

Daily Current Affairs



जनसत्ता

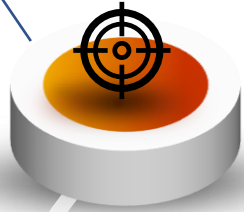


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“

SUCCESS IS
NOT FINAL,
FAILURE IS
NOT FATAL:
IT IS THE
COURAGE TO
CONTINUE
THAT
COUNTS

”

winston churchill

INCREASED STRENGTH
NDA touches majority mark in Rajya Sabha
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GAZA WAR FALLOUT
Israel's operation in West Bank kills nine
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A silent democratic backlash
Social forces are seeking to reclaim their space
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BLAZING START
Osaka stuns 10th seed Ostapenko in round 1
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INSIDE
Mehbooba not to contest Assembly election in J&K

SRINAGAR
Peoples Democratic Party president Mehbooba Mufti on Wednesday said she will not contest the Assembly election in Jammu and Kashmir, pointing out that she would not be able to fulfil her party's agenda in the Union Territory setup. » PAGE 3

Attack by stray dogs kills woman in Bengaluru

BENGALURU
A 76-year-old retired teacher was killed after nearly a dozen stray dogs attacked her on Wednesday, during her morning walk in north Bengaluru, bringing the focus back to the problems posed by stray dogs. » PAGE 3

'Nature not taken in account for Nicobar project'

NEW DELHI
The Environment Ministry's go-ahead to Nicobar project had not considered "least environmentally destructive" sites, Congress spokesperson Jaitam Ramesh wrote in a letter to the Environment Minister. » PAGE 6

Afghan women sling to protest Taliban's ban

KABUL
In response to a new law announced by the Taliban regime prohibiting women from raising their voices in public, Afghan women have posted videos on social media of them singing. » PAGE 3

Bengal bandh disrupts normal life as Trinamool takes on BJP

Kolkata Police arrest several BJP leaders for trying to halt transport facilities and shut establishments; supporters of ruling party out on streets trying to foil the bandh call; State BJP chief writes to Union Home Minister on law and order situation

Shiv Sahay Singh
KOLKATA
Life was paralysed in West Bengal on Wednesday due to a 12-hour bandh called by the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) to protest against alleged police excesses on protesters during the march to the State Secretariat on Tuesday.



Major trouble: A BJP supporter in a scuffle with a policeman during the bandh in Kolkata on Wednesday. ANI

The BJP supporters sat on railway tracks at several places, throwing suburban train services out of gear. Party workers blocked major arterial roads disrupting movement of vehicles.

While the culture of bandhs, the hallmark of the Left Front regime and used extensively by the Trinamool Congress when it was in the Opposition, is no more prevalent in the State, the strike witnessed violence between those for and against it.

halt transport facilities and forcibly shut commercial establishments. BJP MLA Sankar Ghosh was seen asking passengers to get off a bus while holding a placard demanding justice for the doctor who was raped and murdered at the K.G. Kar Medical College and Hospital.

Bullets fired
In Bhatpara, bullets were fired at the vehicle of a BJP leader. Two people sustained injuries in the attack that was caught on camera. State BJP president Sukanta Majumdar called the bandh a "success" and wrote to Union Home Minister Amit Shah on the law and order situation in the State. "I have written to Hon'ble Union Home Mi-

nister Shri Amit Shah to apprise him of the alarming law and order situation in West Bengal. BJP leader and State BJP president Sukanta Majumdar's recent anti-national remarks, threatening unrest across States, are deeply concerning," he wrote to social media. He was referring to the comments Chief Minister Manu Bhanu Prasad made at a party rally where she said, "Remember if Bengal burns, then Assam, Bihar, Jharkhand, Odisha and Delhi will also burn."

The State government had announced several measures to thwart the strike. The Trinamool leadership said the strike did not have much impact.

Nature to the rescue



Many areas: A woman with dried Dhaincha stems wading through a waterlogged paddy field at Govindpur village in Assam on Wednesday. ANI

Bangladesh interim govt. lifts ban on Islamist party

Kalid Bhattacharjee
DHAKA
The interim government of Bangladesh on Wednesday ended the ban on the Jamaat-e-Islami, its student wing Islami Chhatra Shibir, and all associated organisations.

The announcement was preceded by a press conference by Shaheer Rahman, chief of Jamaat-e-Islami.

The end of the ban has opened the door for the return of the Nirbhaya-type incident in future," the President said, referring to the rape and murder of a physiotherapy intern in Delhi.

FULL REPORT
» PAGE 13

SIT records statements as probe into abuse in Kerala film industry gathers pace

G.Anaad
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM
The investigation into the complaints of sexual exploitation and abuse in the Kerala film industry gathered pace on Wednesday.



Members of Opposition United Democratic Front march to the office of actor and MLA M. Mukesh on Wednesday. C. SURESH/MAM

The special investigation team (SIT) probing the accusations recorded the statement of the woman artist who had publicly accused actor and former general secretary of the Association of Malayalam Movie Artists, Siddique, of raping her at a hotel in Thiruvananthapuram under the pretext of auditioning her for a movie project.

The SIT also probed in Kochi, where investigators called on a woman actor who had accused four actors and two production controllers of sexually abusing her. She had also accused a politically connected lawyer of attempting to traffic her to a film producer for sex.

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI/PATNA
Two Jharkhand Police officials suspected of spying on former Chief Minister Champai Soren in New Delhi were questioned by the Delhi Police, officials said on Wednesday.



Serious allegations: Former Jharkhand Chief Minister Champai Soren arriving at the Ranchi airport on Wednesday. ANI

According to sources, the two sub-inspectors were staying at a five-star hotel in the city for the past few days and were taken to the Chandrayapuri police station for questioning.

They were later allowed to go. The two officials told the police that they had come to Delhi on routine duty, a senior Delhi police official said.

BP leader and Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma, who is also a candidate and MP in the Jharkhand elections, alleged that Mr. Champai

velled against the Hemant Soren government. Mr. Champai returned to Ranchi from New Delhi and resigned from the primary membership and all posts of the Jharkhand Mukti Morcha (JMM) in the evening.

Aggrieved by the JMM's present style of functioning, I am forced to quit," he said in a letter to party chief Shibu Soren.

JMM spokesperson Manoj Pandey told The Hindu, "These allegations are baseless. It's all the Special Branch officials have been nabbed, it may be because of some other reason...It may have been deputised for Champai Soren's security because he was still a Cabinet Minister until he resigned."

(With inputs from PTI)
» PAGE 4

Centre holds meeting with States and Union Territories over workplace safety of doctors

Installation of CCTV cameras at blind spots, regulated access at large hospitals, police verification of contractual and outsourced employees of govt. hospitals, security audit, night patrolling, and regulated access at large health facilities among measures suggested to Chief Secretaries and DGPs

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Aimed at ensuring that measures are put in place by the States and Union Territories to address the concerns of doctors over their safety at their workplaces, the Centre held a meeting with the Chief Secretaries and the Directors-General of Police (DGP) on Wednesday.

Union Home Secretary Govind Mohan and Union Health Secretary Apurva Chandra co-chaired the virtual meeting. Mr. Mohan asked them to ensure installation of CCTV cameras at blind spots, integration of a helpline number for healthcare workers, and regulated access to large hospitals.

India and Russia sign a working plan to handle emergencies

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

India and Russia on Wednesday signed a working plan of the Joint Russian-Indian Commission on the Cooperation in the Field of Emergency Management for 2025-26.

Union Minister of State for Home Nityanand Rajaram and Russian Deputy Prime Minister Vyacheslavovich, Minister of the Russian Ministry for Civil Defence, Emergency and Elimination of Consequences of Natural Disasters (EMERCOM of Russia), signed the agreement in Moscow. Both the countries agreed to implement the plan during 2025-26, and decided to continue exchange of the best practices and lessons learnt in the field of disaster management.

"This meeting is significant to draw a strategy for executing the previous agreements between India and Russia, such as, Inter-Governmental Agreement (IGA) for cooperation in the field of Emergency Management in December, 2020, and Regulation to establish the Indo-Russian Joint Commission for Cooperation (2013) in prevention and elimination of consequences of emergency situations," a statement from the Union Home Ministry said. The first meeting of the commission was held in New Delhi in 2016.

"Within the overall framework of bilateral efforts and these three specific issues were deliberated in the meeting — use of space monitoring technologies for risks forecasting and emergency response, exchange of experiences responding to large-scale disasters, and cooperation in the field of training of fire and rescue specialists," the statement said. It was decided that the next meeting of the commission will be held in India in 2026. This working plan will give added impetus to the bilateral efforts and pave the way for updation, mutual assistance in enhancing early warning systems and capacity building of both the countries in emergency preparedness, emergency response and planning, the Ministry said.



Seeking justice: People protest in Kolkata on Tuesday against the rape and murder of a resident doctor at the R.G. Kar Hospital.

"Officers of State governments/Union Territories apprised about the steps taken by the State governments to enhance the security and provide a safer working environment for healthcare workers

across public and private hospitals, medical colleges and other healthcare institutions," the Union government said in a release. The release stated that some of the immediate and short-term measures taken

by State governments include proper implementation of legislation already in place in 26 States and Union Territories, enhanced awareness through display of provisions of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita

(BNS) to protect healthcare professionals in hospital and medical colleges from crimes, and provision of chief security officers in hospitals and medical colleges.

Police verification The Union government has advised for police verification of contractual and outsourced employees working in government hospitals, joint security audits, setting up of police chowki or police thana on premises of large medical colleges and district hospitals, increased patrolling by police at night, and setting up of complaint committees on sexual harassment.

License suspended In another major development, the Indian Medical Association (IMA) on Wednesday suspended the membership of Sandip Ghosh, former principal of the R.G. Kar Medical College and State Security Corporation could provide security personnel, he suggested.

Licence suspended In another major development, the Indian Medical Association (IMA) on Wednesday suspended the membership of Sandip Ghosh, former principal of the R.G. Kar Medical College and State Security Corporation could provide security personnel, he suggested.

President's statement on crimes against women reflects seriousness and depth of issue, says BJP

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) on Wednesday said the statement by President Droupadi Murmu on crimes against women reflected the seriousness and depth of the issue and that there was a need to rise above party politics to ensure that justice was done for 2025-26.



Sudhanshu Trivedi

BJP national spokesperson Sudhanshu Trivedi said at a press conference, "The Minister issued a veiled threat by saying that she did not want any FIR to be registered against the doctors as it would jeopardise their careers."

He also criticised Ms. Banerjee for her suggestion to hold elections in the State, calling it a reflection of the frustration and disarray of the West Bengal government.

Mr. Trivedi said that seeking justice for the victim was not an electoral issue, adding that it was a matter of principle and evidence in a court of law and ensuring that those found guilty were punished. "Justice is not determined by elections... the belief that justice will be swayed by the accused in power is a very dangerous option," he said. "Unlike the previous strikes, leaders of the ruling party are now trying to keep businessmen operating a bandh, after which the Chief Minister address-

es the media... if the Constitution is under threat anywhere, it is in West Bengal. The State's Minister, Udayan Guha, has threatened to break practices in States where election-related violence has diminished. He remains plagued by such violence both during and after elections," said the BJP leader.

He also questioned the State government's handling of the case. He accused the Indian National Developmental, Inclusive Alliance government of being a party to the conspiracy, pointing out that Kapil Sibal — a Rajya Sabha MP of the Opposition Party — was the lawyer for the Trinamooli government.

Bengal to pass Bill to ensure death penalty for rape, says Mamata

Shih Sahay Singh
KOLKATA

West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Wednesday said a session of the West Bengal Legislative Assembly would be called next week to pass a Bill to ensure capital punishment for those convicted of rape.

The comments by the Trinamool Congress chairperson came amid outrage and protests over the rape and murder of a resident doctor at the R.G. Kar Medical College and Hospital in Kolkata on August 9.

Ms. Banerjee said the Bill would be sent to Governor C.V. Ananda Bose for approval, but she is convinced that it would not be passed by him. "Next week, we will call an Assembly session by requesting the Speaker and pass a Bill to ensure capital punishment for rapists. We will send this Bill to the Governor. If he doesn't pass, we will sit outside Raj Bhavan. This Bill must be passed and he cannot evade accountability this time," Ms. Banerjee said.

She was addressing an event on the foundation day of the student wing of the Trinamooli. "BJP conspiracy" The Chief Minister praised the efforts of the State police in confronting protesters who marched to the State Secretariat on Tuesday. "I salute the police for their role yesterday. They had given their blood but did not yield a dead body to the BJP conspiracy," she said. "Amid demands by the Opposition parties for the rape and murder, the Chief Minister targeted the Prime Minister and his party, asking her resignation should ask for his instead."



