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PCS Special:	25 February
25F	Union Cabinet, led by Modi, holds the first meeting at Seva Teerth केंद्र सरकार, मोदी के नेतृत्व में, सेवा तीर्थ में पहली बैठक आयोजित करती है
25F	Know your English अपने अंग्रेज़ी ज्ञान को जानिए

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Union Cabinet, led by Modi, holds the first meeting at Seva Teerth

PCS

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Union Cabinet, led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, on Tuesday held its first meeting at the newly inaugurated Seva Teerth complex and adopted a resolution to fulfil the government's goal of placing India among the world's top three economies in the near future.

In the resolution, the Cabinet said that with the "new energy" of Seva Teerth – the new Prime Minister's Office complex – and the rapid pace of reform, it would work towards realising the vision of a "Developed India 2047".

Long-term journey

Describing the initiative as a long-term journey, the resolution said the decisions taken today would shape the future for generations to come.

"This first meeting at Se-



Prime Minister Narendra Modi during the inauguration of Seva Teerth, the new building of the PM's office earlier this month. ANI

va Teerth reminds us that the greater the goal of development, the deeper must be our responsibility towards it. This complex is not just a modern workplace. It also symbolises a new work culture of governance. Through its modern technology and efficient working methods, government efficiency will reach new heights," it said, adding that every "Kar-

mayogi who works here will be inspired by the sense that their work is linked to simplifying the lives of the last person in the country".

Vision realised

The Union Cabinet resolved that the work culture would encourage judicious use of resources and accelerate the continuous journey of reforms that the

country had experienced over the years, and added that it would become the foundation for advancing India as a capable, strong, and self-reliant nation.

"For decades since Independence, governments have preserved this legacy and dreamed of the future in the Prime Minister's Office, South Block. We dreamed of an India whose thinking is indigenous, its form is modern, and its potential is infinite. Today, Seva Teerth is the embodiment of that vision, which will enhance India's pride as the mother of democracy," the resolution said.

Listing the achievements under the leadership of Mr. Modi over the past decade, the Union Cabinet said, "Every decision taken here (at the new complex) will be inspired by the spirit of service towards 140 crore countrymen and linked to the broader goal of nation-building".

25F. Union Cabinet, led by Modi, holds the first meeting at Seva Teerth

केंद्र सरकार, मोदी के नेतृत्व में, सेवा तीर्थ में पहली बैठक आयोजित करती है

• The Union Cabinet, led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, on Tuesday held its first meeting at the newly inaugurated Seva Teerth complex and adopted a resolution to

fulfill the government's goal of placing India among the world's top three economies in the near future.

केंद्र सरकार, प्रधान मंत्री नरेंद्र मोदी के नेतृत्व में, मंगलवार को नव उद्घाटित सेवा तीर्थ परिसर में अपनी पहली बैठक आयोजित की और एक संकल्प अपनाया

ताकि भारत को निकट भविष्य में दुनिया की शीर्ष तीन अर्थव्यवस्थाओं में स्थान दिलाने का सरकारी लक्ष्य पूरा किया जा सके।

• Seva Teerth houses the

Prime Minister's Office, the National Security Council Secretariat, the Cabinet Secretariat, all of which were previously located across different locations. The new building complexes consolidate administrative functions within modern, and future-ready facilities.

Know your English

English

S. Upendran

"I came looking for you yesterday. Where were you?"

"Sridhar took me to see *Taal*."

"How was the movie?"

"I didn't like it."

"That's surprising. My friend said it was quite good."

"Sridhar's kids, on the other hand, thought it was rather good."

"Quite good' and 'rather good'. What is the difference between the two?"

"'Rather good' is stronger than 'quite good'."

"So, if I want to compliment someone about something, I should say 'rather good' instead of 'quite good'."

"Right. When you say that something is 'rather good', you are implying that it is better than what you expected it to be."

"And you are surprised by the fact it is so good."

"Exactly! Some grammarians say that 'rather good' is the same as 'very good'."

"I see. Sujatha's Hindi is rather good. Many people think that she had her schooling in Delhi."

"The food served at the wedding was rather good. I was really surprised."

"What does 'quite good' mean?"

"When you say that the film is quite good, what you are implying is that the movie though not great, is worth seeing."

"In other words, the movie is not surprisingly good."

"It definitely is not. 'Quite good' is not as strong as 'rather good'."

"So when you say Sujatha's Hindi is quite good, it means that she can manage in most situations."

"I guess you could say that."

"Has your cousin decided where he is going for the holidays?"

"Yes. We had a lengthy discussion about it yesterday and he's decided...."

"...discussion about? Didn't you say some time ago that one shouldn't use 'about' after 'discussion'?"

"I don't think I ever said that. One can, in fact, use 'about' after 'discussion'. For example, during the lunch break, we had a lengthy discussion about *Taal*."

"Sujatha and I had a lengthy discussion about cricket. Can I say that?"

"You certainly can. Every morning, my boss and I have a discussion about our sales strategy."

"My friends and I discuss about movies."

"That's what I told you to avoid. I told you not to...."

"...not to use 'about' after 'discuss'."

Now I remember. Let's discuss something else, shall we?"

"Certainly. What would you like to discuss?"

"Your cousin, Sridhar. He works during the weekends too, doesn't he?"

"That's right. He gets Thursdays off. He works Friday through Wednesday."

"Friday through Wednesday? Don't you mean 'to' Wednesday? Shouldn't...."

"...you can say 'I work Monday through Friday', or, 'I work Monday to Friday'. Both are acceptable."

"What's the difference?"

"As far as I know, 'Monday through Friday' is American and...."

"...Monday to Friday is British."

Published in *The Hindu* on September 13, 1999.

25F. Know your English अपने अंग्रेज़ी ज्ञान को जानिए

• "Quite good' and 'rather good'. What is the difference between the two?"

"'Quite good' और 'Rather good'। इन दोनों में क्या अंतर है?"

• "'Rather good' is stronger than 'quite good'."

"'Rather good', 'quite good' से अधिक प्रभावशाली है।"

• "So, if I want to compliment someone about something, I should say 'rather good' instead of 'quite good'."

"तो, अगर मुझे किसी बात पर किसी की प्रशंसा करनी हो, तो मुझे 'quite good' की बजाय 'rather good' कहना चाहिए।"

• "Right. When you say that something is 'rather good', you are implying that it is better than what you expected it to be."

"सही। जब आप कहते हैं कि कोई चीज़



- 'rather good' है, तो इसका मतलब है कि वह आपकी उम्मीद से बेहतर है।"
- "And you are surprised by the fact it is so good."
"और आप इस बात से हैरान होते हैं कि वह इतनी अच्छी है।"
 - "Exactly! Some grammarians say that 'rather good' is the same as 'very good'.
"बिल्कुल! कुछ व्याकरणविद कहते हैं कि 'rather good' का अर्थ 'very good' के समान है।"
 - "I see. Sujatha's Hindi is rather good. Many people think that she had her schooling in Delhi."
"समझ गया। सुजाता की हिंदी rather good है। कई लोग सोचते हैं कि उसकी पढ़ाई दिल्ली में हुई है।"
 - "The food served at the wedding was rather good. I was really surprised."
"शादी में परोसा गया खाना rather good था। मुझे सच में आश्चर्य हुआ।"
 - "What does 'quite good' mean?"
"Quite good' का क्या अर्थ है?"
 - "When you say that the film is quite good, what you are implying is that the movie though not great, is worth seeing."
"जब आप कहते हैं कि फिल्म quite good है, तो आप यह संकेत देते हैं कि फिल्म भले ही बहुत शानदार न हो, फिर भी देखने लायक है।"
 - "That's right. He gets Thursdays off. He works Friday through Wednesday."
"बिल्कुल सही। उसे गुरुवार की छुट्टी मिलती है। वह Friday through Wednesday काम करता है।"
 - "Friday through Wednesday? Don't you mean 'to' Wednesday? Shouldn't..."
"Friday through Wednesday? क्या तुम्हारा मतलब Wednesday to नहीं है? क्या ऐसा नहीं...।"
 - "...you can say 'I work Monday through Friday', or, 'I work Monday to Friday'. Both are acceptable."
"...आप कह सकते हैं 'I work Monday through Friday', या 'I work Monday to Friday'। दोनों स्वीकार्य हैं।"
 - "What's the difference?"
"इनमें क्या अंतर है?"
 - "As far as I know, 'Monday through Friday' is American and.."
"जहाँ तक मुझे पता है, 'Monday through Friday' अमेरिकी प्रयोग है और.."
 - "...Monday to Friday is British."
"... Monday to Friday' ब्रिटिश प्रयोग है।"

GS Paper 1: History,	
TOPICS COVERED	25 February 2026
25F	QUIZ

Questions and Answers to the previous day's daily quiz:

1. In September 1919, Adolf Hitler joined the German Workers' Party, a small nationalist group in Munich founded by _____. **Ans: Anton Drexler**
 2. In 1921-22, the NSDAP set up the Sturmabteilung whose members were called this. **Ans: Brownshirts**
 3. In 1923, this event led to the abolishing of the Sturmabteilung. **Ans: Beer Hall Putsch**
 4. In 1925, Hitler created Y, whose name was German for 'Protection Squadron'. **Ans: Schutzstaffel (SS)**
 5. Name the event of February 23, 1933, that Hitler used as a pretext to arrest communists en masse. **Ans: Reichstag fire**
- Visual: Name this leader. **Ans: Paul von Hindenburg**
- Early Birds:** Suchit Narottam| Abhiroop Bose| Prashansa Lohumij| Maalavika Nair| Piyali Tuli

25F. QUIZ: Adolf Hitler and the German Workers' Party (1919)

- In September 1919, Adolf Hitler joined the German Workers' Party (DAP) in Munich, a small nationalist and anti-Semitic political group founded by Anton Drexler.
- Hitler initially joined as an intelligence agent for the German Army to monitor political activities, but his oratory skills and propaganda ability quickly made him a key leader.
- By 1920, he helped transform the party into the Nazi Party (NSDAP), shaping its ideology of extreme nationalism, racial supremacy, and authoritarianism, which later influenced Germany's political trajectory.

Sturmabteilung (SA) and the Brownshirts (1921-22)

- In 1921-22, the NSDAP created the Sturmabteilung (SA), a paramilitary wing whose members were called Brownshirts.



- Led by **Ernst Röhm**, the SA protected meetings, intimidated opponents, and enforced party authority through street violence.
- Their brown uniforms came from surplus military shirts. The organisation expanded during the Weimar crisis, helping **Adolf Hitler** rise. After the **1934 Night of the Long Knives**, the SA's power declined as **SS** became dominant within **Nazi Germany**.

Beer Hall Putsch and the Temporary Abolishing of the Sturmabteilung (1923)

- In **November 1923**, the failed **Beer Hall Putsch** in **Munich** led to the banning of the **NSDAP** and the temporary abolishing of the **Sturmabteilung (SA)**.
- Led by **Adolf Hitler** and supported by **Erich Ludendorff**, the coup attempted to overthrow the **Weimar Republic** government. After its failure, Hitler was arrested and sentenced to prison, where he wrote *Mein Kampf*.
- The German authorities outlawed Nazi organisations, including the SA, though it was later reorganised after the party's revival in **1925**.

Creation of the Schutzstaffel (SS) – 'Protection Squadron' (1925)

- In **1925**, **Adolf Hitler** created the **Schutzstaffel (SS)**, meaning 'Protection Squadron', initially as a small elite unit to guard him and protect **Nazi Party** leadership.
- Under **Heinrich Himmler** from **1929**, the SS expanded into a powerful organisation controlling **security**, **intelligence (Gestapo)**, and **concentration camps**.
- It became central to enforcing **Nazi ideology**, racial policies, and wartime repression. After the **1934 Night of the Long Knives**, the SS overshadowed the SA, becoming one of the most influential institutions in **Nazi Germany**.

