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International Support for Buddhist Claims

- **Q.** Which countries have extended support to Buddhist claims over the Mahabodhi Temple?
- 1.Japan
- 2.Sri Lanka
- 3.Pakistan
- 4.Thailand
- Select the correct option:
 - A. 1 and 2 only
 - B. 1, 2 and 4 only
 - C. 2 and 3 only
 - D. 1, 3 and 4 only

Significance of Coral Reefs

- **Q.** Coral reefs are ecologically important because they:
- 1. Support biodiversity.
- 2.Act as buffers against coastal erosion.
- 3. Are immune to temperature-related bleaching.

Select the correct answer:

- A. 1 and 2 only
- B. 2 and 3 only
- C. 1 and 3 only
- D. 1, 2 and 3

Economic Impact of Film Controversies

- **Q.** Which of the following are economic consequences of political controversies surrounding films?
- 1.Increase in revenue due to viral publicity.
- 2. Risk of boycotts leading to financial losses.
- 3. Delay in international screenings.

Correct answer:

- A. 2 and 3 only
- B. 1 and 2 only
- C. 1 and 3 only
- D. 1, 2 and 3

Bodh Gaya Temple Act Controversy

- **Q.** Consider the following statements:
- 1. The Bodh Gaya Temple Act, 1949, provides for equal representation of Hindus and Buddhists on its committee.
- 2. The chairman of the managing committee is always a Buddhist monk.
- 3. Japan and Sri Lanka have supported Buddhist control of Mahabodhi Temple.
- Which of the above statements is/are correct?
 - A. 1 and 2 only
 - B. 1 and 3 only
 - C. 2 and 3 only
 - D. 1, 2 and 3

Saturn's New Moons

- **Q.** Consider the following statements:
- 1. Saturn now has the most moons in the solar system—274 in total.
- 2.All newly discovered moons are classified as irregular moons.
- 3. The largest moon of Saturn is Europa.

Which is/are correct?

- A. 1 and 2 only
- B. 1 and 3 only
- C. 2 and 3 only
- D. 1, 2 and 3

Coral Bleaching

- **Q.** Which of the following is/are causes and consequences of coral bleaching?
- 1. Caused by prolonged exposure to low-salinity water.
- 2.Leads to the expulsion of zooxanthellae from corals.
- 3. Results in the corals turning completely white.

Choose the correct code:

- A. 2 and 3 only
- B. 1 and 2 only
- C. 1 and 3 only
- D. 1, 2 and 3

. Mahabodhi Temple – Historical Context

- **Q.** Which of the following is true about the Mahabodhi Temple?
- 1. Built by Emperor Ashoka in the 3rd century BCE.
- 2.Destroyed during British rule.
- 3. Became a mutt under a Hindu monk in the 16th century.

Select the correct answer:

- A. 1 only
- B. 1 and 3 only
- C. 2 and 3 only
- D. 1, 2 and 3

. Ningaloo Reef

- **Q.** Which of the following is true about the Ningaloo Reef?
- 1. It is a barrier reef located on Australia's east coast.
- 2. Hosts whale sharks and endemic reptile species.
- 3. Recognized as a World Heritage Site by UNESCO.

Correct answer:

- A. 2 only
- B. 2 and 3 only
- C. 1 and 3 only
- D. 1, 2 and 3

Mitathal and Tighrana Sites

- **Q.** Which of the following about Mitathal and Tighrana Harappan sites is/are correct?
- 1.Both are located in Rajasthan.
- 2. Mitathal belongs to the Copper-Bronze Age.
- 3. Tighrana contains post-Harappan and Sothian cultural layers.

Choose the correct option:

- A. 2 only
- B. 2 and 3 only
- C. 1 and 3 only
- D. 1, 2 and 3

Actor Mohanlal Controversy

- **Q.** Which of the following statements are correct about the recent film controversy?
- 1.CBFC refused to certify the film in any form.
- 2. The controversy was linked to depictions of the 2002 Gujarat riots.
- 3. The film crew announced voluntary cuts.

Select the correct answer:

- A. 1 and 3 only
- B. 2 and 3 only
- C. 1 and 2 only
- D. 1, 2 and 3

"A bird on a tree isn't afraid of the branch breaking because its trust isn't in the branch, but in its own wings."







'Manipur reported no violence in 4 months NEWS & PAGE 6





In conversation with Ilaivaraaja Exploring musician's journey has been an enriching experience PINION » PAGE 9

Mexico E.U.

23,410 Malaysia

7,378 krael



Venkatesh deliver SPORT IN PAGE 16

INSIDE

India holds fire as Trump announces tariffs U.S. President announces tariffs ranging

from 10% to 49%; India hit with 27% tariff

India's Commerce Ministry 'examining the implications', will engage with stakeholders

Raining tariffs

U.S. President Donald Trump announced far-reaching new tariffs on nearly all U.S. trading partners, threatening to dismantle much of the architecture of the global economy and trigger broader trade wars

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EU, China, Canada vow countermeasures; Japan, South Korea term tariffs regrettable

Modi. Yunus set for talks amid strain in ties

J.S. President Do-nald Trump launched a full-NEW DELHI scale trade war on Thursday, announcing massive "reciprocal tariffs", rangwill meet Bangladesh Chief Advisor Muhammad Yunus for ing from 10% to 49%, on U.S. imports from its trad-ing partners around the talks on Friday, on the sidel of the 6th RIMSTEC summit in of the 6th BMSTEC summit in Bangkok, for the first time since the interim government took charge after the ouster of Sheikh Hasina. 30 PAGE 4 world. India was not spared and was hit with a 27% tariff on its exports to

J&K CM to meet allies after L-G transfers officials

Jammu and Kashmir Chief Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Omar Abdullah will chair an "emergency and important meeting" of party legislators and alies in Sirinagar on Friday. This follow the transfers of middle-rung officials recently by J

'Kerala, Bengal, T.N. received no fund under SSA

NEW DELHI
Kerala, Tamil Nadu, and West
Bengal received zero funds
under the Union Education
Ministry's Samagra Shiksha
Abhiyaan (SSA) for the
financial tear (2024, 25 unit) Abniyaan (SSA) for the financial year 2024- 25 until March 27, Minister of State for Education Jayant Choudhary said in the Rajya Sabha on

Thursday. >> PAGE 3

Authors protest against Meta for 'stealing' work

Around 100 authors on Thursday protested outside the London headquarters of Meta, accusing the U.S. tech giant of "stealing" content to train its Artificial Intelligence models. A U.S. court filing earlier this year

claimed imposed duties of 52% on the U.S. - would

broader and higher than experts had predicted. The U.S. President in-voked his authority under

the International Emer-gency Economic Powers Act (IEEPA) of 1977 to adreement. The tariffs sparked warrings of reprisal from warrings of reprisal from China and the European Union, though India's reac-tion, though India's reach and the India's reach markets plunged in res-ponse, from Japan's Niklet which lost 4% and European markets that which lost 4% and European markets that which lost 4% and European markets that each, to India's Sensex, that shaved more than 300 points, while the Nilty U.S., the Dow Jones fell ov-er 3% in the first hour of trading, while the Nasday Despite weeks of ongo-ing negotiations between dress large and persistent U.S. goods trade deficits, which he called a "national

ing negotiations between U.S. Trade Representatives and Indian officials over a

face a "discounted" tariff of 27% on its exports to the U.S.

'Liberation day' The tariff hikes, which Mr. Trump has said for weeks would herald April 2 as "Liberation Day" for the U.S., were considerably

which he called a "national emergency".

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said that the Commerce Ministry is "carefully exa-mining the implications of Bilateral Trade Agreement, the various measures", ad-Mr. Trump announced ding that it is engaged with This is Liberation Day, a long-await-ed moment. 2nd April 2025 will forever be remembered as the day American

0

Trade Minister Yoji Muto called the reciprocal tariffs "extremely regrettable". South Korea's Acting President Han Duck-soo ordered support for the country's domestic auto all stakeholders, including Indian industry and exporters, to assess the impact of the tariffs. It also said, ing "opportunities that may arise due to this new development", noting that hensive Global Strategic Partnership" with the U.S., and will continue BTA talks aimed at raising bilateral 20030. 0 5500 billion by 2030. country's domestic auto industry, among the worst affected. Incidentally, Rus-sia, which has minimal trade with the U.S. of just \$3.5 billion, did not feature on the tariff list at all. Joso India's comments were in contrast to other U.S. trading partners who had been slapped with tariffs. The European Union, China, and Canada threatened that these would be "coun."

'Slight advantages' In Delhi, officials pointed out that the U.S.'s penalty of 27% adjusted tariffs for India was lower than other Asian and South Asian countries that are Indian that there would be "coun-termeasures". Japanese rivals for exports, includ-ing Vietnam (46%), Thai-

land (37%), Bangladesh (37%), Sri Lanka (44%) and Pakistan (30%), which could give India some "comparative advantag-es". India's diamond and ie-

India's diamond and je-wellery sector could be hit hard. The Gem & Jewellery Export Promotion Council (GEPC) said that, given he tariffs, it will be a chal-lenge to sustain India's cur-rent export volume of \$10 billion to the U.S market. The United States accounts for more than 30% of In-dia's annual evems and ledia's annual gems and je-wellery exports of \$32 billion.

"We urge the Govern-

livery delays.

In his remarks, Mr. » PAGES 6, 9, 12, 13 & 14 ment of India to progress the Bilateral Trade Agree-

ATV White House/ REA poy ment between India and the U.S., as it would be cru-cial in navigating the tariff issues and securing long term interest of the sector," the Council said in a press statement.

Industries take stock
The auto industry, however, does not expect to face
any significant impact
from the reciprocal tarifa a
automobiles and auto
parts were not covered by
st. b.

it.

The developments could exacerbate supply chain challenges for aeros-pace manufacturer Boe-ing, resulting in aircraft deTrump named India along with Thailand and Viet-nam as examples of what he called "vicious attacks" tariffs on motorcycles as an example. In fact, the Modi government has lo-wered tariffs on foreign motorcycles down from 100% in 2017 in a series of cuts; in the latest Union Budget in February, Fi-Sitharaman reduced those tariffs from 50% to 30%

Mr. Trump signed shortly after the announcement, the White House said that

the White House said that "addressing trade imba-lances" was a major priori-ty, comparing India's sim-ple average most-favored-nation (MFN) tariff rate of 17% with Chi-na's 7.5% and the EU's 5% apples, citing the USTR's report on "Foreign Trade Barriers" released earlier this week that contained a particularly scathing chap

Heightened vigilance



Supreme Court halts tree felling in Kancha Gachibowli

The Supreme court on Thursday observed the extent of destruction car in 100 acres of Kancha Ga-chibowli "forest" area shows an alarming picture shows an alarming picture while directing the Telan-gana Chief Secretary to ex-plain the "compelling ur-gency" which drove the

gency" which drove the State government to flatten trees with heavy machin-ery and excavate the land in the name of "develop-mental activity". Staying work on the land, a Bench of Justices B.R. Gaval and A.G. Mash said the State Chief Secre-



cretary will be sent to a temporary prison con-structed on the same system of the same system. The same system of the same system of the syst



port with photographs of the area by 3.30 p.m. Senior advocate A.M. Singhvi, who appeared for the State, denied that the land had been a forest. When asked whether trees had been felled, Mr. Singhvi had replied that "some shrubs were cleared" in the area. Post lunch, when the hearing re-commenced, the Bench perused the Registrar's re-port and noted that "a huge number of trees were

machinery deployed across an area of 100 acres". It noted that a number of peacock, deer and birds were seen in the birds were seen in the area, prima facte, indicating "that there existed a forest inhabite by the same of the seen of the seen of the seen of the term 'thager, and the seen of the term 'thager, are saying son. 100 acres is something like Corbett... 100 acres in two or three would only remind one sentence, howsover high one may be, one is not above the law.

