

*Strait of Hormuz Crisis Tensions Rise Amid*

## **IRAN-ISRAEL**

CONFLICT

## T20 WC **2026** **India Wins**

HISTORIC VICTORY



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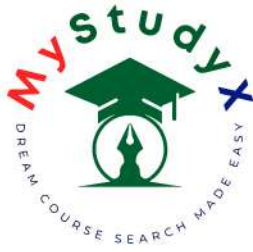


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**Dear Aspirants,**

The Civil Services Examination is not just a test of knowledge, but a test of awareness, understanding, and perspective. Among all components of the UPSC examination, current affairs hold a central place—from Prelims to Mains and even the Interview. Consistent reading of current events helps aspirants connect static subjects with real-world developments, develop analytical thinking, and form balanced opinions. In a journey as vast and demanding as UPSC preparation, current affairs are not a separate subject; they are the foundation that connects the entire syllabus.

This monthly current affairs magazine has been designed with the needs of UPSC aspirants in mind. The aim is not merely to present news, but to explain its background, relevance, and exam-oriented significance. When read consistently, revised regularly, and linked with the static syllabus, current affairs become one of the most scoring and decisive areas in the examination.

*“UPSC is not cleared by those who study the most, but by those who understand the most and revise the most.”*

This edition covers several important constitutional, economic, international, scientific, and security-related developments. Key constitutional issues include the Shariat Case in the Supreme Court, which raises important questions related to inheritance law and constitutional validity, and the demand for Sixth Schedule Constitutional safeguards for Ladakh, an issue linked with federalism, tribal rights, and governance.

In the economic and international domain, major developments include the Reliance Texas Refinery project, the US Section 301 Probe in which India is among the targeted countries, and the India–Canada Uranium Deal, which is significant for India’s energy security and nuclear cooperation. The issue also covers the Supreme Court’s observations on vaccine impact and the demand for a policy framework for victims, as well as the rules related to withdrawal of life support, which are important from ethical, legal, and governance perspectives. Updates on major bills and government schemes have also been included for Prelims and Mains preparation.

From an international relations perspective, the Nepal Polls 2026 in which the RSP registered a major victory is important for India–Nepal relations. Global developments such as leadership exits from major organizations like WEF, Adobe, HDFC, and IndiGo reflect changes in global corporate and institutional leadership. The Strait of Hormuz crisis amid the Iran–Israel conflict and the Global Terrorism Index 2026, where Pakistan tops the list, are important for internal security and international relations. This edition also explains Trump’s Iran strategy and important operations such as Operation Epic Fury and Operation True Promise.

In science and technology, the NASA DART Mission, which successfully shifted an asteroid’s orbit, marks a major milestone in planetary defence and space technology. The magazine also covers major awards and achievements, including India’s historic victory in the T20 World Cup 2026, and the Forbes record achievement where Surya Midha surpassed Mark Zuckerberg. We also pay tribute to respected personalities H.K. Dua and Kushal Das, whose contributions in their respective fields will be remembered.

This magazine is not just meant to inform, but to help you think, analyze, and connect issues—exactly the skills that UPSC expects from future civil servants. If used properly, this magazine will help you build perspectives, enrich your answers, and strengthen your preparation.

Read with curiosity, revise with discipline, and prepare with a sense of purpose. Your goal is not just to clear an exam, but to prepare yourself for the responsibility of serving the nation.

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# Scholarship in Focus – India

## The JN Tata Endowment

### A Strategic Guide to One of India’s Oldest Overseas Education Funding Programs

For generations of Indian students, the ambition to study abroad has been shaped by two parallel forces: academic potential and financial limitation. Long before overseas education became mainstream, the JN Tata Endowment for the Higher Education of Indians was established with a clear and forward-looking vision: to enable Indian students to access international education and bring that knowledge back to contribute meaningfully to society. Founded in 1892, the Endowment is one of the oldest such initiatives in the country, and its legacy is reflected in the thousands of scholars it has supported across disciplines and generations.

What makes the Endowment particularly relevant today is not just its history, but its approach. It does not attempt to fully fund an education abroad; instead, it provides **strategic financial support** that helps students bridge the initial gap and build a broader funding plan.

### Understanding the JN Tata Endowment

The JN Tata Endowment operates on a **loan scholarship model**, which distinguishes it from both fully funded scholarships and traditional education loans. Under this model, selected candidates receive financial assistance that is partly repayable, with the possibility of a **gift award (partial waiver)** based on performance and need.

This hybrid structure reflects a philosophy that combines support with accountability. Students are assisted at a critical stage of their academic journey, but are also expected to take responsibility for their long-term commitments.

The Endowment supports students pursuing **postgraduate, doctoral, and postdoctoral studies** at recognised institutions abroad. Unlike many funding schemes that are restricted by discipline, country, or institutional ranking, it maintains a relatively open framework, allowing applicants from a wide range of academic backgrounds to apply.

### Eligibility: Who can apply?

The eligibility criteria for the Endowment are broad in structure but selective in practice.

#### Eligibility & Requirements (2026-2027)

- **Citizenship:** Be an **Indian citizen**
- **Age Limit:** You must be **not older than 45 years** as of June 30, 2026.
- **Academic Threshold:** You must have secured at least **60% on average** in your undergraduate or postgraduate studies from a recognized Indian university.
- **Course Scope:** It is strictly for **full-time overseas** Postgraduate, PhD, or Postdoctoral studies.  
*Note: It does not cover undergraduate studies, distance learning, or short-term programs (seminars/conferences).*

- **Current Students Abroad:** If you have already started your course, you can still apply if you have at least **one full academic year (12 months)** remaining at the time of the award (usually July).

One of the defining features of the Endowment is the absence of rigid socioeconomic or community-based restrictions. There are **no fixed income ceilings**, and the programme is not limited to specific categories of applicants. However, this also means that selection is **highly competitive**, with a strong emphasis on merit, clarity of purpose, and overall profile strength.

## What financial support does it offer?

For the 2026-2027 cycle, the **JN Tata Endowment** has maintained its core structure but clarified several high-value "bonus" components that go beyond the standard loan.

### 1. The Loan Scholarship (Core Support)

- **Amount:** Typically ₹1 lakh to ₹10 lakhs, though exceptional "gifted" candidates can now secure up to **₹20 lakhs**.
- **Interest:** It carries a very low **2% simple interest**. However, the Trustees often waive this interest if the loan is repaid on time according to the schedule.
- **Repayment:** You get a "grace period" while studying. Repayment starts in the **3rd year** after disbursement and must be completed by the **7th year** in five equal installments.

### 2. The "Gift" Award (Merit Bonus)

This is not a separate application. If you are a JN Tata Scholar, you may be eligible for a **Gift Award** based on your performance *during* your studies abroad.

- **Nature:** It is a partial waiver of the loan.
- **Criteria:** Typically ranges from **₹75,000 to ₹3,00,000**.
- **Condition:** Scholars must submit their transcripts once they are overseas. If your academic performance is outstanding, the Trustees may convert a portion of your loan into a non-repayable grant.

### 3. Travel Grants & Linked Trusts

The Endowment acts as a gateway to the broader **Tata Trusts** ecosystem. Shortlisted scholars are often recommended for:

- **Travel Grants:** Assistance specifically for airfare to your destination (e.g., Mumbai to Zurich or Frankfurt).
- **Lady Meherbai D. Tata Education Trust:** If you are a woman pursuing specific fields (like Social Sciences, Public Health, or Education), you might be nominated for additional grants from this sister trust.

It is important to understand that the Endowment is not designed to cover the full cost of studying abroad. Instead, it functions as **seed funding**, helping students initiate their financial planning. Many scholars combine this support with university scholarships, assistantships, personal savings, or bank loans to meet total expenses.

## The application process: what to expect

The application process is structured, but not overly complex. However, it does require preparation and clarity.

Phase	Description	Key Focus
<b>Phase 1: Application</b>	Initial screening of documents and Statement of Purpose (SoP).	Academic merit and clarity of goals.
<b>Phase 2: Aptitude Test</b>	An online test (thinking and analytical skills).	Problem-solving and reasoning.
<b>Phase 3: Technical Interview</b>	A deep-dive interview with a subject matter expert.	Mastery of your specific field of study.
<b>Phase 4: Final Selection</b>	Verification of admission and financial/guarantor documents.	Final award of the loan scholarship.

The interview stage is the "make or break" stage where you move from being a set of numbers on a page to a potential JN Tata Scholar. The panel usually consists of two people: a Subject Matter Expert (often a professor from an IIT or a top research institute) and a Trust Representative. It goes beyond academic scores and evaluates:

- Clarity of academic and career goals
- Depth of subject understanding
- Motivation for studying abroad
- Communication and overall personality

Applicants are expected to articulate not just what they plan to study, but why it matters and how it aligns with their long-term objectives.

## Why the Endowment continues to matter

In a landscape increasingly dominated by fully funded scholarships with rigid eligibility criteria, the JN Tata Endowment occupies a unique position. It offers **flexibility without compromising on merit**, and accessibility without being limited by narrow definitions of eligibility.

Its value extends beyond financial support. Being selected as a JN Tata Scholar carries **significant academic and professional credibility**, often strengthening applications for other scholarships, research opportunities, and institutional funding.

Equally important is its role in enabling **early-stage momentum**. For many students, the Endowment becomes the first confirmed source of funding, which in turn improves confidence, strengthens visa applications, and facilitates access to additional financial resources.

## Frequently Asked Questions

### Is the JN Tata Endowment a full scholarship?

No. It is a loan scholarship with a possible partial grant component.

### Can it be combined with other funding sources?

Yes. Most recipients combine it with other scholarships, assistantships, or education loans.

### Is admission required before applying?

Applicants can apply before receiving a final offer, but confirmed admission strengthens the application.

### Is repayment mandatory?

Yes. The loan portion must be repaid as per the agreed schedule.

## A final word

The JN Tata Endowment does not position itself as a complete financial solution, and that is precisely what makes it effective. It functions as a **strategic enabler**, supporting capable students at a critical stage and allowing them to build a comprehensive funding plan around it.

For students navigating the complexities of international education financing, this kind of support can be decisive. It transforms uncertainty into possibility, and ambition into action. In a system where access often depends on both merit and means, the Endowment continues to play a quiet but significant role in ensuring that deserving candidates are not held back by financial constraints alone.

# Scholarship in Focus – International

## Commonwealth Scholarship

For many Indian students, studying in the UK is a dream that feels exciting but expensive. Tuition fees, living costs, travel, and visa-related expenses can make even a strong admission offer difficult to afford. The Commonwealth Scholarship is one of the best fully funded options for talented students who want to study in the UK but cannot pay for it on their own.

Managed by the Commonwealth Scholarship Commission (CSC), it is part of the UK's long-standing commitment to supporting education and development across Commonwealth countries. Each year, around 700 students get the chance to study in the UK through these awards. It is not only about academic excellence — it also looks for leadership potential, financial need, and the ability to use education for the good of your home country.

India has been one of the strongest represented nations in this scholarship's history. Indian scholars have gone on to make significant contributions in medicine, engineering, public policy, climate research, and education — which is exactly the kind of outcome the scholarship was designed to produce.

### What is the Commonwealth Scholarship?

The Commonwealth Scholarship is a postgraduate award for students from Commonwealth countries. It is designed for people with strong academic ability and a clear commitment to development — in simple terms, it helps bright students study in the UK when they would not otherwise be able to afford it.

For Indian students, this scholarship is especially valuable if you plan to return after your studies and contribute to areas like education, healthcare, research, technology, public policy, or social development. It is meant for students who can turn their education into real impact.

The scholarship is not a loan. It does not need to be repaid. And unlike many other international scholarships, it does not require you to secure university admission before applying — depending on the award type, the CSC can support you in finding a suitable UK institution.

### Who Can Apply?

To be eligible, you must be a citizen or permanent resident of a Commonwealth country — and India qualifies. You also need at least an upper second-class undergraduate degree. For PhD scholarships, a relevant master's degree is usually required as well.

Financial need is another key condition. The scholarship is meant for students who cannot afford UK study without support, so a strong academic record matters, but so does demonstrating genuine need.

The CSC offers several award types:

- **Commonwealth Master's Scholarships** — for a full-time master's degree at a UK university
- **Commonwealth PhD Scholarships** — for a full-time doctoral degree at a UK university
- **Commonwealth Shared Scholarships** — jointly funded with UK universities, often for specific courses
- **Split-site Scholarships** — for PhD students who split their research between a home institution and a UK university
- **Distance Learning Scholarships** — for postgraduate study at a UK university without relocating
- **Professional Fellowships** — short-term placements for mid-career professionals in development-related fields

Each award has its own rules, eligibility conditions, and application process, so always check the specific category before applying.

### What Does It Cover?

The Commonwealth Scholarship is fully funded. For Master's scholarships, the package includes:

- Full tuition fees paid directly to your UK university
- Return airfare to and from the UK at the start and end of your course
- A monthly living stipend — currently £1,452 outside London and £1,781 in the London metropolitan area
- A warm clothing allowance upon arrival
- A study travel grant for fieldwork or research travel related to your course

For PhD scholars, there may also be support for thesis costs and additional research-related expenses depending on the award.

For many Indian students, this is what makes studying in the UK possible without taking on a large education loan. The monthly stipend, while modest by UK standards, is designed to cover everyday living costs comfortably when combined with the free accommodation support some universities offer.

### What Does It Cover?

Commonwealth Scholars can study at any approved UK university, and the list is extensive. It includes institutions like the University of Oxford, University of Cambridge, University College London, the London School of Economics, University of Edinburgh, University of Manchester, Imperial College London, and many more across England, Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland.

The scholarship is not tied to a specific ranking tier. What matters more is that your chosen course aligns with development goals and that the university has the academic environment suited to your research or study plan. Some Shared Scholarships are tied to specific universities and courses, so it is worth exploring those options separately if you have a particular institution in mind.

### How to Apply

The application process depends on the scholarship type. Some awards require direct application through the CSC, while others require nomination by a national agency. For Indian students, the official nominating body is the Ministry of Education's Department of Higher Education, External Scholarships Division.

Your application will generally ask for:

- Passport or national ID
- Academic transcripts
- Degree certificate(s)
- References (usually two academic or professional referees)
- A study plan or personal statement
- An admission letter, if required for your specific award

Your study plan is one of the most important parts of the application. It should clearly explain what you want to study, why you chose that course, why the UK is the right place for it, and — crucially — how your education will benefit India after you return. Vague answers do not score well. The more specific and grounded your plan is in real development challenges, the stronger your application will be.

### Tips for a Strong Application

**Start your study plan early.** This is not something you can write well in a day or two. Give yourself at least two to three weeks to draft, revise, and refine it. Ask a mentor, professor, or career advisor to review it before you submit.

**Be specific about your development goal.** Instead of saying you want to "contribute to healthcare in India," explain the specific gap you want to address, what skills you will gain in the UK that you cannot get in India, and what you plan to do within the first few years of returning.

**Be specific about your development goal.** Instead of saying you want to "contribute to healthcare in India," explain the specific gap you want to address, what skills you will gain in the UK that you cannot get in India, and what you plan to do within the first few years of returning.

**Apply through the right channel.** Many Indian applicants miss this step. For the Master's Scholarship, you must apply through the Indian nominating agency, not directly to the CSC. Missing this step means your application will not be considered.

**Do not wait for the national deadline.** The Ministry of Education's internal deadline is often earlier than the CSC's official closing date. Check the national timeline as early as possible and work backwards from there.

### Deadline

For the **2026–27 academic year**, the application deadline is **16:00 on Tuesday, 14 October**.

Do not wait until the last minute. Some nominating agencies have earlier internal deadlines, so start preparing as soon as possible. Gather your documents, request references early, and spend real time on your study plan before submitting.

### Why Indian Students Should Consider It

The Commonwealth Scholarship combines full financial support with international recognition. A UK postgraduate degree can open doors in research, government, development organisations, universities, engineering, healthcare, and more.

It is especially well-suited for students who are academically strong but financially constrained. The scholarship does not penalise you for not being able to afford UK education — that is literally the point of the award. And because the scholarship is built around the idea of returning home to create impact, having a clear social or development goal can genuinely strengthen your application. Students who frame their goals around India's real needs — in areas like rural healthcare, climate resilience, digital infrastructure, or education access — tend to write more compelling applications than those who focus only on career advancement.

### Frequently Asked Questions

**Can I apply if I already have an admission offer from a UK university?** Yes. Having an admission offer can strengthen your application in some categories, but it is not always a requirement. Check the rules for your specific award type, as some scholarships support you in securing admission after selection.

**Is work experience required?** It is not mandatory for most Master's scholarships, but relevant professional experience can strengthen your application — especially if it connects to your development goal. For Professional Fellowships, mid-career experience is a core requirement.

**Can I apply for more than one award type?** Generally, you should apply for the award that best matches your situation. The CSC advises applicants to read all award descriptions carefully and apply only to the most suitable one. Applying to multiple categories through the same nominating agency can create complications.

**What happens after I am selected?** The CSC will work with you to confirm your UK university placement, arrange your visa, and provide pre-departure information. Scholars also become part of the broader Commonwealth Scholar community, which offers networking events, alumni connections, and ongoing support during your studies.

**Do I have to return to India after completing my studies?** Yes. The scholarship is built on the principle that scholars return home and use their skills for national development. This is not just an expectation — it is a condition of the award. Scholars are expected to return to India after completing their programme.

**Can I bring my family to the UK?** The scholarship covers costs for the scholar only. If you wish to bring dependants, you will need to fund their travel, accommodation, and living expenses yourself. This is worth considering when planning your budget.

**What if I do not have an upper second-class degree?** Unfortunately, this is a firm minimum requirement for most award types. If your undergraduate grade falls below this threshold, you may need to consider other scholarships or gain additional qualifications before applying.

**Is the scholarship renewable?** The scholarship covers the full duration of your approved programme. For a one-year Master's, it covers one year. For a PhD, it covers the standard duration of your doctoral programme. You do not need to reapply each year, but you are expected to make satisfactory academic progress.

### Final Thoughts

The Commonwealth Scholarship is highly competitive, but it remains one of the most valuable opportunities available to Indian students who want to study in the UK. It offers full funding, a prestigious academic environment, and a clear purpose — supporting students who want to create meaningful change in their home country.

If your academic record is strong, your goals are clear, and your application shows both need and purpose, this scholarship can open the door to a life-changing opportunity. Start early, write honestly, and make sure every part of your application answers the same underlying question: why will this scholarship, in your hands, make a difference for India?

## POLITY & GOVERNANCE

### Chhattisgarh Freedom of Religion Bill, 2026

The Chhattisgarh Legislative Assembly has passed the Chhattisgarh Freedom of Religion Bill, 2026 to curb unlawful religious conversions carried out through force, fraud, inducement, or misrepresentation.



#### The law targets conversions carried out through:

- Force
- Allurement
- Fraud
- Undue influence

#### Prior declaration and verification mechanism:

- Individuals intending to convert must inform authorities
- Local administration may verify the conversion process

#### Offences under the Bill are:

- Cognisable and non-bailable
- Tried in special courts

#### Objective of the Law

- Prevent forced or fraudulent religious conversions
- Ensure transparency in religious conversion process
- Maintain public order and social harmony

#### Additional Key Facts

##### Constitutional Provision

- Article 25 of the Indian Constitution guarantees freedom of religion, subject to reasonable restrictions.

#### Anti-Conversion Laws in India

##### Several states have similar laws, including:

- Odisha (1967)
- Madhya Pradesh
- Uttar Pradesh
- Gujarat

#### Common Features of Such Laws

- Ban on conversion through coercion or inducement
- Requirement of prior notice to district authorities
- Enhanced punishment for mass conversions

#### Judicial Aspect

Anti-conversion laws are currently under judicial scrutiny in the Supreme Court regarding their constitutional validity.

#### Key Highlights

- The Bill provides stringent punishment for illegal conversions, especially mass conversions, with imprisonment ranging from 10 years to life imprisonment and fines of ₹25 lakh or more.
- Conversion of vulnerable groups such as women, minors, and SC/ST communities attracts stricter penalties (minimum long-term imprisonment).

## Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Amendment Bill, 2026

The Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Amendment Bill, 2026 seeks to amend the 2019 Act. It proposes to remove the provision of “self-perceived gender identity” for legal recognition. Introduces a system of medical boards/screening committees for issuing transgender identity certificates. The role of the District Magistrate (DM) will depend on recommendations of such committees.



### Background

- The original Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act, 2019 allowed identity based on self-perception.
- The landmark NALSA v. Union of India (2014) judgment by the Supreme Court:
  - Recognised transgender persons as the third gender
  - Upheld the right to self-identify gender without medical tests

### Concerns & Criticism

- Seen as a rollback of rights guaranteed under the NALSA judgment

### Critics argue it may:

- Violate Right to Equality (Article 14)
- Violate Right to Privacy & Dignity (Article 21)
- Medical screening is viewed as intrusive and discriminatory
- Lack of consultation with stakeholders has also been highlighted

### Government’s Rationale

- To prevent misuse of welfare schemes meant for transgender persons
- To ensure benefits reach genuine beneficiaries through verification
- Minister of Social Justice and Empowerment: Virendra Kumar Khatik

### Key Changes Proposed in 2026 Bill

- Removal of self-identification principle
- Mandatory medical/official verification before granting identity
- Revised definition of “transgender person”
- Provision for stricter punishments for crimes against transgender persons

## Appropriation Bill, 2026

The Indian Parliament has passed the Appropriation Bill, 2026, completing a crucial stage of the Union Budget process. The Bill was passed by both Houses of Parliament (Lok Sabha & Rajya Sabha). It authorizes the withdrawal of funds from the Consolidated Fund of India for government expenditure in FY 2025–26.

### Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman stated that:

- Government budgeting is transparent and realistic.
- India’s economy is in a strong position.
- ₹57,000+ crore allocated towards Economic Stabilisation Fund.
- Capital expenditure has increased 4.2 times (2017–18 to 2026–27).

### Consolidated Fund of India

- Defined under Article 266(1).



**Includes:**

- All revenues received by the Government
- Loans raised
- Receipts from loans
- No money can be withdrawn without parliamentary approval.

**Budget Process:**

- Budget Presentation (Article 112)
- Demand for Grants (Lok Sabha only)
- Appropriation Bill (expenditure approval)
- Finance Bill (tax proposals)

**Capital Expenditure (CapEx)**

- Refers to spending on infrastructure, assets, and development projects.
- In Budget 2026-27, CapEx is about ₹12. 2 lakh crore, reflecting infrastructure push.
- Fiscal Indicators (Budget 2026-27)
- Fiscal Deficit target: 4. 3% of GDP

**Focus areas:**

- Infrastructure
- Manufacturing
- Energy security
- MSMEs

**What is an Appropriation Bill?**

It is introduced under Article 114 of the Constitution. It allows the government to withdraw money from the Consolidated Fund of India. It is a Money Bill → Rajya Sabha can only recommend changes (cannot reject).

**UPSC's New Rule regarding Appointment of State DGPs**

The Union Public Service Commission (UPSC), in line with directions of the Supreme Court of India, has introduced stricter rules for the appointment of State Director Generals of Police (DGPs) to ensure timely and transparent selection.

- SC approval mandatory for delay: State governments must obtain prior permission from the Supreme Court if there is any delay in sending the list of eligible officers to UPSC.
- Advance timeline rule: States must send proposals at least 3 months before the retirement of the incumbent DGP.
- No "Acting DGP" concept: Appointment of acting/temporary DGPs is not allowed.
- UPSC cannot ignore delays: UPSC has no authority to condone major delays without SC approval.

**Background**

- Based on the landmark Prakash Singh vs Union of India (2006) judgment.
- DGP tenure: Minimum 2-year fixed tenure recommended by SC.

**Why This Rule Was Introduced?**

Many states were:

**Key Provisions / Guidelines**

- Panel System: UPSC prepares a panel of 3 senior IPS officers for selection.
- Exceptional Cases for Delay (Allowed):
- Death of incumbent DGP
- Resignation
- Premature removal
- (Only in such cases, delay may be considered)
- Without SC nod: UPSC cannot proceed with empanelment if delay occurs.

- Delaying submission of proposals
- Appointing acting DGPs to bypass rules
- This led to non-compliance with Supreme Court guidelines.

### Maharashtra Freedom of Religion Bill, 2026

The Maharashtra Legislative Assembly passed the Freedom of Religion Bill, 2026 on 16 March 2026 to regulate religious conversions in the state.

#### UNCONSTITUTIONAL, ONE-SIDED: CONGRESS & SP

Maharashtra Freedom of Religion Bill 2026		Penalties and enforcement
<b>Mandatory procedure for conversion:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Any individual intending to change religion &amp; institution organising the ceremony must provide a 60-day advance notice to competent authority</li> <li>➤ Notice to be displayed to invite objections for 30 days</li> <li>➤ If objections arise,</li> </ul>	authority may initiate police inquiry into true intent of conversion <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Once conversion is complete, individual must submit formal declaration in 21 days</li> <li>➤ Failure to comply with filing requirements will render conversion null and void</li> </ul>	Legal consequences for "unlawful conversions", making them cognisable, non-bailable offences triable by court: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>General violations:</b> Up to seven years of imprisonment and a ₹1 lakh fine</li> <li><b>Aggravated cases:</b> If conversion involves a minor, a woman or persons from SC/ST communities, fine rises to ₹5 lakh</li> <li><b>Mass conversions:</b> Organisations or individuals involved face seven years in jail and ₹5 lakh fine</li> <li><b>Repeat offenders:</b> 10 years of imprisonment and ₹7 lakh fine</li> </ul>

#### Key Provisions

##### Punishment:

- Imprisonment up to 7–10 years along with a fine.

##### Prior Notice:

- Individuals must give a 60-day prior notice to authorities before conversion.

##### Post-Declaration:

- Declaration must be submitted within 21 days after conversion.

##### Burden of Proof:

- Lies on the accused person to prove that conversion was not illegal.

#### Nature of Offence:

- Cognisable and non-bailable offence.
- Marriage-related Conversion:
- Conversion done for the purpose of marriage is also punishable.

#### Political Response

- Supported by: Ruling alliance (Mahayuti) and some other parties.
- Opposed by: Congress, NCP (SP), Samajwadi Party, CPI(M) — termed it unconstitutional and biased.

#### Additional Useful Facts

Similar anti-conversion laws exist in several Indian states such as:

- Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh.
- These laws are often debated in the context of Article 25 of the Indian Constitution, which guarantees freedom of religion.
- Such laws have also faced judicial scrutiny in courts over concerns of misuse.

#### Key Points for Exams

- The bill aims to prevent unlawful religious conversions.
- It targets conversions done through force, fraud, inducement, or marriage.
- The bill will now be sent to the Legislative Council for approval.

### Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Amendment Bill, 2026

Union Minister for Social Justice and Empowerment Virendra Kumar introduced the Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Amendment Bill, 2026 in the Lok Sabha to amend the Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act, 2019.

**Key Highlights of the Bill**

- The Bill proposes changes in the legal definition of a transgender person to provide clearer identification for benefits and protections.
- It excludes individuals with different sexual orientations or self-perceived gender identity from the legal definition of transgender persons under the Act.
- The Bill recognises socio-cultural identities such as kinner, hijra, aravani, jogta and eunuch, along with persons having intersex variations.
- It proposes stricter and graded punishments for crimes against transgender persons and for coercive acts like forced gender alteration.
- A medical board may assist in the process of certification, with the final certificate issued by the District Magistrate.
- The amendment aims to ensure that government welfare benefits reach the intended transgender community facing social exclusion.