Reichstag Fire (February 1933)

- On **27 February 1933**, the **Reichstag building** in **Berlin** was set on fire in an event known as the **Reichstag Fire**.
- Adolf Hitler**, recently appointed **Chancellor of Germany (30 January 1933)**, used the incident as a pretext to arrest **Communists** and suppress political opponents.
- The subsequent **Reichstag Fire Decree** suspended key **civil liberties**, including freedom of speech and assembly.
- This marked a decisive step in dismantling the **Weimar Republic** and consolidating **Nazi dictatorship** in Germany.

GS Paper 1: Geography	
TOPICS COVERED	25 February 2026
25F	Rajasthan prohibits felling of khejri trees after 11-day protest राजस्थान ने 11-दिन के विरोध के बाद केजरी पेड़ों की कटाई पर रोक लगाई
25F	Helicopter crashes into sea near Andaman's Mayabunder अंडमान के मायाबंदर के पास हेलीकॉप्टर समुद्र में गिरा

BIG SHOT



Cretaceous discovery: In the Sahara desert in Niger, scientists have unearthed fossils of a new species of Spinosaurus, among the biggest of the meat-eating dinosaurs, notable for its large blade-shaped head crest and jaws bearing interlocking teeth (illustrated above). It was 12 m long and weighed 5-7 tonnes. <https://www.bbc.com/news/science-environment-56821111>

Cretaceous discovery: In the **Sahara desert in Niger**, scientists have unearthed fossils of a new species of **Spinosaurus**, among the biggest of the meat-eating dinosaurs, notable for its large blade-shaped head crest and jaws bearing interlocking teeth (illustrated above). It was 12 m long and weighed 5-7 tonnes.



Rajasthan prohibits felling of khejri trees after 11-day protest

GS I: Geography

The Hindu Bureau
JAIPUR

The Bharatiya Janata Party government in Rajasthan has enforced a ban on the felling of khejri trees following an 11-day-long agitation by saints and Bishnoi community members in Bikaner.

A Bill for tree protection will also be introduced during the ongoing Budget Session of the State Assembly.

Khejri is the official State tree of Rajasthan, designated in view of its immense value to the desert ecosystem and rural economy.

The agitation had started after the alleged widespread felling of khejri for solar power projects coming up in the western parts of the State.

The indefinite sit-in protest outside the Bishnoi

Dharamshala in Bikaner was called off after the State government issued a circular to halt the felling of the trees.

Protesters backed

The agitation received support from several State leaders, including ex-Rajasthan Chief Ministers Ashok Gehlot and Vasundhara Raje.

Minister of State K.K. Bishnoi had earlier attempted to get the agitation withdrawn by assuring a ban limited to Bikaner and Jodhpur divisions. As the protesters rejected the partial measure, a delegation led by Mr. Bishnoi handed over an order to all District Collectors. The order stated that felling of khejri trees would remain prohibited throughout the State until a new law comes into force to protect them.

25F. Rajasthan prohibits felling of khejri trees after 11-day protest राजस्थान ने 11-दिन के विरोध के बाद केजरी पेड़ों की कटाई पर रोक लगाई

The **Bharatiya Janata Party government in Rajasthan** has enforced a ban on the felling of khejri trees following an **11-day-long agitation by saints and Bishnoi community members in Bikaner**.

राजस्थान में भारतीय जनता पार्टी सरकार ने केजरी पेड़ों की कटाई पर प्रतिबंध लगा दिया है, जो बीकानेर में संतों और बिश्नोई समुदाय के सदस्यों द्वारा 11 दिन तक चली आंदोलन के बाद लागू किया गया।

A **Bill for tree protection** will also be introduced during the ongoing **Budget Session of the State Assembly**.

राज्य विधानसभा के चल रहे बजट सत्र के दौरान पेड़ संरक्षण विधेयक भी प्रस्तुत किया जाएगा।

Khejri is the official State tree of Rajasthan, designated in view of its immense value to the **desert ecosystem and rural economy**.

केजरी राजस्थान का आधिकारिक राज्य वृक्ष है, जिसे इसके रेगिस्तानी पारिस्थितिकी तंत्र और ग्रामीण अर्थव्यवस्था में अतुलनीय महत्व के कारण चुना गया है।

The **order stated that felling of khejri trees would remain prohibited throughout the State until a new law comes into force to protect them**.

आदेश में कहा गया कि केजरी पेड़ों की कटाई पूरे राज्य में तब तक प्रतिबंधित रहेगी जब तक उनकी सुरक्षा के लिए नई कानून लागू नहीं होता।

25F. Helicopter Andaman's अंडमान के मायाबंदर

- A Pawan Hans including two crew shortly after take-off and Middle morning. लोग सवार थे, जिनमें नॉर्थ और मिडल ऑफ के थोड़ी देर
- All occupants सभी सवारियों को



GS I: Geography

Helicopter crashes into sea near Andaman's Mayabunder

A Pawan Hans helicopter carrying seven people, including two crew members, crash-landed in the sea shortly after take-off from Mayabunder in the North and Middle Andaman district on Tuesday morning. All occupants were rescued, officials said. The incident occurred around 9.30 a.m., and all five passengers and the two crew members were admitted to hospital. "The helicopter had taken off from Sri Vijaya Puram around 8.45 a.m. A preliminary inquiry suggests a technical snag, following which the pilot made a crash-landing in the sea," a senior Civil Aviation official said. PTI

crashes into sea near Mayabunder के पास हेलीकॉप्टर समुद्र में गिरा

helicopter carrying seven people, members, crash-landed in the sea off from **Mayabunder in the North Andaman district** on Tuesday एक पवन हंस हेलीकॉप्टर, जिसमें सात दो कू सदस्य शामिल हैं, मंगलवार सुबह अंडमान जिला के मायाबंदर से टेक-बाद समुद्र में क्रैश-लैंड हो गया। were rescued, officials said. बचा लिया गया, अधिकारियों ने कहा।

GS Paper II: Polity,

TOPICS COVERED

25 February 2026

25F Union Cabinet nod for 'Kerala' to become 'Keralam' 'केरल' का नाम बदलकर 'केरलम' करने के लिए केंद्रीय कैबिनेट की मंजूरी



25F Does the Data Act dilute the Right to Information Act?
क्या Data Act, Right to Information Act को कमजोर करता है

Union Cabinet nod for 'Kerala' to become 'Keralam'

GS II: Polity

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Union Cabinet on Tuesday approved the Kerala government's proposal to change the State's name from 'Kerala' to 'Keralam', the name used in the Malayalam language.

The President will now refer the Kerala (Alteration of Name) Bill, 2026, to the Kerala Legislative Assembly to express its views, under the proviso to Article 3 of the Constitution of India,

a government statement said.

Once these views are received, the Union government will take further action to obtain the President's recommendation to introduce the name change legislation in Parliament.

The decision was taken at a Cabinet meeting chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi at its first gathering at Seva Teerth, the new complex housing the Prime Minister's Office.

The Kerala Assembly passed a resolution seeking name change on June 2024

The move comes almost two years after the Kerala Assembly passed a resolution seeking the name change.

The resolution, dated June 24, 2024, said: "The name of our State is 'Keralam' in Malayalam Language. States were formed

on the basis of language on the 1st day of November, 1956. The Kerala Piravi Day is also on the 1st day of November. Since the time of national independence struggle, there has been a strong demand for the formation of United Kerala for the people speaking Malayalam language. But in the First Schedule to the Constitution the name of our State is recorded as 'Kerala'. This Assembly unanimously appeal to the Central Government to

take urgent steps as per Article 3 of the Constitution for modifying the name as 'Keralam'."

The matter was considered in the Ministry of Home Affairs and, with the approval of Minister Amit Shah, the draft note was circulated to the Department of Legal Affairs and the Legislative Department of the Ministry of Law and Justice, for their comments. These departments concurred with the proposal to change the name.

25F. Union Cabinet nod for 'Kerala' to become 'Keralam' 'केरल' का नाम बदलकर 'केरलम' करने के लिए केंद्रीय कैबिनेट की मंजूरी

- The **Union Cabinet on Tuesday approved the Kerala government's proposal to change the State's name from 'Kerala' to 'Keralam'**, the name used in the Malayalam language. केंद्रीय कैबिनेट ने मंगलवार को केरल सरकार के प्रस्ताव को मंजूरी दी, जिसमें राज्य का नाम 'केरल' से बदलकर 'केरलम' करने की बात थी, जो मलयालम भाषा में उपयोग किया जाता है।
- The President will now refer the **Kerala (Alteration of Name) Bill, 2026**, to the **Kerala Legislative Assembly to express its views**, under the proviso to **Article 3 of the Constitution of India**, a government statement said. सरकार के एक बयान के अनुसार राष्ट्रपति अब केरल (नाम परिवर्तन) विधेयक, 2026 को केरल विधान सभा को भेजेंगे ताकि वह अपनी राय व्यक्त कर सके, भारत के संविधान के अनुच्छेद 3 के प्रावधान के तहत।
- Once these views are received, the **Union government will take further action to obtain the President's recommendation to introduce the name change legislation in Parliament**. एक बार जब ये राय प्राप्त हो जाती हैं, केंद्र सरकार राष्ट्रपति की सिफारिश प्राप्त करने के लिए आगे की कार्रवाई करेगी ताकि संसद में नाम परिवर्तन कानून पेश किया जा सके।
- The decision was taken at a **Cabinet meeting chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi at its first gathering at Seva Teerth**, the new complex housing the **Prime Minister's Office**. यह निर्णय प्रधानमंत्री नरेंद्र मोदी की अध्यक्षता में कैबिनेट बैठक में लिया गया, जो सेवा तीर्थ में अपने पहले सत्र में हुई, यह नया परिसर प्रधानमंत्री कार्यालय का घर है।
- The move comes almost **two years after the Kerala Assembly passed a resolution seeking the name change**. यह कदम लगभग दो साल बाद आया जब केरल विधानसभा ने नाम परिवर्तन की मांग वाला प्रस्ताव पारित किया था।
- The resolution, dated **June 24, 2024**, said: "**The name of our State is 'Keralam' in Malayalam Language. States were formed on the basis of language on the 1st day of November, 1956**. इस प्रस्ताव, दिनांक **24 जून, 2024**, में कहा गया: "हमारे राज्य का नाम मलयालम भाषा में 'केरलम' है। राज्यों का गठन भाषा के आधार पर **1 नवंबर, 1956** को किया गया।
- The **Kerala Piravi Day is also on the 1st day of November**. केरल पीरवि दिवस भी **1 नवंबर** को मनाया जाता है।
- Since the time of **national independence struggle**, there has been a strong demand for the formation of **United Kerala** for the people speaking Malayalam language.



राष्ट्रीय स्वतंत्रता संग्राम के समय से ही मलयालम भाषा बोलने वाले लोगों के लिए एकीकृत केरल के गठन की मजबूत मांग रही है।

- But in the **First Schedule to the Constitution** the name of our State is recorded as 'Kerala'.
लेकिन संविधान की प्रथम अनुसूची में हमारे राज्य का नाम 'केरल' दर्ज है।
- This Assembly unanimously appealed to the **Central Government to take urgent steps as per Article 3 of the Constitution for modifying the name as 'Keralam'.**
यह विधानसभा सर्वसम्मति से केंद्रीय सरकार से अपील करती है कि वह संविधान के अनुच्छेद 3 के अनुसार 'केरलम' के रूप में नाम बदलने के लिए तुरंत कदम उठाए।
- The matter was considered in the **Ministry of Home Affairs** and, with the approval of **Minister Amit Shah**, the draft note was circulated to the **Department of Legal Affairs and the Legislative Department of the Ministry of Law and Justice**, for their comments.
यह मामला गृह मंत्रालय में विचाराधीन था और मंत्री अमित शाह की मंजूरी के साथ, प्रारूप नोट को कानूनी मामलों के विभाग और कानून और न्याय मंत्रालय के विधायी विभाग को उनके विचारों के लिए भेजा गया।
- **These departments concurred with the proposal to change the name.**
इन विभागों ने नाम बदलने के प्रस्ताव से सहमति व्यक्त की।

Does the Data Act dilute the Right to Information Act?

Why is a blanket exemption to any information which relates to personal information problematic?