After LS passage, Waqf Bill sees a heated debate in RS

in the Rajya Sabha that the Waqf (Amendment) Bill is not anti-Muslim and ushers it ransparency while the Opposition alleged that the Bill is aimed at reducing Muslims to "second-class citizens". It questioned both the "intent and content" of the Bill, amid intense debate on Thursday. The Bill was cleared by in the Raiva Sabha that the

The Bill was cleared by the Lok Sabha after a de-bate that lasted over 12 hours, with 288 votes in favour and 232 against. The debate that began on Wed-nesday afternoon went past midnight.
The BJP and its allies

have a majority in Rajya Sabha and the Bill is expected to sail through. Some of the Opposition Some of the Opposition
MPs in the Upper House
were wearing black as a
mark of protest. Placing
the Bill for debate in the
Upper House, Union Minis-

Upper House, Union Minister of Minority Affairs Kiren Rijjiu said the Bill was not aimed at hurting the not aimed at hurting the affairs was to bring in transparency and accountability.
Opening the attack, the said of the said of the aimed at a traper of the said of the

said. How will temples, churches or even gurudwa-ras which have been around for centuries be able to provide proof, he said. said.
Referring to Mr. Hussain's statement, Leader of
the House in the Rajay Sabha and Union Health Minister J.P. Nadda attacked the
Congress, accusing it of reducing the Muslim women
to "second-grade citizens".
He said that other Muslim

the Congress leader said. Mr. Hussain, pointing at the inclusion of non-Muslims in the Waof Board as per the proposed law, asked, "Will you allow me to be part of a Hindu tem-ple trust?"

The "Waqf By User" clause has been removed

polarisation takes place,"

in the Bill, Mr. Hussain said. How will temples.

did. The Opposition picked

Bill, RID MP Manoi K, Jha highlighted the various in-cidents of mistreatment of try. He also said that the provision of nomination of non-Muslims in Waqf board is being dressed as a secular clause, except such a provision is not available in endowment boards of in endowment boards of other religions. Congress MP Abhishek Manu Singhvi also pointed out Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister and TDP president Chandraba-bu Naidu's objection on in-clusion of non-Hindu in

amendments are aimed at stoking communal polarisation. Pr only able to win 240 seats in the Lok Sabha election. "Everybody knows who benefits when communal

India holds fire as Trump announces tariffs

U.S. President announces tariffs ranging from 10% to 49%; India hit with 27% tariff

Jagriti Chandra Suhasini Haidar NEW DELHI

.S. President Donald Trump launched a fullscale trade war on Thursday, announcing massive "reciprocal tariffs", ranging from 10% to 49%, on U.S. imports from its trading partners around the world. India was not spared and was hit with a 27% tariff on its exports to the U.S. despite ongoing talks for a trade agreement.

The tariffs sparked warnings of reprisal from China and the European Union, though India's reaction was muted. Global markets plunged in response, from Japan's Nikkei which lost 4% and Euromarkets that dropped more than 2% each, to India's Sensex, that shaved more than 300 points, while the Nifty dropped as well. In the U.S., the Dow Jones fell over 3% in the first hour of trading, while the Nasdaq crashed 4%.

Despite weeks of ongoing negotiations between U.S. Trade Representatives and Indian officials over a Bilateral Trade Agreement, Mr. Trump announced that India – which he claimed imposed duties of 52% on the U.S. – would face a "discounted" tariff of 27% on its exports to the U.S.

'Liberation day'

The tariff hikes, which Mr. Trump has said for weeks would herald April 2 as "Liberation Day" for the U.S., were considerably broader and higher than experts had predicted.

The U.S. President invoked his authority under the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (IEEPA) of 1977 to address large and persistent U.S. goods trade deficits, which he called a "national emergency".

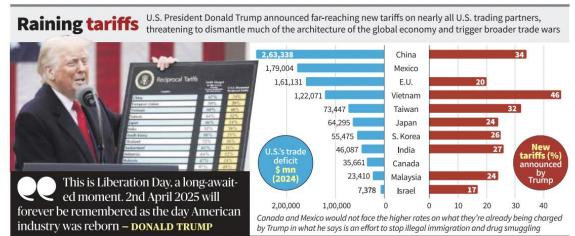
He announced a 10% baseline tariff on all countries, which will take effect from April 5. An individualised reciprocal higher tariff on the countries with which the U.S. has the largest trade deficits will also be imposed from April 9.

India's official response to the announcement was subdued.

An official statement issued on Thursday morning said that the Commerce Ministry is "carefully examining the implications of the various measures", adding that it is engaged with

India's Commerce Ministry 'examining the implications', will engage with stakeholders

EU, China, Canada vow countermeasures; Japan, South Korea term tariffs regrettable



AP/ White House/ BEA.gov

all stakeholders, including Indian industry and exporters, to assess the impact of the tariffs. It also said, however, that it was studying "opportunities that may arise due to this new development", noting that India "values its Comprehensive Global Strategic Partnership" with the U.S., and will continue BTA talks aimed at raising bilateral trade to \$500 billion by 2030.

India's comments were in contrast to other U.S. trading partners who had been slapped with tariffs. The European Union, China, and Canada threatened that there would be "countermeasures". Japanese

Trade Minister Yoji Muto called the reciprocal tariffs "extremely regrettable".

South Korea's Acting President Han Duck-soo ordered support for the country's domestic auto industry, among the worst affected. Incidentally, Russia, which has minimal trade with the U.S. of just \$3.5 billion, did not feature on the tariff list at all.

'Slight advantages'

In Delhi, officials pointed out that the U.S.'s penalty of 27% adjusted tariffs for India was lower than other Asian and South Asian countries that are Indian rivals for exports, including Vietnam (46%), Thailand (37%), Bangladesh (37%), Sri Lanka (44%) and Pakistan (30%), which could give India some "comparative advantages".

India's diamond and jewellery sector could be hit hard. The Gem & Jewellery Export Promotion Council (GJEPC) said that, given the tariffs, it will be a challenge to sustain India's current export volume of \$10 billion to the U.S market. The United States accounts for more than 30% of India's annual gems and jewellery exports of \$32 billion.

"We urge the Government of India to progress the Bilateral Trade Agreement between India and the U.S., as it would be crucial in navigating the tariff issues and securing long term interest of the sector," the Council said in a press statement.

Industries take stock

The auto industry, however, does not expect to face any significant impact from the reciprocal tariff as automobiles and auto parts were not covered by it.

The developments could exacerbate supply chain challenges for aerospace manufacturer Boeing, resulting in aircraft delivery delays.

In his remarks, Mr.

Trump named India along with Thailand and Vietnam as examples of what he called "vicious attacks" on U.S. workers, using the tariffs on motorcycles as an example. In fact, the Modi government has lowered tariffs on foreign motorcycles down from 100% in 2017 in a series of cuts: in the latest Union Budget in February, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman reduced those tariffs from 50% to 30%.

In the executive order Mr. Trump signed shortly after the announcement. the White House said that "addressing trade imbalances" was a major priority, comparing India's simmost-favored-nation (MFN) tariff rate of 17% with China's 7.5% and the EU's 5% as "significantly higher" than the U.S.'s 3.3%. It also criticised India, among other countries, for high tariffs on items like cars. network switches and routers, rice in the husk, and apples, citing the USTR's report on "Foreign Trade Barriers" released earlier this week that contained a particularly scathing chapter on India.

MORE REPORTS ON

» PAGES 6, 9, 12, 13 & 14

U.S. STOCK MARKET SEES WORST DAY

as economists raise risk of recession

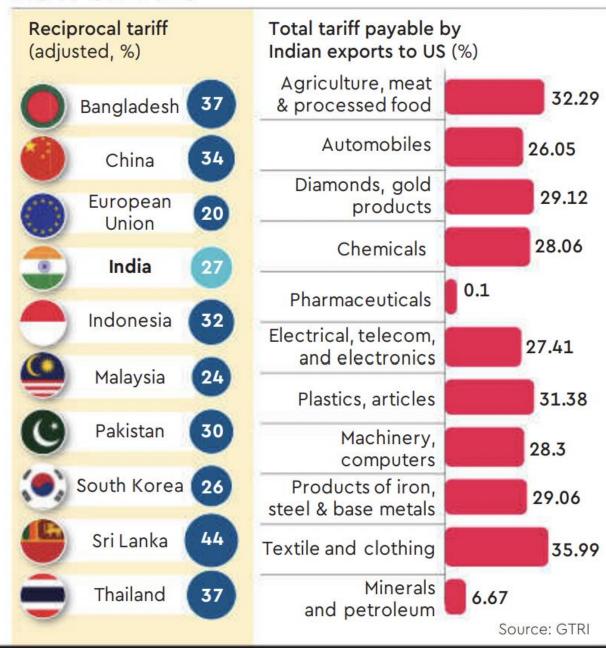
PLAUSIBLE THAT TARIFFS COULD KNOCK

down US economic growth by 2%, say experts

CHINA, EU AMONG HIGHEST LEVIED,

retaliatory measures under consideration

AS IT STANDS

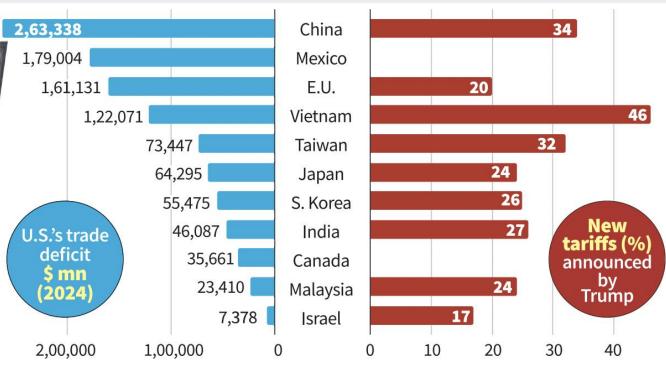


Raining tariffs

U.S. President Donald Trump announced far-reaching new tariffs on nearly all U.S. trading partners, threatening to dismantle much of the architecture of the global economy and trigger broader trade wars



This is Liberation Day, a long-awaited moment. 2nd April 2025 will forever be remembered as the day American industry was reborn – **DONALD TRUMP**

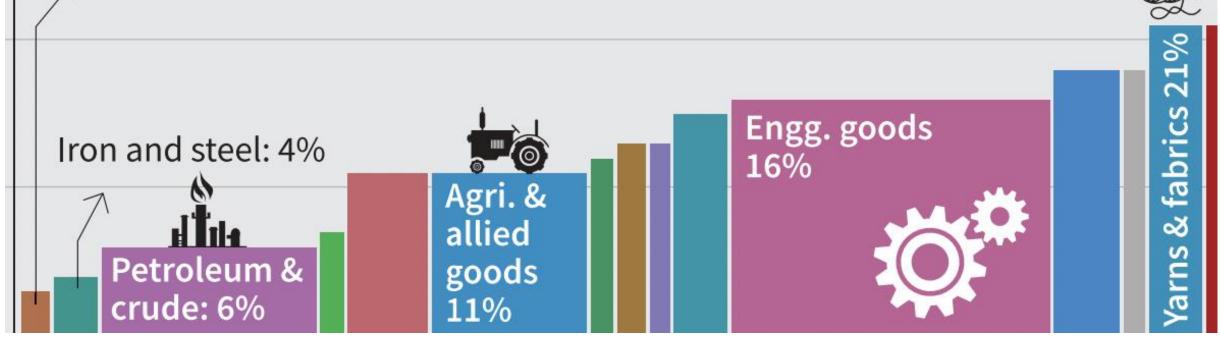


Canada and Mexico would not face the higher rates on what they're already being charged by Trump in what he says is an effort to stop illegal immigration and drug smuggling