**Background: Transgender Rights Law in India**

- The Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act, 2019 provides for protection of rights and welfare of transgender persons in India.
- The Act prohibits discrimination in education, employment, healthcare, and access to public services.
- It allows transgender persons to apply for a certificate of identity from the District Magistrate to update their official documents.

**Institutional Mechanism**

- The National Council for Transgender Persons was established in 2020 to advise the government on policies and welfare measures related to the transgender community.

**Passive Euthanasia in India**

**Why in News?**

The Supreme Court of India permitted the first individual case of passive euthanasia in India. The court allowed the withdrawal of artificial life support for Harish Rana, a 32-year-old man from Uttar Pradesh who has been in a vegetative state for over 12 years.

**Supreme Court Decision:**

- The bench comprising J. B. Pardiwala and K. V. Viswanathan allowed the withdrawal of life-sustaining treatment.
- The decision came after medical boards and family members agreed that continued clinically administered nutrition (CAN) should be discontinued.
- The petition requesting withdrawal of life support was filed by Harish Rana’s father.

**Legal Context: Passive Euthanasia in India:**

- In 2018, the Supreme Court of India legally recognised passive euthanasia under strict safeguards.
- Passive euthanasia allows withdrawal of life support so that death occurs naturally.
- However, active euthanasia (directly administering substances to cause death) remains illegal in India.

**Importance of Living Will:**

**HARISH RANA: 13 YEARS IN COMA**

**2013** | Civil engineering student **Harish Rana** falls from the fourth floor of his PG accommodation in Chandigarh and suffers severe head injuries. He is admitted to the Postgraduate Institute of Medical Education and Research trauma centre.

**2013-2014** | After emergency treatment for traumatic brain injury, doctors declare Rana 100% quadriplegic.

**2014-2023** | Rana remains bedridden with no neurological recovery. His parents care for him at home using feeding tubes, physiotherapy and round-the-clock medical support.



**2024** | Family approaches Delhi High Court seeking permission to withdraw life support. The court declines the request. They move Supreme Court, which directs UP govt to bear treatment costs.

**2025** | SC orders formation of a primary medical board to assess Rana’s condition.

**March 2026** | SC allows withdrawal of life-sustaining treatment for Rana.

- A living will is a legal document specifying a person's wishes regarding medical treatment in case of terminal illness.
- Harish Rana did not have a living will, so the family had to seek court permission for withdrawal of life support.

**Background of the Case:**

- Harish Rana suffered severe head injuries in 2013 after falling from a building.
- Since then, he has remained in a persistent vegetative state with no meaningful interaction or recovery.
- Doctors concluded that he has virtually no chance of recovery.

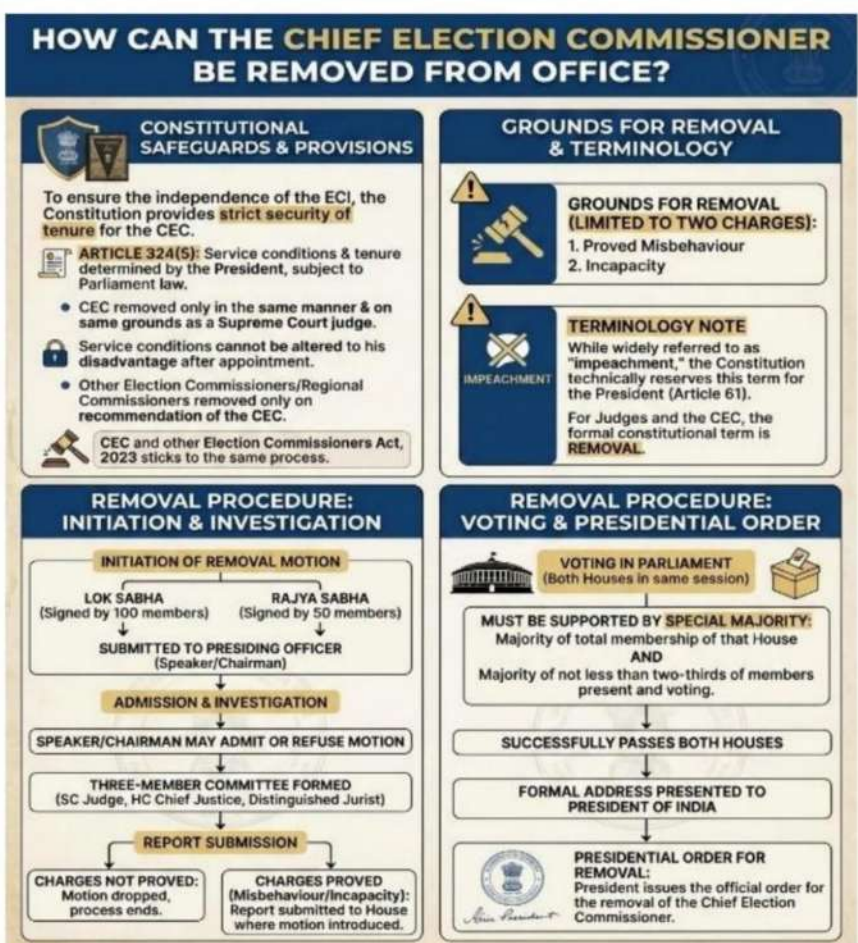
**Earlier Landmark Case:**

- The debate on euthanasia in India began with the Aruna Shanbaug case.
- She remained in a vegetative state for 42 years after a brutal assault.
- In 2011, the Supreme Court of India rejected the plea for ending her life but recognized passive euthanasia under strict conditions.
- She passed away in 2015 due to pneumonia.

**Global Debate:**

- Supporters argue euthanasia allows patients to die with dignity and avoid prolonged suffering.
- Opponents emphasize the sanctity of life and ethical concerns.

**CEC Removal Motion**



**Why in News?**

The Opposition is planning to move an impeachment motion against Gyanesh Kumar, the Chief Election Commissioner of the Election Commission of India. The allegation is related to biased conduct during the Special Intensive Revision of electoral rolls, particularly in West Bengal.

**Constitutional Provision**

The removal of the CEC is governed by Article 324(5) of the Constitution of India.

**Key provisions:**

- The Chief Election Commissioner can be removed in the same manner as a Supreme Court judge.
- Other Election Commissioners can be removed only on the recommendation of the CEC.

**Legal Framework**

- Parliament enacted the Chief Election Commissioner and Other Election Commissioners

(Appointment, Conditions of Service and Term of Office) Act, 2023.

- Section 11 of the Act explains the procedure for resignation and removal of the CEC and Election Commissioners.

**Removal motion must be signed by:**

- 100 members of the Lok Sabha, or 50 members of the Rajya Sabha.

**Admission of Motion**

- The motion is submitted to:
- Speaker of Lok Sabha, or Chairman of Rajya Sabha.
- They decide whether to admit or reject the motion.

**Investigation Committee**

- If admitted, a three-member committee is formed:
- One Supreme Court Judge
- One Chief Justice of a High Court
- One Distinguished Jurist

**Parliamentary Voting**

- If the committee proves the charges, Parliament votes on the motion.
- The motion must be passed by:
- Majority of total membership of each House, and Two-thirds majority of members present and voting.

**Final Removal**

After approval by both Houses in the same session, the recommendation is sent to the President of India, who issues the final removal order.

**Grounds for Removal**

- The grounds are the same as those for removing a Supreme Court judge under Article 124(4) of the Constitution of India:
- Proved Misbehaviour
- Incapacity
- Procedure for Removal of the CEC
- Initiation of Motion

**Maharashtra Stamp (Amendment) Bill, 2026**

The Maharashtra Legislative Assembly passed the Maharashtra Stamp (Amendment) Bill, 2026 to ensure faster disposal of pending stamp duty cases and improve administrative efficiency in the revenue department. The Bill was passed unanimously during the Budget Session of the Maharashtra Legislature. The amendment modifies Section 52(A) of the Maharashtra Stamp Act, decentralising financial powers within the department so that lower-level officials can decide higher-value cases, reducing the burden on senior authorities. Earlier, many cases remained pending with the Inspector General of Registration (IGR) due to limited decision-making powers at the local level. The amendment allows officials such as Collectors and Deputy Inspectors General to adjudicate stamp duty disputes, thereby reducing delays and the need for citizens to travel to Mumbai for case resolution.

**Maharashtra Stamp Act**

The Maharashtra Stamp Act, 1958 governs levy and collection of stamp duty on property transactions and legal documents in the state. Stamp duty is charged on instruments such as:

- Sale deeds
- Lease agreements
- Mortgage deeds
- Gift deeds

**Importance of Stamp Duty**

Stamp duty is a major source of revenue for state governments, especially from real estate transactions. Maharashtra earns a significant share of revenue from property registration and stamp duty collections, particularly in cities like Mumbai, Pune, and Thane.

**Administrative Structure**

Inspector General of Registration (IGR) oversees property registration and stamp duty administration in the state. Decentralisation aims to reduce backlog, increase efficiency, and improve ease of property registration.

**Essential Commodities Act**

The Government of India has invoked the Essential Commodities Act, 1955 to ensure uninterrupted supply of Liquefied Petroleum Gas across the country. The decision was taken to prevent shortages and maintain stable availability of LPG for domestic consumers amid rising demand.

**THE ESSENTIAL COMMODITIES ACT (ECA), 1955**

Ensuring Availability & Controlling Prices of Essential Goods in India

**ORIGIN & PURPOSE**  
Enacted in 1955.  
**Objective:** To ensure the delivery of certain commodities or products, the supply of which may be obstructed by hoarding or black-marketing, and to control their prices.

**GOVERNMENT POWERS**

- Regulate production, supply, and distribution of essential commodities.
- Impose stock limits to prevent hoarding.
- Fix maximum retail prices (MRP).
- Take punitive action against offenders.

**BALANCING MARKET DYNAMICS**  
SUPPLY vs PRICE CONTROL

**KEY COMMODITIES COVERED**

- FOODSTUFFS** (Cereals, Pulses, Edible Oils)
- PETROLEUM PRODUCTS**
- DRUGS & PHARMACEUTICALS**
- FERTILIZERS**
- TEXTILES**

**RECENT AMENDMENTS (2020)**  
Deregulation of certain food items (cereals, pulses, potato, onion, edible oilseeds, oils) except in extraordinary circumstances like war, famine, extraordinary price rise, or natural calamity.

**IMPACT & CRITICISM**

<p><b>POSITIVE IMPACT</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Protects consumers from price surges.</li> <li>Ensures food security during crises.</li> </ul>	<p><b>CHALLENGES</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Can discourage private investment in storage.</li> <li>May lead to market distortions and reduced supply.</li> </ul>
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**Measures to Increase LPG Production**

Under this directive, oil refineries and petrochemical plants have been instructed to maximise LPG production. They have also been asked to divert certain hydrocarbon streams toward LPG output so that domestic consumption needs can be met without disruption.

**Key Facts:**

- The Essential Commodities Act, 1955 empowers the central government to regulate the production, supply, and distribution of essential commodities.
- Its objective is to prevent hoarding, black marketing, and price manipulation of essential goods.
- Commodities covered may include food items, petroleum products, fertilisers, and medicines.
- The Essential Commodities (Amendment) Act, 2020 relaxed stock limits on agricultural commodities except in extraordinary situations like war, famine, natural calamities, or extraordinary price rise.
- LPG is one of the most widely used household cooking fuels in India and is distributed mainly through public sector oil marketing companies.

**Regulation of Natural Gas Supply**

Along with invoking the Act, the government issued the Natural Gas (Supply Regulation) Order, 2026 to regulate the production and allocation of natural gas, including imported liquefied natural gas. The order aims to ensure a balanced distribution of gas among different sectors.

**Priority Sectors for Gas Allocation**

- Priority in gas allocation will be given to critical sectors such as:
  - Domestic PNG (Piped Natural Gas) supply
  - CNG used in transportation
  - LPG production
  - Fertiliser plants
  - Pipeline compressor fuel requirements
- This prioritisation ensures that essential energy needs and key industries continue functioning smoothly.

**Implementation and Monitoring**

The implementation of the gas allocation framework will be coordinated by GAIL (India) Limited with support from the Petroleum Planning and Analysis Cell, which operates under the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas.

**Challenge to Shariat Act on Muslim Inheritance Reaches the Supreme Court of India**

**Background of the Case**

A petition has challenged provisions of the Muslim Personal Law (Shariat) Application Act, 1937 in the Supreme Court. The challenge relates mainly to rules governing inheritance among Muslims. Petitioners argue that the current system discriminates against Muslim women in property rights and violates constitutional equality.

### What the Shariat Act, 1937 Provides

The Act applies Islamic personal law (Shariat) to Muslims in matters such as:

- marriage
- divorce
- maintenance
- succession and inheritance.

It was introduced to replace local customs with uniform Muslim personal law across British India.



### How Muslim Inheritance Works Under the Law

Muslim inheritance rules are derived from Quranic principles and Islamic jurisprudence.

#### In many cases:

Female heirs receive smaller shares than male heirs.

For example, a daughter may receive half the share of a son.

A Muslim person cannot freely will more than one-third of their property, while the remaining property must go to legal heirs according to Shariat rules.

### Main Arguments in the Petition

The petition raises several constitutional concerns:

- Violation of equality: It argues that unequal inheritance shares for women violate Articles 14 and 15 of the Constitution.
- Different rights across states: After the Uniform Civil Code law in Uttarakhand, Muslim women there may have different inheritance rights compared to women in other states.
- This means two Muslim women with identical backgrounds may receive different property rights depending on where they live.

### Observations of the Supreme Court

The Court noted that the issue raises important constitutional and social questions. Judges observed that striking down the Shariat inheritance framework could create a legal vacuum, since no alternative statutory law exists for Muslim inheritance. The Court suggested that Parliament may be better suited to undertake comprehensive reforms.

### Link with Uniform Civil Code (UCC)

During the hearing, judges referred to Article 44 of the Constitution, which encourages the State to implement a Uniform Civil Code.

The Court indicated that a common civil law could address inequalities in personal laws across communities.

### Why the Case is Important

The case highlights the conflict between personal religious laws and constitutional principles of equality.

It could influence debates on:

gender equality in inheritance rights

reform of personal laws

implementation of a Uniform Civil Code in India.

### Way Forward

- **Comprehensive legal review:** Parliament may examine reforms in Muslim inheritance law to ensure gender justice while respecting religious practices.
- **Balance between faith and equality:** Any reform should align personal laws with constitutional principles such as equality and non-discrimination.
- **Clarity through legislation:** Instead of judicial intervention alone, clear statutory reforms may prevent legal uncertainty.
- **Broader debate on Uniform Civil Code:** The issue may revive discussions on implementing Uniform Civil Code to bring uniformity in personal laws.

## Ladakh's Demand for Sixth Schedule Protection: Explained

### Background of the Issue

Environmental activist Sonam Wangchuk was detained in September 2025 under the National Security Act (NSA) following protests in Ladakh. The protests were linked to demands for statehood and inclusion of Ladakh under the Sixth Schedule of the Constitution. The Central Government later revoked his detention, bringing renewed attention to the political demands of Ladakh.

### Political Changes After 2019

In 2019, the Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation Act, 2019 reorganised the former state of Jammu & Kashmir. Ladakh became a Union Territory without a legislative assembly, governed directly by the Centre. Many local groups argue that this reduced their political representation and decision-making power.

### What is the Sixth Schedule?

The Sixth Schedule of the Constitution of India provides autonomous governance to tribal areas. It currently applies to tribal regions in Assam, Meghalaya, Tripura and Mizoram. It allows the creation of Autonomous District Councils with powers over:

- land and forest management
- local taxation
- culture and customs
- local governance and development.

### Why Ladakh is Seeking Sixth Schedule Status

Local groups argue that constitutional safeguards are needed for several reasons:

#### 1. Protection of Tribal Identity

About 97% of Ladakh's population belongs to Scheduled Tribes.

Sixth Schedule status could help preserve culture, language, and traditional institutions.

#### 2. Protection of Land and Resources

Residents fear outsiders buying land and resources after the region became a Union Territory.

The Sixth Schedule could help protect land rights of local communities.

#### 3. Environmental Concerns

Ladakh has a fragile Himalayan ecosystem.

<p><b>MEGHALAYA</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Khasi Hills Autonomous District Council</li> <li>● Jaintia Hills Autonomous District Council</li> <li>● Garo Hills Autonomous District Council</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Mara Autonomous District Council</li> </ul>
<p><b>MIZORAM</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Chakma Autonomous District Council</li> <li>● Lai Autonomous District Council</li> </ul>	<p><b>TRIPURA</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Tripura Tribal Areas Autonomous District Council</li> </ul>
	<p><b>ASSAM</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Dima Hasao Autonomous Council</li> <li>● Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council</li> <li>● Bodoland Territorial Council</li> </ul>

Local leaders want stronger control over tourism, mining, and infrastructure projects to ensure sustainable development.

#### 4. Greater Political Autonomy

Autonomous councils could give Ladakh more control over governance and development decisions.

#### Key Groups Leading the Movement

The demand for Sixth Schedule protection is mainly led by:

1. Leh Apex Body (LAB)
2. Kargil Democratic Alliance (KDA)

These groups represent political, social, and religious organisations from both Leh and Kargil districts and have been negotiating with the Centre.

#### Government's Response

The Central Government has formed a High-Powered Committee to discuss issues related to:

- land protection
- job reservation for locals
- political representation
- cultural safeguards.

However, no final decision on Sixth Schedule inclusion has been taken so far.

#### Why the Issue Matters

The debate reflects tensions between development, environmental protection, and local autonomy. It also raises broader constitutional questions about how tribal regions outside Northeast India can receive similar protections.

#### Way Forward

- **Constructive Dialogue:** The Central Government should continue structured talks with local groups such as the Leh Apex Body and Kargil Democratic Alliance to find a consensus-based solution.
- **Legal Safeguards for Land and Jobs:** Introduce special protections for local land ownership and employment to address fears of demographic and economic changes.
- **Strengthening Local Governance:** Enhance the powers of existing Hill Development Councils to give Ladakh greater participation in governance and development planning.
- **Environmental Protection Measures:** Adopt strict environmental regulations and sustainable tourism policies to protect Ladakh's fragile Himalayan ecosystem.
- **Balanced Constitutional Solution:** The government may consider Sixth Schedule-like protections or other constitutional mechanisms to safeguard Ladakh's tribal identity, culture, and resources while ensuring effective administration.

### SC Directs Centre to Frame Policy for Covid Vaccine Side-Effect Victims

#### Background of the Case

The Supreme Court of India directed the Central Government to create a "no-fault compensation policy" for people who suffered serious adverse effects after Covid-19 vaccination. The order was issued by a bench of Justice Vikram Nath and Justice Sandeep Mehta. The decision came while hearing petitions filed by parents who alleged that their daughters died after receiving the Covishield vaccine in 2021. Petitioners argued that their daughters experienced severe Adverse Events Following Immunisation (AEFI) and sought compensation and investigation.

**Supreme Court Directs  
Centre To Frame 'No-Fault'  
Compensation Policy For Serious  
COVID-19 Vaccine Side Effects**



**What the Supreme Court Directed**

The Court gave several key directions to the Union Government:

- Frame a “No-Fault Compensation Policy” for serious vaccine-related adverse events.
- Compensation should be provided without requiring victims to prove negligence or fault by the government or vaccine manufacturers.
- The existing monitoring system for adverse events following immunisation (AEFI) must continue to operate.
- Data on vaccine side effects should be periodically placed in the public domain to ensure transparency.

The government should facilitate easy reporting of suspected adverse events by individuals and private doctors through an accessible online platform.

**What is a “No-Fault Compensation Policy”?**

A no-fault compensation scheme provides financial support to individuals who suffer harm from vaccination without requiring proof of negligence or liability. The aim is to quickly compensate victims of rare adverse events while maintaining public confidence in vaccination programs. Such systems exist in several countries as part of public health protection mechanisms.

**Court’s Key Clarifications**

The Supreme Court clarified several important points:

- The compensation framework does not mean the government accepts fault or liability.
- The judgment does not prevent affected persons from pursuing other legal remedies through courts or other legal forums.
- The Court rejected the demand to create a separate court-appointed expert committee, stating that a scientific monitoring mechanism already exists for AEFI.

**Existing Monitoring Mechanism: AEFI**

India already has a system to monitor vaccine safety:

AEFI (Adverse Events Following Immunisation) surveillance system investigates vaccine-related adverse events. Experts analyze reported cases to determine whether the vaccine actually caused the health event. The Supreme Court directed that this existing system should continue alongside the new compensation policy.

**Data on Vaccine Side Effects in India**

Government data presented earlier in court showed:

More than 220 crore Covid-19 vaccine doses administered in India. Around 92,697 AEFI cases reported, which is about 0.0042% of total doses. 1,171 deaths reported, around 0.00005% of vaccinations. These numbers indicate that serious side effects are extremely rare compared with the total vaccinations administered.

**Way Forward**

- Quick implementation of the Supreme Court-directed No-Fault Compensation Policy for serious Covid-19 vaccine side effects.
- Clear guidelines on eligibility, types of adverse events, and compensation process.
- Strengthening the AEFI surveillance system for faster investigation of reported cases.
- Easy reporting system through online portals for individuals and doctors.
- Regular public disclosure of vaccine safety data to ensure transparency and public trust.

- Awareness among citizens and healthcare workers about reporting adverse events and compensation mechanisms.

## Withdrawing Life-Supporting Care in India: Procedure and Key Issues

### Introduction

The debate over withdrawing life-supporting medical care has gained attention after the Supreme Court of India allowed passive euthanasia in an individual case for the first time. The decision involved a patient who had been in a persistent vegetative state for more than a decade, with no realistic chance of recovery. This ruling highlights the legal framework governing passive euthanasia and end-of-life decisions in India, along with the challenges families and doctors face when trying to withdraw life-sustaining treatment.

### What is Withdrawing Life-Supporting Care?

Withdrawing life-supporting care refers to the removal or withholding of medical treatment that artificially keeps a person alive, allowing the patient to die naturally. This practice is commonly referred to as passive euthanasia. Life-sustaining treatments that may be withdrawn include: ventilator support, cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR), dialysis, chemotherapy or radiotherapy & artificial nutrition or hydration. Passive euthanasia differs from active euthanasia, where a medical professional intentionally administers a drug or injection to cause death. Active euthanasia remains illegal in India.

### Legal Basis in India

India does not have a dedicated law on euthanasia, but the legal framework has evolved through Supreme Court judgments.

#### Key milestones include:

1. Aruna Shanbaug case (2011): The Court allowed passive euthanasia under strict conditions.
2. Common Cause case (2018): The Court recognised the right to die with dignity as part of Article 21 (Right to Life) and allowed people to make a “living will” refusing life-prolonging treatment.
3. Modification in 2023: The Supreme Court simplified procedures to make the implementation of passive euthanasia easier.

These rulings together form the current framework for end-of-life decisions in India.

### Procedure for Withdrawing Life Support

- The process generally involves several safeguards to ensure that the decision is ethical and medically justified.
- Living Will or Advance Directive: A person can record their wishes in a living will stating that life-support treatment should be withdrawn if they become terminally ill or incapable of making decisions.
- Consent of Family or Surrogate: If there is no living will, family members or legal guardians can request withdrawal of treatment.
- Medical Board Review: A hospital must constitute a primary medical board of experts to examine the patient and determine whether recovery is possible.
- Second Medical Opinion: A secondary medical board reviews the decision to ensure there is no error or misuse.
- Implementation with Palliative Care: If both boards agree, life support may be withdrawn while ensuring the patient receives palliative and comfort care.



### Major Challenges and Hurdles

Despite legal guidelines, withdrawing life-supporting care remains difficult in practice.

1. **Lack of a Clear Law:** India still relies mainly on court guidelines rather than a comprehensive statute, creating legal uncertainty.
2. **Complex Procedures:** Multiple approvals and medical boards can delay decisions, prolonging suffering for patients and families.
3. **Low Awareness:** Many people are unaware of the concept of living wills or advance directives, limiting their practical use.
4. **Ethical and Cultural Concerns:** Religious and cultural beliefs often view euthanasia as morally wrong, making families hesitant to consider withdrawing treatment.
5. **Fear of Legal Liability:** Doctors may worry about legal consequences if life support is withdrawn, which can discourage them from following the procedure.

### Conclusion

The Supreme Court's evolving jurisprudence has recognised the right to die with dignity as part of the right to life. While passive euthanasia and withdrawal of life-support are legally permitted under strict safeguards, the process remains complex due to procedural, ethical, and legal challenges. Experts increasingly argue that a clear legislation on end-of-life care is necessary to make the system more humane, transparent, and accessible for patients and families facing difficult medical decisions.

### Karnataka Assembly Clears Bills on Honour Killings & Manuscript Preservation

The Karnataka Legislative Assembly has passed key bills, including one to curb honour killings and another to preserve and digitise ancient manuscripts, aiming to strengthen social justice and cultural heritage protection.

#### Bill to Curb Honour Killings

The Assembly cleared the Karnataka Freedom of Choice in Marriage and Prevention and Prohibition of Crimes in the Name of Honour and Tradition Bill, 2026 (also called Eva Nammava Bill).

- Seeks to prevent honour-based crimes linked to inter-caste/interfaith marriages
- Upholds the right of adults to choose their partners freely
- Provides strict punishment (minimum imprisonment for such crimes)
- Covers not just killings but also violence, intimidation, and social boycott

#### Bill for Manuscript Preservation & Digitisation

- The Assembly also passed the Karnataka Jnana Bhandar Manuscripts and Digitisation Bill.
- Proposes setting up a dedicated authority for manuscripts
- Aims to digitise ~5 lakh pages annually
- Focus on preserving ancient knowledge, culture, and heritage

#### Significance of the Bills

- Strengthens protection of individual rights and social equality
- Addresses rising cases of honour-based violence
- Promotes digital preservation of India's cultural heritage
- Enhances good governance and record management

#### The Bill is based on constitutional rights such as:

- Article 14 (Equality)
- Article 19 (Freedom)
- Article 21 (Right to Life & Liberty)

## CAPF Bill 2026 & IPS Deputation

The Central Government is set to introduce the CAPF (General Administration) Bill, 2026, which seeks to formalise and retain the deputation of IPS officers in senior positions of the Central Armed Police Forces (CAPFs).

### Key Provisions of CAPF Bill 2026

Provides statutory backing to IPS deputation in CAPFs

Proposes reservation of senior posts for IPS officers:

- 50% of IG posts
- 67% of ADG posts
- 100% of DG posts

Empowers the Central Government to frame recruitment, promotion, and service rules

### Background: Supreme Court Verdict (2025)

In May 2025, the Supreme Court of India ruled that:

- CAPF officers should be treated as Organised Group 'A' Services (OGAS)
- IPS deputation in CAPFs should be progressively reduced (up to IG level) within 2 years
- A cadre review should be conducted to improve promotion opportunities
- The Court also dismissed the Centre's review petition in October 2025, making the ruling final.

