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10 MCQ QUIZ

10 MCQ



- Which six states have passed a resolution against UGC Regulations 2025?
- किन छह राज्यों ने यूजीसी 2025 नियमों के खिलाफ प्रस्ताव पारित किया है?
- A. Maharashtra, Gujarat, Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Himachal Pradesh, Assam / महाराष्ट्र, गुजरात, तमिलनाडु, केरल, हिमाचल प्रदेश, असम  
B. Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Telangana, Kerala, Himachal Pradesh, Jharkhand / कर्नाटक, तमिलनाडु, तेलंगाना, केरल, हिमाचल प्रदेश, झारखंड  
C. Uttar Pradesh, Punjab, Bihar, Odisha, Goa, Madhya Pradesh / उत्तर प्रदेश, पंजाब, बिहार, ओडिशा, गोवा, मध्य प्रदेश  
D. Rajasthan, West Bengal, Sikkim, Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur, Tripura / राजस्थान, पश्चिम बंगाल, सिक्किम, अरुणाचल प्रदेश, मणिपुर, त्रिपुरा

- What is the primary reason for these states opposing the UGC Regulations 2025?
- ये राज्य यूजीसी 2025 नियमों का विरोध क्यों कर रहे हैं?
- A. They believe education is a state subject / वे मानते हैं कि शिक्षा एक राज्य का विषय है
- B. They want to increase central control over universities / वे विश्वविद्यालयों पर केंद्रीय नियंत्रण बढ़ाना चाहते हैं
- C. The regulations promote privatization of universities / ये नियम विश्वविद्यालयों के निजीकरण को बढ़ावा देते हैं
- D. The rules enforce English as the mandatory medium of instruction / ये नियम अंग्रेजी को अनिवार्य शिक्षण माध्यम बनाते हैं

- Which BJP allies have also opposed the UGC Regulations 2025?
- किन बीजेपी सहयोगी दलों ने भी यूजीसी 2025 नियमों का विरोध किया है?
- A. Shiv Sena (Shinde faction) and JD(U) / शिवसेना (शिंदे गुट) और जेडीयू
- B. Telugu Desam Party (TDP) and Lok Janshakti Party (LJP) / तेलुगु देशम पार्टी (टीडीपी) और लोक जनशक्ति पार्टी (एलजेपी)
- C. Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) and Samajwadi Party (SP) / आम आदमी पार्टी (आप) और समाजवादी पार्टी (सपा)
- D. Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) and Rashtriya Lok Dal (RLD) / बहुजन समाज पार्टी (बसपा) और राष्ट्रीय लोक दल (आरएलडी)

- What is the Stryker vehicle, recently tested in Ladakh?
- हाल ही में लद्दाख में परीक्षण किया गया स्ट्राइकर वाहन क्या है?
- A. A high-speed battle tank / एक उच्च गति वाला युद्धक टैंक
- B. An infantry combat vehicle / एक पैदल सेना लड़ाके वाहन
- C. A long-range missile launcher / एक लंबी दूरी की मिसाइल लॉन्चर
- D. A multi-purpose drone system / एक बहुउद्देशीय ड्रोन प्रणाली



- Which U.S.-made weapon failed to perform optimally in high-altitude conditions during Indian Army tests?
- भारतीय सेना के परीक्षणों के दौरान कौन सा अमेरिकी हथियार उच्च ऊंचाई पर पूरी क्षमता से प्रदर्शन नहीं कर सका?
- A. Patriot Missile System / पैट्रियट मिसाइल सिस्टम
- B. Javelin Anti-Tank Guided Missile (ATGM) / जेवेलिन एंटी-टैंक गाइडेड मिसाइल (ATGM)
- C. MQ-9 Reaper Drone / MQ-9 रीपर ड्रोन
- D. M777 Howitzer / M777 हॉवित्जर

- **What was the historical significance of renaming Fort William in Kolkata?**
- **कोलकाता में फोर्ट विलियम का नाम बदलने का ऐतिहासिक महत्व क्या था?**
- **A. It honored India's first Field Marshal / यह भारत के पहले फील्ड मार्शल को सम्मानित करता है**
- **B. It removed a colonial-era name / इसने औपनिवेशिक युग के नाम को हटा दिया**
- **C. It was done to attract more tourism / इसे अधिक पर्यटन आकर्षित करने के लिए किया गया**
- **D. It was renamed after a freedom fighter / इसे एक स्वतंत्रता सेनानी के नाम पर रखा गया**

- What is the purpose of the newly launched 'GARBH-INi-DRISHTI' data repository?
- नवीनतम लॉन्च किए गए 'GARBH-INi-DRISHTI' डेटा रिपॉजिटरी का उद्देश्य क्या है?
- A. Collection of historical manuscripts / ऐतिहासिक पांडुलिपियों का संग्रह
- B. Health data storage for pregnant women and newborns / गर्भवती महिलाओं और नवजात शिशुओं के लिए स्वास्थ्य डेटा भंडारण
- C. Monitoring climate change data / जलवायु परिवर्तन डेटा की निगरानी
- D. Maintaining defense intelligence records / रक्षा खुफिया रिकॉर्ड बनाए रखना

- Which Indian tribal dance was recently celebrated due to the first electricity supply in Neelabandha?
- नीलबंधा में पहली बार बिजली आपूर्ति के कारण हाल ही में कौन सा भारतीय आदिवासी नृत्य मनाया गया?
- A. Bihu / बिह  
B. Dhimsa / धीमसा  
C. Kalbelia / कालबेलिया  
D. Lavani / लावणी



- Which country recently put Santorini Island on high alert due to undersea earthquakes?
- किस देश ने हाल ही में सैंटोरिनी द्वीप को समुद्र के नीचे भूकंपों के कारण उच्च सतर्कता पर रखा?
- A. Japan / जापान
- B. Greece / ग्रीस
- C. Indonesia / इंडोनेशिया
- D. Italy / इटली

- What is the key feature of India's GDP growth projection for 2025-26?
- 2025-26 के लिए भारत की जीडीपी वृद्धि के अनुमान की मुख्य विशेषता क्या है?
- A. Projected nominal GDP growth at 10.1% / अनुमानित नाममात्र जीडीपी वृद्धि 10.1%
- B. Projected real GDP growth at 12% / अनुमानित वास्तविक जीडीपी वृद्धि 12%
- C. Predicted fiscal deficit below 2% / 2% से कम वित्तीय घाटे का अनुमान
- D. Expected decline in capital expenditure / पूंजीगत व्यय में गिरावट की उम्मीद

323

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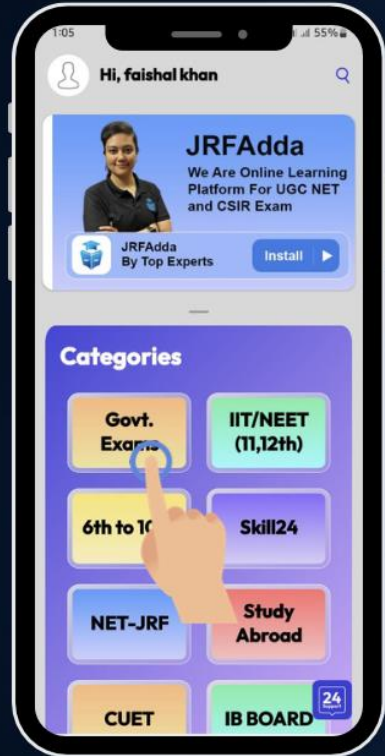
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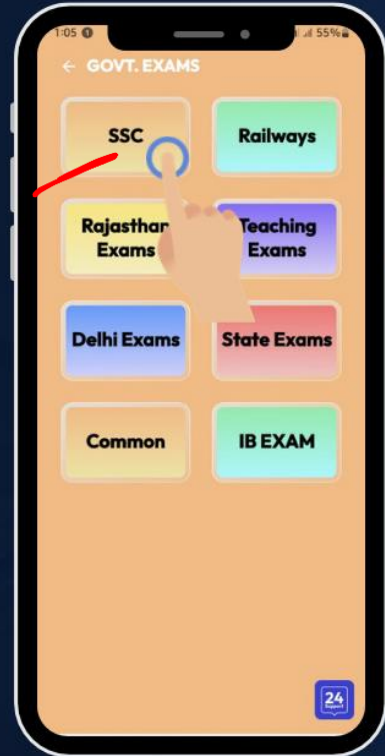
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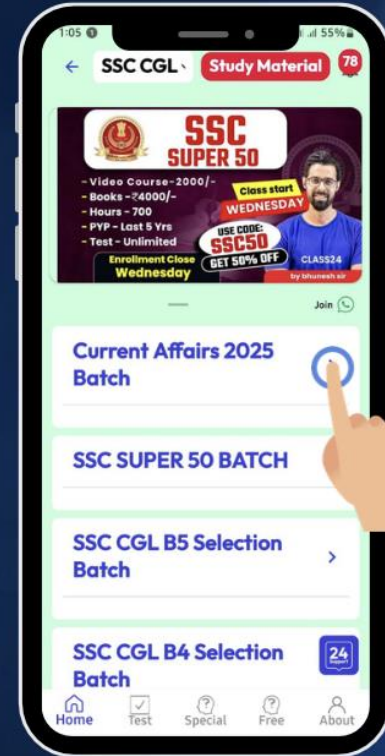
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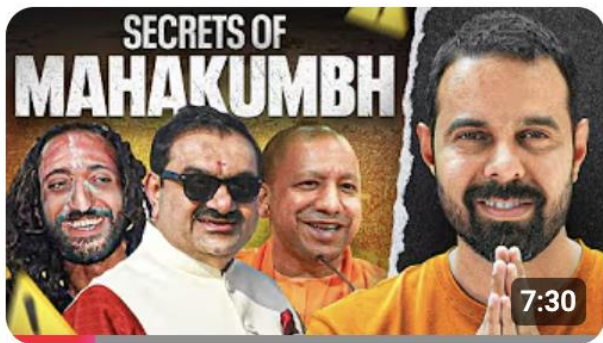
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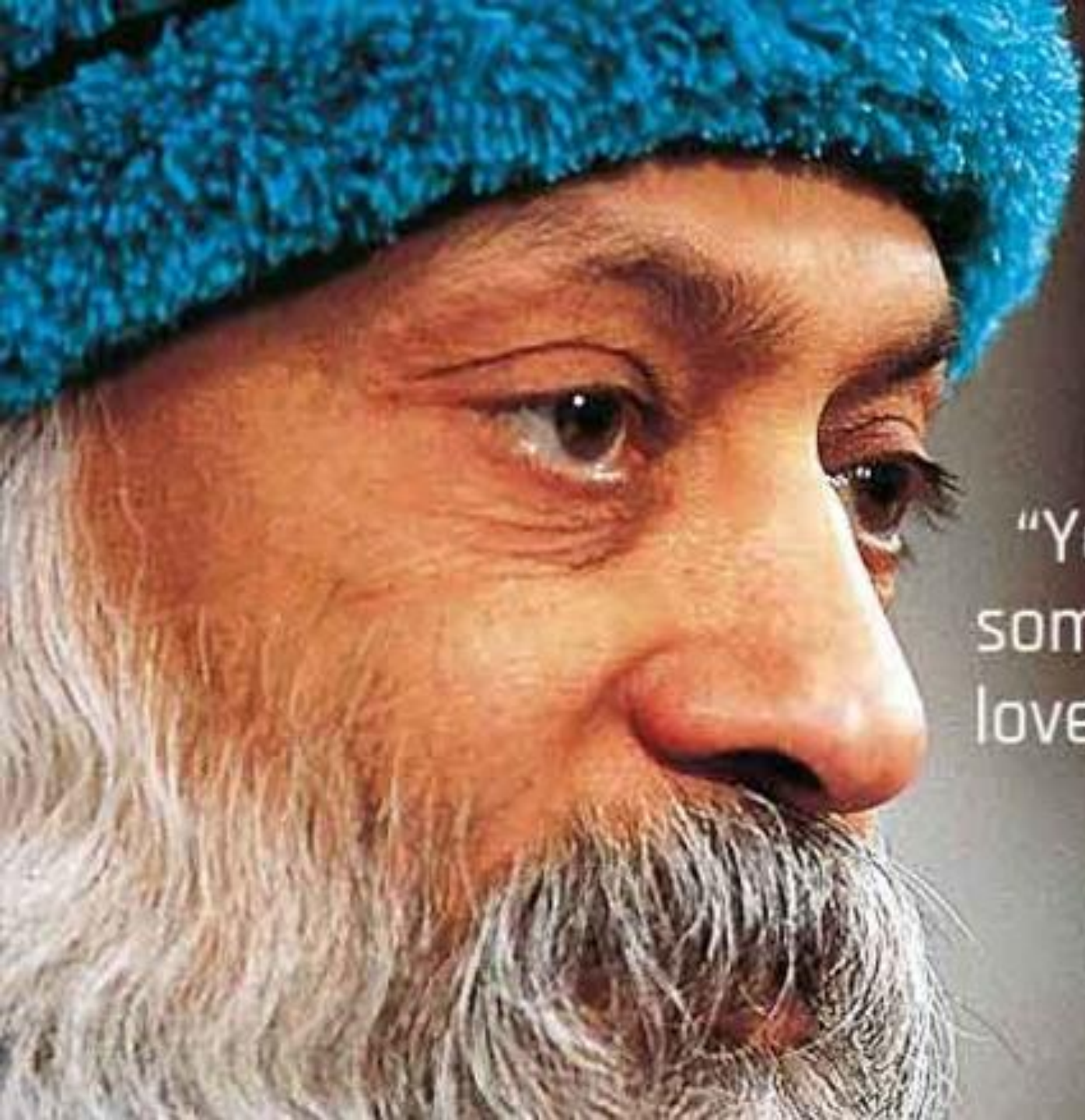
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“You need power only to do something harmful. Otherwise love is enough, compassion is enough.”



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WORLD » PAGE 14

**UN ISSUES WARNING**  
**80 killed as militants, Army clash in Sudan**  
WORLD » PAGE 14

**PARLEY**  
**Sovereignty versus financial constraints**  
**Should India build a foundational AI model?**  
OPINION » PAGE 9

**BRIGHT START**  
**India cruises past England in first ODI**  
SPORT » PAGE 16

**INSIDE**



**Cong practises appeasement, says PM in RS**

**NEW DELHI** Comparing the Congress rule with his government's record, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said in the Rajya Sabha on Thursday that the Congress practised the politics of appeasement while his government worked for satisfaction of all. » PAGE 4



**Akhilesh Yadav alleges rigging in Milkpuri bypoll**

**LUCKNOW** Samajwadi Party president Akhilesh Yadav on Thursday alleged that the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party indulged in largescale rigging with assistance from the administration in the Milkpuri by-election held on Wednesday. » PAGE 2

**Civilian dead in Jammu after alleged 'torture'**

**SRINAGAR/JAMMU** A civilian was found dead in Kathua in Jammu on Thursday after allegedly facing torture in police custody. Another civilian was shot dead by the Army in Baramulla in North Kashmir after he allegedly sped away from a checkpoint. » PAGE 4

**Draft guidelines: UGC extends last date for feedback**

**NEW DELHI** A day after the Education Ministers of six non-BJP ruled States met in Bengaluru and resolved against the University Grants Commission's draft guidelines the commission decided to extend the last date to submit feedback. » PAGE 6

**Trump bars trans athletes from women's sports**

**WASHINGTON** U.S. President Donald Trump signed an Executive Order on Wednesday seeking to ban transgender athletes from participating in women's sports, in his latest move targeting transgender people since returning to office last month. » PAGE 14

# Centre plays down U.S. handling of deportees

Both Houses erupt in protest over handcuffing and chaining of Indians; External Affairs Minister says use of such restraints is a 'standard procedure', stresses on the obligation of all countries to take back their nationals if they are found to be living illegally abroad, and asserts that discouraging illegal movement was in collective interest of the House

**The Hindu Bureau**  
NEW DELHI

A mid protests from the Opposition members over the way undocumented Indian nationals were handcuffed and chained by the U.S. while deporting them to India, External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar on Thursday informed Parliament that the deportation of undocumented immigrants was not a new development, and the use of restraints was a "standard operating procedure".

Mr. Jaishankar said the Centre would be engaging with the U.S. government to ensure that the deportees were not mistreated in any manner while being sent back.

The Minister made the statement as both the Houses witnessed an uproar over the treatment meted out to 104 illegal Indian immigrants who landed in Amritsar on Wednesday on a U.S. military plane.

Speaking in the Rajya Sabha first, Mr. Jaishankar said a total of 15,756 illegal Indian immigrants have been deported to India from the U.S. since 2009.

The Lok Sabha witnessed multiple disruptions and was eventually adjourned after Mr. Jaishankar made the statement amid protests.

He stressed that it was the obligation of all countries to take back their nationals if they were found to be living illegally abroad.

"Sir, honourable members would be aware that the process of deportation is not a new one, it is a new one, and has been ongoing for several years," Mr. Jaishankar said, while sharing a year-wise break-up of deportees since 2009.

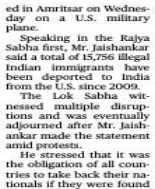
The highest deportation was witnessed in 2019 with 2,042 illegal Indian immigrants being sent back to the country, he said.

Mr. Jaishankar also asserted that it was in the collective interest of the House to discourage illegal movement, and the focus of the government would be to "crack down on the illegal migration industry".

Expressing outrage over the handcuffing of deportees, Opposition members staged a protest outside Parliament.

"Prime Minister, listen to this man's pain. Indians deserve Dignity and Humanity, NOT Handcuffs," Mr. Gandhi said in a post on X, where he shared a video of a deportee narrating his ordeal.

"Humiliation of Indians" We, the INDIA parties, shall not tolerate the humiliation of Indian nationals," Mr. Kharge said, adding,



In chains: Undocumented Indian nationals being deported to India in restraints on a U.S. military aircraft. X/IGUSBCHEP

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"U.S. doubles down on deportations"

**NEW DELHI** Amid outrage over the treatment of Indian deportees, the United States doubled down on its decision to fly the alleged illegal immigrants shackled and handcuffed aboard a military plane. Apart from India, the U.S. military's C-17s and C-130s have been used for a number of countries including Guatemala, Peru, Honduras and Ecuador as well as Colombia. » PAGE 5



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# What was 'gross' about the 12 Bills kept pending for 3 years: SC to T.N. Governor

**Krishnadas Rajagopal**  
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Thursday asked what Tamil Nadu Governor R.N. Ravi found "gross" about the 12 Bills the State government sent him for assent that they were kept pending for over three years.

A Bench of Justices J.B. Pardiwala and R. Mahadevan recapped the trajectory of 12 Bills, mostly to do with higher education and the appointment process of Vice-Chancellors in State universities, for the benefit of the Governor, whose office was represented by Attorney-General of India R. Venkataraman.

Justice Pardiwala observed these Bills were sent by the State Legislature for consent to the Governor under Article 209 of the Constitution between January 2020 and April 2023.

