in Bihar sets a template — the exercise will be conducted across states. Going ahead, the SC's intervention draws some much-needed red lines.

ZELENSKY FEAR U.S. MIGHT SELL OUT UKRAINE, SEEKS SECURITY

Trump, Putin head to 'high stakes' Alaska summit with world on edge

“I am not here to negotiate for Ukraine, I am here to get them at a table... I want to see a ceasefire rapidly... I am not going to be happy if it's not today... I want the killing to stop.”

— DONALD TRUMP
PRESIDENT, UNITED STATES

“A three-way summit would be possible if the Alaska talks bore fruit... Friday's talks could last 6-7 hours and aides would take part in what had been expected to be one-to-one meetings.”

— DMITRY PESKOV
SPOKESPERSON, KREMLIN

“On the day of the negotiations, they also kill people. And that says a lot... The war continues. It continues precisely because there is no order, nor any indication that Moscow is preparing to end this war.”

— VOLODYMYR ZELENSKY
PRESIDENT, UKRAINE

18.08.2025

PUTIN DEMANDS KYIV CEDE DONETSK; ZELENSKY REFUSES, SET TO MEET TRUMP

Trump echoes Putin stance on Ukraine war as Alaska meet ends without truce

TAKEAWAYS FROM TRUMP-PUTIN ALASKA SUMMIT

1 NO AGREEMENT REVEALED

After meeting for nearly three hours, Trump and Putin left Alaska without announcing any deal or any specific areas where they made progress. Though Putin said the leaders reached an agreement to "pave the path towards peace in Ukraine," Trump made clear there were still areas of disagreement. "There's no deal until there's a deal," he said. Trump also did not specify where the leaders still disagreed.

2 PUTIN SECURED WINS

Putin scored a win even before he arrived in the United States. After years of being ostracized by the West, he returned to American soil for the first time in a decade, welcomed by American fighter jets, a red carpet and a ride in the Beast, Trump's armored car. And Putin secured another victory when it concluded, departing the United States without making any major concessions while maintaining a warm rapport with Trump.

3 TRUMP SHOWED DEFERENCE

Despite the fact that the much anticipated meeting took place on U.S. soil, Trump allowed Putin to speak first at their joint appearance. The Russian leader used the opportunity to offer his own view of the conflict in Ukraine and what he claimed were the "root causes" of Russia's invasion. His remarks went unchallenged by a smiling Trump, who has long favored authoritarian leaders — "the strong ones," as he has put it.

4 PUTIN PRAISES TRUMP

Trump did not appear to come away with much, but he did get two things he valued. One was the chance to denounce the probe into whether his campaign conspired with Russians in 2016. Standing feet from Putin, Trump proclaimed it a "hoax," and a shared and unfair torment for both men. Putin praised Trump and said he could "confirm" that Russia's incursion into Ukraine in 2022 would not have happened if Trump was office at the time.

5 TRUMP OPEN TO RUSSIA VISIT

When the planning began for the historic summit, some observers wondered whether Trump would make a ceremonial visit by stepping into the neighboring country. It was not to be. But one person close to Trump indicated days before the trip that a Moscow visit might be possible. So perhaps it wasn't simply a joke when, in their final moments at the podium, Putin suggested that the two leaders next meet in his capital city.

6 ZELENSKY ON SIDELINES

The person with most at stake, President Zelensky of Ukraine, was left watching on TV with the rest of the world. Zelensky was not invited, though Trump said he would call him and NATO leaders after he left Alaska to give them a readout of his meeting. In an interview with the Fox News after the meeting, Trump insisted he believed that there would be a meeting between Zelensky and Putin, and that the American leader may join as well. NYT

TRUMP MEETS PUTIN ON U.S. SOIL FOR FIRST TIME IN A DECADE; NEXT TIME IN MOSCOW, SAYS RUSSIAN PRESIDENT

Handshakes, limo ride... abrupt ending

PUTIN'S DEMAND FOR MORE UKRAINIAN TERRITORY



EXPLAINED

E Worry of European leaders

IF UKRAINE falls, European leaders says Russia may attempt to challenge NATO within years. A successful defense against Russia could not only prevent aggression but also weaken or delay Putin's broader ambitions to dismantle the post-Cold War security framework and reestablish a sphere of influence reminiscent of the Soviet empire.

Progress was made in **Trump-Putin summit**, even as sticking points remain

A thaw in US-Russia relations tends to widen India's geopolitical space. Yet Delhi faces an immediate challenge: Trump's threat of secondary tariffs on Indian purchases of Russian oil

US President Donald Trump's decision to align with Russian President Vladimir Putin's approach to peace in Ukraine at the Alaska Summit has provoked sharp criticism in Europe and at home. Yet this reaction may be missing the essence of what Trump is trying to do. He has long been indifferent to the censure of the mainstream press and foreign policy establishment that labels him "soft on Putin." Trump has endured that line of attack for a decade, including attempts to remove him from the White House during his first term. Across three presidential campaigns — in 2016, 2020, and 2024 — Trump has consistently reaffirmed his conviction that the United States needs better relations with Russia. In his latest campaign, he promised a quick end to the war in Ukraine. The Alaska Summit was the culmination of that commitment. By moving beyond the narrow objective of a ceasefire and pressing for a peace agreement, Trump has signalled recognition of battlefield realities, rather than deference to Putin. Speaking to a television channel after the summit, Trump bluntly stated that Ukraine has little chance of defeating Russia, a far larger power.

Both leaders spoke of "considerable progress" in Alaska. **The main sticking point, however, remains the issue of territorial concessions.** Putin is pressing for Ukraine to **cede parts of the Donbas** still under its control in return for Russia freezing the rest of the frontline. For Kyiv, this is a bitter pill to swallow. Trump has said he will urge Ukrainian President Zelenskyy — due at the White House on Monday — to accept concessions in exchange for the benefits of peace. *Europe*, briefed by Trump after the summit, ***has not outrightly rejected the idea of territorial compromise.*** But European leaders insist on robust security guarantees for Ukraine and the preservation of its freedom to choose its security partners. **The reality, however, is stark:** Neither Ukraine nor Europe holds a veto over US policy. Should Trump decide to disengage from Ukraine — a move that would resonate strongly with his anti-war MAGA base — Kyiv's

resistance would collapse quickly. **Europe, for its part, lacks the capacity to replace Washington as Ukraine's security guarantor.** This imbalance creates space for Trump's peace diplomacy in the coming weeks. Flexibility in Kyiv and Brussels could open the door for a second Trump-Putin summit to formalise new arrangements for Ukraine. But entrenched resistance to compromise across the Atlantic could still derail the process.

India, for its part, welcomed the progress at Alaska. A thaw in US-Russia relations tends to widen India's geopolitical space. Yet Delhi faces an immediate challenge: Trump's threat of secondary tariffs on Indian purchases of Russian oil. These tariffs, set to take effect on August 27, could impose a crippling 50 per cent duty on Indian exports to the US, its most important trading partner. At the summit's close, Trump sent mixed signals by saying he would decide on the tariffs "in a couple of weeks," once the Ukraine situation becomes clearer. For India, the moment demands deft diplomacy abroad and a credible economic plan at home to cope with the potential shock of punitive tariffs.

Used cooking oil to fuel for planes:

India's first sustainable aviation fuel

plant to start production by year-end

By the end of this calendar year, **IOC** will have the capacity to produce 35,000 tonnes per year of SAF from used cooking oil, **which will be sourced from large hotel chains, restaurants, and sweets and snacks majors like Haldiram's, which normally discard cooking oil after single use.**

△ The country's largest refiner and fuel retailer Indian Oil Corporation (IOC) expects to start producing sustainable aviation fuel (SAF) **on commercial scale at its Panipat refinery by December**, following the recent international

certification received by the unit for manufacturing the **biofuel from used cooking oil**.

Challenges:-

- There is a large amount of such oil available in the country. The only challenge is collection. While it is easy to collect from large hotel chains, a solution needs to be found for **collection from small users, including households**.

ISCC CORSIA Certification:-

- Earlier this week, IOC became the **first company in India to receive** the ISCC CORSIA certification for SAF production at its Panipat refinery in Haryana.
- ◆ ISCC CORSIA is a certification system for compliance with the **Carbon Offsetting and Reduction Scheme for International Aviation** (CORSIA) criteria for SAF.
- ◆ It is a **prerequisite for commercial SAF production**.
- ◆ According to IOC, the certification also sets a benchmark for other domestic refiners and industry players to scale up SAF production.

Aviation Alternative Fuel (AAF)

→ **AAF**

is a **biofuel**

that is *produced from* → → sustainable feedstocks
and

has **chemistry similar to**
conventional **aviation turbine fuel (ATF)** or jet fuel,
which is **derived from crude oil**.

→ This means that existing aircraft engines can easily use the **SAF-ATF blend.**

⇒ For instance, Airbus claims that all its aircraft are capable of flying on a **maximum 50% blend of SAF and conventional fuel.**

⇒ Various Indian airlines have already operated successfully a few test and demonstration flights using jet fuel doped with SAF in various proportions.

⇒ According to aviation industry and energy experts, SAF alone is likely to account for over **60% of the global aviation industry's decarbonisation efforts.**

Export opportunity:-

✓ Europe:-

Given that Europe already has SAF blending mandates, European airlines could be the **first potential buyers of IOC's SAF**, *which they can buy when they fly into India.*

✓ Exploring opportunities:-

The refiner is also exploring export opportunities, *given that SAF demand is expected to shoot up globally over the coming years.*

CORSIA mandatory @ 2027

→ The year 2027 will be an important one for adoption of SAF globally with the mandatory phase of CORSIA kicking in.

CORSIA,	
which applies to international flights,	
would require airlines globally	
to offset any growth in carbon dioxide emissions	beyond the 2020 levels.

→ Using jet fuel blended with SAF is one of the ways through which carriers can keep their emissions under permissible levels.

India and CORSIA

⇒ International

- India, too, will have to comply with the **mandatory** phase starting 2027.
- In line with the CORSIA framework, India's National Biofuel Coordination Committee (NBCC) has set the initial indicative targets for blending of SAF with jet fuel 2027 onwards, starting with international flights.
- The indicative targets are:
 - **1% blending** in 2027 and
 - **2%** in 2028.

⇒ Domestic

- The government is expected to announce SAF blending mandates for domestic flights in India as well, but only after blending for international flights begins 2027 onwards.
- However, given the **high cost of production** of the biofuel and opposition from airlines over apprehensions of **fuel cost escalation**, the government is now looking at introducing any such mandate only from 2027 or beyond.
- According to industry insiders, **SAF currently costs around three times the price of regular jet fuel.**

Alternate to Cooking Oil : Ethanol

- While IOC has received the certification for the used cooking oil pathway for SAF production, the company is also working on setting up units based on the **alcohol-to-jet pathway**, which involves **using ethanol as a feedstock** to make SAF.
- A few other companies in India are also working to build units based on the various SAF manufacturing pathways. All such technologies

and units need to be certified before they can start commercial operations.

EXPLAINED

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What is sustainable aviation fuel?

SUSTAINABLE AVIATION fuel is a biofuel that is produced from sustainable feedstocks and has chemistry similar to conventional aviation turbine fuel or jet fuel, which is derived from crude oil. This means that existing aircraft engines can easily use the SAF-ATF blend.

