

# Daily Current Affairs



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**If we're growing, we're  
always going to be out of  
our comfort zone.**

John C. Maxwell



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**MEET PAPER LEAR**  
**CBI grills Jharkhand school principal**  
NEWS » PAGE 6

**RECURRENT MONSOON**  
**Heavy rain brings north, central Kerala to its knees**  
STATES » PAGE 7

**SPECTRUM AUCTION**  
**Telcos buy waves worth over ₹1,300 cr.**  
BUSINESS » PAGE 12

**HIDDEN ROLE**  
**More onus on LoP in the new Lok Sabha**  
**Rahul must take cues from 2024 poll verdict**  
EDITORIAL » PAGE 8

**KNOCKOUT CHALLENGE**  
**India eyes revenge against England**  
SPORTS » PAGE 16

**INSIDE**

**Former diplomat Muckund Dubey passes away**

**NEW DELHI**  
Former Foreign Secretary Muckund Dubey, who steered India's foreign affairs establishment towards the end of the Cold War and the post-9/11 War phase in the early 1990s, passed away on Wednesday, he was 80. » PAGE 4

**Joint combing operations held in Jiriham**

**NEW DELHI**  
The Assam Rifles, along with personnel from the CRPF, and police, on Wednesday conducted a large-scale joint combing operation in Jiriham district of Manipur which saw the most recent spate of violence in the ongoing ethnic conflict. » PAGE 4

**Sri Lanka seals deal with OCC to restructure debt**

**COLOMBO**  
In what it termed a significant milestone, Sri Lanka on Wednesday sealed a deal with the Official Creditors Committee (OCC) to restructure the debt owed to its bilateral lenders, including India, and signed a separate agreement with China for debt treatment. » PAGE 14

**Kenya President puts off signing controversial Bill**

**NAIROBI**  
Kenya's President said on Wednesday that he will not sign into law a finance bill proposing new taxes that protesting citizens and protesters to storm the parliament on Tuesday leaving several people dead as police opened fire. » PAGE 14

**Assange returns home to Australia, a free man**

**Associated Press**

**CANBERRA**  
Wikileaks founder Julian Assange returned to his home in Australia aboard a charter jet on Wednesday, hours after pleading guilty to obtaining and publishing U.S. military secrets in a deal with Justice Department prosecutors that concludes a drawn-out legal saga.

The criminal case of international internet, which had played out for years came to a surprise end in a most unusual setting with Mr. Assange, 52, entering his plea in a U.S. district court in Saipan, the capital of the Northern Mariana Islands.



Victory lap: Julian Assange waves after landing at the RAAF airbase in Canberra, Australia, on Wednesday.

**Outpouring support**

Mr. Assange was accused of receiving and publishing hundreds of thousands of U.S. war logs and diplomatic cables that included details of U.S. military wrongdoing in Iraq and

principles of the Constitution. By doing this, the rights of citizens were suppressed and the principles of democracy attacked," Mr. Birla said, reaching out the resolution.

"If the then-Prime Minister, Indira Gandhi had talked about committed bureaucracy and constituted judiciary, it was an example of key anti-democratic attitudes," he said.

Amidst allegations by Opposition members, the House was adjourned for the day after observing a moment of silence in memory of the victims of the Emergency.

Earlier, after the Speaker's election, Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched Mr. Birla for the skill he showed in maintaining the decorum of the House during his previous term.

**Join the spots**



On the trail: A leopard, seen carelessly lounging at the Bannerghatta Biological Park, was photographed during the inaugural run of South India's tiger support fund. The safari will showcase several leopards rescued from across Karnataka. » PAGE 10 (From top row)

**As CBI arrests him, Kejriwal withdraws petition from SC**

**Mishra, Rajiv Gandhi**

The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) formally arrested Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal in the excise policy case on Wednesday, and was granted three days to interrogate him in custody.

**As CBI arrests him, Kejriwal withdraws petition from SC**

The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) formally arrested Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal in the excise policy case on Wednesday, and was granted three days to interrogate him in custody.

**US criticises India in report on religious freedom**

**Assange, France, Cross**

The United States in a report published on Wednesday offered a rare criticism of close partner India on religious freedom, while also voicing alarm over rising bigotry worldwide against both Jews and Muslims.

## *Join the spots*



**On the trail:** A leopard, seen cautiously lounging at the Bannerghatta Biological Park, was photographed during the inaugural run of south India's first leopard safari. The safari will showcase several leopards rescued from across Karnataka. K. MURALI KUMAR (REPORT ON PAGE 3)

# India's largest leopard safari opens at Bannerghatta

**The Hindu Bureau**

BENGALURU

South India's first and the country's largest leopard safari was inaugurated by Karnataka Environment Minister Eshwar Khandre on Wednesday at the Bannerghatta Biological Park.

As per Central Zoo Authority guidelines for safaris, an area of 20 hectares has been demarcated and fenced for the safari. Eight leopards have been released for the safari in the open forest area.

According to park officials, Bannerghatta is home to a good population of free ranging leopards (*Panthera pardus*), and highlighting these predators is vital.

The facility has been



**In focus:** A leopard clicked during the inaugural safari ride at Bannerghatta in Bengaluru on Wednesday. K. MURALI KUMAR

created at a cost of ₹4.5 crore. The leopard safari area is made up of undulating terrain with natural rocky outcrops and semi-deciduous forest. This whole area is covered with a vertical chain-link mesh

which is 4.5 metres high, and MS sheets have been placed at a 30 degree inclined angle of 1.5 metres.

The officials added that owing to increasing human-animal conflict in recent times, the park re-

ceives many leopard cubs rescued across the Karnataka. "These cubs will be raised and shifted to the leopard safari to help visitors learn about these big cats, the reasons for the growing human-animal conflicts, and the ways to protect the animals," said the officials.

The officials added that four acres within the safari area have been separated, using a solar fence, to help the animals acclimatise to their new environment.

## Other initiatives

During his visit to the park, Mr. Khandre also inaugurated a number of initiatives, which included a renovated elephant weaning centre, a babycare room at the butterfly park, a children's play area, an en-

trance arch, and he also flagged off electric buggies and zoo installations.

The Minister also named a male elephant calf Swaraj and set free six hamadryas baboons for public display.

The park officials said that during this financial year new naturalistic enclosures have been proposed for emus and rheas at a cost of ₹50 lakh.

A hunting cheetah enclosure at an estimated cost of ₹1.5 crore; a hamadrya and olive baboon enclosure at ₹1.5 crore, and an Indian grey wolf enclosure at ₹1.5 crore have also been proposed. Skywalks are also being developed to establish connectivity between the zoo and the butterfly park, they added.



- **Inauguration:**

- South India's first and the country's largest leopard safari was inaugurated at Bannerghatta Biological Park by Karnataka Environment Minister Eshwar Khandre.
- 

## Safari Details:

The safari spans an area of 20 hectares, demarcated and fenced as per Central Zoo Authority guidelines.

Eight leopards have been released in the safari's open forest area.

## Leopard Population:

Bannerghatta is home to a good population of free-ranging leopards (*Panthera pardus*).

The safari aims to educate visitors on leopards and address human-animal conflicts.

## Infrastructure and Costs:

The facility was created at a cost of ₹4.5 crore.

The safari area features undulating terrain with natural rocky outcrops and semi-deciduous forest.

The area is enclosed with a vertical chain-link mesh, 4.5 meters high, with MS sheets placed at a 30-degree inclined angle of 1.5 meters.