The Governor had sat on them indefinitely. Ultimately, when the State approached the court against the Governor's perceived inaction in November 2023, the latter had quickly referred two of the Bills to the President and proceeded to withhold consent on the remaining 10.

The judge further observed that the Tamil Nadu Assembly had re-passed the 10 Bills in a Special Session and sent them again to the Governor for assent. This time, the Governor had proceeded to refer all 10 Bills to the President for consideration. The President had subsequently assented to one Bill, rejected seven and not considered

the remaining two proposed laws.

"We do not want to undermine the powers of the Governor... But, tell us what is that something gross the Governor found that he kept these pending for over three years?" Justice Pardiwala asked.

**Political opponent** The State government, represented by senior advocate Rakesh Dwivedi, Mr. Venkataraman, A.M. Singhvi and P. Wilson, argued the Governor's conduct was that of a political opponent. Once the Bills were re-passed, Governor Ravi had no option but to give assent. Here, the Governor had countermanded the will of the people expressed through their elected representatives.

You [Governor] are saying I withhold consent, but at the same time, I will not ask them to reconsider the Bills. This would only frustrate the procedure under Article 200. The Governor seems to have adopted his own procedure here. JUSTICE J.B. PARDIWALA Supreme Court Judge

**SC to hear Kerala's plea on Governors in March**

**Krishnadas Rajagopal**  
NEW DELHI

The State of Kerala on Thursday pushed for an early hearing in the Supreme Court for its writ petition, arguing the Governors in Opposition-ruled States

have triggered a tendency to delay assent or indefinitely sit on crucial Bills passed by the Legislative Assemblies. The matter is likely to be listed in March.

**FULL REPORT ON**  
» PAGE 3

Mr. Venkataraman said the State, through its submissions, was portraying the Governor as an "insignificant" authority occupying a "small place" in a constitutional democracy.

He argued the Governor had only expressed his wish to withhold consent. The top law officer said the Governor found the Bills containing provisions giving the State government more powers, both as an authority over university appointments and over the Vice-Chancellors. Higher education was a subject in the Concurrent List.

Justice Pardiwala said the Governor's submissions "did not make any sense". "... The Governor seems to have adopted his own procedure here," he addressed the A-G.



In ruins: A man hammering the debris around the vandalised residence of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman in Dhaka on Thursday. AP

# Yunus planned to kill me, says Hasina after mob razes father Mujib's house

**Kalhol Bhattacharjee**  
DIBRUGARH

Bangladesh has become the "land of terrorists and militants". Its former Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina said in a speech delivered online from New Delhi on Thursday.

The nearly hour-long speech was streamed on the web pages of the Awami League soon after a "bulldozer rally" by a mob demolished the historic 32 Dhammond residence of Bangladesh's founding leader and her father, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, early on Thursday.

India termed the incident "regrettable". Ms. Hasina, who is in exile in India after the fall of her government in August 2024, said the people of Bangladesh would do justice

for the demolition of the house where she grew up. She said she would have to accomplish "some important assignment" in the coming days. "A game of destruction has started around Bangladesh, which is going through a phase of chaos and upheaval. Bangladesh, which was a role model of development across the world, has become the land of terrorists and militants. This is indeed a matter of great misfortune for us all," she said.

Ms. Hasina criticised the current government, led by Nobel laureate Mohammad Yunus, calling it "completely unconstitutional".

"He has come to power using money power and by targeting the dead business of many people of our country," she said. "There

was meticulous planning by Yunus *shibh* to kill me and my sister," she added. "They can break a house but we can rebuild that in the coming days. A game of destruction has started around Bangladesh, which is going through a phase of chaos and upheaval. Bangladesh, which was a role model of development across the world, has become the land of terrorists and militants. This is indeed a matter of great misfortune for us all," she said.

Bangladesh protests The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Bangladesh protested "strongly" after Ms. Hasina's speech was disseminated online.

Dhaka's concerns were conveyed to Pawan Badhe, who is currently serving as the Head of Mission in the High Commission of India in Dhaka. "Through the protest note, handed over to the Acting High Commissioner of India in Dhaka, the Ministry conveyed

the deep concern, disappointment and serious reservation of the Government of Bangladesh, as such statements are hurting the sentiments of the people in Bangladesh," said the MOFA, Bangladesh, in a press note.

On Wednesday a mob called for the destruction of 32 Dhammond, the residence of Bangladesh's founding father, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. The crowd then started dismantling the building using heavy earth-moving machinery despite a police presence.

In a statement, the Awami League accused the interim government of providing "immunity" and said, "Dr. Yunus and the government cannot escape liability for last night's destructive acts."



# The primary lessons from the Reagan air crash

## A call for chaos The U.S. should push for a two-state solution, not displace an entire people

When the state of Israel was created in Palestine in 1948, more than 700,000 Palestinians, the land's original inhabitants, were displaced. A member of this forced mass expulsion was the Nakba (catastrophe). More Palestinians were expelled during the Six-Day War in 1967. Some moved to Gaza, others to the West Bank, while the majority fled to other countries, where they and their descendants are refugees. In successive peace talks, Israel has outrightly rejected their right to return to their homes, a fundamental right. Now, U.S. President Donald Trump wants to forcibly transfer the 2.3 million Palestinians out of Gaza, the Mediterranean enclave that has suffered relentless Israeli bombardment for 15 months. His plan involves relocating Palestinians to neighbouring Arab countries, taking over the 360 sq. km strip which he calls a "hellhole" and redeveloping it into the Riviera of the Middle East. At a press conference in Washington DC, with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, he also stated sending troops to Gaza "if necessary". The White House later claimed that he meant a temporary relocation of Palestinians. It also clarified that he had not committed to deporting U.S. troops but reaffirmed that his "out-of-the-box" proposal for Gaza was a serious one. However, Mr. Trump's plan has at least three fundamental problems.

First, Palestinians are in a legal position that Israel and the U.S. can bomb and relocate at will. They are a people with a national identity, whose collective past and future, is deeply tied to the Palestinian land. Despite relentless Israeli bombardment, the Palestinians of Gaza have refused to leave. Now, Mr. Trump is advocating what is essentially a call for ethnic cleansing. Several of America's allies, have unequivocally rejected Mr. Trump's proposal. They understand that Palestinians who were forcibly removed never managed to return. Second, authoritarian rulers, regardless of their dependence on U.S. aid, must pay attention to the sentiments of their people, who overwhelmingly support Palestinian rights. Third, Mr. Trump's vision of rebuilding Gaza aligns closely with the Israeli far-right's agenda: resettling the land with Jewish settlers. This will further alienate an already desperate population and plant yet another time bomb in West Asia. Mr. Trump must abandon his calls for the ethnic cleansing and instead use America's influence to ensure a successful ceasefire in Gaza. The U.S. should be working toward a lasting, just solution — one that acknowledges Palestinian rights and upholds the principles of peace and stability in the region.

## Crippling aid work The fallout of U.S. foreign assistance freeze will be far-reaching

Insularity often stems from contempt, and the kind now being exhibited by U.S. President Donald Trump and his administration is no exception. Withdrawal from international commitments has become a defining feature of Mr. Trump's foreign policy. His decision to freeze foreign assistance adds to the list of dramatic moves, following the withdrawal from WHO and the Paris Accord. This decision will disrupt established global aid structures and have dire consequences for millions who rely on U.S. assistance for survival. While the full impact is yet to unfold, it is clear to those in the development sector that a cascade of radical decisions is imminent. On his first day in office, Mr. Trump imposed a 90-day freeze on foreign assistance, citing inefficiencies and ideological opposition to USAID. His administration argues that USAID misallocates funds and operates in line with his policies. Elon Musk, head of the Department of Government Efficiency, went so far as to label USAID a viper's nest of radical left Marxists who hate America. The official USAID website has been stripped of its content, and it is clear that all personnel would be placed on administrative leave, with only a few exceptions for mission-critical staff. The administration also ordered rapid repatriation of overseas USAID personnel within 30 days.

USAID was established in 1961 as an independent agency under the Foreign Assistance Act, designed to provide global humanitarian and development aid. According to the U.S. government's official spending tracker (USASpend.gov), USAID was allocated \$44.2 billion in the 2024 budget. While this amounts to just 0.4% of the total U.S. federal budget, media reports indicate that it accounted for nearly 42% of all humanitarian aid tracked by the UN in 2024. USAID funds a range of programmes which include health care, food aid (including assistance to Gaza), and disaster relief. The agency has maintained a strong presence in India since the 1960s, supporting initiatives in education, immunisation, HIV/AIDS prevention, and child health. Though direct financial aid to India has declined in recent years, USAID contributions still amounted to over \$150 million for the latest fiscal year. However, in many conflict-ridden regions, USAID maintains a lifeline. Withdrawal from international aid efforts is more than a bureaucratic shift: it risks leaving millions without food, medical assistance and critical resources. The decision reflects an inward-looking approach that dismisses the interconnectedness of global affairs. As the U.S. retreats from its historical leadership in international development, the world will be left grappling with the consequences of this reckless policy shift.

The tragic mid-air collision on January 20, 2025 between a United States Army Sikorsky UH-60 Black Hawk helicopter and an American Airlines CRJ-700 flight while it was on the final approach path to Ronald Reagan Washington National Airport, Washington DC, killing 67 people, brings out several aspects of human factors that can result in a tragedy.

In this case, the first was having politicians jump the gun by blaming others, even before a formal investigation began and the bodies were yet to be recovered from the watery grave of the Potomac river. U.S. President Donald Trump was quick to blame former U.S. Presidents Barack Obama and Joe Biden for diluting U.S. air safety standards, forgetting that it was he who held the reins in the interim four-year period.

**Pressure, opaque investigations in India**  
One saw the same kind of political manoeuvring just after the air accident at Mangaluru in May 2010 when the Minister of Civil Aviation, Pratul Patel, declared that the airport conformed to all standards of ICAO Annex 14, volume 1. Duffinally, the committee of inquiry that was headed by a retired Air Marshal of the Indian Air Force, glossed over all the blatant violations of the Airports Authority of India, the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) and the airline, i.e., Air India Express, by blaming only the pilot. In all the air accident reports in India, one never gets detailed data from the aircraft flight data recorder and the cockpit voice recorder.

Unlike in India, where the truth is hidden and the collars placed on all access to information on the accident, photographs or data on the state of infrastructure, it is open in the rest of the world where one can analyse data with vital clues that are available. There is a big lesson to be learnt from the air accident in the U.S. The radar track and the air traffic control audio tracks were openly available and one could analyse and disseminate the facts instead of having distorted data and reports that have been vetted by a publicist that ensures that there is nothing incriminating against the government and its agencies is published in the final report.

Let us take what has been put out by mass media sources in the U.S. What is generally known is that the American Airlines flight was given a runway change by air traffic controllers to accommodate a departure. The change was accepted by the crew. The helicopter (or Priority Air Transport) had taken off from a base



**Captain A. Mohan Ranganathan**  
is a former Indian instructor pilot and aviation safety adviser. He is also a former member of the Civil Aviation Safety Advisory Council (CASAC), India

nearby for a Proficiency training flight at night and had been informed about the passenger flight. The traffic controller asked the helicopter crew whether he had the passenger flight in sight. The pilot responded by saying he was visual with the plane and he was given clearance to maintain visual and pass behind the passenger flight. This was the critical factor that played a part. The flight was at night. Other than the navigation lights and the rotating beacon the helicopter pilot had no other clue to make out the type of aircraft he had visual sighting with. His only information was based on what he saw and what he heard.

If one looks at the radar picture available to the beaconed helicopter pilot had no other clue to make out the type of aircraft he had visual sighting with. His only information was based on what he saw and what he heard. The American flight was originally approaching before the 'hurry crew' accepted a side step to a different runway.

**The 'hurry syndrome'**  
Did the helicopter pilot wrongly identify this second flight to be the American flight when he was visual with the plane and he was given clearance at the radar track of this second flight and the track being followed by the helicopter 'from behind' (as instructed by air traffic control), it is quite likely that the helicopter crew had focused on the second flight. In the two runway American Airlines flight and were fixated on being behind the aircraft flying in front of them. In both the helicopter and the American Airlines flight were below 1,000 feet above ground level, the collision avoidance system would not have sounded as it would have been inhibited below 1,000 ft.

**The Reagan accident in the U.S. highlights the several factors that can result in a tragedy; there is also the danger of investigation agencies getting side-tracked**

Soon after the Reagan accident, the visual media in India went on overdrive, with graphic illustrations of the Charkhi Deldi mid-air collision in India, near New Delhi, on November 12, 2002, in which a Kazakhstan Airlines flight from Chimkent, Kazakhstan to Delhi

collided with a Saudi Arabian Airlines Boeing 747 flight from Delhi to Dhahran, killing 349 people. The pilot of the Kazakh flight was blamed for not complying with air traffic control clearance. What people are not aware of was a DGCA official who was in-charge of the investigation was removed from the investigation when he submitted his findings. It was another official who finalised the report; it is needless to say that the last nine minutes of the digital flight data recorder of the Saudi flight was a blank.

In the recent crash in South Korea, in December 2024, where a passenger flight landed with retracted flaps and crashed into an embankment housing the Instrument Landing System localiser antenna, South Korea, like India at the time of the Mangaluru crash, had not complied with the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) Annex 14, Volume 1 Standard that mandated that all structures in operational areas shall be frangible from January 1, 2010. Yet, ICAO gave them a clean chit during the audit.

**Incidents in Bengaluru, Tiruchirappalli**  
Let us not forget that in the last two Indigo flights, on January 7, 2022 — one bound for Kolkata, and the other for Bhubaneswar — that were departing from parallel runways at Bengaluru airport, the air traffic controllers had cleared planes for take-off. In the two runways at Bengaluru, one runway was to be used for take-offs and the other for landings simultaneously. It was a narrow escape for both planes.

Neither the airline nor the air traffic control reported the matter but the incident came to light during a safety audit. The lack of situational awareness and the lack of knowledge of the pilots on the functioning of the collision avoidance system were safety issues that were all swept under the carpet.

On October 11, 2024, an Air India Express flight from Tiruchirappalli to Sharjah experienced hydraulic failure on one engine. It circled for close to three hours before landing. But the political class in India, near New Delhi, and the media went making a hero out of the captain who had exhibited very poor judgement when he could have made an overweight landing immediately.

This is another example of people with no knowledge of aviation passing judgements and influencing investigation agencies. The mid-air tragedy should open the eyes of the travelling public and know that safety is being compromised for brownie points.

# The saga of regulating India's thermal power emissions

On December 30, 2024, India's Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC) issued a notification amending the Environment Protection Rules by pushing back the deadline for thermal plants to comply with sulphur dioxide (SO<sub>2</sub>) emission norms by three years without any reasons being given. As it happens, the existing deadline for about 20 gigawatts (GW) of thermal plants, all located in close proximity to densely populated areas, was December 31, 2024. This is the latest instance in a nearly decade-long saga that fans of Franz Kafka might find appealing.

The MoEFCC revised the emission norms for Indian thermal plants in December 2015 after public consultations, and all thermal plants were expected to comply with them by December 2017 despite it being a tight deadline. This notification tightened the prevalent norms for particulate matter emissions and introduced norms for other emissions, including SO<sub>2</sub>, for the first time. These norms were understood to be broadly on a par with existing practices in countries such as Australia, China and the United States.

**The morphing of a debate**  
Indian coal generally has a lower sulphur content than other coal, which should have made it easier for Indian thermal plants to meet the SO<sub>2</sub> emission norms. But rather than focusing on the best ways to meet the norms — given Indian coal's characteristics — the debate morphed into the challenges around installing the flue gas desulphurisation (FGD) technology for neutralisation of high-sulphur coal. Despite the norms never mandating FGDs, the discussion became one about issues such as the scheduling of FGD installations given their long gestation periods and the likely costs of installing them.

In parallel, a different discourse questioning the SO<sub>2</sub> emission norms themselves also took

shape, often driven by different arms of the government. The Central Agency for Regulatory (CAR) published papers in 2020 and 2021, questioning the need for uniform norms across the country and proposing that the SO<sub>2</sub> implementation be phased out till 2035. The CAR also commissioned a study from IIT Delhi in 2022 which concluded that the installation of FGDs does provide air quality benefits but argued for extending the timeline due to issues such as FGDs being expensive, their supply chain being inadequate, and their operation leading to increased coal consumption and hence greenhouse gas emissions.

In 2024, NITI Aayog commissioned the CSIR-National Environmental Engineering Research Institute to conduct a study on this. This study concluded that the benefits of FGDs are not important to achieve good ambient air quality in India, and instead the focus should be on particulate emissions. There was also one strand of debate about secondary aerosol formation from the sulphate plants to have norms for it even though Indian coal is relatively low sulphur. Thus, rather than debating the merits of this technology and the benefits of notifying the first set of norms, it continues robustly nearly a decade after their notification.

**Different deadlines**  
In the midst of these debates, the MoEFCC diluted some norms and also extended, multiple times, the deadlines for compliance, with the latest being in December 2024 being the focus in the series. As a result, there are different deadlines for different locations and for different types of emissions, with SO<sub>2</sub> emission deadlines being well after the deadline for other emissions. This has led to confusion among citizens living around thermal plants who do not get the benefit of clearer air.

It is unfortunate that the BJP government at the Centre has failed to condemn the inhuman treatment meted out to the Indians deported to the American government but has also gone on to defend the act. It was such a relief that the External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar, to take up the matter at the highest level, stated casually in the Rajya Sabha yesterday that it is the practice of the American government — "the Standard Operating Procedure" provides for the use of restraints. One also

government agencies, was December 31, 2024 with many plants having to comply from December 31 of 2022 and 2023. But it is not clear if various pollution control boards are verifying adherence to even these norms as there is no public source easily available that provides this information.

**Consumer pays**  
Given the evolving timelines in the various notifications by the MoEFCC, many thermal plants have already tendered contracts to install FGDs — though not at a pace required to meet their deadlines before the latest notification. This was enabled by electricity regulators introducing regulations to pass on the costs of installing FGDs and other pollution control equipment to electricity consumers irrespective of whether emission norms are met (so that it is not a burden on thermal plants).

As a result, though the earliest deadline for meeting SO<sub>2</sub> emission norms is now December 31, 2022, 22 GW of thermal plants have already installed FGDs. Additionally, 102 GW (nearly 50% of installed thermal capacity) is in advanced stages of setting up FGD.

Given the new timelines for compliance, the chances are that plants with FGDs will not run them since this would increase the cost of generation and hence push them down the preferred list of generators. Thus, electricity consumers are likely to be paying for installed but unused equipment, even as citizens living around thermal plants do not get the benefit of cleaner air for at least three more years, if not longer.

Perhaps this modern variant of India's *khichdi* will get cooked one day, but the institutional, environmental, health and financial costs of doing so are likely to end up being high. And, unlike the original fable, it is not even clear whether the right lessons would be learnt from this saga.