MUST Know :-

- Ethanol is a renewable fuel made from various plant materials collectively known as "biomass".
- More than 98% of U.S. gasoline contains ethanol to oxygenate the fuel.
- Typically, gasoline contains **E10 (10% ethanol, 90% gasoline)**, which reduces air pollution.

There are several steps involved in making ethanol available as a vehicle fuel:

- ✓ Biomass feedstocks are grown, collected, and transported to an ethanol production facility.
- ✓ **Feedstocks** are converted to ethanol at a production facility and then transported to a fuel terminal or end-user by rail, truck, or barge.

- ✓ E10 is sourced from fuel terminals whereas E85 is sourced from a terminal or directly from an ethanol production facility.
- ✓ E15 is available from fuel terminals or through a blender pump dispenser that draws from E10 and E85 tanks at a station.

Fuel Properties

- ✓ Ethanol ($\text{CH}_3\text{CH}_2\text{OH}$) is a clear, colorless liquid.
- ✓ It is also known as **ethyl alcohol**, grain alcohol, and EtOH.
- ✓ Ethanol has the same chemical formula regardless of whether it is produced from starch- or sugar-based feedstocks, such as
 - **corn grain** (as it primarily is in the **United States**),
 - **sugar cane** (as it primarily is in **Brazil**), or
 - from cellulosic feedstocks (such as wood chips or crop residues).

Minimum octane number is required for Gasoline

- ✓ **Ethanol has a higher octane number than gasoline**, providing premium blending properties.
- ✓ Minimum octane number requirements for gasoline prevent engine knocking and ensure drivability.
- ✓ Lower-octane gasoline is blended with 10% ethanol to attain the standard 87 octane.
- ◆ Ethanol contains less energy per gallon than gasoline, to varying degrees, depending on the volume percentage of ethanol in the blend.
- ◆ Denatured ethanol (98% ethanol) contains about 30% less energy than gasoline per gallon.
- ◆ Ethanol's impact on fuel economy is dependent on the ethanol content in the fuel and **whether an engine is optimized to run on gasoline or ethanol.**

- ❖ India's ethanol is derived from sugarcane based feedstock.
- ❖ Maize is also under experiment.

Challenges with the Sugarcane @ water intensive @ India

- ✓ About 60-70 tonnes of water is required to cultivate one tonne of sugarcane.
- ✓ Many sugarcane growing regions in India do not receive the 1,500 to 3,000 millimetre rainfall that is necessary for the crop's optimal growth.
- ✓ This leads to groundwater extraction and unsustainable irrigation methods.
- ✓ A 2023 Central Groundwater Board report says that sugarcane growing districts in Maharashtra extract more groundwater than nearby regions.
- ✓ Distress among sugarcane growers in that State has been widely reported.
- ✓ Unsustainable agriculture practices accelerate land degradation.
- ✓ The Desertification and Land Degradation Atlas of India 2021 found that almost 30% of India's land is degraded.
- ✓ The water intensive nature of sugarcane and the impact on ground water reserves at a time of extreme weather has been absent from the discussion on ethanol-blended petrol.

National Policy on Biofuels @ achievement - 20% blending

- ✓ E 20 petrol, which contains 20% ethanol and is being sold by Indian oil refiners, has been much in the news lately.
- ✓ India has achieved its target to blend 20% ethanol per litre of fuel five years ahead of the target under the National Policy on Biofuels.
- ✓ Ethanol blending in India rose from just 1.5% in 2014 to 20% in 2025, backed by the government's strong fiscal incentives to the sugarcane industry.
- ✓ While the government says ethanol blending achieves a range of goals such as cutting greenhouse gas emissions, bolstering

farmers' incomes and reducing India's oil import bill, its benefits to the environment require closer scrutiny.

✦ While the Centre admitted to a "marginal drop" in engine efficiency, it said this "can be further minimised through improved engine tuning and use of E20-compatible materials."

Will it affect the transition to EVs?

- ✓ The Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas said the shift to ethanol-blended petrol "has helped India reduce carbon dioxide emissions by 700 lakh tonnes."
- ✓ Shifting to EVs, however, will achieve far higher rates of emissions reductions and speed up transport's decarbonisation, which is the third largest carbon emitting sector globally after energy and industry.
- ✓ The success of cities like Beijing in cutting air pollution is mainly due to the rapid adoption of EVs. Of course, this switch has to be backed by renewable energy rather than coal, to aid in decarbonising transport.
- ◆ Adoption of EVs has been much slower in India when compared to other large economies like the U.S., the European Union and China.
- ◆ Another challenge to wider EV adoption in India is its dependence on Rare Earth Elements (REE).
 - The production and processing of many REEs is geographically concentrated in China, making global supply vulnerable to several risks.

Applications:

Ethanol is used in various sectors:

- Fuel Additive: Ethanol is a crucial component in blended petrol, offering a cleaner alternative to conventional fuels.
- Beverages: Ethanol is a key ingredient in alcoholic beverages like beer, wine, and spirits.
- Disinfectants: Its germicidal properties make it a vital component in hand sanitizers and other disinfectants.

✍ India is the second largest producer of sugarcane next to Brazil.

19.08.2025



EXPLAINED

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Ahead of PM's likely visit

FOR BEIJING, Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi's visit is a key step towards facilitating Prime Minister Narendra Modi's likely visit to China at the end of this month. For Delhi, it serves as an important leverage to get Beijing to agree to de-escalation within a time frame. Amid the US tariffs, the meetings will also provide an opportunity to discuss economic issues of concern.

UKRAINIAN PRESIDENT BACKED BY HUGE EUROPEAN DELEGATION IN U.S.

Zelenskyy, Trump express hope for trilateral talks with Putin to end war

US President pledges to back European security guarantees for Ukraine: 'NATO-like presence'



U.S. TO BACK EUROPEAN
SECURITY GUARANTEES
FOR UKRAINE: TRUMP

ZELENSKYY SAYS OPEN
TO TRILATERAL TALKS:
'IT'S A GOOD SIGNAL'

How can courts order a recount of votes?

Backdrop

Recently SC overturned the result of the sarpanch election of a village in Haryana. The move came after the apex court conducted a recounting of votes by summoning all Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs) used during the election to its premises in New Delhi.

Experts believe that the case marked the first instance of the SC conducting a recount of EVM votes.

Legal framework for challenging an election

Where to Challenge:-

- 1) To challenge the validity of results of **Parliamentary, Assembly, or local government elections**, a candidate or an elector can file election petition before the High Court of the particular state in which the election was conducted.
- 2) For local government elections, however it has to be filed at the district-level civil courts.

Who can file and time frame?

→ The petition can only be filed by a **candidate or an elector** related to the election in question.

→ Also, it has to be filed within 45 days from the date of declaration of results.

Content of Petition:-

- The petition must contain a concise statement of all “**material facts**” on which the challenge is based.
 - If a petition has allegations of “**corrupt practices**”, *it must provide details such as the names of individuals involved, and the date and place of the alleged act.*
- The SC has repeatedly held that allegations of corrupt practices are quasi-criminal and require a high standard of proof.
 - Vague or ambiguous claims are not entertained, and a petition that fails to state material facts can be dismissed at the outset.

Grounds for invalidating an election

- Bribery, undue influence — such as a candidate failing to disclose their criminal antecedents — or promoting enmity among social groups;
- If the winning candidate was not qualified or was disqualified on the date of their election;
- Improper rejection of a nomination paper of an electoral candidate.
- Improper acceptance of a nomination or the improper reception or rejection of votes (but only when it is proven that these actions materially affected the election’s outcome);
- And non-compliance with the Constitution or any election laws and rules, if such non-compliance materially affected the result.

When courts can order a recount of votes

- A recount of votes is one of the remedies a court can order, *but it is not granted lightly.*

- As it involves re-examining ballots, it is seen as potentially compromising the secrecy of the vote, a cornerstone of free and fair elections.
- Therefore, a court will only order a recount if the petitioner presents specific, material facts and provides sufficient evidence to establish a prima facie case that a mistake in counting is probable and that a recount is necessary.

Where the recounting takes place

- Courts **usually** order vote recounts to take place **at the location where the election was held** — unlike in the case of the Panipat sarpanch election dispute, in which the SC recounted the votes at its premises.

When courts can declare a new winner

- **It is rare – but not unprecedented** – for a court to void an election and declare another candidate as the winner. The court must be satisfied that the petitioner or another candidate received a majority of the valid votes.
- Alternatively, the petitioner must prove that they would have secured a majority of votes if not for the votes obtained by the winning candidate through corrupt practices. This requires concrete evidence to quantify the votes tainted by corruption.
 - In February 2024, the SC declared a new electoral winner in the Chandigarh Mayoral election after it found that the polling station presiding officer had wrongfully marked eight paper ballots as invalid. All the votes had been cast for the losing candidate. The court ordered that these votes be treated as validly cast in the losing candidate's favour, which helped him win the election.

20.08.2025

3 NEW MECHANISMS ON
border; talks on de-escalation

INDIA FLAGS CONCERNS
over terror, Brahmaputra dam

BOUNDARY FRAMEWORK
to be in line with 2005 pact

Look forward to meeting Xi, says PM as India, China move on border, trade, flights

SERIES OF STEPS

THREE new
mechanisms to
manage border

AGREE to discuss
de-escalation at LAC

FACILITATE trade and
investment flows

BORDER trade via
designated points

RESUMPTION of direct
flights at earliest



EUROPE AT TRUMP TABLE

Italian PM Giorgia Meloni, European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen, Chancellor of Germany Friedrich Merz, French President Emmanuel Macron, Finland President Alexander Stubb, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, NATO Secy General Mark Rutte during a meeting with US President Donald Trump at the Oval Office on Monday. [x/WhiteHouse](#)

INSIDE RUSSIA MAY NOT WANT TO MAKE DEAL: TRUMP **P 10** THE GREAT TRUMP RESET **BY C RAJA MOHAN** **P 9**

With Alaska and Washington summits, Trump has moved the needle towards peace

The prospect of closer US-Russia ties, at least for the remainder of Trump's term, remains troubling not only for Ukraine, but also for Europe. It is encouraging that Putin and Zelenskyy may finally sit in the same room to negotiate an end to the bloodshed.

If there was any indication that the Ukrainian President was not going to be ambushed again in the White House, it came when a member of the White House press corps who had mocked Volodymyr Zelenskyy back in February for his choice of outfit now said, "You look fabulous in that suit." Zelenskyy's retort — "I changed, you did not" — was met with laughter across the Oval Office,

including from US President Donald Trump. That exchange reflected the overall tone of the summit in Washington between **Trump, Zelenskyy and seven European leaders** who had accompanied the Ukrainian President to ensure that Russia, after the Alaska summit, would not get away with a peace deal detrimental to Ukraine and Europe. A mounting challenge for some of the most powerful heads of state this year has been learning how to deal with the most powerful man in the world.

There are three key takeaways from the White House summit.

- The first is the lack of consensus over a ceasefire. While the Europeans pressed for one, Trump backed away, despite his own calls for a halt to the fighting before he met Russian President Vladimir Putin in Alaska less than a week ago. The US President is now pushing for a peace deal that skips the intermediary step of a temporary truce, a position that mirrors the Kremlin's stance so far. Notably, after Alaska, Trump had told European leaders he now supported a plan under which Ukraine, in what would amount to sacrificing sovereignty, would have to cede unconquered territory.
- The second takeaway is that plans were discussed in the White House for Europe to provide security assurances to Ukraine, with the US serving as a coordinator. That US security guarantees are back on the table will come as a relief for Ukraine.
- Finally, Trump announced on social media that he had begun “arrangements for a meeting” between Putin — whom he spoke to on phone during the summit — and Zelenskyy, to be followed by a trilateral. This is the closest the war has come to a breakthrough.