- **Additional Initiatives:**

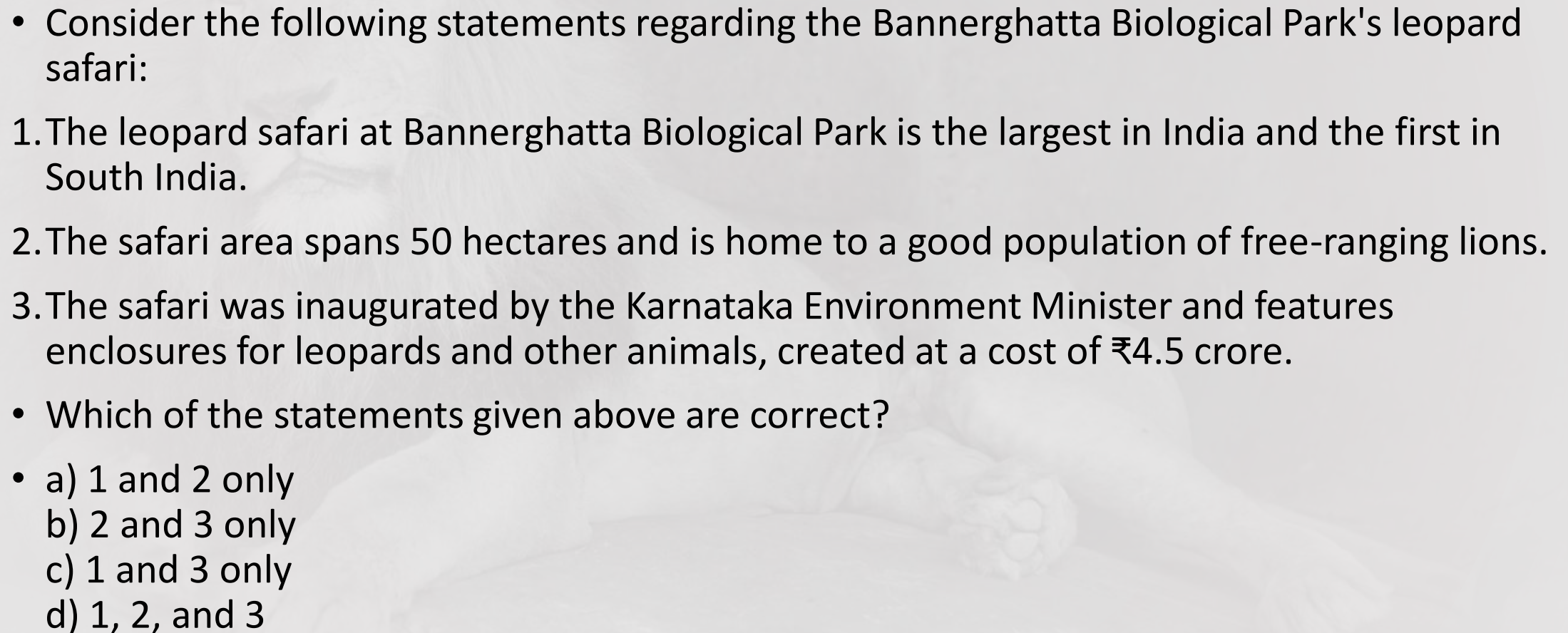
- Four acres within the safari area are separated with a solar fence for acclimatization of animals.
- The park plans to introduce new naturalistic enclosures for emus and rheas at ₹50 lakh, a hunting cheetah enclosure at ₹1.5 crore, and enclosures for hamadryas and olive baboons and Indian grey wolves at ₹1.5 crore each.
- Other developments include a renovated elephant weaning center, a childcare room, a butterfly park, a children's play area, and skywalks for connectivity.



## Visitor Experience:

Minister Khandre named a male elephant calf "Swaraj" and released six hamadryas baboons for public display.

Electric buggies and zoo installations were also inaugurated.

- 
- Consider the following statements regarding the Bannerghatta Biological Park's leopard safari:
    1. The leopard safari at Bannerghatta Biological Park is the largest in India and the first in South India.
    2. The safari area spans 50 hectares and is home to a good population of free-ranging lions.
    3. The safari was inaugurated by the Karnataka Environment Minister and features enclosures for leopards and other animals, created at a cost of ₹4.5 crore.
  - Which of the statements given above are correct?
    - a) 1 and 2 only
    - b) 2 and 3 only
    - c) 1 and 3 only
    - d) 1, 2, and 3



# Prolonged exposure to coal mining causes respiratory, skin diseases in workers: study

† **Jacob Koshy**  
NEW DELHI

Prolonged exposure to pollutants from coal mining has resulted in widespread respiratory and skin diseases among mine workers and other inhabitants of six districts in India where coal extraction is a major occupation, says a survey of 1,200 households published by the National Foundation for India, an organisation that works on social justice issues.

The six districts are Koriya and Raigarh (Chhattisgarh), Dhanbad and Ramgarh (Jharkhand), and Angul and Jajpur (Odisha).

## Medical expenses

At least 65% of the participants interviewed reported health issues such as chronic bronchitis, asthma, and skin ailments such as eczema, dermatitis and



**Unmindful of the risk:** Workers at an open-cast coal mine in Jharia on the outskirts of Dhanbad in Jharkhand. AFP

fungal infections. On an average, a household in these districts spent ₹300 to ₹1,000 on monthly medical bills.

The average annual hospitalisation expenses in Dhanbad were the highest at ₹28,461 for a household. The survey, on an average, spanned 18 to 20 villages in each district.

People living closer to

the mines are relatively more vulnerable. Dhanbad and Ramgarh, which have more people living in such zones, have higher incidence of lung and breathing-related diseases and skin infections.

## Shift from coal

The broader thrust of the study was to investigate a 'just transition' – or how

those who are directly dependent on coal mining may be effectively and sensitively transitioned from these jobs.

The world's shift away from coal is expected to result in significant job losses and economic downturn in coal-dependent regions. This will impact not only the coal miners and workers directly but also the broader local economy.

"Social and economic disparities were evident across districts, with varying income levels and irregular wage receipt patterns," said Pooja Gupta, co-author of the study and research associate at the NFI.

"Dhanbad (Jharkhand) and Koriya (Chhattisgarh) are solely reliant on coal production, and reported lower incomes than the more diversified industrial districts like Angul (Od-

isha)," she said in a press statement.

## Renewable energy

While India has committed to source nearly 500 GW of electricity – nearly half its projected installed capacity for 2030 – from renewable energy sources, coal is expected to be the mainstay of power generation in India for decades.

Nearly half of India's installed power generation capacity, or about 205 GW, are coal-powered thermal plants.

Change, however, is in the air as renewable energy accounted for 71.5% of the record 13.6 GW power generation capacity added by India for the first time in the January-March quarter this year, while coal's share, including lignite, of the total power capacity dropped below 50% for the first time since the 1960s.




- **Health Impact of Coal Mining:**

- Prolonged exposure to pollutants from coal mining has led to widespread respiratory and skin diseases among mine workers and inhabitants in six major coal-extraction districts in India.
- A survey of 1,200 households by the National Foundation for India highlights these health issues.



- **Affected Districts:**

- The districts include Korba and Raigarh (Chhattisgarh), Dhanbad and Ramgarh (Jharkhand), and Angul and Jajpur (Odisha).
  - Common health issues reported are chronic bronchitis, asthma, eczema, dermatitis, and fungal infections.
- 

- **Economic Impact on Health:**
- Households in these districts spend ₹300 to ₹1,000 monthly on medical bills.
- The average annual hospitalization expenses in Dhanbad are the highest at ₹28,461 per household.



## Social and Economic Disparities:

People living closer to the mines, especially in Dhanbad and Ramgarh, are more vulnerable to lung and skin infections.

The study also investigated how a "just transition" from coal dependency could be managed to mitigate economic impacts



## Shift from Coal:

The world's shift away from coal is expected to cause job losses and economic downturns in coal-dependent regions.

Social and economic disparities were noted across districts with varying income levels and irregular wage patterns.