Mamata Banerjee

Ms. Banerjee said she had earlier given the slogan but now the workers could decide for themselves as to what they would do. "At least you can his at those who are spreading canards against us," she said.

Reacting to the remarks, BJP State president Sukanya Majumdar said they showed that the Chief Minister was in fear.

Trinamooli Congress general secretary Abhishek Banerjee called for a stricter laws against rape. Referring to alleged incidents of atrocities against women in Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, he said, "Those who are seeking the resignation of Mamata Banerjee, should ask for Yogi Adityanath's resignation." Mr. Banerjee said the Trinamooli Congress would take to the streets if the Union government did not enact a new law to ensure strict and trial and sentencing of those found guilty of rape.

Jail is exception, bail is the norm even in money laundering cases, says SC

Krishnadad Rajarajopal
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Wednesday held that bail is the rule and jail an exception even in money laundering cases.



Justice Viswanathan

"Liberty of the individual is always in jeopardy and deprivation is the exception. Deprivation can only be by the procedure established by law, which has to be a valid and reasonable procedure," a bench of Justices B.R. Gavi and K.V. Viswanathan observed in its judgment. The judgment, authored by Justice Viswanathan, granted relief to Birkhand Singh and others. Justice Soren's aid, Prem Prakash, in an illegal mining-related case registered by the Enforcement Directorate. The court held that Section 45 of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) should not be construed by the prosecution in such a way to make it impossible for a person in custody to silence of an accused already in judicial custody, by forcing him to make a self-incriminatory statement in another money-laundering case registered by the same investigating agency.

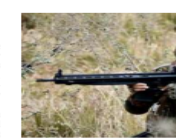
tion and the right to investigation, while one investigation or trial is underway, goes beyond that case and protects the accused in regard to other offences pending or imminent." The court noted in a 44-page judgment which followed its earlier ruling in the case of *P. Venkataswami Soren*.

must if the twin conditions of Section 45 were satisfied. These are: there should be reasonable grounds to believe the accused is already in judicial custody and he would not commit any crime while out on bail. Justice Viswanathan referred to the Supreme Court judgment granting bail to Manish Sisodia on August 9 to hold that bail cannot be denied on the whims of the central agency. The ED has alleged Mr. Prakash to be a close aide of Manish Sisodia.

India signs repeat order for 73,000 SIC 716 rifles; deliveries by 2025-end

Dinakar Peri
NEW DELHI

The Ministry of Defence has signed a repeat order for 73,000 SIC 716 rifles from Sig Sauer. New deliveries are expected to be completed by 2025.



The Army has inducted 66,400 of the 72,400 SIC 716 assault rifles

The contract was signed in June 2024. The delivery is within 18 months of contract," a defence ministry statement said. The Army has earlier procured and inducted 72,400 SIC 716 rifles through the procurement under a ₹700-crore contract signed in February 2019. "We are proud to be a partner in the forefront and joint effort of the Indian Ar-

my, and proder still that the 716 rifle achieved by the Ministry of Defence's purchase programme is the second largest Army in the world," Ron Cohen, chief executive officer of Sig Sauer, said in a statement

and overwhelming soldier acceptance led to this follow-on award for an additional 73,000 rifles, the company added. The Army has for long been looking to replace the indigenous INSAS (Indian National Small Arms System) rifles in use with modern rifle. The Army has inducted 66,400 of the 72,400 SIC 716 assault rifles procured under the deal in February 2019 and these have been provided to frontline troops involved in counter-insurgency operations. The SIC 716, weighing 3.82 kg, has an effective range of 800 m and is more capable, reliable than the INSAS in use.

issued on August 26. Since the initial ordering of the SIC 716, we have received phenomenal end-user feedback on the performance and reliability of the platform." The successful filing

₹6,456 cr. approved for Railway projects

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA) chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Wednesday approved three projects of the Railway Ministry with a total estimated cost of approximately ₹6,456 crore.

The three projects involving seven districts in four States — Odisha, Jharkhand, West Bengal, and Bihar — will increase the existing network of Indian Railways by about 300 kilometres.

Multi-tracking project will enhance connectivity routes for transport services catering to a population of 19 lakh. The projects are a result of the PM-Gati Shakti National Master Plan for multi-modal connectivity. The three projects will provide seamless connectivity for movement of people, goods and services. These are essential routes for transport of commodities such as agricultural produce, fertilizer, coal, iron ore, steel, cement, and limestone.

The capacity augmentation works will result in additional freight traffic of magnitude 45 MTPA (million Tonnes Per Annum).

India signs repeat order for 73,000 SIG 716 rifles; deliveries by 2025-end

Dinakar Peri

NEW DELHI

The Ministry of Defence has signed a repeat order for 73,000 SIG 716 rifles from Sig Sauer of the U.S. and deliveries are expected to be completed by end-2025.

“The contract was signed in June 2024 and delivery is within 18 months of contract,” a defence official said. The Army has earlier procured and inducted 72,400 SIG 716 rifles through fast-track procurement under a ₹700-crore contract signed in February 2019.

“We are proud to be a partner in the modernisation effort of the Indian Ar-



The Army has inducted 66,400 of the 72,400 SIG 716 assault rifles procured under a ₹700-crore deal in February 2019. FILE PHOTO

my, and prouder still that the SIG 716 rifle achieves the Ministry of Defence’s modernisation goals with the second largest Army in the world,” Ron Cohen, president and CEO, Sig Sauer, said in a statement

issued on August 26. “Since the initial fielding of the SIG 716, we have received phenomenal end-user feedback on the performance and reliability of the platform.”

The successful fielding

and overwhelming soldier acceptance led to this follow-on award for an additional 73,000 rifles, the company added.

The Army has for long been looking to replace the indigenous INSAS (Indian National Small Arms System) rifles in use with a modern rifle.

The Army has inducted 66,400 of the 72,400 SIG 716 assault rifles procured under the deal in February 2019 and these have been provided to frontline troops involved in counter-insurgency operations.

The SIG 716, weighing 3.82 kg, has an effective range of 600 m and is more capable and reliable than the INSAS in use.

INDIA-US RELATIONSHIP OVERVIEW

The confluence of common factors like democratic values, Shared areas of Interests, Stand against terrorism makes India and US enjoy a comprehensive strategic partnership.



\$ 128.55 billion
Bilateral trade in
2022-23 (increase of
7.65% over 2021-22)



Largest Export destination
US is the major
export hub
for Indian goods.



3rd largest defence Supplier
US (~11%) is India's
3rd largest defence
supplier after
Russia (~45%)
and France (~29%)



\$28 billion
India maintains a
trade surplus with
the US

Defence ties



- ⊕ US recognized India as a **“Major Defence Partner”** in 2016.
- ⊕ US Defence agreements like
 - **Logistics Exchange Memorandum of Association (LEMOA), 2016**
 - **Communications Compatibility and Security Agreement (COMCASA), 2018**
 - Industrial Security Agreement 2019
 - **Basic Exchange and Cooperation Agreement (BECA) 2020** are signed with India
- ⊕ Bilateral military exercises like **Yudh Abhyaas, Vajra prahar, Malabar, RIMPAC etc.** are conducted between the two countries.



People to People ties

- ⊕ Indian diaspora in US is around 4.9 Million and they form the **second largest immigrant group** in US after the Mexicans



FOUNDATIONAL AGREEMENTS

Logistics Exchange Memorandum of Agreement (LEMOA)

- Provide **logistic support, refuelling & berthing facilities** for each other's **warships & aircraft** on barter/equal-value exchange basis
- **Will not involve stationing of US troops on Indian soil. Nor will India extend support if US goes to war** with "a friendly country"
- **Good for US forces re-balancing to Asia Pacific.** Indian forces rarely operate far away from their shores but access to **Djibouti & Diego Garcia** could be useful

Communication Interoperability & Security Memorandum Agreement (CISMOA)

- **Technology enabler to help transfer high-tech avionics, encrypted communication & electronic systems** to India
- US says **CISMOA will boost 'interoperability'** as well as ensure **secrecy of its C4ISR** (command, control, communications, computer, intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance) systems
- **But fears that US will be able to track & snoop on Indian warships/aircraft** equipped with such systems

Basic Exchange & Cooperation Agreement for Geo-Spatial Cooperation (BECA)

- US says **BECA will help India with advanced satellite & topographical data** for long-range navigation & missile-targeting
- **But India, which has its own satellite imaging capabilities, unwilling for American digital sensors to be positioned on its soil**

- The article reports that the Ministry of Defence of India has signed a repeat order for 73,000 SIG 716 rifles from the U.S.-based company Sig Sauer.
- This new order follows the earlier procurement of 72,400 SIG 716 rifles under a ₹700-crore contract signed in February 2019. The delivery of the new batch is expected to be completed by the end of 2025.

- **Contract Details:** The contract for the new batch of rifles was signed in June 2024, with an 18-month delivery timeline.
- **Previous Acquisition:** The Indian Army has already inducted 66,400 of the previously ordered 72,400 SIG 716 rifles, which have been provided to frontline troops involved in counter-insurgency operations.



Reason for Repeat Order: The decision for the repeat order was driven by the successful fielding and positive soldier feedback on the performance and reliability of the SIG 716 rifles.


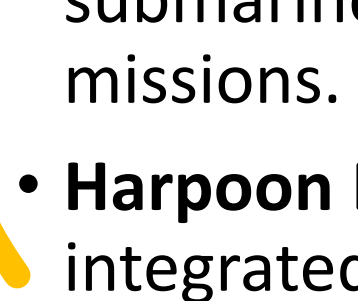
Modernization Effort: This acquisition is part of the Indian Army's ongoing efforts to modernize its arsenal, replacing the older INSAS (Indian National Small Arms System) rifles with more capable and reliable modern rifles like the SIG 716.

Technical Specifications: The SIG 716 rifle weighs 3.82 kg, has an effective range of 600 meters, and is considered superior to the INSAS rifles in terms of capability and reliability.

This acquisition reflects the Indian Army's commitment to upgrading its small arms capabilities to meet the needs of modern warfare.

- **Apache AH-64E Attack Helicopters:** India purchased these advanced attack helicopters for the Indian Air Force, which are equipped with Hellfire missiles, advanced targeting systems, and are considered among the most lethal helicopters in the world.
- **C-17 Globemaster III:** This large military transport aircraft is used by the Indian Air Force for strategic and tactical airlift missions, including transporting troops, equipment, and humanitarian aid.

- 
- **P-8I Poseidon:** A maritime patrol and reconnaissance aircraft, the P-8I is used by the Indian Navy for anti-submarine warfare, anti-surface warfare, and intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance missions.
 - **M777 Ultra-Light Howitzers:** These lightweight artillery guns have been inducted into the Indian Army, particularly useful in high-altitude regions like the Himalayas due to their portability.
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- **CH-47F Chinook Helicopters:** These heavy-lift helicopters are used by the Indian Air Force for troop transport, artillery emplacement, and battlefield resupply.
 - **MH-60R Seahawk Multi-Mission Helicopters:** India has procured these helicopters for the Indian Navy, which are equipped for anti-submarine warfare, anti-surface warfare, and search and rescue missions.
 - **Harpoon Block II Missiles:** These are anti-ship missiles that have been integrated into some of India's naval platforms.
- 

- 1.M4 Carbines and SIG Sauer Rifles:** Indian Special Forces have acquired these firearms from the USA for their advanced operational needs.
- 2.NASAMS-II (National Advanced Surface to Air Missile System):** India has shown interest in acquiring this air defense system to enhance its missile defense capabilities, though it is still in discussions.

O'Brien seeks formation of standing committees

The Hindu Bureau
 NEW DELHI

The Trinamool Congress's Rajya Sabha leader, Derek O'Brien, in a letter to the leader of the House, J.P. Nadkda, lodged a complaint about the delay in the constitution of the department-related Parliamentary Standing Committees. His letter comes amid intense negotiations between the government and the Opposition on control of the House.

The department-related Standing Committees are an essential part of the parliamentary oversight mechanism. There are 24 such committees that closely monitor the working of various Ministries. Sixteen of these are headed by the ruling party and eight by their Rajya Sabha counterparts.

The Congress is looking to chair four committees. Mr. O'Brien said that the delay in the constitution of these committees has profound implications for the democratic process.