Still, it is difficult to imagine a deal that satisfies both Russia and Ukraine. Kyiv, however, has little choice but to accept what Trump offers. Just before the Washington summit, Trump remarked that Zelenskyy could “end the war with Russia almost immediately” — a return to his conciliatory stance towards Putin after weeks of threatening sanctions. **The prospect of closer US-Russia ties, at least for the remainder of Trump's term, remains troubling not only for Ukraine, but also for Europe.** It is encouraging that Putin and Zelenskyy may finally sit in the same room to negotiate an end to the bloodshed, even as,

reportedly, Ukraine and Russia exchanged fire shortly after the White House meeting.

3 new cases of 'brain-eating amoeba' in Kerala

Kerala new brain-eating amoeba cases: In the initial stage, the symptoms of **primary amoebic meningoencephalitis (PAM)** include headache, fever, nausea and vomiting.

PAM cases in Kerala:

- Three cases of the rare primary amoebic meningoencephalitis (PAM) have been reported in Kerala in recent days, leading to the death of a nine-year-old and infecting a three-month-old baby.
 - ✍ PAM is a rare brain infection caused by *Naegleria fowleri*, also called 'brain-eating amoeba'.
- What also is the fact raised question for the state health department that there appears to be no common factor among the three cases, which were reported from different villages in the Kozhikode district.
- ◆ The **first case** of PAM in India was reported in **1971**, and the first case in Kerala was reported in **2016**.
 - ✓ From **2016 to 2023**, the state had **only 8 cases**.
 - ✓ *Last year*, Kerala had **36 cases and 9 deaths**.

What is primary amoebic meningoencephalitis?

- PAM is caused by *Naegleria fowleri*, a **free-living amoeba or a single-celled living organism**.
 - ✓ It lives in **warm, fresh water and soil** around the world, and

- ✓ infects people when it **enters the body through the nose**.
- ✓ **Higher temperatures** of up to 115°F (46°C) **are conducive to its growth**, and it can survive for short periods in warm environments.
- ✓ The amoeba can be **found in warm freshwater**, such as lakes and rivers, swimming pools, splash pads, surf parks, or other recreational venues that are poorly maintained or minimally chlorinated.

How does *Naegleria fowleri* infect people?

- *Naegleria fowleri* enters the body **through the nose**, → → usually when people are **swimming**.
 - It then **travels up to the brain**,
 - where it **destroys the brain tissue and causes swelling**.
- In a Kozhikode case in 2024, it was suspected that the girl was infected while swimming in a local river. However, the other children who swam with her did not get infected. Notably, people cannot get infected with *Naegleria fowleri* **from drinking water contaminated with the amoeba.**

✍ PAM is also **non-communicable.**

What are the symptoms of primary amoebic meningoencephalitis?

- In the **initial stage**, the symptoms include **headache, fever, nausea and vomiting.**
- ✓ **Later on**, the patient may have a **stiff neck and experience confusion, seizures, hallucinations and slip into a state of coma.**
- According to the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), “Most people with PAM **die within 1 to 18 days** after symptoms begin. It usually leads to coma and death after 5 days.”

What is the treatment for primary amoebic meningoencephalitis?

- As earlier reported, scientists haven’t been able to identify any effective treatments for the disease yet.
- At present, doctors treat it with a combination of drugs, including

- amphotericin B,
- azithromycin,
- fluconazole,
- rifampin,
- miltefosine, and
- dexamethasone.

Past incidents of infection

- The **first incident in Kerala** was reported in Alappuzha in **2016**, perhaps due to its large number of water bodies. Since then, infections have been reported in Malappuram, Kozhikode and Thrissur.
 - Compared to a **97% fatality rate for the disease globally**, Kerala stands at 25%.
 - ↳ **All reported cases in India had led to the patient's death until July 2024,**
 - when a 14-year-old boy in Kozhikode district became the first Indian to survive the disease. He was only the 11th PAM survivor in the world.
 - **One of the reasons for the spike in cases in Kerala has been increased testing for acute encephalitis syndrome (AES) – a condition that can be caused by various diseases, including PAM – as well as other factors such as climate change and environmental pollution.**
 - ↳ In the new cases, another possibility could be that the PAM was caused by a different category of amoeba, which is found in dust and soil, according to health department officials.
-

21 DEAD IN FOUR DAYS
in Maharashtra rain incidents

CITY'S WETTEST AUG SINCE 2020,
some pockets see 300 mm rain in 24 hrs

TRAINS, BUSES, FLIGHTS HIT;
people wade through flooded roads

Rain brings Mumbai to its knees

MUMBAI MAROONED

800 mm
Approx rain Mumbai
received in 4 days till
Tuesday evening

566 mm
City's average
August rainfall

Total rain in August in Mumbai in last 5 years



(Santacruz station data)



Amit Chakravarty

Train passengers walk along a flooded track on Tuesday.

HOW RAIN HAS IMPACTED THE REGION

- Waterlogging across island city, Western suburbs and Eastern suburbs.
- Train services suspended along Central Line and Harbour Line
- 50 local trains cancelled on the Western Line. Two express trains cancelled
- Schools closed in Mumbai and Thane
- Government offices shut in Mumbai, BMC appeals for WFH for private employees
- Crops on 12-14 lakh hectares affected in state. - NAYONIKA BOSE



GS Mains and ESSAY perspective

The untold stories of **Bengali women revolutionaries** who got us freedom

*These women waged a battle on two fronts: **Against foreign colonial domination and social constraints** that sought to limit their agency*

As India celebrates its 79th Independence Day, the national mood is suffused with pride and remembrance. While the freedom struggle continues to be defined by towering figures and well-documented milestones, it is equally marked by quiet, determined resistance, often led by those whose names were pushed to the margins. Among these are the women revolutionaries of Bengal, who not only confronted the British Empire with remarkable courage but also defied the deeply entrenched patriarchy of their own society. Their legacy is not only inspirational; it is essential to our understanding of what true freedom demands.

These women waged a battle on two fronts: Against foreign colonial domination and social constraints that sought to limit their agency. In early 20th-century Bengal, women were expected to adhere to narrow societal roles — education for girls was discouraged, early marriage and widowhood were common, and purdah kept upper-caste women confined to the domestic sphere. In this atmosphere, even joining the nationalist cause came with suspicion. **Revolutionary groups like Surya Sen's initially doubted women's capacity for leadership and sacrifice.**

Despite such scepticism, they emerged as forces of resistance, often surpassing expectations. Their determination was not merely symbolic. Their methods ranged from the armed and overt to the intellectual and covert. Some led attacks, some smuggled weapons, and others educated the next generation of girls quietly in their courtyards. Every act was calibrated resistance.

Pritilata Waddedar, for instance, led a daring armed assault on the European Club at Chittagong in 1932 — a site infamous for its racial segregation policies. Refusing capture, she consumed cyanide and embraced martyrdom, leaving behind leaflets and letters urging Indian women to “not remain in the background.”

Her courage was matched by Kalpana Datta, who participated in the Chittagong armoury raid and later chronicled her experience, documenting how women were not mere auxiliaries but “equal tacticians and partners.” These were not rhetorical declarations; they were statements of fact drawn from lived resistance.

21.08.2025

New Bills on ministers with criminal charges are bad faith, bad law

To argue that ‘the people’ will decide if their ministers should run the government from jail subverts people’s rights. The Bills deserve to travel no further

△ On the face of it, the Constitution (130th Amendment) Bill and two related Bills, tabled in the Lok Sabha and sent to a joint committee on Wednesday, frame a concern about political corruption and seek to enforce constitutional morality.

- In fact, however, the Bills are deeply troubling pieces of legislation that arrogate to the Executive expanded and concentrated state power and severely shrink safeguards, checks and balances.
- They **undermine the principle of separation of powers and violate federal autonomy.**
 - According to the Bills, if any minister, including chief ministers and the Prime Minister, **is arrested and remains in custody for 30 straight days**, **for an offence punishable by 5 years or more in jail**, he or she must resign or lose their office.
- This proposed automatic **removal on unproven charges** marks an inexplicable and disturbing departure from the **established principle of disqualification only after conviction**

in its ruling in the Lily Thomas case in 2013, the Supreme Court held that	a conviction which carries a sentence of 2 years or more would result in the disqualification of a legislator from holding public office and contesting elections from the date of conviction.
--	--

- In a climate in which the executive has shown little compunction in weaponising central agencies to target political opponents, and when the guard rails of the federal framework are under strain, the Bills only add to the dubious arsenal of the Centre's ruling party.

△ In the past, chief ministers have resigned before being sent to jail in cases of corruption, from Lalu Prasad in Bihar in the 1990s to Hemant Soren in Jharkhand more recently — Arvind Kejriwal, who continued as Delhi Chief Minister even after being taken into custody in the Delhi excise policy case, was an exception.

- But that is a call that must remain a political one. It is a matter between the political party and the politician, and then between the politician and the people.
- Of course, the judicial process is infamously prone to delays, but short-circuiting the due process of law, overturning the principle of innocent till proved guilty, and handing untrammelled power to the ruling establishment at the Centre is certainly not the answer.
- All Union governments have misused central agencies against political opponents — the CBI was dubbed the “Congress Bureau of Investigation” and a “caged parrot” in the tenure of the UPA. But the last 10 years or so have seen this distortion acquire a new scale.
 - Since 2014, there has been a starkly disproportionate targeting by the CBI and ED of Opposition leaders, who win an instant reprieve when they cross over to the BJP.
 - The ED, which has acquired a reputation for being the prime instrument of this vindictive politics, armed with stringent laws that make bail more difficult, has a pathetic conviction rate.
 - It has, time and again, been rebuked by the SC, as for its money laundering investigation in the Tamil Nadu State Marketing Corporation case.

△ To argue, as the Home Minister does, that “the people” will decide if their ministers should run the government from jail, is a cynical framing that subverts people’s rights in their own name. The Bills, which have gone to a joint parliamentary panel, deserve to travel no further. They should be rejected.

Quick picks :-

What does the amendment propose?

→ The Bill proposes amendments to

Articles 75 ,	which deal with	the Union Council of Ministers ,
164 , and		Council of Ministers in the states , and
239AA of the Constitution,		Ministers in Union Territories

- **These provisions will have a new clause:** “A Minister, who for any period of **30 consecutive days** during holding the office as such, is arrested and detained in custody, on allegation of committing an offence under any law for the time being in force, which is **punishable with imprisonment** for a term which may extend to **five years or more**, shall be removed from his office **by the President on the advice of the Prime Minister** to be tendered by the thirty-first day, after being taken in such custody.”
- The removal **can be reversed when the Minister is released** from custody.
- Chief Ministers and the Prime Minister will be in the ambit of the proposed law.

What is the current legal framework, and how does the Bill depart from it?

- Under **Section 8** of the **Representation of the People Act, 1951, (RPA)** legislators are disqualified from contesting elections or continuing in office upon conviction for **certain** criminal offences, and being sentenced to imprisonment for **at least two years**.

- In the RPA, the yardstick for disqualification is conviction by a court.
 - The disqualification can be stayed if the conviction is stayed by a higher court on appeal.