## Renewable Energy Commitment:

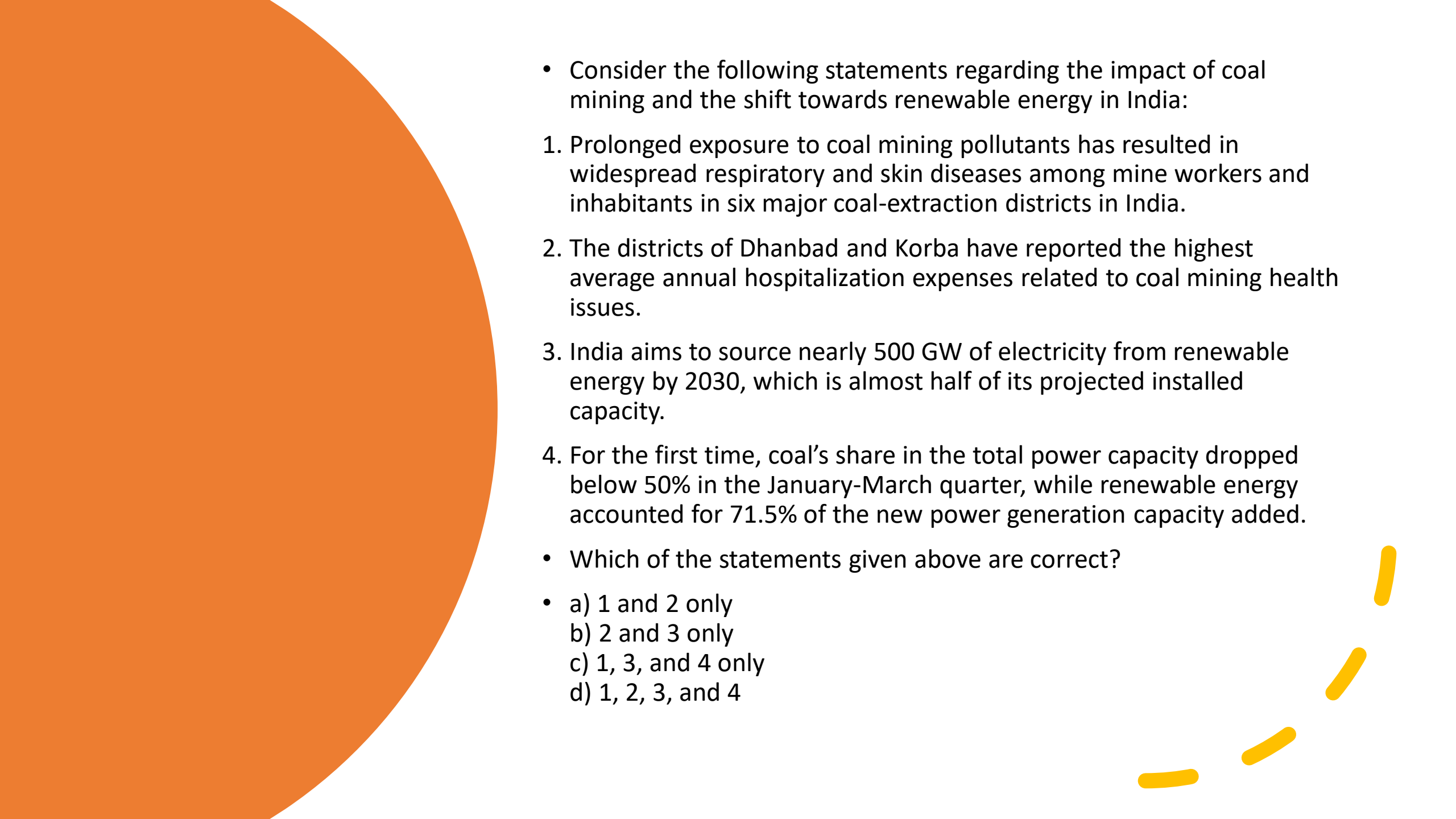
India aims to source nearly 500 GW of electricity from renewable energy by 2030, almost half of its projected capacity.

Currently, nearly half of India's installed power generation capacity, about 205 GW, comes from coal-powered plants



## 1. Renewable Energy Growth:

1. For the first time, renewable energy accounted for 71.5% of the 13.6 GW power generation capacity added in India in the January-March quarter.
  2. Coal's share, including lignite, dropped below 50% for the first time since the 1960s.
- 

- 
- Consider the following statements regarding the impact of coal mining and the shift towards renewable energy in India:
    1. Prolonged exposure to coal mining pollutants has resulted in widespread respiratory and skin diseases among mine workers and inhabitants in six major coal-extraction districts in India.
    2. The districts of Dhanbad and Korba have reported the highest average annual hospitalization expenses related to coal mining health issues.
    3. India aims to source nearly 500 GW of electricity from renewable energy by 2030, which is almost half of its projected installed capacity.
    4. For the first time, coal's share in the total power capacity dropped below 50% in the January-March quarter, while renewable energy accounted for 71.5% of the new power generation capacity added.
  - Which of the statements given above are correct?
    - a) 1 and 2 only
    - b) 2 and 3 only
    - c) 1, 3, and 4 only
    - d) 1, 2, 3, and 4

# Text & Content

THE HINDU

## NEWS IN NUMBERS

### Number of Palestinians killed in Gaza since October 7

**37,718** The health ministry in Gaza said that at least 37,717 people had been wounded in the Gaza Strip since the war began when Hamas attacked Israel on October 7. **37**

### Gap after which Nagaland civic bodies went to the polls

**20** In years. The polling for 25 civic bodies in the State was held on June 26, after a gap of two decades. The last elections were held in 2004. Three municipalities and 22 town councils went to the polls. **20**

### The partial debt deal sealed by Sri Lanka with bilateral lenders

**5.80** In \$ billion. The country sealed a partial debt deal by reaching a final restructuring agreement for \$5.8 billion of debt with its bilateral lenders. **5.80**

### Length of the first plastic road of Jaipur Military Station

**100** In metres. The Jaipur Military Station is the second military station to construct the plastic waste road and the first to make it part of its maintenance programme. **100**

### Grassroots workers trained on new criminal laws

**40** In lakh. Over 5.65 lakh police, prison, forensic, judicial and prosecution officials have also been trained about the laws to ensure that people are aware of the legislation. **40**

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## The row over Delhi's water crisis

Why is the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP)-led Delhi government blaming the Haryana government for the capital's water shortage? Is Delhi dependent on its neighbouring States for water? What has the Lieutenant Governor's (L-G) office said?

### EXPLAINER

Satchya Mahajan

The story so far: Amidst a heat wave in several parts of north India, the national capital has been struck with an acute water shortage over the past couple of weeks sparking a battle in the Supreme Court with its neighbouring states including Haryana and Himachal Pradesh. The Aam Aadmi Party (AAP)-led Delhi government has alleged that Haryana is blocking water to Delhi and has asked them to release it.

**Why is there water shortage in Delhi?** Delhi depends heavily on its neighbouring States of Himachal Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Punjab, Haryana, and Uttar Pradesh to fulfil its drinking water needs. The capital's raw water supply comes from four sources with approximately 40% of it coming via Yamuna through Haryana. The raw water is treated in Delhi's Water Treatment Plants (WTPs) and sent across through its pipelines that cover over 10,000 kilometres.

In the past couple of weeks, the Delhi government has blamed the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) for blocking Delhi's share of water through the Sirsa Canal, which is one of the primary sources of water for the capital. The canal, which falls under the Haryana government, starts from Haryana and enters Delhi with raw water. If there are any problems, the Delhi Government is responsible for notifying the issue and financing the problem. Delhi's Water Minister Atishi has claimed that Haryana is purposely blocking water, in an already difficult situation due to the heat, which is resulting in the residents of Delhi being forced to go waterless for days.

However, the Lieutenant Governor's (L-G) office has maintained that Haryana and other neighbouring States are releasing adequate supplies of water, and that the shortage is due to a leakage in the



Searching heat: Residents fill containers with water from a tanker in New Delhi, on June 24. REUTERS

Mirsa Canal, and the lack of cleaning of pipelines and WTPs. Additionally, the L-G office has claimed that the presence of privately run tankers which are finding illegal sources of water and selling them at high rates is adding to the issue.

**What is happening in the SC?** The Delhi government had moved the Supreme Court to seek a direction to Haryana to supply more water to the crisis-hit national capital on May 11. The AAP government in Delhi has told the top court that the water demand in the city has risen significantly due to heatwave conditions, and that Haryana be directed to release extra water for a month. The Supreme Court on June 3 directed the Centre to hold an emergency meeting of its Upper Yamuna River Board (UYRB) with the States of Delhi, Haryana, and

Himachal Pradesh to address water scarcity in the national capital amid soaring temperatures. On June 5, the Congress-led Himachal Pradesh government agreed to share water resources with the capital in the Supreme Court, promising to release 137 cusecs of water through the Hathnand barrage in Haryana into the Wairahoti heritage in Delhi. However, Haryana, through which the water would pass to reach Delhi, raised objections. And later on, even the Himachal Pradesh government went back on its statements, stating that water was already flowing in the Yamuna, and that it had made an incorrect statement of being able to spare Delhi 137 cusecs of water.

**What has been the court's response?** The SC has now bowed out of the row, stating that it does not want to interfere

with the proceedings of the UYRB. The Bench headed by Justice P.K. Mishra said it did not want to either violate or flout with the MoU settled among the States by even passing an interim order. "The issue should be left to be considered by the Upper Yamuna River Board, a body constituted under the agreement of parties in the MoU of May 12, 1994," the Bench observed in its order. The board was directed to hold a meeting with stakeholders and was asked to take a call on the matter. Delhi MLAs have also written to Jal Shakti Minister C.K. Patel seeking help on humanitarian grounds. The main function of the UYRB is to regulate the allocation of available flows amongst the beneficiary States.

**What is next for Delhi?** With an acute water shortage in Delhi, the powers in the capital need to focus beyond politics, be it the Centre or the State government. Rajendra Singh, a water conservationist who is popularly referred to as the 'Waterman of India', said, "He explained that Delhi must focus on three solutions to the problem. "First, drinking water in the capital needs to be made its top priority; water for irrigation and other works needs to be redirected for drinking water."

He further stated that "Delhi needs to thoroughly re-examine its water resources and work on the principles of 'retreat, recycle and reuse.' The capital needs to look closely at its WTPs and build successful models to sustain its needs. The water flowing through Delhi needs to go into the cycle of reuse."