LOWEST EXPOSURE:

The rectangles on the far left are those where the U.S.'s share in India's exports was lowest, among the top 30 products. For instance, the U.S's share in India's total **rice** exports was **3%.** Tariffs will have lower impact on these products





HIGHEST EXPOSURE:

Close to 37% of India's marine product exports went to the U.S., the highest among India's top 30 products in the period. Tariffs will have a higher impact on such products



Manufactured goods 21%

Note: Products in the graphic include broader categories such as gems and jewellery, and its sub components such as pearls and stones



Chemical, allied products 21%

nstruments: 21% and Machinery 30ld: 23% Non-readymade: 24%

Readymade garments: 30%

Readymade cotton: 31% Gems & jewellery: 31%

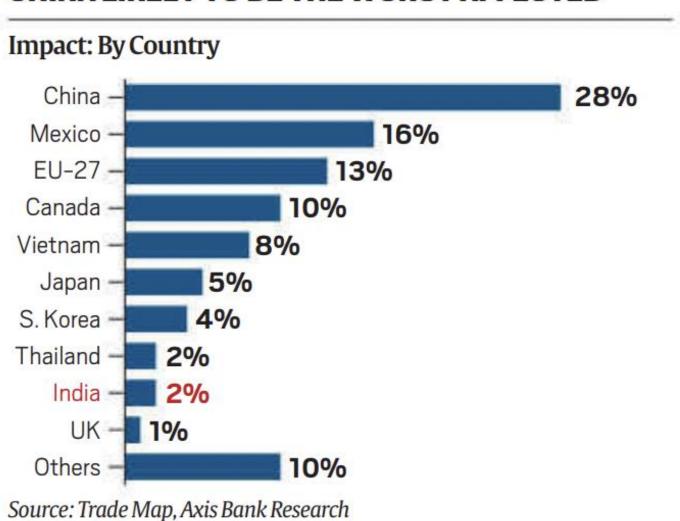
Drug formulations: 36%

MAKING AMERICA WEALTHY AGAIN: AT WHOSE COST?

Country	Tariffs on US goods (US estimates)	Trump's 'reciprocal' tariffs	US trade deficit in 2024 (\$mn)	US trade deficit as % of total*	Per capita income(US: \$89,680)
Cambodia	97%	49%	-12,300	1.0	\$2,950
Vietnam	90%	46%	-1,22,071	10.1	\$4,990
Sri Lanka	88%	44%	NA	NA	NA
Bangladesh	74%	37%	-6,152	0.5	\$2,770
Thailand	72%	36%	-45,609	3.8	\$7,750
China	67%	34%	-2,95,402	24.6	\$13,870
Taiwan	64%	32%	-73,937	6.1	\$34,920
Indonesia	64%	32%	- 17,883	1.5	\$5,250
Switzerland	61%	31%	-38,463	3.2	\$ 1,11,720
South Africa	60%	30%	-8,837	0.7	\$6,520
Pakistan	58%	29%	-2,989	0.2	NA
India	52%	26%	-45,664	3.8	\$2,940
South Korea	50%	25%	-66,007	5.5	\$37,670
Japan	46%	24%	-68,468	5.7	\$35,610
Malaysia	47%	24%	-24,830	2.1	\$ 14,420
EU	39%	20%	-2,31,769	19.3	\$45,240
Israel	33%	17%	-7,425	0.6	\$54,370
Philippines	34%	17%	-4,880	0.4	\$4,440
UK	10%	10%	11,857	- 1.0	\$54,280
Brazil	10%	10%	7,351	-0.6	\$10,820
Singapore	10%	10%	2,829	-0.2	\$93,960
Chile	10%	10%	NA	NA	\$ 17,930
Australia	10%	10%	-73,927	6.1	\$67,980
Turkey	10%	10%	- 1,453	0.1	\$ 16,880
Colombia	10%	10%	1,347	-0.1	\$7,900
WORLD			-12,02,872		\$ 14,450

*Total US trade deficit. Source: White House, IMF, The Indian Express Research

CHINA LIKELY TO BE THE WORST AFFECTED

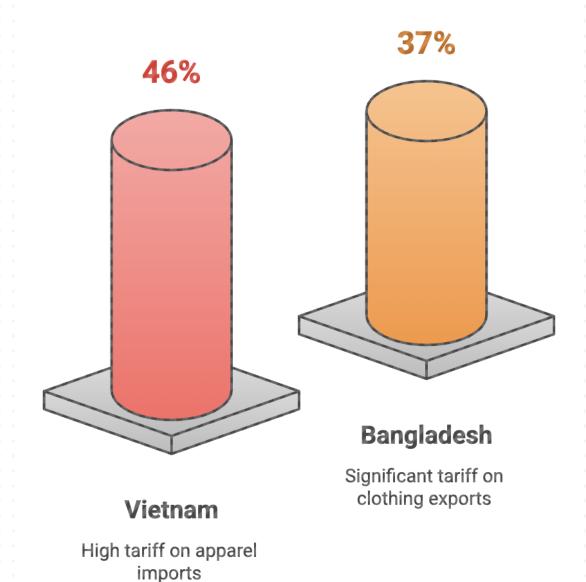


Sector	Impact
Pharma	Positive – Exempted from tariff hikes
Jewellery & Gems	Negative – High new tariffs
Apparel	Mixed – Some competitive gain vs peers
Auto & Modules	Negative – Hit by new tariffs
Steel/Aluminium	Negative – Already taxed since March 2024

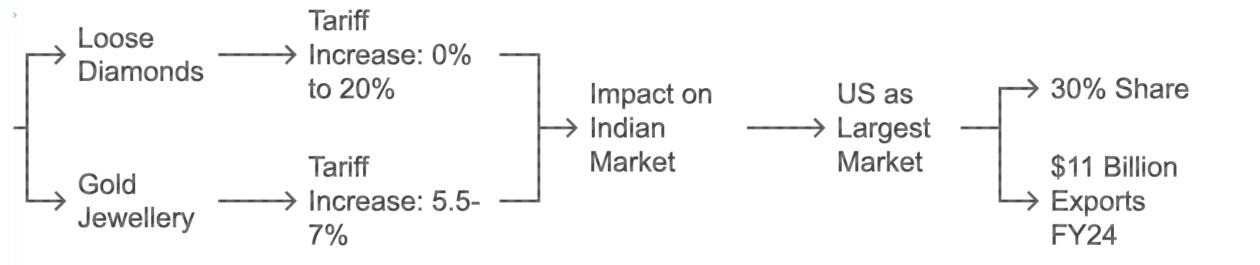
India's Pharma Ascendancy



Competitive Tariff Comparison for Apparel Exports



Impact of New US Tariffs on Indian Gems & Jewellery



HC judge to probe 'sexual misconduct' of district judge

K.S. Sudhi

The Kerala High Court has asked one of its serving judges to probe the allega-tion of sexual misconduct

tion of sexual misconduct of a district judge. The High Court appoint-ed Justice Bechu Kurian Thomas as the inquiry of-ficer to look into the allega-tion levelled against a dis-trict judge in Kozhikode of outragine the medests of a sion in December last year following the allegation that he had outraged the modesty of a woman court employee in his official chamber on the court

The issue came to light following a protest by a section of the court staff during the working hours of the court against what they termed the inaction they termed the inaction against the officer. Later, the district ludge reported the woman in the presence of the principal district judge of Korhikode. Hodered the suspension of the district judge after it took serious note of the destrict judge after it took serious note of the destrict judge after it took serious note of the department of the destrict judge later denied the allegations levelled against him.

m. An inquiry by the Interof the district court reached nowhere following the reported non-coop eration of the woman em-ployee. The woman, chose not to file any complaint before the committee and

'Kerala, T.N., Bengal got no funds for Samagra Shiksha'

The three States were allocated ₹328.9 crore, ₹2,151.6 crore, and ₹1,745.8 crore, respectively, but

The Hindu Bureau NEW DELHI



had been allocated ₹328.9 crore, ₹2,151.6 crore, and ₹1,745.8 crore, respectively, the funds had not been sed, he said

The Tamil Nadu governnent has been at loggerheads with the Centre after funds were stopped for its refusal to implement the three-language formula



The panel had observed that withholding funds for not entering into an MoU for separate schemes is "not justifiable". FILE PHOTO

Territories, ₹27,833.5 crore had been released until March 27. Uttar Pradesh re-

tion of ₹6,971.26 crore, out

of which ₹4.487.46 cror

The reply states that

on the pace of expenditure and receipt of commensu-rate State share, audited

The Madras High Court on

Thursday agreed to hear on Friday a review petition filed by the Nilgiris Collec-

The Hindu Bureau

ased based

had been released till date

under the new National Education Policy and sign a memorandum of under-standing on building PM-SHRI schools.

Samagra Shiksha scheme provides for fund-ing for textbooks, upgrada-tion of infrastructure, salaries for teachers and so on. The data shared in the Upper House says out of ₹45,830.21 crore allocated outstanding advances, up-to-date expenditure state-ment, audited utilisation certificate of previous years and so on.

"The withholding of funds is severely impacting teachers' salaries, RTE reimbursements, and tran-sportation for students in remote areas," a parlia-mentary Standing Commit-tee report on the issue had earlier noted. The commitearlier noted. The commit-tee had observed that with-holding funds for not en-tering into an MoU for separate schemes such as PM SHRI is "not justifiable". The committee has re

ended imm lease of pending funds to the States such as Kerala, Tamil Nadu and West Bengal to prevent disruption in salaries, teachers' training and so on.

Opposition slams 'assault' on Christian priests in Madhya Pradesh police station

Mehul Malpani BHOPAL

Opposition leaders, includ-Opposition leaders, includ-ing Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan and Con-gress general secretary (or-ganisation) K.C. Venugo-pal, on Thursday slammed

Opposition members from the Congress and oth-er parties also raised the issue in the Lok Sabha, raised slogans and staged a walkout after their deturned down by Speaker Om Birla. Later, Congress MPs led by Mr. Venugopal also staged a protest inside Parliament.

According to the labalpur Police, the incident took place on March 31 in-side the Ranjhi Police Sta-tion premises when the of-ficers were inquiring about

HC to hear plea on vehicle cap for Ooty, Kodaikanal

The incident occurred when police were looking

allegations by the Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP) about "forced religious conversion" of tribal peo-ple from neighbouring Mandla district. A bus car-rying locals from Maharaj-pur, as well as a priest and a nun. was visiting churcha nun, was visiting church-es in the city. Members of it to the police on suspicior of religious conversion.

"During the verification, the people in the bus claimed that they were Christians but had Hindu identities in their docu-ments," Jabalpur Superintendent of Police Sampa Upadhyay said, adding that they were let go soon after. It was then that two Christian priests from Ja-balpur were allegedly as-saulted by members of Hindu outfits, with pur-ported videos going viral online. In one of the vide-

escorted to safety by ponce personnel.

However, Mr. Upadhyay denied that the priests were assaulted. He told The Hindu that an FIR had been filed against three un-known persons, and the police were recording wir. police were recording wit-

Slamming the incident, Mr. Vijayan said the priests hailed from Kerala and that they had gone to the sta-tion to help the tribals but were "beaten up as police watched".