U.P. plan to reward digital influencers draws flak

The initiative of encouraging pro-government posts faces sharp criticism from the Opposition; it says no influencer can save a government which is bound to face defeat in the coming election

The Hindu Bureau
 LUCKNOW

The Uttar Pradesh government plans to reward social media influencers who promote its initiatives, schemes, and achievements. Maximum monthly payment limits are set at ₹5 lakh, ₹3 lakh, ₹2 lakh — for Facebook, and Instagram; ₹5 lakh, ₹4 lakh, ₹3 lakh, ₹2 lakh — for YouTube videos, shorts, and podcasts; ₹8 lakh, ₹7 lakh, ₹6 lakh, ₹4 lakh — for social media influencers who promote its initiatives, schemes, and achievements. The initiative of encouraging pro-government posts and schemes on social media faces sharp criticism from the various quarters with the Opposition parties alleging that no influencer or social media warrior can save a government which is bound to face defeat in the coming election.

"The government has decided to list agencies/firms to give advertisements to promote them, making and displaying content through digital medium like two wide-ows/posts/reels about schemes and activities based on the U.P. govern-



ment. It will also help in employment opportunities to citizens of the State," a press note issued by the Principal Secretary, Information Department, Sanjay Prasad, reads.

The Congress is looking to chair four committees. Mr. O'Brien said that the delay in the constitution of these committees has profound implications for the democratic process.

ment has been authorised to take legal action if such paid content has any anti-national, anti-social, or derogatory content. "We are against any kind of censorship on social media. What has been done is bidding the independent voices and threat them, if they do not fall in line, but no influencer can save this government which is bound to go. The aim is to provide employment to BJP-linked people," SP spokesperson Animesh Jaiswal said.

The Congress, while criticising U.P. government's move, said it shows nervousness amid truth coming out through social media platforms in the era of digital literacy.

Digital influencers on social media platforms argue that it signals the government's attempt to get produced favourable content and added, "The public through the medium.

With the latest elections, NDA crosses the majority mark in the Rajya Sabha

The Hindu Bureau
 NEW DELHI

With the latest round of elections to the Rajya Sabha, the BJP-led National Alliance (NDA) has reached the majority mark in the House, after adding 12 more members to its ranks.

The BJP, which has been the single largest party in the Upper House for some time, has increased its strength to 96 and along with allies, six nominated members and two independents, the NDA now has the support of 119 members.

The strength of the Rajya Sabha is 237 now. The majority mark is thus 119. These numbers were held till April 2026, when the largest lot of 31 seats from 10 States are up for grabs.

In the past 10 years of the Narendra Modi government, no Bill had been stalled for want of a clear majority in the Upper House.

Upper House strength

With 12 new members elected unopposed, the BJP strengthened its position in Rajya Sabha while Congress is close to losing the Leader of the Opposition status.

■ BJP's strength in the Rajya Sabha is 96 and with the support of allies, NDA's tally in the House is 119

■ The Congress with 26 members is close to losing its Leader of the Opposition status

■ The next round of Rajya Sabha elections is scheduled for November when 11 members will retire

■ It has 26 members at present

■ In a full-strength House, a party needs to have at least 25 MPs to get the Leader of the Opposition's position.

■ For the rest of the year, not much change is expected in the Rajya Sabha arithmetic.

■ The next big round of elections will happen in November when 11 members from Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand retire. Among them, 10 will be from the Opposition status with its depleted strength.

■ The two parties, since the 2024 general election, though have been inching closer to the Opposition.

■ Congress's strength in the House is 77

■ The Congress, on the other hand, had been perishing close to losing the Leader of the Opposition status with its depleted strength.

EC notice to BJP for using child in Haryana poll video

The Hindu Bureau
 NEW DELHI

Taking a serious view of a social media post by the BJP using a child in a Haryana campaign video, the Election Commission on Wednesday issued notice to the party's leadership. The post on X features Haryana Chief Minister Nayab Singh Saini interact-

ing with children in various social events and begins with a child saying 'Apki Baar Saini Sarkar Ki Hai' (It's your turn, Mr. Minister). The video, which was taken during an election-related activity, has been issued by the EC.

Chief Electoral Officer, Haryana to the BJP State president. He has asked to submit a response by 6 p.m. on Thursday. In a communication to all political parties in Haryana, the EC sought to bring to the attention of the parties and high command, and the broad public that has emerged is that no one will be given permission," Mr. Babaria said.

Congress will not field MPs for Haryana polls

The Hindu Bureau
 NEW DELHI

Congress MPs from Haryana will not be allowed to contest the Assembly elections, the party's in-charge for the State, Deepak Babaria, said on Wednesday.

The statements come against the backdrop of speculation that Lok Sabha member Kumar Solja and Rajya Sabha member Randeep Surjewala could be interested in returning to State politics.

The screening panel, headed by Ajay Maken, has been meeting to finalise the candidates for 90 seats.

"Nobody will be given permission to contest. To fight the election, they will be required to take permission from the 90 Assembly seats.

"No desire shown" — In my knowledge, no Parliament member has shown any desire to contest the Assembly election, without the permission of the party, how can anyone

contest the election," he asked.

When the claim of a Lok Sabha or Rajya Sabha member taken up, the committee's approach would be that they should focus on the campaign instead of contesting."

■ The statements come against the backdrop of speculation that Lok Sabha member Kumar Solja and Rajya Sabha member Randeep Surjewala could be interested in returning to State politics.

■ Mr. Babaria is part of the

panel that will shortlist possible candidates. So far, discussions on potential candidates for 25 seats have taken place. The party is said to have received more than 2,500 applications for the 90 Assembly seats.

"In my knowledge, no Parliament member has shown any desire to contest the Assembly election, without the permission of the party, how can anyone

There is also speculation that Mr. Surjewala, a Congress general secretary and Rajya Sabha member, may seek to return to State politics.

Asked if Mr. Surjewala's son may contest the election, Mr. Babaria said he could not comment.

The election in Haryana will take place in a single phase on October 1, and the votes will be counted on October 4 along with those of Jammu and Kashmir.

Jan Dhan Yojana personifies dignity, empowerment: PM

The Hindu Bureau
 NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi hailed his government's programme of financial inclusion, the Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana (PMJDY), as it completed 10 years, by posting a long post on LinkedIn on Wednesday. The programme, personified by dignity, empowerment, and the opportunity to participate in the economic life of the country, especially for women, those in rural and semi-urban parts of the country, he said.

He added that for him, the PMJDY initiative was more than just a policy; rather, it was an endeavour to build an India where each and every citizen, irrespective of one's economic background, has access to the formal banking apparatus.

"Many of you, especially the youth, would be thinking — why does this matter so much? After all, in this age, having a bank account would be very basic and even taken for granted. However, when we started this office in 2014, the situation was very different. It was almost 65 years since Independence, but access to banking was a distant dream for almost half of our households," the Prime Minister said.

Success of scheme
 The success of the Jan Dhan Yojana has two parts to it, said Mr. Modi.

The first is in the number of women who have participated in the economic life of the country, especially for women, those in rural and semi-urban parts of the country, he said.

Over 65% of these accounts are either in rural or semi-urban areas, thus taking the movement of financial inclusion outside the metros, the Prime Minister said, adding that direct transfers worth almost ₹39 lakh crore have taken place.

Likewise, the benefits of the scheme and the other targeted schemes have reached to a bank account have positively impacted crores of people, including SCs, STs, and other backward classes, he added.

The Prime Minister asserted that the scheme also became a vital pillar of what he called the JAM Trinity: Jan Dhan, Aadhaar, and Mobile.

Voicing discontent



Strong support: BJP workers block Mata Vaishno Devi Road at Katra in Reasi district of Jammu and Kashmir on Wednesday as they protest against the denial of ticket to party leader Rohit Dubey for Assembly election. PTI

Court refuses nod to reopen Rau's IAS Study Circle building

Isabella Mishra
 NEW DELHI

A Delhi court on Wednesday denied permission to the CEO of Rau's IAS Study Circle to resume classes at the Old Rajinder Nagar building where three Civil Services aspirants had drowned after rainwater flooded its basement on July 27.

The building was subsequently sealed by the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI), which is probing the case.

The coaching centre's CEO, Abhishek Gupta, sought relief, contending that the premises are needed for the smooth functioning of classes for the students who had already enrolled with the institute.

He told the court that among the 1,025 students enrolled with the institute, 558 were taking offline classes, whereas others had opted for the hybrid mode. He said students have been continuously enquiring about the resumption of classes. The institute submitted 121 emails, which, it said, had

been sent by students and their parents.

Denying access to the building, Chief Justice M. J. Akshaya Kumar noted that the application was premised on the grounds that not having access to the upper floors of the building is hampering the students' preparations.

"It is interesting to note that 105 emails out of the 121 were sent by students on one particular day, i.e. on 10.08.2024. The remaining emails were sent on 11.08.2024 and 12.08.2024. It is not clear

what prompted so many students to make enquiries about the resumption of classes on a single day," the court said. It further noted that the content of most of the emails was premised on the grounds that not having access to the upper floors of the building is hampering the students' preparations.

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'Effective policing needed to promote economic growth'

The Hindu Bureau
 NEW DELHI

Union Home Secretary Govind Mohan on Wednesday said that for India to become a global superpower, "effective policing, law and order, and effective action against crimes and criminals" are necessary.

Mr. Mohan, who took charge last week, delivered the Anand Swarup Gupta Memorial Lecture on "New Criminal Laws — A Paradigm Shift in Crime Reforms" at the foundation day ceremony of the Bureau of Police Research and Development (BPR&D).

Mr. Mohan stressed the requirement for contemporary and relevant jurisdiction for law enforcement agencies to break the

shackles of colonialism, adding that the new criminal laws are victim-centric and the purpose of these laws is to give justice, and not punishment. He highlighted the key features of the laws, especially those related to citizen-friendly measures such as zero FIR and e-FIR, introduction of community service as a new form of punishment, and more lenient treatment of first-time offenders.

Mr. Mohan said that the role of the Bureau in police modernisation and upgradation is of paramount importance.

He noted the great efforts towards training and publicity made by the Bureau for the implementation of the new criminal laws.

per floors of the building is causing grave hardship to the students who are not able to study for their upcoming UPSC Main Examination," the counsel said.

The CBI countered the claim and added that the premises are not safe and similar accidents have taken place in other parts of the building for no reason.

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With the latest elections, NDA crosses the majority mark in the Rajya Sabha

The Hindu Bureau

NEW DELHI

With the latest round of elections to the Rajya Sabha, the BJP-led National Democratic Alliance has reached the majority mark in the House, after adding 12 more members to its ranks.

The BJP, which has been the single largest party in the Upper House for some time, has increased its strength to 96 and along with allies, six nominated members and two Independents, the NDA now has the support of 119 members.

The strength of the Rajya Sabha is 237 now. The majority mark is thus 119. These numbers will hold till April 2026, when the largest lot of 31 seats from 10 States are up for grabs.

In the past 10 years of the Narendra Modi government, no Bill had been stalled for want of a clear majority in the Upper House.

Upper House strength

With 12 new members elected unopposed, the BJP strengthened its position in Rajya Sabha while Congress is close to losing the Leader of the Opposition status

■ BJP's strength in the Rajya Sabha is 96 and with the support of allies, NDA's tally in the House is 119

■ The Congress with 26 members is close to losing its Leader of the Opposition

status. In a full-strength House, a party needs to have at least 25 MPs to get the Leader of the Opposition's position

■ The next round of Rajya Sabha elections is scheduled for November when 11 members will retire



The YSR Congress Party and Biju Janata Dal, which have always stood apart from the ruling and Opposition blocs, had more often than not come out in support of the government Bills.

The two parties, since the 2024 general election, though have been inching closer to the Opposition.

Congress's strength

The Congress, on the other hand, had been perilously close to losing the Leader of the Opposition status with its depleted strength.

It has 26 members at present.

In a full-strength House, a party needs to have at least 25 MPs to get the Leader of the Opposition's position.

For the rest of the year, not much change is expected in the Rajya Sabha arithmetic.

The next big round of elections will happen in November when 11 members from Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand retire. Among them, 10 will be from the BJP and one from Samajwadi Party.