SS II Polity
Rangarajan, R

The story so far:

The petitions challenging the amendment to the Right to Information (RTI) Act that provides blanket exemption for personal information, through a section in the Digital Personal Data Protection (DPDP) Act, has been referred to a Constitution Bench of the Supreme Court.

How was the DPDP Act framed?
The Supreme Court in *Puttaswamy* (2017) had declared the right to privacy as a fundamental right primarily under Article 21 (right to life and liberty). It is also an overarching right that includes freedom of speech and expression (Article 19). In this judgment, the court had directed that the government must put forth a data protection regime.
The government had constituted a committee under the chairmanship of

Justice B.N. Sri Krishna to deliberate and report on the data protection framework. The committee submitted its report and a draft Bill on data protection in July 2018. Subsequently, in August 2023, Parliament passed the DPDP Act, 2023. The DPDP Act provides the legal framework for the protection of personal data of individuals (known as data principals) which they share with other persons, companies and government entities (data fiduciaries).

What is the controversy?
The RTI Act, 2005 was enacted to provide citizens with the right to seek information from public authorities. Section 8(1)(j) of the RTI Act stipulated that information which relates to personal information, the disclosure of which has no relationship to any public activity or interest, or which would cause unwarranted invasion of the privacy of an individual need not be provided. However, if the appropriate authority was satisfied that larger public

interest justified the disclosure of such information, the same could be provided. Section 44(3) of the DPDP Act amends section 8(1)(j) of the RTI Act. It provides a blanket exemption to any information which relates to personal information without any exceptions. The statement of objects and reasons while introducing the DPDP Bill is silent about the aim of this amendment. It may be inferred that it is to protect the fundamental right to privacy of public officials that cannot be abridged or taken away by parliamentary law. However, this amendment has been challenged in the Supreme Court, through a series of petitions, on the ground that it is *ultra vires* the Constitution. This has now been referred to a Bench considering 'constitutional sensitivity' of the questions involved.

What can be the way forward?
The Supreme Court has in various cases viewed the right to information as integral

to Articles 19 and 21. The RTI Act has had a significant impact on increasing the transparency and accountability of public authorities. Previously, the personal assets and liabilities of public servants, which they are required to periodically submit to government, were disclosed by Public Information Officers under the RTI Act if it served larger public interest. This had been used to probe any allegation of corruption by public servants. However, with the current amendment, such information would be declined on the ground that it is related to personal information. It enables rejecting requests concerning even procurement records, audit reports or public spending on the premise that it could be 'personal information'. The court had remarked that it might lay down the guidelines as to what is meant by 'personal information'. This is a welcome step. However, the amendment of the RTI Act through the DPDP Act, 2023 should be repealed. It should revert to the earlier position which allowed the disclosure of personal information if it fulfilled larger public interest. This provision already contained the required proportionate balance, between the needs for privacy and disclosure, with respect to the personal information of public officials.

Rangarajan R is a former IAS officer and author of 'Courseware on Polity Simplified'. He currently trains at Officers IAS academy. Views expressed are personal.

THE GIST

▼ The Supreme Court in *Puttaswamy* (2017) had declared the right to privacy as a fundamental right.

▼ The RTI Act, 2005 was enacted to provide citizens with the right to seek information from public authorities.

▼ Section 44(3) of the DPDP Act amends section 8(1)(j) of the RTI Act. It provides a blanket exemption to any information which relates to personal information without any exceptions.

25F. Does the Data Act dilute the Right to Information Act?

क्या Data Act, Right to Information Act को कमजोर करता है

- The petitions challenging the amendment to the **Right to Information (RTI) Act** that provides **blanket exemption for personal information** through a section in the **Digital Personal Data Protection (DPDP) Act** have been referred to a **Constitution Bench of the Supreme Court**.

सूचना का अधिकार (आरटीआई) अधिनियम में संशोधन, जो डिजिटल व्यक्तिगत डेटा संरक्षण (डीपीडीपी) अधिनियम के माध्यम से व्यक्तिगत जानकारी पर पूर्ण छूट देता है, को चुनौती देने वाली याचिकाएँ सुप्रीम कोर्ट की संविधान पीठ को भेजी गई हैं।

How was the DPDP Act framed?

डीपीडीपी अधिनियम कैसे बना?

- The Supreme Court in *Puttaswamy* (2017) declared the **right to privacy as a fundamental right primarily under Article 21**.
सुप्रीम कोर्ट ने पुट्टास्वामी (2017) में गोपनीयता के अधिकार को मुख्यतः अनुच्छेद 21 के तहत मौलिक अधिकार घोषित किया।



- It also held that privacy is an overarching right including **freedom of speech and expression (Article 19)**.
इसने यह भी माना कि गोपनीयता एक व्यापक अधिकार है जिसमें **वाक् एवं अभिव्यक्ति की स्वतंत्रता (अनुच्छेद 19)** शामिल है।
- The court directed the government to put forth a **data protection regime**.
न्यायालय ने सरकार को **डेटा संरक्षण व्यवस्था** लाने का निर्देश दिया।
- The **government constituted a committee under Justice B.N. Sri Krishna to deliberate on the data protection framework**.
सरकार ने **न्यायमूर्ति बी.एन. श्रीकृष्ण** की अध्यक्षता में समिति गठित की।
- The committee submitted its report and draft Bill in **July 2018**.
समिति ने अपनी रिपोर्ट और मसौदा विधेयक **जुलाई 2018** में प्रस्तुत किया।
- In **August 2023**, Parliament passed the **DPDP Act, 2023**.
अगस्त 2023 में संसद ने **डीपीडीपी अधिनियम, 2023** पारित किया।
- The **Act provides the legal framework for protection of personal data of individuals (data principals) shared with data fiduciaries**.
यह अधिनियम व्यक्तियों (**डेटा प्रिंसिपल**) द्वारा साझा किए गए व्यक्तिगत डेटा की सुरक्षा हेतु कानूनी ढांचा प्रदान करता है, जिसे **डेटा फिड्यूसियरी** संभालते हैं।

What is the controversy? विवाद क्या है?

- The **RTI Act, 2005** gives citizens the right to seek information from public authorities.
आरटीआई अधिनियम, 2005 नागरिकों को सार्वजनिक प्राधिकरणों से जानकारी मांगने का अधिकार देता है।
- **Section 8(1)(j) exempted disclosure of personal information unless larger public interest justified it**.
धारा **8(1)(j)** के तहत व्यक्तिगत जानकारी का खुलासा तभी होता था जब **बड़े सार्वजनिक हित** में उचित ठहराया जाए।
- **Section 44(3) of the DPDP Act amends Section 8(1)(j) of the RTI Act**.
डीपीडीपी अधिनियम की धारा 44(3) ने आरटीआई की धारा 8(1)(j) में संशोधन किया।
- It provides a **blanket exemption to any information relating to personal information without exceptions**.
यह व्यक्तिगत जानकारी से संबंधित किसी भी सूचना को **पूर्ण छूट** देता है।
- The amendment has been challenged as **ultra vires the Constitution**.
इस संशोधन को **संविधान के विरुद्ध** बताते हुए चुनौती दी गई है।

What can be the way forward? आगे का मार्ग क्या हो सकता है?

- The **Supreme Court has viewed the right to information as integral to Articles 19 and 21**.
सुप्रीम कोर्ट ने **सूचना के अधिकार** को **अनुच्छेद 19 और 21** का अभिन्न अंग माना है।
- The **RTI Act has increased transparency and accountability of public authorities**.
आरटीआई अधिनियम ने सार्वजनिक प्राधिकरणों की **पारदर्शिता और जवाबदेही** बढ़ाई है।
- Earlier, **disclosure of assets and liabilities of public servants was allowed if it served larger public interest**.
पहले **लोक सेवकों की संपत्ति और देनदारियों** का खुलासा बड़े सार्वजनिक हित में किया जाता था।
- **This helped probe allegations of corruption**.
इससे **भ्रष्टाचार के आरोपों** की जांच संभव हुई।
- **Under the current amendment, such information may be declined as personal information**.
वर्तमान संशोधन के तहत ऐसी जानकारी को **व्यक्तिगत सूचना** कहकर रोका जा सकता है।
- **It may even reject requests on procurement records, audit reports, or public spending**.
यह **खरीद रिकॉर्ड, ऑडिट रिपोर्ट या सार्वजनिक व्यय** से जुड़ी जानकारी भी अस्वीकार कर सकता है।
- The court remarked it may lay down guidelines on what constitutes 'personal information'.
न्यायालय ने संकेत दिया कि वह **'व्यक्तिगत सूचना'** की परिभाषा पर दिशा-निर्देश दे सकता है।



- The amendment of the RTI Act through the **DPDP Act, 2023** should be repealed. **डीपीडीपी अधिनियम, 2023** के माध्यम से आरटीआई संशोधन को निरस्त किया जाना चाहिए।
- The earlier position allowing disclosure if it fulfilled **larger public interest** should be restored. पहले की स्थिति बहाल होनी चाहिए जिसमें **बड़े सार्वजनिक हित** में खुलासा संभव था।
- That provision ensured a **proportionate balance between privacy and disclosure** regarding personal information of public officials. वह प्रावधान सार्वजनिक अधिकारियों की व्यक्तिगत जानकारी के संबंध में **गोपनीयता और खुलासे के बीच संतुलित व्यवस्था** सुनिश्चित करता था।

GS Paper II: Governance,	
TOPICS COVERED	25 February 2026
25F	SC suggests PMAY benefits for Haldwani occupants एससी ने हल्द्वानी निवासियों के लिए पीएमएवाई लाभ सुझाए

25F. SC suggests PMAY benefits for Haldwani occupants
एससी ने हल्द्वानी निवासियों के लिए पीएमएवाई लाभ सुझाए

- Additional Solicitor General Aishwarya Bhati, for the Railways, said a flooding **Ghaura River** habitually disrupts railway operations in a region known as the **doorway to the hills of Uttarakhand**.
रेलवे की ओर से अतिरिक्त सॉलिसिटर जनरल **ऐश्वर्या भाटी** ने कहा कि **घौला नदी** का बार-बार बाढ़ आना उत्तराखंड की पहाड़ियों के द्वार के रूप में जाने जाने वाले क्षेत्र में रेलवे संचालन को नियमित रूप से बाधित करता है।
- Striking a balance between development requirements and the human element behind, Chief Justice Kant suggested the **State acquire alternative land under the PMAY for the rehabilitation of the evictees**.
विकास की आवश्यकताओं और मानव तत्व के बीच संतुलन बनाते हुए, मुख्य न्यायाधीश **कांत** ने सुझाव दिया कि राज्य **PMAY** के तहत हटाए जाने वाले लोगों के पुनर्वास के लिए वैकल्पिक भूमि अधिग्रहित करे।
- Instead of monetary compensation, the amount could be used for construction of homes which were equivalent to those the evictees had to leave behind**.
मौद्रिक मुआवजे के बजाय, राशि का उपयोग उन घरों के निर्माण के लिए किया जा सकता है जो हटाए जाने वाले लोगों को छोड़ने पड़े घरों के बराबर हों।

GS Paper II: International Relations	
TOPICS COVERED	25 February 2026
25F	Modi's Israel visit faces headwinds मोदी का इज़राइल दौरा चुनौतियों का सामना करता है
25F	Cong. slams PM's Israel visit amid West Asia tensions कांग्रेस ने पश्चिम एशिया तनाव के बीच पीएम के इज़राइल दौरे की निंदा की
25F	An Israel visit — its strategic, economic, regional impact इज़राइल यात्रा — इसका रणनीतिक, आर्थिक, क्षेत्रीय प्रभाव
25F	India's trade strategy in a multipolar world बहुध्रुवीय विश्व में भारत की व्यापार रणनीति



Modi's Israel visit faces headwinds

Netanyahu's plans to announce a 'hexagonal alliance' with India, Greece, Cyprus, and some unnamed countries against 'both radical Sunni and Shia axes' will be watched closely by those likely to feel targeted, including Iran, Türkiye, Saudi Arabia and Qatar, all of which have complex ties with India

GS II: IR

NEWS ANALYSIS

Suhasini Haidar
NEW DELHI

As Prime Minister Narendra Modi prepares for a stand-alone visit to Israel on Wednesday to upgrade bilateral relations, its timing faces geopolitical headwinds.

