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10 MCQ from the session

**Under which programme has India completed genome sequencing of 10,000 TB samples?**

**• भारत ने 10,000 टीबी नमूनों का जीनोम अनुक्रमण किस कार्यक्रम के तहत पूरा किया है?**

A. Mission TB-Free India

B. Dare2eraD TB

C. Nirog Bharat Yojana

D. Swasthya Mission

**What is India's target year to eliminate tuberculosis?**

- **भारत का टीबी समाप्त करने का लक्ष्य वर्ष क्या है?**
  - A. 2030
  - B. 2027
  - C. 2025
  - D. 2040

**What percentage of the world's TB cases are reported from India?**

- **दुनिया के कितने प्रतिशत टीबी मामले भारत में दर्ज होते हैं?**
  - A. 10%
  - B. 18%
  - C. 28%
  - D. 40%



**What is the objective of the Indian Navy's IOS Sagar initiative?**

- **भारतीय नौसेना की IOS सागर पहल का उद्देश्य क्या है?**
  - A. Promote cruise tourism
  - B. Strengthen maritime cooperation with IOR and African nations
  - C. Expand submarine capability
  - D. Train private security

**What was the name of the multilateral naval exercise involving India and African countries?**

**• भारत और अफ्रीकी देशों के बीच आयोजित बहुराष्ट्रीय नौसैनिक अभ्यास का नाम क्या था?**

A. Indo-African Sea Shield

B. AI-KEYME

C. SAGAR Bond

D. MARSEC-25

**What is India's rank in global food waste as per 2022 data?**

- **2022 के अनुसार भारत वैश्विक खाद्य अपव्यय में किस स्थान पर है?**
  - A. 1st
  - B. 2nd
  - C. 3rd
  - D. 4th

**Which gas from food waste contributes significantly to global warming?**

• खादय अपव्यय से निकलने वाली कौन सी गैस ग्लोबल वॉर्मिंग में योगदान देती है?

A. Carbon Dioxide

B. Methane

C. Nitrous Oxide

D. Sulphur Dioxide

**Which company recently overtook Tesla in overall car sales in China?**

• चीन में किस कंपनी ने हाल ही में कुल कार बिक्री में टेस्ला को पीछे छोड़ दिया?

A. NIO

B. SAIC

C. BYD

D. Xpeng

**What is the new investment limit for a Medium Enterprise under revised MSME norms?**

- **संशोधित एमएसएमई मानदंडों के अनुसार एक मीडियम एंटरप्राइज की नई निवेश सीमा क्या है?**
  - A. ₹50 crore
  - B. ₹75 crore
  - C. ₹100 crore
  - D. ₹125 crore

**What is a 'secret sitting' in the context of Indian Parliament?**

- **भारतीय संसद में 'गुप्त बैठक' का क्या अर्थ है?**
  - A. Budget session with closed doors
  - B. Special emergency session for national security
  - C. A closed-door session without public/media access
  - D. Meeting between PM and Speaker

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happens when  
you **CREATE**  
from *vision*, not  
from problems

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STATES » PAGE 3

**STRIKES IN YEMEN**  
U.S. officials text war plans to group chat with journalist  
WORLD » PAGE 14

**CROSS-BORDER TIES**  
India, China officials hold talks in Beijing  
NEWS » PAGE 4

**DATA POINT**  
Growth centred in few districts of southern States  
Unemployment rates a cause for concern  
OPINION » PAGE 9

**ASIAN CUP QUALIFIERS**  
India and Bangladesh in goalless draw  
SPORT » PAGE 17

**INSIDE**

**Stalin to make announcement to 'uplift Tamils'**  
NEW DELHI  
Chief Minister M.K. Stalin said on Tuesday that he would soon make an announcement to "protect the Tamil identity and uplift Tamils". » PAGE 2

**Kamra seeks time to appear before Mumbai Police**  
MUMBAI  
The Mumbai Police on Tuesday served initial summons against stand-up comedian and satirist Kunal Kamra for allegedly defaming Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Eknath Shinde. He has sought seven days to appear before the police, sources said. » PAGE 5

**'India, China may seek to interfere in Canadian poll'**  
OTTAWA  
China and India are likely to try to interfere in the Canadian general election on April 28, while Russia and Pakistan have the potential to do so, the Canadian Security Intelligence Service said on Monday at a time when Canada's relations with India is chilly. » PAGE 14

# Govt., Opposition call for collegium system reform

Current system lacks transparency, say both sides after a meeting of Rajya Sabha floor leaders chaired by V.P. Dhankhar; Leader of the House Nadda to have a one-on-one meeting with floor leaders to try and arrive at a solution; Leader of the Opposition Kharge urges the government to clarify its stance on the NJAC, struck down by the SC

**Sobhana K. Nair**  
NEW DELHI  
The Vice-President and Rajya Sabha Chairman Jagdeep Dhanekar chaired a meeting of Rajya Sabha floor leaders on Tuesday in the context of recovery of half-burnt Indian currency notes at the official residence of the High Court judge Justice Yashwant Varma on March 14, building "back of half-burnt" currency notes was "undoubtedly serious" and it was a "very critical issue that is agitating the minds in branches of governance". Referring to the National Judicial Appointments Commission (NJAC) Act passed by Parliament, he said that if the mechanism for judicial appointments had not been struck down by the Supreme Court, things would

placed the onus on the government to clarify its position.  
At the end of the inconclusive meeting, it was decided that BJP president and the Leader of the House in the Rajya Sabha J.P. Nadda would have a one-on-one meeting with all floor leaders to try and arrive at a "solution."  
Earlier in the day, Mr. Dhanekar, on the floor of the House, said that the discovery of half-burnt notes was "undoubtedly serious" and it was a "very critical issue that is agitating the minds in branches of governance". Referring to the National Judicial Appointments Commission (NJAC) Act passed by Parliament, he said that if the mechanism for judicial appointments had not been struck down by the Supreme Court, things would

## Panel begins inquiry, visits residence of judge

**The Hindu Bureau**  
NEW DELHI  
A three-member committee of judges on Tuesday began its in-depth inquiry into the allegation that "back of half-burnt" currency were found after dousing a fire in a sitting room at the residence of Delhi High Court judge Justice Yashwant Varma, who has been taken off judicial work.  
Mr. Nadda said that a distinction should be made on the issue at hand in the discovery of half-burnt currency notes at the residence of a Delhi High Court judge, and the larger issue of finding an alternative to the present Collegium system. Mr. Nadda said he would have "a one-on-one chat" with the next few days with all the floor leaders to decide on the next steps.  
(With inputs from Sandeep Phukan)

(TMC) MP Sukendu Sekhar Roy said that these issues should be discussed on the floor of Parliament and not in an ante-chamber. Since the NJAC had already been struck down by the Supreme Court, the government should have a clear road map on what would happen if that occurred, he added.  
Mr. Nadda said that a distinction should be made on the issue at hand in the discovery of half-burnt currency notes at the residence of a Delhi High Court judge, and the larger issue of finding an alternative to the present Collegium system. Mr. Nadda said he would have "a one-on-one chat" with the next few days with all the floor leaders to decide on the next steps.  
(With inputs from Sandeep Phukan)

## Soaring mercury



Soaring mercury: A girl holding an umbrella visits the Taj Mahal on Tuesday, as temperature rises in several parts of North India.

have been different. The NJAC Bill ratified by 16 Assemblies and assented to by the President in December 2014 was struck down by the Supreme Court in October 2015.  
He also questioned Parliament's relevance in the situation.  
"Very critical issue" "We will come back to the focus on this very critical important issue that concerns much beyond the judicial mess. It concerns

## India slaps Samsung with tax demand of \$601 million

**Reuters**  
NEW DELHI  
Customs authorities have ordered consumer electronics major Samsung and its executives to pay \$601 million (\$1 is equal to ₹85.72 at current rates) in back taxes and penalties for dodging tariffs on import of key telecom equipment, a government order showed.  
The demand represents a substantial chunk of last year's net profit of \$955 million for Samsung in India, which is one of the largest players in the consumer electronics and smartphones market. It can be challenged in a tax tribunal or the court, the company, which also imports telecom equipment through its network division, received a warning in 2023 for misclassifying imports to evade tariffs of 10% or 20% on a critical transmission component used in mobile towers. It imported and sold them to Reliance Jio.  
Samsung pushed India's tax authority to stop the scrutiny, saying the component did not attract tariffs. Officials had known its classification for misclassifying imports to evade tariffs of 10% or 20% on a critical transmission component used in mobile towers. It imported and sold them to Reliance Jio.  
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## Cannot be forced to join govt. portal, X tells Delhi HC