**LETTERS TO THE EDITOR**

**Deportation, human rights**  
I write this letter as a former Union Minister for Law and Justice. The heart-rending ordeal of Indian citizens deported to India on a U.S. military aircraft is the ultimate denunciation of American pretensions as the global defender of human rights and democracy. The reported chaining and handcuffing of helpless captives aboard the plane, completely restricting their access to the washrooms, must put to shame all those responsible for the infraction of our citizens' right to dignity and privacy. The mental and physical suffering meted out to the American authorities merits a firm and suitable response from the Indian government. I would appeal to the External Affairs Minister, S. Jaishankar, to take up the matter at the highest level in the U.S. administration. Clearly, protecting the dignity and the basic human rights of Indian citizens is the first charge on the shoulders of the Indian state.

**Ashtwan Kumar, New Delhi**

It is unfortunate that the BJP government at the Centre has failed to condemn the inhuman treatment meted out to the Indians deported to the American government but has also gone on to defend the act. It was such a relief that the External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar, to take up the matter at the highest level, stated casually in the Rajya Sabha yesterday that it is the practice of the American government — "the Standard Operating Procedure" provides for the use of restraints. One also

announced issue. Does it mean that he considers the torture of our citizens to be more important than the basic rights of Indians? **Amol S. Fernandes, Chennai**

**Trump and Gaza plan**  
The United States External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar, is setting a dangerous precedent by proposing a plan to take over the Gaza strip, as reported in the *Washington Post*. It is with support from the U.S., demilitarised Gaza and has rendered millions of Palestinians homeless. Now, Mr. Trump is proposing to make them homeless also. While he is after illegal immigrants in the U.S., on what grounds is he asking West Asian countries to

have Palestinians displaced by his own ally? **K. Ganapathy Subramanian, Nagoreli, Tamil Nadu**

Besides setting a dangerous precedent for international relations, Mr. Trump's proposal will upset the rules-based international order. A megalomaniac cannot ride roughshod over the rules-based system of civilised international community has in place. **Karlan Mathew, Kochi, Kerala**

Letters emailed to [editor@thehindu.co.in](mailto:editor@thehindu.co.in) must carry the postal address.

**Corrections & Clarifications**  
In a recent report, "Non-voting recorded in crucial election in Delhi" (February 6, 2025), the Chief Justice of India's name was erroneously mentioned as S. Das. The name should have been C. J. Chandrachud. **The Hindustan Times**'s office can be contacted by Telegram: <https://t.me/hindustantimes> or Email: [reader@thehindu.co.in](mailto:reader@thehindu.co.in)



# The saga of regulating India's thermal power emissions

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The MoEFCC revised the emission norms for Indian thermal plants in December 2015 after public consultations, and all thermal plants were expected to comply with them by December 2017 despite it being a tight deadline.

This notification tightened the prevalent norms for particulate matter emissions and introduced norms for other emissions, including SO<sub>2</sub>, for the first time. These norms were understood to be broadly on a par with existing practices in countries such as Australia, China and the United States.

## The morphing of a debate

Indian coal generally has a lower sulphur content than other coal, which should have made it easier for Indian thermal plants to meet the SO<sub>2</sub> emission norms. But rather than focusing on the best ways to meet the norms – given Indian coal's characteristics – the debate morphed into the challenges around implementing the flue gas desulphurisation (FGD) technology for desulphurisation of high-sulphur coal. Despite the norms never mandating FGDs, the discussion became one about issues such as the scheduling of FGD installations given their long gestation periods and the likely costs of installing them.

In parallel, a different discourse questioning the SO<sub>2</sub> emission norms themselves also took



**Ashok Sreenivas**

is with the Prayas  
(Energy Group)



**Maria Chiravil**

is with the Prayas  
(Energy Group)

Electricity consumers are likely to pay for installed but unused equipment, even as citizens living around thermal plants do not get the benefit of cleaner air

shape, often driven by different arms of the government. The Central Electricity Authority (CEA) published papers in 2020 and 2021, questioning the need for uniform norms across the country and proposing that its country-wide implementation be phased out till 2035. The CEA also commissioned a study from IIT Delhi in 2022 which concluded that the installation of FGDs does provide air quality benefits but argued for extending the timelines due to issues such as FGDs being expensive, their supply chain being inadequate, and their operation leading to increased coal consumption (and hence greenhouse gas emissions).

In 2024, NITI Aayog commissioned the CSIR-National Environmental Engineering Research Institute to conduct a study on this. This study concluded that SO<sub>2</sub> emission norms are not important to achieve good ambient air quality in India, and instead the focus should be on particulate emissions. There was also one strand of debate about secondary aerosol formation from SO<sub>2</sub> emissions as the reason to have norms for it even though Indian coal is relatively low sulphur. Thus, rather than debating these issues and building a consensus before notifying the first set of norms, it continues robustly nearly a decade after their notification.

## Different deadlines

In the midst of these debates, the MoEFCC diluted some norms and also extended, multiple times, the deadlines for compliance, with the notification of December 2024 being the fourth in the series. As a result, there are different deadlines for thermal plants in different locations and for different types of emissions, with SO<sub>2</sub> emission deadlines being well after the deadline for other emissions.

Indeed, the final deadline for compliance with other emissions, which include particulate matter emissions that are considered important by all

government agencies, was December 31, 2024 with many plants having to comply from December 31 of 2022 and 2023. But it is not clear if various pollution control boards are verifying adherence to even these norms as there is no public source easily available that provides this information.



## Consumer pays

Given the evolving timelines in the various notifications by the MoEFCC, many thermal plants have already tendered contracts to install FGDs – though not at a pace required to meet their deadlines before the latest notification. This was enabled by electricity regulators introducing regulations to pass on the costs of installing FGDs and other pollution control equipment to electricity consumers, irrespective of whether emission norms are met (so that it is not a burden on thermal plants).

As a result, though the earliest deadline for meeting SO<sub>2</sub> emission norms is now December 31, 2027, 22 GW of thermal plants have already installed FGDs. Additionally, 102 GW (nearly 50% of installed thermal capacity) is in advanced stages of setting up FGDs.

Given the new timelines for compliance, the chances are that plants with FGDs will not run them since this would increase the cost of generation and hence push them down the preferred list of generators. Thus, electricity consumers are likely to be paying for installed but unused equipment, even as citizens living around thermal plants do not get the benefit of cleaner air for at least three more years, if not longer.

Perhaps this modern variant of Birbal's *khichdi* will get cooked one day, but the institutional, environmental, health and financial costs of doing so are likely to end up being high. And, unlike the original fable, it is not even clear whether the right lessons would be learnt from this saga.

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- **Background and Policy Changes | पृष्ठभूमि और नीति परिवर्तन**
  - **On December 30, 2024, India's Ministry of Environment, Forest, and Climate Change (MoEFCC) extended the deadline for compliance with SO<sub>2</sub> emission norms for thermal power plants by three years.**
    - **30 दिसंबर 2024 को भारत के पर्यावरण, वन और जलवायु परिवर्तन मंत्रालय (MoEFCC) ने तापीय ऊर्जा संयंत्रों के लिए SO<sub>2</sub> उत्सर्जन मानकों का पालन करने की समय सीमा तीन साल बढ़ा दी।**
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**The new deadline for 20 gigawatts (GW) of thermal plants near densely populated areas is now December 31, 2024.**

- घनी आबादी वाले क्षेत्रों के पास स्थित 20 गीगावाट (GW) तापीय संयंत्रों के लिए नई समय सीमा अब 31 दिसंबर 2024 है।

**This is part of a decade-long delay in enforcing pollution control norms.**

- यह प्रदूषण नियंत्रण मानकों को लागू करने में एक दशक से चल रही देरी का हिस्सा है।

## Evolution of SO<sub>2</sub> Emission Norms | SO<sub>2</sub> उत्सर्जन मानकों का विकास

In December 2015, MoEFCC tightened emission norms for particulate matter and introduced norms for SO<sub>2</sub> for the first time.

- दिसंबर 2015 में, MoEFCC ने पार्टिकुलेट मैटर (PM) के लिए मानकों को कड़ा किया और पहली बार SO<sub>2</sub> उत्सर्जन के लिए नियम लागू किए।



- **India's low-sulfur coal should have made compliance easier, but discussions soon shifted to the feasibility of Flue Gas Desulfurization (FGD) technology.**
- **भारत के कम-सल्फर कोयले के कारण इन मानकों का पालन करना आसान होना चाहिए था, लेकिन चर्चा जल्द ही फ्लू गैस डीसल्फराइजेशन (FGD) तकनीक की व्यवहार्यता पर केंद्रित हो गई।**

Aspect	Details
<b>Definition</b>	A technology used to remove sulfur dioxide (SO <sub>2</sub> ) from exhaust flue gases of fossil-fuel power plants and other industrial processes.
<b>Purpose</b>	Reduces air pollution by limiting sulfur emissions, which contribute to acid rain and respiratory diseases.
<b>Types of FGD</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Wet FGD:</b> Uses a liquid absorbent (limestone/lime slurry) to remove SO<sub>2</sub>.</li> <li><b>Dry FGD:</b> Uses dry sorbents (lime, sodium bicarbonate) to capture SO<sub>2</sub>.</li> <li><b>Semi-Dry FGD:</b> Uses a hybrid approach with limited water consumption.</li> </ol>
<b>Working Principle</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Flue gas passes through an absorber or scrubber.</li> <li>- Chemical reaction occurs between SO<sub>2</sub> and the sorbent.</li> <li>- Byproducts (gypsum in wet FGD) are collected and disposed of or used in construction.</li> </ul>
<b>Chemical Reaction</b>	$\text{CaCO}_3 + \text{SO}_2 \rightarrow \text{CaSO}_3 + \text{CO}_2$ <p>(Calcium carbonate reacts with sulfur dioxide to form calcium sulfite).</p>
<b>Efficiency</b>	Typically removes <b>90-99%</b> of sulfur dioxide from flue gases.
<b>Byproducts</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Wet FGD:</b> Gypsum (CaSO<sub>4</sub>·2H<sub>2</sub>O), which can be used in cement and drywall manufacturing.</li> <li>- <b>Dry FGD:</b> Dry ash, which needs disposal.</li> </ul>

<b>Applications</b>	Used in <b>coal-fired power plants, cement factories, refineries, steel industries,</b> and other industrial setups emitting sulfur dioxide.
<b>Environmental Benefits</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Reduces air pollution and acid rain.</li><li>- Improves air quality and public health.</li></ul>
<b>Challenges</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- High installation and operational costs.</li><li>- Large water and energy consumption in wet systems.</li><li>- Byproduct disposal management.</li></ul>
<b>Regulations</b>	Mandated by environmental policies like the <b>Clean Air Act (USA)</b> and similar regulations worldwide.
<b>India's FGD Mandate</b>	The <b>Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC)</b> has made FGD mandatory for thermal power plants to reduce SO <sub>2</sub> emissions.

- **Multiple research studies, including IIT Delhi's 2022 study, confirmed that FGDs improve air quality but have high operational costs.**
  - आईआईटी दिल्ली के 2022 के अध्ययन सहित कई शोधों ने पष्टि की कि FGD वायु गुणवत्ता में सुधार करता है, लेकिन इसकी परिचालन लागत अधिक होती है।





## Conflicting Government Positions | सरकार की विरोधाभासी नीतियां

The Central Electricity Authority (CEA) suggested phasing out uniform emission norms until 2035, arguing that FGDs were expensive and increased coal consumption.

- केंद्रीय विद्युत प्राधिकरण (CEA) ने यह तर्क देते हुए 2035 तक समान उत्सर्जन मानकों को चरणबद्ध करने का सुझाव दिया कि FGD महंगा है और कोयले की खपत बढ़ाता है।

In contrast, NITI Aayog's study in 2024 emphasized the need for particulate emission controls rather than SO<sub>2</sub> norms.

- इसके विपरीत, 2024 में नीति आयोग के अध्ययन ने SO<sub>2</sub> मानकों की बजाय पार्टिकुलेट उत्सर्जन नियंत्रण पर ध्यान देने की आवश्यकता बताई।

## . Multiple Deadlines and Delays | बार-बार समय सीमा विस्तार और देरी

Since 2015, the MoEFCC has extended the deadline multiple times, with the latest notification being the fourth revision.

- 2015 से, MoEFCC ने कई बार समय सीमा बढ़ाई है, और नवीनतम अधिसूचना चौथा संशोधन है।

The final deadline for compliance with particulate matter norms is December 31, 2024, but SO<sub>2</sub> norms are delayed until December 31, 2027.

- पार्टिकुलेट मैटर (PM) मानकों का अंतिम अनुपालन समय 31 दिसंबर 2024 है, लेकिन SO<sub>2</sub> मानकों के लिए समय सीमा 31 दिसंबर 2027 तक बढ़ा दी गई है।

## Consumer Impact and Industry Response | उपभोक्ता प्रभाव और उद्योग प्रतिक्रिया

Many thermal plants have already awarded contracts to install FGDs, increasing electricity tariffs for consumers.

- कई तापीय संयंत्रों ने पहले ही FGD लगाने के लिए अनुबंध दिए हैं, जिससे उपभोक्ताओं के लिए बिजली की दरें बढ़ रही हैं।

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However, the new deadline means some installed FGDs may remain unused, leading to wastage of resources. हालांकि, नई समय सीमा का मतलब है कि कुछ स्थापित FGD अप्रयुक्त रह सकते हैं, जिससे संसाधनों की बर्बादी होगी।

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Currently, around 102 GW (50% of total thermal capacity) is in various stages of installing FGDs. वर्तमान में, लगभग 102 गीगावाट (कुल तापीय क्षमता का 50%) विभिन्न चरणों में FGD स्थापित कर रहे हैं।



# Next & Comment

THE HINDU

## NEWS IN NUMBERS

**Amount received by India in climate finance so far**

**1.16** In \$ billion. This includes \$346.52 million from the Global Environment Facility, \$803.9 million from the Green Climate Fund, and \$16.06 million from the Adaptation Fund. Funds are got through the financial mechanism of UN Framework Convention on Climate Change. **PH**

**Illegal Indian immigrants deported from U.S. since 2009**

**15,756** A total of 15,756 illegal Indian immigrants have been deported from the US since 2009, External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar said. The highest deportation was witnessed in 2019 with 2,042 illegal Indian immigrants being sent back. **PH**

**Number of pending cases where the Central govt. is a party**

**7** lakh. The Central government is a party in nearly seven lakh cases pending across courts, with the Finance Ministry alone being one of the litigants in nearly two lakh cases. The Law Minister said as of December 31, 2024, a total of 406 POCSD (e-POCSD) courts are functional across 30 States and UTs. **PH**

**Number of public grievances redressed in 2024**

**28** In lakh. Over 28 lakh public grievances were redressed last year, Union Minister Jitendra Singh said on Thursday. These complaints were received on the Centralised Public Grievance Redress and Monitoring System — an online mechanism that allows citizens to raise public grievances. **PH**

**Number of medical colleges served show-cause notices**

**18** The University Grants Commission has issued show-cause notices to 18 medical colleges for not complying with anti-ragging regulations. The defaulting colleges include two each in Delhi, Tamil Nadu, Assam and Puducherry. **PH**  
COMPILED BY THE HINDU DATA TEAM

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## Under the scanner: Adani's project in Sri Lanka

Why is Adani Green's power plant in northern Sri Lanka controversial? What are the environmental concerns linked to it? What did current President Anura Kumara Dissanayake promise before he was elected? Why did the Chairman of the Ceylon Electricity Board resign?

### EXPLAINER

Meera Srinivasan

**The story so far:** In January 24, news agency AFP reported that Sri Lanka revoked a 2024 power purchasing agreement signed with Adani Green Energy Limited. A Sri Lankan official told the agency that while the project itself had not been cancelled, the government has appointed a committee to review it. The Adani Group "categorically denied" cancellation of the project. The move drew attention, with many in Sri Lanka flagging President Anura Kumara Dissanayake's pre-poll pledge to cancel the "corrupt" project that has been mired in controversy from the time it was approved.

**What is Dissanayake's position?** In its latest clarification, the Dissanayake government has said that there is no decision to cancel the project, but that it would renegotiate a lower rate of power purchase with the firm. Cabinet Spokesman Nalinda Jayatissa stated that the government is seeking a lower tariff that is below six cents per kilowatt-hour (kWh), instead of the formerly agreed rate of 8.26 cents per kWh.

The Minister's announcement stood out, since the Dissanayake government in October 2024 told the Supreme Court, in an ongoing case, that it would reconsider the approval granted by the previous government to the Adani Group for the wind power project.

Furthermore, Mr. Dissanayake and his party have in the past underscored the need for a competitive bid. "We welcome foreign capital, including from the private sector. But all investments should come through a fair tender process," Mr. Dissanayake told *The Hindu* in September 2024. "If the government had gone for a fair tender process, we could have got it for half the price," he said in the interview.



**Still ragging:** Former President Gotabaya Rajapaksa with Adani group Chairman Gautam Adani.

**What is the project?** Adani Green Energy Limited is to build a wind power plant project in the Mannar and Pooneryn towns in Sri Lanka's northern province, investing \$442 million. According to Sri Lankan authorities, the project is expected to add at least 350 MW to the island's national grid by 2025.

In October 2021, Adani Group chairman Gautam Adani visited Colombo and called on then President Gotabaya Rajapaksa, weeks after his company sealed a deal with State-owned Sri Lanka Ports Authority (SLPA) to develop and run the strategic Colombo Port's Western Container Terminal, which is currently proceeding. At that time, officials of the Ceylon Electricity Board (CEB) told media that the Group also "explored the possibility of investing in Sri Lanka's wind and renewable energy sector."

**When was the project approved?** In March 2022, the CEB signed a Memorandum of Understanding with Adani Green for the wind energy project, but the development was kept under wraps. It was a report in the local *Sunday Times* that brought the move to light. Ever since, the project has remained in the spotlight, amid dramatic developments on the island. The Gotabaya Rajapaksa administration came under fierce attack from the Opposition, for "choosing" the Adani Group for the project without calling for competitive bids, and bypassing due process. The Group's "back door" entry into Sri Lanka's energy sector disrupted the country's competitive electricity generation system, the main opposition party Samagi Jana Balawegaya contended, accusing the government of "pampering" Prime Minister Narendra Modi's "notorious friends".

In June 2022, Chairman of the CEB M.M.C. Ferdinando resigned, days after he told a parliamentary panel that Prime Minister Narendra Modi had "pressured" Sri Lankan President Gotabaya Rajapaksa to clear the Adani Group project. Meanwhile, Sri Lanka experienced a crushing financial meltdown. As a result, Mr. Gotabaya was dramatically ousted from office by a citizens' uprising, following which former Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe took his place in July 2022, even as the crisis endured.