While defence and security, labour and trade, AI and technology, and IMEC project connectivity will be at the top of the agenda for his meetings with Israel Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, the outcomes will go beyond bilateral agreements to their symbolism and the message they send to the wider West Asian region.

Over the course of the 24-hour visit from Wednesday, most of the engagements planned will see the leaders together. Mr. Netanyahu will receive Mr. Modi at the airport in Tel Aviv, and they are expected to travel together to Jerusalem. Apart from bilateral talks and press statements

on Thursday, they will attend a private dinner, an innovation event, a visit to the Yad Vashem Holocaust memorial museum, and possibly a meeting with the diaspora in Israel, billed as an interaction with the "Indian-Jewish" community settled there. Mr. Modi will address the Knesset.

'Hexagonal alliance'

In particular, Mr. Netanyahu's plans to announce a "hexagonal alliance" with India, Greece and Cyprus, and some unnamed Arab, African and Asian countries against "both radical Sunni and Shia axes", will be watched closely by those countries seen to be targeted, including Iran, Türkiye, Saudi Arabia and Qatar, each of which has historical and complex ties with India. Any announcements on trilateral cooperation between India, the UAE and Israel during the visit will also have an impact in the region, where UAE-Saudi tensions are rising.

"The intention here is to create an axis of nations that see eye-to-eye on the reality, challenges, and



Prime Minister Narendra Modi with his Israeli counterpart, Benjamin Netanyahu, in 2018. FILE PHOTO

goals against the radical axes, both the radical Shia axis, which we have struck very hard, and the emerging radical Sunni axis," Mr. Netanyahu told his cabinet on Sunday while announcing Mr. Modi's visit. The comments came just as U.S. Ambassador to Israel Mike Huckabee said in an interview that it "would be fine" if Israel were to take control of most of the biblical Middle-East or West Asia, leading commentators to draw a link between the remarks.

To travel to Tel Aviv, Mr. Modi will also have to navigate

U.S. President Donald Trump's threats to attack Iran, both literally and figuratively, amid a U.S. military build-up and withdrawal of personnel from key bases across West Asia. While attacks do not appear likely this week, given Iran-U.S. talks on Thursday, it must be remembered that U.S. strikes on Iran's nuclear facilities in June 2025 took place even as negotiations were ongoing. Facing questions asking citizens in Iran to leave the country, Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri said on

Monday that the Prime Minister's security would be ensured in the event of bombardment of Iran. However, New Delhi would also have to consider the optics of being caught in the crossfire between Iran and Israel, just as Mr. Modi will be standing shoulder to shoulder with Mr. Netanyahu.

The visit could affect India's ties with Iran directly, a country that borders South Asia and has long offered India energy and connectivity options. In deference to Mr. Trump's sanctions, the Modi government stopped importing Iranian oil in 2017. Trade and investment declined subsequently, and more recently development of the Chabahar port terminal has been curtailed. In January, New Delhi put off the scheduled visit of Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi. Later this year, New Delhi is expected to host the BRICS summit, where Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian will be invited.

Mr. Modi's visit, the first since the two-year Israeli war on Gaza in which more

than 70,000 were killed, also coincides with Israel's plans to extend control over more territories under the Palestinian Authority in the West Bank, which has sparked international condemnation. India was hesitant to join a statement at the United Nations, eventually signed by 100 countries criticising Israel's violations of international law over the plans, and the Indian mission signed it a day after it was announced at a joint press conference by dozens of diplomats. When asked last week, the Ministry of External Affairs spokesperson blamed the Palestinian mission and others for proceeding too early with a statement that was not "jointly negotiated".

However, the government did not explain why it delayed, while many countries signed immediately. Mr. Modi's talks with Mr. Netanyahu will also be crucial, given the U.S. "Board of Peace" plans for reconstruction, administration and peacekeeping of the Gaza Strip, and India's decision to participate as an observer.

25F. Modi's Israel visit faces headwinds

मोदी का इज़राइल दौरा चुनौतियों का सामना करता है

- Netanyahu's plans to announce a 'hexagonal alliance' with **India, Greece, Cyprus**, and some unnamed countries against 'both radical Sunni and Shia axes' will be watched closely by those likely to feel targeted, including **Iran, Türkiye, Saudi Arabia and Qatar**, all of which have complex ties with India.

नेटन्याहू की योजना, जिसमें भारत, ग्रीस, साइप्रस और कुछ अज्ञात देशों के साथ 'हेक्सगोनल अलायंस' की घोषणा शामिल है, जो 'दोनों उग्र सुन्नी और शिया ध्रुवों' के खिलाफ है, उन देशों द्वारा बारीकी से देखी जाएगी जिन्हें लक्षित महसूस किया जा सकता है, जिनमें **ईरान, तुर्की, सऊदी अरब और कतर** शामिल हैं, जिनके भारत के साथ जटिल संबंध हैं।

- While defence and security, labour and trade, **AI and technology, and IMEC project connectivity** will be at the top of the agenda for his meetings with Israel Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, the outcomes will go beyond bilateral agreements to their symbolism and the message they send to the wider West Asian region.

जबकि रक्षा और सुरक्षा, श्रम और व्यापार, एआई और प्रौद्योगिकी, और IMEC परियोजना कनेक्टिविटी उनके इज़राइल प्रधानमंत्री बेन्यामिन नेटन्याहू के साथ बैठकों के एजेंडा के शीर्ष पर होंगे, परिणाम द्विपक्षीय समझौतों से आगे जाएंगे और उनके प्रतीकात्मक महत्व और संदेश को पश्चिम एशियाई क्षेत्र में पहुंचाएंगे।

- Mr. Modi will address the **Knesset**.
श्री मोदी क्नेससेट को संबोधित करेंगे।

'Hexagonal alliance' 'हेक्सगोनल अलायंस'

- In particular, Mr. Netanyahu's plans to announce a "**hexagonal alliance**" with **India, Greece and Cyprus, and some unnamed Arab, African and Asian countries** against "both



radical Sunni and Shia axes", will be watched closely by those countries seen to be targeted, **including Iran, Türkiye, Saudi Arabia and Qatar**, each of which has historical and complex ties with India.

विशेष रूप से, **श्री नेटन्याहू** की योजना, जिसमें भारत, ग्रीस और साइप्रस और कुछ अज्ञात अरब, अफ्रीकी और एशियाई देशों के साथ "हैक्सगोनल अलायंस" की घोषणा शामिल है, "दोनों उग्र सुन्नी और शिया ध्रुवों" के खिलाफ, उन देशों द्वारा बारीकी से देखी जाएगी जिन्हें लक्षित माना जाता है, जिनमें **ईरान, तुर्की, सऊदी अरब और कतर** शामिल हैं, जिनके भारत के साथ ऐतिहासिक और जटिल संबंध हैं।

- Any announcements on trilateral cooperation between India, the UAE and Israel during the visit will also have an impact in the region, where UAE-Saudi tensions are rising. दौरान भारत, **UAE** और इज़राइल के बीच **त्रिपक्षीय सहयोग** पर कोई भी घोषणा क्षेत्र में प्रभाव डालेगी, जहां **UAE-सऊदी तनाव** बढ़ रहा है।
- "The intention here is to create an **axis of nations** that see eye-to-eye on the reality, challenges, and goals against the radical axes, both the **radical Shia axis**, which we have struck very hard, and the emerging radical Sunni axis," Mr. Netanyahu told his cabinet on Sunday while announcing Mr. Modi's visit.

"यहाँ **इरादा** यह है कि देशों का एक **अक्ष** बनाया जाए जो वास्तविकता, चुनौतियों और लक्ष्यों को **उग्र ध्रुवों** के खिलाफ समान रूप से देखें, दोनों **उग्र शिया ध्रुव**, जिस पर हमने बहुत कड़ा प्रहार किया है, और उभरता हुआ **उग्र सुन्नी ध्रुव**," **श्री नेटन्याहू** ने रविवार को अपनी **कैबिनेट** को बताया, जब उन्होंने **श्री मोदी** के दौरे की घोषणा की।

25F. An Israel visit — its strategic, economic, regional impact इज़राइल यात्रा — इसका रणनीतिक, आर्थिक, क्षेत्रीय प्रभाव

An Israel visit — its strategic, economic, regional impact

GS II: IR

MOB

The West Asian region is staring at the possibility of its worst ever military conflict with one of the largest American military buildups in the Persian Gulf. Iran is defiant and has refused to bow down to 'unreasonable demands' from the United States. Concurrently, in Gaza, although the ceasefire has held since October 2025, the prospects of lasting peace still look remote. In addition, emerging fault lines in the region are drawing allies such as the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and Saudi Arabia into opposing military blocs.

In the midst of such an uncertain security situation, Prime Minister Narendra Modi is set to undertake a two-day visit to Israel (February 25-26, 2026). This will be Mr. Modi's second visit to Israel, following his historic first visit in July 2017 — the first by any Indian Prime Minister. Notably, this is a standalone visit with no engagement with Palestinian Authority leadership, highlighting India's success in "de-hyphenating" its Israel engagement.

The question, however, that arises is why this visit? What role can India play in this fragile security situation in the region? With India and Israel facing similar security threats, how can they take this very important partnership forward?

Convergence in a security partnership

Surrounded by hostile neighbours and as victims of frequent terror attacks, both countries have often sought convergence on security and defence issues. According to the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), India has been Israel's largest defence customer for several years, accounting for about 34% of Israel's total arms exports between 2020 and 2024. The cooperation has gradually progressed from imports to joint development and technology collaboration.

Over the past few decades, Israel has provided India with a number of cutting-edge technologies, weapon and surveillance platforms such as unmanned aerial vehicles, missiles, special forces equipment and radar systems. The Barak-8 air and missile defence system, co-developed by India and Israel, is one such success story. During Israel Defence Minister Benjamin Gantz's visit to New Delhi in June 2022, there was the 'India-Israel Vision on Defence Cooperation' for enhancing cooperation in the field of futuristic defence technologies. In November 2025, India and Israel signed an agreement to deepen cooperation in defence, industry and technology, including the sharing of advanced systems to support joint development and production.

For India, there were lessons from its experience in Operation Sindoor (May 2025) — the need for a strong and impregnable air (including anti-drone) and missile defence shield under Mission 'Sudarshan Chakra'. There are inputs that there could be special focus on it during Mr. Modi's visit including the procurement and co-production of the 'Iron Beam' — a



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100kW-class high-energy laser system capable of intercepting drones, rockets, and mortars efficiently and cost-effectively. There are also reports that Autonomous Guard, an Israeli company has signed a deal with an Indian private defence firm valued at approximately \$1.9 million, which would cover the supply of advanced surveillance and threat-detection systems, specialising in sensor-based observation technologies.

The science, technology and innovation link

India has benefited immensely from Israel's success in modern technology and innovations, especially in agriculture, water and electronics. There are more than 35 Centres of Excellence (CoE) in India which are focused in high quality and high-density production of flowers, vegetables, fruits (mango, citrus, litchi, date palm, pomegranate), and beekeeping. Water management technologies too are critical, especially with many water-scarce areas in India. MASHAV, Israel's Agency for International Development Cooperation under Israel's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, signed agreements with Haryana in June 2022 and Rajasthan in December 2024 to collaborate on integrated water resource management and capacity building. With Artificial Intelligence (AI) rapidly emerging as a key driver of modern technology, it is expected to become a focus area in future bilateral cooperation and innovation initiatives.

Israel-India bilateral trade is often overshadowed by security cooperation. It, however, remains a significant pillar of engagement. India is Israel's second-largest trading partner in Asia, with bilateral trade reaching \$3.75 billion in FY2024-2025. While merchandise trade continues to be dominated by diamonds, petroleum and chemicals, the partnership is expanding into electronics, high-tech products, communications and medical equipment.