**The Hindu Bureau**  
NEW DELHI  
Social media platform X has informed the Delhi High Court that it cannot be compelled to come on board the Centre's SAHYOG portal, which aims at creating a unified framework to combat cybercrime, arguing that "X Corp has its own portal to process valid legal requests".  
Pointing to the Supreme Court's ruling in the *Sreyas Singal vs Union of India* case, X argued that the SAHYOG portal falls outside the statutory scheme of Section 69A of the IT Act, which empowers the government to order online platforms to block information in specific circumstances.  
The portal would "create a parallel mechanism to the existing mechanism under Section 69A of the IT Act albeit there are no procedures or safeguards. Thus, it is stated that X Corp cannot be compelled to come on the SAHYOG portal," it said.  
During the hearing on March 18, Akhil Sibal, the senior counsel representing X, submitted that the Elon Musk-owned platform has also filed a petition before the Karnataka High Court challenging the SAHYOG portal. That petition had termed the portal as "arbitrary" and "unreasonable".  
"Automating notices" The SAHYOG portal is being developed by the Union Ministry of Home Affairs "to automate the process of sending notices to intermediaries (such as online platforms)" to take down unlawful content, its website says. In its second phase, the portal's func-



X argued that it has its own portal to process legal requests.

## Centre drops import duty on goods used to make EV, phone batteries; Lok Sabha passes Finance Bill

**Sandeep Phukan**  
NEW DELHI  
Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Tuesday announced there would be no import duties on 35 capital goods used to make electric vehicle (EV) batteries and 28 items used to make mobile phone batteries to boost domestic manufacturing.  
Replying to the debate on the Finance Bill, which was passed by the Lok Sabha, the Minister said the Customs tariff rationalisation in Budget 2025 was aimed at boosting domestic production, enhancing export competitiveness by reducing duties on raw materials and inputs, and making domestic products cost-effective.  
"The Finance Bill 2025 relating to the rationalisation of import duties and address duty inversion. These will also support manufacturing



Nirmala Sitharaman speaks in the Lok Sabha during the Budget Session of Parliament in New Delhi on Tuesday.

units, domestic value addition, promote exports, facilitate trade and also provide relief to the common people," she said.  
The government moved 35 official amendments to the Finance Bill, including one to abolish a 6% digital tax on online advertisements, and its passage in the Lower House.  
"Big step forward" Calling the rationalisation of Customs tariffs a "very big step forward," the Minister said importers would benefit while exporters would be protected. The announcement came as the Finance Bill delegation arriving in India to carry forward talks on President Donald Trump's proposal of imposing reciprocal tariffs.  
However, Ms. Sitharaman asserted that the pro-

department carried out a "major" campaign in which taxpayers were encouraged to voluntarily disclose their foreign income and assets. SMS and E-mails were sent to around 19,501 select taxpayers, asking them to review their income tax returns filed for 2024-25 based on information available to Income Tax of foreign deposits and assets, she said.  
Cumulatively, the mudge resulted in the declaration of foreign assets worth ₹29,208 crore and foreign income of ₹1,089 crore in Schedule PA (foreign assets) by 30,161 taxpayers, Ms. Sitharaman added.  
Noting that the Finance Bill provides "unprecedented tax relief," the Finance Minister said personal income tax collection for 2025-26 was projected at ₹13.6 lakh crore.  
"CLARIFY AMENDMENT" » PAGE 5

# Centre drops import duty on goods used to make EV, phone batteries; Lok Sabha passes Finance Bill

**Sandeep Phukan**

NEW DELHI

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“This Finance Bill 2025 relating to the Customs aims to rationalise tariff structure and address duty inversion. These will also support manufacturing

units, domestic value addition, promote exports, facilitate trade and also provide relief to the common people,” she said.

The government moved 35 official amendments to the Finance Bill, including one to abolish a 6% digital tax on online advertisements, during its passage in the Lower House.

## ‘Big step forward’

Calling the rationalisation of Customs tariffs a “very big step forward,” the Minister said importers would benefit while exporting industries that import parts and components, would become cost competitive.

The announcement came just ahead of a U.S. delegation arriving in India to carry forward talks on President Donald Trump’s proposal of imposing reciprocal tariffs.

However, Ms. Sitharaman asserted that the pro-



Nirmala Sitharaman speaks in the Lok Sabha during the Budget Session of Parliament in New Delhi on Tuesday. PTI

cess of Customs tariff rationalisation had been going for the past two years.

The Finance Minister also informed the House that the new Income Tax Bill, seeking to replace the Income Tax Act of 1961, would be taken up for discussion during the next Monsoon session, as it was currently being examined by a Select Committee of Parliament.

Referring to the con-

cerns expressed by Opposition members regarding income tax officers being authorised to examine digital records for assessment purposes in the new income tax Bill, Ms. Sitharaman said it was necessary to make this provision as the 1961 tax law permitted only the examination of physical books of accounts or manual records of income-expenditure.

She also informed the House that the Income Tax

department carried out a ‘nudge’ campaign in which taxpayers were encouraged to voluntarily disclose their foreign income and assets. SMS and E-mails were sent to around 19,501 select taxpayers, asking them to review their Income Tax returns filed for 2024-25 based on information available to Income Tax of foreign deposits and assets, she said.




Cumulatively, the nudge resulted in the declaration of foreign assets worth ₹29,208 crore and foreign income of ₹1,089 crore in Schedule FA (foreign assets) by 30,161 taxpayers, Ms. Sitharaman added.

Noting that the Finance Bill provides “unprecedented tax relief,” the Finance Minister said personal income tax collection for 2025-26 was projected at ₹13.6 lakh crore.


## ‘CLARIFY AMENDMENT’

» PAGE 5




## . Key Customs Reforms | प्रमुख सीमा शुल्क सुधार

-  **No Import Duty** on:
  - 35 capital goods used for Electric Vehicle (EV) battery manufacturing
  - 28 items used for mobile phone batteries
-  उद्देश्य: Boost domestic production, enhance export competitiveness, and reduce raw material costs.
-  उद्देश्य: घरेलू निर्माण को प्रोत्साहन देना, निर्यात प्रतिस्पर्धा बढ़ाना, कच्चे माल की लागत कम करना।

## Budget 2025 Customs Strategy | बजट 2025 की सीमा शुल्क रणनीति

-  Customs tariff rationalisation to:
  - Curb duty inversion (जहां इनपुट पर अधिक शुल्क, उत्पाद पर कम)
  - Promote value addition in India
  - Facilitate Make in India
- “This is a very big step forward for boosting domestic manufacturing”  
– Nirmala Sitharaman  
“यह आत्मनिर्भर भारत की दिशा में बड़ा कदम है” – निर्मला सीतारमण