### Key Issue / Controversy

The Bill is seen as contradicting the Supreme Court judgment, which aimed to reduce IPS deputation. Critics argue it may:

- Limit promotion opportunities of CAPF cadre officers
- Continue IPS dominance in leadership positions

### Government's Justification

Ensures better coordination between Centre and States

Improves operational efficiency and leadership in security forces

## Gujarat Passes Uniform Civil Code (UCC) Bill, 2026

The Gujarat Legislative Assembly has passed the Uniform Civil Code (UCC) Bill, 2026 after an extensive debate, marking a significant step toward creating a common legal framework for all citizens irrespective of religion. The bill standardizes laws related to marriage, divorce, succession, and live-in relationships, aiming to ensure equality and uniformity in personal laws across the state.

### Key Provisions of the Bill

The UCC introduces uniform rules governing personal matters, including mandatory registration of marriages and live-in relationships. It also prohibits polygamy (bigamy) and establishes legal recognition and safeguards for live-in relationships, including rights for women and children. Additionally, the bill provides clear guidelines for inheritance and succession.

### Exemptions and Scope

The provisions of the UCC do not apply to Scheduled Tribes (STs) and certain communities with protected customary rights. The law will apply across Gujarat and even to residents of the state living outside its territory.

### Gujarat:

- Capital: Gandhinagar
- Largest City: Ahmedabad
- Chief Minister: Bhupendra Patel
- Governor: Acharya Devvrat
- Formation: 1 May 1960 (separated from Bombay State)
- Official Language: Gujarati
- High Court: Gujarat High Court (Ahmedabad)

**Objectives and Significance**

The primary aim of the bill is to promote equality, gender justice, and legal uniformity by removing differences in personal laws based on religion. It is also seen as a move toward fulfilling Article 44 of the Directive Principles of State Policy, which advocates for a Uniform Civil Code in India.

**Supreme Court Ruling on SC/ST Benefits After Religious Conversion**

The Supreme Court of India has ruled that a person who converts to a religion other than Hinduism, Sikhism, or Buddhism cannot claim Scheduled Caste (SC) status or related benefits. The Court upheld an earlier High Court judgment and clarified that caste-based protections are legally linked to specific religions under existing constitutional provisions.

**Key Observations of the Court**

Conversion to religions like Christianity or Islam leads to immediate loss of SC status, irrespective of birth. A person cannot simultaneously follow another religion and claim SC identity, as both are legally incompatible. SC benefits such as reservation and protection under the SC/ST (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989 are not available after such conversion.

**Position of Scheduled Tribes (STs)**

Unlike SCs, Scheduled Tribe (ST) status is not strictly religion-based.

ST recognition depends on:

- Tribal customs and way of life
- Social acceptance by the tribal community

If conversion leads to loss of tribal identity and community ties, ST benefits may also be affected.

**Constitutional & Legal Basis**

1. Governed by the Constitution (Scheduled Castes) Order, 1950
2. SC status is restricted to Hindus (1950), Sikhs (1956), and Buddhists (1990 amendment)
3. Linked to Article 341 of the Indian Constitution, which empowers the President to specify SC communities

**Additional Facts**

SC/ST (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989: Provides legal protection against caste-based discrimination

Reservation System in India: Based on historical social disadvantage, not only economic criteria

Re-conversion Rule: A person may regain SC status only if:

- Returns to original religion
- Proves caste identity
- Gains acceptance from the community

**Significance of the Judgment**

- Reinforces the religion-linked nature of SC status in India
- Clarifies long-standing legal ambiguity regarding conversion and reservation benefits
- Has implications for reservation policies, affirmative action, and social justice debates

**"There is a powerful driving force inside every human being that, once unleashed, can make any vision, dream, or desire a reality."**

## International Relations & Events

### New Ethnic Unity Law

#### China's Law on Promoting Ethnic Unity and Progress

##### Article 15

The state respects and safeguards the learning and use of ethnic minority languages and scripts, promotes the standardization, standardization and informatization construction of ethnic minority languages and scripts, and supports the protection, collation, research and utilization of ethnic minority ancient books.

##### Article 15 (cont'd)

State organs take the national common language and writing as the official language and writing for official business. Where it is required by relevant laws and regulations to issue documents using ethnic minority languages and writing systems, versions in both the national common language and writing and the ethnic minority languages and writing systems shall be provided simultaneously.

The law requires government bodies, schools, and social organisations to promote “a common consciousness of the Chinese nation.” It also emphasises the use of Mandarin Chinese in education and public life, even though it formally states that minority languages will be respected.

#### Concerns and Criticism

- Critics argue that the law could increase assimilation pressure on minority communities, particularly in regions such as Xinjiang, Tibet, and Inner Mongolia, where minority languages and cultural practices have already faced restrictions.
- Human rights groups warn that the legislation could limit cultural and religious freedoms of minorities and further institutionalise existing assimilation policies in China.

#### Ethnic Diversity in China

- China officially recognises 56 ethnic groups, including the majority Han Chinese and 55 minority groups.
- Major minorities include Uyghurs, Tibetans, Mongols, Hui, and Zhuang.

#### Concept of Zhonghua Minzu

The Chinese government promotes the idea of Zhonghua Minzu, which refers to a unified Chinese nation composed of all ethnic groups.

#### China's Ethnic Autonomy System

The Chinese Constitution provides for regional ethnic autonomy in minority-dominated areas such as Xinjiang, Tibet, Ningxia, Inner Mongolia, and Guangxi.

#### Background of Ethnic Policies

Since the 2010s, China has emphasised stronger national integration policies under President Xi Jinping, focusing on cultural assimilation and political stability in minority regions.

#### Law Approved by Chinese Legislature

China has enacted a new law titled “Law on Promoting Ethnic Unity and Progress” to strengthen national integration among its diverse ethnic communities. The law was passed by the National People's Congress on 12 March 2026 and signed by Chinese President \*\*Xi Jinping. It is scheduled to come into force on 1 July 2026. The legislation aims to foster a shared national identity and unity among China's ethnic groups, but it has also raised concerns among scholars and rights groups about its potential impact on minority cultures and languages.

#### Key Provisions of the Law

##### Other provisions include:

- Promoting interaction and integration among different ethnic groups.
- Strengthening national unity, sovereignty, and social stability.
- Encouraging patriotic education and loyalty to the state.
- Penalising activities that allegedly undermine ethnic unity or promote separatism.

**Why the Strait of Hormuz and the Suez Canal Matter More Than Ever**

**Key pipelines that bypass Strait of Hormuz**



**Why in News?**

Strategic maritime routes such as the Strait of Hormuz and the Suez Canal play a critical role in ensuring global energy security and stability of international oil markets. Disruptions in these chokepoints can lead to energy supply shocks and volatility in global oil prices.

**Geography and Global Energy Transport:**

- Global energy supply is influenced not only by production but also by geography and transport routes.
- A few narrow maritime corridors (chokepoints) carry a large portion of the world’s oil and natural gas trade.
- These corridors are essential for linking major energy-producing regions with global markets.

**Strait of Hormuz: Critical Oil Transit Route:**

- The Strait of Hormuz connects the Persian Gulf with global shipping lanes.
- Located between Iran and Oman.

**Strategic Importance:**

- A large share of global oil exports from the Middle East passes through this strait.

**Suez Canal: Energy and Trade Corridor:**

- The Suez Canal is a man-made canal connecting the Mediterranean Sea and the Red Sea.
- It acts as a vital bridge between Asian energy exporters and European markets.

**Major Facts:**

- Roughly 8–9 million barrels of oil and petroleum products daily move through the canal and the SUMED Pipeline.
- Ships using this route avoid traveling around the Cape of Good Hope.

**Strategic Importance:**

- If shipping through the canal is disrupted, vessels must travel around the Cape of Good Hope, increasing time and transportation costs.
- Disruptions can impact global supply chains and energy markets.

**Impact of Disruptions on Energy Markets:**

- Shipping delays or security risks can affect tanker traffic and energy logistics.
- Even the perception of disruption may lead to:
  - Increase in global oil prices
  - Market volatility

**Major Facts:**

- Around 20–21 million barrels of oil per day pass through this route.
- Accounts for nearly one-fifth of global petroleum consumption.

Key oil exporters using this route include:

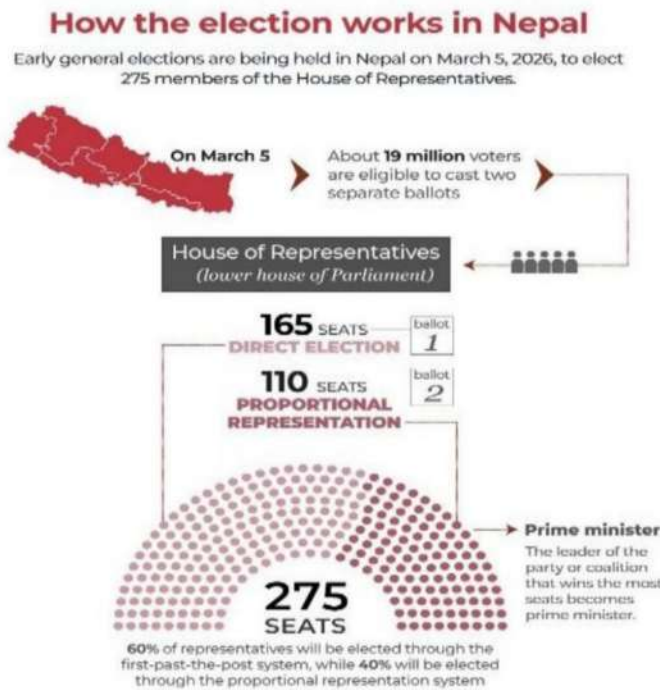
- Saudi Arabia
- Iraq
- Kuwait
- United Arab Emirates

- Higher transportation and energy costs

**Energy Logistics in the Global Economy:**

- Energy security depends not only on production and reserves but also on safe transportation routes.
- Oil and natural gas continue to play a major role in the global energy mix, despite the growth of renewable energy.
- Stability of maritime routes remains essential for maintaining global energy supply chains.

**Nepal Election 2026**



In the 2026 general elections of Nepal, the Rastriya Swatantra Party (RSP) achieved a historic landslide victory, winning 122 out of 165 directly elected seats in the House of Representatives, marking the largest majority in Nepal’s democratic history. The party is led by Balendra Shah (popularly known as Balen), a former Kathmandu mayor and rapper-turned-politician, who is expected to become Nepal’s next Prime Minister following the victory. The election marked a major political shift, as the newly formed RSP defeated traditional political parties such as Nepali Congress and Communist Party of Nepal (UML). The elections were held after the 2025 youth-led protests that forced the resignation of the previous government.

**Electoral System**

- 165 members elected through First-Past-The-Post (FPTP) system.
- 110 members elected through Proportional Representation (PR) system.

**Rastriya Swatantra Party (RSP)**

- Founded: 2022
- Founder: Rabi Lamichhane
- Known for anti-corruption and governance reform agenda.

**Significance of the Election**

- Represents a major generational shift in Nepal’s politics.
- Traditional parties lost dominance after youth-led protests in 2025 against corruption and governance issues.

**Nepal Political System**

- Form of Government: Federal Democratic Republic.
- Current Constitution: Adopted in 2015.
- Parliament: Bicameral legislature consisting of:
  - House of Representatives (Pratinidhi Sabha) – 275 members.
  - National Assembly (Rastriya Sabha) – 59 members.

**\$20 billion Gulf shipping insurance plan**



**What is the New US Maritime Reinsurance Plan?**

The United States has launched a \$20 billion maritime reinsurance programme to protect shipping and stabilise global trade in the Gulf region during tensions related to the Iran conflict.

**Who Announced the Programme?**

- US International Development Finance Corporation (DFC)
- United States Department of the Treasury
- The plan was approved by Donald Trump.

**The programme aims to:**

- Protect ships operating in the Gulf shipping corridor
- Maintain global trade and energy supply
- Restore confidence in maritime routes affected by regional tensions

**What Type of Insurance Will Be Provided?**

- The programme will provide maritime reinsurance coverage, including:
- War risk insurance
- Hull and Machinery insurance
- Cargo insurance
- This protection will apply to eligible vessels operating in the Gulf region.

**Coverage Amount:**

- The facility will cover maritime losses of up to \$20 billion on a rolling basis.
- This means coverage will continue as ships enter and exit the region.

**Key Institutions Involved:**

- Implementation involves coordination with:
- United States Central Command (CENTCOM)
- Selected American insurance companies will also participate as preferred partners.

**Strategic Importance of the Strait of Hormuz:**

- The Strait of Hormuz connects the Persian Gulf with the Gulf of Oman and Arabian Sea.
- A large share of global oil and LNG shipments passes through this narrow maritime route.
- Any disruption here can affect global energy prices and international trade.

**Why the Plan is Important?**

The programme is designed to ensure the continued flow of key commodities such as:

- Oil
- Gasoline
- Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG)
- Jet fuel
- Fertilizers

These commodities pass through the Strait of Hormuz, one of the world's most critical energy transit routes.

**Why Yemen’s Houthis are staying out of Israel-US fight with Iran – for now**

**What is the Current Situation?**

- The Israel–US attacks on Iran have increased tensions across the Middle East.
- Cities affected by rising tensions include Abu Dhabi, Doha, Kuwait City, Manama, and Beirut.
- However, Yemen has remained relatively quiet so far, despite being part of Iran’s regional alliance network.

**Who Are the Houthis?**

- The Houthi movement is an Iran-allied group that controls northwestern Yemen and the capital Sanaa.
- The group has previously carried out attacks on US and Israeli targets since the Gaza war began in October 2023.

**Importance of the Red Sea:**

- From 2023 to 2025, the Houthis attacked shipping routes in the Red Sea corridor.

**Effects of these attacks:**

- At least nine mariners killed
- Four ships sunk
- Disruption to trade routes carrying about \$1 trillion worth of goods annually

**Why Have the Houthis Not Entered the War Yet?**

**So far, the Houthis have limited their response to:**

- Strong public statements supporting Iran
- Mass protests condemning US–Israeli strikes
- Analysts say the group is currently avoiding direct retaliation from the US or Israel.

**Previous Israeli Strikes on the Houthis:**

- In August 2025, Israeli air strikes in Sanaa killed several senior Houthi officials, including:
  - Prime Minister Ahmed al-Rahawi
  - Chief of Staff Mohammed al-Ghumari
- These losses made the Houthi leadership more cautious about provoking another major air campaign.



**Possibility of Future Houthi Involvement:**

- Experts believe the Houthis may still join the war later.

**Possible triggers include:**

- Direct attacks by the US or Israel on Houthi territory
- A request from Iran
- Military advances by anti-Houthi forces inside Yemen
- Houthi leader Abdel-Malik al-Houthi said that “hands are on the trigger”, suggesting the group is ready to escalate if needed.

**Why Iran Might Delay Using the Houthis?**

- Some analysts say Iran may be saving the Houthis as a strategic option.
- The Houthis could act as a “reserve card” in the conflict if the war expands.

**Possible Targets of Houthi Attacks:**

- If the group enters the war, potential targets could include:
  - Israel

- US warships in the region
- Military bases in the Middle East
- Regional partners of Israel such as the UAE
- The Houthis have long-range drones and missiles capable of reaching distant targets.

**Impact of Iran’s Weakening on the Houthis:**

- The US–Israel strikes reportedly killed several Iranian political and military leaders.
- If Iran weakens or collapses:
- Weapons supply to the Houthis may decline
- Iranian influence over regional groups could weaken
- The Houthi movement may face military and political challenges

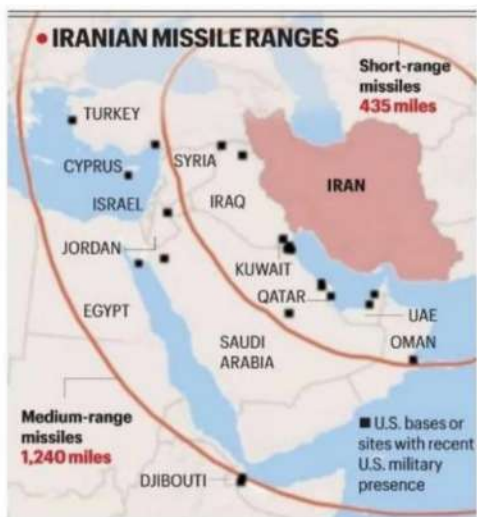
**Weapons Smuggling Allegations:**

- A United Nations investigation in 2022 found that many weapons seized in the Arabian Sea likely came from Iran.
- According to a UN Security Council panel report, weapons from Russia, China, and Iran were smuggled into Yemen through sea and land routes.
- Iran has denied these allegations.

**Reaction Inside Yemen:**

- Many Yemeni civilians fear that the conflict could spread to Yemen.
- Residents in Sanaa have started stockpiling food, cooking gas, rice, and flour in anticipation of possible air strikes.
- However, for now Yemenis are watching the war rather than participating in it.

**Operation True Promise-4: Iran’s Response to US–Israel Strikes**



**What is Operation True Promise-4?**

Operation True Promise-4 is the name used by Iran for its military retaliation against United States and Israel. It came after the joint U. S. –Israel strikes on Iranian targets in 2026. The operation is part of a series of Iranian responses called “True Promise.”

**Why Did Iran Launch the Operation?**

Iran launched the operation mainly for retaliation and deterrence.

**Key reasons:**

- To respond to U. S. –Israel attacks on Iranian military and political targets.
- To show that Iran can strike back against powerful adversaries.
- To restore deterrence and warn against future attacks.

**Weapons Used in the Operation**

**Iran used multiple types of weapons:**

- Ballistic missiles
- Cruise missiles
- Shahed drones
- These weapons were launched simultaneously to overwhelm air defence systems.

**Regional Impact**

- The operation caused widespread tension across the Middle East.
- Effects included:
  - Air defence systems activated in several Gulf countries.
  - Airspace restrictions and emergency alerts in parts of the region.
  - Concerns about a wider regional war.

**Meaning Behind the Name “True Promise”**

- The name “True Promise” carries symbolic meaning in Iran’s military messaging.
- It represents:
  - A promise to retaliate against attacks on Iran.
  - A strategy of deterrence through direct strikes rather than only proxy groups.
  - A signal that Iran will respond immediately and forcefully to future threats.

**Background: Earlier “True Promise” Operations**

- Iran has used the same naming pattern before:
  - Operation True Promise (2024) – missile and drone strikes on Israel.
  - Operation True Promise II (2024) – another large missile attack on Israeli targets.
  - Operation True Promise III (2025) – continued retaliation during the conflict.
  - Operation True Promise IV (2026) – response to U. S. –Israel strikes.

**Targets of the Operation**

**Iran’s retaliation targeted several areas:**

- Israeli territory through missile attacks.
- U. S. military bases in the Middle East.
- Strategic sites in Gulf countries hosting American forces.
- Missiles and drones were reported near bases in Qatar, Kuwait, UAE, and Bahrain where U. S. forces are present.

**Operation Epic Fury**

**What is Operation Epic Fury?**

Operation Epic Fury refers to joint military strikes carried out by United States and Israel against Iran on 28 February 2026. The strikes targeted Iranian leadership and military infrastructure. The attack reportedly killed Iran’s Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei.

**Main Legal Issue: Use of Force**

International law strictly limits when countries can use military force.

**Rule under International Law**

Article 2(4) of the UN Charter prohibits the use of force against another country's sovereignty.

**Operation Epic Fury: US Military Systems Deployment**  
Comprehensive overview of 20+ distinct weapons systems used by the US against Iran across air, land, and sea domains by US Central Command

**Operational Scope & Tactical Domain**

- 20+** Distinct Weapons Systems  
Deployed across air, land, and sea domains by US Central Command.
- Multi-Domain Superiority**  
Integrated use of high-altitude drones, stealth bombers, and naval carrier strike groups.
- Source: US CENTCOM (March 2026)**  
Official data reflecting the hardware utilized during Operation Epic Fury.

**THE ARSENAL MATRIX (Hardware & Manufacturers)**

- Strategic Air Strike & Naval Power**  
Focuses on stealth-capable strike aircraft and nuclear-powered naval assets.
- Intelligence & Unmanned Systems**  
Utilizes high-altitude reconnaissance platforms and advanced unmanned aerial vehicles.
- Precision Missiles & Land Defense**  
Covers integrated missile defense networks and long-range precision artillery.

**Key Systems & Manufacturers Mapping**

- Lockheed Martin, RTX, & General Atomics**
  - THAAD, ATACMS, HIMARS, F-22, F-35, Tomahawk, Patriot, MQ-9 Reaper
- Boeing, Northrop Grumman, & L3Harris**
  - B-1 Bomber, F-15, EA-18G, P-8A Poseidon, E-3 Sentry, RC-135, B-2 Bomber
- Spektreworks & Huntington Ingalls Ind.**
  - LUCAS Drones, USS Gerald R. Ford, USS Abraham Lincoln

**Only Two Exceptions**

- Countries can legally use force only when:
- UN Security Council authorises it
- Self-defence against an armed attack (Article 51)

**Why Critics Say the Strike Was Illegal**

- The UN Security Council did not approve the attack.
- Iran was not attacking the U. S. or Israel at that time.
- Iran was engaged in nuclear negotiations when the strike happened.

**Pattern of Military Actions**

- The article argues that Operation Epic Fury is part of a larger pattern of unilateral military actions.

**Examples mentioned include:**

- Military actions in Venezuela in 2025–26.
- Cross-border strikes conducted without international approval.
- The concern is that powerful countries might begin to treat international law as optional.

**Risks of Regime Change Operations**

- History shows that removing governments through military intervention often creates instability.
- Examples cited in the article:
  - 2003 Iraq War
  - 2011 NATO intervention in Libya

**Common consequences:**

- State collapse
- Long-term conflict
- Rise of armed groups
- Regional instability.

**Why International Law Matters**

- International law exists to prevent uncontrolled wars.
- Key purpose:
  - Maintain global stability
  - Protect weaker states
  - Prevent unilateral military aggression.
- If powerful states ignore the rules, other countries may also start using force more freely.

**Possible Responses by the International Community**

**Inside the United States**

- Congress could restrict military funding for the operation.
- The War Powers Resolution (1973) requires congressional approval for long wars.

**International Level**

- UN General Assembly action under the Uniting for Peace procedure.
- Legal cases at the International Court of Justice.

**Regime Change and International Law**

- The operation was reportedly aimed at removing Iran’s government.

**Why This Is Problematic**

- International law prohibits forcible regime change.
- The principle protects the political independence of states.
- Changing another country’s government through military force violates the norm of non-intervention.

**Why Did Donald Trump Choose War on Iran?**

The United States launched military strikes against Iran under the leadership of Donald Trump, marking a major escalation in long-standing tensions between the United States and Iran. The decision followed years of geopolitical rivalry, disputes over Iran’s nuclear programme, and attacks on U. S. interests in the Middle East.

**Reasons Behind the Decision**

**Preventing Iran’s Nuclear Weapon Development**

The U. S. administration argued that Iran was advancing its nuclear programme and could potentially develop nuclear weapons, posing a threat to regional and global security.

**Countering Iran’s Missile and Military Capabilities**

American officials stated that Iran’s growing ballistic missile arsenal and drone capabilities threatened U. S. forces and allies in the region.

**Pre-emptive Action Against Possible Attacks**

The U. S. claimed that the strikes were a pre-emptive move to prevent potential Iranian attacks on American forces and allies.

**Long-standing Hostility Between the U. S. and Iran**

Relations between the two countries have been strained since the 1979 Iranian Revolution and the subsequent Iran hostage crisis, which created decades of mistrust and confrontation.

**Pressure to Limit Iran’s Regional Influence**

The U. S. has long accused Iran of supporting militant groups in the Middle East and destabilising the region, which was cited as another reason for military action.

**Military Build-Up Before the Strikes**

Before launching the operation, the U. S. deployed aircraft carriers, destroyers, and advanced aircraft around Iran, representing one of the largest U. S. military buildups in the Middle East in decades.

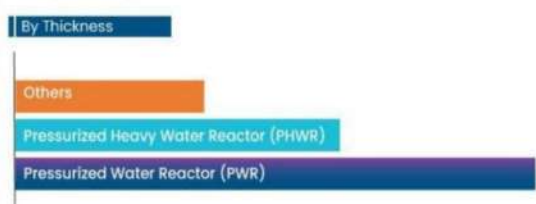
**Key Facts:**

- The United States and Iran have had hostile relations since the 1979 Iranian Revolution.
- In 2018, the U. S. withdrew from the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action under the Trump administration.
- After withdrawing from the nuclear deal, the U. S. launched the Maximum Pressure Campaign to restrict Iran’s oil exports and economy.
- In 2026, U. S. and Israeli strikes targeted Iranian leadership, including the killing of Ali Khamenei during the conflict.
- The conflict also triggered retaliatory attacks by Iran on U. S. facilities in Bahrain.

**US–Japan Nuclear Energy Deal (SMRs)**

The United States and Japan have unveiled a major nuclear energy deal following a meeting between Donald Trump and Sanae Takaichi. The agreement focuses on investing in next-generation nuclear energy, particularly Small Modular Reactors (SMRs), as part of a broader strategic and economic partnership.

Global Small Modular Reactor (SMR) Market Snapshot, 2025 – 2032



Value 2025: **US\$ 6.6 Bn**  
 Value 2032: **US\$ 9.2 Bn**  
 CAGR (2025 – 2032): **4.9%**



**Key Highlights**

- Japan will invest up to \$40 billion in building Small Modular Reactors (SMRs) in the United States.
- Reactors will be constructed in Tennessee and Alabama by companies such as GE Vernova and Hitachi.
- The deal is part of a larger US–Japan investment framework (~\$73 billion) covering energy and infrastructure.
- Additional investments include up to \$33 billion in natural gas projects in states like Texas and

Pennsylvania.

**About Small Modular Reactors (SMRs)**

- SMRs are advanced nuclear reactors with smaller capacity than traditional plants.

➤ Example: BWRX-300

**Features:**

- Faster construction time
- Lower cost
- Enhanced safety (passive safety systems)

**Slovenia Introduces Fuel Rationing**

Slovenia has become the first country in the European Union to introduce fuel rationing amid ongoing global energy disruptions.