In September 2025, during the visit of Israeli Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich, India and Israel signed a Bilateral Investment Agreement. This was followed by the signing of the Terms of Reference for a Free Trade Agreement (FTA) during Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal's visit to Israel in November 2025. With India having recently concluded several significant trade deals, the FTA with Israel could gain the necessary momentum during Mr. Modi's visit. Israel is also keen to establish arrangements and exemptions for Indian infrastructure companies to participate in building critical roads and ports. Additionally, similar to India's agreement with Russia, Israel may pursue a deal to facilitate "human mobility" to attract skilled Indian talent.

Another key aspect to watch during the Modi visit is the progress of the India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor (IMEC). Announced at the G-20 Summit in Delhi in September 2023, this intercontinental connectivity project holds strategic significance

for both countries. Although the Gaza conflict had temporarily stalled the initiative, there is now a renewed sense of urgency to advance it. Recent trade agreements with the European Union, Oman, and the UAE are expected to boost trade in both value and volume, creating the need for a shorter and safer transport route. With the Suez Canal route vulnerable to disruptions from regional conflicts, IMEC could provide an alternative, secure corridor to Europe. But achieving lasting peace in Gaza remains crucial for the project's success.

Gaza peace process and regional dynamics

Discussion on the Gaza peace process is a definite likelihood. During the recent 'Summit' of the Board of Peace, presided over by U.S. President Donald Trump on February 19, 2026, more than 50 countries participated, with some pledging \$7 billion in funding and others committing troops to the International Stabilisation Force. India attended as an observer and has not yet defined its role in the process. Given India's strong ties with both the Gulf region and Israel, discussions may include potential avenues for India's involvement in Gaza.

Both leaders are also expected to discuss regional dynamics in depth, including developments in Iran, given the potential implications of conflict for India and the wider region, particularly with regard to India's energy security. India's hosting of the 2nd India-Arab Foreign Ministers' Meeting (IAFMM), in January 2026, along with Mr. Modi's visits to Jordan and Oman (December 2025), and the visit of the UAE President in January 2026, demonstrate the careful balance that India has forged in the region. This sets the stage for a constructive and realistic discussion on various regional issues during the visit.

Ahead of the Modi visit, Prime Minister of Israel Benjamin Netanyahu tweeted this: "we will create a 'hexagon' of alliances around or within the Middle East. This includes India, Arab nations, African nations, Mediterranean nations (Greece and Cyprus), and nations in Asia... The intention here is to create an axis of nations that see eye-to-eye on the reality, challenges and goals against the radical axes, both the radical Shiite axis, which we have struck very hard, and the emerging radical Sunni axis."

India, however, does not necessarily see things in the region from this lens. How India reacts to such a proposal, given how close India's ties are with countries in the region, will also be a thing to be watched.

Mr. Modi's visit is being closely watched, as India and Israel are at pivotal points in their journeys. Despite domestic differences, the two have built a strong strategic partnership over the past decade. Mr. Modi's address to the Knesset — a privilege usually reserved for U.S. Presidents — and his visit to a Jerusalem innovation centre highlight the visit's significance. It is far more than routine diplomacy, with potential long-term implications for both countries and the region.

The Prime Minister's visit will help deepen engagement with Tel Aviv, going far beyond routine diplomacy





- The **West Asian region** is staring at the possibility of its worst ever **military conflict** with one of the largest **American military buildups** in the **Persian Gulf**.
पश्चिम एशियाई क्षेत्र अपने सबसे बड़े संभावित सैन्य संघर्ष का सामना कर रहा है, जहां फारस की खाड़ी में सबसे बड़े अमेरिकी सैन्य जमावड़े में से एक देखा जा रहा है।
- **Iran is defiant and has refused to bow down to 'unreasonable demands' from the United States.**
ईरान अडिग है और उसने संयुक्त राज्य अमेरिका की 'अवांछित मांगों' के आगे झुकने से इनकार कर दिया है।
- In addition, emerging **fault lines** in the region are drawing allies such as the **United Arab Emirates (UAE) and Saudi Arabia into opposing military blocs.**
इसके अलावा, क्षेत्र में उभरती दरारें सहयोगियों जैसे संयुक्त अरब अमीरात और सऊदी अरब को विरोधी सैन्य गुटों में खींच रही हैं।
- Notably, this is a **standalone visit with no engagement with Palestinian Authority** leadership, highlighting India's success in "**de-hyphenating**" its **Israel engagement.**
विशेष रूप से, यह एक स्वतंत्र यात्रा है जिसमें फिलिस्तीनी प्राधिकरण के नेतृत्व से कोई मुलाकात नहीं है, जो भारत की इज़राइल संबंधों को "अलग पहचान" देने की सफलता को दर्शाती है।

Convergence in a security partnership सुरक्षा साझेदारी में अभिसरण

- Surrounded by hostile neighbours and as **victims of frequent terror attacks**, both countries **have often sought convergence on security and defence issues.**
शत्रुतापूर्ण पड़ोसियों से घिरे और लगातार आतंकी हमलों के शिकार होने के कारण, दोनों देशों ने अक्सर सुरक्षा और रक्षा मुद्दों पर अभिसरण की तलाश की है।
- According to the **Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI)**, India has been **Israel's largest defence customer** for several years.
स्टॉकहोम अंतरराष्ट्रीय शांति अनुसंधान संस्थान के अनुसार, भारत कई वर्षों से इज़राइल का सबसे बड़ा रक्षा ग्राहक रहा है।
- Accounting for about **34% of Israel's total arms exports between 2020 and 2024.**
2020 से 2024 के बीच इज़राइल के कुल हथियार निर्यात का लगभग 34% हिस्सा।
- The **cooperation has gradually progressed from imports to joint development and technology collaboration.**
सहयोग धीरे-धीरे आयात से बढ़कर संयुक्त विकास और प्रौद्योगिकी सहयोग तक पहुंच गया है।
- Over the past few decades, **Israel** has provided **India** with a number of **cutting-edge technologies**, weapon and surveillance platforms such as **unmanned aerial vehicles, missiles, special forces equipment and radar systems.**
पिछले कुछ दशकों में, इज़राइल ने भारत को कई आधुनिक तकनीकें, हथियार और निगरानी प्रणालियां जैसे मानवरहित हवाई वाहन, मिसाइल, विशेष बल उपकरण और रडार प्रणाली प्रदान की हैं।
- The **Barak-8 air and missile defence system**, co-developed by **India and Israel**, is one such success story.
भारत और इज़राइल द्वारा संयुक्त रूप से विकसित बराक-8 वायु और मिसाइल रक्षा प्रणाली ऐसी ही एक सफलता की कहानी है।
- For enhancing cooperation in the field of **futuristic defence technologies**.
जिसका उद्देश्य भविष्य की रक्षा प्रौद्योगिकियों के क्षेत्र में सहयोग बढ़ाना था।
- **In November 2025, India and Israel signed an agreement to deepen cooperation in defence, industry and technology.**
नवंबर 2025 में, भारत और इज़राइल ने रक्षा, उद्योग और प्रौद्योगिकी में सहयोग को गहरा करने के लिए एक समझौते पर हस्ताक्षर किए।
- **Including the sharing of advanced systems to support joint development and production.**
जिसमें संयुक्त विकास और उत्पादन को समर्थन देने के लिए उन्नत प्रणालियों को साझा करना शामिल है।
- For **India**, there were lessons from its experience in **Operation Sindoor (May 2025)** — the need for a strong and impregnable **air and missile defence shield.**
भारत के लिए, ऑपरेशन सिंदूर (मई 2025) के अनुभव से सीख मिली — एक मजबूत और अभेद्य वायु और मिसाइल रक्षा ढाल की आवश्यकता।



- Under **Mission Sudarshan Chakra**.
मिशन सुदर्शन चक्र के तहत।
- Including the procurement and co-production of the **Iron Beam — a 100kW-class high-energy laser system** capable of intercepting **drones, rockets, and mortars** efficiently and **cost-effectively**.
जिसमें **आयरन बीम** की खरीद और सह-उत्पादन शामिल है — एक **100 किलोवाट उच्च-ऊर्जा लेजर प्रणाली** जो **ड्रोन, रॉकेट और मोर्टार** को प्रभावी और किफायती ढंग से रोक सकती है।
- There are also reports that **Autonomous Guard**, an Israeli company has signed a deal with an **Indian private defence firm** valued at approximately **\$1.9 million**.
रिपोर्ट्स के अनुसार, **ऑटोनॉमस गार्ड** नामक एक इज़राइली कंपनी ने एक **भारतीय निजी रक्षा कंपनी** के साथ लगभग **1.9 मिलियन डॉलर** का समझौता किया है।
- Which would cover the supply of **advanced surveillance and threat-detection systems, specialising in sensor-based observation technologies**.
जिसमें **उन्नत निगरानी और खतरा-पहचान प्रणालियों** की आपूर्ति शामिल है, जो **सेंसर-आधारित अवलोकन तकनीकों** में विशेषज्ञ हैं।

The science, technology and innovation link विज्ञान, प्रौद्योगिकी और नवाचार संबंध

- **India** has benefited immensely from **Israel's success in modern technology and innovations**, especially in **agriculture, water and electronics**.
भारत ने **इज़राइल** की आधुनिक तकनीक और नवाचारों की सफलता से विशेष रूप से **कृषि, जल और इलेक्ट्रॉनिक्स** के क्षेत्र में अत्यधिक लाभ उठाया है।
- There are more than **35 Centres of Excellence (CoE)** in India which are focused in high quality and high-density production of flowers, vegetables, fruits (**mango, citrus, litchi, date palm, pomegranate**), and beekeeping.
भारत में **35 से अधिक उत्कृष्टता केंद्र** हैं जो उच्च गुणवत्ता और उच्च घनत्व उत्पादन पर केंद्रित हैं, जैसे फूल, सब्जियां, फल (**आम, खट्टे फल, लीची, खजूर, अनार**) और मधुमक्खी पालन।
- **Water management technologies** too are critical, especially with many **water-scarce areas** in India.
जल प्रबंधन तकनीकें भी महत्वपूर्ण हैं, विशेषकर भारत के कई **जल-संकटग्रस्त क्षेत्रों** में।
- **MASHAV**, Israel's Agency for International Development Cooperation under Israel's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, signed agreements with **Haryana (June 2022)** and **Rajasthan (December 2024)**.
माशाव, जो इज़राइल के विदेश मंत्रालय के अंतर्गत अंतरराष्ट्रीय विकास सहयोग एजेंसी है, ने **हरियाणा (जून 2022)** और **राजस्थान (दिसंबर 2024)** के साथ समझौते किए।
- To collaborate on **integrated water resource management and capacity building**.
जिसका उद्देश्य **समेकित जल संसाधन प्रबंधन और क्षमता निर्माण** पर सहयोग करना है।
- **Israel-India bilateral trade is often overshadowed by security cooperation**.
इज़राइल-भारत द्विपक्षीय व्यापार अक्सर **सुरक्षा सहयोग** के कारण छाया में रह जाता है।
- It, however, remains a significant pillar of engagement.
फिर भी यह संबंधों का एक महत्वपूर्ण स्तंभ बना हुआ है।
- **India is Israel's second-largest trading partner in Asia**, with bilateral trade reaching **\$3.75 billion in FY2024-2025**.
भारत एशिया में इज़राइल का दूसरा सबसे बड़ा व्यापारिक भागीदार है, और द्विपक्षीय व्यापार वित्त वर्ष **2024-2025 में 3.75 अरब डॉलर तक पहुंचा**।
- While merchandise trade continues to be dominated by **diamonds, petroleum and chemicals**, the partnership is expanding into **electronics, high-tech products, communications and medical equipment**.
जहां वस्तु व्यापार में अभी भी **हीरे, पेट्रोलियम और रसायन** प्रमुख हैं, वहीं साझेदारी **इलेक्ट्रॉनिक्स, उच्च-तकनीकी उत्पाद, संचार और चिकित्सा उपकरण** तक विस्तार कर रही है।
- In **September 2025**, during the visit of Israeli Finance Minister **Bezalel Smotrich**, India and Israel signed a **Bilateral Investment Agreement**.
सितंबर 2025 में, इज़राइल के वित्त मंत्री **बेज़ालेल स्मोट्रिच** की यात्रा के दौरान, भारत और इज़राइल ने एक **द्विपक्षीय निवेश समझौते** पर हस्ताक्षर किए।