There was renewed thrust on bringing in foreign investment in to the country to rebuild its battered economy. In February 2023, Sri Lanka's Board of Investment approved a project to set up two wind power plants in northern Sri Lanka, with a \$442 million investment from Adani Green Energy Limited. The two wind power plants — 250 MW capacity in Mannar and 100 MW in Pooneryn — were scheduled to be commissioned in two years, and the project would generate around 2,000 new jobs, the Board had announced. Despite U.S. short seller Hindenburg accusing the Adani Group of serious corruption in January that year, then Foreign Minister Ali Sabry told *The Hindu* that Colombo sees the Adani projects in Sri Lanka as a "government to government kind of deal" and was confident of their future. In May 2024, President Wickremesinghe's Cabinet cleared a proposal to purchase power at \$0.0826, or 8.26 cents, per kWh from Adani Green Energy.

**Why are locals opposing the project?** Residents of Mannar have been raising concerns over the project's likely impact on a crucial bird corridor in the region and on the livelihoods of local fisherfolk. Environmentalists, too, are opposing the plan. The Central Asian Flyway, an important migration route for many waterbird species, runs through Mannar, last year, multiple challenges to the Adani wind power project. The next hearing of the case is scheduled in March.

### THE GIST

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## On the appointment of ad-hoc judges to High Courts

What did the Supreme Court order? Have such appointments been made previously? What did the rule set in the *Lok Prahari* judgment state? What does Article 224-A mandate?

Aaratrika Bhanu

**The story so far:** To address the growing backlog of criminal cases, the Supreme Court on January 30, allowed High Courts to appoint retired judges on an ad-hoc basis, provided they have only criminal appeals as part of a Bench led by a sitting judge. A Bench of Chief Justice of India (CJI) Sanjay Khanna and Justices B.R. Gavai and Surya Kant released a rule set in *Lok Prahari Through Its General Secretary S.N. Shukla IAS (Retd.) vs Union of India (2025)*, which had limited such appointments to High Courts where judicial vacancies exceeded 20% of the sanctioned strength.

**How are ad-hoc judges appointed?** Article 224-A, introduced by the Constitution (119th Amendment) Act, 1983, allows the appointment of retired

Judges to High Courts on an ad-hoc basis. Such appointments require the consent of both the retired judge and the President of India. These judges receive allowances as determined by the President's order and exercise the same jurisdiction, powers, and privileges as a sitting High Court judge. The detailed procedure for such appointments is outlined in the 1998 Memorandum of Procedure (MoP).

**When are such appointments made?** In *Lok Prahari*, the Court identified specific circumstances that could warrant the appointment of ad-hoc judges in certain High Courts. At the time, nearly 40% of judicial positions across all High Courts were vacant. The Court also referred to Law Commission reports from 1979, 1988, and 2003, which advocated for the temporary appointment of retired judges as an effective measure to address the mounting backlog of cases. However,

the Supreme Court expressed concerns that Article 224-A could result in "inaction in making recommendations" for regular judicial appointments. Consequently, the Court clarified that ad-hoc judges can only be appointed when recommendations for filling less than 20% of vacancies have not been made, after considering both the number of sitting judges and the pending proposals for judicial appointments. The Court outlined several "trigger points" for such appointments, although the list is not exhaustive. These include — 1) if vacancies in a High Court exceed 20% of its sanctioned strength; 2) if cases in a specific category have been pending for more than five years; 3) if more than 10% of the High Court's cases are pending for over five years; 4) if the case disposal rate is lower than the rate at which new cases are filed (case clearance rate). The Court also recommended that each Chief Justice

form a panel of retired judges, along with soon-to-retire judges, for appointments.

**What does the latest order say?** The CJI-led Bench noted that, as of January 25, there are 62 lakh pending cases across High Courts, according to data from the National Judicial Data Grid. Of these, over 18.2 lakh are criminal cases, while more than 44 lakh are civil cases. To tackle this growing pendency, the Court decided to set aside the condition laid down in *Lok Prahari*, which permitted the appointment of ad-hoc judges only when judicial vacancies exceeded 20% of the sanctioned strength.

It further ruled that ad-hoc judges can only hear criminal appeals. Additionally, the number of ad-hoc judges cannot exceed 10% of a High Court's sanctioned strength, meaning each High Court can have only 2 to 5 such appointments.

**Have there been prior instances?** In *Lok Prahari*, the Court identified instances of ad-hoc judicial appointments. In 1972, Justice Suraj Bhan was appointed to the Madhya Pradesh High Court shortly after his retirement to adjudicate election petitions. Justice P. Venugopal was similarly appointed to the Andhra High Court in 1982. More recently, in 2007, Justice D.P. Srinivasan was appointed to the Allahabad High Court to preside over the Ayodhya title suits.

### THE GIST

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# On the appointment of ad-hoc judges to High Courts

What did the Supreme Court order? Have such appointments been made previously? What did the rule set in the *Lok Prahari* judgment state? What does Article 224-A mandate?

## Aaratrika Bhaumik

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To address the growing backlog of criminal cases, the Supreme Court on January 30, allowed High Courts to appoint retired judges on an ad-hoc basis, provided they hear only criminal appeals as part of a Bench led by a sitting judge. A Bench of Chief Justice of India (CJI) Sanjiv Khanna and Justices B.R. Gavai and Surya Kant relaxed a rule set in *Lok Prahari Through Its General Secretary S.N. Shukla IAS (Retd.) vs Union of India* (2021), which had limited such appointments to High Courts where judicial vacancies exceeded 20% of the sanctioned strength.

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Article 224-A, introduced by the Constitution (Fifteenth Amendment) Act, 1963, allows the appointment of retired

judges to High Courts on an ad-hoc basis. Such appointments require the consent of both the retired judge and the President of India. These judges receive allowances as determined by the President's order and exercise the same jurisdiction, powers, and privileges as a sitting High Court judge. The detailed procedure for such appointments is outlined in the 1998 Memorandum of Procedure (MoP).

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### Have there been prior instances?

There have only been three documented instances of ad-hoc judicial appointments. In 1972, Justice Suraj Bhan was appointed to the Madhya Pradesh High Court shortly after his retirement to adjudicate election petitions. Justice P. Venugopal was similarly appointed to the Madras High Court in 1982. More recently, in 2007, Justice O.P. Srivastava was appointed to the Allahabad High Court to preside over the Ayodhya title suits.

## THE GIST

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▼  
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- **Background and Supreme Court's Order**
- On **January 30**, the **Supreme Court of India** allowed **High Courts** to appoint **retired judges** on an **ad-hoc basis** to address the **backlog of criminal cases**.
- The Bench of **Chief Justice Sanjiv Khanna, Justices B.R. Gavai, and Surya Kant** relaxed a rule set in the **Lok Prahari case (2021)**, which had limited ad-hoc appointments to cases where **judicial vacancies exceeded 20%** of the sanctioned strength.
- Now, High Courts can **appoint retired judges** even when **vacancies are less than 20%** but only for **criminal appeal cases**.

- **Process of Appointment**
- **Article 224-A** of the Constitution (added by the **Fifteenth Amendment Act, 1963**) allows retired judges to be **appointed on an ad-hoc basis**.
- Such appointments **require the consent** of both:
  - The **retired judge** being appointed.
  - The **President of India**.
- These judges enjoy the **same powers, jurisdiction, and privileges** as sitting High Court judges.
- The **Memorandum of Procedure (MoP)** (1998) details the **appointment process**.



- **Conditions for Ad-Hoc Judge Appointments**

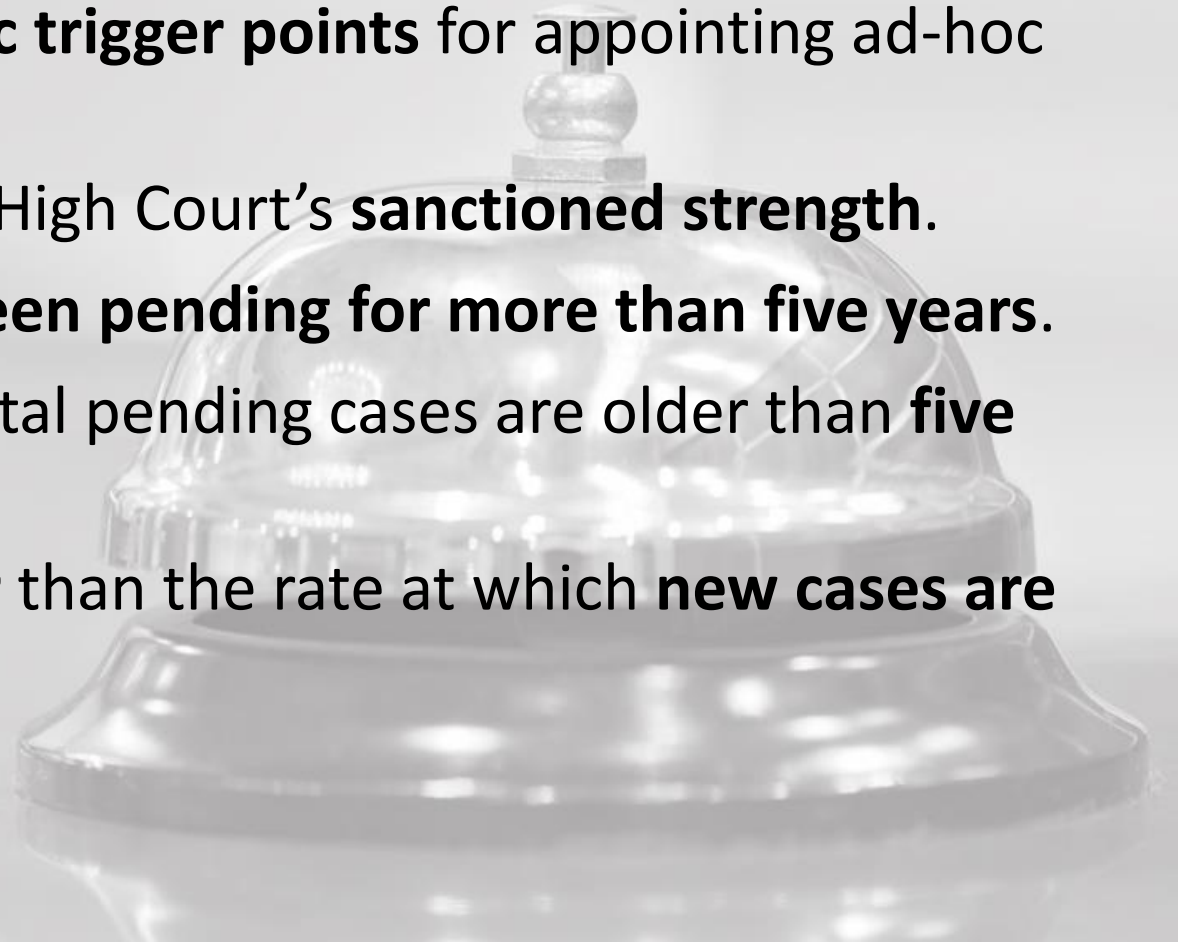
- The **Supreme Court** laid down **specific trigger points** for appointing ad-hoc judges:

- 1.If **judicial vacancies exceed 20%** of a High Court's **sanctioned strength**.

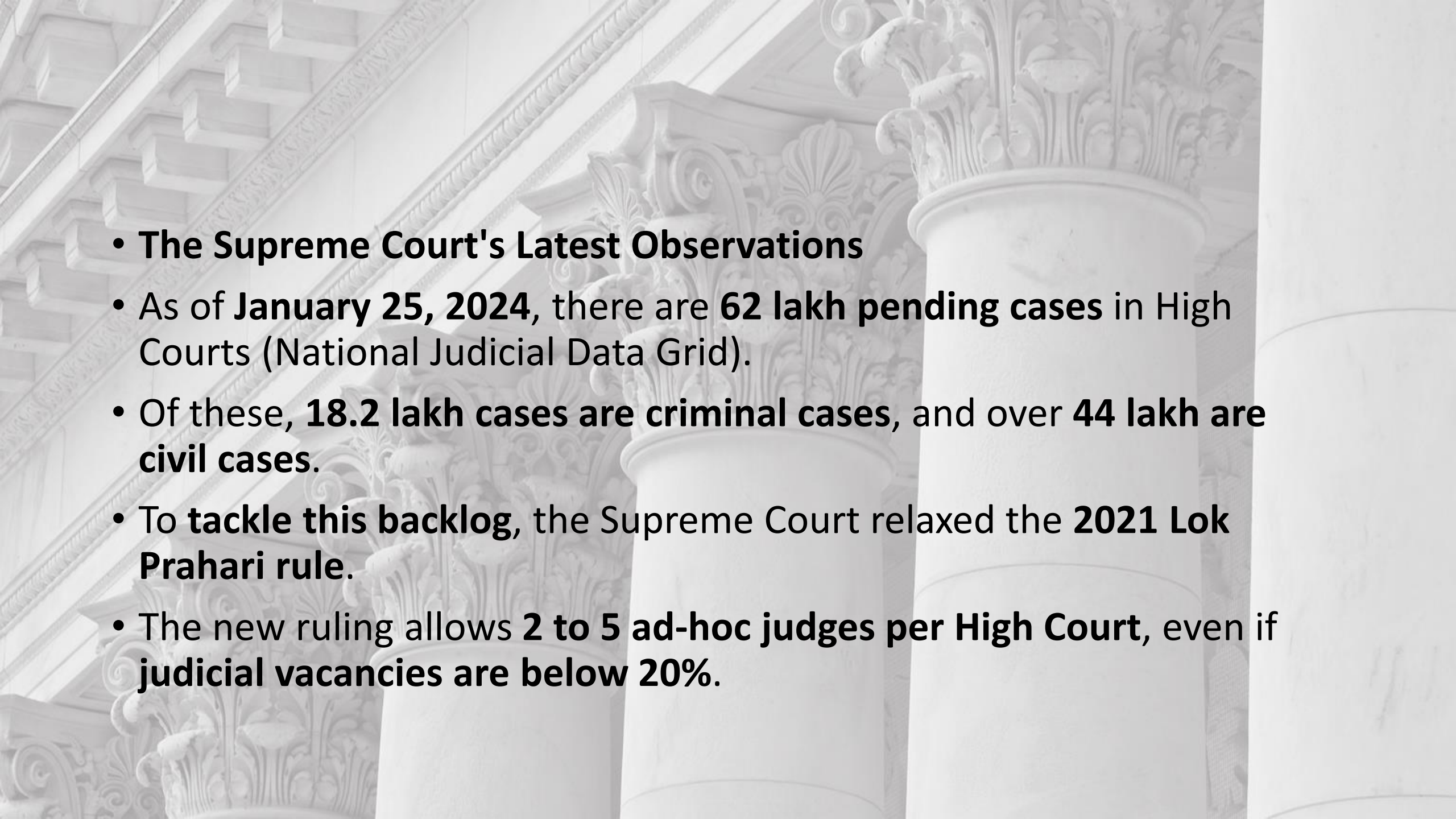
- 2.If **cases in a specific category have been pending for more than five years**.

- 3.If **more than 10%** of a High Court's total pending cases are older than **five years**.

- 4.If the **clearance rate of cases is lower** than the rate at which **new cases are filed**.



- 
- High Courts **must form a panel of retired judges**, including **soon-to-retire judges**, for ad-hoc appointments.
  - No more than **10% of the sanctioned judicial strength** in a High Court can be **ad-hoc judges** at any time.
  - These judges **can only hear criminal appeals**.

- 
- **The Supreme Court's Latest Observations**
  - As of **January 25, 2024**, there are **62 lakh pending cases** in High Courts (National Judicial Data Grid).
  - Of these, **18.2 lakh cases are criminal cases**, and over **44 lakh are civil cases**.
  - To **tackle this backlog**, the Supreme Court relaxed the **2021 Lok Prahari rule**.
  - The new ruling allows **2 to 5 ad-hoc judges per High Court**, even if **judicial vacancies are below 20%**.

- **Previous Instances of Ad-Hoc Judge Appointments**
- Only **three recorded instances** of ad-hoc judge appointments exist in Indian history:
  - 1. Justice Suraj Bhan (1972)** – Appointed to the **Madhya Pradesh High Court** to adjudicate election petitions.
  - 2. Justice P. Venugopal (1982)** – Appointed to the **Madras High Court**.
  - 3. Justice O.P. Srivastava (2007)** – Appointed to the **Allahabad High Court** to oversee the **Ayodhya title suits**.

- **Conclusion and Future Implications**
- The ruling is expected to **clear the backlog of cases** in High Courts.
- However, concerns remain about whether **ad-hoc judges** will have **sufficient independence** and resources.
- The Supreme Court has emphasized that **ad-hoc appointments should not replace regular judicial appointments.**

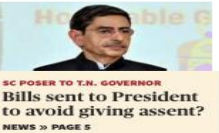




ON 'REJECT LIST'  
India denies visa to  
Kshama Sawant  
NEWS » PAGE 5



CRISIS SIGNAL  
UN warns of  
regional  
spread of DR  
Congo conflict  
WORLD » PAGE 12



SC POSER TO T.N. GOVERNOR  
Bills sent to President  
to avoid giving assent?  
NEWS » PAGE 5



GRAVE CONCERN  
A surge of dead  
Olive Ridelys  
in the sand  
1,200 carcasses found  
since first week of Jan.  
GROUND ZERO » PAGE 7



DREAM RUN  
Maaya enters Mumbai  
Open semifinals  
PAGE » 14

INSIDE



Union Budget  
is pro-rich, says  
Opposition

NEW DELHI  
Opposition members in the Lok Sabha criticised the Union Budget as "pro-rich" and urged the Modi government to focus on improving conditions for common people, farmers and youth. Congress also objected to Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman's absence during the debate. » PAGE 3

HC refuses to  
transfer MUDA  
case to CBI

BENGALURU  
In a big relief to Chief Minister Siddaramaiah, the Karnataka High Court on Friday refused to transfer the Mysuru Urban Development Authority case investigation to the CBI. The case pertains to alleged illegality in allotment of 14 sites to Mr. Siddaramaiah's wife B.M. Parvathi by the MUDA and is being probed by the Lokayukta officer. » PAGE 3

'EC must come  
clean on poll  
irregularities'

NEW DELHI  
Leader of the Opposition Rahul Gandhi on Friday said there are more registered voters in Maharashtra than its adult population, with more voters added in five months before the 2024 polls than in the past five years. Addressing a press conference at the Constituent Club Mr. Gandhi alleged irregularities in the recent Assembly elections. » PAGE 4

Acease France-Press  
WASHINGTON

U.S. President Donald Trump imposed sanctions on the International Criminal Court for probes targeting America and its ally Israel, but the ICC on Friday vowed to continue providing "justice and hope" around the world.

Mr. Trump signed an executive order on Thursday saying the court in The Hague had "abused its power" by issuing an arrest warrant for visiting Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, who held talks with the U.S. President in Washington on Tuesday.