Additionally, instead of depending on other States, Delhi should investigate rain harvesting methods. The spaces in Anand Bhawan can be made into water harvesting structures, Mr. Singh suggested. Ground water resources used to be recharged in Delhi by the water in the Aravalli belt, but that is not the case anymore which is leading to wastage. The Aravalli belt should be converted into a water sanctuary and the Yamuna flood plain banks into a water bank.

### THE GIST

New Delhi depends heavily on its neighbouring States of Himachal Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Punjab, Haryana, and Uttar Pradesh to fulfil its drinking water needs.

Delhi's Water Minister Atishi has claimed that Haryana is purposely blocking water, in an already difficult situation due to the heat, which is resulting in the residents of Delhi being forced to go waterless for days.

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## How well is India tapping its rooftop solar potential?

Which are the States with the highest RTS capacities? How can more awareness be spread?

Shantanu Roy

The story so far: India's installed rooftop solar (RTS) capacity increased by 2.99 GW in 2023-2024, the highest growth in a year. As of March 31, the total installed RTS capacity in India was 11.87 GW, according to the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy. To meet rising energy demand, India needs to double down on its efforts to expand its RTS potential.

**What is the RTS programme?** India launched the Jawahar Solar National Solar Mission in January 2010. Its main objective was to produce 20 GW of solar energy (including RTS) in three phases: 2010-2013, 2013-2017, and 2017-2022. In 2019, the government revised this target to 100 GW by 2022, including a 40 GW RTS component, with yearly targets for each state and Union Territory. In December 2023, India had an installed RTS capacity of 7.3 GW and extended the deadline for the 40-GW

target to 2026. While financial incentives, technological advances, awareness, and training have improved RTS installation numbers, there is a long way to go. India's overall RTS potential is approximately 798 GW, most of which is concentrated in 300 GW of renewable energy capacity, with a solar composition of 280 GW. By 2030, RTS alone needs to contribute about 100 GW by 2030.

**How are States faring?** As of March 31, 2024, the RTS capacities of Gujarat, Maharashtra, and Rajasthan had taken big strides while some others were behind the curve. An installed RTS capacity of 3,486 MW in Gujarat is the result of its government's quick approval process, a large number of RTS installers, and high consumer awareness. Similarly, Maharashtra, with an RTS capacity of 2,672 MW, is one of the top performing States owing to its robust solar policies and conducive regulatory environment.

Thanks to its land area and high solar irradiance, Rajasthan boasts of the

highest RTS potential in the country: 1,154 MW. Its efforts to streamline approvals, and training have improved RTS installation numbers, there is a long way to go. India's overall RTS potential is approximately 798 GW, most of which is concentrated in 300 GW of renewable energy capacity, with a solar composition of 280 GW. By 2030, RTS alone needs to contribute about 100 GW by 2030.

Its challenges include infrastructure, and lack of public awareness. The Pradhan Mantri Surya Ghar Muft Billion Yojana is a flagship initiative to fit one crore households with RTS systems and help them get up to 300 units of free electricity every month. An average system size of 2 kW for targeted households will result in a total RTS capacity addition of 202 GW. The scheme has a financial outlay of ₹79,024 crore, which includes financial assistance for consumers (₹68,700 crore), incentives for

distribution companies (₹4,950 crore), incentives for local bodies and model solar villages in each district, payment security mechanisms, capacity building (₹657 crore), and awareness and outreach (₹657 crore). The law also encourages the adoption of advanced solar technologies, energy storage solutions, and smart grid infrastructure.

**How can we ensure RTS growth?** Creating awareness is key to getting consumers on board. In addition, RTS needs to be economically viable for households. While government subsidies are helpful, multiple low-cost financing options are required. The number of banks and non-bank financial companies providing RTS loans has increased of late. Access to low-cost RTS loans should be as easy as getting a bike or car loan.

From rooftop solar technology, energy storage solutions, and smart grid infrastructure, consumers can improve performance, and enhance the reliability of RTS systems. Investments in training programmes, and government-led solar PV technician programmes initiated in 2023, will help create a skilled workforce. As the scheme's implementation enters full swing, net-metering regulations, grid-integration standards, and billing cycles should be reviewed and updated to help address emerging challenges and facilitate timely consumer assistance.

Shantanu Roy works with the Center for Study of Science, Technology and Policy.

### THE GIST

India's installed rooftop solar (RTS) capacity increased by 2.99 GW in 2023-2024, the highest growth in a year.

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Creating awareness is key to getting consumers on board. In addition, RTS needs to be economically viable for households.

# How well is India tapping its rooftop solar potential?

Which are the States with the highest RTS capacities? How can more awareness be spread?

**Shantanu Roy**

## The story so far:

India's installed rooftop solar (RTS) capacity increased by 2.99 GW in 2023-2024, the highest growth in a year. As of March 31, the total installed RTS capacity in India was 11.87 GW, according to the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy. To meet rising energy demand, India needs to double down on its efforts to expand its RTS potential.

## What is the RTS programme?

India launched the Jawaharlal Nehru National Solar Mission in January 2010. Its main objective was to produce 20 GW of solar energy (including RTS) in three phases: 2010-2013, 2013-2017, and 2017-2022. In 2015, the government revised this target to 100 GW by 2022, including a 40-GW RTS component, with yearly targets for each State and Union Territory. In December 2022, India had an installed RTS capacity of 7.5 GW and extended the deadline for the 40-GW

target to 2026. While financial incentives, technological advances, awareness, and training have improved RTS installation numbers, there is a long way to go. India's overall RTS potential is approximately 796 GW. To meet India's target of installing 500 GW of renewable energy capacity, with a solar component of 280 GW, by 2030, RTS alone needs to contribute about 100 GW by 2030.

## How are States faring?

As of March 31, 2024, the RTS capacities of Gujarat, Maharashtra, and Rajasthan had taken big strides while some others were behind the curve. An installed RTS capacity of 3,456 MW in Gujarat is the result of its government's quick approval process, a large number of RTS installers, and high consumer awareness. Similarly, Maharashtra, with an RTS capacity of 2,072 MW, is one of the top-performing States owing to its robust solar policies and conducive regulatory environment.

Thanks to its land area and high solar irradiance, Rajasthan boasts of the

highest RTS potential in the country: 1,154 MW. Its efforts to streamline approvals, provide financial incentives, and promote RTS through public-private partnerships have spurred this growth.

Kerala, Tamil Nadu, and Karnataka, with respective installed capacities of 675, 599, and 594 MW, have also performed reasonably well. However, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, and Jharkhand, among others, are yet to fully explore their RTS potential. Their challenges include bureaucratic hurdles, inadequate infrastructure, and lack of public awareness.

The 'Pradhan Mantri Surya Ghar Muft Bijli Yojana' is a flagship initiative to fit one crore households with RTS systems and help them get up to 300 units of free electricity every month. An average system size of 2 kW for targeted households will result in a total RTS capacity addition of 20 GW. The scheme has a financial outlay of ₹75,021 crore, which includes financial assistance for consumers (₹65,700 crore), incentives for distribution companies (₹4,950 crore),

incentives for local bodies and model solar villages in each district, payment security mechanisms, capacity building (₹657 crore), and awareness and outreach (₹657 crore). The scheme also encourages the adoption of advanced solar technologies, energy storage solutions, and smart grid infrastructure.

## How can we ensure RTS growth?

Creating awareness is key to getting consumers on board. In addition, RTS needs to be economically viable for households. While government subsidies are helping, multiple low-cost financing options are required. The number of banks and non-bank financial companies providing RTS loans has increased of late. Access to low-cost RTS loans should be as easy as getting a bike or car loan.


Promoting R&D in solar technology, energy storage solutions, and smart-grid infrastructure can lower costs, improve performance, and enhance the reliability of RTS systems. Investments in training programmes, (like the 'Suryamitra' solar PV technician programme initiated in 2015), vocational courses, and skill development initiatives will help build a skilled workforce.

As the scheme's implementation enters full swing, net-metering regulations, grid-integration standards, and building codes should be reviewed and updated to help address emerging challenges and facilitate smooth implementation.

*Shantanu Roy works with the Center for Study of Science, Technology and Policy.*



- **Growth in Rooftop Solar (RTS) Capacity:**

- India's installed RTS capacity increased by 2.99 GW in 2023-2024, reaching a total of 11.87 GW as of March 31, 2024.
  - The highest growth in a year, driven by financial incentives, technological advances, and awareness.
- 

## RTS Programme:

Launched in January 2010 under the Jawaharlal Nehru National Solar Mission with a target of 20 GW of solar energy by 2022.

In 2015, the target was revised to 100 GW, including a 40-GW RTS component by 2022.

By December 2022, India had installed an RTS capacity of 7.5 GW, with the deadline extended for the 40-GW target to 2026.