**Why was Fuel Rationing Introduced?**

- Energy crisis triggered by US–Israel–Iran conflict
- Disruptions in global oil supply routes (especially Gulf region)
- Sharp rise in fuel prices across Europe

**Key Provisions of Fuel Rationing**

1. Private vehicles: Maximum 50 litres/day
2. Businesses & farmers: Maximum 200 litres/day

**What is “Fuel Tourism”?**

People from neighbouring countries (like Austria) crossing borders to buy cheaper fuel in Slovenia

This increased demand worsened supply pressure

**Ground Situation in Slovenia**

- Government clarified that fuel stocks are sufficient
- Issue is mainly distribution and sudden surge in demand
- Army deployed to assist fuel supply operations


**Global Context**

Many countries are taking emergency steps like:

- Fuel subsidies
- Export restrictions

**FROM WFH TO FUEL RATIONING AND ODD-EVEN FOR CARS: HOW COUNTRIES ARE RESPONDING TO THE OIL CRISIS**

	Petrol prices (US \$/ litre)		% change
	Feb-23	Mar-16	
Australia	1.11	1.47	32.4
Pakistan	0.92	1.15	25.0
USA	0.87	1.08	24.1
South Korea	1.28	1.45	13.3
Germany	2.08	2.34	12.5
China	1.08	1.19	10.2
Sri Lanka	1.1	1.18	7.3
UK	1.78	1.87	5.1
Malaysia	0.65	0.68	4.6
Brazil	1.17	1.22	4.3
Bhutan	0.67	0.68	1.5
Indonesia	0.72	0.73	1.4
Japan	0.99	1	1.0



Source: Globalpetrolprices.com, moneycontrol

**PAKISTAN**

- Schools, colleges shut for two weeks
- Four-day working week, 50% WFH for govt staff
- Fuel allocations to govt depts slashed 50%, non-essential govt vehicles withdrawn from roads

**SRI LANKA**

- Wednesday declared a mandatory public holiday for schools, universities, and non-essential state workers.
- Reintroduced National Fuel Pass (QR-based rationing); private vehicles capped at 15 litres/week, public transport at 200 litres

**BANGLADESH**

- All universities, foreign-curriculum schools, and coaching centres closed and moved to online classes to reduce electricity loads
- Fuel rationing since March 8
- 5-hour rolling blackouts for households, power garment export units
- 4 out of 5 state-run fertiliser plants shut due to gas shortage

**BHUTAN**

- To prevent hoarding, ban on fuel sales in jerry cans
- WFH activated, prioritised fuel rationing for emergency services

**PHILIPPINES**

- 4-day week for govt staff
- Private sector encouraged to adopt WFH
- Ban on non-essential public sector travel

**VIETNAM** | Businesses

urged to enable WFH, push people for public transport, cycling & carpooling

**MYANMAR** | Odd-even scheme for pvt vehicles

**CAMBODIA** | About a third of the 6,300 petrol stations closed around mid-March

**LAOS**

- WFH for civil servants.
- Rotational work shifts introduced to reduce commuting

**SOUTH AFRICA**

"Controlled allocation measures" rolled out at industry level as diesel signs go dark in several provinces

**EGYPT**

- From March 28, malls,

restaurants & retail outlets to shut by 9pm on weekdays. Govt buildings to shut by 6pm

- Illuminated billboards switched off

**KENYA** | Fuel rationing, effective ban on exports announced

**NEW ZEALAND**

- Air New Zealand has cancelled over 1,000 flights due to high jet fuel prices
- Govt is considering 1979-era 'car-less day' policy

**SLOVAKIA** | Diesel purchase quotas in place

**SLOVENIA** | MOL Slovenia, the country's second-largest fuel retailer, rationed fuel at 30 litres for cars, 200 litres for trucks for adequate supply

- Release of oil reserves
- Energy crisis linked to instability in oil transit routes like the Strait of Hormuz

**Slovenia:**

- Capital: Ljubljana
- Currency: Euro (€)
- Member of: EU, NATO

**Vietnam–Russia Nuclear Power Plant Agreement**

Vietnam and Russia have signed an intergovernmental agreement to build a nuclear power plant in Vietnam, marking a major step in reviving Vietnam’s nuclear energy programme. The project, known as Ninh Thuan 1 Nuclear Power Plant, will be constructed with Russian assistance and is expected to strengthen bilateral cooperation in the energy sector.

**Key Features of the Deal**

The agreement outlines the construction of two Russian-designed nuclear reactors with a combined capacity of about 2,400 MW. The project will be implemented with the involvement of Rosatom, which is one of the world’s leading nuclear power plant developers.

**Objectives and Significance**

The primary aim of this project is to boost Vietnam’s electricity generation capacity amid rising energy demand caused by rapid industrial growth and urbanization. It will also help reduce dependence on fossil fuels and support clean energy transition and emission reduction goals.

**Background and Revival of Nuclear Programme**

Vietnam had earlier suspended its nuclear power plans in 2016 due to high costs and safety concerns. However, the programme was revived in recent years to address increasing power shortages and energy security challenges.

**Additional Facts:**

- The project highlights strengthening strategic ties between Vietnam and Russia, especially in energy and infrastructure sectors.
- Vietnam aims to become a high-income economy (“tiger economy”) by 2050, and stable energy supply is crucial for this goal.
- Nuclear energy is considered a reliable base-load power source, unlike intermittent renewable sources like solar and wind.
- Russia is a major global exporter of nuclear technology and has built plants in countries like Bangladesh, China, and Belarus.

**Vietnam**

- Capital: Hanoi
- Currency: Vietnamese Dong (VND)
- General Secretary: Tô Lâm
- Prime Minister: Phạm Minh Chính

**Russia**

- Capital: Moscow
- Currency: Russian Ruble (RUB)
- President: Vladimir Putin

**Vietnam–Russia: Key Facts**

- Diplomatic Relations: Established in 1950 (during Soviet Union era).
- Strategic Partnership: Upgraded to Comprehensive Strategic Partnership in 2012.



- Key Sector of Cooperation: Energy (especially oil, gas, and nuclear energy).
- Major Russian Company Involved: Rosatom
- Important Project: Ninh Thuan 1 Nuclear Power Plant (planned with Russian support).
- Defence Cooperation: Russia is a major arms supplier to Vietnam.
- Energy Projects: Joint oil exploration in South China Sea via Vietsovpetro.
- Trade: Includes energy, machinery, fertilizers, and defence equipment.
- Education & Culture: Many Vietnamese students study in Russia under scholarship programs.
- Global Grouping: Both countries are part of Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM) cooperation framework.

### Trump's 15-Point Peace Plan for Iran

U.S. President Donald Trump has proposed a 15-point peace framework aimed at ending the ongoing conflict with Iran and stabilizing the West Asian region. The proposal focuses on ceasefire, nuclear restrictions, and reopening critical global energy routes.

#### Key Provisions of the Plan

- Complete halt to Iran's nuclear program, including uranium enrichment and dismantling of facilities
- Ban on ballistic missile development and reduction of support to militant groups
- Reopening and ensuring free navigation through the Strait of Hormuz, a vital global oil route
- Proposal of a temporary ceasefire (around one month) to enable negotiations

#### In return, the U.S. may offer:

- Sanctions relief
- Support for civilian nuclear energy programme

#### Additional Facts:

- The conflict began in 2026 after U.S.-Israel strikes on Iran, leading to closure of the Strait of Hormuz
- Disruptions in the strait caused sharp rise in global oil prices
- The plan involves mediators like Pakistan, Turkey, and Egypt
- Similar past agreement: Iran Nuclear Deal (JCPOA, 2015) (later withdrawn by the U.S.)
- West Asia (Middle East) is crucial for global energy security and geopolitics

#### Strategic Importance of Strait of Hormuz

- The Strait of Hormuz carries about 20% of global oil and energy supplies, making it one of the world's most critical chokepoints
- The plan proposes declaring it a "free maritime zone", ensuring uninterrupted global trade
- Iran's control over the strait gives it significant geopolitical leverage, which the plan seeks to limit

#### Iran's Response & Challenges

Iran has shown skepticism and rejection of the proposal, calling it unrealistic

Tehran demands:

- Removal of U.S. military presence in the region
- War reparations and security guarantees

- Ongoing conflict and mistrust make the plan difficult to implement

## Economy & Trade

### US Section 301 Investigation

**Background of the Issue**

The United States has launched a Section 301 investigation into India and 15 other economies. The probe was initiated by the Office of the United States Trade Representative (USTR). It comes after the US Supreme Court struck down tariffs imposed under the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (IEEPA), limiting the US President’s power to impose broad tariffs. As a result, the US is now using other legal tools like Section 301 of the Trade Act of 1974 to examine trade practices of partner countries.

**What is Section 301 of the US Trade Act?**

Section 301 allows the US government to investigate unfair trade practices by foreign countries that harm US commerce. If such practices are found, the US can impose retaliatory measures such as tariffs or trade restrictions. The investigation is conducted by the USTR and typically involves consultations, hearings, and stakeholder comments before action is taken.

**Countries Under Investigation**

The probe targets several major US trading partners, including:

India, China, European Union, Japan, South Korea, Vietnam, Taiwan, Mexico, Bangladesh, Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia, Cambodia, Norway, Singapore & Switzerland

These economies are being examined for “structural excess manufacturing capacity” and overproduction in certain industries.



**Why the US Launched the Investigation**

The US has cited several concerns:

1. Excess Industrial Capacity: Some countries are believed to maintain production capacity far beyond domestic demand, leading to overproduction.
2. Trade Surpluses: Countries with large trade surpluses with the US are seen as contributing to global market imbalances.
3. Impact on US Manufacturing: Overproduction abroad can flood global markets with cheaper goods, harming American industries and jobs.
4. Reshoring Supply Chains: The US aims to strengthen domestic manufacturing and supply chains by addressing perceived unfair competition.

**Why India is Being Targeted**

The US highlighted several sectors where India has large production capacity and export potential, including: solar modules, petrochemicals, steel, textiles, construction materials, healthcare products & automotive goods. India had a goods trade surplus of about \$58 billion with the US in 2025, which is also cited as a concern.

**Investigation Process**

The probe was formally launched on March 11. Written comments from stakeholders will be invited starting March 17. Public hearings by the Section 301 Committee are scheduled for May 5. Based on findings, the US could impose tariffs or other trade measures on the targeted countries.

### Impact on India–US Trade Relations

The investigation comes when India and the US are negotiating a bilateral trade agreement. Experts believe the probe may be used as leverage in trade negotiations. If tariffs are imposed, it could affect key Indian export sectors and ongoing trade talks.

### Why the Issue is Important?

The probe signals a shift in US trade strategy after legal limits on tariff powers. It could reshape global trade relations and supply chains. For India, the outcome may affect exports, manufacturing sectors, and trade negotiations with the US.

### Texas Refinery Project

**TEXAS PROJECT FOR SHALE OIL**

- Refinery's developer America First Refining said it had 'received a 9-figure investment from a global supermajor at a 10-figure valuation' in Feb, without naming RIL
- Project expected to offset \$300 billion in the US-India trade deficit through a 20-year product offtake agreement with RIL
- Industry experts say the investment could deepen India-US economic cooperation, expand RIL's international presence and potentially open future moves into fuel distribution and retail in North America



**THIS IS A HISTORIC \$300 BILLION DEAL – THE BIGGEST IN US HISTORY... Thank you to our partners in India, and their largest privately held Energy Company, Reliance, for this tremendous investment!**  
— Donald Trump

### Background of the Announcement

The US President Donald Trump announced a major oil refinery project in Brownsville, Texas. The project involves investment support from Reliance Industries, India's largest private-sector company. It is expected to be the first new oil refinery built in the United States in nearly 50 years.

### Key Details of the Project

The refinery will be developed by America First Refining. It will be located at the Port of Brownsville on the US Gulf Coast. Construction is expected to begin in 2026. The refinery is designed to process around 60 million barrels of crude oil per year (about 160,000–168,000 barrels per day).

### Why the Deal is Called a “\$300-Billion Project”

The \$300-billion figure refers to the total value of crude processed and fuel produced over about 20 years, not the construction cost.

The refinery is expected to:

- process about 1.2 billion barrels of US shale oil (worth around \$125 billion)
- produce about 50 billion gallons of refined fuel (worth around \$175 billion).

Together, this creates an estimated \$300-billion economic value over the long term.

### Role of Reliance Industries

Reliance has provided major investment support for the refinery project. It has also signed a 20-year offtake agreement to purchase and distribute products produced by the refinery. Reliance operates the world's largest refining complex at Jamnagar, Gujarat, giving it strong expertise in refining operations.

### Why the US Wants a New Refinery

Several strategic reasons explain the project:

1. Increase Domestic Refining Capacity: The US produces large amounts of shale oil, but many existing refineries are designed for heavier imported crude.
2. Energy Security: Refining domestic shale oil reduces dependence on foreign refining and imported crude.
3. Rising Fuel Prices: The announcement comes amid higher global oil prices and geopolitical tensions in West Asia, affecting fuel markets.

4. Export Opportunities: The location at Brownsville port suggests the refinery may export refined fuels to global markets.

**Why the Project is Significant**

It marks the first new refinery project in the US in decades, reflecting a shift toward expanding domestic energy infrastructure. It highlights growing energy cooperation between the United States and India through companies like Reliance. The refinery is designed specifically for American light shale oil, which could reshape US refining patterns.

**Canada uranium deal**

**INDIA'S NUCLEAR POWER PIVOT: THE CANADA URANIUM DEAL**

Securing fuel for a nuclear future through international partnership.

**DOMESTIC URANIUM GAP LIMITS GROWTH**  
Imports essential for ambitious reactor expansion

**CANADA: A STRATEGIC FUEL PILLAR**  
Ensures reliable, long-term supply for uninterrupted operations.

**DIVERSIFYING IMPORTS FOR ENERGY SECURITY**  
Reduces over-reliance on single suppliers; minimizes geopolitical vulnerabilities.

**LOW-CARBON STABILITY**  
Provides stable base-load power.

**HIGH COSTS**  
Requires significant capital investment and rigorous waste management.

**Why in News?**

During the visit of Mark Carney to India, a long-term uranium supply agreement was signed. The deal was signed between India's Department of Atomic Energy and Canadian company Cameco.

**Another Uranium Deal:**

➤ India recently signed another uranium supply agreement with Kazatomprom, the state-owned uranium company of Kazakhstan.

**Why Uranium Imports Are Important**

- Fuel Security for Nuclear Reactors:
- India has limited domestic uranium reserves.
- Importing uranium from Canada ensures stable fuel

supply for nuclear power plants.

**Expansion of Nuclear Energy:**

- India plans to significantly increase its nuclear power capacity as part of its clean energy transition.
- Reliable uranium imports support new reactor projects and continuous operation of existing plants.

**Clean Energy and Climate Goals:**

- Nuclear energy produces low-carbon electricity.
- The uranium deal supports India's climate commitments and energy transition strategy.

**Strategic Energy Partnership:**

- The agreement strengthens India–Canada cooperation in civil nuclear energy following the India–Canada Civil Nuclear Agreement.
- Note: India has uranium deposits but low-grade ore (0.02–0.45%) compared to the global average 1–2%.
- As a result, over 70% of India's uranium needs are met through imports.
- India currently consumes about 1,500–2,000 tonnes of uranium annually.

**India's Nuclear Expansion Plan:**

- The government plans to increase nuclear power capacity from 9 GW to 100 GW by 2047.
- Domestic uranium production may meet only about 30% of future demand.
- Hence, long-term import contracts are essential.

**Diversification of Uranium Supply**

- India now imports uranium from several countries including:
- Canada
- Kazakhstan
- Uzbekistan
- Russia (for reactors at Kudankulam Nuclear Power Plant).
- Future agreements may also involve Australia and the United States.

**India’s Three-Stage Nuclear Programme:**

- India aims to eventually rely on thorium-based nuclear energy.
- A Prototype Fast Breeder Reactor is being developed at Kalpakkam.
- This programme was originally envisioned by Homi J. Bhabha in the 1950s.

**Canada:**

- Head of State: Charles III
- Prime Minister: Justin Trudeau
- Capital: Ottawa
- Continent: North America
- Official Languages: English and French
- Currency: Canadian Dollar

**Key Features of the Deal:**

- 22 million pounds (about 10,000 tonnes) of uranium will be supplied.
- Supply period: 2027–2035.
- Contract value: 2.6 billion Canadian dollars (about \$1.9 billion).
- Uranium will be used to fuel India’s nuclear reactors.

**Key Takeaway:**

The Canada uranium supply deal strengthens India’s nuclear fuel security, supports the plan to expand nuclear capacity to 100 GW by 2047, and diversifies uranium import sources.

**India and Finland Strengthen Bilateral Cooperation**



**What is the India–Finland Strategic Partnership?**

- Narendra Modi and Alexander Stubb elevated India–Finland relations to a “Strategic Partnership in Digitalisation and Sustainability.”
- The partnership focuses on strengthening cooperation in technology, sustainability, innovation, and global governance.
- The move also aligns with the recently concluded India–European Union Free Trade Agreement 2026.

**Agreements Signed Between India and Finland:**

- Three major agreements (MoUs) were signed in the following areas:

**Migration and Mobility Agreement:**

- Facilitates movement of skilled professionals, talent, and students between the two countries.

**Environmental Cooperation:**

- Focus on sustainable development and environmental protection.
- Statistical Collaboration:
- Enhances data sharing and statistical cooperation for policymaking.
- These agreements aim to promote economic exchanges, knowledge sharing, and sustainable growth.

**Sustainability and Circular Economy:**

- India and Finland will co-host the World Circular Economy Forum in India.

**Cooperation will expand in:**

- Clean energy
- Environmental protection
- Sustainable technologies
- Finland’s expertise in circular economy models aligns with India’s sustainability and climate goals.

**Defence, Space and Critical Technologies:**

- Both nations agreed to strengthen cooperation in:
- Defence and security technologies
- Space cooperation
- Semiconductor manufacturing
- Critical minerals supply chains
- This cooperation aims to improve technological self-reliance and supply chain resilience.

**Examples of India–Finland Cooperation:**

**Technology and Infrastructure**

- Nokia has played a key role in developing telecommunication networks in India.
- Finnish architects contributed to the construction of the Chenab Rail Bridge, the world’s highest railway bridge.
- Collaboration helped establish the largest bamboo-to-bioethanol refinery in Numaligarh.

**Education and Talent Mobility:**

- Finland is becoming a popular destination for Indian students and professionals.

**The Migration and Mobility Agreement supports:**

- Legal migration pathways
- Talent exchange
- Teacher training programmes

**Areas of Strategic Cooperation:**

**Digital and Emerging Technologies:**

Both countries will collaborate in advanced technology sectors such as:

- Artificial Intelligence (AI)
- 6G telecommunications
- Quantum computing
- Digital infrastructure
- The partnership aims to promote secure, trustworthy, and resilient digital ecosystems.

- Research partnerships in education
- Finland’s globally renowned education system offers valuable insights for India’s education reforms.

**Arctic and Polar Cooperation:**

- Finland is an important partner for India in the Nordic and Arctic regions.

**Key areas of cooperation include:**

- Arctic and polar scientific research
- Climate change monitoring
- Sustainable resource management
- This collaboration aligns with India’s Arctic Policy 2022.

**India–Finland Relations: Background**

- Finland established diplomatic relations with India in 1949.
- Bilateral trade currently ranges between €1. 5–2 billion annually.
- Finland maintains a slight trade surplus in goods trade.

**MFN Status**

Republic of India and the European Union (EU) have agreed to grant each other Most Favoured Nation (MFN) status for five years as part of the India-EU Free Trade Agreement (FTA) that was finalised on 27 January 2026 after nearly two decades of negotiations.

**Key provision:**

- Under the MFN clause in the proposed trade deal, neither side can offer more favourable tariff concessions or trade terms to other trade partners without extending the same benefits to the other party during the five-year period once the FTA comes into force, reinforcing non-discriminatory trade practices.

**Trade deal context:**

- The FTA is expected to reduce or eliminate tariffs on the majority of goods exchanged between India and the EU, enhancing market access for both sides.
- The agreement also includes commitments to abide by World Trade Organization (WTO) principles, cooperation in digital trade, customs facilitation, and aligning food safety and certification processes with international standards.

**What is Most Favoured Nation (MFN) Status?**

MFN status is a principle in international trade under WTO rules that requires a country to grant the same trade advantages (like low tariffs) it gives to any one trading partner to all WTO members — ensuring non-discrimination in tariff treatment.

**Purpose of MFN in FTAs:**

While MFN is a standard WTO obligation, in the context of an FTA, a mutual MFN clause means neither party can give better tariff treatment to a third country without offering equal terms to the FTA partner for a set period (here five years). This prevents preferential treatment leakage and strengthens the deal’s stability.

**India–EU Free Trade Agreement:**

- The India–EU FTA was concluded on 27 January 2026 after nearly 20 years of negotiations.
- The pact aims to significantly boost bilateral trade, joining markets worth over USD 11 trillion and covering 93% of Indian exports to the EU duty-free.

- Certain sensitive agricultural products such as dairy, rice, sugar and beef have been excluded from tariff liberalisation to protect domestic sectors.

**WTO and Trade Rules:**

The World Trade Organization (WTO) oversees global trade norms, including the MFN principle. However, FTAs are exceptions to MFN under WTO as they allow participating members to offer preferential treatment to each other. The India-EU deal’s time-bound MFN clause is an additional bilateral commitment.

**European Union – Key Facts**

**Establishment & Evolution**

- Established by the Maastricht Treaty (1993), officially called the Treaty on European Union.
- Originated from the European Economic Community (EEC) formed in 1957 (Treaty of Rome).
- Purpose: Promote economic integration, political cooperation, and peace in Europe.

**Membership**

- Currently consists of 27 member countries.
- The United Kingdom left the EU in 2020 through Brexit.
- Headquarters: Brussels, Belgium.

**Key Institutions**

- European Commission – Executive arm; proposes legislation and ensures implementation.
- European Parliament – Directly elected legislative body.
- Council of the European Union – Represents member state governments.
- European Council – Sets overall political direction.
- Court of Justice of the European Union – Ensures uniform interpretation of EU law.
- European Central Bank – Manages the Euro and monetary policy.

**Currency**

- Official currency: Euro (€).
- Used by 20 out of 27 EU countries (Eurozone members).

**President of the European Council: António Costa**

- President of the European Commission: Ursula von der Leyen
- Presidency of the Council of the European Union: Cyprus
- President of the European Parliament: Roberta Metsola

**India and Israel Elevate Ties**

During the ongoing state visit of Prime Minister Narendra Modi to Israel, both countries signed 16 Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) and formally announced the elevation of bilateral relations to a “Special Strategic Partnership.” The agreements were signed in Jerusalem in the presence of Prime Minister Modi and his Israeli counterpart Benjamin Netanyahu.

**India–Israel Diplomatic Relations**

- India and Israel established full diplomatic relations in 1992 after decades of limited engagement.
- Strategic cooperation has grown significantly over the past three decades, covering defence, agriculture, water management, and technology.

**India’s Unified Payments Interface (UPI)**

- UPI is a real-time payments system developed by the National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) that enables instant funds transfer across banks and merchants.
- The agreement to enable UPI in Israel is expected to facilitate seamless digital payments, boost tourism, and strengthen financial connectivity.

**National Payments Corporation of India:**

- Founded: 19 December 2016
- Headquarters: Mumbai, Maharashtra, India
- Non-Exe Chairman: Ajay Kumar Choudhary
- MD & CEO: Dilip Asbe

**India-Israel Defence Cooperation**

Israel is one of India’s major defence partners, with cooperation in joint development, production, and technological transfers. The relationship has expanded from traditional defence equipment to focus on high-tech and co-development projects.

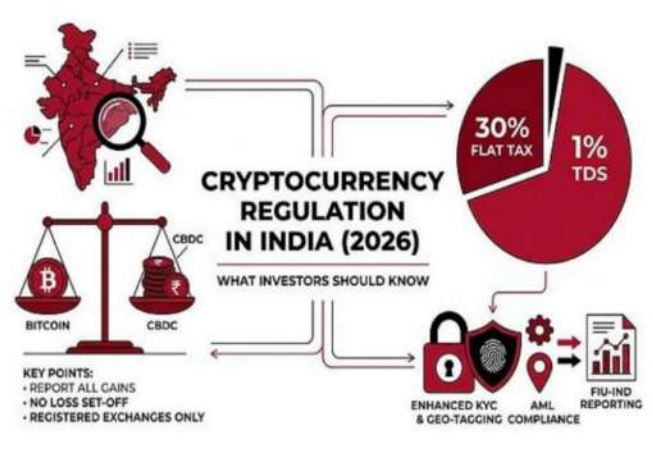
**Key Areas of Cooperation Covered by the MoUs**

- The 16 MoUs and agreements span multiple strategic and emerging sectors, such as:
- Artificial Intelligence (AI) and emerging technologies
- Agriculture and innovation centres
- Cybersecurity and digital payments (UPI linkage)
- Education and research collaboration
- Commerce, services, and manufacturing protocols
- Cultural and people-to-people exchanges
- These agreements are expected to enhance high-tech engagement, trade flows, research cooperation, and bilateral economic integration.

**Tax Rules to Include Crypto Assets and CBDC in Financial Reporting**

**Why in News?**

- The Government of India has amended the Income Tax Rules to expand the financial reporting framework.
- The amendment brings crypto assets, Central Bank Digital Currency (CBDC), and certain electronic money products within the reporting system.



**Expansion of Financial Asset Definition**

- The revised rules introduce the concept of “relevant crypto-assets.”
- The definition of financial assets now includes interests linked to crypto assets.

**Transactions Covered**

- The framework will now include reporting of:
- Exchange between crypto assets and fiat currencies
- Exchange between different crypto assets.

**Inclusion of CBDC and Electronic Money**

- Entities holding Central Bank Digital Currency (CBDC) or certain electronic money products for customers may be treated as depository institutions.
- This brings them under the reporting financial institution framework.

**Compliance Relaxation for Small Accounts**

- Some electronic money accounts may receive simplified treatment if the rolling 90-day average balance does not exceed \$10,000.

**Reporting Framework Alignment**

- The rules strengthen India’s reporting obligations under:
  - Foreign Account Tax Compliance Act (FATCA)
  - Common Reporting Standard (CRS).
- These frameworks require financial institutions to identify and report accounts held by foreign tax residents.

**Global Crypto Reporting Standard**

- The amendments also align with the Crypto-Asset Reporting Framework (CARF), designed to improve tax transparency in digital assets globally.

**Objective**

- Ensure tax transparency and regulatory oversight of digital assets.
- Adapt the tax reporting system to the rapidly evolving digital financial ecosystem.

**Additional Reporting Requirements**

- Financial institutions must now maintain extra information such as:
  - Whether the account holder submitted valid self-certification
  - Whether the account is joint
  - Number of joint account holders.

**Fiscal Health Index 2026**

The Fiscal Health Index (FHI) 2026, released by the NITI Aayog, evaluates the financial performance of Indian states for FY 2023–24. The index ranks states based on their fiscal discipline, revenue generation, expenditure quality, and debt sustainability. According to the latest index, Odisha retained the top position, followed by Goa and Jharkhand, showcasing strong fiscal management. Other states in the top 10 include Gujarat, Maharashtra, Chhattisgarh, Telangana, Uttar Pradesh, Karnataka, and Madhya Pradesh. At the lower end, states like Punjab, West Bengal, Andhra Pradesh, and Kerala performed poorly, indicating concerns related to high debt and weak fiscal discipline.

**Parameters Used in the Index**

The index evaluates states on key fiscal indicators such as:

- Revenue Mobilisation
- Quality of Expenditure
- Fiscal Prudence (Deficit Management)
- Debt Index
- Debt Sustainability

**What is Fiscal Health Index (FHI)?**

The Fiscal Health Index is a composite index developed by NITI Aayog to assess the fiscal strength of states. It helps in benchmarking states and promoting better financial governance and cooperative federalism.

These indicators collectively measure how efficiently a state manages its finances.

**Category-wise Classification**

States are grouped into categories based on performance:

- Achievers → e. g. , Odisha, Goa, Jharkhand
- Front Runners
- Performers
- Aspirational States

This classification helps identify best practices and areas needing improvement.