A JOURNEY SINCE 1952

Total members so far **2,282** (including 208 women and 137 nominated members)

Longest-serving members: **Mahendra Prasad**, serving the 7th term, followed by **Manmohan Singh** serving 6th term

Representation of women in Rajya Sabha increased from **15 (6.94%)** in 1952 to **31 (12.76%)** in 2014. It is currently **26**, or **10.83%**, of the strength of the House



120
Bills passed by Lok Sabha and amended by Rajya Sabha

Total sittings of the House till 249th session
5,466

Total number of bills introduced in Rajya Sabha
944

Number of bills withdrawn
104

Number of bills pending in Rajya Sabha
38

Total number of bills passed by Rajya Sabha
3,817

Number of bills passed by RS that lapsed due to dissolution of LS
60

RAJYA SABHA FIRSTS

First bill passed: The Indian Tariff (2nd Amendment) Bill, 1952

First constitution amendment bill: The Constitution (Second Amendment) Bill, 1953 for readjustment of representation in Lok Sabha by increasing the size of population per constituency

First bill on law and order: The Preventive Detention (Second Amendment) Bill, 1952

First security bill: The Armed Forces (Assam & Manipur) Spl Powers Bill, 1958

First bill on pollution: The Prevention of Water Pollution Bill, 1969

First money bill deemed to have been passed by Rajya Sabha: The Appropriation (Railways) No.4 Bill, 1978

First bill referring to terrorism: The Terrorist Affected Areas (Special Courts) Bill, 1984

LANDMARK EVENTS

1 Casting vote by the chair: The only time a presiding officer of RS cast his vote was on August 5, 1991 when voting was tied 39-39 on a statutory resolution moved by opposition seeking disapproval of the CrPC (amendment) ordinance, resulting in opposition victory

2 Prez rule nod just by RS: President Rule extended in Tamil Nadu and Nagaland in 1977, and for Haryana in 1991, only by RS when LS was dissolved

3 Removal of a judge: RS adopted a motion for removal of

a judge in respect of Justice Soumitra Sen of Calcutta HC in 2011. He quit before the motion was taken up in LS

4 Expulsion of members: RS adopted a motion in 1976 to expel Subramanian Swamy after his activities were found to be derogatory to the dignity of the House. Chatrapal Singh was expelled in 2005 after the ethics panel found him guilty of accepting money for raising questions. Sakshi Maharaj was expelled in 2006 for irregularities in MPLAD projects



WHY ARE RAJYA SABHA ELECTIONS IMPORTANT?

LEGISLATIVE POWERS

- No Bill, except for Money Bills, can become a law without being passed by both Houses
- Rajya Sabha maintains federal equilibrium, by protecting interests of the states vs Centre

JUDICIAL POWERS

Removal of

- SC or HC judge
- Attorney General
- Comptroller and Auditor General
- Chief Election Commissioner

Charges against the Vice-President can be leveled only in the Rajya Sabha

EXCLUSIVE POWERS

- Rajya Sabha can declare a State List subject as a subject of national importance (Article 249).*
- Rajya Sabha can create new All-India Services common to both Centre and states (Article 312).*
- * supported by not less than two-third members present and voting.*
- In case of Lok Sabha dissolution amid National Emergency, the Rajya Sabha takes over the functions of the Parliament




The Chairman and Deputy Chairman of the Rajya Sabha

Chairman	Deputy Chairman
He is not a member of the House.	He serves as a member of the House.
He presides over the House.	He can preside over the house only when the Chairman's seat is vacant or when the vice president has to act as a president of the nation or when the chairman is not present for the sitting.
He can be removed from the position of Chairman only on being removed from the office of the vice president.	A resolution passed by the majority of all Rajya Sabha members can have him dismissed.
He can cast a vote only upon equality of votes. He cannot cast a vote in the first instance.	He can take part in voting only in the presence of the chairman of the House.

DIFFERENCE	LOK SABHA	RAJYA SABHA
WHAT IT IS CALLED?	House of People	Council of States
WHAT IS THE MEANING OF THE NAME?	House of People, where people who are qualified to vote can elect their representative by way of direct elections	Council of States, where the representatives are indirectly elected by the elected representative of the Assemblies of States and Union Territories
WHAT IS THE TENURE OF THE HOUSE?	It continues for 5 years Note: It can be dissolved earlier by passing no-confidence motion	It is a permanent body.
WHO HEADS THE HOUSE?	Speaker	Vice President of India as the Chairman of the house
WHAT IS THE MINIMUM AGE TO BECOME A MEMBER?	25 years	30 years
WHAT IS THE STRENGTH OF THE HOUSE?	552 members	250 members
WHAT ARE THE FUNCTIONS OF THE HOUSE?	All bills originate in Lok Sabha mostly and after passing through Rajya Sabha, they are returned for Lok Sabha approval. It plays a major role in legislation.	Rajya Sabha has special powers to protect the states' rights against the Union.

The article reports that the BJP-led National Democratic Alliance (NDA) has crossed the majority mark in the Rajya Sabha, India's Upper House of Parliament, following the latest round of elections.



The NDA has now secured a total of 119 seats in the 237-member Rajya Sabha, ensuring a majority.

BJP's Strength: The BJP has increased its strength to 96 members in the Rajya Sabha. With the support of allies, six nominated members, and two Independents, the NDA has reached a total of 119 members.

Rajya Sabha Majority: The current strength of the Rajya Sabha is 237 members, and the majority mark is 119.

Congress' Position: The Congress party, with only 26 members, is close to losing its position as the Leader of the Opposition, which requires a minimum of 25 members.

Other Parties: The YSR Congress Party and Biju Janata Dal, which often support the government bills, continue to stand apart from both the ruling and opposition blocs.

Future Elections: The next significant round of Rajya Sabha elections is scheduled for November, when 11 members will retire, 10 of whom are from the BJP and one from the Samajwadi Party.

This development strengthens the NDA's position in passing legislation in the Upper House, as the alliance now holds a clear majority.

Chinese steel still dominates Indian market



Dragon dominates: Steel trade deficit for April to July widened to ₹11,592 crore, or 30% higher, for FY24. REUTERS

Abhishek Law
NEW DELHI

One out of every three steel products imported into India is from China, indicating continued pressure on the domestic market for steel exports. The steel trade deficit for the April-July period widened to ₹11,592 crore, 30% higher than the ₹9,036 crore reported for FY24, a Steel Ministry report accessed by *businessline* showed. India was a net importer of steel. Finished steel imports stood at ₹24,941 crore for the first four months, and 2.7 million tonne (mt) in volume terms – up 32% y-o-y. On the other hand, export of the metal stood at ₹3,349 crore, or 1.6 mt, down 41% y-o-y. As per the report, global steel prices continued declining in July, with “prices coming down in major steel markets” due to local and global issues. “Barring few aberrations, prices of most of the finished steel products saw month-on-month and year-on-year decline in India, China, the U.S. and the European Union,” the Ministry said.

Chinese shipments
Shipments of the metal coming in from China stood at nearly 0.8 mt, up almost 42% y-o-y. Imports last year – for April-July period – were 0.57 mt. “China was the largest import market for India (60% share) at the report,” *businessline* and alloy steel imports from China accounted for 47% of the shipments in value terms or ₹5,923 crore (0.31 mt), and the balance 53% or ₹4,263 crore (0.5 mt) was from non-allied imports. (The writer is with *The Hindu Businessline*.)

Unemployment rate is now the U.S. Fed’s undisputed lodestar

U.S. Fed Chairman Jerome Powell made a pivot in Jackson Hole through his clear emphasis that unemployment, not inflation, is now the number one determinant of his upcoming policy decisions; some even believe the unemployment rate is now around 90% of the Federal Reserve’s dual mandate

COMMENT

Jamie McGeever
OHLAND

Jerome Powell’s Jackson Hole speech has turned September 8 and September 18 into the two most important dates for monetary policy in the United States in years, as events on both days center on the U.S. Federal Reserve’s new guiding light: the unemployment rate. The first marks the release of the August non-farm payrolls report, and the second will see the Fed’s much-anticipated interest rate decision and, just as crucially, its updated Summary of Economic Projections (SEP). The Federal Reserve will almost certainly cut rates on September 18, as Mr. Powell signaled at Jackson Hole and as other officials have effectively confirmed since. The only questions now are whether the easing cycle starts with a 25- or 50-basis-point cut, and how much policy is loosened in the coming months.

After these two pivotal days in September, investors should have their answers.

Dual pivots essentially mean two pivots in Jackson Hole. The first, as expected, is his clear signaling



On the cards: A rise in unemployment could lead to more aggressive rate cuts by the Fed. REUTERS

that a rate cut is forthcoming. The second, perhaps less anticipated, is his equally clear emphasis that unemployment, not inflation, is now the number one determinant of his upcoming policy decisions. Mr. Powell’s warning that the Federal Reserve does “not seek or welcome further cooling in labor market conditions” basically means the current unemployment rate of 4.3%—which is still fairly low by historical standards—is now a “line in the sand” that, if crossed, will likely trigger a policy response. “The unemployment rate is now around 90% of the Federal Reserve’s dual mandate, inflation is about



the labor market and, by extension, the economy. They include nominal job growth, the ebb and flow of the labor force, and one of the Federal Reserve’s favorites since the COVID-19 pandemic, the JOLTs (Job Openings and Labor Turnover Survey) estimates of outsized quits and job openings. But for the public, markets at large and politicians, the unemployment rate offers the clearest picture of how well the labor market is holding up. This figure is doubly important now that the U.S. presidential election race is in full swing.

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Eyes on September
Of course, there’s more than one way of measuring the strength or otherwise

Buzz around EV



Green vehicles: A woman stands next to Germany automobile manufacturer Volkswagen’s ID. Buzz electric vehicle during the Gaikindo Indonesia International Auto Show 2024 at the Grand City Complex in Surabaya, Afi.

‘U.S. clean energy jobs growth rate double that of overall jobs’

Reuters
WASHINGTON

Jobs in the U.S. clean energy industry in 2023 grew at more than double the rate of the country’s overall jobs, and unionization in clean energy surpassed for the first time the rate in the wider energy industry, the Energy Department said on Wednesday.

Employment in clean energy businesses—including wind, solar, nuclear and battery storage—rose by 142,000 jobs, or 4.2% last year, up from a rise of 3.9% in 2022, the U.S. Energy and Employment Report said. The rate was above the overall U.S. job growth rate of 2% in 2023. Unionization rates in



clean energy hit 12.4%, more than the 1% in the overall energy business, it said. That work is driven by growth in construction and utility industries and other legislation passed in 2022 including the bipartisan CHIPS Act and President Joe Biden’s Inflation Reduction Act, the department said.

Construction jobs in clean energy, driven by the legislation and private-sector investments, “is expected to continue for decades to build out the clean energy infrastructure that we need,” Betony Jones, Energy Department’s head of energy jobs, told reporters in a call. While unionized members “might move from project to project, there is continued demand for workers to make a career in that industry,” she said.

Employment in the utility scale and rooftop solar industries grew 5.3% adding more than 18,000 jobs, it said. The solar installation industry in California, the country’s most

populous state, says it has lost more than 17,000 jobs due to high interest rates and the state’s lowering of net meter rates that allow customers to be credited for excess power their rooftop panels generate. “New jobs in fossil fuels were mixed. The natural gas workforce grew by more than 77,000 or 13.3%, while jobs in petroleum fell more than 44,000 or 6%. Coal jobs fell almost 8,500 or 5.3% as power generation continued to switch from coal to gas, wind and solar. White House climate adviser Ali Zaidi told reporters that the report showed the administration’s commitment to pursue both energy and climate security.

Judicial reforms strain Mexican-U.S. ties, spook investors

Agence France Press
MEXICO CITY

Controversial judicial reforms promoted by Mexico’s outgoing president are straining diplomatic relations with the United States, its neighbor and key trading partner, while also rattling financial markets.

U.S. Ambassador to Mexico Ken Salazar has warned that the changes would “threaten” a trade relationship that “relies on investors’ confidence in Mexico’s legal framework.” The reforms, under which judges would be elected by popular vote, could pose “a major risk to the functioning of Mexico’s democracy,” he told journalists last week. At the same time, the leftist leader clarified that

“make it easier for cartels and other bad actors to take advantage of politically motivated and inexperienced judges,” Mr. Salazar said. Canada, also a member of the major free trade partnership with the United States and Mexico, has for its part said investors are worried. “My investors are concerned, they want stability, they want a judicial system that works if there are problems,” Canadian Ambassador Graeme Clark said. Mr. Salazar’s remarks in particular irked Mexican President Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador, who announced Tuesday a “pause” in dialogue with the U.S. government. At the same time, the leftist leader clarified that



Vox populi: Judges would be elected by popular vote under the new judicial reforms. AFP

he did not mean there would be a break in relations with U.S. President Joe Biden’s government. It came days after Mr. Lopez Obrador said his go-

vernment had sent a diplomatic note to Washington to protest its “interventionist” statements on the matter. The proposed reforms

have the approval of Mexico’s incoming president, Claudia Sheinbaum, who will take office in October. Ms. Sheinbaum, who will be the country’s first

woman president, won a landslide victory in June 2 elections, but shortly afterward the Mexican stock market and currency saw a sharp decline over investor worries about the reform plans.