- **State Performance:**

- Gujarat, Maharashtra, and Rajasthan are leading with significant RTS capacities.
- Gujarat has an installed RTS capacity of 3,456 MW, Maharashtra 2,072 MW, and Rajasthan 1,154 MW.
- Kerala, Tamil Nadu, and Karnataka also have performed well with capacities of 675, 599, and 594 MW, respectively.
- Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, and Jharkhand lag behind in exploring their RTS potential.

## Government Initiatives:

The 'Pradhan Mantri Surya Ghar Mukh Bijli Yojana' aims to fit one crore households with RTS systems, providing up to 300 units of free electricity annually.

Financial allocation of ₹75,021 crore, including assistance for consumers (₹65,700 crore) and incentives for distribution companies (₹4,950 crore).

## Challenges and Solutions:

Bureaucratic hurdles, inadequate infrastructure, and lack of awareness are major challenges.

Solutions include creating awareness, ensuring economic viability, promoting R&D in solar technology, and improving net-metering regulations.

Government subsidies and low-cost financing options are essential for encouraging adoption.


- 
- Consider the following statements regarding India's rooftop solar (RTS) capacity and related initiatives:

1. India's installed RTS capacity reached 11.87 GW by March 31, 2024, with an increase of 2.99 GW in the year 2023-2024.

2. Gujarat has the highest installed RTS capacity in India, with 3,456 MW, followed by Maharashtra and Rajasthan.

3. The 'Pradhan Mantri Surya Ghar Mukh Bijli Yojana' aims to provide up to 300 units of free electricity annually to one crore households with RTS systems.

- Which of the statements given above are correct?

- a) 1 and 2 only
  - b) 2 and 3 only
  - c) 1 and 3 only
  - d) 1, 2, and 3
- 

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**Pannun plot: US says India looking at 'institutional reforms'**

**DIVYA A**  
NEW DELHI, JUNE 26

IT MIGHT BE THE first indication of what the Indian inquiry commission, formed in the wake of an alleged plot to assassinate Pakistan separatist Commander-in-Chief Nighat Baloch, could be looking at, US Deputy Secretary of State Kurt Campbell said Wednesday. He said the reforms are looking at what potential institutional reforms might be necessary in the future.

**CONTINUED ON PAGE 2**

## PM HAILS BIRLA FOR MAINTAINING DIGNITY OF HOUSE

# Om Birla gets second term as LS Speaker, elected by voice vote

Allow Opp voice, it also represents the people: Rahul

**VIKAS PATHAK & ASAD REHMAN**  
NEW DELHI, JUNE 26

WITH THE numbers in the BJP's side, BJP MP Om Birla was elected Lok Sabha Speaker for a second consecutive term by a voice vote on Wednesday, after a rare contest which saw the Opposition proposing its own candidate for the post.

With the Opposition — which had announced Congress MP Kishore Kumar Sahasrabudhe as its candidate — not pressing for division of votes, the BJP — Speaker Bhupendra Patel Meena declared Birla as elected, and had the historic process and second Speaker's candidature had become inauspicious.

Later, however, TMC's Kalyan Basu said there should have been a contest.

**CONTINUED ON PAGE 2**

**IN PARLIAMENT**  
PAGE 5



Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla with Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Leader of Opposition Rahul Gandhi, Parliamentary Affairs Minister Kiren Rijiju on Wednesday.

No division of votes, but divide runs deep in House

**LIZ MATHEW**  
NEW DELHI, JUNE 26

WHEN PRIME MINISTER Narendra Modi and Leader of Opposition Rahul Gandhi shook hands and ushered the newly-elected Speaker Om Birla to his chair, the Lok Sabha bore witness to the spirit of compromise yet competition.

But within a couple of hours, the momentary bonhomie gave way to both the Treasury benches and the Opposition digging into their entrenched positions. All it took was for Om Birla to call upon the Congress to vote for the Opposition to cross the floor.

The Emergency imposed by Indira Gandhi, and observe its 50th anniversary on Wednesday.

**CONTINUED ON PAGE 2**

## Speaker invokes Indira and Emergency blot, Congress MPs protest

**VIKAS PATHAK**  
NEW DELHI, JUNE 26

SPARKS FLEW between the government and the Congress in the Lok Sabha Wednesday soon after Speaker Om Birla took charge, as Birla read out a resolution condemning the impos-

tion of Emergency on the night of June 25-26, 1975, calling out the Congress and former Prime Minister Indira Gandhi for its atrocities.

Congress members rushed onto the well of the House as Birla read the statement, calling for a two-minute silence after it, even as Birla read out the propos-

**CONTINUED ON PAGE 2**

## ARRESTED IN CORRUPTION CASE



Arvind Kejriwal was sent to CBI custody for three days.

## Kejriwal in CBI custody, court backs CM when he rebuts agency's claim

### Denies he told agency that Sisodia was responsible for excise policy

**NIRBHAY THAKUR**  
NEW DELHI, JUNE 26

A DELHI court Wednesday sent Chief Minister and AAP leader Arvind Kejriwal to CBI custody for three days, a day after he was questioned by the agency in Tihar jail in the alleged corruption case involving the Delhi excise policy.

Arrested on March 21 by the Enforcement Directorate in an alleged money laundering case

**EXPLAINED**

**LAW WHY CBI ARRESTED KEJRIWAL**  
PAGE 5

linked to the excise policy, Kejriwal suffered a setback Tuesday when the Delhi High Court stayed a trial court order granting bail to him in the case. On Wednesday, the CBI

**CONTINUED ON PAGE 2**

## CONTEMPT NOTICE TO DELHI GOVT

Cover-up on, DDA VC must clean if L-G ordered tree felling: SC



**ANANTH KRISHNAN**  
NEW DELHI, JUNE 26

STARTING THAT a "cover-up" in an despite its notice on a p working contempt proceedings against the Delhi Development Authority, the Supreme Court Wednesday said the DDA Vice-Chairman "must clean up" on whether Lieutenant Governor V K Saxena had issued directions to cut trees in a Ridge area of the Capital, widening an approach road to a new hospital for Central paramilitary forces.

The bench of Justices A S Oza and L Jaid Bhagat dismissed and Inna Bala the DDA plea more time to find out what the record relating to the Governor's visit to the site.

**CONTINUED ON PAGE 2**

**mint**  
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**India's semiconductor industry to face 300,000 professionals shortage by 2027**

Source: MINT - Indian Business and Financial Daily Newspaper

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- NESAC (Shillong) | IDEA Lab GGSIPU

**Industry**

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- Internshala | Neural Niti Pvt. Ltd.
- Nextup Robotics | NTPC Ltd. | EOC Noida
- OctaNet Services | SISL Infotech | Zero Up

**MOVE TO REDUCE GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS BY 70% FROM 1990 LEVELS BY 2030**

# Danish farmers to face carbon tax for flatulent cows, pigs, a world first

**JAN M. OLSEN**

COPENHAGEN, JUNE 26

DENMARK WILL tax livestock farmers for the greenhouse gases emitted by their cows, sheep and pigs from 2030, the first country in the world to do so as it targets a major source of methane emissions, one of the most potent gases contributing to global warming.

The aim is to reduce Danish greenhouse gas emissions by 70% from 1990 levels by 2030, said Taxation Minister Jeppe Bruus. As of 2030, Danish livestock farmers will be taxed 300 kroner (\$43) per ton of carbon dioxide equivalent

in 2030. The tax will increase to 750 kroner (\$108) by 2035.

However, because of an income tax deduction of 60%, the actual cost per ton will start at 120 kroner (\$17.3) and increase to 300 kroner by 2035.

Although carbon dioxide typically gets more attention for its role in climate change, methane traps about 87 times more heat on a 20-year timescale, according to the U.S. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

Levels of methane, which is emitted from sources including landfills, oil and natural gas systems and livestock, have increased particularly quickly since 2020,



Livestock account for about 32% of human-caused methane emissions, says the UN Environment Program. AP

Livestock account for about 32% of human-caused methane emissions, says the U.N. Environment Program.

"We will take a big step closer in becoming climate neutral in 2045," Bruus said, adding Denmark "will be the first country in the world to introduce a real CO2 tax on agriculture" and hoped other countries would follow suit. New Zealand had passed a similar law due to take effect in 2025. However, the legislation was removed from the statute book Wednesday after hefty criticism from farmers.

New Zealand said it would exclude agriculture from its emis-

sions trading scheme in favor of exploring other ways to reduce methane. In Denmark, the deal was reached late Monday between the center-right government and representatives of farmers, the industry, unions, among others, and presented Tuesday.

Denmark's move comes after months of protests by farmers across Europe against climate change mitigation measures and regulations that they say are driving them to bankruptcy. The Danish Society for Nature Conservation described the tax agreement as "a historic compromise."