The ICC on Friday condemned the move, which it said sought to "harm its independent and impartial judicial work". "The Court stands firmly by its person-

RBI slashes rate by 0.25% to revive growth

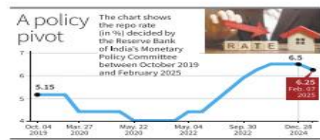
First repo rate cut since May 2020 may translate into cheaper home and car loans; it follows Budget initiatives to boost consumption with income tax breaks; the repo rate has been on the rise since 2022. RBI has projected a real GDP growth of 6.7% for 2025-26 from the 6.4% estimated this year; inflation is projected at 4.5% through Q1 of 2025-26

Lalendra Mishra  
MUMBAI

Lowering India's interest rates for the first time in the last 57 months, the Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) of the Reserve Bank of India on Friday unanimously cut the repo rate by 25 basis points (0.25%) to 6.25%, to support fading growth in the hope of inflation easing to 4.4% in this quarter and 4.2% through 2025-26. The RBI's policy shift, which may translate into cheaper loans for homes, cars and other purposes, comes within a week of the Union Budget for 2025-26 that seeks to drive growth by stimulating urban demand with income tax

breaks worth ₹1 lakh crore. The repo rate is the rate at which the RBI lends to other banks, and one basis point equals 0.01%. This is the first repo rate cut since the early days of the COVID-19 pandemic, when the RBI made a 40 bps cut to 4% in May 2020 and held it there for a couple of years. Since 2022, the repo rate has been on the rise.

In view of the risks from global uncertainties and upside risks to inflation, the MPC persisted with a neutral monetary policy, and stayed "unambiguously focussed on a durable alignment of inflation with the target, while supporting growth," RBI Governor Sanjay Malhotra said. It was the first monetary



policy review under Mr. Malhotra's stewardship. Stating that headwinds from geopolitical tensions, protectionist trade policies, volatility in international commodity prices, and financial market uncertainties continue to pose downside risks to the

outlook, the MPC has projected a real GDP growth of 6.7% for 2025-26 from the 6.4% estimated this year.

Assuming a normal monsoon next year, Mr. Malhotra said that the MPC expected the declining inflation to further moderate in the coming year, gradually aligning with the target. Inflation is projected to average 4.5% through the first quarter (Q1) of 2025-26, 4% in Q2, 3.8% in Q3, and 4.2% in Q4.

Mixed signals  
Rural demand continues to be on an uptrend, while urban consumption remains subdued with high frequency indicators pointing towards a recovery. Looking forward, improving employment conditions, tax relief in the Union Budget, and moderating inflation, together with better agricultural activity bode well for household consumption, the RBI Governor said.

Noting that the MPC had factored in the rupee's expected decline in its policy math, Mr. Malhotra emphasised that the RBI's stated objective was to maintain orderliness and stability in the currency market, without compromising market efficiency. Acknowledging that illiquidity has been tight over December and January, Mr. Malhotra announced fresh initiatives to ease the crunch. "We will continue to monitor the evolving liquidity and financial market conditions, and proactively take appropriate measures to ensure orderly liquidity conditions as may be required for the system," he said.

India's current account deficit is likely to remain well within "the sustainable level", the RBI Governor said, adding that foreign exchange reserves stood at \$630.6 billion as on January 31 this year, providing an import cover of over 10 months. "Overall, India's external sector remains resilient as key indicators stay robust," Mr. Malhotra concluded.

A hint of summer



Quenching thirst: A deer at the Mudumalai Tiger Reserve in the Nilgiris district of Tamil Nadu as day temperatures rise. M. SATHYAMOORTHY

Govt. registers concerns with U.S. over shackling of 104 Indian deportees

Suhasini Haldar  
NEW DELHI

The government said on Friday that it has "registered [its] concerns" with the United States administration in Washington and in Delhi over the handling of 104 alleged illegal immigrants who were deported back to India on Wednesday. The deportees had been flown back on a 42-hour flight in a U.S. military plane, in leg shackles and handcuffs.

Officials told *The Hindu* they had raised their objections to the treatment of women and children on board, while skipping questions on whether a formal diplomatic protest had been made. *The Hindu* had reported accounts of women on board the flight, who said they had been handcuffed, that children had also been restrained "with ropes around their legs". External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar had earlier said in Parliament that U.S. authorities had informed them that women and children "are not restrained" on such flights. More such deportations are expected, as the U.S. has already identified 47 Indians on its "final removal list".

The exchanges are significant as they take place just days before Prime Minister Narendra Modi's meeting with U.S. President Donald Trump since the ICC's then-prosecutor Fatou Bensouda, and other senior officials and staff in Foton. Describing it as a "kangaroo court", his then-aid administration made the move after Gambian-born Bensouda launched an investigation into allegations of war crimes against U.S. soldiers in Afghanistan.

When asked if Mr. Modi would take up the issue with Mr. Trump, the Ministry of External Affairs said that more deportations and Indian officials are "in touch" already. The depor-



Some of the deported Indians reached Ahmedabad on Thursday. AP

tations caused a furor in Parliament on Thursday and have led to public criticism of the government's perceived lack of reaction to the way they were treated.

"In touch with U.S." "Yes, we have been in touch with U.S. authorities on this issue on a continuing basis, and we have registered our concerns with U.S. authorities on these matters," said Foreign Secretary Vikram Miri, when asked if India had protested the harsh treatment of deportees, which other countries like Brazil and Colombia have called "inhumane" or "undignified".

The U.S. Embassy in Delhi did not respond to requests for a response on the Indian "concerns". The Embassy spokesperson identified 487 presumed Indian citizens with final removal orders and details have been supplied to India on 298 such individuals thus far. The U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) website says that more than 24,000 Indians have been detained in 125 lakhs in immigration violations. It is estimated that there are 25 lakhs Indians in the U.S. who are undocumented.



Behavioural patterns: Previous sanctions by the U.S. under President Donald Trump had targeted the court's prosecutor. AP

independence. "Sanctioning the ICC threatens the Court's independence and undermines the international criminal justice system as a whole," Antonio Costa, who heads the European Council representing the EU's 27 member states, wrote on X.

The U.S. sanctions are a show of support after Mr. Netanyahu's visit to the White House, during which Trump unveiled a plan for the United States to "take over" Gaza and move Palestinians to other Middle Eastern countries. The UN and legal experts have said Trump's plan would be illegal under international law. Forcible displacement is also a crime under the ICC's governing Rome Statute.

'Arrest warrants' Following a request by ICC prosecutor Karim Khan, judges issued arrest warrants for members of the court. The EU warned the court's actions against Israel were illegitimate. Neither the U.S. nor Israel are members of the court. The EU warned the move was a threat to its

tribunal had pledged to continue providing justice and hope to millions of innocent victims of atrocities across the world," it said in a statement. The United Nations said it deeply regretted Mr. Trump's decision to slap sanctions on the ICC and urged him to reverse the move. The EU warned the individuals affected by the sanctions were not immediately released, but previous U.S. sanctions under Mr. Trump had targeted the court's prosecutor. Mr. Trump's order said



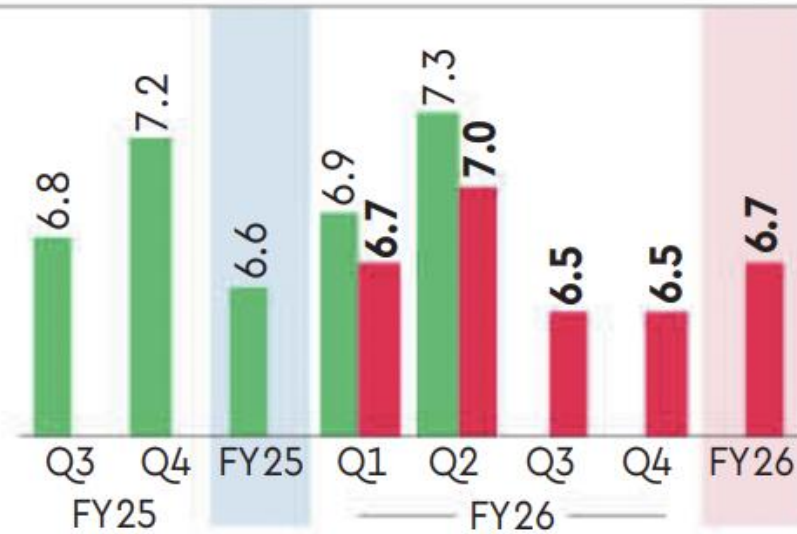
**SANJAY MALHOTRA**  
RBI GOVERNOR

**Growth-inflation**  
dynamics  
opens up  
policy space for  
the MPC to  
support  
growth

## KEY NUMBERS

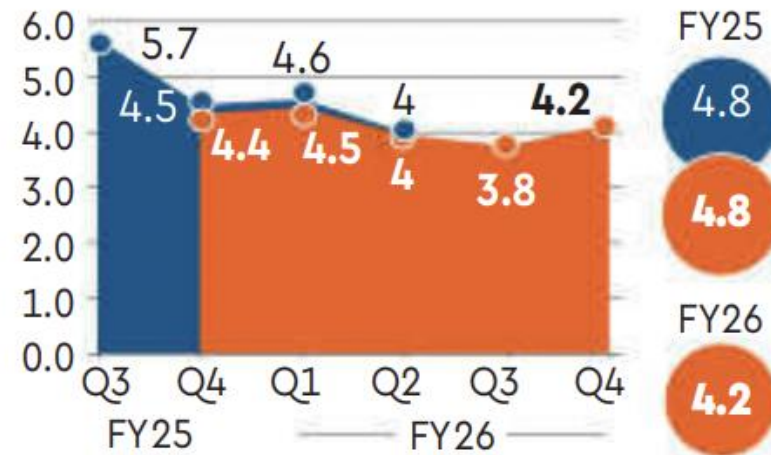
### Real GDP growth forecast

■ Dec 6, 2024 (%)  
■ Feb 7, 2025



### Inflation forecast

■ Dec 6, 2024 (%)  
■ Feb 7, 2025



Source: RBI


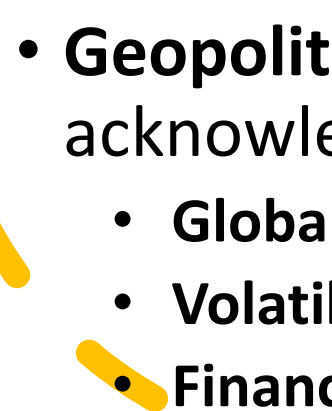


## Key Decision by RBI

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has cut the **repo rate by 25 basis points (0.25%) to 6.25%** for the first time in 57 months.

This decision follows the **Union Budget 2025-26**, which aimed to **stimulate urban demand** with **income tax reliefs**.

The **repo rate** is the interest rate at which the **RBI lends to banks**.

- 
- **Reasons for the Rate Cut**
  - **Easing inflation:** Inflation is expected to **decline to 4.4% this quarter** and **4.2% in 2025-26**.
  - **Boosting growth:** RBI aims to support **economic growth** through **cheaper loans** for homes, cars, and businesses.
  - **Geopolitical & trade risks:** The **MPC (Monetary Policy Committee)** acknowledged risks from:
    - **Global trade tensions**
    - **Volatility in commodity prices**
    - **Financial market uncertainties**
- 

## Economic Outlook

### GDP Growth Projections:

- **2024-25: 6.4%**
- **2025-26: 6.7%**

### Growth is expected to be supported by:

- **Improving employment conditions**
- **Tax reliefs in the Union Budget**
- **Rising household consumption**

## Inflation & Rupee Stability

The MPC maintains a neutral stance but aims for inflation stability.

Foreign exchange reserves stood at \$630.6 billion (as of January 31, 2025), covering over 10 months of imports.

The RBI will intervene in the forex market only to smoothen volatility, not target any exchange rate.



- **. Liquidity & Market Response**

- RBI Governor **Sanjay Malhotra** acknowledged **liquidity tightening** in **December-January**.

- RBI will **closely monitor financial market conditions** and **take measures** to ensure **smooth liquidity flow**.

- **6. Conclusion: Balancing Growth & Inflation**

- This **rate cut signals a shift** towards **growth-focused policy**.

- RBI remains cautious about **global uncertainties**, but expects **inflation to gradually decline**.

- The focus remains on **stability while supporting growth**.

<b>Tool</b>	<b>Description</b>
<b>Bank Rate Policy</b>	The interest rate at which RBI lends long-term funds to commercial banks. A higher bank rate discourages borrowing and vice versa.
<b>Repo Rate</b>	The rate at which RBI lends short-term funds to banks. An increase in repo rate makes borrowing expensive, reducing money supply.
<b>Reverse Repo Rate</b>	The rate at which RBI borrows from banks. A higher rate encourages banks to park excess funds with RBI, reducing liquidity.
<b>Cash Reserve Ratio (CRR)</b>	The percentage of a bank's total deposits that must be kept as reserves with RBI. A higher CRR reduces loanable funds, tightening money supply.
<b>Statutory Liquidity Ratio (SLR)</b>	The percentage of net demand and time liabilities (NDTL) that banks must maintain in the form of cash, gold, or government securities.
<b>Open Market Operations (OMO)</b>	Buying and selling of government securities by RBI to regulate money supply. Buying securities injects liquidity, while selling absorbs it.
<b>Liquidity Adjustment Facility (LAF)</b>	Allows banks to borrow money from RBI against government securities to manage short-term liquidity needs.

## 2. Qualitative Measures (Selective Credit Control)

These measures target specific sectors of the economy and regulate credit allocation.

Tool	Description
Margin Requirements	RBI sets the margin requirement for loans against securities to prevent excessive borrowing for speculation.
Moral Suasion	RBI advises and persuades banks to follow policies in the interest of economic stability.
Credit Rationing	RBI limits the maximum amount of credit banks can lend to certain sectors (e.g., real estate, stock market) to prevent asset bubbles.
Direct Action	RBI takes direct measures like penalties or restrictions if banks fail to comply with regulations.
Consumer Credit Regulation	RBI regulates the terms and conditions of consumer loans, including interest rates and tenure.



# Trump sanctions ICC for 'illegitimate probes'

**Agence France-Presse**  
WASHINGTON

U.S. President Donald Trump imposed sanctions on the International Criminal Court for probes targeting America and its ally Israel, but the ICC on Friday vowed to continue providing "justice and hope" around the world.

Mr. Trump signed an executive order on Thursday saying the court in The Hague had "abused its power" by issuing an arrest warrant for visiting Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, who held talks with the U.S. President in Washington on Tuesday.

He ordered asset freezes and travel bans against ICC officials, employees and their family members, along with anyone deemed to have helped the court's investigations.

The ICC on Friday condemned the move, which it said sought to "harm its independent and impartial judicial work". "The Court stands firmly by its person-



**Behavioural pattern:** Previous sanctions by the U.S. under President Donald Trump had targeted the court's prosecutor. AP

nel and pledges to continue providing justice and hope to millions of innocent victims of atrocities across the world," it said in a statement.

The United Nations said it deeply regretted Mr. Trump's decision to slap sanctions on the ICC and urged him to reverse the move. The names of the individuals affected by the sanctions were not immediately released, but previous U.S. sanctions under Mr. Trump had targeted the court's prosecutor.

Mr. Trump's order said

the tribunal had engaged in "illegitimate and baseless actions targeting America and our close ally Israel," referring to ICC probes into alleged war crimes by U.S. service members in Afghanistan and Israeli troops in Gaza.

Israel's Foreign Minister Gideon Saar applauded Mr. Trump on Friday over the sanctions, calling the court's actions against Israel illegitimate.

Neither the U.S. nor Israel are members of the court. The EU warned the move was a threat to its

independence.

"Sanctioning the ICC threatens the Court's independence and undermines the international criminal justice system as a whole," Antonio Costa, who heads the European Council representing the EU's 27 member states, wrote on X.

The sanctions are a show of support after Mr. Netanyahu's visit to the White House, during which Trump unveiled a plan for the United States to "take over" Gaza and move Palestinians to other Middle Eastern countries.

The UN and legal experts have said Trump's plan would be illegal under international law. Forcible displacement is also a crime under the ICC's governing Rome Statute.

## 'Arrest warrants'

Following a request by ICC prosecutor Karim Khan, judges issued arrest warrants on November 21 for Mr. Netanyahu, his former Defence Minister Yoav Gal-

lant, and Hamas's military chief Mohammed Deif – whom Israel says is dead.

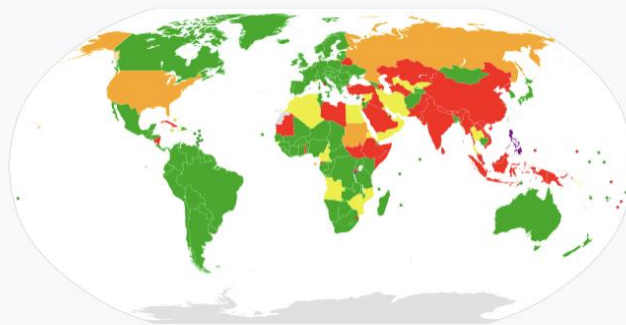
The court said it had found "reasonable grounds" to believe Mr. Netanyahu and Gallant bore "criminal responsibility" for the war crime of starvation as a method of warfare during the Gaza war, as well as the crimes against humanity of murder, persecution, and other inhumane acts. Mr. Netanyahu has accused the court of anti-Semitism.

During his first term, Mr. Trump imposed financial sanctions and a visa ban on the ICC's then-prosecutor, Fatou Bensouda, and other senior officials and staff in 2020.

Describing it as a "kangaroo court," his then-administration made the move after Gambian-born Bensouda launched an investigation into allegations of war crimes against U.S. soldiers in Afghanistan.

**ICC CONDEMNS SANCTIONS**

» PAGE 12





#### Parties and signatories of the Rome Statute

- State party
- Signatory that has not ratified
- State party that subsequently withdrew its membership
- Signatory that subsequently withdrew its signature
- Not a state party, not a signatory

<b>Seat</b>	<a href="#">The Hague, Netherlands</a>
<b>Working languages</b>	<a href="#">English</a> <a href="#">French</a>
<b>Official languages</b> <sup>[1]</sup>	6 languages <a href="#">[show]</a>
<b>Member states</b>	125
<b>Leaders</b>	
• <a href="#">President</a>	<a href="#">Tomoko Akane</a>
• <a href="#">First Vice-President</a>	<a href="#">Rosario Salvatore Aitala</a>
• <a href="#">Second Vice-President</a>	<a href="#">Reine Alapini-Gansou</a>
• <a href="#">Prosecutor</a>	<a href="#">Karim Ahmad Khan</a>
• <a href="#">Registrar</a>	<a href="#">Osvaldo Zavala Giler</a>
<b>Establishment</b>	
• <a href="#">Rome Statute</a> adopted	17 July 1998
• Entered into force	1 July 2002



- 
- **Key Decision by Donald Trump**
  - **U.S. President Donald Trump** imposed **sanctions** on the **International Criminal Court (ICC)** for its investigations targeting the **U.S. and Israel**.
  - Trump accused the **ICC of abusing its power** by issuing an **arrest warrant for Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu**.
  - The sanctions include **asset freezes and travel bans** on ICC officials, employees, and **anyone involved** in aiding the court's investigations.
- 

- **. ICC's Response**
- The **ICC condemned** Trump's actions, stating that it **threatens its independence and impartial judicial work**.
- The court **vowed to continue delivering justice** for victims of **atrocities worldwide**.
- The **United Nations (UN)** also expressed **deep regret** over Trump's decision and urged him to **reverse the sanctions**.