### Importance of Fiscal Health

**State finances are crucial because:**

States account for ~2/3rd of public expenditure in India

Fiscal discipline ensures economic stability and growth

Poor fiscal health leads to high debt, deficits, and reduced development spending

### First GI-Tagged Joha Rice to UK and Italy

India exported the first consignment of 25 metric tonnes of GI-tagged Joha rice from Assam to the United Kingdom and Italy on 12 March 2026, facilitated by the Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority (APEDA) under the Ministry of Commerce and Industry.

#### Key Highlights

- The export was facilitated by Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority (APEDA).
- The 25-metric-tonne consignment was sent from Assam to the United Kingdom and Italy.
- The shipment was organised in collaboration with the Assam Department of Agriculture.
- The export aims to promote indigenous agricultural products from Northeast India in global markets.
- It is expected to increase income opportunities for farmers and boost India's agricultural exports.

#### About Joha Rice

- Joha Rice is a short-grain aromatic rice variety traditionally grown in Assam.
- It is known for its distinct fragrance, soft texture and rich taste.
- The rice received Geographical Indication (GI) status in 2017, recognising its unique origin and traditional cultivation.
- Major producing districts include Sivasagar, Jorhat, Golaghat, Nagaon and Majuli.
- The crop is cultivated across over 21,000 hectares in Assam, producing around 43,000 metric tonnes annually.

#### Role of APEDA

- Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority is a statutory body established under the APEDA Act, 1985.
- It functions under the Ministry of Commerce and

Industry.

- The authority promotes export of agricultural and processed food products and helps connect Indian producers with global markets.
- APEDA also promotes GI-tagged agricultural products internationally.

## India–China Trade via Lipulekh Pass

India and China are set to resume border trade through the Lipulekh Pass in June 2026 after a six-year suspension. The trade route was closed in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic and border tensions. Its reopening marks the revival of a historically significant Himalayan trade corridor.



### About Lipulekh Pass

Lipulekh Pass is a strategic mountain pass located in Uttarakhand near the India–China–Nepal tri-junction. It connects India with the Tibet region of China and has traditionally been used for trade and pilgrimage (Kailash Mansarovar Yatra).

### Significance of Trade Resumption

➤ Revival of cross-border trade and economic activity in border areas, especially Uttarakhand

- Boost to local livelihoods and traditional trade communities
- Indicates a possible easing of India–China relations after prolonged tensions
- Part of broader efforts to enhance bilateral economic engagement

### Geopolitical Concerns

- Nepal has raised objections, as the Lipulekh area is part of the disputed Kalapani region
- The issue stems from boundary disagreements under the 1816 Treaty of Sugauli
- The move may trigger diplomatic sensitivities in India–Nepal relations

### Background & Timeline

- Lipulekh Pass was reopened for trade in 1992 after the 1962 war
- Trade occurs seasonally (June–September) due to harsh weather
- Suspension in 2020 (COVID-19 + border tensions)
- Restart planned in June 2026

### Other India–China trade passes:

- Nathu La (Sikkim)
- Shipki La (Himachal Pradesh)
- Elevation of Lipulekh Pass: ~5,334 meters
- Key exports from India: spices, pulses, jaggery, textiles
- Key imports from China (Tibet): wool, borax, livestock products

## Digital Marketplace for Drone Procurement

The United States Army has introduced a new digital marketplace for Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS) aimed at accelerating the procurement of drones and expanding access to advanced unmanned technologies. This initiative is designed to modernize the traditional defence acquisition process, which is often slow and complex, by providing a faster and more efficient platform for purchasing drone systems.

### Key Points

- The platform acts as a one-stop digital marketplace for purchasing vetted drone systems.
- It enables Army units, government agencies, and allied nations to compare, evaluate, and procure drones efficiently.

- Developed in collaboration with Amazon Web Services (AWS) and the Army Enterprise Cloud Management Agency.

## How the new drone procurement model will function

MILITARY UNITS	GENERAL STAFF AFU	DIGITAL RATING	PROCUREMENT	SUPPLY
Request based on battlefield needs	List of equipment defined by technical specifications (without brand names or manufacturers)	UAV assessment based on combat data from digital systems: ePoints, DOT-Chain, Brave1 Market, DELTA, and Mission Control	Defence Procurement Agency DOT procures drones based on the rating, minimizing human intervention	Military units receive equipment that has delivered real combat results

**Includes features like:**

- Product comparison tools
- Feedback mechanisms
- Direct ordering system
- Aims to reduce procurement delays and deliver technology faster to soldiers.
- Marks a shift from traditional, slow defence procurement systems to a more agile and transparent model.
- Also intended to streamline foreign military sales (FMS) and strengthen defence partnerships.

**Additional Facts:**

- UAS (Unmanned Aircraft Systems): Includes drones along with their control systems and communication links.
- The marketplace is described as an “Amazon-like platform” for military drone procurement.
- This initiative aligns with the U.S. military’s broader push toward rapid acquisition and deployment of emerging technologies, especially drones.
- The U.S. Army is increasingly focusing on mass deployment of low-cost drones, influenced by modern warfare trends (e.g., Ukraine conflict).
- The move helps expand the defence industrial base by allowing participation from more private and innovative firms.

**LPG vs LNG & Impact of West Asia Conflict**

The ongoing West Asia conflict has significantly disrupted global energy supplies, particularly affecting India’s imports of Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG) and Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG). Both LPG and LNG are hydrocarbon gases converted into liquid form for storage and transport, but they differ in composition, storage methods, and usage.

**Key Differences Between LPG and LNG**

- LPG: Mainly propane and butane; used for cooking (domestic cylinders).
- LNG: Primarily methane; used in power generation and industries.
- LNG requires cryogenic storage at very low temperatures, while LPG is easier to store and transport.

**Impact of Conflict on India**

- The conflict has disrupted shipping routes, especially through the Strait of Hormuz, a critical global energy chokepoint.

- Around 60% of India’s LPG demand is met through imports
- Nearly 90% of LPG imports pass via the Strait of Hormuz
- This has disrupted nearly 54% of LPG supplies, forcing the government to prioritise household consumption over industrial use

**Government Response**

- To manage the crisis:
- Supply to commercial and industrial sectors has been reduced
- Priority is given to domestic cooking needs
- India is exploring alternative energy sources and supply routes

**Additional Facts**

- Strait of Hormuz: Handles about 20% of global oil trade (major chokepoint)
- Energy Security: Refers to uninterrupted availability of energy at affordable prices
- India maintains Strategic Petroleum Reserves (SPR) as a buffer against such shocks
- LPG is a key component of schemes like Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana (PMUY)
- LNG is increasingly used as a cleaner transition fuel compared to coal

**“Fake It Until You Make It! Act As If You Had All The Confidence You Require Until It Becomes Your Reality.”**

## Defence & Security

### Indigenous Air Droppable Container

#### Why in News?

Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) and the Indian Navy successfully conducted in-flight release trials of the indigenous Air Droppable Container (ADC-150). The trials were carried out from a Boeing P-8I Poseidon aircraft off the coast of Goa between February 21 and March 1, 2026.

#### About Air Droppable Container (ADC-150):

- Indigenously designed and developed aerial delivery system.
- Capable of carrying up to 150 kg payload.
- Designed to deliver:
  - Critical equipment
  - Essential stores
  - Medical supplies

#### Key DRDO Laboratories Involved:

- Naval Science and Technological Laboratory, Visakhapatnam – Nodal laboratory for the project.
- Aerial Delivery Research and Development Establishment, Agra – Developed the parachute system.
- Centre for Military Airworthiness and Certification, Bengaluru – Provided flight clearance and certification.
- Defence Research and Development Laboratory, Hyderabad – Provided instrumentation support.

#### Purpose:

- Provide rapid logistical support to naval ships deployed in deep seas.

#### Operational Role:

- Enhances the Indian Navy's blue-water operational logistics capability.
- Allows emergency delivery of supplies to naval vessels operating far from the coastline.
- Supports quick response during distress situations at sea.

#### Aircraft Used for Trials:

- Trials were conducted using the Boeing P-8I Poseidon.
- The aircraft is used by the Indian Navy for:
  - Maritime surveillance
  - Anti-submarine warfare
  - Long-range reconnaissance

#### Future Induction:

- After the successful completion of all developmental flight trials, the ADC-150 system is expected to be inducted into the Indian Navy soon.
- It will strengthen India's maritime logistics and operational readiness.

### VSHORADS

The Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) successfully conducted three consecutive flight trials of the Very Short-Range Air Defence System (VSHORADS) from the Integrated Test Range (ITR), Chandipur off the coast of Odisha.

**Operational Role:**

- VSHORADS is meant to augment India’s short-range air defence capability, especially in challenging terrains like mountain fronts.
- It can be deployed rapidly by infantry and forces needing mobile air defence solutions.

**Technical Features:**

- It uses dual-waveband infrared guidance and modern avionics for improved tracking.
- The propulsion is provided by a dual-thrust solid rocket motor.
- Operational range is typically around 6 km with high maneuverability against fast moving threats.

**What is VSHORADS?**

- VSHORADS stands for Very Short-Range Air Defence System.
- It is a man-portable air defence missile system (MANPAD) designed to engage low-altitude aerial targets such as aircraft, helicopters, and UAVs at short ranges.
- The system is indigenously developed by DRDO’s Research Centre Imarat (RCI) with other DRDO labs and industry partners.

**Collapse of Maoist Insurgency in India**

**What happened?**

The long-running Maoist insurgency in India, once the country’s most serious internal security challenge, has significantly weakened and shrunk in territorial influence and organisational strength by early 2026, raising questions about whether the movement can revive.

**Key Developments Leading to the Collapse**

**Severe Attrition of Leadership:**

Intensive security operations have led to the death, arrest, or surrender of many top leaders of the Communist Party of India (Maoist), including senior commanders and Central Committee members, resulting in a deep leadership vacuum.

**Reduction in Affected Areas:**

The number of Left Wing Extremism (LWE)-affected districts in India has fallen dramatically — from nearly 200 in the early 2000s to just 38 by late 2025, with only seven now classified as affected in early 2026.

**Internal Security Significance:**  
The decline of Maoism is considered one of India’s major internal security achievements after earlier successes in curbing terrorism in areas like Punjab in the 1990s.

**Lower Violence and Casualties:**

Incidents of Maoist violence and resultant deaths have decreased substantially over the past decade, signalling a decline in operational capability.

**Enhanced Security Measures:**

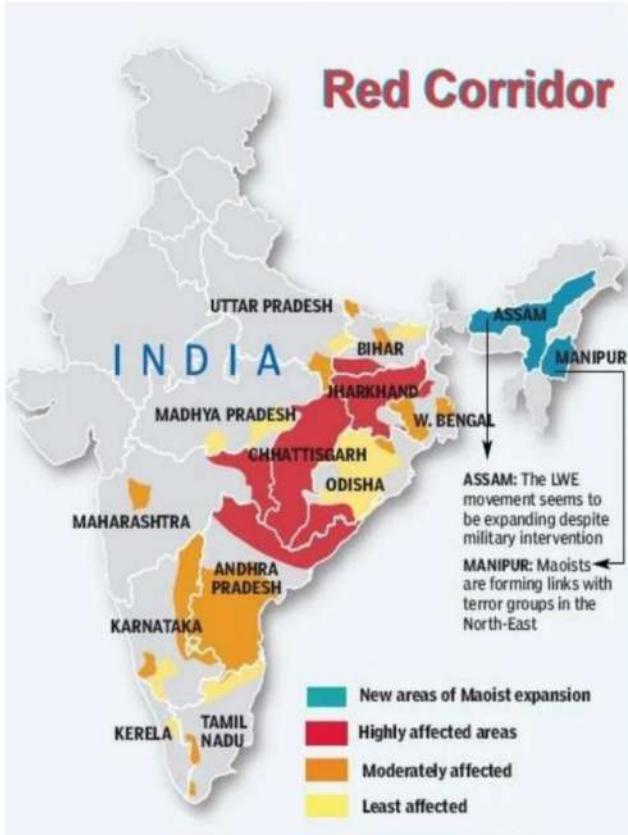
The Indian state used better intelligence, fortified police stations, specialised forces (like CoBRA and District Reserve Guard), expanded mobile coverage, and intensive counter-insurgency operations to dismantle Maoist strongholds.

**Improved Governance and Connectivity:**

Infrastructure development such as roads, community services, and digital connectivity in previously remote tribal areas reduced their dependence on insurgent influence.

**Surrenders and Rehabilitation:**

Large numbers of cadres and commanders have surrendered under government surrender and rehabilitation policies, reducing manpower and morale within the movement.



**Additional Facts:**

**Origins of Maoist Insurgency:**

The movement traces back to the Naxalbari uprising in 1967 in West Bengal, based on Maoist ideology seeking revolution against perceived exploitation and inequality.

Over time, it grew into the Communist Party of India (Maoist) after unification of several Maoist groups.

**Red Corridor:**

The “Red Corridor” refers to the region across central and eastern India — including parts of Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Odisha, Bihar, West Bengal, Telangana, Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh — that were once heavily affected by Maoist activity.

**National Policy and Action Plan:**

India’s National Policy and Action Plan on Left Wing Extremism adopted a multi-dimensional strategy combining security, development and governance reforms to counter insurgency.

**Rehabilitation and Reintegration:**

The government provides incentives under surrender and rehabilitation policies to encourage Maoist cadres to reintegrate into mainstream society with financial assistance and skill development support.

**Remaining Challenges:**

Despite major gains, pockets of resistance remain, especially in forested regions like Bastar (Chhattisgarh), and experts caution against complacency, noting that structural causes such as poverty, land alienation, and governance gaps can still fuel insurgent beliefs if unaddressed.

**Why Torpedoed Iranian Warship Is a Political Problem for India?**

**Why in News?**

An Iranian warship IRIS Dena was sunk by a U.S. submarine near the coast of Sri Lanka, creating diplomatic and strategic challenges for India.

**Connection with India:**

- Just days before the attack, IRIS Dena participated in the International Fleet Review 2026 hosted by India in Visakhapatnam.
- The naval exercise involved ships from about 40 countries, including the United States and Russia.

**Key Points:**

- The Iranian frigate IRIS Dena was torpedoed by a U.S. submarine in the Indian Ocean near Sri Lanka.
- Around 32 sailors were rescued, while over 100 sailors were reported dead or missing.
- The attack marked the first time since World War II that a U.S. submarine attacked a surface vessel.

**Why It Is a Political Problem for India?**

**Strategic Location**

The attack occurred in the Indian Ocean Region, close to India’s maritime neighbourhood and within Sri Lanka’s Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ).

**Diplomatic Balancing**

- India maintains relations with Iran, United States, Israel, and Gulf countries.
- Taking sides could affect its diplomatic ties.

**Pressure on Strategic Autonomy**

- India traditionally follows a neutral foreign policy approach called strategic autonomy.
- The incident puts pressure on Narendra Modi to clarify India’s position.

**Domestic Political Criticism**

Opposition leaders criticised the government for not strongly reacting, noting that the ship had recently been a guest of India’s Navy.

**India’s Response:**

- The Indian Navy deployed aircraft and ships to assist rescue operations with the Sri Lanka Navy.
- India has called for dialogue and peaceful resolution of conflicts.

**Conclusion:**

The sinking of IRIS Dena highlights India’s diplomatic challenge of balancing ties with competing global powers while maintaining stability in the Indian Ocean Region.

**Global Terrorism Index 2026**



According to the latest Global Terrorism Index (GTI) 2026, Pakistan has been ranked as the most affected country by terrorism, recording a 6% rise in terrorism-related deaths. This highlights worsening internal security conditions despite a broader global decline in terrorism fatalities.

**Key Findings of the Report**

Pakistan witnessed an increase in terror-related deaths by around 6%, indicating rising instability.

Despite this, global terrorism deaths declined significantly, showing contrasting regional trends.

Terror activities remain concentrated in specific regions, especially conflict-prone areas.

**Global Trends in Terrorism**

Global terrorism deaths fell by about 28% to nearly 5,500 deaths in 2025, the lowest in recent years.

However, terrorism is becoming more localized and concentrated, especially in regions like the Sahel (Africa).

Western countries have seen a rise in lone-wolf and youth-driven attacks.

**Concerns Highlighted**

- The report warns that global instability, conflicts, and economic disruptions may reverse the declining trend in terrorism.
- Terror groups are becoming more adaptive and technologically advanced, increasing future risks.

**Additional Exam-Relevant Key Facts**

Global Terrorism Index (GTI): Published annually by the Institute for Economics and Peace.

Coverage: Ranks 163 countries based on terrorism impact.

**Indicators Used:**

- Number of terrorist incidents
- Number of deaths
- Injuries
- Hostages

Deadliest Terror Group (recent trends): Islamic State remains among the most lethal globally.

Regional Hotspot: The Sahel region (Africa) accounts for a major share of global terrorism deaths.

**Defence Exercise**

**Sea Dragon**

The Indian Navy has joined the US-led multinational Exercise Sea Dragon 2026, a high-end anti-submarine warfare (ASW) drill conducted in the Indo-Pacific region (Guam). The exercise is a two-week multinational naval drill focusing on submarine detection and tracking. India is represented by its P-8I long-range maritime reconnaissance aircraft.

**About Exercise Sea Dragon**

- It is an annual multinational Anti-Submarine Warfare (ASW) exercise.
- Hosted by the US Navy’s 7th Fleet.
- Started as a bilateral exercise (US–Australia) and later expanded to include Indo-Pacific partners.

**Participating countries include:**

- United States (host)
- India
- Japan
- Australia
- South Korea

Conducted at Andersen Air Force Base, Guam in the Indo-Pacific region. The exercise involves advanced ASW training, including tracking simulated and real submarines. It includes over 200 hours of in-flight operational training.

**Focuses on:**

- Detection and tracking of submarines
- Maritime surveillance
- Tactical coordination among partner navies

**About P-8I Aircraft:**

- Long-range maritime reconnaissance aircraft used by the Indian Navy
- Based on Boeing P-8 Poseidon platform

**Key roles:**

- Anti-submarine warfare (ASW)

- Anti-surface warfare
- Surveillance and reconnaissance

**Related Naval Exercises:**

- MALABAR Exercise → India, US, Japan, Australia (Quad)
- MILAN Exercise → Multilateral naval exercise hosted by India
- RIMPAC Exercise → World’s largest naval exercise (US-led)

**Freedom Shield**

The United States and South Korea have launched a large-scale joint military exercise called Freedom Shield 2026, involving thousands of troops to strengthen their combined defence readiness on the Korean Peninsula.

**Strategic Context**

- The Korean Peninsula remains a major geopolitical hotspot due to tensions with North Korea, which continues to develop nuclear weapons and ballistic missiles.
- Military exercises like Freedom Shield are intended to deter aggression and ensure regional stability.
- Such drills often trigger strong reactions from North Korea, which sees them as hostile actions.

**About the Freedom Shield Exercise**

- Freedom Shield is an annual joint military exercise conducted by the armed forces of the United States and South Korea.
- The drills integrate operations across land, air, sea, space, and cyber domains to test modern warfare scenarios.
- The exercise is designed to improve interoperability between allied forces and prepare for potential crises on the Korean Peninsula.
- It is part of the broader U. S. –South Korea security alliance established after the Korean War (1950–53).

**LAMITIYE-2026**

An Indian Armed Forces contingent has arrived in Seychelles to participate in the 11th edition of the joint military exercise “Exercise Lamitiye” with the Seychelles Defence Forces. The exercise is being held at the Seychelles Defence Academy.

**Meaning and Background of the Exercise**

The term “Lamitiye” means “friendship” in the Creole language. The exercise is a biennial (every two years) joint training programme conducted in Seychelles since 2001 to strengthen defence cooperation between the two countries.

**Participation from All Three Services**

- The 2026 edition is significant because it involves a tri-service participation from India—Army, Navy, and Air Force.
- The Indian Army contingent includes personnel from the Assam Regiment.
- The Indian Navy has deployed the stealth frigate INS Trikand.
- The Indian Air Force is participating with a C-130J Super Hercules aircraft.

**MILAN 2026**

The Indian Navy successfully concluded its flagship multilateral naval exercise MILAN 2026 with a closing ceremony onboard India’s indigenous aircraft carrier INS Vikrant off the coast of Visakhapatnam.

**About Exercise MILAN**

- Started in: 1995
- Nature: Multilateral naval exercise hosted biennially by the Indian Navy.
- Purpose: Promote cooperation, interoperability, and professional exchange among friendly navies.

**About MILAN 2026**  
MILAN 2026 was conducted under the theme “Camaraderie, Cooperation, Collaboration.” The exercise comprising two main phases — the Harbour Phase and the Sea Phase. It was hosted by the Indian Navy at Visakhapatnam, under the Eastern Naval Command.

**INS Vikrant**

INS Vikrant is India’s first indigenously built aircraft carrier, symbolising India’s naval capability and self-reliance in defence manufacturing. Commissioned in 2022, it plays a key role in power projection and maritime diplomacy.

**Eastern Naval Command**

- Headquarters: Visakhapatnam
- One of the three main operational commands of the Indian Navy, tasked with safeguarding India’s eastern maritime front.

**“For Every Reason It’s Not Possible, There Are Hundreds Of People Who Have Faced The Same Circumstances And Succeeded.”**

## Environment & Ecology

### World's Migratory Species Report

**About the Report:**

- The State of the World's Migratory Species Report is a global assessment of migratory wildlife and their conservation status.
- Prepared under the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS).
- CMS is a legally binding treaty established in 1979 under the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP).
- The first global report was released in 2024.

**Coverage of the Report**

- Analysed 1,189 migratory species listed under CMS.
- Also assessed trends of more than 3,000 additional migratory species worldwide.
- Uses data from the International Union for Conservation of Nature Red List and global population monitoring studies.

**Importance of Migratory Species**

- Migratory species play a vital role in ecosystems:
- Migratory birds support pollination and pest control.
- Marine animals help maintain ocean food chains.
- Migratory herds distribute nutrients and shape ecosystems.
- They also support tourism, cultural traditions, and food systems.

**Major Findings of the Latest Report**

- Declining Populations:
- Around 49% of migratory species populations protected under CMS are declining.
- About 24% face the risk of extinction.
- Out of 1,189 CMS-listed species, about 582 species show declining population trends.

**Prominent Birds Using The Central Asian Flyway**



**Rising Extinction Risks:**

- 26 migratory species have moved into higher extinction-risk categories on the International Union for Conservation of Nature Red List.
- 18 of them are migratory shorebirds, indicating threats to coastal and wetland ecosystems.

**Major Threats:**

- Two biggest threats to migratory species:
- Habitat loss due to urbanisation, agriculture, and infrastructure development.
- Overexploitation through hunting and overfishing.
- Infrastructure such as roads, railways, pipelines, and fences disrupt migration routes of large animals.

**Emerging Threat – Avian Influenza:**

- Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (H5N1) is causing mass mortality events among migratory birds.

**Affected species include:**

- African Penguins
- Humboldt Penguins
- Peruvian Pelicans

- Red-crowned Cranes
- Also affected marine mammals such as South American Sea Lion and South American Fur Seal.
- Conservation Success Stories
- Seven CMS-listed species have shown improvement:
- Saiga Antelope
- Scimitar-horned Oryx
- Mediterranean Monk Seal

**Key Biodiversity Areas:**

- The report identified 9,372 Key Biodiversity Areas (KBAs) important for migratory species.
- 47% of these areas are not protected, making them vulnerable to human pressures.

**Indian Army and Ladakh Forest Department Sign MoU for Wildlife Conservation**

The Indian Army and the Forest, Ecology and Environment Department of the Union Territory of Ladakh signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to strengthen wildlife conservation and protect the fragile high-altitude ecosystem of the region. The MoU was signed by the Army’s Fire and Fury Corps.

**Focus on Conservation of Key Himalayan Species**

- The collaboration aims to conserve iconic Himalayan wildlife species such as the snow leopard, Himalayan wolf, bharal (blue sheep), ibex, Himalayan marmot, and the black-necked crane, along with their natural habitats in Ladakh’s cold desert ecosystem.
- A Joint Snow Leopard Conservation Cell will also be established to coordinate conservation efforts, monitor wildlife populations, and enhance collaboration between the Army and forest authorities in remote border areas.

**Additional Key Facts:**

- Fire and Fury Corps is the 14 Corps of the Indian Army, headquartered in Leh, responsible for operations in the Ladakh sector along the Line of Actual Control (LAC).
- The initiative aligns with the Global Snow Leopard and Ecosystem Protection Program (GSLEP), an international programme involving 12 snow-leopard range countries.
- The snow leopard is classified as “Vulnerable” by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN).
- Important protected areas for snow leopards in Ladakh include Hemis National Park, one of the largest national parks in South Asia.
- Ladakh’s cold desert ecosystem supports unique wildlife adapted to high altitude, low oxygen, and extreme temperatures.

**World’s Most Polluted Country in 2025**

According to a report by IQAir, Pakistan was ranked the most polluted country in the world in 2025, based on air quality data.

**Key Findings of the Report**

The report highlighted that Pakistan recorded extremely high levels of PM2.5 (fine particulate matter), which are harmful pollutants that can penetrate deep into the lungs. The PM2.5 levels in Pakistan were found to be up to 13 times higher than the safe limit prescribed by the World Health Organization.

**Health and Environmental Concerns**

High PM2.5 levels are associated with serious health risks such as:

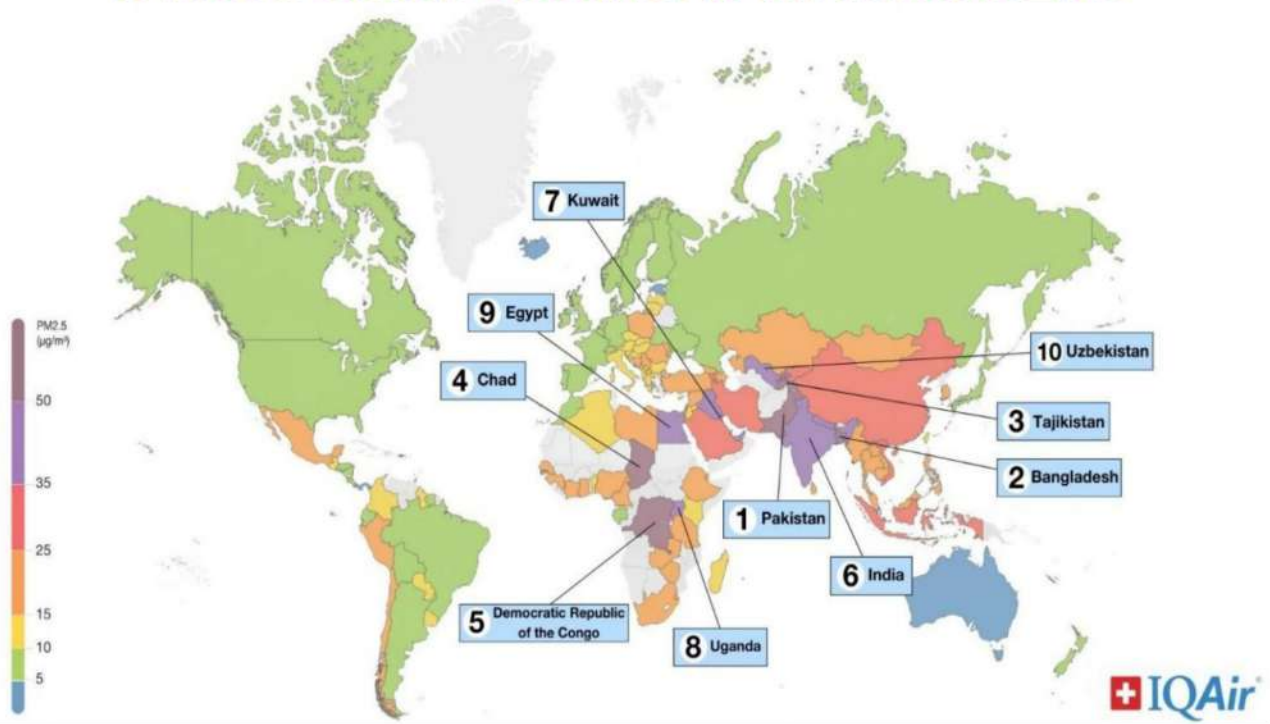
- Respiratory diseases
- Cardiovascular problems
- Premature deaths

Major cities like Lahore and Karachi frequently experience “unhealthy” to “hazardous” air quality levels, indicating a severe pollution crisis.