Lily Thomas judgment, 2013 by the SC
RECONFIRMED

- ◆ India's constitutional scheme envisages the presumption of innocence for the accused, and puts the onus of proving the charges on the prosecution.
 - Police file a **chargesheet** within 90 days of arrest, after which a **court frames the charges**. Trial begins after that, and can end in acquittal or conviction.
- ◆ In the proposed Bill, the yardstick for removal is 30 consecutive days of being "arrested and detained in custody".
 - Since **arrest and detention are only the preliminary step in a criminal investigation**, such a yardstick raises serious questions of due process.



Expert Criticism

‘A constable now can have power to change govts, and always of Opposition’: Abhishek Singhvi

“Does anyone in his right senses believe a PM will be arrested by the ruling dispensation? It is insulting to intelligence of the people”:

Congress MP on Bills providing for removal of ministers, CMs, PM held on serious charges

Q:- The Bills mandate the removal of a Central or state minister who has been in jail for at least 30 days on allegations of corruption or serious offences. What are your objections?

This is quite an extraordinary enactment and appears to have ulterior motives.

- Firstly, it relies upon an **Executive act** which is **completely uncertain and arbitrary – namely arrest** – to change the will of the people with respect to an elected minister, CM or PM. There is no Legislative determination of the act of arrest, and it is left to the **whims and caprice of Executive authorities and biased agencies**. One such act..... will have disastrous consequences for democracy.....
- Secondly, there is **complete lack of synchronization** because the Legislature already prescribes how and when elected representatives should be disqualified. **The Representation of the People Act puts a definite act of conviction as the standard criterion... ..** There is a large element of judicial adjudication involved in any such conviction, which then triggers disqualification.

In the proposed enactment, the mere act of a police officer either acting wrongly or acting in a biased manner (frequently under instructions from his political masters) generates very serious consequences for elected representatives.

Q:- Some believe the Bills will run into legal hurdles.

I have no doubt that the Bills would be struck down as unconstitutional and violative of several Articles of the Constitution, including but not limited to **Articles 14, 19 and 21**. It appears to be **a mindless law conceived in haste and delivered with ulterior motives**. I hope and trust that the Bills are struck down if at all passed. But I hope that more likely they will not be passed.

If the Bill to remove arrested ministers is passed, India will join the ranks of Belarus, Bangladesh, Cambodia, Cameroon, Congo (DRC), Myanmar, Nicaragua, Pakistan, Russia, Rwanda, Uganda, Venezuela, Zambia and Zimbabwe which routinely jail Opposition leaders

23.08.2025

SPECIAL INTENSIVE REVISION ROW: DRAFT ROLL LEFT OUT 65 LAKH NAMES

Use Aadhaar, any of 11 listed papers for inclusion claim: SC on Bihar rolls

The Supreme Court Friday directed the Election Commission of India to let those excluded from

Bihar's draft electoral rolls

submit their claim forms

online, or physically,

along with their Aadhaar card or

any of the 11 documents listed

by the Commission.

An estimated 65 lakh names were excluded from the draft voter list following the Special Intensive Revision exercise in the poll-bound state.

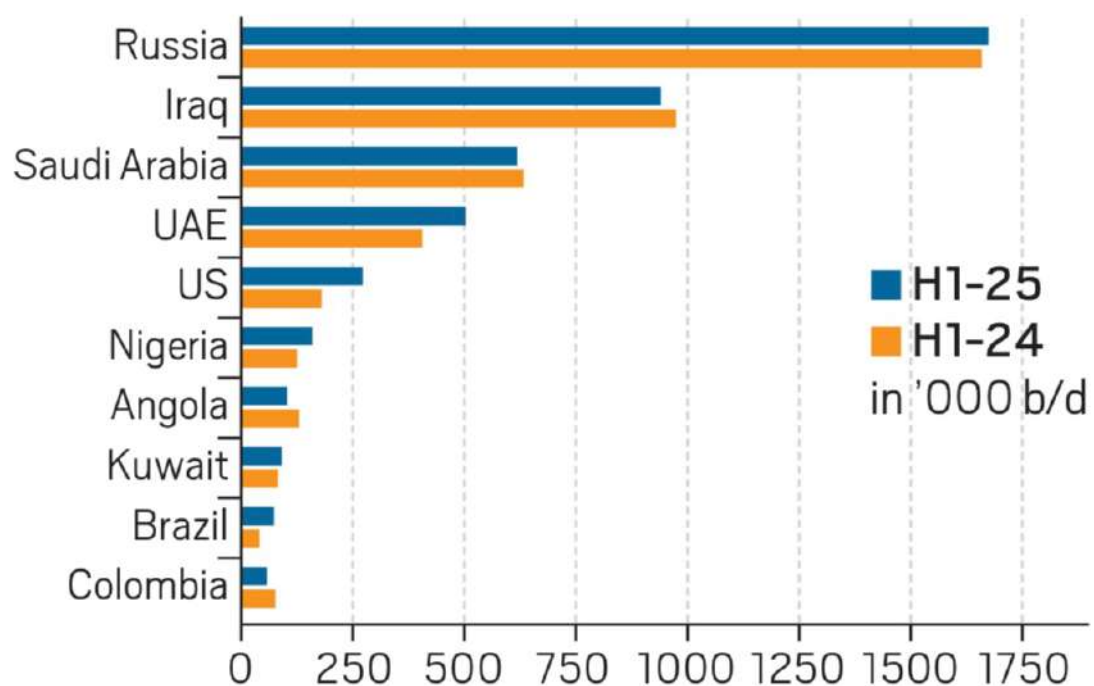
EXPLAINED

E

**A race
against
time**

SUBMISSION OF claims for inclusion in the voter list will be a race against time. That window closes on September 1. There have been pleas for more time to complete the SIR exercise. As of date, the SC has not extended the time period. The matter will be heard next on September 8.

INDIA'S TOP 10 CRUDE OIL SUPPLIERS IN H1 2025



Source: S&P Global Commodity Insights

DELHI-NATIONAL CAPITAL REGION

SC modifies order, says stray dogs to be released after sterilisation

DOG LOVERS TOLD TO PAY FOR INFRA

THE BENCH asked individual “dog lovers” and NGOs, who approached the court against the earlier order, to deposit Rs 25,000 and Rs 2 lakh, respectively, within a week to continue being heard in the matter.

“THE AMOUNTS so deposited shall be utilised in the creation of infrastructure and facilities for the stray dogs under the aegis of the respective municipal bodies,” the bench said.

Topic : GS (Mains)

SC's revised order on stray dogs opens up space for long-term solutions

This will require an acknowledgement of, and introspection over, the reasons for the failure of the Animal Birth Control (Dog) Rules

If the furore following the Supreme Court's August 11 order, which directed that all stray dogs in Delhi-NCR be removed to shelters, showed a deep polarisation of attitudes, then its modification of the order on Friday is an opportunity to tackle a serious issue in a more thoughtful, scientific manner. **The three-judge bench, to which the matter was reassigned after the original order was reserved, strikes a balance between established animal welfare laws and public safety concerns:** Among other directions, the Court has said that while sterilised and vaccinated dogs are to be released where they were picked up from, the ones that have rabies or are suspected to have it, or display aggressive behaviour, are to remain in the shelters. The new order opens up space for tempers to calm down, so that a sustainable and humane solution to a stubborn problem may be found.

What this requires, in the first place, is an acknowledgement of, and introspection over, the reasons for the failure of the Animal Birth Control (Dog) Rules. Both a paucity of resources and a lack of will on the part of local governance have hobbled efforts to manage the stray dog population. In its order on Friday, the Court asked municipal authorities to give a full picture of the resources available, including the number of pounds, veterinarians, dog-catching personnel and cages/vehicles required for compliance with the ABC Rules. With the Court now expanding the scope of the matter to include all states and Union Territories, these hard numbers can help plug holes and be used to formulate a more realistic solution. They can help local bodies in other parts of the country, especially those that may not have the kind of resources that Delhi-NCR does, to form a clearer idea of the challenges, and develop a more targeted approach. Numbers can also help make a stronger case for why the vast community of those who care for "streeties" must be included if there is to be a lasting solution: Their help can be

sought, for example, in ensuring that each dog in a locality is kept up-to-date with vaccinations, including for rabies – something that may be beyond the capacity of resource-poor municipal bodies.

That the problem of stray dogs is deeply linked to unmanaged solid waste cannot be ignored; like so many other species, such as pigeons, crows and cats, dogs too have come to depend on overflowing rubbish bins and garbage dumps for food. Tackling the trash problem can go a long way towards controlling the stray dog population. In addition to correcting other past mistakes, municipal authorities should not delay addressing this problem.



Disturbing Facts :-

Great Kolkata Killing, 1946

Why in News:

Vivek Agnihotri's *Bengal Files* is about the 'Great Calcutta Killing', the riots that raged in Kolkata for four days beginning **August 16, 1946**, the date designated by the **Muslim League as "Direct Action Day"** to create Pakistan. One of the characters in the violence was Gopal Mukherjee that has created the controversy in Bengal.

Political situation in India and Bengal in 1946

Initiated British Policy

- British Prime Minister Clement **Atlee** (Viceroy : Lord Wavell) had **announced** the **transfer of power in March 1946**, although no date had been fixed.

- In **May**, the **Cabinet Mission** proposed a plan for **an interim government**, *which both the Congress and Muslim League rejected.*

Jinnah's immediate response

➤ The League had committed itself to accepting **nothing short of partition and the creation of Pakistan**. Its leader, Muhammad Ali Jinnah, proclaimed that there would now be "**either a divided India or a destroyed India**".

➤ In a public address, Jinnah declared that "One India is [now] an impossible realisation... It will inevitably mean that the Muslim will be transferred from the domination of the British to the caste Hindu rule... Freedom must mean freedom... Hundreds of millions of Muslims will never agree merely to a change of masters." (cited by Sam Dalrymple, Shattered Lands: Five Partitions and the Making of Modern Asia (2025))

Bengal's Demography

➤ **Bengal as a whole :**

Bengal as a whole was Muslim-majority, but most of the **54% Muslim** population of the province lived in areas that **would become East Pakistan and subsequently, Bangladesh.**

➤ **Calcutta :**

The **city of Calcutta** was **73% Hindu**.

- **Muslims** were concentrated in **North Calcutta** and in the **Metiabruz** area by the Ganga, and were mainly part of the city's underclasses.

◆ In the **provincial elections of January 1946,**

- the **Bengal Provincial Muslim League**, *a provincial branch of the Muslim League,*

- had emerged victorious, and **H S Suhrawardy – a future Prime Minister of Pakistan** and **an early mentor of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman**, *the father of Bangladesh* – became **prime minister (chief minister)** of the province.

- ◆ **Almost all members of Suhrawardy's cabinet belonged to the League.** In his book, *A History of the Bengali-speaking People* (2001), historian Nitish Sengupta wrote that Suhrawardy's **cabinet without a single upper caste Hindu** was a “strong message to them that the government was determined to rule Bengal without associating with the *bhadralok* class”.
- ◆ “For them (upper-caste Bengali Hindus) this was a foretaste of what was likely to happen to them if the whole of Bengal went to Pakistan,” Sengupta wrote.

Calcutta smothered : Direct Action Day – 16th August

- On July 29, the **League called on Muslims across India to observe August 16 as Direct Action Day**, with strikes, hartals, and protests. But in Bengal, and Calcutta specifically, the situation went totally out of control.