In her first press conference after the election, Sheinbaum pledged a “broad consultation” on the proposals, saying it would include bar associations, law schools and judges.

Limited time
But with Congress due to start on Sunday, Mr. Lopez Obrador has a one-month window to try to push through the reforms before Ms. Sheinbaum resumes office. The bloc led by his ruling Morena party will have

more than the two-thirds of votes needed in the lower chamber to amend the constitution.

In the upper house, the Senate, it will be a few seats short of that supermajority, but analysts think it can probably obtain the votes required to make up the difference. The proposed changes “could result in a politicization of the judiciary” and “have a potentially big negative impact on Mexico’s business environment,” British consultancy firm Capital Economics wrote in a note to clients. “The politicization of the justice system could raise concerns about whether disputes between businesses and the government would be resolved in an impartial manner,” it

added. The disagreements could complicate a review of the continent’s free trade pact scheduled for 2026, according to experts. Another proposed reform, seeking the dissolution of autonomous regulatory agencies, “poses a significant risk” to the agreement, political risk analysis firm EMPRA said. The change would breach “potentially big negative impact on Mexico’s business environment,” British consultancy firm Capital Economics wrote in a note to clients. “The politicization of the justice system could raise concerns about whether disputes between businesses and the government would be resolved in an impartial manner,” it

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The change would breach provisions in the trade deal aimed at safeguarding the autonomy of regulatory agencies to prevent state interference, it said.

The tensions come at a time when Mexico hopes to benefit from the "near-shoring" trend of companies moving manufacturing operations from Asia closer to U.S. markets.



- Mexico in the Western Hemisphere
 Mexico and its neighbors
 Show all

Capital and largest city	Mexico City 19°26′N 99°8′W
Official languages	Spanish (<i>de facto</i>)
Co-official languages	68 Indigenous languages
Ethnic groups	<i>See below</i>
Religion (2023) ^[1]	71% Christianity <ul style="list-style-type: none">56% Catholicism10% Protestantism5% other Christian 17% no religion 8% other religion 5% prefer not to say
Demonym(s)	Mexican
Government	Federal presidential republic ^[2]
• President	Andrés Manuel López Obrador
• President of the Senate	Ana Lilia Rivera
• President of the Chamber of Deputies	Marcela Guerra Castillo
• Chief Justice	Norma Lucía Piña Hernández

Independence from Spain

- **Start of War of Independence** 16 September 1810
- **Declared** 27 September 1821
- **Recognized** 28 December 1836
- **First constitution** 4 October 1824
- **Second constitution** 5 February 1857
- **Current constitution** 5 February 1917

Area

- **Total** 1,972,550 km² (761,610 sq mi) (13th)
- **Water (%)** 1.58 (as of 2015)^[3]

Population

- **2023 estimate** ▲ 129,875,529^[4] (10th)
- **Density** 61/km² (158.0/sq mi) (142nd)

GDP (PPP)

- **2024 estimate**
- **Total** ▲ \$3.434 trillion^[5] (12th)
- **Per capita** ▲ \$25,963^[5] (70th)

GDP (nominal)

- **2024 estimate**
- **Total** ▲ \$2.017 trillion^[5] (12th)
- **Per capita** ▲ \$15,249^[5] (63rd)

Gini (2018)

▼ 41.8^[6]
medium inequality

HDI (2022)

▲ 0.781^[7]
high (77th)

Currency

Mexican peso (MXN)

- Key points from the article include:

1. Impact on U.S.-Mexico Relations: The proposed reforms have led to a pause in dialogue between Mexico and the United States, with the Mexican government protesting what it views as "interventionist" statements from the U.S.



2. Investor Concerns: Investors and international observers are worried that the reforms could destabilize Mexico's judicial system, making it harder to resolve disputes impartially and affecting the business environment. This concern has already caused a drop in Mexico's stock market and currency.

Reactions from Other Countries:

Canada, a member of the major free trade partnership with the U.S. and Mexico, has also expressed concerns. Investors are worried about the stability of the judicial system in Mexico.

Proposed Changes and Timeline:

López Obrador's ruling Morena party may push through the reforms before he leaves office, but the reforms would need more than a two-thirds majority in the lower chamber and the Senate to amend the constitution.

- 
- **Potential Risks:** The article also mentions that another proposed reform could dissolve autonomous regulatory agencies, posing risks to the continent's free trade agreement, especially with a review scheduled for 2026.
- 

In 2021, exports to Mexico from India reached USD 5.931 billion and imports from Mexico were at USD 4.17 billion, taking the total trade to USD 10.11 billion.

- **India's Exports:** Vehicles and auto parts, organic chemicals, electrical machinery and electronic equipment, aluminium products, readymade garments, iron and steel products and gems and jewellery.
- **India's Imports:** Crude oil, mineral fuel, fertilizers, etc. Crude oil occupies 75% of the export basket from Mexico.

India's exports of pharmaceutical products remained steady in 2020 and increased by more than 80%.

IN THE NEWS

JAN DHAN TO BOOST VIKSIT BHARAT MISSION: MODI

THE GOVERNMENT WILL continue to build on the success of the Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana (PMJDY) and initiate even more steps to build a Viksit Bharat, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on Wednesday. Modi said over 530 million poor people have opened bank accounts with deposit balances of over ₹2.3 lakh crore. ■ PAGE 2

RIL AGM TODAY: FOCUS ON CLUES TO RETAIL, JIO IPOs

WHEN MUKESH AMBANI, Reliance Industries' chairman, steps up to deliver his much-anticipated once-a-year public address on Thursday, shareholders will be parsing his words for any details on listing its telecom and retail giants, reports Bloomberg. ■ PAGE 4

IMPORT DUTIES ON EDIBLE OILS MAY BE RAISED SOON

THE GOVERNMENT IS considering a proposal to raise import duties on crude and refined edible oils, with the domestic mandi prices of most oil seeds falling below the minimum support prices for several months now, reports Sandip Das. A final decision on how to raise the import duties on edible oils is likely to be taken soon, sources said. ■ PAGE 2

AIRTEL SET TO BE INDUS' LARGEST SHAREHOLDER

BHARTI AIRTEL IS set to become the single largest shareholder in Indus Towers after the completion of the buyout by the tower company on August 14. ■ PAGE 6

ZOMATO LATEST: FOOD EXPENSE MANAGEMENT

ZOMATO HAS LAUNCHED 'Zomato for Enterprise', a new platform designed to simplify corporate food expense management, reports Anshu Hussain. CEO Deepinder Goyal announced the initiative, which marks another step in the company's diversification strategy. ■ PAGE 5

FE SPECIALS

SEBI'S ECONOMIC BUREAU
Mumbai, August 28

INDIA CAN CLOCK a GDP growth rate of 6-7% but its policy lacks the capability to carry out reforms that can spur growth in the range of 9-11%, said Ruchir Sharma, global investor, fund manager and author of best-selling books.

At the ExpressAdvis, organised by The Indian Express in Mumbai on Tuesday, Sharma said, "I think that we can grow at 6%, or maybe 7% with some help of foreign capital but the kind of growth rates that China did... 9%, 10% and 11%, I don't think we can do... and the consensus in this country is there. We still don't give our people enough economic freedom."

'Banks increasingly adopting AI to offer more to customers'
Interview with Dennis Gada, executive VP & global head of banking and financial services, Infosys

■ EFE, PP

Why Paytm is in the dock again

Sebi guidelines state that stock options cannot be granted to an employee who is a promoter

■ EXPLAINER, PP

Nod to 12 industrial smart cities with ₹28K-cr outlay

MUKESH JAGOTA
New Delhi, August 28

THE CABINET COMMITTEE on Economic Affairs (CCEA) on Wednesday approved 12 new industrial smart cities in 10 states to boost domestic manufacturing with an estimated outlay of ₹28,602 crore.

These cities, to be built under the National Industrial Corridor Development Programme, will have an investment potential of ₹1.5 lakh crore, will create 1 million direct jobs, and hold the potential to generate indirect employment of 3 million, commerce and industry minister Piyush Goyal said.

The new smart cities are largely modelled on the current ones, but all of them would come up in tier-2 cities, helping decongest the metros and capital cities. These are principally aimed at developing futuristic industrial cities with the capacity and efficiency to compete with the best manufacturing and investment destinations of the world.

Continued on Page 7

UNLOCKING POTENTIAL

These cities will have an investment potential of ₹1.5 lakh crore

They will create 1 million direct jobs and 3 million indirect jobs

PIYUSH GOYAL, COMMERCE & INDUSTRY MINISTER

THE LAND HAS BEEN ACQUIRED FOR ALL THE INDUSTRIAL HUBS AND THE AIM IS TO GET THEM FUNCTIONAL IN THE NEXT THREE YEARS

INSIDE

Move to spur growth: Realtors

THE UNION government's approval for 12 industrial smart cities could have a "multiplier effect" on the real estate and allied segments, reports Raghavendra Kamath. He said the industrial cities would fuel higher real estate development in terms of warehouses, hotels, housing complexes, malls and more. ■ PAGE 2

Plan needs to be linked to timelines PAGE 4

15-QW NE hydro projects cleared PAGE 3

Agri-fundra fund scope widened PAGE 2

ROAD CLEAR FOR \$8.5-BN ENTITY

Reliance-Disney merger gets CCI greenlight

Clearance subject to 'voluntary modifications'

MANU KAUSHIK
New Delhi, August 28

THE COMPETITION COMMISSION OF India (CCI) has approved the merger of Reliance Industries (RIL) and the Indian media operations of Walt Disney Company, paving the way for the creation of an \$8.5 billion giant. The regulatory nod comes a day before RIL chairman Mukesh Ambani is set to address shareholders at its annual general meeting.

The deal to merge the media assets of Reliance's Viacom18 Media and Disney's other Disney-linked firms are "subject to the compliance of voluntary modifications," CCI said on Wednesday, without elaborating what these voluntary modifications were. A detailed order is expected to be issued shortly.

Reliance had signed a binding agreement with Disney in February this year to merge their media operations in India — a move that not only consolidated Reliance's position in the sector but also gave them a lion's share of the cricket broadcast rights.

Reliance is set to own over 60% of the new combined unit — 36% directly and 47% via the Viacom18 Media business.

Nita Ambani will assume the role of chairperson of the merged entity, with former Walt Disney executive Laday Shankar, joining as vice chairperson.

RIL has agreed to invest at least ₹11,500 crore into the JV for its growth strategy

DONE DEAL

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merged entity's tight control over cricket rights for TV and streaming in India, and its ability to hurt advertisers. The companies have reportedly pledged not to bundle and self-advertise slots for different cricket tournaments and keep subscription rates for their offerings under regulatory limits, the source added.

Continued on Page 7

Reddit registers two India entities

SOCIAL MEDIA GIANT Reddit has officially entered the Indian market by registering two new entities in the country.

Narayanam V. According to sources, Reddit's moves in India are part of its fast-growing user base in the country and to comply with local laws that require social media platforms to establish a physical office in India.

The Ministry of Corporate Affairs (MCA) now that Reddit has registered two entities in Mumbai in July. ■ Page 4

Sebi cautions SME investors

SEBI ON WEDNESDAY cautioned investors about a pattern of stock manipulation in the SME market which promotes unfair unrealistic picture of the business to elevate stock prices and offset their status reports. Vivek Kumar M. Sebi urged investors to be careful and watchful of these patterns and exercise caution while investing in such stocks. The concern about rising concerns over the quality of issues coming to the SME market and underselling interest from individual investors in this issue. ■ Page 6

RBI governor for innovation with prudence in fintech

\$6-bn investment in last two years reflects growing confidence in the sector, says Das

FE BUREAU
Mumbai, August 28

RESERVE BANK OF India (RBI) governor Shaktikanta Das said on Wednesday that the preferred approach for achieving balance between innovation and prudent regulation involves self-regulation within the fintech sector.

Speaking at the Global Fintech Fest, he highlighted that the number of fintechs founded in India stood at 11,000 and the sector has received investments of \$6 billion in the last two years alone, noting that these investments reflect growing confidence in India's fintech sector, which has seen remarkable advancements in areas such as digital payments, lending, and financial inclusion.

To achieve self-regulation within the fintech sector, Self-Regulatory Organisations (SROs) would be the route to take since they comprise industry participants and have a good understanding of the sector's unique challenges.

He also said that out of three industry bodies who applied for recognition as SROs, RBI has already granted approval to one.