**Global Scenario**

The report also noted a slight global improvement, as 13 countries met WHO air quality standards in 2025, compared to only 7 in 2024. However, pollution levels remain critically high in many developing countries.

**10 Most Polluted Countries in the World in 2025**



**“For Every Reason It’s Not Possible, There Are Hundreds Of People Who Have Faced The Same Circumstances And Succeeded.”**

## Social Issues & Schemes

### Project GANGA

The Project GANGA has been launched by the Government of Uttar Pradesh to provide high-speed broadband internet to around 20 lakh households in rural and semi-urban areas across the state over the next 2–3 years. The initiative aims to strengthen digital connectivity, improve access to online services, and boost the rural digital economy.

#### MoU with Private Sector Partner

- To implement the project, the State Transformation Commission signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with One OTT Entertainment Limited, which is part of the Hinduja Group.
- The collaboration will help expand digital infrastructure and deliver broadband services in villages.

#### Role of Local Entrepreneurs

- Under the project, about 8,000–10,000 local entrepreneurs at the Nyaya Panchayat level will be trained as Digital Service Providers (DSPs).
- These DSPs will deliver high-speed broadband and other digital services to rural households.

#### Employment Generation

The initiative is expected to generate over 1 lakh direct and indirect employment opportunities, especially for rural youth engaged in service delivery, installation, and maintenance of digital infrastructure.

#### Importance of the Project

##### The project aims to:

- Expand digital connectivity in rural areas
- Improve access to e-governance services
- Support online education, telemedicine, and digital payments
- Promote rural entrepreneurship and employment

#### Key Facts:

- Project GANGA stands for Government Assisted Network for Growth and Advancement.
- It aims to connect 20 lakh households with high-speed broadband in Uttar Pradesh.
- The project focuses mainly on rural and semi-urban areas to reduce the digital divide.
- The initiative aligns with the Government of India's Digital India campaign to expand digital infrastructure and services nationwide.
- Another major national rural broadband programme is BharatNet, which aims to connect Gram Panchayats through optical fibre networks.

### Lakhpati Bitiya Yojana

The Delhi government launched the Lakhpati Bitiya Yojana, a welfare scheme aimed at promoting financial security and education for the girl child in the national capital. The initiative was launched in the presence of Droupadi Murmu along with Delhi Chief Minister Rekha Gupta during the programme titled "Sashakt Naari, Samridh Delhi."

#### Objective of the Scheme

The scheme aims to ensure that girls do not drop out of education due to financial constraints and to strengthen the economic empowerment of women and girls in Delhi.

### Eligibility Criteria

- The girl child must be born in Delhi.
- The family should have been residing in Delhi for at least three years.
- The annual family income should not exceed ₹1.20 lakh.
- A maximum of two girl children per family can avail the benefits.

### Key Features of the Scheme

- The government will deposit financial assistance in stages from birth until higher education.
- The deposited amount, along with interest, will accumulate to around ₹1 lakh or more by maturity.
- The amount is transferred directly into the Aadhaar-linked bank account of the girl child through Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT).
- The final maturity amount is available when the girl turns 21 years old or completes graduation/diploma studies.

### 'RELIEF' Scheme

- The Government of India launched the RELIEF (Resilience & Logistics Intervention for Export Facilitation) Scheme with an outlay of ₹497 crore.
- The scheme aims to support Indian exporters affected by the ongoing conflict in West Asia/Middle East.

**3-component RELIEF**

**EXPORTERS WHO HAVE ECGC CREDIT**  
INSURANCE COVER: ₹56 CR  
Consignments where bill of lading/airway bill issued from Feb 14-Mar 15 | ECGC gives enhanced cover up to 100% of loss

**UPCOMING EXPORTS TO THE REGION: ₹159 CR**  
Bill of lading/airway bill granted from Mar 16-Jun 15, except energy shipments | Premium paid by exporters to not increase beyond pre-disruption level

**NON-ECGC-INSURED MSME EXPORTERS: ₹282 CR**  
Bill of lading issued from Feb 14-March 15 | Applicable for exporters who have not taken ECGC coverage

Overall ceiling of ₹50 L per exporter

ECGC may provide enhanced cover up to 95% of loss

### It addresses challenges such as:

- Rising freight costs
- Increased insurance premiums
- Shipping delays and disruptions

### Objective of the Scheme

- To ensure continuity of exports and prevent trade disruptions.
- To protect India's market share in Gulf and West Asian regions.
- To enhance resilience of exporters, especially MSMEs.

### Key Features of RELIEF Scheme

- The scheme has three major components:
- Support for existing shipments (protection & obligation relief)
- Enhanced insurance coverage for future exports
- Special support for MSMEs facing cost pressures
- Implemented through the Export Credit Guarantee Corporation (ECGC).
- Provides higher risk coverage (up to ~95–100%) in certain cases.
- Includes daily monitoring mechanism for trade disruptions.

### Coverage Area

- Focus on Gulf and West Asia trade corridors.
- Covers exports to around 17 countries, including major Gulf nations.

**Export Credit Guarantee Corporation (ECGC)**

- Established in 1957
- Chairman & MD: Sristiraj Ambastha
- Under Ministry of Commerce & Industry

**Provides:**

- Export credit insurance
- Protection against commercial & political risks

**Export Promotion Mission (EPM)**

- Announced in Union Budget 2025-26
- Aim: Boost India’s exports and global competitiveness
- RELIEF scheme is part of this mission

**Importance of West Asia for India**

- Accounts for significant share of India’s exports (~\$100 billion annually)
- Major source of:
  - Crude oil & energy imports
  - Key trade route via Strait of Hormuz

**Impact of Middle East Conflict**

- Disruption in shipping routes & logistics
- Increase in war-risk insurance premiums
- Surge in freight costs (up to 90–100% in some routes)

**Supreme Court Ruling on Maternity Leave for Adoptive Mothers**

The Supreme Court of India struck down the provision that limited maternity leave only if the adopted child was below 3 months of age. The Court held that adoptive mothers are entitled to 12 weeks of maternity leave, regardless of the child’s age. The restriction under Section 60(4) of the Code on Social Security, 2020 was declared violative of Articles 14 and 21 (equality and right to life).

**Key Observations by the Court**

- Motherhood is not limited to biological childbirth; adoption is equally a form of parenthood.
- The objective of maternity benefits is to support care, bonding, and child development, not just childbirth.
- Denying leave based on the child’s age is discriminatory and arbitrary.
- Adoption is part of reproductive autonomy under Article 21.

**Paternity Leave Observation**

**Supreme Court of India**

- Headed by the Chief Justice of India (CJI).
- Maximum strength: 34 judges (1 CJI + 33 judges).
- Judges are appointed by the President of India.
- Surya Kant is the incumbent and 53rd chief justice of India, and was appointed on 24th November 2025.

**Appointment & Tenure**

- Judges are appointed under Article 124 of the Constitution.
- Retirement age: 65 years.
- Removal: Through impeachment by Parliament (special majority).

- The Court urged the government to introduce a law on paternity leave as a social security benefit.
- It emphasized the importance of both parents' presence in a child's early development.

**Maternity Benefit (Amendment) Act, 2017:**

- Provides 26 weeks leave for biological mothers
- Earlier allowed 12 weeks leave for adoptive mothers (child below 3 months)

**Code on Social Security, 2020:**

- Consolidates labour laws including maternity benefits

**Important Case Link:**

- Deepika Singh v. Central Administrative Tribunal – Expanded definition of “family” and maternity rights

**Other Key Facts**

- First Chief Justice: H. J. Kania
- Public Interest Litigation (PIL) originated in the 1980s to improve access to justice
- Works as the final court of appeal in India

**Small Hydro Power Development Scheme**

The Union Cabinet approved the Small Hydro Power (SHP) Development Scheme for the period FY 2026–27 to FY 2030–31.

- Total outlay: ₹2,500+ crore (approx. ₹2,584 crore).
- Target: Development of ~1500 MW capacity through small hydro projects.
- Focus areas: Remote, rural, hilly, and North-Eastern regions.

**Features of the Scheme**

- Covers Small Hydro Projects (SHP) with capacity between 1 MW to 25 MW.

**Provides Central Financial Assistance (CFA):**

- Up to ₹3.6 crore per MW or 30% of project cost (whichever is lower)
- Maximum limit: ₹30 crore per project (special support for NE and border areas)
- Encourages preparation of Detailed Project Reports (DPRs) for around 200 projects.
- Promotes run-of-the-river projects (minimal environmental impact, no large dams).

**Additional Facts**

- Small Hydro Power (SHP): Projects up to 25 MW capacity.
- India's estimated SHP potential: ~20 GW.
- First hydro project in India: Darjeeling (1897).
- Implementing Ministry: Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE)
- Part of India's broader push toward clean energy transition and Net Zero goals

**BHAVYA industrial cluster scheme**

The Bharat Audyogik Vikas Yojana (BHAVYA) is a major initiative approved by the Union Cabinet with a total outlay of ₹33,660 crore. The scheme aims to accelerate industrial growth in India by developing modern industrial infrastructure and strengthening the manufacturing sector. It is part of the broader vision of Atmanirbhar Bharat and Viksit Bharat, focusing on making India a global manufacturing hub.

**Objective of the Scheme**

The primary objective of the BHAVYA scheme is to promote manufacturing, attract both domestic and foreign investments, and generate large-scale employment opportunities. It also seeks to improve the Ease of Doing Business by providing ready-to-use industrial infrastructure, thereby reducing delays in setting up industries.

**Key Features**

- A major highlight of the scheme is the development of 100 plug-and-play industrial parks across the country over a period of approximately 6 years.
- These parks will offer pre-approved land along with essential facilities such as electricity, water, and clearances, enabling industries to begin operations quickly. The parks will typically range between 100 to 1000 acres in size.
- The scheme also provides financial assistance of up to ₹1 crore per acre and will be implemented through a Public-Private Partnership (PPP) model involving central government, state governments, and private players.
- Additionally, there is a strong emphasis on creating green and sustainable infrastructure.

**Economic and Employment Impact**

- The BHAVYA scheme is expected to significantly boost India’s industrial ecosystem by enhancing manufacturing capacity and improving supply chains.
- It is projected to generate around 15 lakh direct jobs, along with numerous indirect employment opportunities in sectors such as logistics and services.
- This will contribute to overall economic growth and regional development.

**Additional Facts:**

- The scheme was announced as part of the Union Budget 2026 and is aligned with the National Industrial Corridor Development Programme (NICDP). It complements other government initiatives like the Production Linked Incentive (PLI) Scheme, which also aims to strengthen domestic manufacturing. Industrial corridors such as the Delhi-Mumbai Industrial Corridor (DMIC) further support the objectives of this scheme.

**Biopharma SHAKTI Initiative**

The Government of India has proposed the Biopharma SHAKTI initiative in the Union Budget 2026–27 with an outlay of ₹10,000 crore over five years.

The scheme aims to strengthen India’s biopharmaceutical sector and position the country as a global biomanufacturing hub.

**Objective of the Initiative**

The initiative focuses on promoting domestic development and manufacturing of biologics and biosimilars, reducing import dependence, and enhancing India’s competitiveness in the global supply chain. It also aims to support innovation in advanced therapies and improve healthcare outcomes.

**Key Features of the Scheme**

- Financial outlay of ₹10,000 crore (5 years)
  - Focus on biologics, biosimilars, and advanced therapies
  - Development of biomanufacturing ecosystem and R&D infrastructure
  - Creation of clinical trial networks and strengthening regulatory systems
- Expansion and upgradation of NIPER institutions for skill development

## Science & Technology

### SATHEE App

The Ministry of Education has launched a free digital learning platform named SATHEE (Self-Assessment, Test and Help for Entrance Exams) to assist students in preparing for major competitive exams like JEE, NEET, and CUET. The platform has been developed in collaboration with Indian Institute of Technology Kanpur and provides free access to high-quality study material, mock tests, and video lectures prepared by experts. It aims to support economically weaker students by reducing dependence on expensive coaching institutes and ensuring equal access to quality education.

#### Additional Important Facts

- SATHEE was launched in November 2023 as part of digital education initiatives.
- It supports multiple exams including: JEE, NEET, CUET, SSC, IBPS, RRB, CLAT, ICAR
- Content is curated by experts from IITs and AIIMS, ensuring high academic quality.
- The platform includes 80,000+ practice questions and daily practice problems (DPPs).
- It has been integrated with AI-based features such as personalized learning and doubt-solving tools (announced at India AI Impact Summit 2026).
- SATHEE complements other government initiatives like:
  - DIKSHA platform (school education)
  - SWAYAM & SWAYAM Prabha DTH channels.

#### Key Features

- Free video lectures & notes by IIT and top institution faculty
- Mock tests & previous year question papers for self-evaluation
- Multilingual content for wider accessibility
- Doubt-solving support & interactive learning tools
- Accessible anytime, anywhere (app + web platform)

### Gujarat's First Sounding Rocket

- India achieved a significant milestone in the private space sector as Gujarat's first sounding rocket was successfully launched from Dholera (near Ahmedabad) by an Indian startup.
- The single-stage sub-orbital rocket reached an altitude of about 3 km within seconds and safely returned using a dual-parachute recovery system, marking a successful test of critical technologies.
- This is the first-ever rocket launch from Gujarat's soil, highlighting the growing role of private players in India's space ecosystem.

#### Carbon-fibre airframe

- Launch conducted with approvals from agencies like IN-SPACE, DGCA, and AAI.
- Validated systems: propulsion, avionics, and recovery mechanism.

#### What is a Sounding Rocket?

- A sounding rocket is a sub-orbital rocket used for scientific research.
- It collects data on:
  - Temperature
  - Pressure

#### Key Highlights

- Developed by Ahmedabad-based startup OmSpace Rocket & Exploration (OSRE).
- Rocket used indigenous technologies such as:
  - 3D-printed igniter
  - Sugar-based solid fuel

- Upper atmospheric conditions
- These rockets are cost-effective and used for testing technologies before larger missions.

**Additional Important Facts**

- India’s space journey began with sounding rockets in the 1960s (Thumba, Kerala).
- India’s first privately built rocket: Vikram-S (launched in 2022).
- The private space sector is regulated by Indian National Space Promotion and Authorization Centre.
- Dholera is part of the Dholera Special Investment Region (SIR), a major industrial smart city project in Gujarat.
- The startup plans to develop a reusable orbital launch vehicle (“Infinity One”) in future.

**Atomic Clock Failure in NavIC Satellite**

**WHY ATOMIC CLOCKS ARE CRUCIAL**

THE "HEART" OF NAVIGATION SATELLITES

PNT (Positioning, Navigation, and Timing) SYSTEMS

PNT systems calculate location by measuring the precise time a signal takes to travel from the satellite to the receiver.

SIGNALS TRAVEL AT THE SPEED OF LIGHT

$TIME\ OF\ FLIGHT = \frac{DISTANCE}{SPEED\ OF\ LIGHT}$

**THE IMPACT OF A NANOSECOND ERROR**

<p><b>ACCURATE CLOCK (0 ns ERROR)</b></p> <p>Signal timestamp (t=0.000000000s)</p> <p>Precise Timing = Pinpoint Positioning.</p>	<p><b>1 NANOSECOND ERROR (+1 ns)</b></p> <p>Signal timestamp (t=0.000000001s)</p> <p><b>1 NANOSECOND ERROR = 30 CENTIMETERS POSITIONING ERROR</b></p>
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Atomic clocks provide the extreme nanosecond-level accuracy essential for reliable global navigation.

**Recent Technical Issue**

India’s indigenous satellite navigation system NavIC has faced a technical setback after the atomic clock onboard the satellite IRNSS-1F malfunctioned. The atomic clock is a critical component that provides extremely precise timing signals required for satellite navigation and positioning services. The malfunction could affect the accuracy and reliability of navigation services provided by the system.

**Impact on NavIC Constellation**

Navigation systems typically require at least four operational satellites to provide accurate positioning services. With clock failures in some satellites, the number of fully functional satellites in the NavIC constellation has reduced, raising concerns about the system’s redundancy and long-term reliability.

**Importance of Atomic Clocks in Navigation Satellites**

Each navigation satellite carries three rubidium atomic clocks that generate precise time signals. Navigation receivers calculate a user’s location by comparing signals from multiple satellites; therefore, accurate timekeeping is essential. If atomic clocks fail, the satellite may not be able to provide reliable positioning data.

**Earlier Instances of Atomic Clock Failures**

Technical issues with atomic clocks have occurred previously in NavIC satellites. For example, all three atomic clocks onboard the satellite IRNSS-1A failed, rendering the satellite ineffective for navigation services and necessitating replacement launches.

**About NavIC (India’s GPS)**

- Full name: Navigation with Indian Constellation (NavIC).
- Developed by the Indian Space Research Organisation.
- Earlier known as Indian Regional Navigation Satellite System (IRNSS).
- Provides positioning, navigation, and timing (PNT) services over India and up to about 1,500 km beyond its borders.

**Satellite Constellation**

- The original system consists of 7 satellites (3 in geostationary orbit and 4 in geosynchronous orbit).
- Replacement and next-generation satellites are being launched under the NVS series.

**Types of NavIC Services**

- Standard Positioning Service (SPS) – for civilian and commercial users.
- Restricted Service (RS) – encrypted service for defence and strategic applications.

**Strategic Importance**

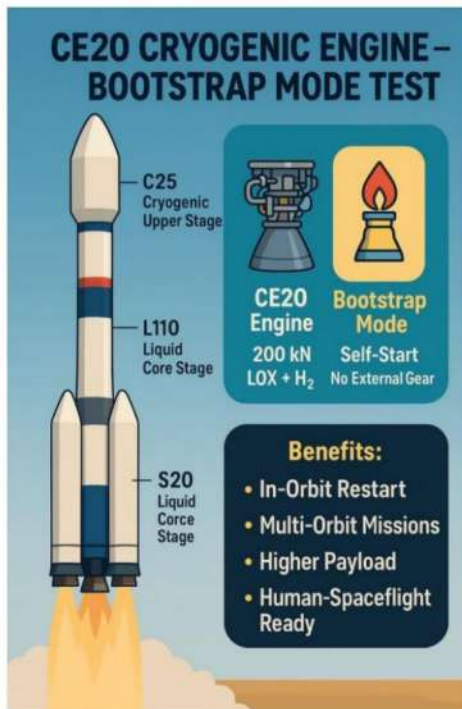
- NavIC reduces India’s dependence on foreign navigation systems such as:
- GPS
- GLONASS
- Galileo
- BeiDou

**Uses of NavIC**

- Navigation for transport, aviation, and maritime sectors
- Disaster management and search-and-rescue operations
- Military and strategic applications
- Vehicle tracking and mobile navigation services.

**CE20 Cryogenic Engine**

The Indian Space Research Organisation successfully conducted a sea-level hot test of its CE20 cryogenic engine at 22-tonne thrust at the ISRO Propulsion Complex in Mahendragiri, Tamil Nadu. The test ran for about 165 seconds, validating the engine’s performance at a higher thrust level.



rocket.

**Purpose of the Test**

The CE20 cryogenic engine powers the upper stage of the LVM3 launch vehicle, India’s heaviest rocket. The successful test will help increase the payload capacity of LVM3 and strengthen its capability for future space missions.

**Significance for Future Missions**

The upgraded engine is expected to support major upcoming missions, including India’s human spaceflight programme, Gaganyaan, and other heavy satellite launches. Higher thrust levels will enable the rocket to carry heavier payloads into orbit and support more complex missions.

**About the CE20 Cryogenic Engine**

- CE20 is India’s most powerful indigenous cryogenic rocket engine.
- Developed by the Liquid Propulsion Systems Centre (LPSC) of ISRO.
- It uses liquid hydrogen (LH<sub>2</sub>) as fuel and liquid oxygen (LOX) as oxidiser.
- Designed to power the C25 cryogenic upper stage of the LVM3

### About Cryogenic Engines

- Cryogenic engines operate using super-cooled propellants (typically liquid hydrogen and liquid oxygen).
- They provide higher efficiency and thrust, making them suitable for heavy satellite launches and deep-space missions.

### ISRO Propulsion Complex (IPRC)

- Located at Mahendragiri in Tamil Nadu.
- Main facility for testing liquid and cryogenic rocket engines.

### About LVM3 (Launch Vehicle Mark-3)

- Formerly called GSLV Mk-III.
- India's heaviest launch vehicle.
- Capable of placing about 8,000 kg payload into Low Earth Orbit (LEO).
- It will be used for the Gaganyaan human spaceflight mission.

## NASA's DART Mission

### Why in News?

New observations show that Double Asteroid Redirection Test (DART), conducted by NASA in 2022, slightly changed the orbit of the asteroid system Didymos–Dimorphos. The collision reduced the time taken by the asteroid pair to complete one solar orbit by less than one second.

### About the DART Mission

- DART (Double Asteroid Redirection Test) was the first planetary defense experiment designed to test whether a spacecraft could change the trajectory of an asteroid.
- In September 2022, the spacecraft intentionally crashed into the asteroid Dimorphos, which orbits the larger asteroid Didymos.

### About the Asteroids

- Dimorphos
- Approximately 560 feet wide.
- A moonlet asteroid orbiting Didymos.
- Target of the DART mission.
- Didymos
- A binary asteroid system consisting of Didymos and its smaller companion Dimorphos.
- Used by scientists to test asteroid deflection techniques.

### Scientific Observations

- Astronomers used stellar occultation observations to measure the orbital changes.
- Between October 2022 and March 2025, scientists and volunteer astronomers conducted 22 observations worldwide to precisely track the change.

### Key Findings

- The impact released about 35.3 million pounds of debris, nearly 30,000 times the mass of the spacecraft.
- The debris cloud created additional momentum, enhancing the impact effect.
- The collision shortened the asteroid system's orbital period around the Sun by about 0.15 seconds.
- Even a tiny change in orbital motion can prevent a potential asteroid collision with Earth in the future.

### Importance for Planetary Defense

- Demonstrates the kinetic impactor technique, where a spacecraft crashes into an asteroid to change its path.
- Even very small orbital changes can prevent a potentially dangerous asteroid from hitting Earth.
- Helps develop strategies to protect Earth from near-Earth asteroid threats.

### Future Missions

- Hera mission by the European Space Agency will study the aftermath of the DART collision.
- Near-Earth Object Surveyor mission by NASA aims to detect dark asteroids that are difficult to observe from Earth.

## World's First iPS Stem-Cell Therapy for Parkinson

### What is the Announcement?

Japan has approved ground-breaking stem-cell therapies for treating Parkinson's disease and severe heart failure, making them the world's first commercially approved medical treatments using iPS cells.

### Parkinson's Treatment – Amchepry:

- Pharmaceutical company Sumitomo Pharma received approval to manufacture and sell Amchepry, a therapy that:
  - Transplants stem cells into a patient's brain
  - Helps replace dopamine-producing neurons lost in Parkinson's disease.
  - The treatment uses induced pluripotent stem (iPS) cells derived from healthy donors.

### Heart Failure Treatment – ReHeart:

- Japan's health ministry also approved ReHeart, developed by medical startup Cuorips.
  - ReHeart works by:
    - Using heart muscle cell sheets
    - Helping form new blood vessels
    - Improving heart function in severe heart failure patients.

### Nobel Prize Connection:

Japanese scientist Shinya Yamanaka won the Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine in 2012 for discovering iPS cells.

### Clinical Trial Findings

- A study conducted by Kyoto University showed:
  - 7 Parkinson's patients participated in the trial
  - Each received 5–10 million stem cells implanted in the brain
  - Patients were monitored for two years
  - No major side effects were observed
  - 4 patients showed improvement in symptoms.

### Conditional Approval System:

- Japan granted "conditional and time-limited approval", meaning:
  - The treatment can reach patients faster
  - Data from smaller clinical trials can be used initially
  - Further monitoring will continue after approval.

### What are iPS Cells?

- Induced Pluripotent Stem (iPS) cells are created by reprogramming mature adult cells back into a stem-cell state.
- These cells can:
  - Develop into any type of cell in the human body
  - Be used for regenerative medicine and disease treatment.
  - The technology avoids the use of embryos.

## Nationwide HPV Vaccination Drive

### Why In News?

The Government of India has announced a free, nationwide human papillomavirus (HPV) vaccination programme aimed at reducing the high burden of cervical cancer among women. The drive will initially target 14-year-old girls with a single-dose voluntary vaccine administered through government health facilities across all States and Union Territories during February–March 2026.

## Key Features of the HPV Vaccination Drive

### Target Group & Schedule:

- The campaign focuses on girls aged 14 years, covering nearly 1.15 crore beneficiaries annually.
- Vaccination will be provided free of cost at designated government health centres including Ayushman Arogya Mandirs, Primary Health Centres, etc.

### Vaccine Type:

A single-dose Gardasil-4 vaccine (quadrivalent) will be used, protecting against HPV types 6, 11, 16 and 18 — with types 16 and 18 responsible for most cervical cancers.

### Voluntary & Safety Measures:

The programme is voluntary and free, with vaccination sessions supervised by trained Medical Officers, and linked to 24x7 medical facilities for post-vaccination observation.

### Implementation Mechanism:

- Vaccine supplies have been secured through partnerships with Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance and approved by India's drug regulator.

### Public Health Strategy:

After the initial catch-up phase, HPV vaccination is expected to be integrated into India's Universal Immunisation Programme (UIP).

### Why It Matters

#### Cervical Cancer Burden:

Cervical cancer is the second most common cancer among women in India, causing nearly 80,000 new cases and over 42,000 deaths annually. Vaccination targets the root cause — persistent infection with high-risk HPV types.

#### Disease Prevention:

HPV infection — especially types 16 and 18 — is responsible for around 90% of cervical cancer cases. Vaccination before exposure can reduce cancer incidence dramatically.

#### Global Health Context:

The World Health Organization (WHO) recommends HPV vaccination for adolescent girls (and ideally boys) before sexual activity, as a key strategy to prevent cervical cancer.

#### Economic and Social Impact:

By reducing the cervical cancer burden, India can lower treatment costs, improve female health outcomes, and enhance women's participation in education and the workforce.

#### Integration with Existing Health Systems:

Leveraging the UIP and India's network of government health facilities ensures broad vaccine coverage and strengthens routine immunisation infrastructure.