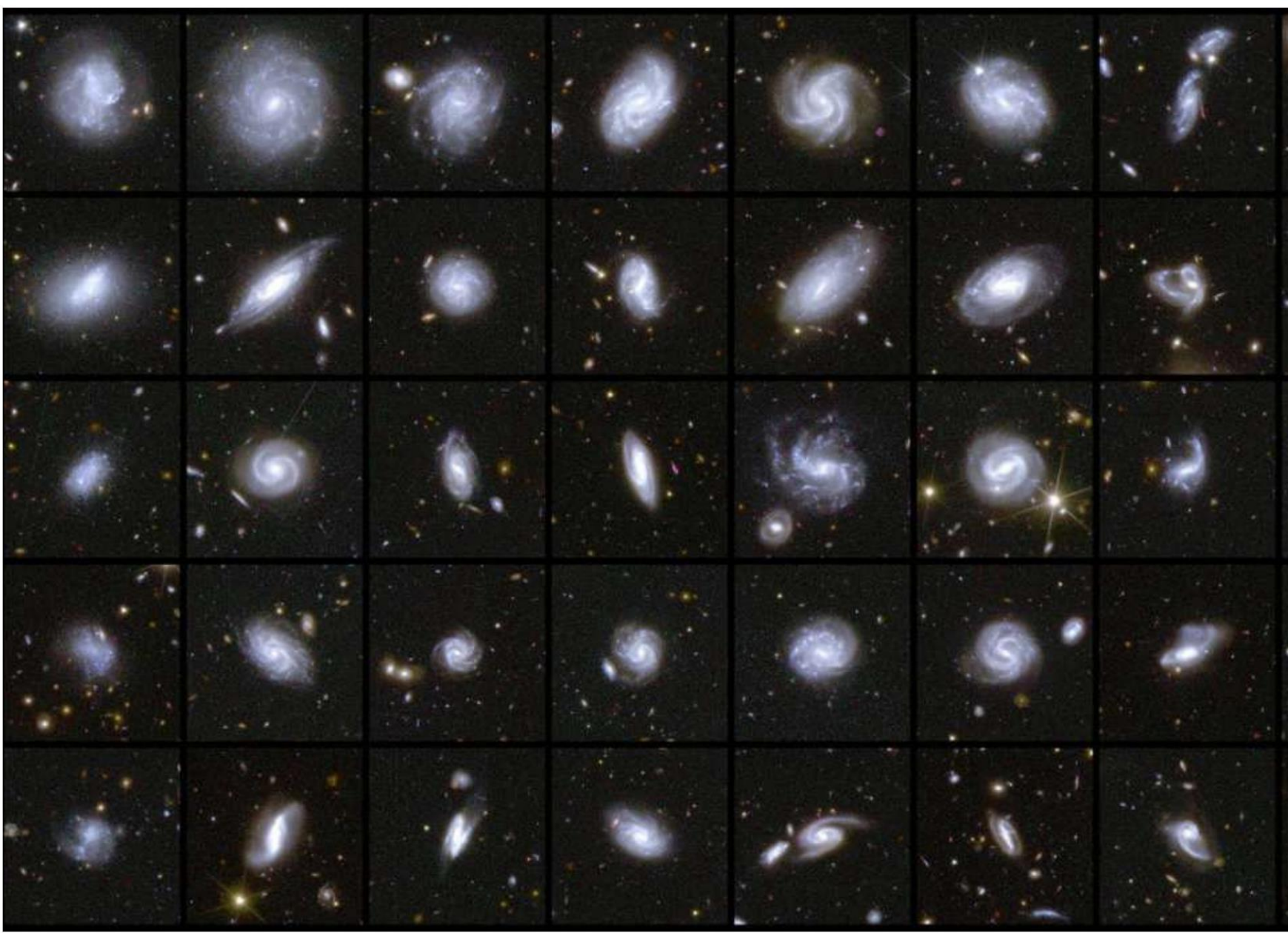
## Additional Amendments | अन्य संशोधन

-  Abolished: 6% **Digital Advertising Tax**
  - ऑनलाइन विज्ञापनों पर 6% कर समाप्त
-  New Income Tax Bill to replace the **1961 Act** will be introduced in **Monsoon Session**
  - नया आयकर विधेयक मानसून सत्र में पेश किया जाएगा।
-  Income Tax officers will be allowed to access **digital records** for assessment
  - डिजिटल रिकॉर्ड्स की जांच के लिए अधिकारियों को अधिकृत किया जाएगा।

## Foreign Assets Declaration Drive | विदेशी संपत्ति घोषणा अभियान

- 📱 'Nudge Campaign' by Income Tax Department
  - 19,501 टैक्सपेयर्स को ईमेल/एसएमएस भेजे गए
  - Foreign income/assets को स्वेच्छा से घोषित करने को कहा गया
- 📊 Results:
  - ₹29,208 crore in foreign asset value declared
  - ₹1,089 crore in foreign income declared by 30,161 taxpayers





This is a collage of galaxies captured by the Euclid observatory and released on March 19. The first column shows galaxies that have a more diffuse appearance. The middle columns showcase face-on spiral galaxies with different shapes and densities of stars. The last columns include interacting galaxies or galaxies with an unusual spiral arm or tidal tail. EUCLID CONSORTIUM/ESA, NASA

# Text & Comment

THE HINDU

## NEWS IN NUMBERS

**New cooperatives registered in the past two years**

**12,957** Home and Cooperation Minister Amit Shah said in Parliament that 12,957 multi-purpose primary agricultural credit societies and dairy and fishery cooperative societies have been established across the country in the past two years. [PH](#)

**Number of tenements surveyed under the Dharavi Project**

**63** In thousand, in a significant milestone for the Dharavi Redevelopment Project, the ongoing survey has surpassed the scope of the last survey done in 2007-08 to map one of Asia's biggest slum's residential and commercial structures. This survey has gone beyond the earlier benchmark. [PH](#)

**Number of taxpayers who have declared foreign assets**

**30** In thousand, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said that more than 30,000 taxpayers have revised their ITR returns or filed belated returns and declared additional foreign assets and income of about ₹30,000 crore. Out of 35,023 taxpayers, a total of 11,162 taxpayers revised their returns. [PH](#)

**Number of MLAs suspended for 7 days by Odisha Assembly**

**12** Odisha Assembly Speaker Nirmala Sitharaman suspended 12 Congress MLAs for seven days for "undisciplined" in the House. The action against the Congress legislators came after the House adopted a motion moved by government Chief Whip Saroj Pradhan. [PH](#)

**Ragging-related complaints in medical colleges in U.P. in 2024**

**33** The highest number of ragging-related complaints in medical colleges in 2024 was reported in Uttar Pradesh with 33, followed by Bihar with 17, Rajasthan with 15, and Madhya Pradesh with 12. Minister of State for Health Anupriya Patel said. [PH](#)

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## How is an in-house inquiry conducted?

What happens if a judge is accused of judicial misconduct? Why is Justice Yashwant Varma under scrutiny? What has the Chief Justice of the Delhi High Court recommended? Is criminal punishment initiated when a judge is found guilty? Should there be a more transparent process?

### EXPLAINER

Rangarajan R.

**The story so far:** The Chief Justice of India (CJI) has constituted an in-house committee to conduct an inquiry into allegations of misconduct against Justice Yashwant Varma. This follows recovery of huge piles of cash at his residence during a fire-control operation.

**What is the current issue?** A fire broke out at the residence of Justice Yashwant Varma of the Delhi High Court on March 14. The fire-control personnel discovered huge piles of cash that was burnt in the fire inside the storeroom. The Chief Justice of Delhi High Court conducted the preliminary inquiry and reported to the CJI that his prima facie opinion is for a deeper probe into the entire matter. As per the direction of the CJI, responses were sought from Justice Yashwant Varma on the preliminary inquiry findings. Justice Varma responded that no cash was ever placed by him or his family members in the storeroom, and that they were never shown the sacks of burnt currency notes during the fire-control operation. A three-member committee has been constituted as per the in-house procedure of the Supreme Court for conducting an inquiry into the allegations. Meanwhile, judicial work has been withdrawn from Justice Varma and he has been transferred to his parent Allahabad High Court by the collegium.

**What is an in-house procedure?** In order to probe into complaints of alleged misbehaviour against judges of the higher judiciary, the Supreme Court has developed an in-house procedure of inquiry. The resolution for in-house procedures for action against judges was adopted in 1999 and made public in 2014. When a complaint is received against a judge of a High Court, the CJI will decide



An overhead: Burnt currency notes near Justice Yashwant Varma's house, in New Delhi on March 23. [PH](#)

whether the issue is frivolous or warrants an inquiry. If an inquiry is deemed necessary, the judge's initial response along with comments of the Chief Justice of the concerned High Court are taken on record. The CJI can then form a three-member committee consisting of two Chief Justices of other High Courts and one High Court Judge. The committee after the inquiry can provide a recommendation that the misconduct is serious enough to warrant removal or not serious enough. If the recommendation is not for removal, the judge would be apprised accordingly. However, if the recommendation is for the judge's removal, he/she will be asked to resign, in the event of the judge unwilling to resign,

the President and the Prime Minister will be informed of the findings for Parliament to initiate action for removal as per provisions of the Constitution. Any complaint against the Chief Justice of a High Court, would be inquired by a committee consisting of a Supreme Court Judge and two Chief Justices of other High Courts. In case of a complaint against a Supreme Court judge, the committee would consist of three Supreme Court Judges. In the instant case, based on the preliminary opinion of the Chief Justice of Delhi High Court, the CJI has constituted a committee consisting of the Chief Justice of Punjab and Haryana Court, the Chief Justice of Himachal Pradesh High Court, and a judge of the Karnataka High Court

to inquire into the allegations.