Mr. Venugopal claimed the incident was "another example" of how the "BJP government and Sangh Pa-rivar were attacking the

Clear Mekedatu and other projects: CM

The Hindu Bureau BENGALURU

A delegation led by Chief Minister Siddaramaiah on Thursday called on Union Ial Shakti Minister C.R. Pa-Jal Shakti Minister C.R. Pa-til and urged him to direct the officials in the Ministry to accord clearances for five major pending irriga-tion projects, including

Mekedatu and Upper Bha-

dra, in Karnataka. Later, Mr. Siddaramaiah called on the Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sab-ha Rahul Gandhi and reportedly discussed the is sue of replacement of Deputy Chief Minister D.K. Shiyakumar as Karnataka

mar and D. Bharatha Chak-ravarthy asked Additional Advocate General J. Ravin-dran to make sure that Advocate General P.S. Raman appears for the hearing on Friday. He was also asked to serve copies of the re view petition on amici cu riae T. Mohan, Chevanar

hied by the Nilgiris Collec-tor against an order passed by the court on March 13, which fixed a cap on the number of tourist vehicles allowed to visit the Nilgiris and Kodaikanal during the Mohan, Rahul Balaji, and M. Santhanaraman. Earlier in the day, advoReview petition was filed due to 'certain difficulties in limiting the number of

in the two hill stations had downed their shutters on Wednesday against the court order fixing a cap on the number of tourist vehi-

agitations against judicial orders. On the other hand, the AAG told the court that the Nilgiris Collector had filed a review petition as there were certain difficulties in limiting the number of tou-rist vehicles to the two hill rist vehicles to the two hill stations. He also requested the court to take up the plea for hearing at the ear-liest since the local traders were unhappy with the

The court had fixed a cap of 6,000 tourist vehicles per day on weekdays and 8,000 vehicles on weekends for the Nilgiris and 4,000 vehicles per day on weekdays and 6,000 on weekends for Kodaikanal, during the su from April to June this year. The traders, howev-er, had complained of loss

⁺ INBRIEF



Leopard safely captured after straying into Bengaluru house

A leopard that had strayed into a house in Jigani near Bengaluru was successfully captured by the Karnataka Forest department officials on the house at around 6.30 a.m. Residents ran out of the house and locked the main door upon spotting the big cat. While the leopard remained trapped inside the house, neighbours alerted the Police and Forest department officials, who captured the leopard after tranquillising it. The leopard was later taken to the Bannerghatta National Park and will be released into the wild.

Singer M.G. Sreekumar fined for improper waste disposal

Playback singer M.G. Sreekumar has been fined 725,000 on the charge of dumping trash into the Kochi backwaters after a video of the act was recently posted on social media. Mr. Sreekumar has remitted the fine amount after the Mulavukad grama panchayat issued him a notice directing the singer to pay the fine amount within 15 days. "Our officials also visited his house and issued a warning. It has been learnt a maid threw the bag from the house that overlooks the backwaters," Akbar V.S., president of the local body, told The Hindu.

Jala Harathi Corporation to take up irrigation works in A.P.

The Andhra Pradesh State Cabinet has approved The Andhra Pradesh State Cablinet has approved the setting up lial Hararthi Corporation to the setting up lial Hararthi Corporation to the State. Disclosing the Cablinet decisions at a press conference on Thursday, Information and Public Relations (A&PR) Minister Kolusu Parthasarathy appeal purpose which eSPV) under 100% government ownership to Implement and complete the Godwart-Hamakanacherla Link of the Codwart-Hamakanacherla Link was the Codwart-Hamakanacherla Link of the Codwart-Hamakanacherla Lin Project for better water utilisation.

New beginning



Axiom space mission:

The Hindu Bureau

Indian astronaut Group Captain Shubhanshu Shuk-la's mission to the International Space Station (ISS) will take place in May 2025. be the pilot of the upcoming Axiom-4 mission (Ax-4), which is the fourth

(AX-4), which is the fourth private astronaut mission to the ISS. Axiom Space posted on X: "With a proven track re-cord of excellence and ex-perience, Axiom Space is proud to have successfully completed three Private Astronaut Missions. with a Astronaut Missions, with a fourth scheduled for NET May 2025. We take pride in

being the trusted provider for multiple countries to #ExperienceSpace and conduct groundbreaking research #ForEarth". NA-SA said that the mission is

Florida, U.S.
Group Captain Shukla,
who is also one of the four
astronaut-designates selected for Gaganyaan misthe first Indian astronaut to
go to the ISS, and the first
Indian to go to space in the
last 40 years.
Former NASA astronaut
Peggy Whitson will commission. the commercial
mission.

targeted to launch no ear-lier than May 2025 from its Kennedy Space Center in Florida, U.S.

State govt. notifies bird flu outbreak in six districts in A.P.

The Hindu Bureau

The Andhra Pradesh government on Thursday is-sued an order notifying outbreak of bird flu in the outbreak of bird flu in the districts of West Godavari, East Godavari, Kurnool, Eluru, NTR and Kakinada as infected zones and sur-veillance zones. As per the Prevention and Control of Infectious

and Contagious Diseases in Animals Act 2009, the go-vernment issued the order declaring the areas falling between 0 to 1 km radius from the epicentres as in-fected zones and the areas falling between 1 to 10 km

movement of poultry to and from the infected and surveillance zones into dis

ease-free zones. The notification of the zones comes after positive responses from the Nation-

responses from the Nation-al Institute of High Security Animal Diseases (NIHSAD), Bhopal, the order says. Joint Director, Animal Husbandry, NTR district, M. Hanumantha Rao said, "An official issues a certificate to a poultry farmer af ter sanitising and sealing the farm. Until 90 days, the farmer cannot bring new birds," adding that all chicken shops also remain closed within 1 km of the red zone for 90 days. Ho

Kannadippaya gets GI tag, anchoring tribal handicraft on the global map India's Shubhanshu will fly to ISS in May

Sandeep Vellaram

annadippaya, a unique ibal handicraft from Kerala, has received the Geo-graphical Indication (GI) ag ensuring market pro tection and a global plat form for this traditiona GI tag has been awarded

Gi tag has been awarded to the Unarvu Pattika-vargha Wwidodesha Sahak-arana Sangam, Venmani, and the Vanasree Bamboo Craft &Vanasree Bamboo Craft &Vanasrehava Sheka-rana unit, Uppukunnu, both in idukki district. The recognition makes kanna-dippaye the first tribal han-dicart product from Kera-la to receive the Gi tag. la to receive the GI tag. The product derives its name (literally meaning



mirror mat) from its reflec-

Unique properties Made from the soft inner layers of reed bamboo, the mat stands out for its unique properties – provid-ing warmth during winter and cooling effect in sum-

mer. The craft is preserved by the Oorali, Mannan, Muthuwa, Malayan, and Ka-dar tribal communities and by the Ulladan, Ma-layarayan, and Hill Pulaya artisans in Idukki, Thris-sur, Ernakulam, and Palak kad districts. Former director Shyam she said.

Forest Research Institute and senior scientist A.V. Raghu played a key role in securing the GI tag for kannadippaya. Sunil P.V., member of Vanasree Bam-boo Craft, expressed concern about the lack of a structured market for the product. C.R. Elsy, former head of the Intellectual head of the Intellectual Property Rights cell at the Kerala Agricultural Univer-sity, who spearheaded the initiative emphasised the importance of reviving in-terest in the craft among younger generations. "Since eco-friendly pro-ducts are in demand glo-bally, this recognition will open international maropen international mar-kets for kannadippaya,"

Axiom space mission: India's Shubhanshu will fly to ISS in May

The Hindu Bureau

BENGALURU

Indian astronaut Group Captain Shubhanshu Shukla's mission to the International Space Station (ISS) will take place in May 2025. Group Captain Shukla will be the pilot of the upcoming Axiom-4 mission (Ax-4), which is the fourth private astronaut mission to the ISS.

Axiom Space posted on X: "With a proven track record of excellence and experience, Axiom Space is proud to have successfully completed three Private Astronaut Missions, with a fourth scheduled for NET May 2025. We take pride in

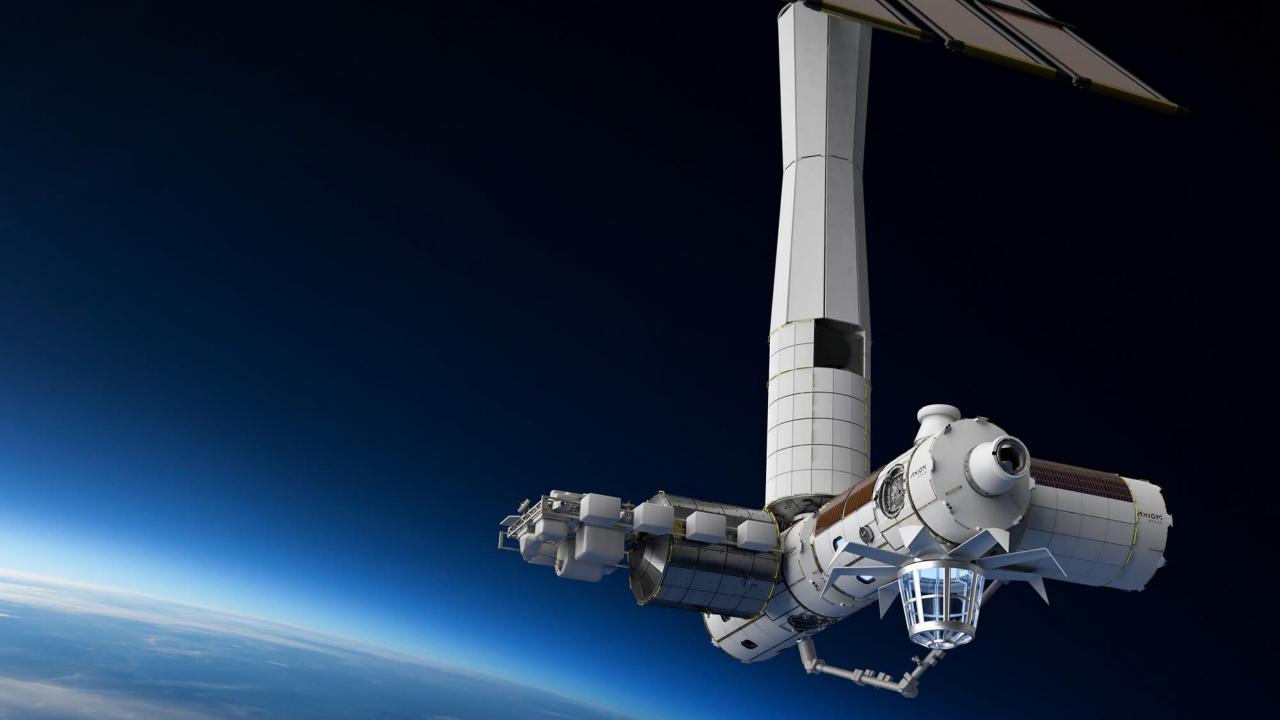
being the trusted provider for multiple countries to #ExperienceSpace and conduct groundbreaking research #ForEarth". NA-SA said that the mission is targeted to launch no earlier than May 2025 from its Kennedy Space Center in Florida, U.S.

Group Captain Shukla, who is also one of the four astronaut-designates selected for Gaganyaan mission of ISRO, will become the first Indian astronaut to go to the ISS, and the first Indian to go to space in the last 40 years.

Former NASA astronaut Peggy Whitson will command the commercial mission.