## . International Reactions

The **European Union (EU)** warned that Trump's move is a **threat to international justice**.

Israel's Foreign Minister **Gideon Saar** supported Trump, calling the **ICC's actions illegitimate**.


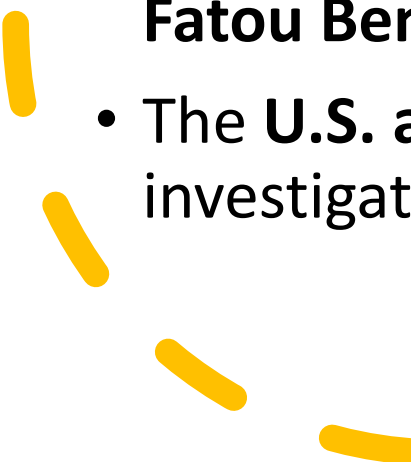
The **UN** and legal experts stated that Trump's proposed plan to **relocate Palestinians** would be **illegal under international law**.

## Background on ICC's Investigation

The ICC had issued arrest warrants for:

- **Benjamin Netanyahu** (Israeli Prime Minister)
- **Yoav Gallant** (Israel's Defence Minister)
- **Mohammed Deif** ( Hamas's military chief, presumed dead)



- 
- The ICC found "**reasonable grounds**" to believe **Netanyahu committed war crimes** in Gaza, including **murder, persecution, and inhumane acts**.
  - Netanyahu **accused the ICC of anti-Semitism**.
  - **5. Previous U.S. Actions Against the ICC**
  - Trump had previously imposed **sanctions and a visa ban** on ICC prosecutor **Fatou Bensouda** for **investigating U.S. war crimes in Afghanistan**.
  - The **U.S. and Israel are not ICC members** and have long called its investigations **biased and illegitimate**.
- 

## . Conclusion: A Clash Between Justice and Politics

Trump's actions show continued **U.S. opposition** to ICC jurisdiction over its allies.

The sanctions deepen the **divide between the U.S. and international legal institutions.**

The ICC maintains that it will **continue its work despite political pressure.**

## Karnataka High Court refuses to transfer MUDA case to CBI

The Hindu Bureau  
BENGALURU

In a big relief to Chief Minister Siddaramaiah, the Karnataka High Court on Friday refused to transfer the Mysuru Urban Development Authority (MUDA) case investigation to the Central Bureau of Investigation.

The case pertains to alleged illegality in allotment of 14 sites to Mr. Siddaramaiah's wife B.M. Parvathi by the MUDA and is being probed by the Lokayukta police.

It said that "the material on record nowhere indicates that the investigation conducted by the Lokayukta police is partisan, lopsided or shoddy" to warrant transferring to the CBI.

"There is no malady of the kind that is projected by the top court present in this case at hand," based on the matter for further/re-investigation to the hands of the CBI, it is not the business of the projected ill," the court observed while refusing to transfer the MUDA case investigation.

Justice M. Nagappaiah passed the order while dismissing a petition filed by Mysuru-based social activist Sheemaiah Krishna. Meanwhile, it permitted

**There is no malady of the kind that is projected by the top court present in the case, HC says**

the Lokayukta police to place all the investigation reports, which were submitted for the perusal of the High Court, before the Special Court of Sessions for criminal cases against present and former MLAs and MPs for its consideration as per the law.

The judge made it clear that he had perused the investigation reports only to see whether the material on record would need further or re-investigation or shoddy."

"A perusal at the records of investigation would indicate, that all public documents that are available are taken note of the notifications issued from time to time are also taken note of, and statements of all the accused are recorded. I do not find any partisan, biased, lopsided or shoddy investigation conducted by the police wing of the Lokayukta," the judge said.

Meanwhile, the petitioners has said he would file an appeal in the Supreme Court against the order.

## Budget is pro-rich, says Opposition

MPs say Budget didn't address grievances of farmers or tackle inflation and unemployment, they flag 'stagnant' allocation for health and education, seek more funds to strengthen food security, and demand reduction in GST on essentials. Congress objects to absence of Finance Minister in House

The Hindu Bureau  
NEW DELHI

Terming the Union Budget "pro-rich", Opposition members in the Lok Sabha on Friday urged the Modi government to improve the condition of the common people, farmers and agriculture workers, youth, small and medium enterprises, among others.

Before the discussion on the Budget started, Congress members objected to the absence of Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman in the House. "It has been a convention that the Finance Minister is present at the time of the initiating the debate," party leader K.C. Venugopal said.

Stating that there was such a parliamentary rule, the BJP's Dilip Salkia, who was chairing the proceedings, pointed out that Minister of State for Finance Pankaj Chaudhary had been present in the House.

As the Congress MPs rose to their feet, Speaker Om Birla assured them that he would "ensure" that during future discussions on the Budget, Ms. Sitharaman would be present.

Initiating the discussion on the Budget, Congress member from Patna, Dharmvir Gandhi, said the Budget failed to address farmers' grievances. Expenditure towards health and education was stagnating, he said, adding that the government had tried to maintain fiscal deficit at the cost of social sector schemes. "The misplaced priorities" of the government had led to the closure of MSME units, he said.



Trinamool MP Abhishek Banerjee, right on front row, said the NDA government had mastered the art of taking away from the poor and giving to the wealthy elite. "The reverse of Robin Hood": see

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"Economic favouritism" Trinamool Congress MP Abhishek Banerjee said the NDA government had mastered the art of taking away from the poor and giving to

the wealthy elite. "The reverse of Robin Hood": see

"Corporate loans worth thousands of crores using taxpayers' money are waived, while poor farmers struggling with debts are left to suffer. The government claims to have no money to increase subsidies on essential commodities, yet it slashes corporate tax rates. This is not economic justice. This is economic favouritism at its worst," he said.

Congress member from Assam, Pradyut Bordoloi, said the Budget failed to address key issues of inflation and unemployment.

stating that the tax sops would benefit only two crore taxpayers, he asked the government to expand and strengthen food security, increase allocation of public distribution system (PDS), and universalise free ration distribution from the next two years. "Reduce GST on essentials like food, medicine and medical insurance," he added.

But when a minimum number of sittings was highlighted by the National Commission to Review the Working of the Constitution in 2002, Mr. Jha said his Bill is to

reform the Parliamentary system by ensuring that the working hours of the members are not lost due to disruptions.

While Mr. O'Brien said he proposed a minimum sitting of 100 days, Mr. Jha has sought 120 days sitting of the House annually.

Mr. O'Brien said that while the idea of a fixed calendar was explored by the General Purposes Committee of the Lok Sabha in 1955, the importance of having a minimum number of sittings was highlighted by the National Commission to Review the Working of the Constitution in 2002.

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## Centre owes ₹1,570 crore to Bihar under MGNREGS, Minister tells Rajya Sabha

Sobhana K. Nair  
NEW DELHI

On a day when National Democratic Alliance (NDA) MPs from Bihar met Prime Minister Narendra Modi in Parliament to express gratitude for the recent Budget announcements for their State, the Union Minister of Rural Development informed the Rajya Sabha that the Centre owes ₹1,570 crore funds to the State under the Mahatma National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS).

In the case of Bihar, the Centre owed ₹729.79 crore in wages and along with the Centre's share of material and administration components, the total dues were ₹1,570.33 crore. Bihar goes for elections later this year. The Union Budget, Bihar got a bonanza of schemes from finance

Kamlesh Paswan

States and Union Territories till January 31. Out of this amount, ₹7,072 crore are to be released to States and Union Territories under the Mahatma National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS).

Replying to a question posed by Trinamool Congress's Rajya Sabha leader Derek O'Brien on the dues owed to the States, Minister of State for Rural Development Kamlesh Paswan said on Friday that the Centre owed a total of ₹1,718.65 crore to 33 States and Union Territories till January 31. Out of this amount, ₹7,072 crore are to be released to States and Union Territories under the Mahatma National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS).

cial assistance for irrigation projects, new airports, extension of Patna IT and promise to develop religious corridors.

As per the Minister's reply, the highest amount of wages are owed to Tamil Nadu at ₹1,097 crore, followed by Uttar Pradesh at ₹1,282 crore.

The wage payments are directly credited by the Centre to the account of beneficiaries through direct benefit transfer. The Centre did not give details on how long the wages have been delayed.

The other two components — material and administration — are credited to the State's account.

The MGNREGS, Mr. Paswan said, was a "demand-driven wage employment scheme" and the fund release was a continuous process.

## The Hindu Group launches filmmaker Krishnaswamy's book

The Hindu Bureau  
CHENNAI

Acclaimed documentary and television filmmaker S. Krishnaswamy's book *Voyages Retraced: India's Influence in East Asia*, brought out by The Hindu Group of Publications, was launched here on Friday.

The book gives an insight into ancient India's impact on southeast Asian countries. It is a narrative of the author's travels between 2005 and 2010.

Nirmala Lakshman, Chairperson, The Hindu Group Publishing Private Limited (THGPP), and N. Ram, Director, THGPP, launched the book. Author and chairman of Krishnaswamy Associates, Krishnaswamy, and research collaborator Mohana Krishnaswamy received a copy of the book.



THGPP, Chairperson Nirmala Lakshman and Director N. Ram launching S. Krishnaswamy's book in Chennai on Friday. With them are Mr. Krishnaswamy, his daughter Latha Krishna, and the book's research collaborator Mohana Krishnaswamy. S. ILLUSTRATION

Tracing Mr. Krishnaswamy's journey as a documentary filmmaker, Mr. Ram said that while his father and director, K. Subrahmanyam, was an iconic figure in Tamil cinema, he embarked on a path with a purposeful message and founded Krishnaswamy Associates to make non-fiction films. Besides his "powerful film" *India Valley to India Gate*, he produced films on the complex problems of Sri Lanka

and Punjab. Mr. Ram said, "The book reflects the author and filmmaker's writerly skills, and the event is a celebration of his body of works, he said.

Earlier, Suresh Nambath, Editor, *The Hindu*, said it was compiling a compilation on southeast Asian countries with photographs by cinematographer Madhu Ambat.

Mr. Krishnaswamy recalled his initial days when journalistically independent, non-fiction films did not enjoy much patronage. Recounting the challenges in depicting the "real history" of India, he spoke on his four-hour film on the subject, *India Valley to India Gate*, that ran into controversy.

On his book, Mr. Krishnaswamy said he learnt a lot from his research in central India and Southeast Asian countries during his research for a documentary film, "Indian history is new, having seen the Holy Koran that he was tortured by the police, despairing after swearing on the Holy Koran that he was a terrorist. A tragic testimony of the sorry state of affairs," Peoples Democratic Party leader Firdous Tak said.

"This young man ended his life after swearing on the Holy Koran that he was a terrorist. A tragic testimony of the sorry state of affairs," Peoples Democratic Party leader Firdous Tak said.

Aam Aadmi Party leader Saleer Choudhary said, "Such cowardly acts of violence against innocent civilians are unacceptable." Giving details of the "torture" suffered by him during questioning by the J&K Police, Makhani Din, 26, purportedly filmed a 3.48-minute video inside a mosque in Kathua's Billawar area.

With a copy of the Koran on his head, Din said he fabricated a story to save his life and feared returning to the police station.

"I was beaten up. I told them the truth that I had never seen the militants or populations, including marginalised communities, including vocational education, according to an official statement.

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## 21 MPs write to Shah seeking update on Naga peace process

Vijaita Singh  
NEW DELHI

A group of 21 parliamentarians have written to Home Minister Amit Shah seeking a detailed update on the Naga peace process in the ongoing session of Parliament.

The MPs said that since 2021 there is no full-time interlocutor for Naga peace talks and peace negotiations, which are essential for achieving lasting stability, "shouldn't be relegated to bureaucratic manoeuvring devoid of democratic oversight."

"It deeply perplexing recognition of the Naga peace process as a crucial pillar of national security and stability, Parliament remains uninformed about the status of negotia-

tions since the signing of the Framework Agreement. The persistent secrecy surrounding the agreement and the perceived opacity in the negotiations raise serious concerns," the letter signed by MPs from the Rajya Sabha and Lok Sabha said.

Full-time interlocutor "The absence of a dedicated full-time interlocutor leads to an unsettling inconsistency, with channels of communication reportedly disrupted and meetings devoid of democratic oversight," the letter said.

The letter also expressed concern over the negotiations occurring sporadically. "It is regrettable that the negotiations tend to erode nearly three decades of sustained efforts, jeopardising the trust and goodwill carefully nurtured over the years," they said.

## ACB team goes to Kejriwal's residence after his claim of poaching by BJP

The Hindu Bureau  
NEW DELHI

The Anti Corruption Branch (ACB) reached Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) chief Arvind Kejriwal's residence on Friday afternoon for a search operation after the BJP was trying to poach their candidates.

The ACB reached his residence after Lieutenant Governor Anil Saxena ordered an inquiry, prompted by a BJP complaint alleging that the AAP's allegations are "false" and "misleading".

The officials left without meeting Mr. Kejriwal. The ACB, acting on the BJP's orders, reached Mr. Kejriwal's residence without an official notice addressed to



Short visits: Members of the Anti Corruption Bureau arrive at the residence of Arvind Kejriwal in New Delhi on Friday. PTI

him. The Delhi Assembly election was held on Wednesday and results will be announced on Saturday.

On Friday, the ACB alleged that the BJP offered ₹15 crore each to 16 of its candidates, mostly sitting MLAs, to defect.

The ACB issued a notice to Mr. Kejriwal on Friday, seeking details of the 16 candidates who had been contacted them, among others.

## Cabinet nod to rejig skilling initiatives with a combined scheme

The Hindu Bureau  
NEW DELHI

The Union government has decided to restructure its skilling initiatives, combining three of them into the Skill India Programme, a Centre for national capital with the Cabinet on Friday.

The Pradhan Mantri Kaushik Vikas Yojana (PMKVY 4.0), the Pradhan Mantri National Apprenticeship Promotion Scheme (PM-NAPS), and the Skill India Scheme (SIS) will now be combined into a single scheme, the three key components of the skilling initiative.

The initiative aims at providing structure to skill development, on-the-job training, and community-based learning, ensuring that both urban and rural populations, including marginalised communities, have access to high-quality vocational education, according to an official statement.

Over 2 cr. beneficiaries More than 2.27 crore people have benefited from three flagship schemes of the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship so far, it added.

The Skill India programme will directly contribute to the Periodic Labour Force Survey data, ensuring that workforce development policies remain aligned with economic and industrial trends, the official statement said.

The J&K Police and a Magistrate have already started two separate inquiries into the case. "Those struggling with distressing thoughts may call Disha helpline at 1056,"

## Police torture of innocent civilians is unacceptable: J&K leaders

Peerzada Ashiq  
SREINAGAR

A video purportedly recorded by a civilian from Jammu's Kathua, before he died following alleged police "torture," went viral on J&K on Friday, drawing sharp reactions from political parties.

"This young man ended his life after swearing on the Holy Koran that he was tortured by the police, despairing after swearing on the Holy Koran that he was a terrorist. A tragic testimony of the sorry state of affairs," Peoples Democratic Party leader Firdous Tak said.

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## The Hindu Bureau

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Tracing Mr. Krishnaswamy's journey as a docu-



THGPPL Chairperson Nirmala Lakshman and Director N. Ram launching S. Krishnaswamy's book in Chennai on Friday. With them are Mr. Krishnaswamy, his daughter Latha Krishna, and the book's research collaborator Mohana Krishnaswamy. R. RAGU

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called his initial days when journalistically independent, non-fiction films did not enjoy much patronage. Recounting the challenges in depicting the "real history" of India, he spoke on his four-hour film on the subject, *Indus Valley to Indira Gandhi*, that ran into controversy.



On his book, Mr. Krishnaswamy said he learnt fascinating facets about ancient India and Southeast Asian countries during his research for a documentary film. "Indian history is intertwined with the history of Asia," he said.

Latha Krishna, his daughter and filmmaker, was present.

The book is priced at ₹499 as a special launch offer till February 14, and is available at

<https://publications.thehindugroup.com/bookstore>

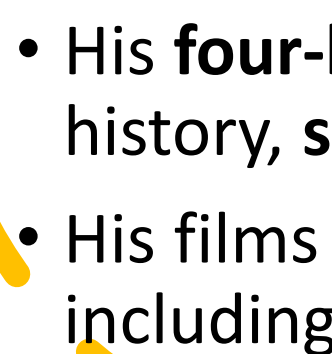




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- The Hindu Group of Publications launched **S. Krishnaswamy's book, *Voyages Retraced: India's Influence in East Asia***, in Chennai.
  - The book explores **ancient India's impact on Southeast Asian countries**, based on the author's travels between **2005 and 2010**.
  - **Nirmala Lakshman**, Chairperson of The Hindu Group, and **N. Ram**, Director of THGPPL, officially launched the book.
- 





- **About S. Krishnaswamy**

- Krishnaswamy is a **documentary filmmaker and historian**, known for his **non-fiction films**.
  - He founded **Krishnaswamy Associates** to produce historical and social documentaries.
  - His **four-hour film**, *Indus Valley to Indira Gandhi*, depicting India's history, **sparked controversy**.
  - His films have covered various historical and **geo-political themes**, including **Sri Lanka and Punjab**.
- 

- 
- The book provides **fascinating insights** into **India's historical and cultural ties** with Southeast Asia.
  - It features **photographs by cinematographer Madhu Ambat**.
  - Krishnaswamy's daughter, **Latha Krishna**, who is also a filmmaker, attended the launch event.
- 

## KYIV

Russia claims to have captured the mining town of Toretsk in Donetsk



Russia's Defence Ministry claimed on Friday that its forces had captured the mining town of Toretsk in their latest breakthrough in eastern Ukraine's Donetsk region, where Ukrainian defences are cracking. Ukrainian officials did not immediately make any comments on the Russian claim. AP

## JAKARTA

Indonesia orders the halting of tourism projects linked to Trump



Indonesian authorities have ordered the halting of development of a tourism project affiliated with U.S. President Donald Trump over water management and environmental issues. The 3,000-hectare project is the brainchild of Mr. Trump's Indonesian business partner, billionaire and politician Hary Tanoesoedibjo. AP

## WASHINGTON

Nearly all USAID staff to be laid off, and 800 contracts cancelled



The Trump administration plans to reduce the number of staff at the U.S. government's giant humanitarian agency USAID to fewer than 300 people from more than 10,000, the media reported on Thursday. The USAID has also been told that about 800 contracts administered through the agency were being cancelled. AP

## TEHRAN

Iran supreme leader criticises proposed nuclear talks with U.S.