"We have succeeded in land-

ing a compromise on a CO2 tax, which lays the groundwork for a restructured food industry — also on the other side of 2030," its head Maria Reumert Gjerding said. A Danish cow produces 6 metric tons of CO2 equivalent per year.

Denmark, which is a large dairy and pork exporter, also will tax pigs although cows produce far higher emissions than pigs.

The tax is to be approved in the 179-seat parliament, but the bill is expected to pass after the consensus. According to Statistic Denmark, there were as of June 30, 2022, 1,484,377 cows, a slight drop compared to the previous year. **AP**

## Carbon Tax on Livestock:

Denmark will tax livestock farmers for greenhouse gas emissions from cows, sheep, and pigs starting in 2030.

The aim is to reduce Danish greenhouse gas emissions by 70% from 1990 levels by 2030.

## Tax Details:

From 2030, Danish livestock farmers will be taxed 300 kroner (\$43) per ton of CO2 equivalent.

The tax will increase to 750 kroner (\$108) by 2035.



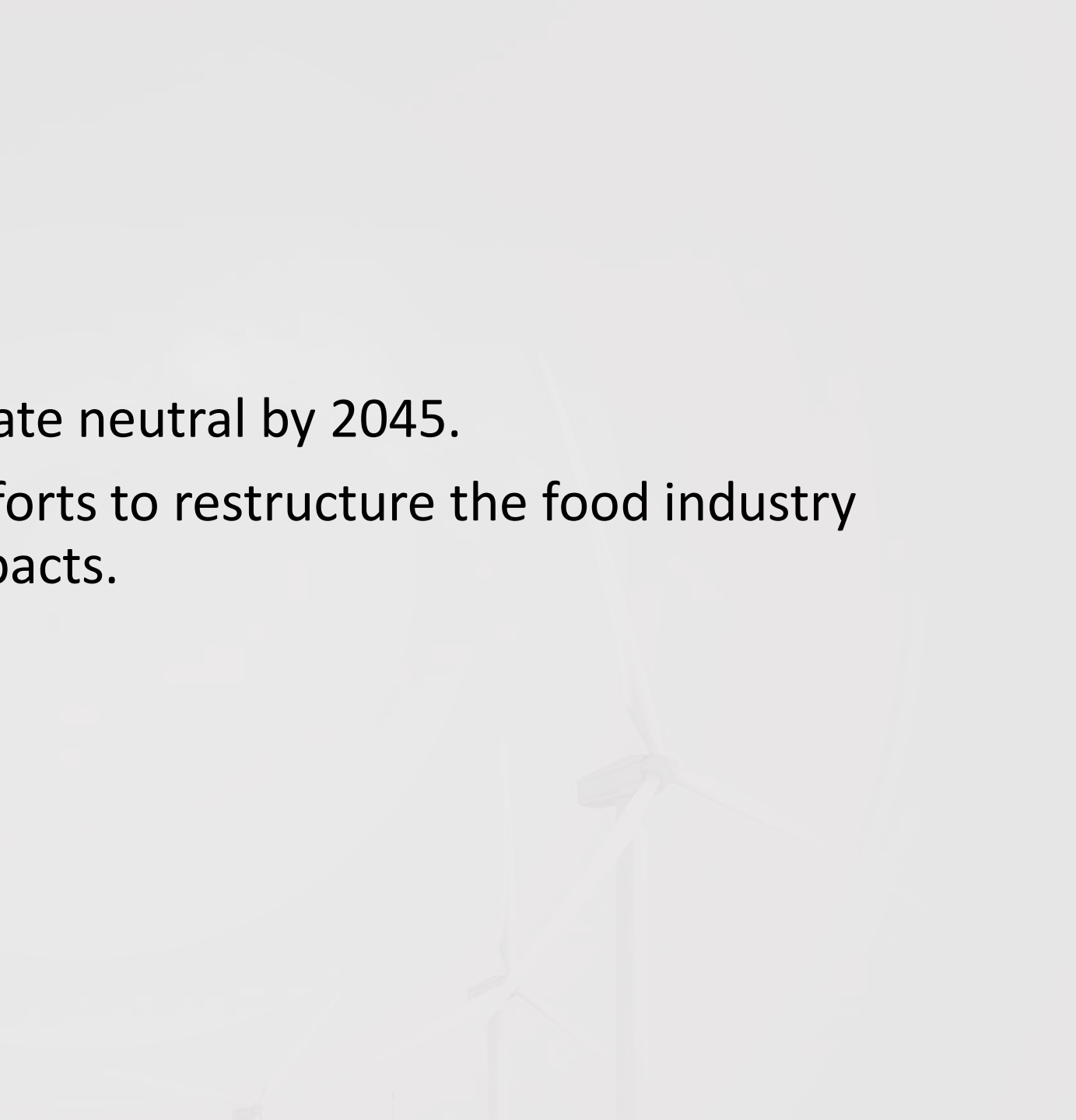


- **Methane Emissions:**

- Livestock accounts for about 32% of human-caused methane emissions.
- Methane is significantly more potent than CO<sub>2</sub>, trapping heat about 87 times more over a 20-year timescale.

- **Government's Goal:**

- Denmark aims to become climate neutral by 2045.
- The move is part of broader efforts to restructure the food industry and reduce climate change impacts.



## Global Context:

Denmark is the first country to introduce a real CO2 tax on agriculture.

New Zealand had passed similar legislation to take effect in 2025 but removed it after protests from farmers.


## **Economic Impact:**


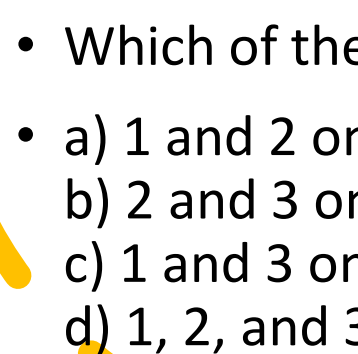
The tax aims to provide financial incentives for reducing methane emissions and transitioning to sustainable practices.

Denmark is a major dairy and pork exporter, and the tax also covers pigs, though cows produce more emissions.



## **1. Legislation Approval:**

1. The tax is to be approved by the Danish parliament and is expected to pass after consensus.
  2. As of June 30, 2022, Denmark had 1,484,377 cows, a slight increase from the previous year.
- 

- 
- Consider the following statements regarding Denmark's carbon tax on livestock:
    1. Denmark will tax livestock farmers for greenhouse gas emissions from cows, sheep, and pigs starting in 2025.
    2. The goal is to reduce Danish greenhouse gas emissions by 70% from 1990 levels by 2030.
    3. Methane, which is emitted by livestock, is significantly more potent than CO<sub>2</sub> in trapping heat over a 20-year timescale.
  - Which of the statements given above are correct?
    - a) 1 and 2 only
    - b) 2 and 3 only
    - c) 1 and 3 only
    - d) 1, 2, and 3
- 

THIRD INDIAN TO WIN PRESTIGIOUS AWARD

# Commonwealth Short Story Prize for Indian writer Sanjana Thakur

UDBHAV SETH

NEW DELHI, JUNE 26

MUMBAI-BORN WRITER Sanjana Thakur, 26, has won the prestigious Commonwealth Short Story Prize for her story, 'Aishwarya Rai', about a woman who tries out "possible mothers" from a local shelter. She won a cash prize of £5,000.

Thakur is the third Indian writer to clinch the prize, which was launched in 2012. It was earlier won by Indian writers Parashar Kulkarni (2016) for his story 'Cow and Company' and Kritika Pandey (2020) for 'The Great Indian Tee and Snakes'.

Thakur, who is currently pursuing a Master of Fine Arts degree in fiction at the University of Texas in Austin, grew up in "many countries not (her) own". She spent her childhood in Mumbai, then moved to Dubai for high school and to Boston for undergraduate studies. Her writing draws from non-Western storytelling traditions and Hindu mythology.

Referring to Mumbai, the city her short story is based in, Thakur said in the press note that distance from it has helped her write about it more authenti-



She won a cash prize of £5,000

cally. "I draw from my immediate surroundings. I notice people and details, and those make their way into my work. But the way my current city (Austin) helps me write is that it's not Bombay. I find it very difficult to write about a place when I'm in it."

'Aishwarya Rai' is about a lonely woman evaluating others in a nearby shelter to see who can be a good candidate for a new mother. The story, in Thakur's words, is about "mothers and daughters, about bodies, beauty standards, and Bombay street food... It's about the push and pull, care and desire, resentment and frustration (in that relationship) – how it's fraught but necessary". The jury chair, Ugandan writer Jennifer Nansubuga Makumbi, said the story "employs brutal irony, sarcasm, cynicism and wry humour packaged in tight prose and stanza-like paragraphs to confront us with the fracturing of family... due to modern urban existence."