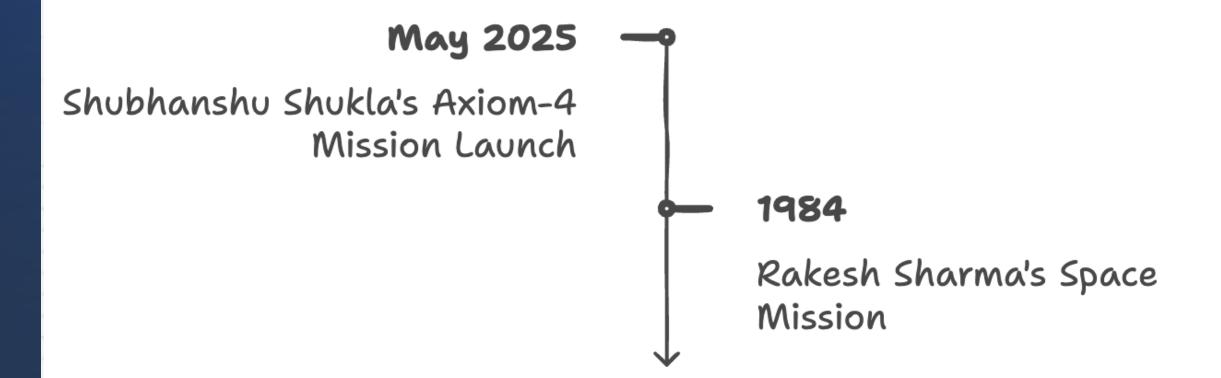




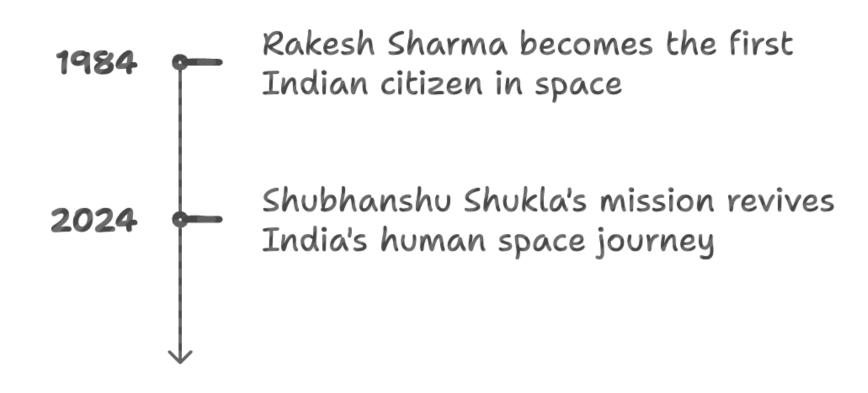


Mission Name	Axiom Mission 4 (Ax-4)
Launch Date	No earlier than May 2025
Launch Vehicle	SpaceX Falcon 9 Block 5
Spacecraft	SpaceX Crew Dragon
Launch Site	Kennedy Space Center's LC-39A or Cape Canaveral Space Force Station's SLC-40, Florida
Mission Duration	Approximately 14 days aboard the ISS
Crew Members	 Commander: Peggy Whitson (USA) Pilot: Shubhanshu Shukla (India) Mission Specialist: Sławosz Uznański-Wiśniewski (Poland) Mission Specialist: Tibor Kapu (Hungary)
Mission Objectives	 Conduct around 60 scientific experiments, including seven led by ISRO (India) Facilitate international collaboration in space research Mark the return to human spaceflight for India, Poland, and Hungary after more than 40 years Enhance microgravity research impacting biological processes and strategies for long-term space missions

Shubhanshu Shukla's Historic Space Mission



India's Journey in Space: From Rakesh Sharma to Shubhanshu Shukla



Topic	★ Fact The state of the
	Fourth private astronaut mission to ISS
Group Captain Shubhanshu Shukla	First Indian to go to ISS
India's last space traveller	Rakesh Sharma (1984)
☆ Gaganyaan	ISRO's first manned mission, Shukla is one of 4 chosen astronauts
Launch Site	Kennedy Space Center, Florida (USA)

Kannadippaya gets GI tag, anchoring tribal handicraft on the global map

Sandeep Vellaram

IDUKKI

Kannadippaya, a unique tribal handicraft from Kerala, has received the Geographical Indication (GI) tag ensuring market protection and a global platform for this traditional product.

GI tag has been awarded to the Unarvu Pattikavargha Vividodesha Sahakarana Sangam, Venmani, and the Vanasree Bamboo Craft &Vanavibhava Shekarana unit, Uppukunnu, both in Idukki district. The recognition makes *kannadippaya* the first tribal handicraft product from Kerala to receive the GI tag.

The product derives its name (literally meaning



Honouring tradition: *Kannadippaya* is the first tribal handicraft product from Kerala to receive a GI tag. JOMON PAMPAVALLEY

mirror mat) from its reflective pattern.

Unique properties

Made from the soft inner layers of reed bamboo, the mat stands out for its unique properties – providing warmth during winter and cooling effect in sum-

mer. The craft is preserved by the Oorali, Mannan, Muthuva, Malayan, and Kadar tribal communities and by the Ulladan, Malayarayan, and Hill Pulaya artisans in Idukki, Thrissur, Ernakulam, and Palakkad districts.

Former director Shyam

Visvanathan of the Kerala Forest Research Institute and senior scientist A.V. Raghu played a key role in securing the GI tag for kannadippaya. Sunil P.V., member of Vanasree Bamboo Craft, expressed concern about the lack of a structured market for the product. C.R. Elsy, former head of the Intellectual Property Rights cell at the Kerala Agricultural University, who spearheaded the initiative emphasised the importance of reviving interest in the craft among generations. younger "Since eco-friendly products are in demand globally, this recognition will open international markets for kannadippaya," she said.

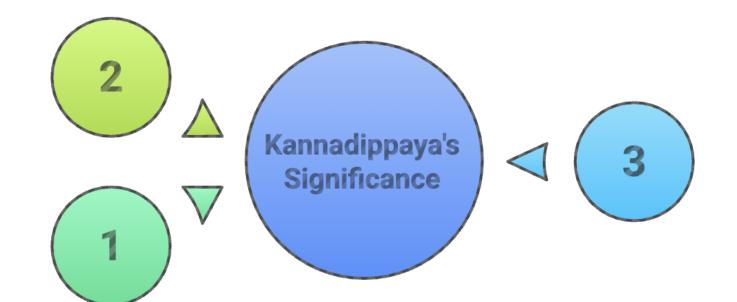
Factors Contributing to Kannadippaya's Significance

Idukki District

The geographical origin known for its rich natural resources

Tribal Handicraft

Represents the cultural and artistic heritage of the tribe



Reed Bamboo

The primary material used, highlighting sustainability

Geographical Indication Recipients

GI Recipient 1

Unarvu Pattikavargaha Sahakarana Sangam received GI status.

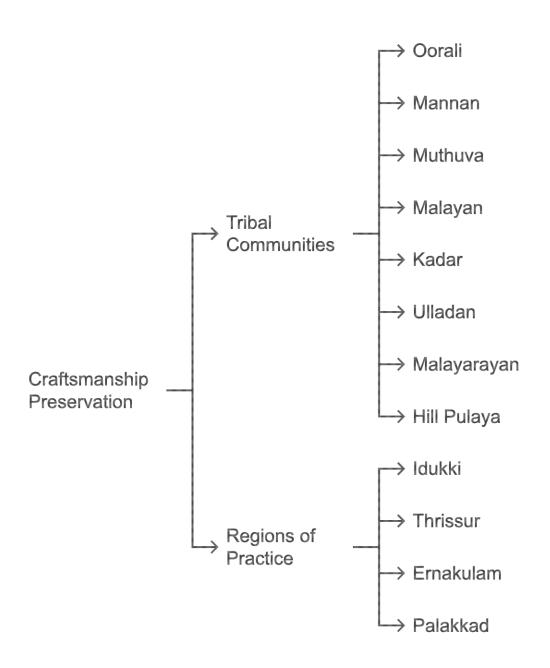




GI Recipient 2

Vanasree Bamboo Craft & Vanavibhava Shekarana Unit received GI status.

Preservation and Practice of Craftsmanship



Kerala's Tribal Craftsmanship

Bamboo Craftsmanship

Reflects the traditional skills of Kerala's tribes.



Tribal Knowledge

Highlights the importance of indigenous knowledge systems.





Cultural Heritage

Promotes the rich cultural traditions of the tribes.



Youth Engagement

Encourages the revival of traditions among younger generations.

WORST Prelims Pointers:

Торіс	Fact
Product Name	Kannadippaya
State	Kerala
District	Idukki (GI awarded)
Material	Inner reed bamboo
Communities Involved	Oorali, Mannan, Muthuva, etc.
Use	Eco-friendly mat with thermal properties
Recognition Institution	Kerala Forest Research Institute
GI Tag Utility	Market protection + international recognition



Instant injustice

The state must not be allowed to adopt

the playbook of the mob rbitrariness and brazen bias in law enfor-cement have undermined the rule of law in India for decades. Despite the spread of education and growing awareness of rights among the masses, high-handedness by the state often threatens the fundamental rights and digni-ty of citizens. Custodial torture and extrajudicial killings are reported with alarming frequency. Police and civic authorities in several States now routinely resort to demolition of property as a convenient and extra-legal form of punishment not just for criminal suspects but also for political opponents. Given the spread of this disturbing trend, the Supreme Court of India 's strong re marks against the practice this week offer a glim-mer of hope. A Bench headed by lustice A.S. Oka mer of hope. A Bench headed by Justice A.S. Okta stated that the llegal demolition of properties be-longing to six individuals by the Prayagraj Beve-shocked the conscience. of the Court. The or-der followed findings that the demolitions were carried out without even serving show-cause not-leas to the house owners, either in person or by science. Residential premises of the appellants of the properties of the appellants. something called the right to shelter, something called due process... The authorities, and espe-cially the development authority, must remem-ber that the right to shelter is also an integral part of Article 21 of the Constitution," the Court observed. The top court has ordered the payment of ₹10 lakh as compensation to each house own-er. Through its observations, the Court has reiterated the basic principles of the rule of law – that there can be no punishment without trial, no col-lective punishment, that every person is pres-

iscrive punishment, that every person is pre-immed innocent until prowen guilty, and that guilt cannot be ascribed by association. It remains doubful whether such judicial intervention is sufficient to act as a deterrent. For one, despite earlier disapproval of the bulkdozing of property has not only continued in Utrar Pradesh but has also spread to other States. Bharataya Janasa Par-fered, but it has also found appeal beyond parti-tant lines. The Aam Andmi Party government in Punjah, for instance, recently resorted to proper-drug main. The apparent social approval of state drug main. The apparent social approval of state drug mafia. The apparent social approval of state high-handedness in many situations is a trou-bling commentary on collapsing standards of go- vernance. Mob lynching is a menace the state is duty-bound to curb with an iron fist; it is tragic when the state itself adopts tactics akin to me justice. The Supreme Court must ensure that its orders are implemented in letter and spirit – con-

Data and federalism

sistently and throughout India.

Reliable data can lead the dialogue between the Centre and the States

his week, NTI Aayog, in partnership with week, NTI Aayog, in partnership with his week, NTI Aayog, in partnership with his case of the state of the ment, and historical trends in the devolution of central funds. At a time when Centre-State relacentral tuntos. At a time when Centre-state Feat-tions are under renewed scrutiny, particularly in the southern States, where fiscal federalism has been a long-standing flashpoint, this portal is a timely and welcome move. The data is not new, drawn as it is from established sources such as drawn as it is from established sources such as the 2011 Census, the Periodic Labour Force Survey, and the Reserve Bank of India's State Financey, and the Reserve Bank of India's State Financeros States brings clarity to the diverse fiscal realities of India, offering a structured lens ment. Concerns persist about the quality of economic data in India, and this portal is not imment. Concerns persist about the quality of economic data in India, and this portal is not imment. Concerns persist about the quality of economic data in India, and this portal is not inferent for the person of the person of the person of the person person of the person person of the person of

States.