### What reforms are required?

The details of in-house inquiries are kept confidential by the Supreme Court. This practice may be changed to disclose the key findings of the inquiry to instil transparency and confidence in the whole process. Furthermore, in the past, no judge has suffered criminal punishment even after having been found guilty of misbehaviour by the inquiry committee. This needs to be addressed and the guilty should be brought to book. In the U.K., there is an autonomous statutory office called the Judicial Conduct Investigations Office that investigates allegations of judicial misconduct. A similar autonomous and permanent body may be established in India under the CJI. One of the root causes for the problem probably lies in the opaqueness of the collegium process that is followed for the appointment of judges. There needs to be a renewed debate on operationalising the National Judicial Appointments Commission (NJAC), that was struck down by the Supreme Court in 2015 as unconstitutional for violating the basic structure of the independence of judiciary. The collegium process has no doubt entered independence of the judiciary in appointments. However, it does suffer from lack of accountability and transparency. A broad-based NJAC, headed by the CJI with representatives from various stakeholders including members of the legislature, lawyer associations and academia may be set up on the lines of the Judicial Service Commission in South Africa. The CJI and other senior judges may be provided with a veto to have the final say in the appointment process. Such a set up would make the selection process more transparent and inclusive without compromising the independence of the judiciary. Rangarajan R is a former IAS officer and author of 'Polity Simplified'. He currently trains civil service aspirants at Officers IAS Academy. Views expressed are personal.

### THE GIST

The Chief Justice of India (CJI) has constituted an in-house committee to conduct an inquiry into allegations of misconduct against Justice Yashwant Varma.

In order to probe into complaints of alleged misbehaviour against judges of the higher judiciary, the Supreme Court has developed an in-house procedure of inquiry. There needs to be a renewed debate on operationalising the National Judicial Appointments Commission (NJAC), that was struck down by the Supreme Court in 2015 as unconstitutional for violating the basic structure of the independence of judiciary.

## What is India's approach to citizens on death row abroad?

What happens when an Indian national gets convicted abroad? Has the Indian government been able to successfully intervene and commute the death sentences of some nationals?

Sambavi Parthasarathy

**The story so far:** In March 3, the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) informed that the execution of Shahbaz Khan, an Indian national sentenced to death in UAE for the alleged murder of an infant, was already carried out. The Ministry's confirmation came as a result of a petition filed by her father Shabbir Khan. In less than a week, the Ministry confirmed that two more Indian nationals, convicted in separate cases, were also executed in the UAE.

**How many are on death row abroad?** As per the data disclosed by the MEA in Rajya Sabha on March 20, a total of 49 Indians are currently on death row. The number of Indians awarded death sentences by foreign courts is the highest

in the UAE with 25 Indian nationals awaiting their sentences, followed by 11 in Saudi Arabia.

**What has been India's response?** The MEA, in its reply to the Rajya Sabha, mentioned that Indian Missions abroad provide all possible assistance to Indian citizens sentenced by foreign courts. Explaining the MEA's approach to such cases, Talwar Ahmad, India's former Ambassador to Oman, the UAE, and Saudi Arabia, said, "There are three processes. First is the arrest and the indictment by the police authorities. Second is the prolonged judicial process. There is a third element - pardon by the ruler or the head of the state. When you say someone is on death row, it means the first and second processes have been completed and the judge has pronounced that sentence. After that, the only thing

that is available to the embassy or the person concerned is to appeal to the ruler. The appeal for pardon is made by a family member of the accused and if the family is located in India, they are guided to submit the petition. The Indian embassy then forwards the petition to the foreign office requesting that it be brought to the ruler's attention.

In many Gulf countries, sentences can also be commuted in exchange for blood money. Blood money refers to the compensation paid to the victim's family as an alternative for retribution. But, it has to be accepted by both the state and the aggrieved family. In some cases, the state may refuse to commute the sentence in exchange for blood money based on the nature of the crime.

**Can the embassy do more?** Death sentences are given in very exceptional cases such as murder, rape

and treason. In countries which have authoritarian systems with nearly non-transparent judicial processes such as Saudi Arabia, the Indian embassy is not informed about the arrest or judicial processes or the pronouncement of the death sentence. The Embassy receives a formal note about the details of the Indian national only after the execution. The embassy's role is further limited when the accused confesses to the crime circumstances of which often remain unknown. On the other hand, in countries with relatively open judicial systems, the embassy can nominate a lawyer. Whenever required, it also uses welfare funds to provide legal services to those who need it.

### Has India intervened successfully in the past?

The government has successfully intervened in several cases. In February last year, eight Indian navy veterans who were sentenced to death by the Qatari government were released following the government's diplomatic efforts and appeals at a higher court. Gurdip Singh, an Indian national arrested on charges of drug trafficking in Indonesia, was sentenced to death in 2005 by the Tangerang court. Singh's appeal was turned down by the High Court of Banten and later the Supreme Court. However, he was spared due to the Indian government's intervention.

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## . The Background | पृष्ठभूमि

- On **March 3**, MEA (Ministry of External Affairs) confirmed the execution of **Shahzadi Khan** in the **UAE** for the alleged murder of an infant.
- Within a week, MEA confirmed the **execution of 2 more Indians** in separate cases in UAE.
- **मार्च 3** को विदेश मंत्रालय ने **यूएई** में शहजादी खान की फांसी की पुष्टि की। एक हफ्ते में दो और भारतीयों को यूएई में फांसी दी गई।

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## How Many Indians on Death Row Abroad?

विदेशों में मौत की सज़ा का सामना कर रहे भारतीयों की संख्या

- As of **March 20, 2024, 49 Indians** are on death row globally.
  - **UAE:** 25 Indians
  - **Saudi Arabia:** 11 Indians
- 20 देशों में फैले हैं ये मामले।
- 2024 के आंकड़ों के अनुसार, **49 भारतीय** विदेशों में मौत की सज़ा का सामना कर रहे हैं।

## What is India's Response? | भारत की प्रतिक्रिया

- Indian missions provide **legal assistance, appoint lawyers, help appeal for pardon** from rulers.
- Appeals can also be made by **family members** of the accused.
- भारतीय मिशन कानूनी सहायता, वकीलों की नियुक्ति और क्षमा याचना में मदद करते हैं।

## 3-Step Judicial Process | न्यायिक प्रक्रिया के 3 चरण:

1. Arrest & Charge by Police
  2. Prolonged Judicial Process
  3. Pardon by Ruler or Head of State
- “Death row” implies first 2 steps are complete.

## Blood Money in Gulf Countries | खाड़ी देशों में 'ब्लड मनी' प्रणाली

- Sentences can be commuted by paying **blood money** (compensation to victim's family).
- Sometimes state also has to accept it, depending on **nature of the crime**.
- **ब्लड मनी** के माध्यम से पीड़ित परिवार को मुआवजा देकर फांसी की सज़ा को बदला जा सकता है।

## Constraints on Indian Embassies | दूतावासों की सीमाएं

- In **authoritarian regimes** (e.g., Saudi Arabia), embassies often:
  - Are **not informed** about arrests or death sentence until after execution.
  - Can only intervene if **accused confesses** or family requests.
- भारत के मिशनों को कई बार मुकदमा या सजा की जानकारी **बाद में मिलती है**, जिससे हस्तक्षेप सीमित हो जाता है।



## Has India Intervened Successfully? | क्या भारत ने कभी सज़ा टलवाई है?

✓ Yes, in past instances:

- **Feb 2023:** 8 Indian navy veterans sentenced to death in **Qatar** were released after intervention.
- **Gurdip Singh** (Indonesia, 2005) – Drug trafficking case; Supreme Court spared death due to Indian efforts.
- भारत सरकार ने कई बार राजनयिक प्रयासों से सज़ा टलवाने में सफलता पाई है।

# How Russian energy trade might change if sanctions ease



**Huge dent:** Russia used to export one million metric tonnes of fuel oil a month to U.S. before war. REUTERS

**Reuters**  
MOSCOW

As talks aimed at ending the war in Ukraine continue, a potential relief in sanctions imposed on Russia, including its vast energy sector, is one of the issues on the agenda. Oil and gas exports are a key revenue source for Moscow and the sector has been subject to Western sanctions since 2014, when Russia annexed the Crimea peninsula from Ukraine. Those got tightened significantly after Russia invaded Ukraine in 2022, with Washington announcing its harshest round of sanctions on January 10. The following are some of the implications of their potential reversal.