- This was followed by the signing of the **Terms of Reference for a Free Trade Agreement (FTA)** during Commerce and Industry Minister **Piyush Goyal's** visit to Israel in **November 2025**.
इसके बाद **नवंबर 2025** में वाणिज्य एवं उद्योग मंत्री **पीयूष गोयल** की इज़राइल यात्रा के दौरान **मुक्त व्यापार समझौते** के लिए संदर्भ की शर्तों पर हस्ताक्षर किए गए।
- With India having recently concluded several significant trade deals, the **FTA with Israel could gain the necessary momentum during Mr. Modi's visit**.
हाल ही में कई महत्वपूर्ण व्यापार समझौतों के बाद, **इज़राइल के साथ मुक्त व्यापार समझौता** प्रधानमंत्री की यात्रा के दौरान आवश्यक गति प्राप्त कर सकता है।
- Israel is also keen to establish arrangements and exemptions for **Indian infrastructure companies** to participate in building **critical roads and ports**.
इज़राइल **भारतीय अवसंरचना कंपनियों** के लिए व्यवस्थाएं और छूट स्थापित करने का इच्छुक है ताकि वे **महत्वपूर्ण सड़कों और बंदरगाहों** के निर्माण में भाग ले सकें।
- Additionally, **similar to India's agreement with Russia**, Israel may pursue a deal to facilitate **"human mobility"** to attract skilled Indian talent.
इसके अतिरिक्त, **रूस** के साथ भारत के समझौते की तरह, इज़राइल कुशल भारतीय प्रतिभाओं को आकर्षित करने के लिए **"मानव गतिशीलता"** को सुगम बनाने का समझौता कर सकता है।
- Another key aspect to watch during the Modi visit is the progress of the **India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor (IMEC)**.
मोदी यात्रा के दौरान देखने योग्य एक अन्य प्रमुख पहलू **भारत-मध्य पूर्व-यूरोप आर्थिक गलियारा** की प्रगति है।
- **Announced at the G-20 Summit in Delhi (September 2023)**, this intercontinental connectivity project holds strategic significance for both countries.
सितंबर 2023 में दिल्ली में आयोजित जी-20 शिखर सम्मेलन में घोषित यह अंतरमहाद्वीपीय संपर्क परियोजना दोनों देशों के लिए रणनीतिक महत्व रखती है।
- **Recent trade agreements with the European Union, Oman, and the UAE** are expected to boost trade in both value and volume.
यूरोपीय संघ, ओमान और संयुक्त अरब अमीरात के साथ हालिया व्यापार समझौते व्यापार के मूल्य और मात्रा दोनों को बढ़ावा देने की उम्मीद है।
- **During the recent 'Summit' of the Board of Peace, presided over by U.S. President Donald Trump on February 19, 2026, more than 50 countries participated**.
हाल ही में **19 फरवरी 2026** को **अमेरिकी राष्ट्रपति डोनाल्ड ट्रम्प** की अध्यक्षता में आयोजित **बोर्ड ऑफ पीस शिखर सम्मेलन** में **50 से अधिक देशों** ने भाग लिया।
- **With some pledging \$7 billion in funding and others committing troops to the International Stabilisation Force**.
जिसमें कुछ देशों ने **7 अरब डॉलर** की वित्तीय सहायता देने और अन्य ने **अंतरराष्ट्रीय स्थिरीकरण बल** के लिए सैनिक भेजने का वादा किया।
- **India** attended as an **observer** and has not yet defined its role in the process.
भारत ने **पर्यवेक्षक** के रूप में भाग लिया और अभी तक इस प्रक्रिया में अपनी भूमिका तय नहीं की है।
- Given **India's strong ties** with both the **Gulf region** and **Israel**, discussions may include potential avenues for India's involvement in **Gaza**.
खाड़ी क्षेत्र और **इज़राइल** दोनों के साथ **भारत के मजबूत संबंधों** को देखते हुए, चर्चाओं में **गाज़ा** में भारत की संभावित भूमिका शामिल हो सकती है।
- India's hosting of the **2nd India-Arab Foreign Ministers' Meeting (IAFMM) in January 2026**, along with Mr. Modi's visits to **Jordan and Oman (December 2025)**, and the visit of the **UAE President (January 2026)**, demonstrate the careful balance that India has forged in the region.
जनवरी 2026 में दूसरी भारत-अरब विदेश मंत्रियों की बैठक की मेजबानी, साथ ही प्रधानमंत्री की **जॉर्डन और ओमान (दिसंबर 2025)** यात्राएं और **संयुक्त अरब अमीरात के राष्ट्रपति (जनवरी 2026)** की यात्रा, इस क्षेत्र में भारत द्वारा बनाए गए संतुलन को दर्शाती हैं।
- A **'hexagon' of alliances** around or within the **Middle East**, includes **India, Arab nations, African nations, Mediterranean nations (Greece and Cyprus), and nations in Asia**.
जिसमें **भारत, अरब देश, अफ्रीकी देश, भूमध्यसागरीय देश (ग्रीस और साइप्रस)** और **एशियाई देश** शामिल होंगे।
- The intention here is to create an axis of nations that see eye-to-eye on the reality, challenges and goals against the **radical axes**.



इसका उद्देश्य उन देशों का एक धुरी बनाना है जो **कट्टरपंथी धुरियों** के खिलाफ वास्तविकता, चुनौतियों और लक्ष्यों पर एकमत हों।

- **Both the radical Shiite axis and the emerging radical Sunni axis.** जिसमें **कट्टरपंथी शिया धुरी** और **उभरती कट्टरपंथी सुन्नी धुरी** दोनों शामिल हैं।
- **Mr. Modi's address to the Knesset — a privilege usually reserved for U.S. Presidents — highlight the visit's significance.** प्रधानमंत्री का **केनेस्सेट** को संबोधन — जो आमतौर पर **अमेरिकी राष्ट्रपतियों** के लिए आरक्षित विशेषाधिकार है — इस यात्रा के महत्व को दर्शाता है।
- His visit to a **Jerusalem innovation centre** further underlines its importance. उनकी **यरूशलम नवाचार केंद्र** की यात्रा भी इसके महत्व को रेखांकित करती है।
- It is far more than routine diplomacy, with potential long-term implications for **both countries and the region.** यह सामान्य कूटनीति से कहीं अधिक है और **दोनों देशों तथा क्षेत्र** के लिए दीर्घकालिक प्रभाव रखता है।

India's trade strategy in a multipolar world

GS II: IR

MOB

India's recent global trade strategy aims to boost exports and strengthen its position as a leading global trade partner. This has resulted in ambitious free trade agreements and a stronger presence in key international economic forums. In 2023, India updated its Foreign Trade Policy (FTP) with the goal of increasing exports to \$2 trillion by 2030, reinforcing a framework of strategic autonomy that supports sovereign decision-making while engaging major global powers. According to the Department of Commerce's 2025 Year-End Review, India recorded a 6.05% annual increase in total exports – merchandise and services combined – reaching \$825.25 billion.

A shift in approach

For many years, India adopted a cautious approach to free trade agreements (FTA), engaging primarily with economies that were similar in structure and stages of development. In recent years, however, New Delhi has shifted to a more proactive trade strategy, pursuing intensive negotiations and concluding comprehensive FTAs with major developed economies that were previously beyond reach. According to recent estimates, India's network of FTAs is projected to cover nearly 71% of its total export basket by 2026 – an extraordinary increase from approximately 22% in 2019. This rapid expansion reflects a decisive shift away from primarily regional trade arrangements toward deeper integration with advanced economies such as Australia, the European Union (EU), the United Arab Emirates (UAE), the United Kingdom (U.K.) and the United States, signalling India's broader strategic ambition to integrate into global value chains and high-value markets.

A major development in India's trade diplomacy is the India-EU Free Trade Agreement, signed on January 27, 2026 after nearly two decades of negotiations. Described as "historic" by European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen, it creates a vast free trade zone covering nearly two billion people.

The agreement reduces or eliminates tariffs on



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over 90% of traded goods, boosting market access for Indian exporters, especially in textiles, leather, pharmaceuticals, chemicals, and marine products. It enhances India's competitiveness against exporters such as Bangladesh and Vietnam. The FTA also removes tariffs on many pharmaceutical exports, strengthens regulatory cooperation, and lowers production costs by easing access to advanced European machinery and inputs. It is also expected to foster digital trade, boost investor confidence, and strengthen long-term economic resilience. Widely regarded as the "mother of all deals", the agreement represents a transformative boost to India's export ecosystem and marks a decisive shift in India's broader global trade strategy.

The deal with the U.S.

Early in February 2026, India and the U.S. signed a framework for an interim agreement on reciprocal trade, restating their commitment to advancing negotiations on a broader U.S.-India Bilateral Trade Agreement (BTA). The interim framework is designed to progressively reduce tariffs across a range of products, thereby facilitating greater Indian exports to the U.S. market and enhancing overall market access.

The agreement also prioritises strategic collaboration in critical sectors such as rare earths and semiconductors. This cooperation is expected to support India's ambitions in high-technology manufacturing, reinforce its electronics export capacity, and strengthen its emergence as a reliable global hub for electronics and semiconductor-related production. By diversifying export destinations and reducing overdependence on specific markets, the pact enhances India's strategic and economic flexibility. Strategically, India's recent global trade agreements collectively signal a major shift toward enhancing its role as a leading player in the global trading system. This shift is visible across four key dimensions. First, deeper engagement with advanced economies such as the EU and the U.S. provides India with preferential access to some of the world's most

lucrative and high-demand markets. Such access is expected to significantly strengthen India's export potential and global market presence with benefits flowing to labour intensive sectors integrating the Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises into the Global Value Chains. The agreements are across continents that reinforces India's strategic attempt to diversify and not become overly dependent on any single geography.

Second, FTAs reduce barriers on both exports and imports of intermediate goods, enabling Indian firms to integrate more effectively into global supply chains and improve their global competitiveness. This integration is especially beneficial for high-growth sectors such as technology, electronics, pharmaceuticals and services, all of which depend heavily on seamless cross-border movement of inputs and components.

Third, trade agreements serve as strategic instruments for enhancing India's diplomatic influence. By establishing deeper economic interdependence with major powers, India strengthens its role in global economic governance and positions itself as a more influential voice in shaping trade norms and standards.

At the core

India's evolving global trade strategy is central to its ambition of becoming an economic superpower and achieving Viksit Bharat. After opting out of the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership, India adopted a calibrated approach – boosting domestic manufacturing through production-linked incentives and infrastructure expansion while deepening global integration. Trade agreements with Australia, the EU, the UAE, and the U.K. aim to expand market access, attract investment, and diversify exports. By strengthening supply chains, promoting digital and services trade, and integrating into global value chains, India seeks to scale high-value exports and position itself as a leading force in global commerce.

Free trade agreements and trade reforms are key to propelling India's exports and global presence

25F. India's trade strategy in a multipolar world बहुध्रुवीय विश्व में भारत की व्यापार रणनीति

- India's recent global trade strategy aims to **boost exports** and strengthen its position as a **leading global trade partner**. भारत की हालिया वैश्विक व्यापार रणनीति का उद्देश्य **निर्यात बढ़ाना** और स्वयं को **अग्रणी वैश्विक व्यापार भागीदार** के रूप में मजबूत करना है।
- This has resulted in ambitious **free trade agreements** and a stronger presence in key **international economic forums**.