- ◆ **Suhrawardy announced a public holiday in Bengal on August 16.** The air in Calcutta was thick with apprehension and foreboding.

- **A meeting held in Maidan** (a vast open space in Central Kolkata).....attended by an estimated **1,00,000 people**.....was addressed by Nazimuddin and Suhrawardy.....**What Suhrawardy told the crowd remains disputed** — it is said that he announced he had taken steps to restrain the police, which was understood as an invitation to loot and murder — but his speech was followed by a massive outbreak of violence in the city.....erstwhile Bengal Presidency's Governor's report to Viceroy Wavell, confirms Suhrawardy's presence for a great deal of time in the Control Room in Lall Bazar [police headquarters], often attended by some of his

supporters.....***His presence at headquarters presumably prevented the police from taking action against the rioters and killers,*** who ran amok across the city using knives, rods, firebombs, and pistols.

◆ Through **August 17 and 18**, the violence intensified.

- It was only on **August 19** that the **military was called in**.
- The chaos and bloodshed continued sporadically, and
- on **August 21**, Bengal was **put under Viceroy's rule**.

✍ **Between 5,000 and 10,000** people are believed to have been **murdered** and some **15,000 wounded** in the “Great Calcutta Killing”, which witnessed perhaps the worst single episode of Hindu-Muslim violence that accompanied the partition of the subcontinent.

Bengal's Wildfire : Spread

- ↘ The Great Calcutta Killing was followed by bloody riots in
- **Bombay,**
 - **Noakhali (in today's Bangladesh),**
 - **Bihar,**
 - **Garhmukteshwar, and**
 - **several places in Punjab** over the next few months.
-

25.08.2025

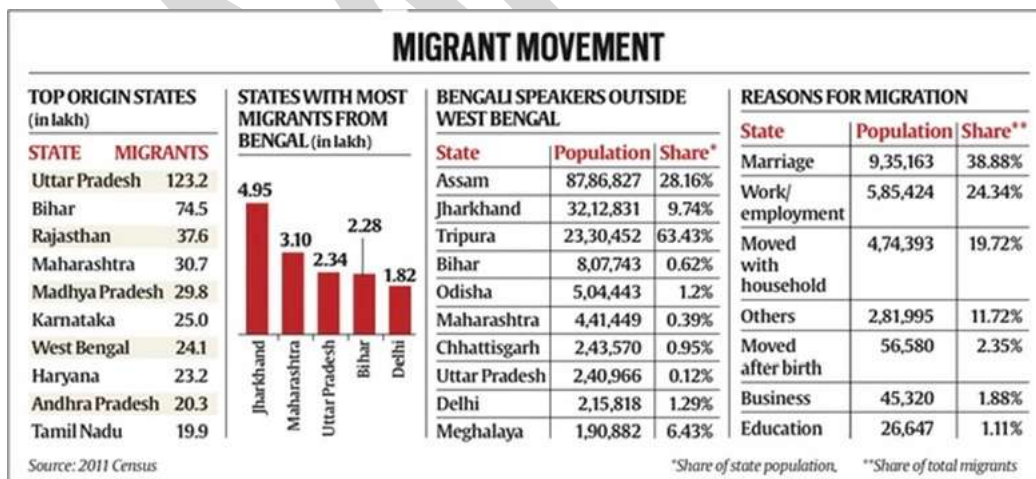


DRDO conducts the maiden flight tests of the Integrated Air Defence Weapon System off the coast of Odisha, Sunday. /1/

Multi-layered shield: Maiden flight tests of integrated air defence weapon system done

West Bengal ranked 7th in migrants outside state, most of them women

Among reasons for migration, marriage was by far the largest, jobs next. Education ranked far below, as per 2011 Census



‘Videshi’ in one’s own country: India’s internal diasporas

INDIA’S LINGUISTIC DIASPORAS

Language	Size of diaspora (in millions)*	Ratio of diaspora size & number of speakers (in %)*	Ratio of international & internal diaspora
Punjabi**	4.3	12.4	0.8
Malayalam	4.6	12.2	1.8
Tamil	8.4	11.5	1.2
Telugu	7.9	9.7	0.1
Gujarati	4.9	8.7	0.3
Hindi	39.9	7.5	0.2
Marathi	5.5	6.6	0.1
Kannada	2.0	4.6	0.2
Bengali**	3.6	3.7	0.2

*As on 2010; Refers to Indian international diaspora.
Source: ‘The Internal and International Diasporas of India’

Topic : Mains (GS)

Blanket ban on **online money gaming** is the wrong answer

India's history is replete with examples of how bans, prohibitions and price controls have almost never achieved the stated objectives

△ With Parliament passing the **Promotion and Regulation of Online Gaming Bill, 2025**, the online gaming industry has been dealt a fell blow.

↳ The government’s rationale for imposing a **complete ban on online money games, including both games of skill and chance**, and **also prohibiting advertising and promotion of such games**, rests on a stated desire to address gaming addiction, mental health issues and financial losses.

↳ Union minister Ashwini Vaishnav said in Parliament that, according to an estimate, **45 crore people** are **affected** by such games, facing a **loss of more than Rs 20,000 crore**.

- Concerns have also been raised over some of these platforms being used **for fraud and money laundering**.

- While there can be no disagreement on the seriousness of these problems, and on the need to tackle them, it must be asked whether a ban is the best way out.

△ In an interconnected world, **a ban would simply drive such activity to unregulated and/or offshore markets**, *which may be beyond the jurisdiction of Indian authorities*. This will make it harder to address some of the concerns.

➤ India's **history is replete with examples** of how bans, prohibitions and price controls have **almost never achieved the stated objectives**.

➤ The move will also have **significant economic implications**. As per a report from PwC titled "From sunrise to sunshine", the real money gaming segment brought in **Rs 16,500 crore** in revenue **during 2023**, which was expected to reach **Rs 26,500 crore by 2028**, accounting for a significant share of the online gaming market in India.

- A complete ban will affect all companies involved in this segment — several online gaming platforms are said to have already suspended their operations following this development — and this will **have implications for jobs, both directly and indirectly**.

- The move will also **impact government finances**. After the GST Council's decision to impose a **28 per cent tax on online gaming**, revenues from the segment rose by 412 per cent in six months, reaching **Rs 6,909 crore**, up from **Rs 1,349 crore** before that.

- The ban, which also underlines the capricious nature of policy, **is likely to make capital, both domestic and foreign, more circumspect** — as per a report from EY, total investments from both domestic and foreign sources added up to **Rs 22,931 crore** between 2019–20 and December 2023.

△ A more considered approach was called for. A Niti Aayog draft paper in 2020 had noted that stakeholders were in favour of a “light-touch regulatory framework for the fantasy sports industry”.

- A prudent approach would veer towards
 - providing greater regulatory clarity,
 - putting in place mechanisms to address the concerns of the government,
 - ensuring adequate checks and balances in the system and
 - establishing efficient grievance redressal mechanisms.

26.08.2025

Topic : Mains (GS)

Famine in Gaza is an Israel-made tragedy

*Confirmation of famine in Gaza by UN-backed body underscores a grim ground reality. **The US is the only power with leverage over Israel.** But with Washington silent, no end is in sight for this continuing tragedy.*

△ Declaration of famine by a UN agency is a rare event. In the 20-year history of the **UN-backed Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC)**, there have been only four:

- **Somalia in 2011,**
- **South Sudan in 2017 and 2020,** and
- **Sudan in 2024.**

➤ It was already framed by the stark visuals of emaciated children and reports of malnutrition and starvation deaths caused by Israel's war, but Gaza has now made it to the list.

- **“As this famine is entirely man-made, it can be halted and reversed,”** says the IPC report published on August 22.
- For months, the IPC had held back from a formal declaration.
- In July, it warned that a “famine scenario” was unfolding in parts of Gaza, yet the conditions for a declaration had not been satisfied due to difficulties in gathering reliable data.
- Now that famine has been confirmed in the Gaza Governorate and is projected to spread, the emphasis on it being man-made underscores the horrific ground reality in a place where **Israel's bombing campaign has already killed more than 60,000 people.**

△ The IPC declaration adds to the mounting international pressure on PM Benjamin Netanyahu in recent weeks. **Yet, consistent with Israel's past dismissal of global criticism, the government has rejected** the report's findings, with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs **calling them “ Hamas lies ”**. The IPC report, however, is not an isolated warning. Last month, a letter signed by 100-plus aid groups including Doctors Without Borders, Oxfam, and Amnesty International accused Israel of deliberately obstructing the flow of aid. Health officials in Gaza estimate that more than 200 have died because of hunger since the conflict began, while more than 1,300 Palestinians have reportedly been killed at aid distribution sites. The evidence is overwhelming, and Israel's blanket rejection of every report as “ Hamas propaganda ” is unlikely to persuade the international community.

△ **But so far, global outrage is hardly acting as a deterrent.** Over the weekend, planes and tanks pounded Gaza City as Israel expanded its war — ostensibly to destroy Hamas and rescue the remaining hostages.

- Even though the world's attention remains fixed on Gaza, Israel announced last week the approval of 3,400 new settler homes in the occupied West Bank, a move condemned by 26 countries and the EU.
- Hamas has no presence in the West Bank, and Article 49 of the Fourth Geneva Convention prohibits an occupying power from transferring its civilian population into occupied territory.
- Yet such legal obligations appear to do little to restrain the Netanyahu government. Nor have **the announcements by France, the UK, Canada, and Australia that they will recognise a State of Palestine in September.**
- **The United States is the only power with leverage over Israel.** *But with Washington remaining silent on the famine declaration and even hinting at support for the settler plans, no end is in sight for this continuing tragedy.*

27.08.2025

LABOUR-INTENSIVE SECTORS FEAR JOB LOSSES

Trump's 50% tariffs kick in today, export of textiles, gems and jewellery worst hit

GOODS SUBJECT TO 50% U.S. TARIFF

Product Group	Exports to US in 2024-25
Textiles and apparel	\$ 10.9 bn
Diamonds, gold and jewellery	\$ 10 bn
Machinery and mechanical appliances	\$ 6.7 bn
Agriculture, meat and processed food	\$ 6.0 bn
Steel, aluminium, copper	\$ 4.7 bn
Organic chemicals	\$ 2.7 bn
Shrimps	\$ 2.4 bn
Handicrafts	\$ 1.6 bn
Carpets	\$ 1.2 bn
Leather and footwear	\$ 1.2 bn
Furniture, bedding, mattresses	\$ 1.1 bn

Source: Ministry of Commerce & Industry, GTRI analysis

ISRO conducts **air drop test** for Gaganyaan: why is it crucial to the mission?

The first crewed mission under the Gaganyaan programme is scheduled for 2027, and the first uncrewed mission is likely toward the end of this year.

The system is critical for
ensuring safe recovery of the crew module –
the capsule in which astronauts sit during a human flight –
during re-entry and landing.

What is an Integrated Air Drop Test?

△ An air drop test **recreates the final leg of a spacecraft's journey back to Earth.**

- An aircraft or helicopter

drops the spacecraft
from a height to
test various systems under different circumstances.

– These include

the deployment of the parachute system
if the mission is aborted mid-flight,

system performance
when one parachute fails to open, and

the spacecraft's orientation
and
safety during splashdown.