**Trade with U.S., E.U.** Russia was one of the largest suppliers of fuel oil to the United States, exporting up to 1 million metric tonne (2,40,000 barrels per day) of fuel oil per month before the war. The United States also imported some crude oil, mostly from Russia's Far East. Those flows could resume if sanctions are eased. No change in E.U. imports of Russian oil and gas is expected until Brussels next reviews the current sanctions package. Yet, Europe remains wary of Russia and has a broad target to halt all Russian oil and gas imports by 2027, making the return to pre-war energy supplies unlikely even if sanctions are eased. The damage to infrastructure, such as the Nord Stream gas pipelines linking Russia with Germany, three of which were blown up in 2022, would also limit future flows.

**Impact on payments** The easing of U.S. financial sanctions would have a bigger impact on Russian energy exports and revenues. By blocking major Russian banks from the SWIFT global payments system and other financial services, the U.S. and EU sanctions brought higher fees and months of payment delays for Russian exporters forced to use alternative payment schemes. An easing of U.S. sanctions could make it easier for Russian companies to make transactions in dollars.

**Price cap** The U.S., the E.U. and allies imposed a price cap of \$60 per barrel on Russian oil sales. Sanctions prohibit Western insurers and shippers from facilitating trade above that level. If the U.S. stops enforcing the cap, Russian exporters may find more maritime service providers willing to work with them.

**Shipping sanctions** The U.S. Treasury imposed sanctions on hundreds of vessels involved in Russian oil and fuel shipments, dozens of shipping operators and a number of Russian oil tankers. If the sanctions are lifted, Moscow would pay less for importing its oil thus increasing its sales. There are, however, no sanctions on shipments of Russian pipeline gas, but most countries stopped buying after Russia invaded Ukraine.

# Trump spurs Europe into action, but any 'Europhoria' may be premature

Mr. Trump's threats on tariffs and questioning of America's future security role in Europe have drawn an energetic response from Europe, yet the surge in optimism ignores Europe's unresolved problems: high energy costs, a fragmented internal market, and looming tariffs from the United States

**NEWS ANALYSIS**

**Reuters**  
FRANKFURT

U.S. President Donald Trump's erratic policymaking has given Europe an unexpected spur to action, but any sense of "Europhoria" about the region's chances of turning this moment into a longer-lasting revival is likely premature.

Mr. Trump's threats on tariffs and questioning of America's future security role in Europe have drawn an energetic response, perhaps best symbolised by Germany's plans to spend hundreds of billions of euros on defence and infrastructure.

Some European companies are becoming more optimistic about sales, while growth projections for the euro zone economy have been upgraded. The euro has risen and investors are ditching U.S. stocks for their longneglected counterparts.

Yet while some analysts now include the phrase "Make Europe Great Again"—a play on Mr. Trump's MAGA slogan—the surge in optimism ignores Europe's unresolved problems: high energy costs, a fragmented internal market, and looming tariffs from its biggest customer, the United States.



**Sharp divide:** Europe shares have risen 12% since Trump took office while U.S. fell 6.7%. AP

"Is the Europhoria justified?" asked Holger Schmieding, an economist at German bank Berenberg. The more positive outlook for Europe makes sense. But as usual, the sudden swing may be a little overdone in some cases.

Euro zone shares have risen 12% since Mr. Trump's inauguration on January 20, while U.S. stocks have fallen by 6.7%.

U.S. consumers and investors have also turned much more pessimistic than their European counterparts. Economists polled by Reuters have upgraded their 2026 growth forecasts for the euro zone for the first time in nearly a year, to 1.3% from 1.2%.



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# U.S. debt reduction may be a drag, not a brag

**Mike Dolan**

LONDON

The rude health of U.S. household and corporate balance sheets is partially responsible for the exceptional resilience of the U.S. economy in recent years—but U.S. de-leveraging may start to become a drag that could amplify recession risk. This month's release of the Federal Reserve's quarterly statistics on U.S. financial accounts highlighted the rising asset wealth and modest debt load of households and businesses at the end of 2024.

But when you strip away the impact of the ongoing expansion of the federal government's mounting debt pile, a potentially pernicious trend emerges—or so says Morgan Stanley's Matthew Horn-



**Alarm bells:** The U.S. private sector is seeing its steepest de-leveraging since the banking crash of 2008. REUTERS

back and the firm's U.S. fixed-income team. U.S. private sector debt load shrank by 2.4% of gross domestic product in the final three months of last year—the steepest de-leveraging of the private sector since the banking crash of 2008.

The drivers of the debt

reduction are the Fed's tightening of monetary policy and the Fed's balance sheet reduction. The Fed's balance sheet reduction is a drag on the economy, but the Fed's tightening of monetary policy is a drag on the economy.

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# What happens when Trump discovers UK's WWII debts?

**Mitu Gulati and Mike Weidemaier**

LONDON

Donald Trump, a president who has proven himself to be highly transactional and keen on reducing debt, may find a potentially trillion-dollar foreign IOU too enticing to overlook, even if it's over 100 years old.

Britain borrowed \$4 billion from the U.S. during World War One. Later, London resisted repayment, asking for the debt to be forgiven because it was a virtuous debt that had been incurred to fight an enemy common to both sides: Germany, and Britain argued, it had paid in blood—lots of it.

The power of compound interest, the liability would now be enormous. If one calculates interest at even the original concessional rate of 3%, the amount owed in today's terms would be in the trillions.

Could Mr. Trump resurrect this claim to use it as leverage in any future negotiations with Britain about trade or other matters? The answer is maybe.

First, the U.S. takes a transactional view of its relations with allies. For example, if an ally wants the U.S. security blanket, it has to offer up something in return, such as rare



**Virtuous debt:** UK's debt was forgiven by the U.S. because it was incurred to fight a common enemy. AP

earth metals. Second, the Trump administration wants to reduce the U.S. debt, which has risen to more than 120% of GDP—though not necessarily in a systematic way, such as through entitlement reform, but through measures that has to offer up something in return to cut taxes while

limiting money creation. One potential debt-reduction strategy would be to make holders of short-term U.S. Treasury securities a seemingly outlandish

strategy, but the more interesting question is could they? It is not inconceivable. There would, of course, be some doubt about the legitimacy of any U.S. claim to repayment. A statute of limitations? Perhaps. But it is not clear that the claim holders have an expiration date.

But even if the debt is still due, it is not enforceable in the usual sense. These are not ordinary debts governed by, say, the law of New York. While the original debt agreements are not publicly available, it is fair to assume that they will be silent about governing law and are unlikely to have provisions submitting to the jurisdiction of courts.

The debt would thus likely be governed by inter-

national law, and there doesn't appear to be any available forum for national debt enforcement.

Perhaps the Trump administration could threaten to offset these U.S. claims against amounts it owes on U.S. Treasuries held by Britain? But in addition to the many complications this would raise, not least potential mayhem in the U.S. Treasury market—it is unclear whether the U.S. could determine which Treasury Britain holds.

All in all, it would be surprising if Mr. Trump pursued this claim.

Mark Weidemaier and Mitu Gulati are law professors at University of North Carolina and University of Virginia, respectively.

# What happens when Trump discovers U.K.'s WWI debts?

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The U.S. largely went along, not insisting on repayment. However, the debt has never been officially cancelled. And given

the power of compound interest, the liability would now be enormous. If one calculates interest at even the original concessionary rate of 3%, the amount owed in today's terms would be in the trillions.

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While no one can predict exactly what will happen during round two of the Trump presidency, two things seem clear even in these early days.

First, the U.S. takes a transactional view of its relationships with allies. For example, if an ally wants the U.S. security blanket, it has to offer up something in return, such as rare



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Second, the Trump administration wants to reduce the U.S. debt—which has risen to more than 120% of GDP—though not

necessarily in a systematic way, such as through entitlement reform, but through measures that would allow the administration to cut taxes while

limiting money creation.