इसके परिणामस्वरूप महत्वाकांक्षी **मुक्त व्यापार समझौते** और प्रमुख अंतरराष्ट्रीय आर्थिक मंचों में मजबूत उपस्थिति बनी है।

- In 2023, India updated its **Foreign Trade Policy (FTP)** with the goal of increasing exports to **\$2 trillion by 2030**.
2023 में, भारत ने अपनी **विदेश व्यापार नीति** को अपडेट किया, जिसका लक्ष्य 2030 तक 2 ट्रिलियन डॉलर निर्यात तक पहुंचना है।
- Reinforcing a framework of **strategic autonomy** that supports sovereign decision-making while engaging major global powers.
यह **रणनीतिक स्वायत्तता** के ढांचे को मजबूत करता है, जो प्रमुख वैश्विक शक्तियों के साथ जुड़ते हुए स्वतंत्र निर्णय-निर्माण का समर्थन करता है।
- According to the **Department of Commerce's 2025 Year-End Review**, India recorded a **6.05% annual increase in total exports reaching \$825.25 billion**.
वाणिज्य विभाग की 2025 वर्षांत समीक्षा के अनुसार, भारत ने कुल निर्यात में **6.05% वार्षिक वृद्धि** दर्ज की और यह **825.25 अरब डॉलर** तक पहुंच गया।

A shift in approach दृष्टिकोण में बदलाव

- For many years, India adopted a **cautious approach** to **free trade agreements (FTA)**.
कई वर्षों तक, भारत ने **मुक्त व्यापार समझौतों** के प्रति **सतर्क दृष्टिकोण** अपनाया।
- Engaging primarily with economies that were similar in structure and stages of development.
मुख्य रूप से उन अर्थव्यवस्थाओं के साथ जुड़ाव रखा जिनकी संरचना और विकास स्तर समान थे।
- In recent years, however, New Delhi has shifted to a more **proactive trade strategy**.
हाल के वर्षों में, नई दिल्ली ने अधिक **सक्रिय व्यापार रणनीति** अपनाई है।
- Pursuing intensive negotiations and concluding comprehensive **FTAs with major developed economies**.
गहन वार्ताओं के माध्यम से प्रमुख विकसित अर्थव्यवस्थाओं के साथ व्यापक **मुक्त व्यापार समझौते** किए गए।
- According to recent estimates, India's network of **FTAs is projected to cover nearly 71% of its total export basket by 2026**.
हालिया अनुमानों के अनुसार, **2026 तक** भारत के **मुक्त व्यापार समझौते** उसके कुल निर्यात का लगभग **71%** कवर करेंगे।
- An extraordinary increase from approximately **22% in 2019**.
जो **2019 में लगभग 22%** से असाधारण वृद्धि है।
- This rapid expansion reflects a decisive shift away from primarily **regional trade arrangements** toward deeper integration with **advanced economies**.
यह तीव्र विस्तार मुख्य रूप से **क्षेत्रीय व्यापार व्यवस्था** से हटकर **उन्नत अर्थव्यवस्थाओं** के साथ गहरे एकीकरण की ओर बदलाव को दर्शाता है।
- Such as **Australia, the European Union (EU), the United Arab Emirates (UAE), the United Kingdom (U.K.) and the United States**.
जैसे **ऑस्ट्रेलिया, यूरोपीय संघ, संयुक्त अरब अमीरात, यूनाइटेड किंगडम और संयुक्त राज्य अमेरिका**।
- Signalling India's broader strategic ambition to integrate into **global value chains and high-value markets**.
यह **वैश्विक मूल्य श्रृंखलाओं** और **उच्च मूल्य बाजारों** में एकीकृत होने की भारत की व्यापक रणनीतिक महत्वाकांक्षा को दर्शाता है।
- It creates a vast **free trade zone (India-EU)** covering nearly **two billion people**.
यह लगभग **दो अरब लोगों** को कवर करने वाला विशाल **मुक्त व्यापार क्षेत्र** बनाता है।
- The agreement reduces or eliminates **tariffs on over 90% of traded goods**.
यह समझौता **90% से अधिक व्यापारित वस्तुओं पर शुल्क** को कम या समाप्त करता है।
- Boosting **market access** for Indian exporters, especially in **textiles, leather, pharmaceuticals, chemicals, and marine products**.
जिससे भारतीय निर्यातकों के लिए **बाजार पहुंच** बढ़ती है, विशेषकर **कपड़ा, चमड़ा, औषधि, रसायन और समुद्री उत्पादों** में।
- It enhances India's competitiveness against exporters such as **Bangladesh and Vietnam**.
यह **बांग्लादेश और वियतनाम** जैसे निर्यातकों के मुकाबले भारत की प्रतिस्पर्धात्मकता बढ़ाता है।



- The FTA also removes tariffs on many **pharmaceutical exports**, strengthens **regulatory cooperation**, and lowers **production costs**.
यह समझौता कई औषधि निर्यातों पर शुल्क हटाता है, नियामक सहयोग को मजबूत करता है और उत्पादन लागत कम करता है।
- **By easing access to advanced European machinery and inputs.**
जिससे उन्नत यूरोपीय मशीनरी और इनपुट तक पहुंच आसान होती है।
- **It is also expected to foster digital trade, boost investor confidence, and strengthen long-term economic resilience.**
यह डिजिटल व्यापार को बढ़ावा देगा, निवेशक विश्वास बढ़ाएगा और दीर्घकालिक आर्थिक स्थिरता को मजबूत करेगा।
- **Widely regarded as the "mother of all deals",** the agreement represents a transformative boost to India's **export ecosystem**.
इसे व्यापक रूप से "सभी समझौतों की जननी" माना जाता है और यह भारत के निर्यात पारिस्थितिकी तंत्र को परिवर्तनकारी बढ़ावा देता है।
- **Early in February 2026, India and the U.S. signed a framework for an interim agreement on reciprocal trade.**
फरवरी 2026 की शुरुआत में, **भारत और संयुक्त राज्य अमेरिका** ने **पारस्परिक व्यापार** पर एक अंतरिम समझौते के लिए रूपरेखा पर हस्ताक्षर किए।
- Restating their commitment to advancing negotiations on a broader **U.S.-India Bilateral Trade Agreement (BTA)**.
जिसमें व्यापक **भारत-अमेरिका द्विपक्षीय व्यापार समझौते** पर वार्ता को आगे बढ़ाने की प्रतिबद्धता दोहराई गई।
- **The interim framework is designed to progressively reduce tariffs across a range of products.**
यह अंतरिम रूपरेखा विभिन्न उत्पादों पर **शुल्कों** को क्रमिक रूप से कम करने के लिए बनाई गई है।
- Thereby facilitating greater **Indian exports to the U.S. market** and enhancing overall **market access**.
जिससे **अमेरिकी बाजार में भारतीय निर्यात** को बढ़ावा मिलेगा और समग्र **बाजार पहुंच** में सुधार होगा।
- The agreement also prioritises strategic collaboration in critical sectors such as **rare earths and semiconductors**.
यह समझौता **दुर्लभ खनिजों** और **अर्धचालकों** जैसे महत्वपूर्ण क्षेत्रों में रणनीतिक सहयोग को प्राथमिकता देता है।
- This cooperation is expected to support India's ambitions in **high-technology manufacturing**.
यह सहयोग **उच्च-प्रौद्योगिकी विनिर्माण** में भारत की महत्वाकांक्षाओं को समर्थन देगा।
- Reinforce its **electronics export capacity** and strengthen its emergence as a reliable global hub for electronics and semiconductor-related production.
यह **इलेक्ट्रॉनिक्स निर्यात क्षमता** को मजबूत करेगा और इलेक्ट्रॉनिक्स तथा अर्धचालक उत्पादन के लिए विश्वसनीय वैश्विक केंद्र के रूप में भारत की उभरती भूमिका को सुदृढ़ करेगा।
- By diversifying export destinations and reducing overdependence on specific markets, the pact enhances India's **strategic and economic flexibility**.
निर्यात गंतव्यों में विविधता लाकर और विशिष्ट बाजारों पर निर्भरता घटाकर यह समझौता भारत की **रणनीतिक और आर्थिक लचीलापन** बढ़ाता है।
- Strategically, India's recent global trade agreements collectively signal a major shift toward enhancing its role as a **leading player in the global trading system**.
रणनीतिक रूप से, भारत के हालिया वैश्विक व्यापार समझौते उसे **वैश्विक व्यापार प्रणाली में अग्रणी खिलाड़ी** के रूप में स्थापित करने की दिशा में बड़े बदलाव का संकेत देते हैं।
- This shift is visible across **four key dimensions**.
यह बदलाव **चार प्रमुख आयामों** में दिखाई देता है।
- First, **deeper engagement with advanced economies such as the EU and the U.S. provides India with preferential access to lucrative markets**.
पहला, **यूरोपीय संघ और अमेरिका** जैसी उन्नत अर्थव्यवस्थाओं के साथ गहरा जुड़ाव भारत को लाभकारी बाजारों तक **विशेष पहुंच** प्रदान करता है।



- Such access is expected to strengthen India's **export potential and global market presence**.
ऐसी पहुंच से भारत की निर्यात क्षमता और वैश्विक बाजार उपस्थिति मजबूत होने की उम्मीद है।
- With benefits flowing to **labour-intensive sectors integrating the Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises into the Global Value Chains**.
जिससे श्रम-प्रधान क्षेत्रों और सूक्ष्म, लघु एवं मध्यम उद्यमों को वैश्विक मूल्य श्रृंखलाओं में एकीकृत करने में लाभ होगा।
- The agreements are across continents that reinforce India's attempt to **diversify** and not become overly dependent on any single geography.
ये समझौते विभिन्न महाद्वीपों में फैले हैं जो भारत के **विविधीकरण** के प्रयास को मजबूत करते हैं और किसी एक क्षेत्र पर अत्यधिक निर्भरता से बचाते हैं।
- Second, **FTAs reduce barriers on both exports and imports of intermediate goods**.
दूसरा, **मुक्त व्यापार समझौते** निर्यात और **मध्यवर्ती वस्तुओं** के आयात पर बाधाएं कम करते हैं।
- Enabling Indian firms to integrate more effectively into **global supply chains** and improve their **global competitiveness**.
जिससे भारतीय कंपनियां **वैश्विक आपूर्ति श्रृंखलाओं** में बेहतर एकीकरण कर सकें और अपनी **वैश्विक प्रतिस्पर्धात्मकता** बढ़ा सकें।
- This integration is especially beneficial for high-growth sectors such as **technology, electronics, pharmaceuticals and services**.
यह एकीकरण विशेष रूप से **प्रौद्योगिकी, इलेक्ट्रॉनिक्स, औषधि और सेवा क्षेत्रों** के लिए लाभकारी है।
- All of which depend heavily on seamless **cross-border movement** of inputs and components.
जो इनपुट और घटकों के सुचारु **सीमा-पार आवागमन** पर निर्भर करते हैं।
- Third, trade agreements serve as strategic instruments for enhancing India's **diplomatic influence**.
तीसरा, व्यापार समझौते भारत के **कूटनीतिक प्रभाव** को बढ़ाने के लिए रणनीतिक साधन हैं।
- By establishing deeper **economic interdependence** with major powers.
प्रमुख शक्तियों के साथ गहरी **आर्थिक पारस्परिकता** स्थापित करके।
- India strengthens its role in **global economic governance** and positions itself as a more influential voice in shaping **trade norms and standards**.
भारत **वैश्विक आर्थिक शासन** में अपनी भूमिका मजबूत करता है और **व्यापार मानदंडों और मानकों** को आकार देने में प्रभावशाली आवाज के रूप में स्थापित होता है।

At the core मूल में

- After opting out of the **Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership**, India adopted a calibrated approach.
क्षेत्रीय व्यापक आर्थिक साझेदारी से बाहर होने के बाद, भारत ने संतुलित दृष्टिकोण अपनाया।
- Boosting **domestic manufacturing** through **production-linked incentives** and infrastructure expansion while deepening global integration.
उत्पादन-आधारित प्रोत्साहनों और अवसंरचना विस्तार के माध्यम से **घरेलू विनिर्माण** को बढ़ावा देते हुए वैश्विक एकीकरण को गहरा किया।
- Trade agreements with Australia, the EU, the UAE, and the U.K.** aim to expand **market access, attract investment, and diversify exports**.
ऑस्ट्रेलिया, यूरोपीय संघ, संयुक्त अरब अमीरात और यूनाइटेड किंगडम के साथ समझौते **बाजार पहुंच बढ़ाने, निवेश आकर्षित करने और निर्यात विविधीकरण** का लक्ष्य रखते हैं।

GS Paper III: Economy,

TOPICS COVERED

25 February 2026

25F Centre increases MSP for jute by ₹275 per quintal
केंद्र ने जूट के लिए MSP ₹275 प्रति क्विंटल बढ़ाया

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25F	The evolving nature of trade agreements व्यापार समझौतों की विकसित होती प्रकृति

GS III: Economy

Centre increases MSP for jute by ₹275 per quintal

The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA), after a meeting on Tuesday, increased the minimum support price (MSP) of raw jute for 2026-27 by ₹275 per quintal over the previous season. The new rate is ₹5,925 per quintal. Information and Broadcasting Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw said the increased MSP would benefit jute growers in States such as West Bengal and Assam. Prime Minister Narendra Modi said the Centre was leaving no stone unturned to make the lives of jute farmers easier. A statement issued by the government said the revised MSP, for TD-3 grade raw jute, would ensure a return of 61.8% to the farmers over the all-India weighted average cost of production.