The effective use of such data depends on ongoing engagement by States, especially through institutions such as the Sixteenth Finance Commission. For India's federal structure to work equitably, regional data must be translated into policies that ensure fair representation, resource allocation, and administrative responsibility. Un-fortunately, discussions on federalism often get reduced to parrow and polarised frames such a reduced to narrow and polarised frames such as debates around the three-language policy or calls to defer delimitation. Over-centralisation can breed discontent, while regional resistance often prequires cooperation rooted in evidence and mu-ual recognition of diverse state realities. Leaders in both New Delhi and the State capitals must en-gage in a spirit of transparency and trust. The new data platform is not a panacea but offers a formed, transparency conversations around everformed, pragmatic conversations around gover-nance, development, and the future of Indian federalism.

The other space race — the geopolitics of satellite net

ndia still has regions where fiber optic cabbes have never reached and cellular towers remain sparse. SpaceX's recent partnerships with Airtel and Jio to expand Starlink services across India could be looked at as a fundamental shift in the conceptions of connectivity, national sovereignty, and economic

connectivity, national sovereignty, and economic power in the digital age. It is not a zero-sum game for both sides. There are economic benefits for all. For Airtel and Jio, Starlink allows them to provide high-speed Internet to India's most remote regions without For SpaceX, the deal opens up a huge market. It also takes care of India's complex regulatory landscape by channelling Starlink's technology through domestic players.

Yet, these arrangements are not just business strategy. There is a lot of geopolitics involved to Communications infrastructure has always been intertwined with national security and vereignty, a reality made even more pronounced when that infrastructure orbits 550 kilometres above earth. With the intertwining of business and political interest sigholally, it cannot be deniled that there are lears that the United States-hased Starlin ketwork; gives the U.S. an States-hased Starlin ketwork; gives the U.S. and constitution of the Company of the Company of the particularly as China develops its rival GuoWang constellation. India's options were to wait for homegrown alternatives or partnering with other countries (portentially even China). But choosing Starlink could indicate a geopolitical realignment (seemingly) democratic alliances rather than an kilometres above earth. With the intertwining of (seemingly) democratic alliance rather than an authoritarian one. The monopolistic concerns surrounding

The monopoistic concerns surrounding Starlink cannot be dismissed. With around 7,000 satellites already in orbit, SpaceX enjoys first-mover advantages in the low earth orbit internet market. OneWeb, its closest competitor, operates fewer than 650 satellites, while Amazon's Project Kuiper remains very small. This is tending towards a monopolistic market tructure. This also has its attendant economic problems of competition, pricing, and dependency. It runs the risk too of having private companies wield nation state levels of influence over critical infrastructure, as was evident wher SpaceX briefly cut Ukraine's Starlink access during critical military operations in 2022.

Economic value versus geopolitical control Let us analyse these aspects of satellite internet through a framework that captures both



seen whether

satellite Internet will

existing digital divides in

lead to a

universal connectivity or economic value and geopolitical control. The high economic value, high geopolitical control scenario can be called the "Digital Sovereignty" for the called the "Digital Sovereignty" telecommunications and strategic independence. China's GuoWang constellation aims for this position, designing its system explicitly as a but low geopolitical cortrol equation is the category of "Market Dominance", where Statink currently operates, offering tremendous commercial potential but placing control largely mitigated to some extent by routing it via mitigated to some extent by routing it via mitigated to some extent by routing it via domestic telecommunications companies though this could be termed as just a face-saver, "Strategic Asset" scenario (low economic value, high geopolitical control) is where India's limited indigenous satellite capacity could be placed into (this strategically vital but economically suboptimal). Economically sub-optimal, it could be argued, is strategically useless, because it does

be argued, is strategically useless, because it doe not offer any leverage power. Finally, the "Marginal Presence" context Finally, the "Marginal Presence" context Kutper project – an example of still developing economic models while offering limited strategic leverage.

Towards digital sovereignty for India For India, the question now becomes whether this is a long-term strategic position. India's Space Research Organisation (ISRO) continues to develop indigenous satellite capabilities. The aim is obviously "Digital Sovereignty". However, it would require a lot of investment and time, both

of which have their strategic tradeoffs.

The partnership model adopted by Airtel and Jio creates a buffer that preserves some measure of sovereignty. Technology transfer provisions and local data storage requirements could protect India's concerns and also enhance India's long-term capabilities. Additionally, having more options for domestic partners means India can maintain some amount of leverage against local monopolistic behaviour, though one could argue about its effectiveness. This model of managed

about its effectiveness. This model of managed dependency is worth exploring further.

One aspect that is intriguing in all of this is the absence of the Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited (ISSNL) from these partnerships. BSNL could have helped reduce some of India's strategic concerns. As a state-owned enterprise with extensive rural presence, BSNL provides dual benefits: it

provides Starlink with broader reach while giving provides Starlink with broader reach while giving the government more direct oversight of this critical technology. While BSNL is facing some financial problems, considering the strategic benefits of having BSNL involved also represents a lost chance.

A technology evolution, challenges Could these partmenhips establish a template for something such as global Internet governance that has geopolitical dimensions? As developing nations face the choice between American, Chinese, or indigenous satellite systems, the Starlink-India hybrid model tries to balance technological pragmatism with strategic

For SpaceX and Elon Musk, these partnerships have benefits both in terms of commercial opportunity and political legitimacy. Indian regulatory concerns are assuaged. This natural evolution of technology from being disruptive to partnering with governments mirrors the rajectory of previous technologic rom railroads to telecommunicat vious technological revolutions

from rairoass to tetecommunications.

The ultimate question remains whether satellite Internet will fulfil its promise of universal connectivity or simply reproduce existing digital divides in orbital form. If it remains too expensive for most of India's rural population, or requires significant government subsidies which would tor most of india's rural population, of requires significant government subsidies which would make it untenable for the indian government, then it would be a bad deal. Some innovative sales techniques, such as tiered pricing models and package deals, would be needed in this scenario. The famed 'innovation at the bottom of the pyramid' could surely help India, by packaging products in a way that are accessible, affordable, and valuable to low-income populations, while also being profitable to the

ompanies involved. With increasing attractiveness of satellite Internet, the governance challenges will only intensify. These will include orbital debris management, and space traffic control. Their transnational nature will require international governance cooperation even amid strategic competition. Without effective global governa undermined by the tragedy of the orbital

ommons.
Orbital assets are going to become as strategic

Bangladesh events, a reflection of South Asia's minorities

he political developments in Bangladesh, particularly violence against Hindus, since the deposition of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina in August 2024, have again raised apprehensions regarding the status of religious inorities in the country. In the broader Indian Muslims and minorities in Pakistan, those of minorities in South Asia have reached an inprecedented low since Partition. Not long ago mprecedented low since Partition. Not long a eligious minorities in India, particularly fusilins, were comparatively better off than hose in Pakistan and Bangfadesh, Political tre each of these nations suggest a continued locking.

A subject that is still in focus
British india's Partition in 1947 was supposed to
reache the question of religious monitories,
reached the question of religious monitories,
substituting the substitution of the principal
susue facing the subcontinent. The management
of Partition, particularly the methods and
legacies it has bequeathed to the separate
legacies it has bequeathed to the separate countries, has become a subject of incessant political disputes, surpassing the event itself. The anguish and the resentment of those who crossed over into India have fuelled the ascendance of a hegemonic Hindutva nationalism, Moreover, Partition has engendered new classifications of socio-political entities, such as Mohajirs in Pakistan and Bangladeshi refugees in India. Next there exists the Kashmir conundrum. Furthermore, Partition, based on the Hindu-Muslim issue, has involved other minorities, including Sikhs and Christians, in its contentious dynamics, rendering the minority question pivotal for the region's sustainability. The fate of religious minorities in South Asia is evidently interconnected, necessitating profour

peace and prosperity.

Owing to the movement of people across the newly established boundaries post-Partition, the issue of minorities emerged as a serious one for



military occupation of the husins and pessore some control of the husins and pessore solven the husins and pessore solven the intended pessor solven the removing the minority question but also at the resolving the minority question but also at the system of the husins post-Nehru era. The Nehru-Liaquat Ali Pact, intended to safeguard minority rights in Pakistan, ultimately neglected the rights of its Muslim ultimately neglected the rights of its Muslim majority, specifically Bengali Muslims in East Bengal, culminating in the emergence of Bangladesh in 1971. The two-nation theory ultimately resulted in the establishment of three nations in the subcontinent.

Addressing the state of religious India-Bangladesh ties need recalibration Although India made significant contributions to the liberation of Bangladesh, the relationship between the two countries was not solely influenced by Bangladesh's enduring appreciation towards India. The current status of minorities in South Asia will have bearing on the region's peace and Hindus in Bangladesh has become a significant concern in India-Bangladesh relations. Recent

against Hindus in Bangladesh is politically driven or indicative of a new era of persecution against them. Some contend that India has erred by diminishing its relations with Bangladesh to a focus solely on Sheikh Hasina's family. By designating the problem of Hindus as a bilateral designating the problem of Hingus as a comment of the comment of t India-Bangladesh ties. The secular fabric of Rangladeshi society has always been ter Mangladeshi sorterly has always been tenuous, with no documents are many the contending ideological factions. India must recalibrate its connection with the populace of Bangladesh and its democratic entities, rather than focusing on a specific family or political party.

The overall picture
The fate of religious minorities in India, Paldstan, and Bangladesh is deeply intertwined, and there is a need for a new language and new institutions to address the issue of their rights. The restricted experiment of the Nehru-Liaquat Ali alliance imparts relevant lessons even in contemporary times. The notion that people with a shared history might cultivate a common future is not wholly utopian. Consequently, discussions regarding Partition must be reinvigorated in order to foster better understanding between Hindus and Muslims in South Asia, Further, recognising that minority rights are most effectively safeguarded inside a secular democracy, there is a necessity for novel initiatives not only in India a necessity for novel initiatives not only in inno an an expectation of the property of the control of the control linding Hindus express concerns no ledy for advicate this exclusively for Muslims in Pakistra note this exclusively for Muslims in India, such political conduct implies greater solidarity for co-religionists within their own religious communities than a commitment to minority

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Democracy is alive The marathon debate in the Lok Sabha, on the Waqf Bill, which went on late into the night and was passed with night and was passed with a comfortable majority after voting, shows that India is country with democratic norms as a part of its soul and body, whoever is in governance (Page 1, April 3), other countries as in india, it has been amply demonstrated that the power of the power o

J.P. Reddy.

Disturbing
It is a sad scenario that
many aspects of life in India
are now assuming political
colours or bias. There needs
to be debating on the
concerns that these
subjects may raise. The
change in attitude of
political parties and
orranisations is larrine. organisations is jarring. Jiji Panicker K.,

Judges, declaration I write this letter as Senior Advocate, Supreme Court of India and a former Union Minister for Law and Justice. The decision made welcome step towards judicial transparency and a declaration by the judges of their willingness to subject themselves to public scrutiny as far as the sources of their wealth is concerned. At a time when

impropriety are becoming louder, and popular faith in the judiciary is shaken, this symbolic gesture by the judges of the nation's judges of the nation's highest court will help in restoring the credibility of the judicial institution. The judges of the Court presided over by the Chief Justice of India, Sanjiv Khanna, deserve full credit for living up to the high standards of probity expected of them. Questions have been raised about the reofgrential about the preferential treatment accorded to the suggestions about judicial judges in the matter of

:::

assets, as compared to Member of Parliament and high constitutional duties high constitutional dutie but are obliged to make their assets public. By voluntarily deciding to make information about their assets public, the judges have strengthene their credentials as the nation's final arbiters of justice, particularly becar justice, particularly because their authority is derived from their unquestionable moral and intellectual integrity.

episode has validated the proposition that significant events trigger historic changes. Opening judicial changes. Opening judicial assets to public scrutiny is such a development. It is necessary, however, to ensure that the information is not abused to compromise judicial independence.