One potential debt-reduction strategy would be to make holders of short-term U.S. Treasuries exchange them for long-dura-

tion or even perpetual bonds. The key word in that sentence is “make.” No one wants to swap short-term Treasuries for Perpetual Uncle Sams. The U.S. would need a carrot—or a stick—to make this happen. Britain happens to be one of the largest holders of U.S. Treasuries, so convincing it to swap a decent chunk of this debt could be a major coup for the U.S. administration.

So might Mr. Trump use the threat of enforcing its WWI claims to pressure Britain to exchange its Treasury holdings for Perpetual Uncle Sams?

## But could they?

It's impossible to know whether the Trump administration would pursue such a seemingly outlan-

dish strategy, but the more interesting question is could they?

It is not inconceivable. There would, of course, be some doubt about the legality of any U.S. claim to repayment. A statute of limitations? Perhaps. But it is not clear that the claims have an expiration date.

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## जानिए क्यों हुआ ?? WORLD WAR 1 | By Bhunesh Sir

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## Historical Context | ऐतिहासिक संदर्भ

- During **World War I**, the **U.K. borrowed \$4 billion** from the U.S. to fight a **common enemy**.  
प्रथम विश्व युद्ध के दौरान ब्रिटेन ने अमेरिका से \$4 बिलियन का कर्ज लिया था।
- Britain later asked for **debt forgiveness**, calling it a “**virtuous debt**”, incurred for shared democratic causes.  
ब्रिटेन ने इस कर्ज को “नैतिक ऋण” कहकर माफ करने की अपील की।

## Legal & Economic Questions | कानूनी और आर्थिक पहलू

Though the U.S. never demanded repayment, the **debt was never formally cancelled**.  
अमेरिका ने भुगतान नहीं मांगा, लेकिन यह ऋण आधिकारिक रूप से रद्द भी नहीं हुआ।

With **compound interest** at even 3%, the total amount today would be **trillions of dollars**.  
यदि ब्याज जोड़ा जाए, तो यह राशि आज के दौर में **ट्रिलियन डॉलर** हो सकती है।

## What Might Trump Do? | ट्रम्प क्या कर सकते हैं?

- Trump is **transactional** and focused on **debt reduction**. He may **revive the WWI debt** as leverage.  
ट्रम्प की कार्यशैली लेन-देन आधारित है। वे इस ऋण को फिर से उठाकर ब्रिटेन पर दबाव बना सकते हैं।
- He may **pressure the U.K. to swap its U.S. Treasury holdings** for other forms like **perpetual bonds**.  
ट्रम्प ब्रिटेन से अपने अमेरिकी ट्रेजरी बॉन्ड्स को "परपेचुअल बॉन्ड्स" में बदलवाने की कोशिश कर सकते हैं।

## Legal Barriers | कानूनी सीमाएं

- There's no **clear forum or treaty** to enforce such century-old debt.  
ऐसा कोई अंतरराष्ट्रीय मंच नहीं है जो 100 साल पुराने कर्ज को लागू कर सके।
- **U.S. courts may lack jurisdiction** and enforcement mechanisms for this debt.  
अमेरिका की अदालतों के पास इस ऋण को लागू करने का कोई स्पष्ट अधिकार नहीं हो सकता।





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## Political Strategy | राजनीतिक रणनीति

- Trump could **use the claim** as a **bargaining tool** in trade or defense talks.  
ट्रम्प इस कर्ज का इस्तेमाल **मोलभाव के हथियार** के रूप में कर सकते हैं।
- U.K. is a **major holder** of U.S. Treasuries, so using this debt could be a **pressure tactic**.  
ब्रिटेन अमेरिका के ट्रेज़री बॉन्ड्स का बड़ा धारक है, इसलिए यह रणनीति दबाव बना सकती है।

## Will It Actually Happen? | क्या यह वास्तव में होगा?

- The article concludes that such a step is **unlikely but not impossible**.  
लेख कहता है कि यह असंभव तो नहीं, लेकिन अप्रत्याशित अवश्य होगा।

# Why Kerala has finally opened the door for private universities in the state

**ABHINAYA HARIGOVIND**

NEW DELHI, MARCH 25

THE KERALA Legislative Assembly on Tuesday passed a Bill allowing the entry to private universities in the state, marking a reversal of longstanding policy that made Kerala the only state without any private universities.

The Kerala State Private Universities (Establishment and Regulation) Bill, 2025 was presented earlier this month and referred to a subject committee for review.

## Key provisions of Bill

**GOVERNMENT NOMINEES:** The university's governing council, which will control its functioning and make its statutes, will have three government representatives

among its 12 members. Of the nine members comprising the executive council for controlling the funds and property, one will be a government nominee. The academic council, which will advise the university on academic matters, will have three government nominees. The nominees will attend all meetings where decisions on government policies or instructions are made.

**RESERVED SEATS:** The Bill allows for the establishment of 'multi-campus' universities. R Bindu, the Minister for Higher Education, said 40% of the seats in each course are to be reserved for permanent residents of Kerala. This will include SC/ ST/ OBC reservations.

**STUDENTS' COUNCIL:** A council headed by the Pro Vice Chancellor will have 10 elected

student members, including one student from the SC/ ST communities and two women students.

**REGULATORY BODY:** This body will be established by the government "to promote teaching, research, development, training".

## Where others stand

There are 471 private universities countrywide, according to the University Grants Commission's 2024 data. Gujarat has the largest number (65), followed by 53 each in Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh. Some states have overarching legislation on private universities, while others have separate acts for each university.

The extent of government representation in university bodies and the proportion of

domicile reservations vary across states. For instance, Tamil Nadu's Private Universities Act, 2019, says 35% of seats in each course will be reserved for students from the state. Haryana reserves a minimum of 25% seats, including 10% for SC students.

## Behind Kerala's decision

In the past, the CPI(M) and its student wing, the Students' Federation of India, have vehemently opposed the involvement of the private sector in education. They have argued that absence of government control would lead to "commercialisation".

The Left protested private polytechnics in the 1980s and the establishment of a medical college in the cooperative sector in the 1990s. It opposed the Congress-led United

Democratic Front (UDF) government's decisions on allowing self-financing engineering and medical colleges in the early 2000s, and granting autonomy to colleges in 2014.

According to Higher Education Minister Bindu, the situation has now changed. "Many years ago, the attempt was to destroy our public universities and privatise indiscriminately. As part of that, unaided institutions began to mushroom... This is not the situation today. Today, we are prioritising and strengthening the public sector, while introducing the possibility of private investment," she said.

During the 2021 state elections, the Left had promised to make Kerala a higher education hub. Shortly after the Left Democratic Front government was re-elected, it established the Commission for Reforms in Higher Education. In its 2022 re-

port, the commission recommended formulating a private universities Bill.

Bindu said the report spoke of private higher education institutes outnumbering the government ones in Kerala, and raised quality concerns. "Today, students are mortgaging family land to be able to go abroad, and the availability of education loans has gone up. Our children are also going to private colleges in Bangalore... we can at least get them to stay back here," she said.

UDF leader VD Satheesan said that they did not oppose private universities in the state, but the Bill does not address key issues facing higher education in Kerala. "These are the issues of brain drain and a drastic fall in the number of students in government, aided and unaided colleges," he said, referring to seats remaining vacant in many colleges in the state.

**EXPLAINED  
EDUCATION**

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## Background | पृष्ठभूमि

- Kerala was the **only state without private universities**, up until now.  
केरल अब तक **एकमात्र राज्य** था जहां **निजी विश्वविद्यालय नहीं थे**।
- The **Kerala State Private Universities (Establishment and Regulation) Bill, 2025** was passed in the Legislative Assembly.  
**केरल राज्य निजी विश्वविद्यालय (स्थापना और विनियमन) विधेयक, 2025** विधानसभा में पारित हुआ।

## Key Provisions of the Bill | विधेयक के मुख्य प्रावधान

### ✓ Government Involvement | सरकारी सहभागिता

- The governing council will have **three government nominees**.  
विश्वविद्यालय की गवर्निंग काउंसिल में 3 सरकारी प्रतिनिधि होंगे।

### ✓ Reserved Seats | आरक्षित सीटें

- **35% of seats** in each course reserved for **permanent residents of Kerala** (SC/ST/OBC included).  
35% सीटें केरल के स्थायी निवासियों के लिए आरक्षित होंगी (SC/ST/OBC सहित)।

## ✔ Students' Council | छात्र परिषद

- A students' council will be headed by the **Pro Vice-Chancellor**.  
प्रो वाइस चांसलर की अध्यक्षता में छात्र परिषद बनेगी।

## ✔ Regulatory Body | नियामक संस्था

- A body to be created by government to **promote teaching, research, development, and training**.  
सरकार द्वारा एक नियामक निकाय बनाया जाएगा जो शिक्षण, शोध, विकास और प्रशिक्षण को बढ़ावा देगा।

## Political & Historical Background | ऐतिहासिक और राजनीतिक संदर्भ

The **CPI(M) and Students' Federation of India** had long opposed private universities, calling them a route to "commercialisation".