### Human Papillomavirus (HPV):

- HPV is a group of viruses; some high-risk types (e.g., 16 and 18) cause cervical and other cancers.
- HPV vaccination also prevents genital warts and can indirectly protect against anal, penile, and throat cancers.

### Vaccine Types:

- Gardasil-4: Quadrivalent vaccine used in the national programme.
- Cervavac: India's first indigenously developed HPV vaccine (quadrivalent), approved in 2022.

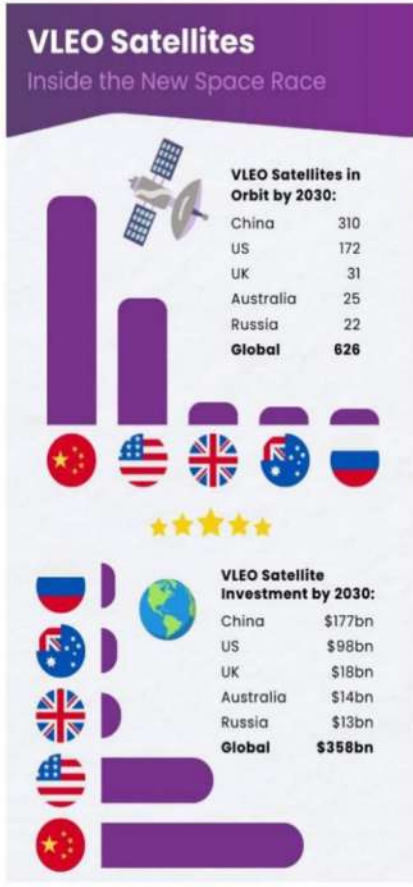
### Screening & Preventive Care:

- Vaccination should complement cervical screening programmes (e.g., Pap smear) for older women, especially as screening coverage in India remains low.

**Global Adoption:**

- More than 160 countries have introduced HPV vaccination into their national immunisation schedules, reflecting a global commitment to cervical cancer elimination.

**VLEO Satellite**



**What is the New Collaboration?**

India’s state-owned defence electronics company Bharat Electronics Limited (BEL) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Bellatrix Aerospace, a Bengaluru-based space startup, to collaborate on the design, development, and manufacturing of satellite systems and payloads.

**Objective of the Partnership**

The partnership aims to strengthen India’s capability in building satellite platforms for Very Low Earth Orbit (VLEO) missions.

**What is Very Low Earth Orbit (VLEO)?**

VLEO refers to the orbital region located between 100 km and 450 km above Earth’s surface.

**Why is VLEO Becoming Important?**

- Most satellites today operate in Low Earth Orbit (LEO) (below ~1000 km), which is becoming crowded due to the growing number of satellites.
- As a result, space agencies and companies are exploring VLEO as a new operational frontier for satellite missions.

**Satellites operating in this orbit can provide:**

- Higher-resolution Earth observation images
- Faster communication signals
- Improved atmospheric and climate research data.

**Role of Bellatrix Aerospace:**

- Founded in 2015, Bellatrix Aerospace specializes in:
- Satellite propulsion technologies
- Advanced satellite subsystems
- Space mobility solutions.

**“Things Work Out Best For Those Who Make The Best Of How Things Work Out.”**

## Culture & History

### Stockholm Water Prize 2026

Iranian environmental scientist Kaveh Madani has been awarded the Stockholm Water Prize in 2026 for his outstanding contribution to global water management. The award is often referred to as the “Nobel Prize of Water” and recognises exceptional work in sustainable water resource management.

#### Key Highlights

- Madani was honoured for combining scientific research, policy-making, and diplomacy in addressing water crises.
- He is known for developing the concept of “water bankruptcy”, which highlights chronic overuse and mismanagement of water resources rather than temporary shortages.
- His work emphasises that many global water problems arise from poor governance and overconsumption, not just climate change.

#### Background of the Scientist

- Kaveh Madani currently serves as Director of the United Nations University Institute for Water, Environment and Health (UNU-INWEH).
- He previously held a senior environmental role in Iran but later went into exile after facing political pressure and accusations for his views on environmental mismanagement.
- His work integrates game theory and decision science into water resource management.

#### About the Stockholm Water Prize

- Established in 1991 by the Stockholm Water Foundation.
- Awarded annually for contributions to the sustainable use and protection of water resources.
- Presented by the King of Sweden during World Water Week in Stockholm.

### Mark Lynton History Prize 2026

- Renowned historian William Dalrymple has been awarded the Mark Lynton History Prize 2026.
- He received the award for his book *The Golden Road: How Ancient India Transformed the World*.
- The prize recognises outstanding historical writing combining research and literary excellence.
- The award carries a cash prize of \$10,000.

#### About Mark Lynton History Prize

- Annual international award for best history book.
- Administered by:
- Nieman Foundation for Journalism
- Columbia University School of Journalism
- Named after Mark Lynton, an author and advocate of historical writing

#### About the Book

- Highlights India’s central role in ancient global exchanges.
- Introduces the concept of the “Golden Road” as an alternative to the Silk Route narrative.

#### Explains how India spread:

- Religion (Buddhism, Hinduism)
- Mathematics (including zero)
- Culture and trade networks across Asia and beyond

#### About William Dalrymple

- Scottish historian born in 1965.
- Known for books like:
- *The Last Mughal*
- *The Anarchy*
- *White Mughals*
- Co-founder of the Jaipur Literature Festival

## Ministry of Culture & FICCI Sign MoU to Boost Cultural & Creative Economy

The Ministry of Culture and the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI) have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to develop a comprehensive strategy for India's Cultural and Creative Economy.

### What is the Cultural & Creative Economy?

- The creative economy includes economic activities that rely on creative talent, cultural heritage, and intellectual property. It spans sectors such as advertising, design, fashion, film, music, performing arts, publishing, and digital content creation.
- According to UNESCO, the creative economy employs millions and contributes significantly to global GDP and trade. (UNESCO estimates creative industries contributed about 3.1% of global GDP and are expected to grow further by 2030.)

- Headquarters: New Delhi, India
- Director General: Jyoti Vij
- President: Mr. Anant Goenka

### Ministry of Culture:

- Cabinet Minister: Gajendra Singh Shekhawat
- Minister of State: Rao Inderjit Singh

### Creative Economy in India

- A dedicated Creative Economy vertical has been set up within the Ministry of Culture to provide policy interventions, market linkages, and protection for creative professionals.
- Projects like National Mission on Cultural Mapping (NMCM) help document and promote cultural assets at the grassroots level, enhancing opportunities for local cultural economies.

### FICCI:

- Formation: 1927
- Founder: Ghanshyam Das Birla, Purshottamdas Thakurdas

## Sahitya Akademi Awards 2025

The Sahitya Akademi announced the Sahitya Akademi Awards 2025, honouring 24 writers across 24 Indian languages for their outstanding literary works.

### Key Points

- Awards given annually in 24 recognised Indian languages.
- Navtej Sarna (English) awarded for novel *Crimson Spring*.
- Mamta Kalia (Hindi) awarded for memoir *Jeete Jee Allahabad*.
- Total 24 authors selected across categories and languages.

### Categories Covered

- 8 Poetry collections
- 4 Novels
- 6 Short story collections
- 2 Essay works
- 1 Literary criticism
- 1 Autobiography
- 2 Memoirs

### Award Details

- Engraved copper plaque
- Shawl
- ₹1 lakh cash prize

### Other Notable Winners

- N. Prabhakaran (Malayalam) – *Maayaamanushyar* (Novel)
- Works from languages like Bengali, Gujarati, Bodo, Punjabi, Sindhi, etc., also awarded

**Sahitya Akademi:**

- Established in 1954
- India’s National Academy of Letters
- First Awards (1955):
- Hindi: Makhanlal Chaturvedi
- English: R. K. Narayan
- Considered second highest literary honour in India after the Jnanpith Award
- Selection Process: Jury recommendation + approval by Akademi authorities

**Jnanpith Award**

Renowned Tamil poet and lyricist Vairamuthu has been selected for the 2025 Jnanpith Award, the highest literary honour in India. The award recognises his outstanding contribution to Tamil literature and poetry over several decades.

**About the Jnanpith Award**

- The Jnanpith Award is India’s highest literary award.
- It was instituted in 1961 by the organization Bharatiya Jnanpith.
- The first award (1965) was given to G. Sankara Kurup for Malayalam literature.
- It is awarded for outstanding contribution to literature in languages listed in the Eighth Schedule of the Constitution and English.

**Significance of the Recognition**

With this honour, Vairamuthu becomes one of the few writers from the Tamil language to receive the Jnanpith Award. The recognition highlights his significant influence on modern Tamil literature and film lyrics, where he has written thousands of songs and literary works.

**Literary Career and Contributions**

Vairamuthu began his literary journey at a young age and later gained prominence as a lyricist in the Tamil film industry. Over his career spanning more than four decades, he has written over 7,500–8,000 songs and numerous literary works including poetry collections, novels, essays, and travelogues.

**He has also received several prestigious honours, including:**

- 2003: Padma Shri: For Distinguished Services in Literature and Education
- 2014: Padma Bhushan: For Distinguished Services in Literature and Education
- 1999: S. P. Adithanar Literary Award for Best Tamil Novel for Thanneer Thesam
- 2003: Sahitya Akademi Award for Best Literary Work for Kallikkaattu Ithihaasam

**Previous Tamil Jnanpith Award Winners**

- Before Vairamuthu, the award had been given to:
- Akilan – 1975
- Jayakanthan – 2002
- Thus, Vairamuthu becomes the third Tamil writer to receive the honour.

**Language Coverage**

- The award recognises writers from 22 languages listed in the Eighth Schedule of the Constitution, including Tamil, Hindi, Bengali, Kannada, Malayalam, Telugu, and others.

**98th Academy Awards**

The 98th edition of the Academy Awards (Oscars) was held on 15 March 2026 at the Dolby Theatre in Los Angeles. The awards celebrate outstanding achievements in films released in 2025 and are presented by the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences.

**Host and Broadcast**

The ceremony was hosted by comedian and television personality Conan O'Brien for the second consecutive year. The event was broadcast on the ABC television network and streamed online via Hulu, reaching global audiences.

**Major Winners and Highlights**

The film *One Battle After Another* emerged as the biggest winner of the night, securing six Academy Awards, including Best Picture and Best Director for Paul Thomas Anderson.

**Other major awards included:**

- Best Actor: Michael B. Jordan for the film *Sinners*.
- Best Actress: Jessie Buckley for *Hamnet*.
- Best Supporting Actor: Sean Penn for *One Battle After Another*.
- Best Supporting Actress: Amy Madigan for the film *Weapons*.

**Other Notable Awards**

- Best Animated Feature: *KPop Demon Hunters*.
- Best International Feature Film: *Sentimental Value*.
- Best Documentary Feature: *Mr. Nobody Against Putin*.
- Best Visual Effects: *Avatar: Fire and Ash*.

**Special Achievement and Historic Moments**

- A new Best Casting category was introduced at the Oscars, with Cassandra Kulukundis becoming the first-ever recipient for her work in *One Battle After Another*.
- Another historic moment occurred when cinematographer Autumn Durald Arkapaw became the first woman to win the Oscar for Best Cinematography for the film *Sinners*.

**Additional Key Facts:**

- The Academy Awards (Oscars) are considered the most prestigious awards in the global film industry.
- They were first held in 1929 in Los Angeles.
- The award trophy is officially called the "Academy Award of Merit", popularly known as the Oscar statuette.
- The awards are given in 24 categories covering acting, directing, writing, technical fields, and documentary films.

**Speaker of the Knesset Medal**

**Why in News**

Prime Minister Narendra Modi was conferred the Speaker of the Knesset Medal, the highest honour of the Israeli Parliament, during his official visit to Israel.

**Both nations reaffirmed cooperation in:**

- Defence and security
- Agriculture and water management
- Innovation and start-ups
- Cybersecurity and technology

**India–Israel Relations: Key Facts**

- Full diplomatic relations were established in 1992.
- In 2017, PM Modi became the first Indian Prime Minister to visit Israel, marking a historic diplomatic milestone.

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## Every Award for PM Modi is a SALUTE TO BHARAT'S RISE

Conferred with Trinidad & Tobago's highest civilian honour



-  **2025**  
The Order of the Republic of Trinidad & Tobago'
-  **2025**  
The Officer of the Order of the Star of Ghana
-  **2025**  
'Grand Cross of the Order of Makarios III' of Cyprus
-  **2025**  
Mithra Vibhushana Award
-  **2025**  
Grand Commander of the Order of the Star and Key of the Indian Ocean
-  **2024**  
The Order of Mubarak Al Kabeer
-  **2024**  
The Order of Excellence
-  **2024**  
Honorary Order of Freedom of Barbados Award
-  **2024**  
The Dominica Award of Honour
-  **2024**  
The Grand Commander of the Order of the Niger
-  **2024**  
Order of St. Andrews the Apostle
-  **2024**  
Order of the Druk Gyalpo

-  **2023**  
Grand Cross of the Order of Honour
-  **2023**  
Grand Cross the Legion of Honour
-  **2023**  
Order of the Nile
-  **2023**  
Companion of the Order of Fiji
-  **2023**  
Grand Companion of the Order of Logohu
-  **2023**  
Ebokl Award
-  **2020**  
Legion of Merit by the US Government
-  **2018**  
Grand Collar of the State of Palestine Award
-  **2019**  
Order of Zayed Award
-  **2019**  
Order of the Distinguished Rule of Nishan Izzuddin
-  **2019**  
King Hamad Order of the Renaissance
-  **2016**  
State Order of Ghazi Amir Amanullah Khan
-  **2016**  
The King Abdulaziz Sash

# 25

Highest Civilian Honour Bestowed on PM Modi

- Bilateral ties have expanded significantly in defence technology, irrigation systems, and space cooperation.
- India maintains a balanced West Asia policy, supporting peaceful resolution through dialogue and a two-state solution framework.

### About the Award

- The award is presented by the Speaker of the Knesset, Israel's unicameral legislature.
- It recognises distinguished global leaders for strengthening democratic values and bilateral relations with Israel.
- PM Modi became one of the prominent world leaders to receive this top parliamentary honour.

- ### About the Knesset
- The Knesset is Israel's unicameral legislature with 120 members.
  - It performs legislative, executive oversight, and electoral functions.
  - It elects the President of Israel and can remove the Prime Minister through a vote of no confidence.

### Medal of the Knesset:

This medal is gold-plated bronze with symbolic inscriptions and is intended to recognise contributions to Israel's international relations and democratic values.

#### Facts about Israel:

- Capital: Jerusalem.
- Parliament: Knesset (Unicameral, 120 members).
- Type of Government: Parliamentary Democracy.
- Established: 14 May 1948.
- Currency: Israeli New Shekel (ILS).

## Persons in News

### Appointments & Resignations of the Month

Sr. No	Person Name	Appointed For / Post	Department / Organisation	Brief Description
1	Kiran Mani	Managing Director (APAC)	OpenAI	Will lead Asia-Pacific strategy, expansion, and operations from Singapore starting June 2026.
2	Puneet Gupta	Chairperson	Digital News Publishers Association (DNPA)	Former Vice-Chairperson, now leading DNPA during AI-driven transformation.
3	Anant Goenka	Vice-Chairperson	DNPA	Appointed to support leadership in digital media policy and collaboration.
4	Krishna Kumar Thakur	Director (Personnel)	NMDC Limited	IRPS officer focusing on HR reforms and workforce productivity.
5	Vikram Doraiswami	Ambassador to China	Ministry of External Affairs	Senior diplomat with expertise in China-related affairs.
6	Arun Mammen	Chairman (Re-elected)	ATMA	Leading tyre industry body during growth phase.
7	Rajarshi Moitra	Vice Chairman	ATMA	Supporting leadership of tyre industry association.
8	Sanjay Chatterjee	Director General	ATMA	Elevated as DG replacing retiring official.
9	José Antonio Kast	President	Government of Chile	Took office marking major right-wing shift.
10	Dr. Partha Biswas	Member	NCSC	Works for welfare and protection of Scheduled Castes.
11	K. V. Ramana Murty	Whole-Time Member	SEBI	Handles capital market regulation and policymaking.
12	R. M. Nachammai	Chief Superintendent	NPCIL	First woman to head an operational nuclear power plant in India.
13	R. N. Ravi	Governor (22nd)	West Bengal	Former TN Governor, expert in conflict resolution.
14	Mojtaba Khamenei	Supreme Leader	Iran	Became top authority after Ali Khamenei's death.

15	Dan Bailey	President	Jio Platforms Limited	Leads global expansion and international strategy.
16	Nidhi Chhibber	CEO (Additional Charge)	NITI Aayog	Senior IAS officer handling interim leadership.
17	Pieter Elbers	Resigned (CEO)	IndiGo	Stepped down as CEO of IndiGo airline.
18	Rahul Bhatia	Interim Chief	IndiGo	Took over as interim CEO after resignation.
19	Atanu Chakraborty	Resigned (Chairman)	HDFC Bank	Resigned citing ethical differences.
20	Shantanu Narayen	Stepping Down (CEO)	Adobe	Announced resignation amid investor concerns over AI.
21	Børge Brende	Resigned (CEO)	World Economic Forum	Resigned amid scrutiny related to Epstein links.

### Obituaries of the Month

Sr. No.	Person Name	Field Related	Description
1	Chuck Norris	Martial Arts / Film Industry	Legendary American martial artist and actor, known for <i>Walker, Texas Ranger</i> , passed away at age 86.
2	Kushal Das	Sports Administration (Football)	Former AIFF General Secretary, key figure in Indian football development, passed away at 66.
3	H. K. Dua	Journalism / Public Life	Veteran journalist, former Rajya Sabha member and ambassador, passed away at 88.
4	Jatinder Mehra	Steel Industry	Renowned steel industry veteran and Essar Group leader, passed away after a long career.
5	Ayatollah Ali Khamenei	Politics / Religion	Iran's Supreme Leader killed in US-Israel airstrikes in Feb 2026, triggering regional tensions.

## Sports

### India's 94th Grandmaster

Sixteen-year-old Mayank Chakraborty from Assam has become India's 94th Chess Grandmaster and the first ever Grandmaster from the North-East region of India after securing his final GM norm in a tournament in Sweden.

#### About the Grandmaster Title

- The Grandmaster (GM) title is the highest title awarded to chess players by the International Chess Federation (FIDE).
- To become a Grandmaster, a player must:
- Achieve three GM norms in international tournaments.
- Cross a FIDE rating of 2500 at some point in their career.

#### Important Background Facts

- India's first Grandmaster was Viswanathan Anand in 1988.
- India has seen rapid growth in chess talent, producing many young Grandmasters in recent years.
- The governing body for chess in India is the All India Chess Federation.
- Chennai is often called the "Chess Capital of India."

#### FIDE:

- Formation: July 20, 1924
- Founder: Pierre Vincent
- Headquarters: Lausanne, Switzerland
- President: Arkady Dvorkovich
- Deputy President: Viswanathan Anand

#### Key Highlights

- Mayank Chakraborty achieved his third and final Grandmaster norm at the 8th GM Tournament in Stockholm, Sweden.
- He finished the tournament with an impressive score of 7 out of 9 points.
- With this achievement, he became the first chess Grandmaster from the North-East region of India.
- Before becoming a Grandmaster, he held the title of International Master (IM).
- His success marks an important milestone for the development of chess in the North-East region.

### England Open Badminton Championships 2026

India's Lakshya Sen finished runner-up in the All England Open Badminton Championships 2026 after losing to Lin Chun-Yi in the men's singles final held in Birmingham. Lin Chun-Yi defeated Lakshya Sen 21-15, 22-20 in straight games to win his first All England title. Lakshya Sen fought strongly but eventually settled for second place, marking his second runner-up finish in this tournament after 2022.

#### Key Points:

- All England Open is the world's oldest badminton tournament, first held in 1899.
- It is part of the Badminton World Federation (BWF) World Tour.

#### 2026 Champions:

- Men's singles: Lin Chun-yi (Chinese Taipei)
- Women's singles: Wang Zhiyi (China)
- Men's doubles: Kim Won-ho (South Korea), Seo Seung-jae (South Korea)
- Women's doubles: Liu Shengshu (China), Tan Ning (China)
- Mixed doubles: Ye Hong-wei (Chinese Taipei), Nicole Gonzales Chan (Chinese Taipei)

- The tournament belongs to the BWF World Tour Super 1000 category (highest level after World Championships and Olympics).
- First Indian winner: Prakash Padukone (1980).
- Second Indian winner: Pullela Gopichand (2001).
- Lakshya Sen hails from Almora.
- Lin Chun-Yi became the first men's singles player from Chinese Taipei to win the All England title.

### ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2026

India won the 2026 ICC Men's T20 World Cup after defeating New Zealand by 96 runs in the final held at Narendra Modi Stadium. India scored 255/5 in 20 overs, while New Zealand was bowled out for 159 runs in 19 overs. Sanju Samson scored 89 runs, while Jasprit Bumrah took 4 wickets for 15 runs and was named Player of the Match. Samson was also named Player of the Tournament.

#### Key Facts:

- Tournament: ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2026
- Final Match: India vs New Zealand
- Date: 8 March 2026
- Venue: Narendra Modi Stadium
- Result: India won by 96 runs
- India Score: 255/5 (20 overs)
- New Zealand Score: 159 all out (19 overs)
- Player of the Match: Jasprit Bumrah
- Player of the Tournament: Sanju Samson
- India Captain: Suryakumar Yadav
- Organised by: International Cricket Council (ICC).
- Edition: 10th edition of the ICC Men's T20 World Cup.
- First T20 World Cup: 2007 (won by India).
- Previous champion: India (2024).
- Next T20 World Cup: Scheduled for 2028 and will be co-hosted by Australia and New Zealand.

**With this victory, India became:**

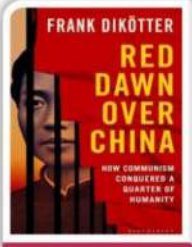
- The first team to win the Men's T20 World Cup three times.
- The first team to successfully defend the T20 World Cup title.
- The first host nation to win the T20 World Cup at home.



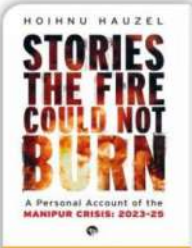
## Important Days of the Month

Day	Observed/Celebrated As	Motto/Importance
01- Apr	Utkal Diwas/Odisha day	To embark the formation of the state(Odisha) as a separate state out of Bihar and Odisha province on 1 April 1936
02- Apr	World Autism Awareness Day	To put a spotlight on the hurdles that people with autism face every day.
04- Apr	International Day for Mine Awareness	To spread awareness about the threat caused by landmines to the safety, health and lives of civilian populations
05- Apr	National Maritime day	Propelling Indian Maritime to Net Zero
07- Apr	World Health day	Together for health. Stand with science
10- Apr	World Homeopathy day	Harmony Through Homeopathy – Healing Beyond Borders
11- Apr	National Safe Motherhood Day	Diagnosis: First step to care
17- Apr	World Haemophilia Day	Access for all: Women and girls bleed too
18- Apr	International Day for Monuments and Sites	Emergency Response for Living Heritage in contexts of Conflicts and Disasters.
19- Apr	World Liver Day	To spread awareness about liver related disease
21- Apr	Civil Service Day	To commemorate the day when 1st Home Minister of Independent India addressed the Administrative Services Officers in 1947.
22- Apr	Earth Day	Our Power, Our Planet
23- Apr	World Book & Copyright Day	To pay a worldwide tribute to books and authors and to encourage people to discover the pleasure of reading.
24- Apr	National Panchayati Day	On this day the 73rd Constitution Amendment Act, 1992 came into force
25- Apr	World Malaria Day	United Against Malaria
26- Apr	World Intellectual Property Day	IP and Sports: Ready, Set, Innovate
28- Apr	World Day for Safety and Health at work	To honour the memory of victims of occupational accidents and diseases
29- Apr	International Dance Day	To mark the birth anniversary of Jean-Georges Noverre (1727–1810), the creator of modern ballet.
30- Apr	Ayushman Bharat Diwas	To mark the rollout of India's most affordable medical Scheme, i.e. Ayushman Bharat Programme.

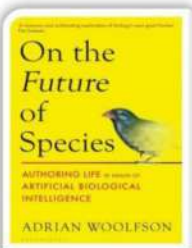
### Books & Authors



**Book:** Red Dawn Over China  
**Author:** Frank Dikötter  
**About:** Explains how Soviet support influenced Communist China's rise and highlights the Chinese Communist Party's governance and control mechanisms.



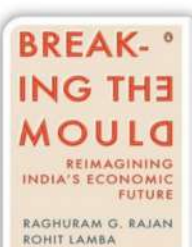
**Book:** Stories the Fire Could Not Burn  
**Author:** Hoihnu Hauzel  
**About:** Narrates Manipur's violence, institutional failures, and human suffering, presenting a deeply emotional and balanced account of conflict and loss.



**Book:** On the Future of Species  
**Author:** Adrian Woolfson  
**About:** Explores how humans may design future lifeforms and examines the ethical and scientific implications of controlling evolution.



**Book:** Plastic Inc.  
**Author:** Beth Gardiner  
**About:** A gripping investigation into the global plastic industry, exposing environmental damage, corporate influence, and health consequences.

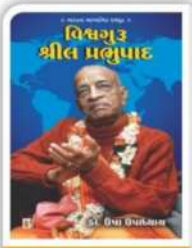


**Book:** Breaking the Mould: Reimagining India's Economic Future  
**Author:** Raghuram Rajan & Rohit Lamba  
**About:** Analyzes India's economic challenges and suggests reforms for inclusive and sustainable growth.

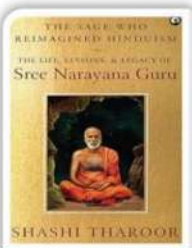
**Books & Authors**



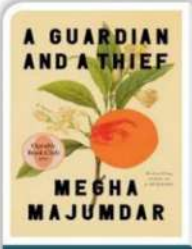
**Book:** Baagh Tiger – The Inside Story  
**Author:** Abhishek Ray  
**About:** A wildlife crime thriller focusing on conservation, human-wildlife conflict, and a poacher’s journey toward redemption.



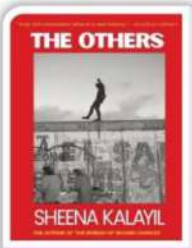
**Book:** Vishwaguru Srila Prabhupada  
**Author:** Dr Usha Upadhyay  
**About:** The book highlights how Srila Prabhupada carried Indian spirituality and Vedic wisdom to the global stage and spread the message of Lord Krishna across continents.



**Book:** The Sage Who Reimagined Hinduism  
**Author:** Shashi Tharoor  
**About:** Highlights Sree Narayana Guru’s ideas on social reform, equality, and inclusive Hinduism, challenging caste discrimination and promoting unity.



**Book:** A Guardian and a Thief  
**Author:** Megha Majumdar  
**About:** Set in a climate-ravaged future Kolkata, it follows a mother whose stolen visa triggers a moral conflict involving survival and desperation.



**Book:** The Others  
**Author:** Sheena Kalayil  
**About:** Explores lives shaped by historical upheaval, focusing on personal relationships and identity against the backdrop of major socio-political changes.