△ The test, however, **cannot simulate actual re-entry scenarios** as helicopters cannot carry spacecraft **high enough**. To create re-entry scenarios, sub-orbital or orbital flights carry the spacecraft **outside Earth's atmosphere**.

△ In October 2023, ISRO carried out the **Test Vehicle Abort Mission** (TV-D1), which launched a single-stage test vehicle for sub-orbital flight with the crew module to demonstrate the performance of the crew escape system.

Two warships from 2 shipbuilders: Features and legacy of **INS Udaygiri and INS Himgiri, now commissioned into the Indian Navy**

With their range of versatile weapons and capabilities, these ships can play a crucial role in **anti-surface warfare, anti-air warfare, and anti-submarine warfare**.

Among the weapons and equipment fitted on this class of ships are **Long Range Surface to Air Missiles (LRSAM)** and **Eight Vertically launched Surface to Surface Brahmos supersonic cruise missiles.**

△ As a testimony to India's growing shipbuilding prowess and its march towards self-reliance, two multi-mission stealth frigates of **Project 17A** – INS Udaygiri and INS Himgiri - were commissioned into the Indian Navy at the Naval Base, **Visakhapatnam** on August 26, 2025.

△ It was *for the first time that two frontline surface combatants indigenously constructed by two different shipyards –*

Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders Limited (MDL), Mumbai	[INS Udaygiri]	- were commissioned simultaneously.
Garden Reach Shipbuilders & Engineers Limited (GRSE), Kolkata	[INS Himgiri]	

△ The **Nilgiri-class stealth frigates** are being constructed under the codename **Project 17 Alpha**.

➤ They are *follow-ons of the* **Shivalik class or Project 17** frigates that *are currently active in service.*

The frigate commissioned in January, INS Nilgiri , was the first of seven frigates in Project 17A.
INS Udaygiri and INS Himgiri <u><i>follow INS Nilgiri,</i></u> <u><i>the lead ship of the successor class to Project 17 (Shivalik class).</i></u>



△ **Features for both:-**

Both ships feature Combined Diesel or Gas propulsion plants and	✓ improved stealth features, ✓ reduced radar signatures, ✓ advanced surveillance radars and
a state-of-the-art Integrated Platform Management System,	✓ electronic warfare suites, ✓ supersonic surface-to-surface missiles,
enabling higher speeds and improved fuel efficiency .	✓ surface-to-air missiles and ✓ rapid-fire gun systems.

△ These are the **100th and 101st warships** designed in-house by the Warship Design Bureau of the Indian Navy, and **built in India**, reflecting the Navy's continuous effort to enhance indigenous content and self-reliance. **High indigenous content — exceeding 75%** — has been achieved through the participation of numerous MSMEs and the procurement of major weapons and sensors from Indian Original Equipment Manufacturers.

△ The multi-mission frigates are crucial operational enablers that **will enhance the Navy's ability to safeguard national interests** across the full spectrum of maritime missions.

- They are equipped with



next-generation weapons,
sensors and
integrated platform management systems,

are ready to perform



anti-air,
anti-surface and anti-submarine warfare,
sea-control and
humanitarian operations.

△ The commissioning of INS Udaygiri and INS Himgiri **not only strengthens the Navy's combat potential** *but reinforces its role as a "First Responder" and "Preferred Security Partner" in the Indian Ocean Region.*

- From combating piracy, fighting against smuggling and illegal trafficking, curbing maritime terrorism, or providing relief after a natural disaster, these warships will prove to be a game-changer in complex and risky operations.

28.08.2025

H-1B visa debate in US

US Commerce Secretary Howard Lutnick says the H-1B visa program, the most desired pathway for Indians to migrate to America, is a 'scam'. Figures on the American Left agree, even if for different reasons

*United States Commerce Secretary Howard Lutnick called the popular H-1B visa program **a "scam"**, saying that **American businesses should be focused on hiring American workers instead of foreigners.***

"The current H-1B visa system is a scam that lets foreign workers fill American job opportunities," he said during an interview with Fox News on Tuesday.

“Hiring American workers should be the priority of all great American businesses. Now is the time to hire American.”

- ◆ The H-1B program has long been a **highly desired pathway for Indians to migrate to the US — more than 72% of approved H-1B petitions in 2023 were from Indians.**

Visa for ‘skilled’ migrants

- The H-1B visa program

allows American employers

to hire immigrant workers

in occupations that require
“a high level of skill”
and
“at least a bachelor’s degree”,

according to the US Department of Labour.

- **The program was started in 1990,**

with the intention of helping “employers who cannot otherwise obtain needed business skills and abilities from the US workforce by authorising the temporary employment of qualified individuals who are not otherwise authorised to work in the United States”.

- An H-1B visa can be issued for a **maximum of 6 years at a stretch,**

after which the visa holder has to either		
leave the US for a period of at least 12 months before returning,	or	apply for and receive permanent residence (“Green Card”).

H-1B VISAS ISSUED BY US STATE DEPT (2013-2024)



United States Secretary of Commerce
Howard Lutnick. *Reuters*

FISCAL YR	VISAS ISSUED
2013	153,223
2014	161,369
2015	172,748
2016	180,057
2017	179,049
2018	179,660
2019	188,123
2020	124,983
2021	61,569
2022	206,002
2023	265,777
2024	219,659

HOW THE H-1B VISA WORKS

CAN BE ISSUED for a maximum six years at a stretch, after which the visa holder has to either leave the US for at least 12 months before returning, or apply for and receive permanent residence (green card).

ANNUAL NUMERICAL LIMIT (regular cap) of 65,000 new statuses/visas each fiscal year, with an extra 20,000 visas available to those with a Master's degree or higher from a US university.

NOT ALL H-1B PETITIONS are subject to the annual cap. Petitions for "continuing employment", which in 2024 were double that of "initial employment" do not fall under the cap, neither do those seeking employment at higher education institutions or nonprofit entities affiliated to such institutions, nonprofit research organisations, or government research organisations.

Why **Evergrande** collapsed, and the **limits to China's debt-fuelled, property-centric growth model**

The Chinese real estate giant rose rapidly, reaching a peak valuation of \$51 billion in 2017. In its dizzying growth, Evergrande both powered and represented the rise of China itself. Now, it's all gone. An analyst of the Chinese economy explains the rise and fall of Evergrande, and the sobering lesson it offers.

➤ On August 25, **shares of the property developer Evergrande**, which was once one of the biggest companies in China, **were delisted from the Hong Kong Stock Exchange**.

➤ In **2018, Evergrande became the world's most valuable real estate company**, which *also had interests in a wide range of other businesses*.

→ **By 2021, it had collapsed** in spectacular fashion – **both the symptom of changes underway** in China's economy, *as well as the reason for the downturn in **several allied industries***.

- *At the time of its collapse*, Evergrande had **more than 1,300 incomplete projects spread across 280 cities** in China. The Evergrande stock has lost almost its entire value since the crisis began.

What is the story of Evergrande's dizzying rise?

⇒ Evergrande's story **is intertwined with China's urbanisation boom**. The founder of the company, Hui Ka Yan, who is now 66 years old, rose from poverty to ride a once-in-a-generation wave in the country's real estate sector.

⇒ The boom was driven by

massive migration from the countryside to the cities,
an unprecedented demand for housing, and
a policy environment that rewarded aggressive expansion.

⇒ According to data from the World Bank, ***the share of the urban population in China's total population***

from 1960 to 1980,	by 1990,	by 2000	by 2024
grew from around 16% to 20%.	it stood at 26%,	At 36%	around 66%

China used more **cement** between **2011 and 2013** than the United States did in the entire 20th century.

⇒ Evergrande stepped into this context,
and
perfected the **high-leverage, high-turnover model**:

- buy land at scale,
- pre-sell apartments,
- use cash flow to fund the next wave.

⇒ Later on, the company **diversified into** everything from **health care** to **finance**, and even **sports**, buying the Guangzhou Football Club.

➤ At its peak in 2017, Evergrande was **valued** at nearly HK\$400 billion (around \$51 billion), **symbolising China's real estate-driven growth model**.

And what led to Evergrande's downfall? Was it because of fundamental problems in its business model, or due to other factors?

⇒ **Chinese govt. policy @ Three Red Lines Policy @ 2020**

The unravelling was years in the making. The Chinese government introduced a “three red lines” policy in 2020 *as an attempt to* **discipline overleveraged developers** *by making the conditions for* **borrowing stricter**.

- That policy was the **proximate trigger**, **cutting off the cheap credit** that Evergrande and other developers depended on.

⇒ Structural bugs

But the deeper problems were structural.

- Demand slashed

Demand for housing had been slowing as

demographics shifted to an **ageing population**, and many urban households already **owned multiple properties**.

- Liquidity crunch

Evergrande *relied on* **perpetual pre-sales**, *where it would use the money to* **immediately start developing the next project**.

- In addition to the **thin cash buffers**, this made it uniquely vulnerable **once credit became tighter and sales softened**, partially due to macroeconomic headwinds.
- Today, there is a glut of millions of empty homes, as well as many unfinished projects across China.

Is Evergrande the first domino to fall in China's real estate crisis? What have been the spillover effects on the Chinese economy as a whole?

⇒ Domino effect and Spillover

- Evergrande wasn't the only domino, but it was the biggest piece to fall with spectacular scale. Other major companies, including **Country Garden** which is usually seen as better managed, have also stumbled.
- What is critical is the way in which the **property sector's downturn has bled into the broader economy:**

construction slowdowns hurt **steel and cement,**

local governments lost **vital land-sale revenue**, and

household wealth tied up in property has **eroded confidence**.

⇒ Remedised policy

Today, policymakers are **trying to stabilise the sector**,

shifting focus to	and	easing mortgage rules
completing unfinished projects,		

— but they are not reviving the old model of perpetual expansion.

⇒ Future outlook

Even in the most optimistic scenario, the bottoming out of property market prices will not materialise until late next year. And with the sector shrinking, an era of China's growth has definitively ended.

Is the Evergrande crisis comparable to the collapse of the investment bank that triggered the 2008 financial crisis?

- ✓ No
- ✓ Lehman case was interwoven with global banking system
- ✓ Evergrande – is ringfenced within China
- ✓ Actually mirroring limits of China's debt-fueled, property-centric growth model.

⇒ The Lehman comparison captures the drama but misses key differences. **Lehman's collapse** triggered a global financial meltdown because of the way **its debts were interwoven with the global banking system**.

- ⇒ Evergrande, by contrast, has been managed through a slow-motion, state-guided unwinding. The appointment of Alvarez & Marsal, veterans of Lehman's restructuring, shows the complexity of the case, but Beijing has worked to firewall systemic contagion.
 - ⇒ So far, it has worked. **China's banking system remains stable**, and the crisis has been largely ringfenced within the country (as opposed to escalating into a global financial shock).
 - ⇒ The Evergrande episode is less a “Chinese Lehman moment” and more a reckoning with the limits of China's debt-fueled, property-centric growth model.
- ◆ It is a sobering lesson that China's old growth playbook has run out of road, but the challenge to transition into a healthier and more sustainable path is extremely daunting.