- **Award and Recognition:**

- Mumbai-born writer Sanjana Thakur, 26, won the Commonwealth Short Story Prize for her story "Aishwarya Rai."
- She received a cash prize of £5,000.
- Thakur is the third Indian to win this prize, which was launched in 2012.



## Previous Indian Winners:

Parashar Kulkarni won in 2016 for his story "Cow and Company."

Kritika Pandey won in 2020 for "The Great Indian Tee and Snakes."

## Thakur's Background:

Currently pursuing a Master of Fine Arts degree in fiction at the University of Texas in Austin.

Grew up in Mumbai, later moved to Dubai for high school and Boston for undergraduate studies.

Her writing draws from non-Western storytelling traditions and Hindu mythology.

## Details of the Winning Story:

"Aishwarya Rai" is about a woman evaluating mothers from a local shelter to find a suitable new mother.

The story explores themes of motherhood, body image, beauty standards, and urban life in Mumbai.

## Inspiration and Writing Style:

Thakur's experiences in Mumbai and her current life in Austin influence her writing.

The story employs brutal irony, sarcasm, cynicism, and wry humor, highlighting the complexities of modern urban existence.

- Consider the following statements regarding Sanjana Thakur and the Commonwealth Short Story Prize:

1. Sanjana Thakur is the third Indian to win the Commonwealth Short Story Prize.
2. Thakur's winning story, "Aishwarya Rai," deals with themes of motherhood, body image, and urban life in Delhi.
3. The Commonwealth Short Story Prize was first awarded in 2002.

- Which of the statements given above are correct?
- a) 1 only
- b) 2 and 3 only
- c) 1 and 3 only
- d) 1, 2, and 3

# Tata named India's most valuable brand 15 years in a row

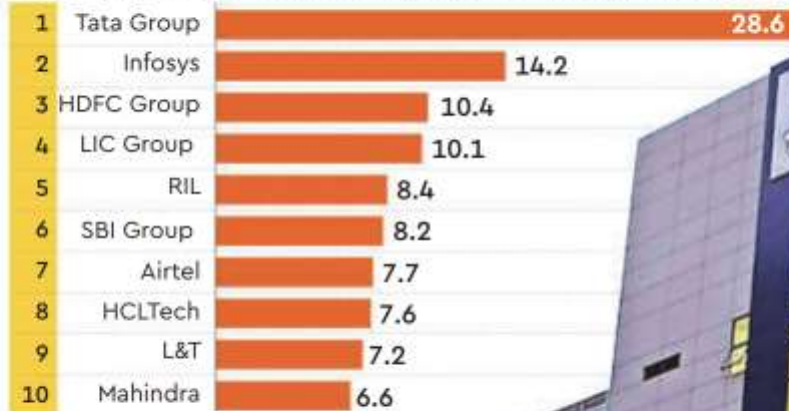
GEETIKA SRIVASTAVA  
New Delhi, June 26

WITH A BRAND value of \$28.6 billion, Tata Group is India's most valuable brand for the 15th consecutive year, with an impressive 9% growth over 2023, new rankings by Brand Finance showed. This is the first time an Indian brand has come close to the \$30-billion brand value benchmark, according to the report.

Brand value is the net economic benefit that a brand owner would achieve by licensing the brand in the open market, as per Brand Finance.

"Tata Group's brand prominence has ascended meteorically, propelled by strategic Indian Premier League (IPL) sponsorships, aeronautical rebranding endeavours, and an expansive footprint bolstered by the flourishing retail domains of West-

## TOP 10 MOST VALUABLE INDIAN BRANDS 2024 (\$ bn)



Source: Brand Finance



side and Tata Consumer products," said Savio D'Souza, senior director at Brand Finance.

Tata Group's Taj, with a valuation

of \$545 million, has been recognised by the 2024 Brand Finance report as India's "strongest" brand, with an impressive brand strength

index (BSI) score of 92.9 out of 100 and a prestigious AAA+ rating.

Brand Finance evaluates brand strength based on factors such as

marketing investment, familiarity, loyalty, staff satisfaction, and corporate reputation. These elements, combined with revenue forecasts, play a crucial role in determining brand value.

In the report, Westside topped the list of fastest-growing brands in India, with a 122% brand value growth, ahead of Motherson (86%) and Sonata Software (83%). "This is a clear indication of the confidence levels in Westside's present business strategy and performance and the anticipated continuing success in the market," said Samit Sinha, managing partner at Alchemist Brand Consulting.

Other Indian brands showing significant growth in brand value include Infosys, which has maintained its position as India's second-most valuable brand with \$14.2 bil-

lion, reflecting a steady 9% increase despite the global slowdown in the IT services sector. HDFC Group has taken the third spot, with a brand value of \$10.4 billion, following its merger with HDFC Ltd.

In the pecking order of industry sectors, the telecom sector achieved a 61% growth in brand value, followed by banking (26%).

The banking brands posted impressive double-digit growth in brand value with Indian Bank, IndusInd Bank and Union Bank leading the pack.

Mahindra leads the Indian auto brand landscape with a brand value of \$3.4 billion. Larsen & Toubro--with a brand value of \$5.2 billion--tops the engineering table, while Amul is the leading Indian food and drinks brand with an 11% brand value increase to \$3.3 billion.



- **Tata Group's Achievement:**

- Tata Group has been named India's most valuable brand for the 15th consecutive year.
  - Its brand value stands at \$28.6 billion, showing a 9% growth over 2023.
  - This is the first time an Indian brand has come close to the \$30-billion benchmark.
- 




- The top 10 most valuable Indian brands in 2024 are:

- Tata Group - \$28.6 billion
  - Infosys - \$14.2 billion
  - HDFC Group - \$10.4 billion
  - LIC Group - \$10.1 billion
  - RIL - \$8.4 billion
  - SBI Group - \$8.2 billion
  - Airtel - \$7.7 billion
  - HCLTech - \$7.6 billion
  - L&T - \$7.2 billion
  - Mahindra - \$6.6 billion
- 



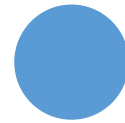


- **Factors Contributing to Brand Value:**

- Brand value is influenced by marketing investment, brand familiarity, loyalty, staff satisfaction, corporate reputation, and revenue forecasts.
  - Tata Group's brand prominence has been driven by IPL sponsorships, aeronautical branding, and a strong retail presence.
- 

- **Sector Performance:**

- The telecom sector achieved a 61% growth in brand value, followed by the banking sector with a 26% growth.
- Banking brands like Indian Bank, IndusInd Bank, and Union Bank showed impressive growth.



## Individual Brand Highlights:

Mahindra leads the Indian auto brand landscape with a brand value of \$3.4 billion.

L&T tops the engineering table with a brand value of \$5.2 billion.

Amul is the leading Indian food and drinks brand with an 11% increase in brand value to \$3.3 billion.

## Fastest-Growing Brands:

Westside topped the list of fastest-growing brands in India with a 122% brand value growth.

Motherson and Sonata Software also showed significant growth.

- 
- Consider the following statements regarding Tata Group and the most valuable Indian brands in 2024:

1. Tata Group has been named India's most valuable brand for the 15th consecutive year with a brand value of \$28.6 billion.

2. Infosys is the second most valuable Indian brand with a brand value of \$14.2 billion.

3. The telecom sector achieved the highest growth in brand value among all sectors, followed by the automotive sector.

- Which of the statements given above are correct?

a) 1 and 2 only



b) 2 and 3 only



c) 1 and 3 only

d) 1, 2, and 3

The image features three black and white cows, likely Friesians, against a dark blue, gradient background. The cow on the left is the largest and most prominent, shown in profile facing right. The other two cows are smaller and positioned behind and to the right of the first. The text '21st Livestock Census' is overlaid in a white, outlined, sans-serif font, centered horizontally and partially overlapping the cows.