Continued on Page 7

GIFT City halts local family office approvals

AKSHATA GORDE
Mumbai, August 28

GIFT CITY HAS stopped allowing domestic family offices to set up investment funds in its status hub due to concerns raised by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI), said a senior official on the sidelines of the Global Fintech Fest.

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) is worried that loosening capital controls for such instruments could open loopholes that may be used to evade taxes and money laundering, according to recent media reports. The central bank is concerned that the movement of large funds could disrupt exchange rate management and forex reserves.

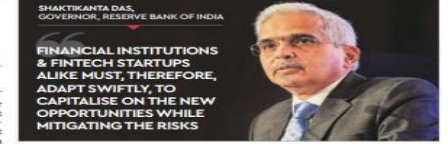
Sandip Shah, head of the IFSC Department at Gujarat International Finance Tec City (GIFT) said that after feedback from the RBI, the regulator for GIFT City has stopped approvals for domestic family investment funds. However, overseas family offices

had had no trouble with approvals, he said. Another CEO told FE that many family offices are enquiring about the potential to set up office in GIFT city. However, due to the absence of regulatory clarity, they are unable to do so.

Last week, a debate had sparked on social media with former Infosys CFO Mohandas Pai sounding an alarm over the issue. Pai slammed the regulatory decision of halting approvals saying that it would hamper global investments.

Requesting Prime Minister Narendra Modi to intervene, Pai said that the decision goes against what the Centre has been aspiring to do — "globalise, compete globally and build a developed India."

Continued on Page 7



GOVT STILL PLAYS A PRETTY INTERVENTIONIST ROLE: RUCHIR SHARMA

'Our polity lacks capability for reforms to spur 9-11% growth'

ENS ECONOMIC BUREAU
Mumbai, August 28

INDIA CAN CLOCK a GDP growth rate of 6-7% but its policy lacks the capability to carry out reforms that can spur growth in the range of 9-11%, said Ruchir Sharma, global investor, fund manager and author of best-selling books.

At the ExpressAdvis, organised by The Indian Express in Mumbai on Tuesday, Sharma said, "I think that we can grow at 6%, or maybe 7% with some help of foreign capital but the kind of growth rates that China did... 9%, 10% and 11%, I don't think we can do... and the consensus in this country is there. We still don't give our people enough economic freedom."

NEWS

Ruchir Sharma, chairman of Rockefeller International and founder chief investment officer of Breakout Capital, at the Express Advis in Mumbai on Tuesday.

We still have a mindset of the fact that this country," Sharma said. He was responding to a question when can India witness a situation where its currency is strengthening, interest rates are lower and growth is accelerating, similar to what Japan experienced from 1970 to 1995, and China in 2000.

"For 30 to 40 years, China was the world's biggest success story. It didn't happen naturally. The kind of reforms that China carried out in those years is something our polity, I don't think it is capable of carrying out," Sharma said.

He explained that China, which began as a very controlled communist state in the 1970s, gave its people a kind of economic freedom over time. Until the 1980s, Chinese people owned their own property, but then all the reforms began one by one. In the 1990s, China fired nearly

100 million people from its public sector enterprises and there was no welfare state.

— the kind of reforms that China and other Eastern European, East Asian countries carried out by really downsizing the public sector. I don't think we (India) have the capacity or consensus to do that. Privatisation in this (India) country is dead on arrival for most things as we know. It only happens by malign neglect, which is that something is allowed to privatise on its own because the private sector takes on greater responsibility than what happened with the banking sector," Sharma said.

Continued on Page 7

ROAD CLEAR FOR \$8.5-BN ENTITY

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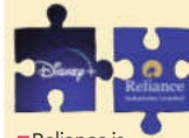
Reliance had signed a binding agreement with Disney in February this year to merge their media operations in India — a move that not only cemented their dominant position in the sector but also gave them a lion's share of the cricket broadcast rights.

Reliance is set to control over 60% of the new combined unit — 16% directly and 47% via the Viacom18 Media business it largely owns — while 37% goes to Disney. Additionally, Reliance has agreed to invest ₹11,500 crore into the JV for its growth strategy. Viacom18 Media and Digital18 are owned by Reliance, Star India and Star Television are controlled by Disney.

The combine will compete with Sony, Netflix and Amazon, with 120 TV channels and two streaming services.

The CCI recently raised several queries on the merger, with the main concern being the

DONE DEAL



■ Reliance is set to control over **60%** of the new combined unit — **16%** directly & **47%** via the **Viacom18 Media** business

■ The new board will have 10 members, with RIL nominating five, Disney three, and two independent directors



■ **Nita Ambani** will assume the role of chairperson of the merged entity, with former Walt Disney executive **Uday Shankar**, joining as vice chairperson

■ RIL has agreed to invest at **₹11,500 crore** into the JV for its growth strategy

merged entity's tight control over cricket rights for TV and streaming in India, and its ability to hurt advertisers. The companies have reportedly pledged not to bundle and sell advertising slots for different cricket tournaments and keep subscription rates for their offerings under regulatory limits, the source added.

Continued on Page 7

Setty takes charge as SBI chairman



STATE BANK OF India (SBI) will strive to become the most valued financial institution and also increase its net profit, new chairman **CS Setty** said

on Wednesday as he asserted that this is India's decade.



Soon after taking charge of the nation's largest bank, Setty assured employees that all efforts would be made to grow SBI into the 'best bank' in the country.

"Since the start of this decade, our global rank among banks has moved up 35 positions from 52 to 17 in terms of market capitalisation," he said, thanking his predecessors.

"It is now our turn to build on this foundation, to grow SBI into the best bank in the country."

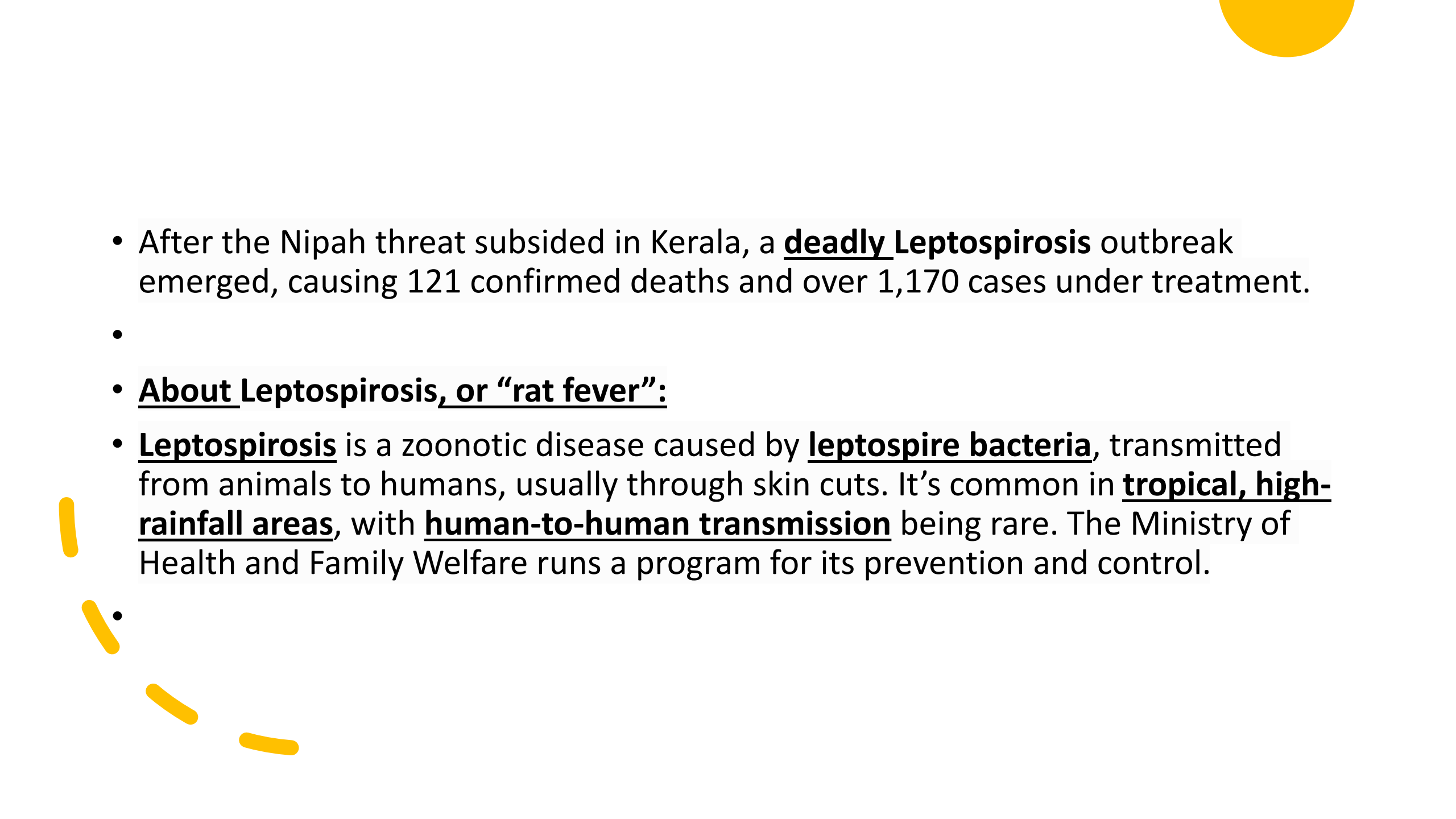
Setty succeeded Dinesh Khara. Prior to becoming chairman, Setty was the senior-most managing director of the bank. —PTI

Predecessor	<p>Imperial Bank of India (1921 – 1955)</p> <p>Bank of Calcutta (1806 – 1921)</p> <p>Bank of Bombay (1840 – 1921)</p> <p>Bank of Madras (1843 – 1921)</p>
Founded	<p>1 July 1955; 69 years ago State Bank of India</p> <hr/> <p>27 January 1921 Imperial Bank of India</p> <p>2 June 1806 Bank of Calcutta</p> <p>15 April 1840 Bank of Bombay</p> <p>1 July 1843 Bank of Madras</p>
Headquarters	State Bank Bhawan, M.C. Road, Nariman Point , Mumbai , Maharashtra , India
Number of locations	<p>India: 22,542 Branches 63,580 ATMs</p> <p>International: 241 Branches in 29 countries</p>
Area served	Worldwide
Key people	<p>Challa Sreenivasulu Setty (Chairman)^[1]</p> <p>Kameshwar Rao Kodavanti (CFO)^[2]</p>
Products	<p>Retail banking</p> <p>Corporate banking</p> <p>Investment banking</p> <p>Mortgage loans</p> <p>Private banking</p> <p>Wealth management</p> <p>Risk management</p> <p>Asset management</p>

Members	50 crores+ ^[4]
Number of employees	2,32,296 (31 March 2024) ^[5]
Parent	<p>Ministry of Finance (Government of India (57.54%))</p>
Subsidiaries	<p>SBI Life Insurance Ltd</p> <p>SBI Mutual Fund (63%)</p> <p>SBI Cards and Payment Services Ltd(68.63%)</p> <p>SBI General Insurance (69.11%)</p> <p>Jio Payments Bank (23%)</p> <p>Yes Bank (23.99%)</p> <p>Andhra Pradesh Grameena Vikas Bank (35%)</p> <p>Kaveri Grameena Bank (35%)</p> <p>Uttarakhand Gramin Bank (35%)</p>
Capital ratio	Tier 1 14.28%(2024) ^[6]
Rating	<p>S&P BBB– / A-3/ Stable^[7]</p> <p>Moody's Baa3/ P-3/ Stable^[7]</p> <p>Fitch BBB– / F-3/ Stable^[7]</p>
Website	<p>sbi.co.in </p> <p>bank.sbi </p>



Leptospirosis

- 
- After the Nipah threat subsided in Kerala, a **deadly Leptospirosis** outbreak emerged, causing 121 confirmed deaths and over 1,170 cases under treatment.
 -
 - **About Leptospirosis, or “rat fever”:**
 - **Leptospirosis** is a zoonotic disease caused by **leptospire bacteria**, transmitted from animals to humans, usually through skin cuts. It’s common in **tropical, high-rainfall areas**, with **human-to-human transmission** being rare. The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare runs a program for its prevention and control.
 -

- It spreads through bacteria in contaminated water, particularly during monsoons. The surge in cases is attributed to **heavy rainfall and poor waste management**, increasing rat populations.
- Experts stress the need for early detection, personal hygiene, protective gear, and doxycycline distribution. Additionally, Kerala faces outbreaks of **hepatitis A and dengue**, underscoring the need for better water quality and public health strategies.