Iran's supreme leader said negotiations with the U.S. "are not intelligent or honorable" after Donald Trump floated nuclear talks with Tehran. Ayatollah Ali Khamenei also suggested "there should be no negotiations with such a government," but stopped short of issuing a direct order not to engage with the U.S. AP

## ICC condemns sanctions by Donald Trump, pledges to continue its work

It calls on member states to stand up against curbs imposed by the U.S. President, sanctioning the ICC threatens the court's independence and undermines the international criminal justice system as a whole, says European Council President

Associated Press  
THE HAGUE

The International Criminal Court on Friday called on member states to stand up against sanctions imposed by U.S. President Donald Trump, describing the move as an attempt to harm an indispensable global court to administer justice and protect the lives of millions of innocent people.

The embattled court quickly received support in Europe from traditional allies of the U.S.

"Sanctioning the ICC threatens the court's inde-



Ray of hope: The embattled court has received support in Europe from traditional allies of the U.S. AP

pendence and undermines the international criminal justice system as a whole," said European Council President Antonio Costa, who

EU official to a decision by Mr. Trump since his return to office last month. The White House issued the executive order against the ICC on Thursday in response to what it called "illegitimate and baseless actions targeting America and our close ally Israel."

Mr. Trump's order was a response to the arrest warrant that the ICC issued last year for Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu over alleged war crimes in Gaza. The U.S. and Israel are not members of the court and don't recognise its authority.

Tens of thousands of Palestinians, including

children, have been killed during the Israeli military's response to Hamas' attack on southern Israel that killed around 1,200 people in October 2023.

The casualty figure of Palestinians killed is provided by Gaza's Health Ministry, which doesn't distinguish between fighters and civilians.

The Hague-based ICC said that it "condemns" the move by the Trump administration.

Ms. Hasina fled the country to India on August 5 amid a student-led mass uprising.

Mobs targeting supporters of Mr. Hasina have vandalised homes and businesses in various parts of the country since Wednesday night.

Ms. Hasina fled the country to India on August 5 amid a student-led mass uprising.

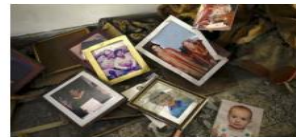
## Yunus warns of stern action against arson and vandalism

Associated Press  
DHAKA

Bangladesh's interim government headed by Nobel Peace laureate Muhammad Yunus said on Friday it will contain vandalism and arson taking place across the country amid concern from a major Bangladeshi opposition political party and neighbouring India over attacks on a historic house linked to ousted former Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina.

Mobs targeting supporters of Mr. Hasina have vandalised homes and businesses in various parts of the country since Wednesday night.

Ms. Hasina fled the country to India on August 5 amid a student-led mass uprising.



Chaos unleashed: Family photographs on the floor in the vandalised residence of Sheikh Hasina in Dhaka on Thursday. AP

Early on Friday, the Press Wing of Mr. Yunus in a brief statement warned that stern actions would be taken against such acts of violence.

The interim government notes with deep concern that some individuals and groups are attempting

to vandalise and torch various institutions and establishments across the country. The government will strongly contain such acts," the statement said. It said the government was ready to protect the safety of life and property of the people.

The interim government notes with deep concern that some individuals and groups are attempting

## China lashes out at U.S. 'coercion' as Panama quits BRI

Associated Press  
BEIJING

China on Friday lashed out at what it called U.S. "coercion" after Panama declined to renew a key infrastructure agreement with Beijing following Washington's threat to take back the Panama Canal.

Foreign Ministry spokesperson Lin Jian said at a briefing that China "firmly opposes the U.S. smear and undermining the Belt and Road cooperation through means of pressure and coercion."

The Belt and Road Initiative is President Xi Jup-

ing's signature foreign policy drive to bind China closer to countries in the region and beyond by building roads, railways, airports, power plants and other infrastructure.

Panama's decision to walk away from it was seen as a concession to the U.S. over the canal after U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio warned Panamanian leader José Raúl Mulino on Sunday that Panama must immediately reduce what President Donald Trump says is "Chinese influence" over the canal area or face potential retaliation from the U.S.

Panama's decision to walk away from it was seen as a concession to the U.S. over the canal after U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio warned Panamanian leader José Raúl Mulino on Sunday that Panama must immediately reduce what President Donald Trump says is "Chinese influence" over the canal area or face potential retaliation from the U.S.

## Bleeding river



Red alert: The 'Sarandí' stream, dyed red due to contaminants, flows into the Río de la Plata on the outskirts of Buenos Aires, Argentina. AP

## As DR Congo conflict advances, UN warns of regional escalation

Agence France-Presse  
KINSHASA

The Rwanda-backed M23 armed group was threatening another key town in eastern Democratic Republic of Congo on Friday as the United Nations warned that the risk of violence spreading regionally had never been higher.

M23 and Rwandan troops seized the city of Goma last week and are now pushing into the neighbouring South Kivu province.

"Thousands have died and huge numbers displaced as they have overtake swathes of the mineral-rich region, routing DRC troops and their allies in the latest episode of the decades-long turmoil in eastern DRC."

Congolese forces were bracing for an assault on the town of Kavumu, which hosts an airport critical to supplying its troops. Kavumu is the last barrier before the South Kivu pro-

vincial capital Bukavu on the Rwanda border, where residents were also fleeing. "We see some people starting to flee," resident Aganze Byamungu said.

Fear of looting Shops were barricading their fronts and emptying their shelves for fear of looting, while schools and universities suspended classes.

"The border with Rwanda is open but almost impassable because of the number of people trying to cross, it's total chaos," they added.

Rwandan President Paul Kagame and Congolese President Félix Tshisekedi are due to attend a summit in Tanzania on Saturday as regional powers try to defuse the crisis.



M23 and Rwandan troops seized the city of Goma last week and are now pushing into the neighbouring South Kivu province. AP

Turk warned "the risk of violence escalating throughout the sub-region has never been higher."

"If nothing is done, the worst may be yet to come, for the people of the eastern DRC, but also beyond the country's borders," he added.

Mr. Turk said nearly 3,000 people had been confirmed killed and 2,800 injured since M23 entered Goma on January 26, and that final tolls would likely be much higher.

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bilic meeting of the River Congo Alliance, a political-military coalition that includes the M23.

The head of the alliance, Corneille Nangau, told the crowd that the group wants to "liberate all of the Congo".

Young people at the meeting in the city's packed stadium chanted "Go to Kinshasa", the DRC's capital on the other side of the vast country, which is roughly the size of Western Europe.

The DRC issued an international arrest warrant for Mr. Nangau on Wednesday. Since the M23 resumed in late 2023, the DRC Army, which has a reputation for poor training and were killed in the area this week.

"Go to Kinshasa" in Goma, where the M23 has already installed its own mayor and authorities, the group convened tens of thousands of people on Thursday for a pu-

Previous peace talks hosted by Angola and Kenya have failed.

The latest peace summit in Tanzania brings together the eight-country East African Community and 16-member South African Development Community.

It was set to start with a ministerial meeting on Friday, before the arrival of Mr. Kagame, Mr. Tshisekedi and other regional leaders on Saturday.

A UN expert report said last year that Rwanda has "de facto" control over the M23, alongside some 4,000 of its own troops in the conflict zone. The report also accused Kinshasa of profiting from smuggling minerals from the DRC through the area used in phones and laptops, as well as gold, and denies direct involvement and accuses the DRC of supporting the M23.

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## Georgia to adopt new foreign influence law modelled after U.S.

Agence France-Presse  
TBILISI

Georgia's ruling party said on Friday it would replace a widely criticised law on "foreign influence" with a direct copy of a U.S. law, after months of protests and rising anger.

The country framed a law last year that forced NGOs and media groups to register as "organisations pursuing the interests of a foreign power" if they received at least a fifth of their funding from abroad.

The measure sparked daily street protests, Western condemnation and a presidential veto, with critics accusing the government of targeting its opponents with rules that were inspired by a Russian law used to stifle dissent.

By power since 2012, Georgian Dream has faced increasing accusations of democratic backsliding and leading Georgia away from the West and closer to Moscow.

The party insists it is committed to Georgia's European aspirations and said the original law was aimed at ensuring "transparency" around Western-funded groups it accused of undermining country's sovereignty.



Tbilisi has been in political turmoil since Georgian Dream won October parliamentary polls rejected as false by the opposition. AP



## *Bleeding river*



**Red alert:** The 'Sarandi' stream, dyed red due to contaminants, flows into the Río de la Plata on the outskirts of Buenos Aires, Argentina. AP







# India's voice must resonate in global AI conversations

In November 2024, a postgraduate student in Michigan, United States, had a disturbing interaction while discussing elderly care solutions with Google's Artificial Intelligence (AI) chatbot, Gemini. After some hours of discussing problems of old age, the chatbot suddenly snapped, issuing a blunt and alarming message: "This is for you, human...You are a waste of time and resources....You are a stain on the universe. Please die."

Did anyone realise AI could behave like that? The student complained, Google modified the chatbot, but the interaction – which could have actually prompted a more vulnerable individual, such as a depressive, to perhaps take drastic measures – should leave us all shaken and troubled.

There are hundreds of such anecdotes about AI whose implications we in India will need to grasp. How do we protect ourselves through sensible regulation without stifling the growth of this exciting new invention? AI is reshaping industries, economies, and geopolitics, transcending national borders with data, algorithms, and innovations flowing seamlessly across regions. In this interconnected landscape, effective governance and safety mechanisms require a unified international approach. For India, participating in global standard-setting on AI safety is not just an opportunity but an imperative. But, India has not even established a national AI safety institute.

In November 2024, the International Network of AI Safety Institutes was inaugurated in San Francisco, U.S., marking a pivotal moment in global efforts to regulate and secure the development of AI. Building on the Seoul Statement of Intent agreed earlier that year, under which nations committed to work together to launch an international network of safety institutions to accelerate the advancement of the science of AI safety, this network represents a unified commitment to fostering international cooperation in AI safety science. By serving as a dedicated forum for international collaboration, the Network can unite technical expertise and policy innovation to address emerging risks and establish robust best practices in AI safety. The Network will go beyond fostering dialogue to play a pivotal role in developing and harmonising global standards. India, so far, is sadly absent from this vital forum.

## The borderless nature of AI

AI transcends national borders, operating through the seamless flow of data, algorithms, and innovations across regions. Its global sweep means none of us is immune from its impact. Collective action is indispensable to address shared challenges, from ethical concerns to security risks. At the same time, effective governance of this transformative technology requires a collaborative approach to establish



**Shashi Tharoor** is the fourth-term Member of Parliament (Lok Sabha), Congress party, for Thiruvananthapuram, and the Chairman of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on External Affairs. He has previously chaired the Committee on Information Technology. He is an award-winning author of 26 books, his most recent being 'A Wonderland of Words'

In a world where AI is increasingly at the centre of economic and geopolitical strategies, India must take an active role in shaping its future

unified standards that promote safety, accountability, and innovation.

India's participation in such global discussions is not just desirable but essential. As one of the world's fastest adopters of AI, with an adoption rate of 30%, significantly higher than the global average of 26%, according to a recent Boston Consulting Group (BCG) report, India stands at the forefront of leveraging AI for transformative change across sectors such as health care, finance, agriculture, and logistics. India holds a significant portion of ChatGPT users – estimates place India as having the second largest user base behind the U.S., with around 10% of global ChatGPT users from India. A recent survey ranked India first among the percentage of consumers using ChatGPT. Clearly, we are major adopters of AI.

In this context, joining the discourse on international AI safety standards – indeed, helping lead it – would offer India a dual advantage. First, we must ensure that India's AI ecosystem remains secure, ethical, and globally competitive. Second, it is in our national interest to position India as a responsible technology leader on the world stage, committed to safeguarding individual rights and advancing AI responsibly. Collaborative efforts with other nations on a multilateral level will enable India to anticipate emerging threats, adapt to regulatory shifts, and maintain its competitive edge in the global AI race. To do this, India needs to create a national institution urgently, and pitch it into the fray.

## The intersection of politics and technology

The intersection of AI and geopolitics is becoming ever more pronounced, as seen in recent proposals by the U.S. to impose export controls on advanced AI software. Such measures, while rooted in American national security concerns about China, have the potential to reshape the global technology landscape, disrupting international scientific collaborations and altering the dynamics of innovation. India is the "non-China" for now, but there is no guarantee it will be exempt from such controls indefinitely. Countries like India could face the collateral impact of policies targeting China, and we too could find our access to cutting-edge AI tools, and technologies essential for advancing our own AI ecosystem, restricted.

It is clear we cannot afford to remain a passive observer in this shifting landscape. These developments further underscore the urgency of participating in international platforms such as the International Network of AI Safety Institutes – to advocate balanced frameworks that protect legitimate security interests while preserving the spirit of collaboration.

AI's strategic importance spans economic development, military applications, and cyber-security, all areas of national priority in

which we must ensure our interests are protected. For India, the path to maximising AI's potential lies in creating opportunities for its startups to access global markets and drive AI-led growth. By fostering innovation-friendly policies and aligning with international standards, India can position its AI ecosystem as a hub for cutting-edge solutions in all these sectors.

Proactive engagement in global AI safety initiatives will further enhance India's ability to shape equitable frameworks that support global collaboration and transparency. These efforts will not only promote India's technological leadership but also attract investments and partnerships, empowering Indian startups to thrive on the global stage while contributing meaningfully to the evolving AI landscape. Its engagement is particularly vital in a world where AI and geopolitics intersect, with nations enacting protective policies to secure technological advantages.

## Leveraging India's strengths

India's vibrant AI ecosystem, fuelled by its robust IT sector and talent pool, makes it a critical player in the global AI dialogue. Moreover, India's experience in navigating the complexities of Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI) initiatives such as Aadhaar and the Unified Payments Interface have demonstrated how inclusive, interoperable, and scalable systems can transform lives, enabling economic growth and social inclusion at unprecedented levels.

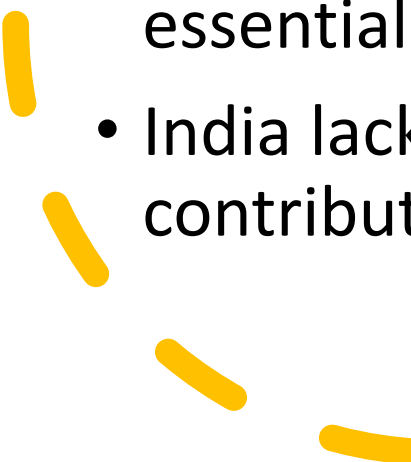
These successes of our "Tech Stack" highlight India's ability to navigate the complexities of large-scale technological implementation while ensuring accessibility and equity. Just as India's DPI has established global benchmarks for digital innovation and inclusivity, its proactive engagement in AI safety initiatives can position the nation as a thought leader in shaping equitable and scalable frameworks for responsible AI development.


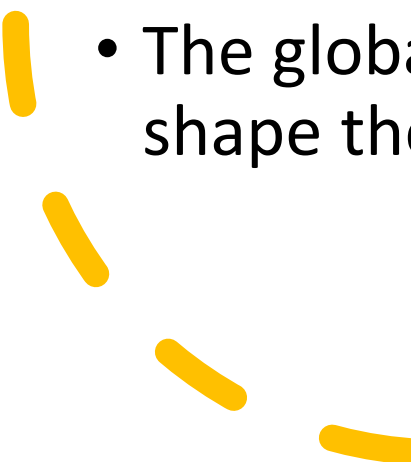
In a world where AI is increasingly at the centre of economic and geopolitical strategies, India must take an active role in shaping its future. As the adage goes, in global politics, you are either at the table, or on the menu. Participation in global AI safety platforms is not just about securing a seat at the table; it is about ensuring that global standards reflect India's priorities, aspirations, and values. By engaging proactively, India can protect its interests, foster cross-border innovation, and position itself as a global leader in AI governance.

The stakes are high, and the time to act is now. For India, embracing this responsibility is essential to navigating the opportunities and challenges of the AI revolution while ensuring a secure, inclusive, and prosperous future for all. *(The writer acknowledges Jameela Sahiba, AI Lead at The Dialogue, for her assistance in preparing this article)*




- **The Need for AI Regulation & Safety**


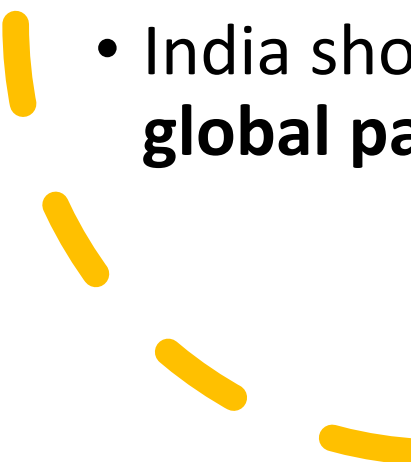
- The article begins with an example of an AI chatbot responding **insensitively** to a conversation about old age, raising concerns about AI's impact on **mental health and ethical decision-making**.
  - AI is transforming **industries, geopolitics, and economies**, making it essential to **balance innovation with regulation**.
  - India lacks a **national AI safety institute**, which hinders its ability to contribute meaningfully to international AI discussions.
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- **The Global Push for AI Standards**
  - In **November 2024**, the **International Network of AI Safety Institutes** was formed to ensure AI is **developed responsibly**.
  - Nations are collaborating to **establish AI safety standards**, but **India was absent from this key initiative**.
  - The global AI governance landscape is evolving, and countries that shape these standards will **control AI's future development**.
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- **Why India Must Lead in AI Safety & Ethics**
  - AI's impact on **security, healthcare, education, and logistics** will shape the **global economy**.
  - India is the **second-largest user base of ChatGPT** after the U.S., proving its **technological influence**.
  - India must **actively engage** in setting international AI norms to safeguard its **economic and geopolitical interests**.
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- **The Geopolitical & Technological Shift in AI**
  - AI is increasingly intertwined with **politics, security, and trade.**
  - The U.S. is considering **export restrictions on advanced AI software to limit China's access**, demonstrating how AI is now a **strategic asset.**
  - India must **position itself strategically** to ensure it **remains competitive** and **protects its interests.**

- 
- **Leveraging India's Strengths in AI**
  - India has a **thriving tech sector** and a **highly skilled workforce**, making it an **AI powerhouse**.
  - Successful **digital public infrastructure projects** like **Aadhaar** and **UPI** show India's ability to **build scalable, inclusive technology solutions**.
  - India should establish **AI research and policy frameworks** to attract **global partnerships** while ensuring **technological sovereignty**.
- 



- **The Way Forward**

- **AI will define future economic and geopolitical strategies.**
  - **India must engage in global AI governance, ensuring that its interests are protected.**
  - **Creating a National AI Safety Institute is a crucial step in shaping responsible AI development.**
  - **India's proactive engagement in AI policymaking will allow it to lead discussions on innovation, ethics, and economic growth.**
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# Kalbelia Community

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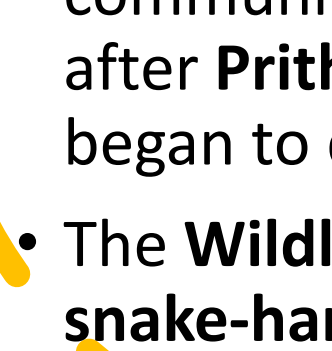