# 21st Livestock Census

- 
- Recently, the Department of Animal Husbandry & Dairying (DAHD) hosted a workshop for the upcoming 21st Livestock Census scheduled for September to December 2024.
  - This aimed to equip State and Union Territory officers with the necessary tools, including a mobile app and software, for efficient data collection during the census.
  - Officials were trained on data collation strategies and familiarized with various registered breeds of livestock.
- 

- 
- **A livestock census has been conducted across the country every 5 years since 1919.**
    - **As per the 20th Census conducted in 2019, total Livestock population in India is 535.78 million.**
    - **The total Bovine population (Cattle, Buffalo, Mithun and Yak) was 302.79 Million.**
- 

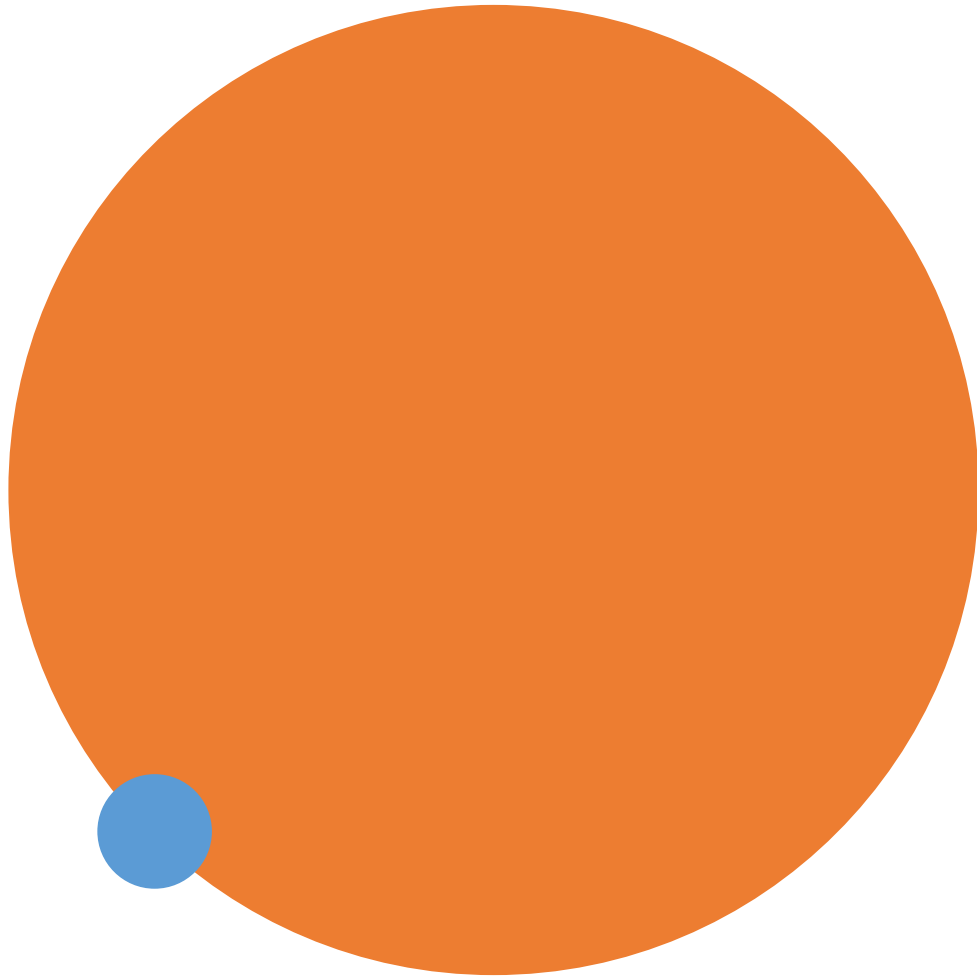


- For development of livestock, the National Livestock Mission (NLM) scheme launched in the 2014-15 consists of 3 sub-missions as Breed Development of Livestock & Poultry, Feed & Fodder Development and Innovation & Extension.


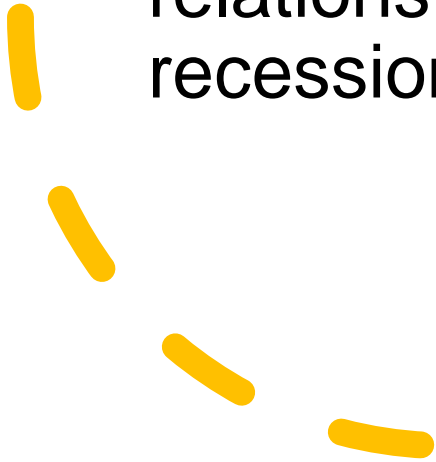


# K-shaped recovery





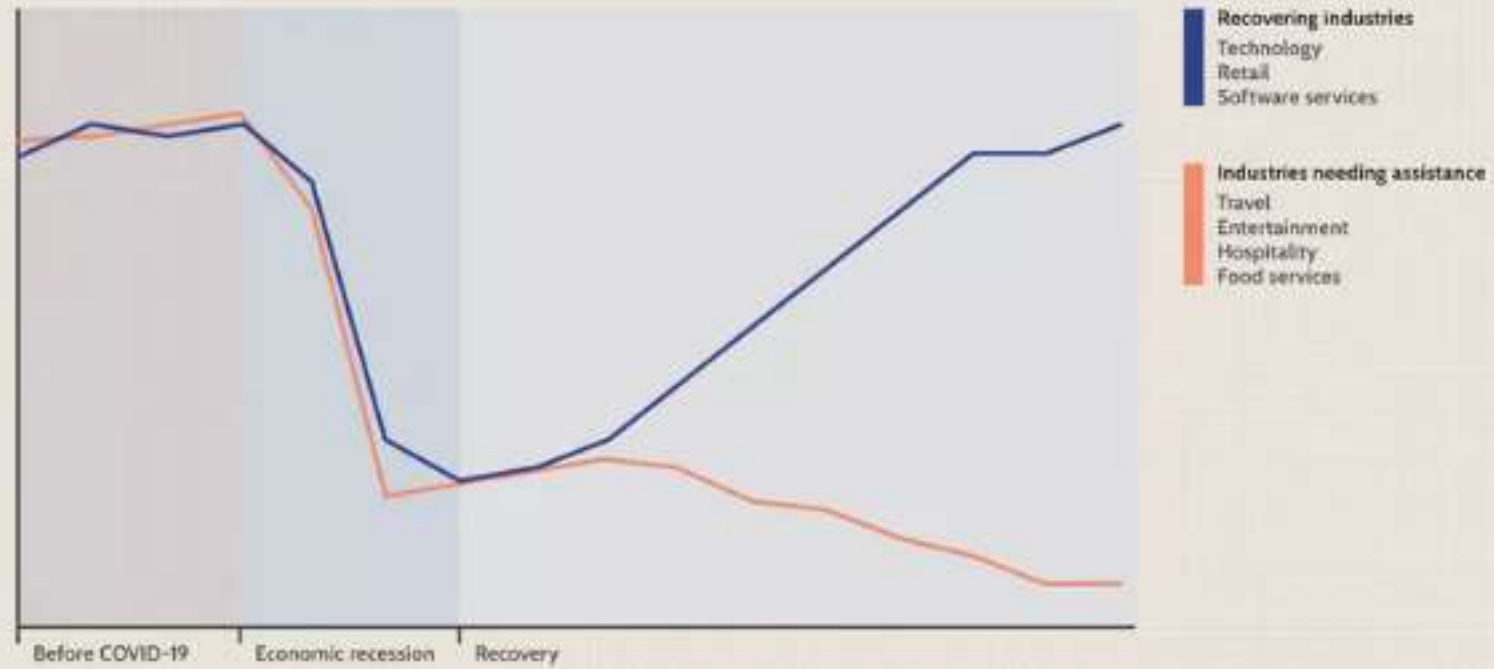
- According to a report by Hong Kong and Shanghai Banking Corporation (HSBC), **India's inflation trajectory is following a K-shape recovery**, hurting the consumers more living in rural areas.

- 
- **‘K-shaped recovery’** refers to a situation where some sectors of the economy revive after a slowdown or recession while others don’t.
  - A K-shaped recovery **leads to changes in the structure of the economy** or the broader society as economic outcomes and relations are fundamentally changed before and after the recession.
- 

A K-shaped recovery is possible due to the **creative destruction of old industries** due to the development of new industries and technologies during the recession.

Government strategies like **monetary and fiscal policies** used to combat the recession can lead to a K-shaped recovery.

## K-Shaped Recovery



# Javelin Anti-tank Missiles



- India and the US have recently discussed co-producing American Javelin anti-tank missiles to fulfill Indian military requirements.





- The Javelin is a premier, single-man-portable, medium-range missile system that operates on a “fire-and-forget” principle.
  - This feature allows the missile to automatically guide itself to the target after launch, enabling the operator to seek cover and avoid counter-attacks.

- 



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# Word of the day

## **Fastidious:**

giving careful attention to detail; hard to please;  
excessively concerned with cleanliness

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**Synonym:** exacting

---

**Usage:** *She dressed with fastidious care.*

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**Pronunciation:** [bit.ly/fastidiouspro](https://bit.ly/fastidiouspro)

---

**International Phonetic**

**Alphabet:** /fæ'stɪdi.əs/, /fə'stɪdi.əs/

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LIVE FROM CLASSROOM

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**SSC50**


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A group of people are clapping in a dimly lit room. The focus is on the hands and forearms of several individuals, some in the foreground and some blurred in the background. The lighting is soft and focused on the clapping action. An orange horizontal bar is located in the top left corner of the image.

Thank you  
guys.

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