KEEP RATS AT BAY

Cause of infection | When one comes into contact with urine of infected rats or cattle or the water contaminated by it

Who are more susceptible
People who work in muddy or marshy land where rats are abundant

Symptoms | Fever, severe pain on calf muscles, redness of eyes

➤ If there is delay in getting medical attention, it will affect the functioning of kidney and will eventually lead to the death of the patient

Precautions | Fill the holes in walls to prevent rats from making it home



➤ Keep tubers, rice, coconut and other items out of reach of rats

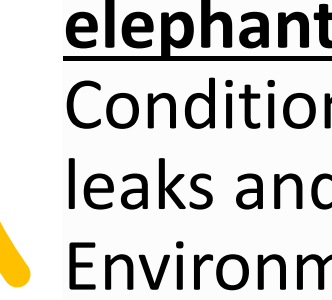
➤ Dispose of waste properly

➤ Take doxycycline tablets as per doctor's instruction. This prevents the growth and spread of the bacteria causing the infection

Hollongapar Gibbon Wildlife Sanctuary



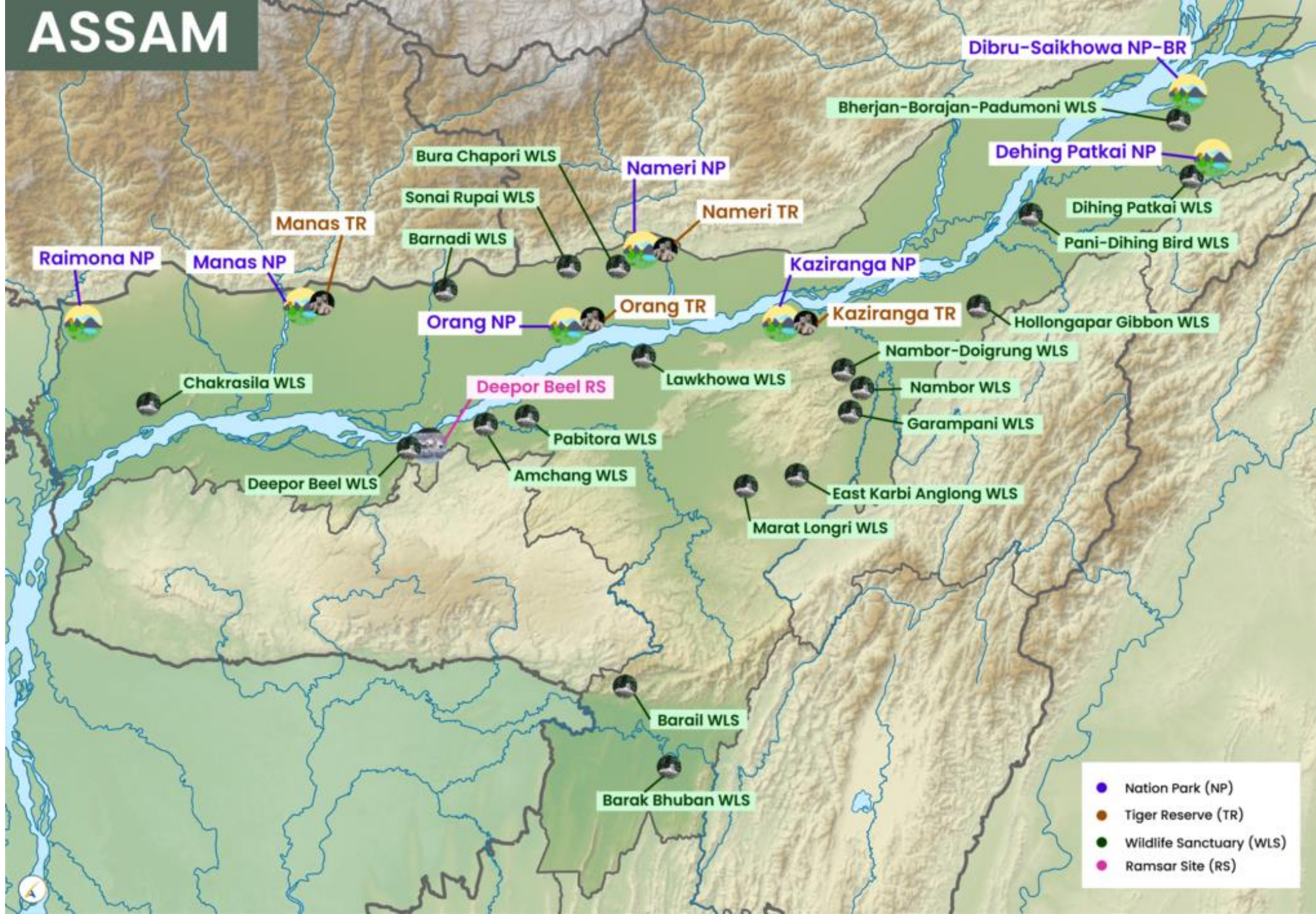
- 
- Assam's wildlife department has recommended **forest clearance for Vedanta's oil and gas exploration project in the eco-sensitive zone** of the **Hollongapar Gibbon Wildlife Sanctuary**, citing national interest.

- - The project, in the habitat of **endangered Hoolock Gibbons and wild elephants**, involves diverting over 4 hectares of forest land. Conditions include preventing pollution and managing risks like oil leaks and gas explosions. The proposal is pending with the Union Environment Ministry's Forest Advisory Committee.
- 



Facts	Description
About	Gibbons, the <u>smallest and fastest of all apes</u> , inhabit tropical and subtropical forests in Southeast Asia. They have high intelligence, distinct personalities, and strong family bonds. They are one of the 20 gibbon species found worldwide.
Population and Habitat	The current population of hoolock gibbons is around 12,000. They are found in <u>Northeast India, Bangladesh, Myanmar, and Southern China</u> .
Gibbon Species in India	Two distinct species in India's northeast: the <u>eastern hoolock gibbon (Hoolock leuconedys)</u> and the <u>western hoolock gibbon</u> (Hoolock hoolock).
Threats	All 20 gibbon species , including hoolock gibbons, are at high risk of extinction due to conservation challenges. Significant population and habitat decline due to deforestation for infrastructure projects in India.

ASSAM







7 NATIONAL PARKS IN ASSAM

- 6th : Raimona National Park (Notified in 2021)
- 7th : Dihing Patkai National Park (Notified in June 2021)

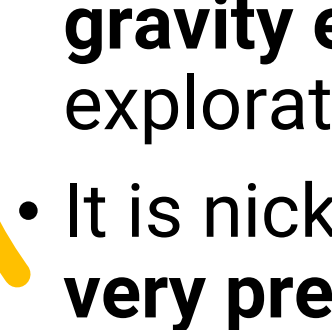


Japan's SLIM Moon Mission

- 
- Recently, **Japan's space agency, JAXA**, has concluded operations of its **Moon lander, the Smart Lander for Investigating Moon (SLIM)**, also known as the "**Moon Sniper**," after losing communication with it.
 - This operation was halted after the failure of multiple attempts to establish connection with the SLIM spacecraft.
- 



- **About SLIM**

- SLIM is a **small-scale lunar lander** designed for **precise landings, reduced equipment size and weight, and investigating the Moon's origins.**
 - It was an uncrewed spacecraft that also aimed to **test low-gravity exploration technology** essential for future solar system exploration.
 - It is nicknamed the "**Moon Sniper**" because of its **ability to land very precisely on the Moon's surface.**
- 

Lowest cost Moon Mission of respective countries

Country	 India	 Russia	 China	 USA
Mission	Chandrayan 3	Luna 25	Chang'e 3	Apollo 10
Mission Cost (Inflation adjusted)	\$77 million	\$200 million	\$300 million	\$2.9 Billion

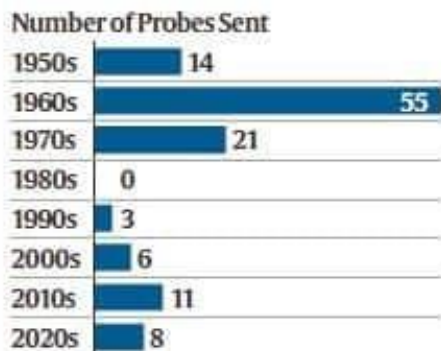
Lowest Cost Mars Mission of respective countries

Country	 India	 Russia	 Japan	 Europe	 USA
Mission	Mangalyan (Successful)	Phobos Grunt (Failed)	Nozomi (Failed)	Express Orbiter (Successful)	Maven (Successful)
Mission Cost (Inflation adjusted)	\$74 million	\$117 million	\$189 million	\$386 million	\$671 million

Source: Data compiled from multiple sources;
Statista, Creadable.in, space.com, media reports

Which countries, where, and when

Lunar Probes by Decade

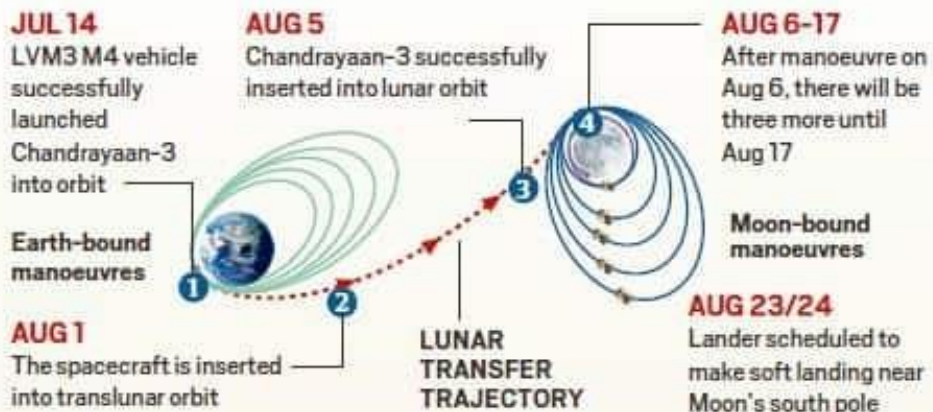


Lunar Probes Success Ratio

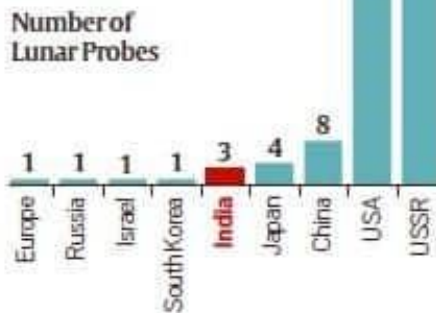


Source for all data: NASA Space Science Data Coordinated Archive

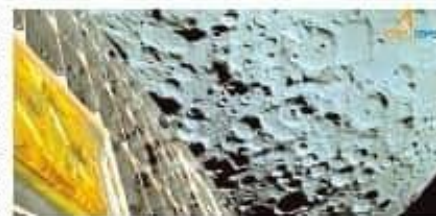
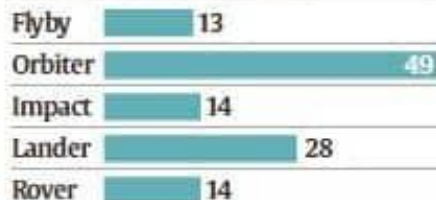
The Journey of Chandrayaan-3



Lunar Probes by Country



Lunar Probes by Type



The Moon from Chandrayaan-3 ISRO

MOON FIRSTS

- First attempt to fly to Moon | **Pioneer 0, 1958** | Failed
- First to provide Moon data | **Luna 1, 1959**
- First spacecraft to reach lunar surface | **Luna 2, 1959** | Crash landed on Moon
- First spacecraft to take pictures of Moon | **Luna 3, 1959**
- First soft-landing attempt on Moon | **Luna 5, 1965** | Failed
- First to get into Moon orbit, go around moon | **Luna 10, 1966**
- First to soft land | **Luna 9, 1966**
- First to send pictures from Moon's surface | **Luna 9, 1966**
- First spacecraft to carry human beings to Moon orbit | **Apollo 8, 1968**
- First humans on Moon | **Apollo 11, 1969**
- First lunar mission by Japan | **Hiten, 1990** | Moon probes resume
- First European Moon mission | **SMART-1, 2003**
- First Chinese Moon mission | **Chang'e 1, 2007**
- First Indian Moon mission | **Chandrayaan-1, 2008** | Confirms presence of water
- First soft landing on far side of Moon | **Chang'e 4, 2019**

EXPLORERS OF THE MOON

Five orbiters and one rover are currently active on the moon. Overall, countries have made 47 attempts at soft landing on the moon of which only 20 have been successful. Chandrayaan-3 aims to land a rover on lunar south pole

THERE HAVE BEEN 20 SUCCESSFUL MOON LANDER MISSIONS SO FAR

- Russia's Luna missions (8)
- America's Surveyor missions (5)
- America's Apollo missions (6)
- China's Chang'e 5 mission (1)

CHANDRAYAAN-1

Launched in 2008, Chandrayaan-1 orbiter made history by confirming presence of water on the moon

CHANDRAYAAN-2

With its launch in 2019, India aimed to be the first country to reach the south pole, but failed to achieve soft landing

CHANDRAYAAN-3

Launched on July 14, 2023, it is expected to make a soft landing in the fourth week of August around the south pole on the near side of the moon

ORIGIN AND EVOLUTION

Some 60-75 million years after the solar system was born 4.5 billion years ago, a Mars-sized planet called Theia headed towards the young Earth and collided with it. Debris from this event aggregated to form the moon. This is according to the giant impact theory, which is the most widely accepted hypothesis on the moon's origin. Lunar samples collected from the Apollo mission suggest that the moon's origin and isotopes are remarkably similar to Earth, lending more weight to the theory. The moon is drifting away from Earth at a rate of 3.76 cm per year.