Ashwani Kumar, New Delhi

must carry the postal address and the full name.

The other space race — the geopolitics of satellite net

ndia still has regions where fiber optic cables have never reached and cellular towers remain sparse. SpaceX's recent partnerships with Airtel and Jio to expand Starlink services across India could be looked at as a fundamental shift in the conceptions of connectivity, national sovereignty, and economic power in the digital age.

It is not a zero-sum game for both sides. There are economic benefits for all. For Airtel and Jio, Starlink allows them to provide high-speed Internet to India's most remote regions without the infrastructure costs of terrestrial networks. For SpaceX, the deal opens up a huge market. It also takes care of India's complex regulatory landscape by channelling Starlink's technology through domestic players.

Yet, these arrangements are not just business strategy. There is a lot of geopolitics involved too. Communications infrastructure has always been intertwined with national security and sovereignty, a reality made even more pronounced when that infrastructure orbits 550 kilometres above earth. With the intertwining of business and political interests globally, it cannot be denied that there are fears that the United States-based Starlink network gives the U.S. an advantage in the competition for digital influence, particularly as China develops its rival GuoWang constellation. India's options were to wait for homegrown alternatives or partnering with other countries (potentially even China). But choosing Starlink could indicate a geopolitical realignment in the Indo-Pacific region. India chose a (seemingly) democratic alliance rather than an authoritarian one.

The monopolistic concerns surrounding Starlink cannot be dismissed. With around 7,000 satellites already in orbit, SpaceX enjoys first-mover advantages in the low earth orbit internet market. OneWeb, its closest competitor, operates fewer than 650 satellites, while Amazon's Project Kuiper remains very small. This is tending towards a monopolistic market structure. This also has its attendant economic problems of competition, pricing, and dependency. It runs the risk too of having private companies wield nation-state levels of influence over critical infrastructure, as was evident when SpaceX briefly cut Ukraine's Starlink access during critical military operations in 2022.

Economic value versus geopolitical control Let us analyse these aspects of satellite Internet through a framework that captures both



Arindam Goswami

is a Research Analyst in the High-Tech Geopolitics Programme at The Takshashila Institution

It remains to be

seen whether

Internet will

promise of

strengthen

divides in

orbital form

connectivity or

existing digital

satellite

lead to a

universal

economic value and geopolitical control. The high economic value, high geopolitical control scenario can be called the "Digital Sovereignty" scenario, where nations have both profitable telecommunications and strategic independence. China's GuoWang constellation aims for this position, designing its system explicitly as a state-controlled asset. In the high economic value but low geopolitical control equation is the category of "Market Dominance", where Starlink currently operates, offering tremendous commercial potential but placing control largely outside the host nation's hands. This can be mitigated to some extent by routing it via domestic telecommunications companies, though this could be termed as just a face-saver, as effective control still sits with Starlink. The "Strategic Asset" scenario (low economic value, high geopolitical control) is where India's limited indigenous satellite capacity could be placed into (this strategically vital but economically suboptimal). Economically sub-optimal, it could be argued, is strategically useless, because it does not offer any leverage power.

Finally, the "Marginal Presence" context captures emerging players such as Amazon's Kuiper project – an example of still developing economic models while offering limited strategic leverage.

Towards digital sovereignty for India

For India, the question now becomes whether this is a long-term strategic position. India's Space Research Organisation (ISRO) continues to develop indigenous satellite capabilities. The aim is obviously "Digital Sovereignty". However, it would require a lot of investment and time, both of which have their strategic tradeoffs.

The partnership model adopted by Airtel and Jio creates a buffer that preserves some measure of sovereignty. Technology transfer provisions and local data storage requirements could protect India's concerns and also enhance India's long-term capabilities. Additionally, having more options for domestic partners means India can maintain some amount of leverage against local monopolistic behaviour, though one could argue about its effectiveness. This model of managed dependency is worth exploring further.

One aspect that is intriguing in all of this is the absence of the Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited (BSNL) from these partnerships. BSNL could have helped reduce some of India's strategic concerns. As a state-owned enterprise with extensive rural presence, BSNL provides dual benefits: it

provides Starlink with broader reach while giving the government more direct oversight of this critical technology. While BSNL is facing some financial problems, considering the strategic benefits of having BSNL involved also represents a lost chance.

A technology evolution, challenges

Could these partnerships establish a template for something such as global Internet governance that has geopolitical dimensions? As developing nations face the choice between American, Chinese, or indigenous satellite systems, the Starlink-India hybrid model tries to balance technological pragmatism with strategic autonomy.

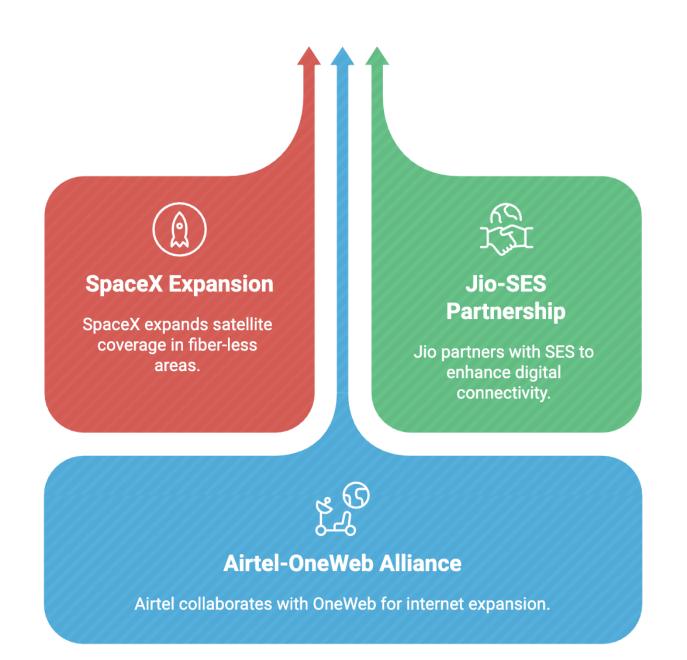
For SpaceX and Elon Musk, these partnerships have benefits both in terms of commercial opportunity and political legitimacy. Indian regulatory concerns are assuaged. This natural evolution of technology from being disruptive to partnering with governments mirrors the trajectory of previous technological revolutions, from railroads to telecommunications.

The ultimate question remains whether satellite Internet will fulfil its promise of universal connectivity or simply reproduce existing digital divides in orbital form. If it remains too expensive for most of India's rural population, or requires significant government subsidies which would make it untenable for the Indian government, then it would be a bad deal. Some innovative sales techniques, such as tiered pricing models and package deals, would be needed in this scenario. The famed "innovation at the bottom of the pyramid" could surely help India, by packaging products in a way that are accessible, affordable, and valuable to low-income populations, while also being profitable to the companies involved.

With increasing attractiveness of satellite Internet, the governance challenges will only intensify. These will include orbital debris management, and space traffic control. Their transnational nature will require international governance cooperation even amid strategic competition. Without effective global governance, the promise of universal connectivity could be undermined by the tragedy of the orbital commons.

Orbital assets are going to become as strategic as terrestrial ones. For all stakeholders – nations, companies, and citizens – the challenge is to harness the connectivity revolution without surrendering autonomy.

Strategic Alliances in Satellite Internet





Strategic Military Asset



Government-Controlled Infrastructure



Commercial and Humanitarian



Use Privately-Driven Dominance

China's GuoWang Constellation Starlink's Market Model

Comparing Satellite Internet Models

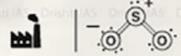
♦ UPSC Prelims Key Facts | तथ्य UPSC प्रारंभिक परीक्षा के लिए:

Topic	Details
Starlink by SpaceX	Over 7,000 satellites; global coverage
OneWeb (Bharti Airtel)	Partnered with Indian telcos
Digital Sovereignty	Strategic control over digital infrastructure
China's GuoWang	Government-led satellite internet
Project Kuiper	Amazon's low-earth satellite initiative
BSNL in India	Public operator facing financial challenges



Air Pollutants

Sulphur Dioxide (SO₂)



It comes from the consumption of fossil fuels (oil, coal and natural gas). Reacts with water to form acid rain.

Impact: Causes respiratory problems.

Nitrogen Dioxide (NO₂)





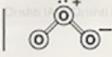


Emissions from road transport, industry and energy production sectors. Contributes to Ozone and PM formation.

Impact: Chronic lung disease.

Ozone (O₃)





Secondary pollutant formed from other pollutants (NOx and VOC) under the action of the sun.

Impact: Irritation of the eye and respiratory mucous membranes, asthma attacks.

Carbon Monoxide (CO)





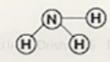


It is a product of the incomplete combustion of carbon-containing compounds.

Impact: Fatigue, confusion, and dizziness due to inadequate oxygen delivery to the brain.

Ammonia (NH₃)





Produced by the metabolism of amino acids and other compounds which contain nitrogen.

Impact: Immediate burning of the eyes, nose, throat and respiratory tract and can result in blindness, lung damage.

Lead (Pb)





Released as a waste product from extraction of metals such as silver, platinum, and iron from their respective ores.

Impact: Anemia, weakness, and kidney and brain damage.

Particulate Matter (PM)







PM10: Inhalable particles, with diameters that are generally 10 micrometers and smaller.

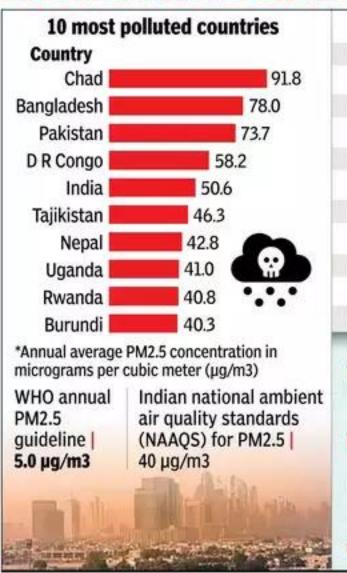
PM2.5: Fine inhalable particles, with diameters that are generally 2.5 micrometers and smaller.

Source: Emitted from construction sites, unpaved roads, fields, fires.

Impact: Irregular heartbeat, aggravated asthma, decreased lung function.

Note: These major air pollutants are included in the Air quality index for which short-term National Ambient Air Quality Standards are prescribed.