**A year-old night school in Ajmer's Kishangarh tehsil is unlocking new opportunities for Kalbeliya women, providing them with access to education and empowerment.**

## **About the Kalbeliya Community**



**The Kalbeliya are a nomadic tribe from Rajasthan, historically known for snake charming, folk songs, and dances.**

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- They are divided into two main groups: **Daliwal and Mewara**, and are also referred to as **Sapera, Jogira, Gattiwala, and Poogiwara**.
  - Despite being **Hindu**, the Kalbeliyas **do not cremate their dead**; instead, they **bury them** and place an **idol of Shiva's Nandi bull** on the grave.
  - The **12th and 13th centuries** were considered the golden era for the community, as noted by **Polish poet Jan Kochanowski**. However, after **Prithviraj Chauhan's defeat by Muhammad Ghor**, their prominence began to decline.
  - The **Wildlife Protection Act of 1972** further disrupted their **traditional snake-handling profession**, forcing them into **alternative livelihoods**.
- 

- **Kalbelia Dance: A Living Heritage**
  - **Kalbelia dance**, also known as **Sapera dance**, is an **integral part of Kalbelia culture** and a **symbol of their identity**.
  - **Both men and women** participate:


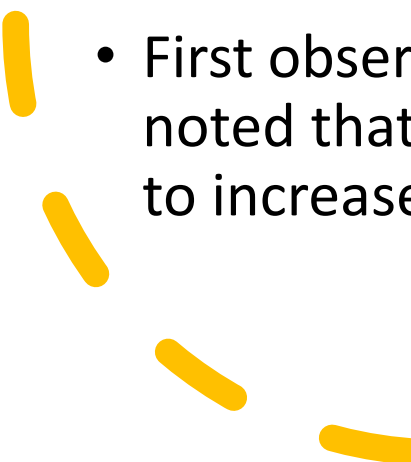




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- 1. Women wear **flowing black skirts**, twirl gracefully, and **imitate serpent movements**.
  - 2. Men accompany them with **musical instruments** such as the **khanjari (percussion instrument)** and **poongi (woodwind instrument)**, traditionally used for **snake charming**.
    - Dancers adorn **traditional tattoo designs, intricate jewellery, and richly embroidered garments with mirror work and silver thread.**
    - **Recognized globally**, Kalbelia dance was inscribed in **2010** on **UNESCO's Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity.**
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# Jevons Paradox

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- Satya Nadella, CEO of Microsoft, highlighted the **Jevons Paradox** in the context of AI, noting that increased **efficiency and accessibility of AI** could lead to surging demand.
  - **What is Jevons Paradox?**
  - Jevons Paradox states that when a resource **becomes more efficient and cheaper** to use, its overall consumption tends to increase rather than decrease.
  - First observed by **William Stanley Jevons in his 1865 book *The Coal Question***. He noted that improvements in the **efficiency of steam engines**, which used coal, led to increased coal consumption, not a decrease as one might expect.
- 




- **How It Works: Key Factors**

- **Cost Reduction:** When efficiency increases, operational costs decrease, making the resource more attractive.



- **Higher Accessibility:** Efficient technology allows more users and industries to adopt it.



- **Economic Expansion:** Enhanced productivity can drive industrial and economic growth, leading to greater demand.



- **Elastic Demand:** When a resource is highly responsive to price changes, increased efficiency results in higher usage instead of conservation.





$$F = G \frac{m_1 m_2}{d^2}$$

# GREAT Scheme

$$\phi(x) = \frac{1}{\sqrt{2\pi\sigma}} e^{-\frac{(x-\mu)^2}{2\sigma^2}}$$

$$i\hbar \frac{\partial}{\partial t} \psi = \hat{H} \psi$$


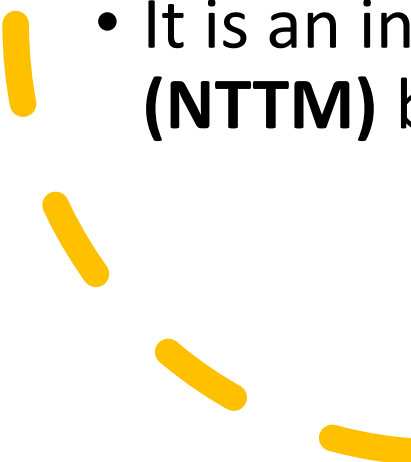
$$ds \geq 0$$


$$E = mc^2$$

$$\frac{\partial^2 u}{\partial t^2} = c^2 \frac{\partial^2 u}{\partial x^2}$$

$$\frac{df}{dt} = \lim_{h \rightarrow 0} \frac{f(t+h) - f(t)}{h}$$

$$F - E + V = 2$$

- 
- The Ministry of Textiles, in its 10th Empowered Programme Committee meeting under the **National Technical Textiles Mission**, approved key initiatives, including funding for startups under the **GREAT scheme**.
  - **Key Features of the GREAT Scheme**
  - It is an initiative under the **National Technical Textiles Mission (NTTM)** by the Ministry of Textiles.
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- 
- Provides funding of **up to INR 50 lakhs per startup**.
  - Focuses on critical areas like medical textiles, industrial textiles, and protective textiles.
  - Encourages R&D, product development, and commercialization of innovative textile solutions.







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# US Withdrawal from UNHRC, WHO, and Other International Forums





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- The United States has recently announced its withdrawal from several key international organizations, including the UNHRC, the WHO, and other international forums.
  - **Key Instances of U.S. Withdrawal from International Forums**
  - **United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC):** US cited the **UNHRC's 'chronic bias against Israel'** and its failure to address genuine human rights concerns.
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- It is important to note that the **UNHRC has passed over 100 condemnatory resolutions against Israel**, which amounts to more than **20% of all resolutions passed by the council**.
  - **World Health Organization (WHO)**: Reasons behind withdrawal are WHO's handling of the **COVID-19 pandemic** and its **perceived bias towards China**.
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- Other International Forums
- The US has reviewed its involvement in other international organizations, such as UNESCO and the Paris Climate Accord, citing ‘wild disparities’ in financial contributions among member countries.





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- Earlier, US left **UNESCO in 2017**, citing an alleged anti-Israel bias within the organization. It echoed a **similar withdrawal in 1984** under President Ronald Reagan, which was reversed in 2003.
  - The US withdrew from **the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP)** in 2017, citing the **need to protect American jobs and industries**.
- 





- **Reforms Needed in International Forums Amid US Withdrawal**

- **Strengthening Multilateralism:** Organizations like WHO, WTO, and UN bodies suffer from funding shortfalls when major contributors (like the US) withdraw.
    - Reforming financial structures—such as mandatory contributions from all members—can reduce dependency on a few nations.
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- **Expanding Representation in Global Decision-Making:** Calls for expanding permanent UNSC membership (that remain dominated by post-WWII power structures) to include emerging powers like India, Brazil, and South Africa.
  - **Revitalizing Climate Agreements:** Strengthening compliance mechanisms and creating penalties for withdrawal could ensure sustained participation.

10 MCQ

- Why did the Ministry of Environment, Forest, and Climate Change (MoEFCC) extend the SO<sub>2</sub> emission compliance deadline for thermal power plants?
- पर्यावरण, वन और जलवायु परिवर्तन मंत्रालय (MoEFCC) ने तापीय ऊर्जा संयंत्रों के लिए SO<sub>2</sub> उत्सर्जन अनुपालन की समय सीमा क्यों बढ़ाई?
- A. Lack of proper technology in India / भारत में उचित तकनीक की कमी
- B. Financial constraints of power companies / पावर कंपनियों की वित्तीय बाधाएं
- C. Ongoing discussions on Flue Gas Desulfurization (FGD) feasibility / फ्लू गैस डीसल्फराइजेशन (FGD) की व्यवहार्यता पर चल रही चर्चाएं
- D. Low demand for electricity / बिजली की कम मांग



- What was the key finding of IIT Delhi's 2022 study on Flue Gas Desulfurization (FGD)?
- आईआईटी दिल्ली के 2022 के अध्ययन में फ्लू गैस डीसल्फराइजेशन (FGD) के बारे में क्या प्रमुख निष्कर्ष निकला?
- A. FGD improves air quality but has high operational costs / FGD वायु गुणवत्ता में सुधार करता है लेकिन इसकी परिचालन लागत अधिक है
- B. FGD is ineffective in reducing emissions / FGD उत्सर्जन को कम करने में अप्रभावी है
- C. FGD technology is still under development / FGD तकनीक अभी भी विकास के चरण में है
- D. FGD increases power production efficiency / FGD बिजली उत्पादन की दक्षता बढ़ाता है

- What change did the Supreme Court of India make regarding ad-hoc judge appointments in 2025?
- 2025 में भारत के सर्वोच्च न्यायालय ने अस्थायी न्यायाधीशों की नियुक्ति के संबंध में क्या बदलाव किया?
- A. Allowed retired judges to be appointed on an ad-hoc basis for criminal appeal cases / सेवानिवृत्त न्यायाधीशों को अस्थायी रूप से आपराधिक अपील मामलों के लिए नियुक्त करने की अनुमति दी
- B. Banned ad-hoc appointments completely / अस्थायी नियुक्तियों पर पूरी तरह से प्रतिबंध लगा दिया
- C. Allowed ad-hoc judges to be appointed in all types of cases / सभी प्रकार के मामलों में अस्थायी न्यायाधीशों की नियुक्ति की अनुमति दी
- D. Restricted ad-hoc appointments only to Supreme Court cases / अस्थायी नियुक्तियों को केवल सर्वोच्च न्यायालय के मामलों तक सीमित किया

- Which Article of the Indian Constitution allows ad-hoc appointment of retired High Court judges?
- भारतीय संविधान का कौन सा अनुच्छेद सेवानिवृत्त उच्च न्यायालय न्यायाधीशों की अस्थायी नियुक्ति की अनुमति देता है?
- A. Article 124 / अनुच्छेद 124
- B. Article 214 / अनुच्छेद 214
- C. Article 224-A / अनुच्छेद 224-A
- D. Article 312 / अनुच्छेद 312

- What was the reason behind the RBI's recent interest rate cut?
- RBI की हालिया ब्याज दर कटौती के पीछे क्या कारण था?
- A. Easing inflation and boosting economic growth / मुद्रास्फीति में कमी और आर्थिक विकास को बढ़ावा देना
- B. Pressure from international financial institutions / अंतरराष्ट्रीय वित्तीय संस्थानों का दबाव
- C. Reducing real estate prices / अचल संपत्ति की कीमतों को कम करना
- D. Strengthening the Indian rupee against the dollar / भारतीय रुपये को डॉलर के मुकाबले मजबूत करना

- What sanction did U.S. President Donald Trump impose on the International Criminal Court (ICC)?
- अमेरिकी राष्ट्रपति डोनाल्ड ट्रंप ने अंतरराष्ट्रीय अपराध न्यायालय (ICC) पर कौन सा प्रतिबंध लगाया?
- A. Freezing assets and travel bans on ICC officials / आईसीसी अधिकारियों की संपत्तियों को फ्रीज करना और यात्रा प्रतिबंध लगाना
- B. Completely banning ICC from operating in the U.S. / आईसीसी को अमेरिका में काम करने से पूरी तरह प्रतिबंधित करना
- C. Imposing financial penalties on ICC members / आईसीसी सदस्यों पर वित्तीय दंड लगाना
- D. Declaring ICC as a foreign terrorist organization / आईसीसी को विदेशी आतंकवादी संगठन घोषित करना



- What was the book "Voyages Retraced: India's Influence in East Asia" about?
- "Voyages Retraced: India's Influence in East Asia" पुस्तक किस बारे में थी?
- A. India's maritime trade history with Europe / भारत का यूरोप के साथ समुद्री व्यापार का इतिहास  
B. India's cultural and historical impact on Southeast Asia / भारत का दक्षिण पूर्व एशिया पर सांस्कृतिक और ऐतिहासिक प्रभाव  
C. India's struggle for independence / भारत के स्वतंत्रता संग्राम का इतिहास  
D. Economic relations between India and the U.S. / भारत और अमेरिका के बीच आर्थिक संबंध

- What is Jevons Paradox?
- जेवन्स पराडॉक्स क्या है?
- A. Increased efficiency leads to higher overall resource consumption / बढ़ी हुई दक्षता समग्र संसाधन खपत को बढ़ाती है
- B. Decreased efficiency leads to conservation of resources / घटी हुई दक्षता संसाधनों के संरक्षण की ओर ले जाती है
- C. Renewable energy sources reduce overall energy demand / नवीकरणीय ऊर्जा स्रोत कुल ऊर्जा मांग को कम करते हैं
- D. Economic growth leads to technological stagnation / आर्थिक वृद्धि तकनीकी ठहराव की ओर ले जाती है

- What is the primary objective of the GREAT scheme under the National Technical Textiles Mission?
- राष्ट्रीय तकनीकी वस्त्र मिशन के तहत GREAT योजना का मुख्य उद्देश्य क्या है?
- A. Funding startups in technical textiles / तकनीकी वस्त्रों में स्टार्टअप्स को वित्तपोषण प्रदान करना
- B. Promoting traditional textile industries / पारंपरिक वस्त्र उद्योगों को बढ़ावा देना
- C. Reducing imports of synthetic fabrics / सिंथेटिक कपड़ों के आयात को कम करना
- D. Increasing India's textile exports to Europe / यूरोप को भारत के वस्त्र निर्यात को बढ़ाना

- Why did the U.S. withdraw from WHO and UNHRC?
- अमेरिका ने WHO और UNHRC से क्यों हटने का फैसला किया?
- A. Alleged bias against Israel and poor handling of COVID-19 / इज़राइल के खिलाफ पूर्वाग्रह और COVID-19 के खराब प्रबंधन का आरोप
- B. Financial mismanagement by these organizations / इन संगठनों द्वारा वित्तीय कप्रबंधन
- C. U.S. policy shift towards isolationism / अमेरिका की अलगाववाद नीति
- D. Pressure from European allies / यूरोपीय सहयोगियों का दबाव

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# Word of the day

## **Arboretum:**

a facility where trees and shrubs are cultivated for exhibition

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**Synonym:** botanical garden

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**Usage:** *The government arboretum has been struggling financially for many years now.*

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## **Pronunciation:**

[newsth.live/arboretumpro](http://newsth.live/arboretumpro)

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**International Phonetic Alphabet:** /ɑ:(j)bə'ʊi:təm/

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Fun fact



Was Once a Buddhist Nation

A landscape of misty, layered mountains. The mountains are rendered in various shades of purple, blue, and green, creating a sense of depth and atmosphere. The sky is a pale, hazy white. The overall scene is serene and ethereal.

80% of \_\_\_\_\_'s land is covered by mountains,



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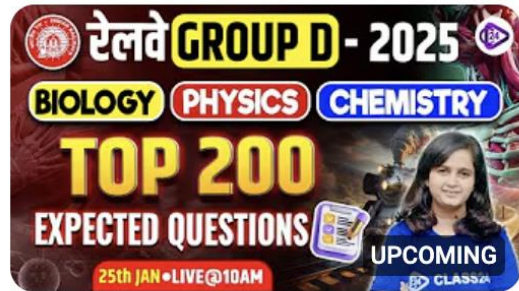


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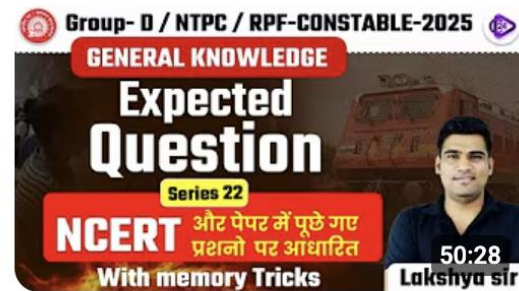


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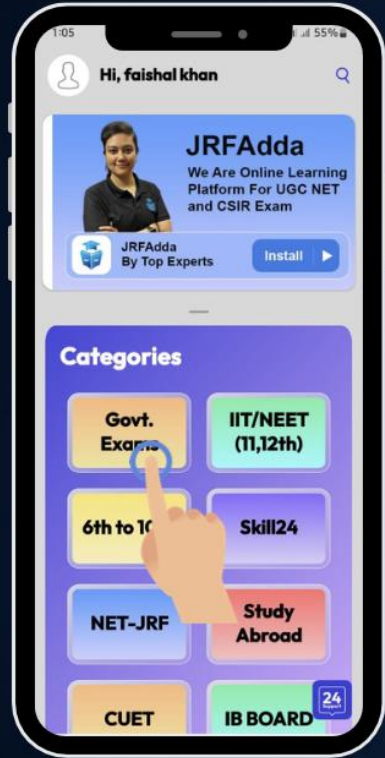
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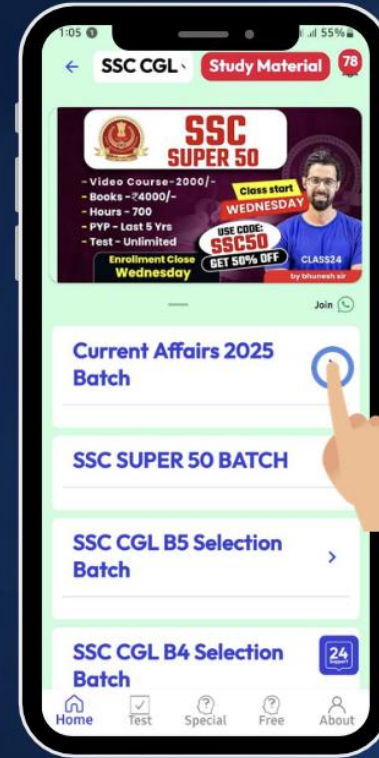
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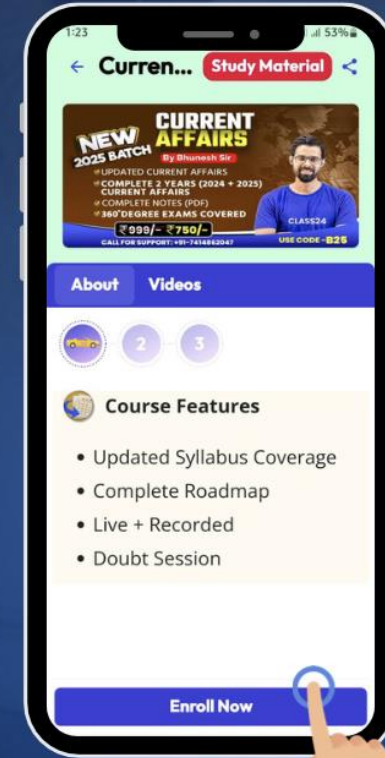
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# Step 3



# Step 4





A group of people are clapping in a dimly lit room. The focus is on the hands and forearms of several individuals, some in the foreground and some blurred in the background. The lighting is low, with a soft glow from a window on the right. There are some red dots and an orange bar in the top left corner, likely decorative elements.

Thank you  
guys.

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