29.08.2025

Data shows nearly half of urban students in Classes XI and XII are taking tuition. **It is a symptom of a broken education system**

Unless the metrics of academic success are diversified, seats in higher education expanded, and the school curricula strengthened not just in infrastructure but relevance, coaching will remain not just an option, but a perceived necessity in the rush to get a head start in life

Private Tuition (class XI and XII)				
Urban		Rural		Total
44.6%	Expense / annum	33.1%	Expense / annum	37%
	Rs 9,950/-		Rs 4,548/-	

In cities across India, the school day now extends well beyond classroom hours. For nearly half of urban students in Classes XI and XII, learning continues across coaching centres, where futures are rehearsed through mock tests and multiple-choice drills. According to data published by the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation's (MoSPI) Comprehensive Modular Survey: Education, 2025, **44.6 per cent of urban** students are taking private tuition. At **33.1 per cent**, the proportion is slightly lower for students in *rural areas*. **Overall, the figures stand at 37 per cent for all students in Classes XI and XII** who have enrolled for private tuition this year. The numbers underscore more than academic ambition — they highlight the growing chasm between aspiration and opportunity.

The implications of this trajectory are troubling. At one level, it reflects deep public mistrust in the quality and sufficiency of school education. Once seen as supplementary support for struggling students, private coaching has now morphed into an essential component for competitive success, driven by ambition and anxiety, a middle-class survival strategy amid a narrowing of higher education opportunities. As classrooms hollow out in significance, **commercial tuition centres — shadow schools** — are turning into preparatory ground for competitive examinations and elite institutions. This not only undermines the vision of the National Education Policy (NEP), 2020 to **foster an inclusive academic model that values innovation and adaptability but also exacts a steep financial, emotional, and social toll.** According to data, urban students in *Classes XI and XII are spending Rs 9,950 per year* on average on private coaching, more than twice as much as their *rural counterparts at Rs 4,548*. For many families, this means spending a significant share of household income on coaching. Students who cannot afford private tuition are often left navigating a system that

underserves them, widening the gulf between the resourced and those with limited means.

The last years of school give shape to the future course of a student's life. Instead of being a journey of discovery and anticipation, the relentless pressure to excel turns education into an endurance test, measured in scores and achievements, pockmarked by stress and burnout, and in many instances, death by suicide. **Regulation of the coaching industry is critical** — in 2024, the Centre issued guidelines on the regulation of coaching centres — but that is only a part of the solution. **Unless the metrics of academic success are diversified, seats in higher education expanded, and the school curricula strengthened not just in infrastructure but relevance,** coaching will remain not just an option, but a perceived necessity in the rush to get a head start in life.

School enrolment drops for third year in a row; 'falling birth rates' cited

OVERALL DIP IN ENROLMENT

Year	ENROLMENT			
	Total	Govt schools	Private schools	Govt-aided schools
2024-25	24.69 cr	12.16 cr	9.59 cr	2.48 cr
2023-24	24.80 cr	12.75 cr	9 cr	2.55 cr
2022-23	25.18 cr	13.62 cr	8.42 cr	2.62 cr
2021-22	26.52 cr	14.32 cr	8.83 cr	2.70 cr
2020-21	26.44 cr	13.49 cr	9.52 cr	2.68 cr
2019-20	26.45 cr	13.09 cr	9.82 cr	2.75 cr
2018-19	26.03 cr	13.11 cr	9.22 cr	2.80 cr

UDISE+ data; Ministry of Education

A recent study has found that bees follow a balanced diet. What's your excuse?

Today, spoiled for choice, the path to a healthy life has become needlessly complicated. But the answer could be rather simple: Follow the bees

The newest study that shows adults need less than 10,000 steps a day to stay on top of their health; the neighbourhood aunty who insists her ghar ke nuskhe (home remedies) are all one needs. These are all answers to that one question human beings struggle with: How does one stay healthy? One staple response that has stood the test of time is a balanced diet. Turns out, it is not limited to human beings. A recent study, published in Proceedings of the Royal Society B: Biological Sciences, noted that eight species of wild bumblebees “strategically visit different flowers to balance their intake of protein, fat and carbohydrates”.

The research, conducted over eight years in the Colorado Rockies, shows that **bees do not collect pollen at random. Different pollens carry different compositions of macronutrients** — some are packed with protein, “like a steak”, others are more “like a salad”. **What enables bees to get the nutrients they need is a “remarkable collective intelligence”**. Colonies of bees work together, with the **larger-bodied** ones consuming pollen **high in protein** and bees with **shorter tongues seeking pollen richer in carbohydrates and fats**. A similar study on elephants’ dietary habits, published in the Royal Society Open Science, showed how they, too, have a varied diet, informed by nutritional, psychological and social needs.

Today, spoiled for choice, with contradictory advice coming from a hundred different quarters, the path to a healthy life has become needlessly complicated. Smart watches, smarter diets, and an endless scroll in search for the smartest solution have left human beings more confused than ever before. But the answer could be rather simple: **A balanced diet, rest and exercise**. Oh, and one piece of advice: **When in doubt, follow the bees**.

As PM Modi lands in Tokyo, **an overview of the India-Japan relationship**

The India-Japan friendship is old, and the bilateral relationship is stable and deepening at a time of uncertainties around the world. PM Modi's visit on Aug 29-30 is expected to further consolidate the Special Strategic and Global Partnership.

- ❑ 15th India-Japan Annual Summit
- ❑ The August 29-30 visit will be the Prime Minister's eighth visit to Japan.
- ❑ The **Annual Summit** will be his first with Prime Minister Ishiba.
 - ▷ The two leaders have met earlier on the sidelines of the ASEAN Summit in Vientiane last October, and
 - ▷ on the sidelines of the G7 Summit in Kananaskis in Canada this June.
- ❑ **Modi last travelled to Japan for the Annual Summit in 2018;**
 - ▷ he has since visited the country for multilateral engagements such as the G20 summit in Osaka in 2019, and
 - ▷ the G7 summit in Hiroshima in 2023.
- ❑ From Japan, the Prime Minister will travel to **China** for the Heads of State Council meeting of the **Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) in Tianjin.**

Old ties, shared vision

- ✧ **Japan and Russia** are India's two oldest Annual Summit-level mechanisms.
- ✧ India-Japan bilateral relations were elevated to

Global Partnership in 2000,
Strategic and Global Partnership in 2006, and
Special Strategic and Global Partnership in 2014.

✧ The **partnership** between India and Japan, two of Asia's leading democracies and among the world's top five economies, **is rooted in civilizational ties** that have been reinforced by convergence in their regional and global outlooks.

✧ India's Act East Policy and Indo-Pacific Oceans Initiative (IPOI) align closely with Japan's Free and Open Indo-Pacific (FOIP) policy.

○ Japan leads IPOI's connectivity pillar, and is **India's largest Overseas Development Assistance (ODA) donor.**

◆ Cooperation between the countries extends to **plurilateral platforms** such as the

Quad (Quadrilateral Security Dialogue),
International Solar Alliance (ISA),
Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (CDRI), and
Supply Chain Resilience Initiative (SCRI).

Realms of cooperation

Defence and Security

EXERCISES:

Malabar (with the US and Australia),
Milan (multilateral naval),
JIMEX (bilateral maritime),
Dharma Guardian (Army), and
Coast Guard cooperation are held regularly.

◆ 2024-25 saw the participation of service chiefs in India and Japan, strengthening interoperability.

Trade and Investment

SUMMARY TRADE: Bilateral trade reached \$22.8 billion in 2023-24. In Apr-Jan 2024-25, trade reached \$21 billion, demonstrating stability.

TRENDS: Imports from Japan continue to outweigh exports.

India's main <u>exports</u> are	<u>imports</u> include
chemicals, vehicles, aluminium, and seafood;	machinery, steel, copper, and reactors.

INVESTMENT: Japan is India's fifth-largest source of FDI, with \$43.2 billion cumulative investment up to December 2024. Annual inflows have been strong – \$3.1 billion in 2023-24 and \$1.36 billion in 2024-25 (Apr-Dec).

◆ Japan has consistently ranked India as the most promising long-term investment destination.

BUSINESS PRESENCE: Around 1,400 Japanese companies with nearly 5,000 establishments operate in India; more than 100 Indian companies are present in Japan. Profitability is high, and there are expansion plans.

EMERGING FOCUS AREAS:

Digital cooperation (semiconductors, startups),
clean energy,
supply chain resilience,
industrial competitiveness, and
skill development.

Development and Infrastructure Cooperation

ODA: Japan has been India's **largest ODA donor since 1958**, supporting **critical infrastructure and human development projects**. ODA disbursement stood at about JPY 580 billion (\$4.5 billion) in 2023-24.

HIGH SPEED RAIL: The **flagship Mumbai-Ahmedabad High Speed Rail** is the flagship project symbolising advanced technology transfer and skill development. The latest tranche of JPY 300 billion (\$2.2 billion) was signed in March 2023.

Multilateral and Regional Cooperation

QUAD & OTHER INITIATIVES: **India and Japan** coordinate closely with the **US and Australia** **to ensure a free, open, and inclusive Indo-Pacific**. The two sides will discuss the future of Quad in view of President Trump's decisions.

The two countries are looking to diversify and secure supply chains through the **Supply Chain Resilience Initiative (SCRI)**, **which also involves Australia**.

People-to-People, Culture and Education

TOURISM: **2023-24** was celebrated as the **Year of Tourism Exchange**, with the **theme "Connecting Himalayas with Mount Fuji"**.

EDUCATION: There are more than 665 academic partnerships between Indian and Japanese universities.

- **Platforms like Edu-Connect and Universities Forum promote exchanges.**
- Both Japanese language learning in India and Indian studies in Japan are expanding. T
- he Skill Connect platform launched in 2023 links Indian talent with Japanese employers.

DIASPORA: About 54,000 Indians live in Japan, mainly IT professionals and engineers.

- The PM is expected to meet with heads of provincial governments and prefectures to forge partnerships between Japanese local governments and Indian state governments and municipalities.



Ishiba (left) with Modi at Vientiane, Laos, last October. X/@narendramodi

STORY OF FRIENDSHIP OVER PAST TWO DECADES

2007: Japan PM Shinzo Abe delivers the landmark “Confluence of Two Seas” speech in Parliament.

2013: Emperor Akihito & Empress Michiko visit India.

2014: Abe is Republic Day chief guest; ties elevated to ‘Special Strategic and Global Partnership’.

2019: President R N Kovind attends

Emperor Naruhito’s coronation

2022: Kishida visits India, pledges JPY 5 trillion in investment

2023: Modi attends G7 Summit in Hiroshima, unveils Gandhi statue near Peace Park

2024: Modi meets Japanese PM thrice, marking 10 years of Special Strategic Partnership

TOKYO UPS INVESTMENT TARGET FROM USD 34 BILLION TO USD 68 BILLION

Behind Japan investment numbers, message to US amid tariff tension

BOOST TO TIES, VISION FOR FUTURE

India-Japan pacts are building the bridge to a new era of cooperation. Some key elements of the partnership

INVESTMENT PLEDGE:



Over 170 MoUs signed in two years represent more than USD 13 billion in committed investments

FOCUS ON SMEs:



Japanese industry partnerships are enabling Indian SMEs enter global supply chains

FARMING & SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT:



Japanese cooperation is directly empowering India's rural economy through green energy projects



TALENT MOBILITY, KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE:

Target is 5 lakh Indians & Japanese exchanges in 5 yrs via study abroad, internships, employment

EXPORT BOOST:



Exports & manufacturing with Japanese joint ventures and know-how also unlocks India's export growth

N-E DEVELOPMENT:



The Assam-ASEAN Holdings MoU focuses on investment in industrial infra, logistics, & agro-based industries in the NE region

'MAKE IN INDIA, MAKE FOR WORLD':



Vision being realised with India-Japan partnership shaping not just economies but also regional security

30.08.2025

Trump targets cashless bail: How the practice works, situation in India

Trump says that cashless bail leads to an uptick in crime.