6. CAPSTONE ORBITER | 2022

In 2022, NASA launched a microwave-sized satellite Capstone to test, for the first time, an elliptical lunar orbit. Called the near rectilinear halo orbit, it can offer stability to long-term missions like Gateway—a moon-orbiting outpost that is part of NASA's Artemis programme. Capstone also aims to demonstrate spacecraft-to-spacecraft navigation services.

5. KOREA PATHFINDER LUNAR ORBITER | ORBITER 2022

South Korea entered the race for moon exploration by launching its first orbiter on August 5, 2022. Its goal is to study the moon's surface to inform future missions about the polar region. It will also hunt for evidence of ice deposits, observe seasonal changes and measure the terrain inside the craters.

4. CHANG'E 5 ORBITER | 2020

In March 2020, China launched Chang'e 5. The spacecraft consisted four modules: an orbiter, a lander, an ascender and a 'returner'. The goal was to collect and return around 2 kg of lunar samples, which it achieved in December 2020. Before reaching the Earth, the orbiter separated from the sample return vehicle. It headed for the Sun-Earth Lagrange point L1 to observe the Sun.

3. CHANDRAYAAN-2 ORBITER | 2019

On July 22, 2019, ISRO launched Chandrayaan-2, consisting an orbiter, a lander and a rover. This was India's first attempt to soft land on the moon, in which the lander failed, but the orbiter continues to be active. It is mapping the moon's topography, investigating the surface's mineralogy and elements, studying the lunar exosphere and looking for signatures of water ice.

CHANDRAYAAN-3 TO LAND NEAR MOON'S SOUTH POLE IN AUGUST 2023

ISRO launched Chandrayaan-3 on July 14, with landing scheduled for the fourth week of August. The mission consists a propulsion module, a lander module and a rover. The propulsion module will carry the lander and rover from the injection orbit to the lunar orbit. The propulsion module will drive earth-bound manoeuvres, trans-lunar injection and moon-bound orbits.

Moon's nearside perpetually faces Earth

1. LUNAR RECONNAISSANCE ORBITER | ORBITER 2009

In 2009, US' NASA launched the Lunar Reconnaissance Orbiter to create a 3D map of the moon's surface to identify landing sites and environments necessary for robotic and human missions. In 2010, the spacecraft's goal was extended to target the polar region, known to hold water reserves. In 2019, one of its instruments observed water molecules moving around the dayside of the moon.

2. YUTU-2 | ROVER | 2018


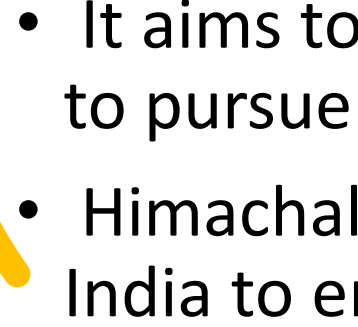
The China National Space Administration launched Yutu-2 in 2018. It is the first mission to make a soft landing on the far side of the moon. In 2019, the lander made a touchdown in the Von Kármán crater to understand more about the early solar system and Earth. It also found that the soil on the far side is stickier and less rocky than on the near side.

Moon's farside is never visible from Earth

HP INCREASES MINIMUM
AGE OF MARRIAGE FOR
WOMEN



-
- In a significant move towards gender equality and promoting higher education, the Himachal Pradesh State Assembly recently passed the 'Prohibition of Child Marriage (Himachal Pradesh Amendment) Bill, 2024'

- 
- About • The Prohibition of Child Marriage Act, 2006 was enacted to prevent the solemnisation of child marriages and address related matters.
 - • The Bill proposes raising the minimum age of marriage for girls from 18 to 21 years.
 - It aims to provide gender equality and create opportunities for girls to pursue higher education and personal development. •
 - Himachal Pradesh proudly claims the title of being the first state in India to enact legislation increasing the marriage age of girls to 21.
- 

Who's a **child**? | While most laws fix 18 as the age when one ceases to be a child, there are exceptions:

- The Majority Act, 1875 sets the age of majority at 18
- 61st Constitutional Amendment Act fixes the minimum voting age at 18
- POCSO Act, 2012 and Juvenile Justice Act, 2015 define a child as someone under the age of 18



- Right to Education Act, 2009 says a child is someone between the ages of six and 14

■ **Child Labour Amendment Act, 2016 says a child is someone under the age of 14 and an adolescent is aged between 14 and 18**



Countries with the highest number of child marriages*



Source: Population data from UN | * Women who were first married or in a union before they were 18-years-old © DW

What are the Laws/Acts says?

- The law of the land prescribes the **minimum age of marriage should be 21 years and 18 years** for men and women respectively.
- **Special Marriage Act, 1954 and Prohibition of Child Marriage Act, 2006:** Prescribed 18 and 21 years as the minimum age of consent for marriage for women and men respectively.
- **Hindu Marriage Act, 1955 Section 5(iii):** 18 years as the minimum age for the bride and 21 years as the minimum age for the groom.
- **Age of Consent Bill, 1927:** It amended the provision of rape in 1927 and declared the marriage with a girl under 12 invalid.
- **Sarda Act** was amended in 1978 and it prescribed 18 and 21 years as the age of marriage for a woman and a man respectively.
- **In the 1880s** a legal framework for the age of consent for marriage began.
- **The Indian Penal Code, 1860:** Criminalised sexual intercourse with a girl below the age of 10.
- **In Islam,** the marriage of a minor who has attained puberty is considered valid.

POSITIVE TREND

'Growing integration of the economy and higher school enrolments contributing to increase in median age for marriage'

Median age for marriage

	2001	2011
Men	22.6	23.5
Women	18.2	19.2



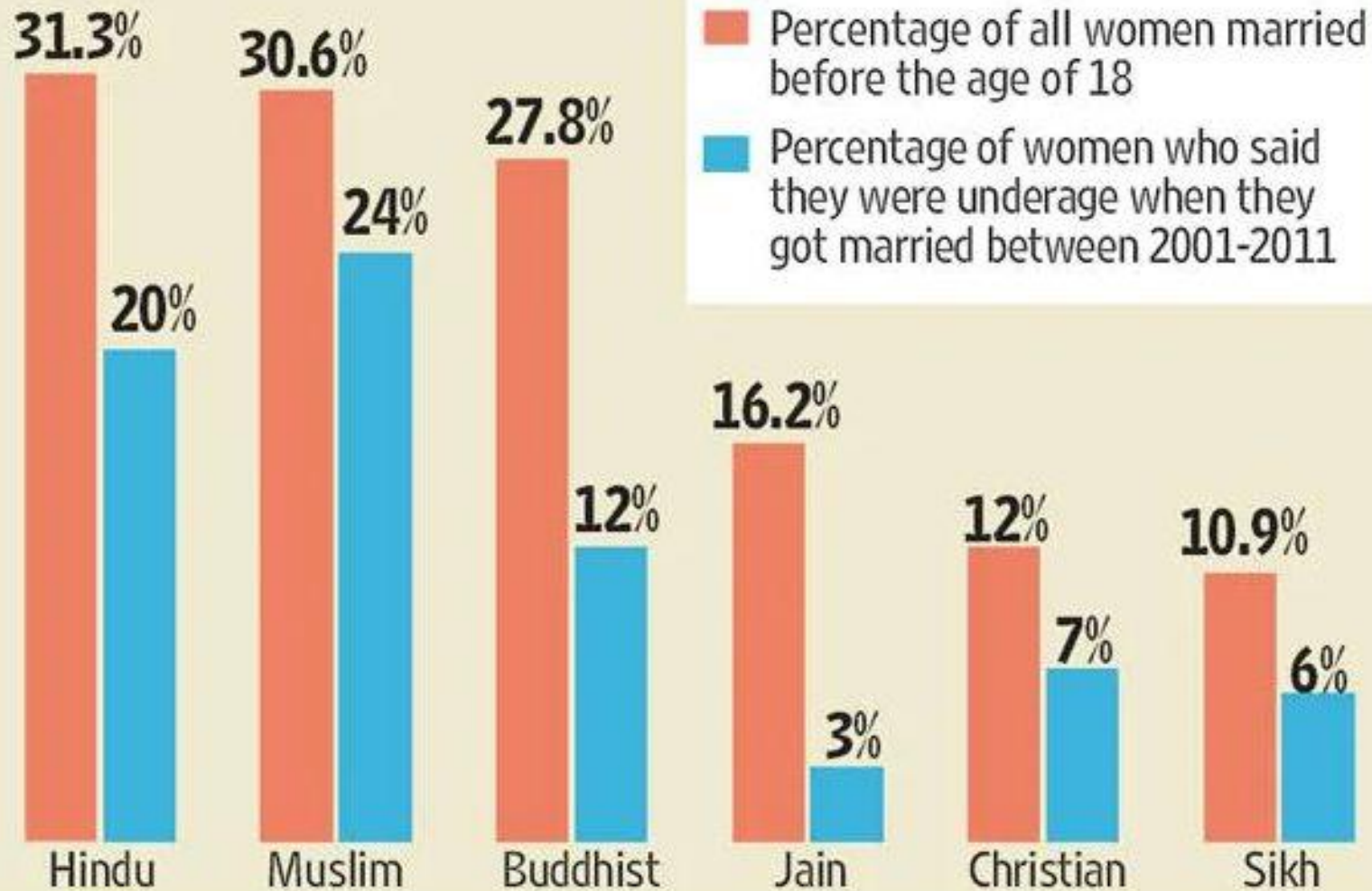
What caused it?

➔ Increase in mobile and migratory nature of work in the country is one part of the explanation. The workers are free of restrictions of a traditional social set-up

➔ The rise was seen among marginal workers and non-workers as well. So, not only migration, higher levels of school enrolment could also be a contributing factor

CATCHING THEM TOO YOUNG

The practice of underage marriages fell across all religions, but Hindu and Muslim women still have it the worst



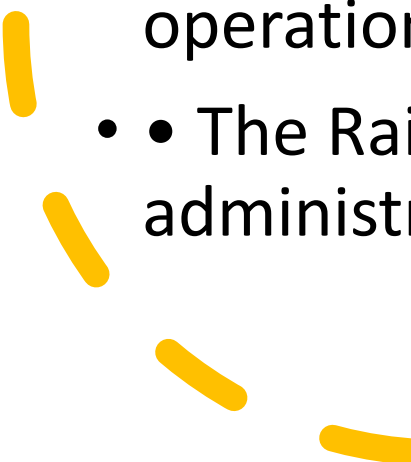
Source: Census 2011

**SATISH KUMAR: NEW
CHAIRMAN OF
RAILWAY BOARD**





- About Railway Board

- • The Railway Board was established in 1905 as a part of the British Indian government's efforts to better manage the expanding railway network.
 - • It serves as the apex body responsible for the administration, operation, and policy formulation of Indian Railways.
 - • The Railway Board is headed by the Chairman and CEO, who is the administrative and operational head of Indian Railways
- 

Vocab of the day

Word of the day

Menial:

used in relation to unskilled work

Synonyms: humble, lowly

Usage: *The government has been criticised for forcing jobseekers to do menial unpaid work.*

Pronunciation: bit.ly/menialpro

International Phonetic Alphabet: /'mi:ni.əl/

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• LIVE DOUBT SESSION



A group of people are clapping in a dimly lit room. In the foreground, a hand is reaching out towards the center. The background is dark, with some people visible in the distance, some of whom are clapping. The overall mood is one of appreciation and gratitude.

Thank you
guys.