**CPI(M) और छात्र संगठनों** ने निजी विश्वविद्यालयों का **वाणिज्यीकरण** के नाम पर विरोध किया था।

In past decades, the Left opposed private polytechnics and **aided self-financing colleges**.

**वाम दलों** ने **सेल्फ फाइनेंसिंग कॉलेजों और निजी पॉलिटेक्निक संस्थानों** का भी विरोध किया था।

However, post-2021 elections, the government shifted focus towards **making Kerala a higher education hub**.

2021 के बाद सरकार का ध्यान **केरल को उच्च शिक्षा हब बनाने** पर गया।

## Why the Policy Changed | नीति में बदलाव क्यों?

- According to **Education Minister R. Bindu**, there are **more private colleges than government ones**, but **quality is declining**.  
शिक्षा मंत्री आर. बिंदु ने बताया कि निजी संस्थानों की संख्या सरकारी कॉलेजों से ज्यादा है, लेकिन गुणवत्ता गिर रही है।
- Students are going to **other states like Bangalore**; this move may help **retain students** in Kerala.  
छात्र बंगलुरु जैसे राज्यों में पढ़ने जा रहे हैं, सरकार उन्हें राज्य में रोकना चाहती है।



## Comparative Data | तुलनात्मक डेटा

- **471 private universities** in India as of 2024.  
2024 तक **471 निजी विश्वविद्यालय** भारत में हैं।
- **Gujarat (65)**, Rajasthan & Madhya Pradesh (53 each) have highest numbers.  
सबसे अधिक गुजरात (65), फिर राजस्थान और मध्य प्रदेश (53-53)।
- Tamil Nadu reserves **35% seats** for state students; Haryana reserves **25%**, including **10% for SCs**.  
तमिलनाडु में **35%**, हरियाणा में **25%** आरक्षण राज्य निवासियों के लिए है।

## Opposition Concerns | विपक्ष की चिंता

Congress (UDF) supports private universities in principle but raised concerns:  
कांग्रेस (UDF) ने समर्थन तो किया लेकिन कुछ मुद्दों को उठाया:

- ◆ Brain drain (मेधावी छात्रों का पलायन)
- ◆ Decline in govt. college enrolment (सरकारी कॉलेजों में प्रवेश घटना)
- ◆ Vacant seats in aided colleges (सहायता प्राप्त कॉलेजों में खाली सीटें)

# ‘Samsung gets \$601-mn tax demand for telecom imports’

REUTERS

NEW DELHI, MARCH 25

INDIA HAS ordered Samsung and its executives in the country to pay \$601 million in back taxes and penalties for dodging tariffs on import of key telecoms equipment, a government order showed, for one of the biggest such demands in recent years.

The demand represents a substantial chunk of last year’s net profit of \$955 million for Samsung in India, where it is one of the largest players in the consumer electronics and smartphones market. It can be challenged in a tax tribunal or the courts.

The company, which also imports telecoms equipment through its network division, received a warning in 2023 for misclassifying imports to evade tariffs of 10 per cent or 20 per cent on a critical transmission component used in mobile towers. It imported and sold these items to Reliance Jio. Samsung pushed the tax authority to drop the scrutiny, saying the component did not attract tariffs and officials had known its classification practice for years.

But Customs authorities disagreed in a confidential January 8 order that is not public but was

## ASSESSING LEGAL OPTIONS, SAYS COMPANY



File

**THE COMPANY** received a warning in 2023 for misclassifying imports to evade tariffs of 10% or 20% on a critical transmission component. “We are assessing legal options to ensure our rights are fully protected,” the company said.

reviewed by *Reuters*. Samsung “violated” Indian laws and “knowingly and intentionally presented false documents before the Customs authority for clearance”, Sonal Bajaj, a commissioner of Customs, said in the order.

Investigators found that Samsung “transgressed all business ethics and industry practices or standards in order to achieve their sole motive of maximising their profit by defrauding the government exchequer,” Bajaj added.

Samsung was ordered to pay Rs 44.6 billion (\$520 million), consisting of unpaid taxes and a penalty of 100 per cent.

Seven India executives face fines of \$81 million, among them the network division’s vice president, Sung Beam Hong, Chief Financial Officer Dong Won Chu

and Sheetal Jain, a general manager for finance, as well as Nikhil Aggarwal, Samsung’s general manager for indirect taxes, the order showed. “The issue involves the interpretation of classification of goods by customs,” Samsung said in a statement, adding that it complied with Indian laws. “We are assessing legal options to ensure our rights are fully protected.”

The Customs authority and the Finance Ministry did not respond to *Reuters’* queries. Reliance also did not respond. The incident comes as India toughens oversight of foreign companies and their imports. Volkswagen and New Delhi are locked in a legal battle in which the automaker is challenging a record demand of \$1.4 billion in import back taxes on grounds of misclassifying car parts.

## What Happened? | क्या हुआ?

- The Indian government has **ordered Samsung** to pay **\$601 million** (~₹5000+ crore) for **dodging tariffs** on telecom imports.  
भारत सरकार ने **सैमसंग** को **₹5000+ करोड़ टैक्स** और जुर्माने के तौर पर चुकाने का आदेश दिया।
- It includes **back taxes and a 100% penalty**, making it one of the **largest tax demands** in recent years.  
इसमें बकाया टैक्स और **100% जुर्माना** शामिल है, यह हाल के वर्षों की **सबसे बड़ी टैक्स मांगों** में से एक है।

## Why the Tax Demand? | टैक्स की मांग क्यों?

- Samsung was accused of **misclassifying telecom imports** in order to avoid **10–20% tariffs** on **critical transmission components** used in mobile towers.  
आरोप है कि सैमसंग ने मोबाइल टावरों में इस्तेमाल होने वाले **महत्वपूर्ण उपकरणों** को गलत वर्गीकृत कर **10–20% कस्टम ड्यूटी** से बचने की कोशिश की।
- These components were allegedly **imported and sold** to telecom clients like **Reliance Jio**.  
यह उपकरण **इम्पोर्ट** कर **रिलायंस जिओ** जैसी कंपनियों को बेचे गए थे।

## Key Players Involved | प्रमुख लोग

- 7 executives, including Sung Beam Hong (VP) and Dong Won Chu (CFO), face fines of \$81 million collectively.  
7 अधिकारियों पर कुल \$81 मिलियन (₹675 करोड़) का जुर्माना लगा।
- The Customs department found **false documentation** and said Samsung "**knowingly and intentionally**" violated Indian customs laws.  
कस्टम विभाग ने कहा सैमसंग ने जानबूझकर फर्जी दस्तावेज पेश किए।

## Samsung's Response | सैमसंग की प्रतिक्रिया

- Samsung has denied wrongdoing and said:
- “We are assessing legal options to ensure our rights are protected.”  
सैमसंग ने कहा: "हम कानूनी विकल्पों पर विचार कर रहे हैं ताकि हमारे अधिकार सुरक्षित रहें।"
- It also stated that it had complied with **all Indian laws** and that the issue is about **interpretation of classifications**.  
कंपनी ने कहा कि वह भारतीय कानूनों का पालन कर रही है, और यह मामला वर्गीकरण की व्याख्या से जुड़ा है।

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## Legal and Economic Context | कानूनी और आर्थिक संदर्भ

- India is now **strictly monitoring foreign firms**, especially tech giants, to ensure compliance with **customs and tax rules**.  
भारत अब **विदेशी कंपनियों** की कड़ी निगरानी कर रहा है, खासकर **टेक कंपनियों** की, **टैक्स और कस्टम नियमों** के अनुपालन के लिए।
- A similar case involved **Volkswagen**, where India claimed **\$1.4 billion** in back taxes on **misclassified car parts**.  
इसी तरह **वोक्सवैगन** पर भी **\$1.4 बिलियन** टैक्स का दावा किया गया था।



## Broader Impact | व्यापक प्रभाव

- This case signals increasing **regulatory scrutiny** on **MNCs in India**, particularly in the **telecom and automotive sectors**.  
यह मामला दर्शाता है कि भारत में विदेशी कंपनियों की निगरानी बढ़ रही है, खासकर टेलीकॉम और ऑटोमोबाइल सेक्टर में।
- Could impact **Samsung's future telecom operations** in India, possibly raising costs for partners like Jio.  
इससे सैमसंग की भारत में भविष्य की टेलीकॉम गतिविधियों पर असर पड़ सकता है।

# Pay Hike for MPs

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The Centre notified a **24% increase in the salaries of MPs** with effect from April 1, 2023.