Researchers say that there is no evidence to support this claim

- ❑ President Donald Trump on Monday signed an executive order targeting cashless bail in the United States. **The order cuts federal funding for jurisdictions which allow the practice.**
- ❑ Trump blamed the practice for leading to an uptick in crime. The executive order says that

authorities end up arresting the same individuals multiple times,

"and dangerous criminals are sometimes rapidly released".

- ◆ Researchers, however, have said that Trump's claims are baseless and there is no evidence to show that cashless bail has led to an increase in crime. *The option is often only there for relatively minor offences anyway.*

Cashless bail in the US

→ While granting bail,

a *court's primary concern* is that

the accused does not evade trial and abscond,

or

in any manner hamper the ongoing probe by tampering evidence

or

influencing witnesses.

As a safeguard, the court sets certain conditions for bail.

➔ To ensure that the accused does not abscond, the court requires a guarantee or surety that they will not abscond.

- ▷ One of the ways in which this has been done historically is to take a cash deposit from the accused which is usually returned at the end of the trial.
- ▷ Failure to make this deposit means the accused will remain in prison till the trial is concluded.

◆ (Note that this does not extend to all crimes: violent crimes usually left outside the purview of cash bail.)

Advocacy on favour of cashless bail

➔ Cash bail, by design, **disadvantages the poor.**

- Advocates of cashless bail — which does not come with a cash assurance — say that it **often keeps innocent accused behind bars for even minor offences** simply because they are poor and puts them under **further financial strain**, **which itself can be a trigger for crime.**

Backdrop

- ➔ In the US, many states began to allow cashless bail after **a Black teenager**, Kalief Browder, **spent three years in prison, including more than 700 days in solitary confinement**, on charges of stealing a backpack because he was **unable to pay \$3000** for his release on bail.
- The **case** against Browder was eventually **dropped**, but Browder **died by suicide in 2015.**

Bail in India

- ➔ Chapter 35 of the **Bhartiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita, 2023**, which replaced the **Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973**, lays down the process for releasing a person on bail.
- ➔ Among the conditions for bail is the furnishing of a **bond** or a **bail bond**.

Bond	Bail bond
By signing a bond, an accused agrees to their bail terms and assures the court they will remain present for the trial. This is <i>usually accompanied by a cash deposit</i>, with the amount depending on the nature of the crime and the economic condition of the accused. This deposit can be forfeited if bail conditions are violated, and is refunded at the conclusion of the trial regardless of the outcome. If an accused does not have the means to furnish cash, courts may consider releasing them on a personal recognisance bond (PR bond). - This requires the accused to <u>arrange for the cash within a specific time after being released on bail.</u>	This is essentially a surety from another person or persons, along with a payment of a specific amount. These persons assure the court that the accused will abide by the bail conditions. The court beforehand verifies the documents of the person signing the bail bond, who is then called before the court and asked questions regarding the accused and their own standing. This is to verify that the person guaranteeing the accused's presence in the trial can indeed ensure that they do not abscond. The person signing the bail bond can be a friend or family member, who themselves do not have a pending case against them, or an employer. - Some courts require this person to show that they have a financial asset or a permanent place of residence as security. - Some bail conditions also require the person to be a local resident of the district. In Mumbai courts, a person standing surety for a certain amount, also requires to submit a solvency certificate, issued by a revenue officer,

	to verify their financial stability. This process may take days, if not weeks, delaying the grant of bail.
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Need for bail reform

- It is not too uncommon that a person is unable to come out of jail despite being granted bail simply because they cannot furnish the monetary sum required to guarantee their freedom.
 - There have been submissions made before the Supreme Court on **accused languishing in jail for inability to arrange** for a surety or pay a cash bail of the required amount, **even as low as Rs 5,000**.
 - In 2022, Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis had said that there were over **1,600 persons languishing behind bars, unable to fulfil their bail conditions**, including arranging for cash.
 - There were over **600 such prisoners in the Mumbai Metropolitan Region alone**, even as the state's prisons have 12,343 more prisoners than they are designed to accommodate (as of July 2025).
- ◆ The 268th Report of the **Law Commission of India**, submitted in **2017**, pertained to bail provisions.
 - It said that granting or refusing bail based on monetary surety was “**contrary to Constitutional ethos**”.
 - “The current system of bail based on financial control and objective assessment **would lead to suspect classification and discrimination**. Moreover, it **would also impinge on the fundamental right to fair trial**,” the report said.
- ◆ In 2023, the Supreme Court had issued guidelines regarding cases **in which an accused remains in prison for more than a week despite being granted bail**.
 - ✧ A Bench of Justices Sanjay Kishan Kaul and A S Oka directed that in such a scenario,

- the **jail superintendent** *needs to inform the District Legal Services Authority.*

who then **may** depute a para-legal **volunteer or a lawyer to visit jail and assist the prisoner's release.**

☞ This came after the National Legal Services Authority informed the court that **5,000 undertrials were languishing in jail despite grant of bail.**

✍ While accused can be released on a PR bond, trial courts often say that **they have to maintain the balance between a person's liberty and ensuring that the conditions of bail are such that the person remains available for the trial.** This frequently leads to the rejection of pleas for release on PR bonds.

AGRI STEADY, MANUFACTURING RISES

GDP surprise: Services pushes up Q1 growth to 5-quarter high of 7.8%

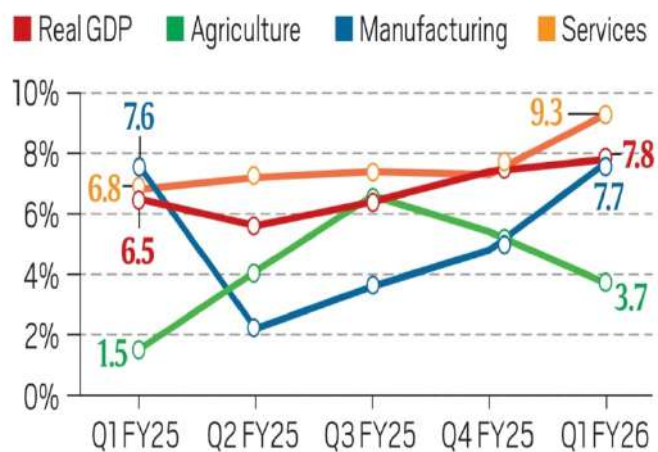
Downside risk due to tariffs, but hopeful will be resolved: CEA

EXPLAINED

E. All engines firing

ALL SECTORS, from manufacturing to services, fired the economy in the first quarter of 2025-26. Services growth rate was at a 2-year high, farm sector expanded 3.7%, and manufacturing 7.7%. If the US trade talks work, the momentum will continue.

INDIA'S GROWTH ON THE UP

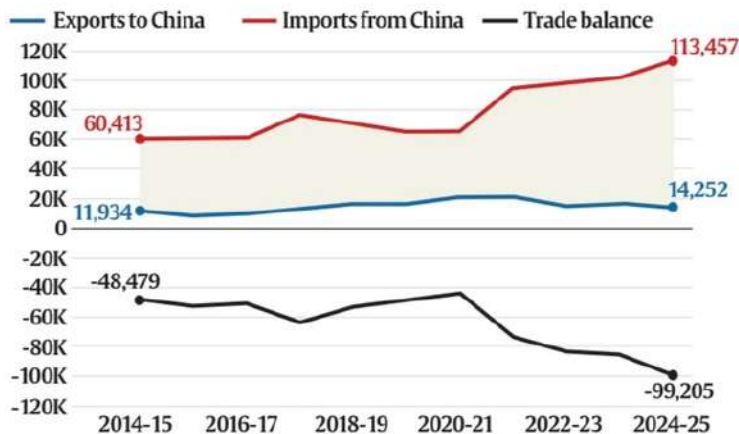


Source: MoSPI

India's China challenge

China and India, who have borne the brunt of Trump's tariffs, are working to repair their relationship. But closer trade ties are fraught with questions, including China's capability to overwhelm India's economy

CHART 1 INDIA'S GROWING DEPENDENCE ON CHINESE IMPORTS



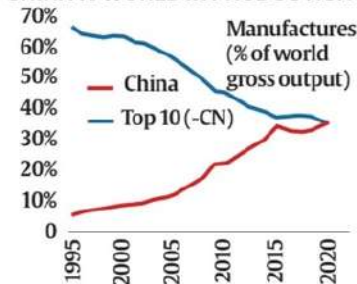
Trade data is in US\$ | Source: Department of Commerce, Government of India

TABLE
SECTORAL CHANGE
IN GVA SINCE 2019-2020

Sectors	CAGR (in %)
Agriculture	4.7
Industry	4.8
Manufacturing	4
Services	5.4

Source: MoSPI, CMIE, Indian Express research

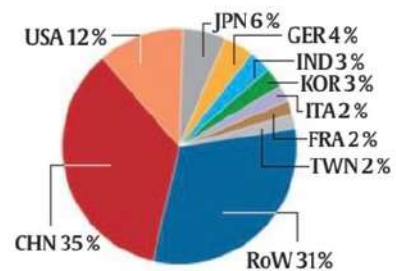
CHART 2
CHINA vs WORLD IN PRODUCTION



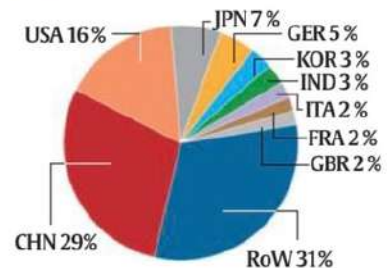
CHARTS 3 & 4

WORLD'S BIGGEST MANUFACTURING ECONOMIES

GROSS PRODUCTION (% WORLD)



VALUE ADDED (% WORLD)



Source: Author's elaboration of OECD, TiVA database 2023, PROD & VALU manufacturing sectors

31.08.2025

Legal challenges cloud Trump's powers as India faces 50% tariff

The ruling came in response to two lawsuits filed by small businesses and a coalition of US states after Trump's executive orders in April. In May, the Court of International Trade had also declared the tariffs unlawful. That decision was put on hold during the appeal process.

- ❑ Days after steep 50 per cent US tariffs on India came into effect, a US appeals court on Friday ruled that a majority of US President Donald Trump's tariffs derived from powers **under the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (IEEPA)** are illegal.
 - The court said the tariffs, however, will continue to remain in place until October 14, **giving the Trump administration a window to appeal to the US Supreme Court.**
- ❑ The ruling affects the **25 per cent reciprocal tariffs** imposed by the US on India, as well as the **additional 25 per cent tariffs imposed on India's imports of Russian oil,** as **Trump announced these under IEEPA.**
 - However, sectoral tariffs such as the **50 per cent duty on steel and aluminium** where Trump has used Section 232 of the **Trade Expansion Act of 1962,** face no legal challenges.

EXPLAINED

E Imperative to talk, negotiate

FOR INDIA, the ruling offers a sliver of hope, but it is crucial to remain engaged with the Trump administration to wrap up a trade deal. Given that it's not just a trade deal, but a larger strategic relationship that needs to be protected, New Delhi will likely pick the gauntlet and aim to get Washington back on table.