LITTLE KNOWN BYRNIHAT WORLD'S MOST POLLUTED



20 most polluted cities in the world

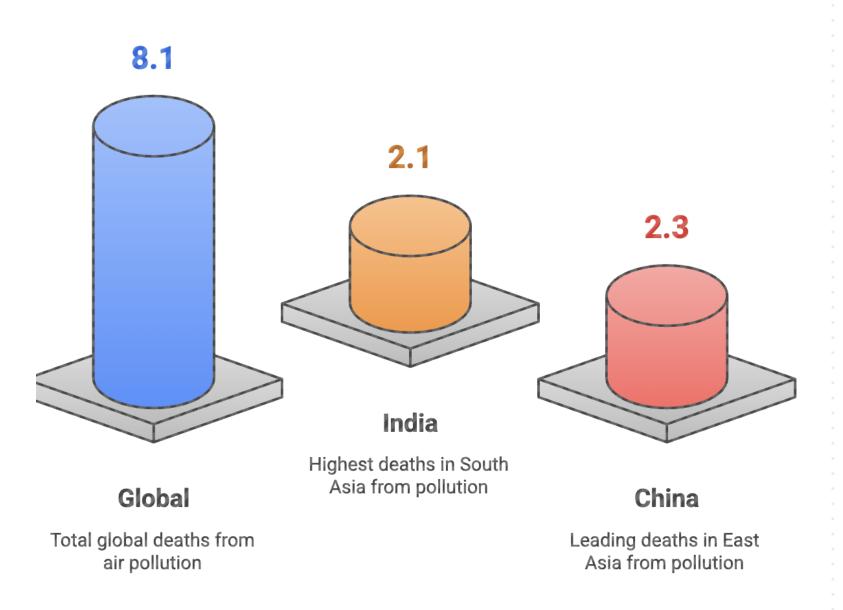
Byrnihat, Meghalaya, India	Sialkot, Pakistan
Delhi, India	Gurugram, Haryana, India
Karaganda, Kazakhstan Mullanpur, Punjab, India	Ganganagar, Rajasthan, India
Lahore, Pakistan	Hotan, China
Faridabad, Haryana, India	Greater Noida, UP, India
N'Djamena, Chad	Bhiwadi, Rajasthan, India
Loni, Uttar Pradesh, India	Muzaffarnagar, UP, India
New Delhi, India	Hanumangarh,
Multan, Pakistan	Rajasthan, India
Peshawar, Pakistan	Noida, UP, India

Key findings from the 2024 World Air Quality Report

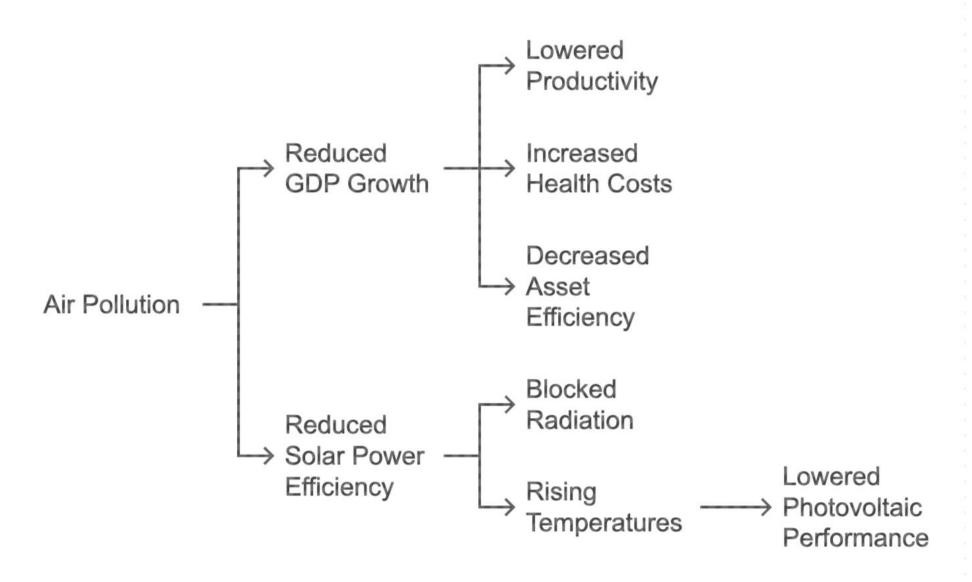
- Only 17% of global cities meet WHO air pollution guidelines
- A total of 126 (91.3%) out of 138 countries and regions exceeded WHO's annual PM2.5 guideline value of 5 μg/m3
- Mayaguez, Puerto

- Rico was the cleanest metropolitan area of 2024, with an annual average PM2.5 concentration of 1.1 µg/m3
- ➤ Oceania is the world's cleanest, with 57% of regional cities meeting WHO PM2.5 annual average

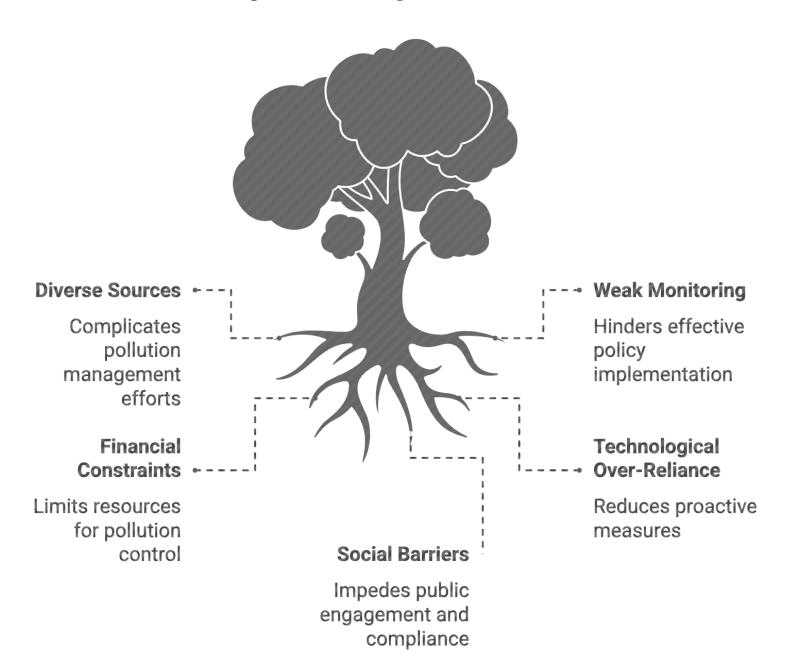
Global Deaths from Air Pollution in 2021



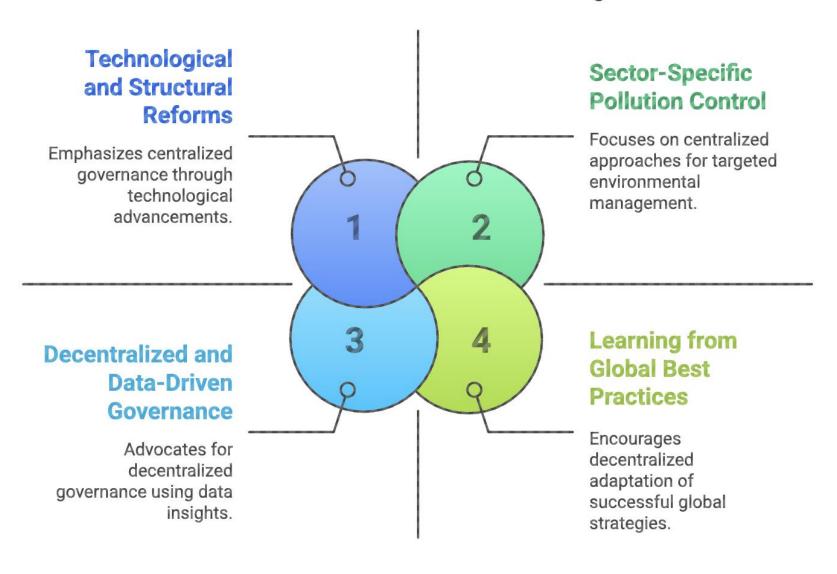
Impact of Air Pollution on Economy and Solar Efficiency



Challenges in Combating Air Pollution in India



Governance and Environmental Strategies

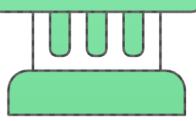


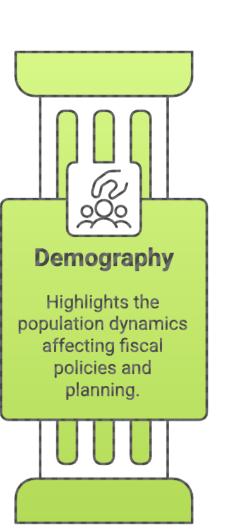
Fiscal Health Index (FHI) 2025





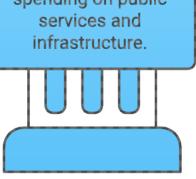
Represents the economic output of states contributing to national growth.

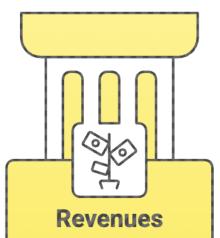






spending on public

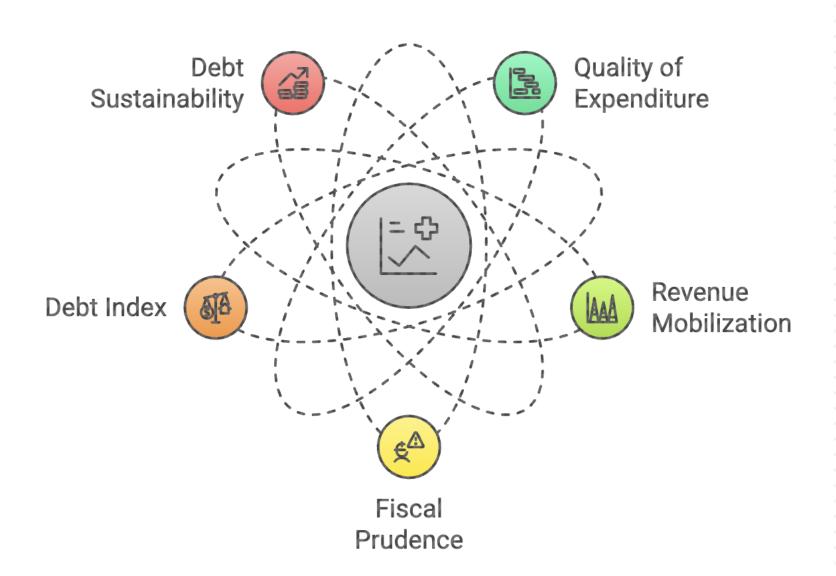




Focuses on the income generated by states through various sources.



Components of Fiscal Health



States have been classified on the basis of the FHI score as per below categories FHI scores have been rounded off to the nearest number for the below classification

Above 50	Achiever
Greater than 40 & less than equal to 50	Front Runner
Greater than 25 & less than equal to 40	Performer
Less than equal to 25	Aspirational

Achiever	Front Runner	Performer	Aspirational
Odisha (1)	Maharashtra (6)	Tamil Nadu (11)	Kerala (15)
Chhattisgarh (2)	Uttar Pradesh (7)	Rajasthan (12)	West Bengal (16)
Goa (3)	Telangana (8)	Bihar (13)	Andhra Pradesh (17)
Jharkhand (4)	Madhya Pradesh (9)	Haryana (14)	Punjab (18)
Gujarat (5)	Karnataka (10)		

Cape Town Convention

• The Rajya Sabha passed the Protection of Interests in Aircraft Objects Bill, 2025, giving legislative force to the Cape Town Convention to promote aircraft leasing in India.

- What is it?
- An international treaty adopted in 2001, the Cape Town Convention on International Interests in Mobile Equipment and its Aircraft Protocol establish uniform legal rules for asset-based financing and leasing of aircraft, helicopters, and engines.

Harmonizing Aviation Leasing





Cross-Border Efficiency

Reduces legal complexities in cross-border aviation transactions.

10 MCQ

Word of the day

Fracas:

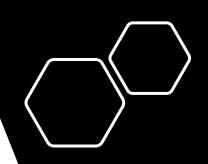
noisy quarrel

Synonyms: scuffle, fight, clash

Usage: Security guards rushed in to stop the fracas at the concert.

Pronunciation: newsth.live/fracaspro

International Phonetic Alphabet: /fɹækɑ:/



CLASS 24 (24) PROUDLY ANNOUNCE COURSES

FOR 8TH TO 12TH, IIT / NEET & FOUNDATION

COMMENCEMENT DATES



Centre Vaishali Mansrover Niware Road 03 April

10 April

10 April

FOR AVAIL MAX FREE BENEFIT



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