## Global Research Conferences to Watch in 2026: Business, Technology, Engineering, Medicine & Science

### Business Conferences

- **International Conference on Advances in Business Management and E-Business**
  - Venue/City: Paris, France
  - Date (2026): 25th - 26th March 2026
  - Registration Deadline: 15th Mar 2026
  - Website/Link: <https://theiier.org/Conference/26773/ICABMeB/>
- **Convergence India Expo 2026 (ICT & Telecom-Business)**
  - Venue/City: New Delhi, India
  - Date (2026): 23-25 March 2026
  - Registration Deadline:
  - Website/Link: <https://www.convergenceindia.org/>
- **IndiaSoft – International IT Exhibition & Conference**
  - Venue/City: Bharat Mandapam, New Delhi, India
  - Date (2026): 23–25 March 2026
  - Registration Deadline:
  - Website/Link: <https://indiasoft.org/>

### Engineering Conferences

- **7th Asia Conference on Renewable Energy and Environmental Engineering (AREEE 2026)**
  - Venue/City: Singapore, Singapore
  - Date (2026): 28–30 Mar
  - Registration Deadline: March 5, 2026
  - Website/Link: <https://www.areee.org/>
- **International Conference on Contemporary Engineering & Technology (ICCET 2026)**
  - Venue/City: Chennai, India
  - Date (2026): 22–23 Mar
  - Registration Deadline:
  - Website/Link: <https://iccet.in>
- **13th International Conference on Industrial Engineering and Applications (ICIEA 2026)**

- Venue/City: Kyoto, Japan
- Date (2026): 09–12 Apr
- Registration Deadline:
- Website/Link: <https://www.iciea.org/>
- **17th International Conference on Mechatronic Technology (ICMET 2026)**
  - Venue/City: Osaka, Japan
  - Date (2026): April 28-30, 2026.
  - Registration Deadline: March 15, 2026
  - Website/Link: <https://www.icmet.ac.cn/>
- **10th International Conference on Civil Engineering (ICOCE 2026)**
  - Venue/City: Singapore, Singapore
  - Date (2026): 28–30 Mar
  - Registration Deadline:
  - Website/Link: <https://www.icoce.org/>
- **International Conference on Recent Challenges in Engineering & Technology (ICRCET 2026)**
  - Venue/City: Bengaluru, India
  - Date (2026): 22–23 Apr
  - Registration Deadline:
  - Website/Link: <https://icrcet.org>
- **i3CE 2026: ASCE International Conference on Computing in Civil Engineering**
  - Venue/City: Incheon (Songdo Convensia), South Korea
  - Date (2026): 14–17 Jun
  - Registration Deadline: 19 May, 2026
  - Website/Link: <https://www.i3ce2026.com>

Medical Conferences

- **3<sup>rd</sup> International Conference on Cardiology and Cardiovascular Innovations (Cardio-2026)**
  - Venue/City: Vienna, Austria
  - Date (2026): July 21 -22
  - Registration Deadline:
  - Website/Link: <https://cardiology-conference.org/>

- **4th Cell & Gene Therapy Research & Development Congress: Asia**
  - Venue/City: Seoul, South Korea
  - Date (2026): 9-10th April
  - Registration Deadline:
  - Website/Link: <https://global-engage.com/product/cell-gene-therapy-asia/#venue-image-slider-event>

Sciences Conferences

- **World Conference on Computational Science and Technology (WcCST-2026)**
  - Venue/City: Chandigarh University, Mohali, Punjab, India
  - Date (2026): 26–27 Mar
  - Registration Deadline:
  - Website/Link: <https://www.cuchd.in/conference/WcCST-26/>
- **International Soft Matter Conference (ISMC 2026)**
  - Venue/City: BITS Pilani – K K Birla Campus, Goa, India
  - Date (2026): 25–29 May
  - Registration Deadline:
  - Website/Link: <https://ge.iitm.ac.in/ismc2026>
- **ICMSEM 2026: International Conference on Materials Science, Engineering and Manufacturing**
  - Venue/City: UK, UK
  - Date (2026): July 27-29
  - Registration Deadline:
  - Website/Link: <https://www.icmsem.org/news-39.html>

## Scholarship in Focus – The UK

### Chevening Scholarship for Indian Students

*Your Practical Guide to the UK's Premier International Leadership Funding*

If you are an Indian student dreaming of a Master's degree in the UK, you already know that being academically qualified is just the first step. The real challenge is the cost. Tuition fees at universities like LSE, Oxford, or UCL can range from £15,000 to £30,000 for a single year — and that is before you factor in living costs, visa fees, flights, and the Immigration Health Surcharge. All told, self-funding a one-year UK Master's can cost around ₹40–55 lakh. That is where the Chevening Scholarship comes in.

Funded by the UK's Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) and supported by the British Council, Chevening is the UK Government's flagship international scholarship. It's not a partial grant or a fee waiver — it's a full financial package that covers tuition, living costs, flights, visa fees, and more. For the right candidate, it is one of the most complete scholarships available anywhere in the world.

#### What Is the Chevening Scholarship?

Chevening is administered by the Chevening Secretariat on behalf of the FCDO. Each year, it selects outstanding individuals from over 160 countries to pursue a one-year Master's degree at any eligible UK university — from Oxford and Cambridge to Manchester, Edinburgh, and Birmingham. You choose your institution based on academic fit, not cost.

Unlike purely academic scholarships, Chevening places equal weight on leadership potential and professional experience. It is designed to identify future leaders, policymakers, entrepreneurs, researchers, and changemakers. Chevening alumni—a global network of over 50,000 people—hold influential roles in governments, businesses, and civil societies worldwide, making joining this community as vital as the degree itself. Some notable Indian alumni include Piyush Goyal (Union Minister of Commerce & Industry), Amitabh Kant (India's G20 Sherpa; former CEO, NITI Aayog), Anupriya Patel (Minister of State for Commerce & Industry), T. V. Narendran (Global CEO & MD, Tata Steel), and Girija Vaidyanathan (former Chief Secretary, Tamil Nadu).

Applications open each year in August and close in early October. The scholarship covers only full-time, one-year Master's programmes starting in the September/October intake. Always check the official Chevening website for the most up-to-date eligibility criteria and deadlines for your intake year.

#### Am I Eligible?

Before you start writing essays and gathering documents, make sure your profile meets Chevening's baseline requirements. Only around 3% of applicants are selected, and failing to meet any single criterion will disqualify an otherwise strong application.

#### Citizenship

You must be an Indian citizen. Applicants with British or dual British citizenship are ineligible (with rare exceptions). You must also not have previously received a UK Government-funded scholarship for study in the UK, including a prior Chevening award.

#### Academic Qualification

You need a bachelor's degree equivalent to a UK upper second-class honours (2:1). Chevening does not fund undergraduate degrees, PhD programmes, part-time courses, or mid-year (spring) intake programmes. Your chosen course must be a full-time, one-year Master's starting in September/October.

### Work Experience

This is Chevening's most distinctive requirement. You must have accumulated at least 2,800 hours of work experience — roughly two years of full-time employment — earned after completing your undergraduate degree. Experience gained before or during your undergraduate studies does not count. This threshold must be met in full by the application deadline. If you graduated after October 2023, you may not have enough time to qualify for the current cycle.

### English Language Proficiency

Since UK Master's programmes are taught in English, you'll need to provide proof of your language ability. Common accepted scores are:

- IELTS Academic: Overall 6.5, with no individual band below 6.0 (many universities require 7.0)
- TOEFL iBT: 90–100, depending on the institution
- PTE Academic: 58 minimum (varies by institution)

Always check the specific language requirements for each of your three chosen programmes, as thresholds vary.

### University Offer

You must apply to exactly three eligible UK Master's programmes. By a secondary deadline within the Chevening timeline, you need at least one unconditional offer from one of those three universities. Without this, your application cannot move to the selection stage.

### Return Commitment

Chevening scholars must return to India for a minimum of two years after completing their studies. This is a binding condition of the scholarship — not just a formality. It reflects Chevening's core mission: investing in future leaders who will create impact at home.

### What Does the Scholarship Cover?

Chevening offers one of the most comprehensive financial packages for a one-year UK Master's, typically valued between £32,000 and £52,000 (approximately ₹34–56 lakh), depending on your university and its location.

### Tuition Fees

Chevening pays your full tuition fees directly to your UK university — you never handle this transaction. Whether your programme costs £15,000 or £28,000, it's fully covered. Some courses (including certain MBAs) are subject to a tuition fee cap, and scholars are responsible for any amount above that ceiling.

### Monthly Living Stipend

- London-based students: £1,347 per month (~₹1,44,100)
- Outside London: approximately £1,236–1,260 per month

The stipend is paid monthly into your UK bank account and is intended to cover rent, food, transport, and personal expenses. Outside London, it affords a comfortable student lifestyle. In London, disciplined budgeting is essential.

### Additional Benefits

- Return economy airfare from India to the UK, booked and paid by Chevening
- Arrival allowance (~£1,200–1,300) to cover deposits and initial setup costs
- Departure allowance (~£1,200–1,300) paid in your final month
- Visa fee reimbursement — including the UK student visa fee (~£490) and the Immigration Health Surcharge (~£470+). You pay these upfront and are reimbursed, so keep all receipts
- Travel grant for attending official Chevening events and networking sessions

Your Immigration Health Surcharge also gives you full access to the NHS for your entire scholarship year — covering GP visits, emergency care, and hospital treatment at no additional cost. Dental and optical care are not fully covered, so factor these into your personal budget.

## How Do I Apply? A Step-by-Step Overview

### Step 1: Confirm Your Eligibility

Before registering, verify every criterion: Indian citizenship, at least 2,800 hours of post-graduation work experience by the application deadline, a qualifying undergraduate degree, and a genuine plan to return to India for two years.

### Step 2: Apply to Three UK Universities

Research and shortlist three eligible UK Master's programmes that align with your career goals. Apply to each independently through their admissions portals. You must secure at least one unconditional offer by Chevening's secondary documents deadline.

### Step 3: Register on the Chevening Portal

The portal opens around August each year. Complete the online registration and pass the built-in eligibility checker. You'll receive a confirmation email with a unique access code — store this carefully, as you'll need it every time you log back in.

### Step 4: Complete the Application Form

The form covers personal details, immigration information, education history, work history, your three chosen programmes, and the details of two referees. The system automatically calculates your work hours from the dates you enter.

### Step 5: Write Your Four Essays

Your essays carry more weight than your academic record. Each one must include specific examples with measurable outcomes — not vague statements about potential or ambition. Use the STAR method (Situation, Task, Action, Result) to structure your answers. Generic essays are the most common reason for rejection.

### Step 6: Submit Before the October Deadline

The portal closes in early October, typically at 12:00 UTC. Late applications are not accepted under any circumstances. Save your progress frequently — the system logs you out after 15 minutes of inactivity.

### Step 7: Interview (If Shortlisted)

Shortlisted candidates are invited for interviews, typically held between February and April. Panels will probe your leadership experiences, career goals, motivation for studying in the UK, and your plans to return to India. Your essays form the foundation of this conversation, so know them thoroughly.

### Step 8: Award and Pre-Departure

Successful candidates receive award letters in June. You'll then confirm your university enrolment, attend a mandatory pre-departure event, process your UK student visa, and book flights through Chevening's travel agency. Bring personal buffer funds of at least £1,500–2,000 (~₹1,60,500–2,14,000) to cover the first few weeks before your stipend arrives.

### Document Checklist

Chevening's initial application does not require document uploads, but shortlisted candidates must produce accurate documents quickly. Prepare these in advance:

- Valid passport (must cover the entire scholarship period)
- Undergraduate degree certificate and official academic transcripts
- CV/résumé covering education, work experience, and extracurricular involvement
- Work experience documentation (employment certificates, appointment letters, or payslips from each post-graduation role, clearly showing start and end dates)
- Two reference letters (referees upload these directly to the portal when requested)
- English language proficiency certificate (IELTS, TOEFL, or PTE) meeting each university's requirements
- University offer letters (at least one unconditional offer by the secondary deadline)
- Four pre-drafted Chevening essays, carefully edited before pasting into the application form

### Tips for First-Time Applicants

#### Start Planning 12 Months Early

The portal opens in August, but your preparation should begin a full year ahead. Identify your target UK programmes, verify your work experience hours, choose your referees, and draft your essays well in advance. Last-minute preparation consistently produces generic applications that don't survive the first round.

#### Treat Your Essays as Your Strongest Asset

Every sentence in your essays must serve a purpose. Avoid sweeping claims — demonstrate impact with specific examples, numbers, and outcomes. An essay that says "I led a team of 12 engineers to deliver a project three weeks ahead of schedule, saving ₹18 lakh" is far stronger than "I have strong leadership skills and a passion for engineering."

#### Choose Your Three Courses Strategically

Each programme you apply to should coherently align with your career narrative and your essays. For example, if your goal is health policy reform but your three chosen courses cover unrelated fields, selection panels will question your preparation. Coherence between your essays, your background, and your course choices matters.

#### Pick Referees Who Know Your Leadership

Chevening selects leaders, not just high achievers. A referee who can speak to your initiative, professional contributions, and impact will serve you far better than one who can only comment on your grades. Share your CV and essay drafts with your referees so their letters reinforce — rather than contradict — your application narrative.

#### Demonstrate a Credible Return Plan

Chevening invests in future Indian leaders, not in candidates planning to build careers in the UK. Your essays must reflect a genuine, well-considered plan to return and create specific, meaningful impact. Name the sector you'll work in, the gap your UK education addresses, and the change you intend to drive.

### Frequently Asked Questions

### Is Chevening available for Indian students?

Yes. India is a Chevening-eligible country, and Indian students are among the largest groups of Chevening scholars globally.

### Can I apply for a Bachelor's degree or PhD?

No. Chevening exclusively funds one-year, full-time Master's programmes starting in the September/October intake.

### Can I be unemployed when I apply?

Yes. You don't need to be currently employed. The only requirement is that you've already accumulated at least 2,800 hours of post-graduation work experience by the application deadline.

### Can Chevening be combined with other funding?

You must disclose any additional funding. Chevening generally requires that it remain your primary funding source. Always consult the official guidelines before accepting secondary funding.

### A Final Word

Every year, highly qualified Indian professionals rule themselves out of Chevening before even applying — because they've never managed a formal team, or their work feels too niche, or they don't see themselves as the kind of "leader" a government scholarship would select. This fundamentally misunderstands what Chevening is looking for.

Chevening's definition of leadership is intentionally broad. It includes the engineer who pushed through a sustainable construction practice against institutional resistance, the teacher who rebuilt a rural school curriculum from scratch, the journalist who gave voice to a story that changed policy, and the public health worker who mobilised a community during a crisis. If you've influenced outcomes, built relationships, and created genuine impact — Chevening is designed for you.

With the next application portal opening in August 2026 for the 2027–28 intake, Indian professionals who are planning ahead should begin identifying their target UK programmes, drafting their essays, and selecting their referees now. For candidates who invest in purposeful, honest, well-prepared applications, Chevening is not an unreachable dream — it's a structured, transparent pathway to a world-class education and a lifelong global network.

### Useful Links

- Official Chevening website: [www.chevening.org](http://www.chevening.org)
- India-specific guidance: [www.chevening.org/scholarship/india](http://www.chevening.org/scholarship/india)
- The British Council in India is also a point of contact for applicants seeking guidance on the process

## Scholarship in Focus - India

### Dr. Manmohan Singh Scholarship

*A Practical Student Guide to Cambridge's Premier India-Focused Doctoral Funding*

For many Indian scholars, the idea of pursuing a PhD at the University of Cambridge represents the pinnacle of academic aspiration, yet the financial realities of studying abroad often place this dream beyond reach. The Dr. Manmohan Singh Scholarship exists to ensure that financial limitations do not stand between talent and opportunity. Cambridge is one of the world's top universities, and the cost of studying there as an international student can be daunting — tuition alone can exceed £25,000 per year, with living costs adding another £12,000–15,000. Over three years, that's close to ₹1 crore. This scholarship is designed to cover those costs entirely.

The scholarship is funded by Rolls-Royce India, the BP Foundation, and the Tata Group. It is primarily administered by St John's College, Cambridge, with the British Council serving as an on-the-ground partner and facilitator for Indian applicants. It supports Indian students pursuing a PhD or MPhil at St John's College — one of the university's oldest and most prestigious colleges. It is named in honour of Dr. Manmohan Singh, former Prime Minister of India, renowned economist, and St John's College alumnus, who graduated with a First in Economics in 1957.

#### What Is This Scholarship?

The Dr. Manmohan Singh Scholarship is a full-cost doctoral funding award for exceptional Indian students. It was created to honour Dr. Singh's legacy and to support outstanding Indian researchers in pursuing doctoral study at Cambridge in fields connected to India's development priorities.

A key point to remember: this is not a general Cambridge scholarship. It is specific to St John's College. You must list St John's as your first-choice college on your Cambridge graduate application — no exceptions. Typically, only 1 scholarship is awarded per year (occasionally a few), making this one of the most competitive doctoral awards available to Indian students. The scholarship can be renewed annually for up to three academic years, as long as you are making good academic progress.

#### Am I Eligible?

Before you spend time on the application, make sure you meet every one of the following criteria:

##### Nationality and Residency

You must be an Indian national with a valid Indian passport. In most cycles, you also need to be living in India at the time of application. The scholarship is meant to bring India-based researchers to Cambridge, not to support those already studying abroad.

##### Age

You must generally be under 35 years old as of 31 December of the year your course begins (some cycles use 31 January — always check the official notice for your intake year).

##### Academic Qualifications

You need a Master's degree (such as an MPhil, MTech, MSc, or equivalent) from a recognised Indian university in a field related to your proposed research. Competitive applicants typically have first-class or distinction-level results at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels.

### Eligible Fields of Study

Your research must fall within one of these three areas:

- Science and Technology — including aerospace, marine engineering, energy, computer science, and applied sciences
- Economics — including development economics, public policy, and quantitative social science
- Social Sciences — including sociology, politics, and international relations

If your subject sits at the edge of these areas, contact St John's College directly to confirm eligibility.

### College and Admission Requirement

You must apply for a full-time PhD or MPhil at Cambridge and choose St John's College as your first preference. You also need to have received at least a conditional offer of admission from Cambridge before finalising your scholarship application. The two processes run in sequence — Cambridge admission first, then the scholarship.

### What Does the Scholarship Cover?

#### Tuition Fees

The scholarship covers full tuition fees for up to three academic years. For international students, these can exceed £25,000 per year. You don't need to pay this yourself — it is paid directly to the university.

#### Monthly Stipend

A monthly living stipend is provided to cover housing, food, transport, and day-to-day expenses. The total annual package (tuition plus living costs combined) has historically been estimated at around £35,000 (approximately ₹37,40,000), though the official figure is described as variable — your actual stipend amount will be confirmed in your award letter.

#### Additional Benefits

- Return economy-class airfare between India and the UK
- UK student visa application fee
- Annual renewal for up to three years (subject to satisfactory academic progress)

Note: The scholarship does not cover costs for dependants. If you plan to bring family members, their expenses are your responsibility.

### How to Apply: Step by Step

#### 1. Identify your research area and potential supervisor

Start by pinpointing a specific research question and finding a Cambridge faculty member who could supervise your work. Email two or three potential supervisors with a short research summary and your academic CV. This step is expected and necessary.

#### 2. Apply to the University of Cambridge

Submit your Cambridge graduate application, making sure to select St John's College as your first-choice college. Include your research proposal, references, and transcripts before the programme deadline.

#### 3. Receive your Cambridge admission offer

Wait for a conditional or unconditional offer from Cambridge. The scholarship application opens only after your admission is confirmed.

**4. Complete the scholarship application**

Once admitted, fill in the scholarship application via the St John's College and British Council-linked portal. This includes a statement of purpose, academic records, references, and proof of admission. Keep the acknowledgement email you receive — it is your official record.

**5. Shortlisting and interview**

Shortlisted candidates are called for an online interview. Expect questions about your research, why you chose St John's, and your long-term academic goals. Prepare thoroughly.

**6. Award notification and pre-departure**

Results are typically announced by June. If selected, you'll receive a formal award letter from St John's College. You then finalise your enrollment, apply for a UK student visa, and book your travel. Most programmes start in September or October.

**Key Dates**

These are typical timelines, always verify exact dates from the official St John's College and British Council notifications for your year:

Milestone	Typical Timing
Cambridge PhD application deadline	Varies by department; often October–January
Scholarship application deadline	Around 15 January
Interviews	April – June
Results announcement	By June
Programme start date	September / October

***Disclaimer:** Timings, age cutoffs, and the exact number of awards may vary slightly by year; always confirm details on the official St John's College and British Council notifications for your intake.*

**Documents You'll Need**

Start collecting these early — some take time to arrange:

- Valid Indian passport
- Master's degree certificate and official transcripts
- Undergraduate degree certificate and transcripts
- CV covering your education, research experience, publications, and any professional roles
- Statement of purpose tailored to the scholarship (explaining your research, your choice of St John's, and your long-term goals)
- Research proposal for your PhD (research question, methodology, significance, expected contribution)
- Two academic reference letters from professors or senior researchers who know your work well
- Proof of Cambridge admission (conditional or unconditional offer letter)

- Any publications, academic awards, or research outputs

All documents must be in English. If any were originally issued in another language, certified translations are required.

#### Tips for a Strong Application

- **Contact a supervisor before applying to Cambridge.** Cambridge PhD admissions are heavily supervisor-driven. Reaching out to two or three potential supervisors before submitting your application significantly improves your chances. Keep your email concise and research-focused.
- **Choose St John's deliberately.** Many Indian students apply to Cambridge without carefully thinking about college preference. For this scholarship, St John's must be your first choice from the start — you cannot change it later, and it is a hard eligibility condition.
- **Treat your research proposal as your most important document.** It must show originality, academic rigour, and feasibility. Don't be vague. Identify a specific gap in the existing literature, explain why it matters, and describe how you'll address it. Get feedback from your Master's supervisor before submitting.
- **Start at least 12–18 months before your intended start date.** Between supervisor outreach, reference collection, proposal writing, and the application itself, the process is long. Starting late almost always results in a rushed, weaker application.
- **Choose referees who know your research well.** A strong reference letter speaks directly to your research ability, not just your grades. Provide your referees with your CV, proposal, and statement of purpose well in advance.
- **Show the broader impact of your research.** The scholarship's funders — Rolls-Royce India, the BP Foundation, and the Tata Group — care about science, technology, energy, and economic development. In your statement and interview, articulate why your research matters and how it connects to larger challenges.

#### Frequently Asked Questions

##### Is this scholarship only for St John's College?

Yes. If you are admitted to any other Cambridge college, this scholarship does not apply.

##### Can I apply if I'm currently outside India?

Most cycles require you to be an Indian national residing in India at the time of application. Check the official call for your cycle to be sure.

##### Is this scholarship for Master's students?

No. It supports doctoral-level study (PhD and MPhil) only — not undergraduate or taught Master's programmes.

##### How many scholarships are awarded each year?

Typically, only 1 scholarship is awarded per cycle, though this can occasionally vary. Most sources describe it as 1 highly competitive award per year, so treat the competition accordingly.

##### Is it renewable?

Yes, for up to three academic years — but renewal is not automatic. You need satisfactory academic progress and supervisor endorsement each year.

### Can I hold another scholarship alongside this one?

Possibly, but any supplementary funding must be disclosed and approved by St John's College. Do not accept additional funding without checking first.

### What if I don't have a Cambridge offer by the deadline?

In most cases, you cannot be considered without at least a conditional offer. Contact St John's College directly if your situation is unclear.

### A Final Word

It's understandable to feel like institutions such as Cambridge were built for a different kind of student. The Dr. Manmohan Singh Scholarship exists to challenge that assumption. Dr. Singh himself arrived at St John's from Amritsar as a young economist and graduated with one of the highest distinctions the college awards. The scholarship in his name is a commitment to making that journey possible again for India's best researchers. Only around 1 scholar (occasionally a few more) is selected each year from a country of 1.4 billion people. But the criteria are transparent, the process is merit-based, and the path is clear: secure your Cambridge admission, choose St John's, build a strong research proposal, and apply.

### Where to Get Help

For official eligibility details and application forms, visit the St John's College, Cambridge website. The British Council India offices in New Delhi, Mumbai, Chennai, and Kolkata can help with application guidance and document requirements as the scholarship's India-side facilitator. For questions about finding a supervisor or departmental admission requirements, contact the relevant Cambridge faculty or department through their graduate admissions pages.

Keep copies of all documents and correspondence throughout the process. The acknowledgement email from St John's College is your official confirmation of submission — do not lose it.



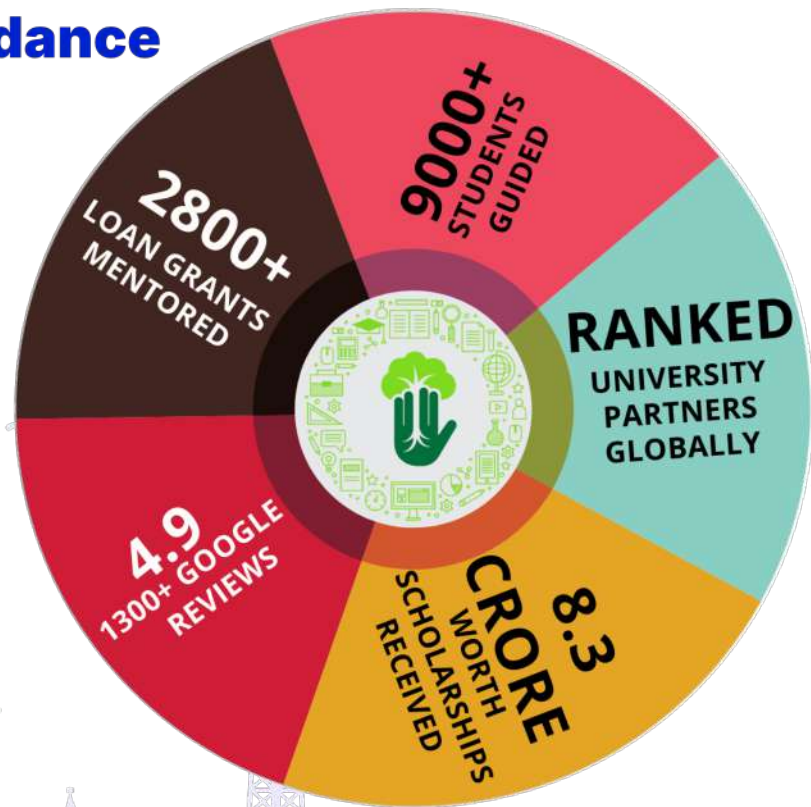
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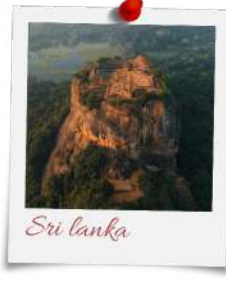
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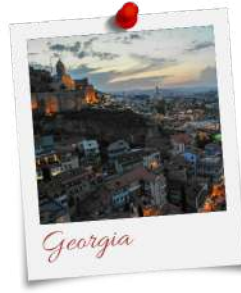
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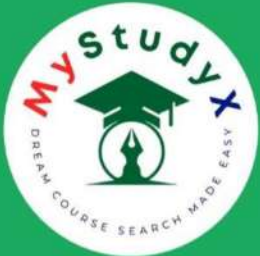
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