The salaries and allowances were last revised in April 2018.



**About Pay hike**



The increase in the salary has been notified in exercise of the powers granted under the **Salary, Allowances and Pension of Members of Parliament Act** on the basis of the **Cost Inflation Index** specified in the **Income Tax Act of 1961**.

- 
- A **Lok Sabha or a Rajya Sabha** member will get ₹1.24 lakh a month, up from the ₹1 lakh they receive at present.
  - The daily allowance has been increased from ₹2,000 to ₹2,500.
  - The pension for former MPs has been increased from ₹25,000 a month to ₹31,000.
  - During their term, MPs are provided with rent-free housing in New Delhi.
- 


<b>Position</b>	<b>Monthly Salary (₹)</b>	<b>Notes</b>
<b>President</b>	500,000	Revised in 2018 from ₹150,000 to ₹500,000.
<b>Vice President</b>	400,000	Receives salary as the ex-officio Chairman of the Rajya Sabha.
<b>Prime Minister</b>	160,000	Includes basic pay of ₹50,000, sumptuary allowance of ₹3,000, daily allowance of ₹2,000, and MP allowance of ₹45,000.
<b>Governor</b>	350,000	Revised in 2018 from ₹110,000 to ₹350,000.
<b>Chief Justice of India</b>	280,000	As per the latest available data.
<b>Supreme Court Judge</b>	250,000	As per the latest available data.
<b>Member of Parliament (MP)</b>	100,000	Basic salary; additional allowances include constituency allowance of ₹70,000 and office expenses of ₹60,000.

# PM VIKAS Scheme

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- **The Union Minister of Minority Affairs & Parliamentary Affairs**, reaffirmed that the **PM VIKAS Scheme focuses on upliftment of minority communities.**

## About

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- **The Pradhan Mantri Virasat Ka Samvardhan (PM VIKAS)** is a **Central Sector Scheme** by the Ministry of Minority Affairs, focusing on the **upliftment of six notified minority communities** (Muslims, Sikhs, Christians, Buddhists, Jain and Zorastrians (Parsis)).

- 
- **Merges five schemes:** ‘Seekho Aur Kamao’, ‘Nai Manzil’, ‘Nai Roshni’, ‘USTTAD’, and ‘Hamari Dharohar’.
  - **Key Focus Areas:**
    - **Skilling and Training:** Both non-traditional and traditional skills.
    - **Women Leadership and Entrepreneurship:** Empowering women through leadership and business opportunities.
    - **Education:** Provided through the National Institute of Open Schooling.
    - **Infrastructure Development:** Through Pradhan Mantri Jan Vikas Karyakram.
    - **Credit Linkages:** Connecting beneficiaries with loan programs from the National Minorities Development & Finance Corporation (NMDFC).





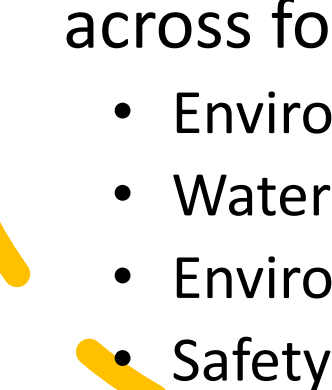
# Blue Flag Tag

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- **Rushikonda Beach** in Visakhapatnam wins back the **Blue Flag tag**.
    - India currently has 13 beaches with **Blue Flag certification**.

## About Blue Flag Tag

- The Blue Flag is an **international eco-label awarded to beaches, marinas, and sustainable** boating tourism operators.
- 

- 
- It is administered by the **Foundation for Environmental Education (FEE)**, headquartered in **Copenhagen, Denmark**.
  - Recognized globally as a symbol of cleanliness, safety, and environmental sustainability.
  - To earn the Blue Flag, a beach/marina must meet 33 strict criteria across four main categories:
    - Environmental Education and Information
    - Water Quality
    - Environmental Management
    - Safety and Services
- 



10 MCQ from the session

**What reform was made for promoting EV and mobile battery manufacturing?**

- **ईवी और मोबाइल बैटरी निर्माण को बढ़ावा देने के लिए कौन सा सुधार किया गया?**
  - A. GST increased on batteries
  - B. 100% import duty added
  - C. No import duty on 35 capital goods and 28 battery items
  - D. EV tax incentive withdrawn

**What is the main aim of customs tariff rationalisation in Budget 2025?**

• **बजट 2025 में सीमा शुल्क को युक्तिसंगत बनाने का मुख्य उद्देश्य क्या है?**

- A. Boost luxury imports
- B. Curb duty inversion and promote value addition
- C. Reduce tax collection
- D. Promote exports only

**How much foreign asset value was declared in the recent nudge campaign?**

- **हाल ही में चलाए गए 'नज कैंपेन' में कितनी विदेशी संपत्ति घोषित की गई?**
  - A. ₹5,000 crore
  - B. ₹12,000 crore
  - C. ₹29,208 crore
  - D. ₹50,000 crore

**As of March 20, 2024, how many Indians are on death row globally?**

• **20 मार्च 2024 तक, दुनियाभर में कितने भारतीय मौत की सज़ा का सामना कर रहे हैं?**

A. 25

B. 49

C. 100

D. 60



**What is “blood money” in Gulf countries?**

• **खाड़ी देशों में 'ब्लड मनी' क्या है?**

A. Bribe to jail officials

B. Fine for not appearing in court

C. Compensation to victim's family to reduce sentence

D. Legal tax on foreign convicts

**What legal step has the Kerala Assembly taken recently?**

- **हाल ही में केरल विधानसभा ने कौन सा कानूनी कदम उठाया है?**
  - A. Banned religious schools
  - B. Passed Private Universities Bill
  - C. Abolished NEET
  - D. Made English medium mandatory

**Why has Samsung been fined ₹5,000+ crore in India?**

- **भारत में सैमसंग पर ₹5,000+ करोड़ का जुर्माना क्यों लगाया गया है?**
  - A. For not paying GST
  - B. Misclassifying telecom imports to avoid duties
  - C. Selling fake products
  - D. Importing banned components

**What is the main goal of PM VIKAS Scheme?**

- पीएम विकास योजना का मुख्य उद्देश्य क्या है?
  - A. Increase exports
  - B. Welfare of tribal communities
  - C. Upliftment of six notified minority communities
  - D. Promote religious tourism

**What is the “Blue Flag” certification given to?**

- **"ब्लू फ्लैग" प्रमाणन किसे दिया जाता है?**
  - A. Best railway station
  - B. Clean and eco-friendly beaches
  - C. Pollution-free industries
  - D. Highest rainfall zones

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# Word of the day

## **Repartee:**

adroitness and cleverness in reply

---

**Synonyms:** humour, wit

---

**Usage:** *He was confident and very quick on repartee.*

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**Pronunciation:** [newsth.live/repartee](http://newsth.live/repartee)pro

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**International Phonetic**

**Alphabet:** /ˌrɛpɑːˈteɪ/

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A group of people are clapping in a dimly lit room. The focus is on the hands and forearms of several individuals, some wearing suits. The background is dark and out of focus, suggesting a large gathering or event. There are some decorative elements in the top left: a solid orange rectangle and a cluster of small, glowing red and blue dots.

Thank you  
guys.

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