25F. Centre increases MSP for jute by ₹275 per quintal
केंद्र ने जूट के लिए MSP ₹275 प्रति क्विंटल बढ़ाया

The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA), after a meeting on Tuesday, increased the minimum support price (MSP) of raw jute for 2026-27 by ₹275 per quintal over the previous season.

कैबिनेट कमेटी ऑन इकॉनॉमिक अफेयर्स (CCEA) ने मंगलवार को एक बैठक के बाद कच्चे जूट के लिए न्यूनतम समर्थन मूल्य (MSP) 2026-27 के लिए पिछले सीजन की तुलना में ₹275 प्रति क्विंटल बढ़ा दिया।

The new rate is ₹5,925 per quintal.

नई दर ₹5,925 प्रति क्विंटल है।

Information and Broadcasting Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw said the increased MSP would benefit jute growers in States such

as West Bengal and Assam.

सूचना और प्रसारण मंत्री अश्विनी वैष्णव ने कहा कि बढ़ाया गया MSP पश्चिम बंगाल और असम जैसे राज्यों में जूट किसानों के लिए लाभकारी होगा।

- A statement issued by the government said the revised MSP, for TD-3 grade raw jute, would ensure a return of 61.8% to the farmers over the all-India weighted average cost of production.

सरकार द्वारा जारी एक बयान में कहा गया कि TD-3 ग्रेड कच्चे जूट के लिए संशोधित MSP किसानों को पूरे भारत के औसत उत्पादन लागत पर 61.8% रिटर्न सुनिश्चित करेगा।



Attracting talent positioned abroad

CS III: Economy

MQB

When Washington imposed a one-time \$1,00,000 fee on the issuance of new H-1B visa petitions in 2025, the move did more than unsettle young Indian engineers based in the U.S. It also forced skilled professionals to reassess the cost of their American aspirations and compelled companies to reconsider where they source and retain talent.

A geopolitical earthquake triggered by the Trump administration has also coincided with a moment when India is looking for its best talent positioned abroad to think and act Swadeshi and consider reinvesting in India. Macrotrends in this regard have all been adversely positioned over the last 10 years, given how poorly India's domestic private investment scenario has been despite the best government efforts. Recent government signals indicate a structured push to re-engage India's global talent through initiatives including Global Access to Talent from India (GATI), eMigrate V2.0, Visiting Advanced Joint Research (VAJRA) Faculty Scheme, and the Know India Programme. Senior officials have urged overseas professionals to "return and reinvest" amid global visa uncertainties.

State-level experiences

A common paradox in India's major metropolises is that while they excel at building startup ecosystems, they remain unliveable for families of returnees. Maharashtra continues to be the nation's largest startup cluster. It also has a Startup, Entrepreneurship, and Innovation Policy (2025). However, because of the lack of housing subsidies, school seat guarantees, and spouse-employment support, household entry costs remain high. This offsets declining firm costs and makes its congested, expensive cities affordable only to the wealthy. Delhi draws more returnees due to its institutional centrality, proximity to national



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The H-1B disruption could catalyse a wave of innovation if cities, universities, and firms strengthen social and research infrastructure to retain returnees

labs, policy networks, and ministries than its entrepreneurial volume. This benefit is enhanced by a proposed startup to increase venture activity. However, Delhi serves as both a gateway and a gatekeeper, favouring those with established institutional capital due to housing costs and extensive recruitment networks at universities and institutes. Karnataka serves as an example of structural ambition devoid of absorptive realism. Its Beyond Bengaluru and Skill Development Policy (2025-32) seek to decentralise growth through Global Capability Centres in Mysuru and Mangaluru. However, "family-readiness" is constrained by inadequate global research infrastructure, healthcare, and education.

These cases are connected by two empirical insights. First, States give institutional support such as incubators, seed money, and infrastructure priority over family relocation policies. Second, mobility studies demonstrate that while wages draw migrants, retention is influenced by networks, spouse employment, and educational attainment. This unevenness shows that while States compete to attract firms, they rarely plan for people. The absence of housing, education, and spousal employment provisions explains why returnees often view India as a temporary assignment rather than a permanent reintegration.

H-1B policy shift

With nearly 71% H-1B approvals in FY2024, India's dominance in the H-1B visa programme is unparalleled. This dominance makes India highly sensitive to U.S. policy shifts. According to the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, in FY 2024, 71% of the 3,99,395 total H-1B approvals were Indian nationals and 46% of total beneficiaries held a master's degree.

The educational profile of H-1B holders has also shifted markedly over time: the proportion of

workers with a master's degree as their highest qualification rose from 31% in 2000 to 57% in 2021, while those with only a bachelor's degree declined from 57% to 34%. Following policy revisions in September 2025, the U.S. introduced limited exemptions to the proposed \$1,00,000 filing fee, particularly for applicants already in the country who transition from F-1 student to H-1B status. This provides short-term relief for U.S.-educated Indian graduates but affects new overseas applicants. Shivani Desai, the CEO of BDO Executive search firm, estimates that the number of Indian students from Ivy League universities seeking positions in India has risen by about 30% this year, while senior Indian executives in the U.S. are increasingly reassessing long-term career prospects amid visa uncertainty. This reversal comes at an opportune moment. With 1,600+ Global Capability Centres employing 1.66 million people and rising U.S. visa costs, conditions are ripe for a shift from brain drain to brain circulation.

Retaining talent remains equally challenging. India's R&D investment is merely 0.64% of GDP, far below the U.S. (3.47%), China (2.41%), and Israel (5.71%), due to limited private sector incentives. This gap reflects both limited public funding and the structural composition of India's corporate sector.

Addressing this imbalance by incentivising private R&D investment and diversifying into higher-intensity sectors such as software products, semiconductors, and advanced manufacturing will be crucial if India is to convert the H-1B disruption into a genuine innovation dividend. The H-1B disruption could catalyse a wave of innovation if cities, universities, and firms strengthen social and research infrastructure to retain returnees. Otherwise, the next generation of highly qualified workers will simply pursue their futures elsewhere.

25F. Attracting talent positioned abroad विदेश में स्थित प्रतिभाओं को आकर्षित करना

- When **Washington** imposed a one-time **\$1,00,000 fee** on the issuance of new **H-1B visa petitions in 2025**, the move did more than unsettle young **Indian engineers** based in the **U.S.**

जब **वाशिंगटन** ने 2025 में नए **H-1B वीजा याचिकाओं** पर एक बार का **1,00,000 डॉलर शुल्क** लगाया, तो इस कदम ने **अमेरिका** में रहने वाले युवा **भारतीय इंजीनियरों** को अस्थिर कर दिया।

- It also forced **skilled professionals** to reassess the cost of their **American aspirations** and compelled companies to reconsider where they source and retain talent.

इसने **कुशल पेशेवरों** को अपने **अमेरिकी सपनों** की लागत पर पुनर्विचार करने और कंपनियों को यह सोचने पर मजबूर किया कि वे **प्रतिभा** को कहाँ से लाएँ और बनाए रखें।



A geopolitical earthquake एक भू-राजनीतिक भूकंप

- Through initiatives including **GATI, eMigrate V2.0, VAJRA Faculty Scheme, and Know India Programme**.
जैसे ग्लोबल एक्सेस टू टैलेंट फ्रॉम इंडिया, ई-माइग्रेट संस्करण 2.0, वज्र फैकल्टी योजना और नो इंडिया कार्यक्रम।
- **Maharashtra continues to be the nation's largest startup cluster and has a Startup, Entrepreneurship, and Innovation Policy (2025)**.
महाराष्ट्र देश का सबसे बड़ा स्टार्टअप क्लस्टर बना हुआ है और इसके पास स्टार्टअप, उद्यमिता और नवाचार नीति 2025 है।
- However, due to lack of **housing subsidies, school seat guarantees, and spouse-employment support**, household entry costs remain high.
लेकिन आवास सब्सिडी, स्कूल सीट गारंटी और जीवनसाथी रोजगार समर्थन की कमी के कारण परिवार बसाने की लागत अधिक रहती है।
- This offsets declining firm costs and makes cities affordable only to the **wealthy**.
यह कंपनियों की घटती लागत को संतुलित करता है और शहरों को केवल **धनवानों** के लिए सुलभ बनाता है।
- **Delhi draws more returnees due to its institutional centrality, proximity to national labs, policy networks, and ministries**.
दिल्ली अपनी संस्थागत केंद्रीयता, राष्ट्रीय प्रयोगशालाओं, नीति नेटवर्क और मंत्रालयों की निकटता के कारण अधिक वापसी करने वालों को आकर्षित करती है।
- This advantage is enhanced by a proposed **startup** to increase **venture activity**.
यह लाभ उद्यम गतिविधि बढ़ाने के प्रस्तावित स्टार्टअप से और बढ़ता है।
- However, **Delhi serves as both a gateway and gatekeeper**, favouring those with established **institutional capital**.
लेकिन दिल्ली प्रवेश द्वार और नियंत्रणकर्ता दोनों की तरह काम करती है, और स्थापित संस्थागत पूंजी वालों को प्राथमिकता देती है।
- Due to **housing costs and recruitment networks** at universities and institutes.
यह आवास लागत और भर्ती नेटवर्क के कारण होता है।
- **Karnataka serves as an example of structural ambition devoid of absorptive realism**.
कर्नाटक संरचनात्मक महत्वाकांक्षा का उदाहरण है जिसमें **व्यावहारिक समावेशन** की कमी है।
- Its **Beyond Bengaluru and Skill Development Policy (2025-32)** seeks **decentralised growth through Global Capability Centres**.
इसकी **बियॉन्ड बेंगलुरु और कौशल विकास नीति (2025-32)** वैश्विक क्षमता केंद्रों के माध्यम से विकेंद्रीकृत विकास का लक्ष्य रखती है।
- First, **States prioritise institutional support** such as incubators, seed money, and **infrastructure over family relocation policies**.
पहला, राज्य **संस्थागत समर्थन** जैसे इनक्यूबेटर, प्रारंभिक पूंजी और अवसंरचना को **परिवार पुनर्वास नीतियों** पर प्राथमिकता देते हैं।
- Second, mobility studies show that **while wages attract migrants, retention depends on networks, spouse employment, and education**.
दूसरा, गतिशीलता अध्ययन बताते हैं कि जहां **वेतन प्रवासियों को आकर्षित करता है**, वहीं स्थायित्व नेटवर्क, **जीवनसाथी रोजगार और शिक्षा** पर निर्भर करता है।
- This unevenness shows that while States compete to attract **firms**, they rarely plan for **people**.
यह असमानता दिखाती है कि राज्य जहां **कंपनियों** को आकर्षित करने में प्रतिस्पर्धा करते हैं, वहीं **लोगों** के लिए योजना कम बनाते हैं।
- The **absence of housing, education, and spousal employment provisions** explains why **returnees view India as a temporary assignment rather than permanent reintegration**.
आवास, शिक्षा और जीवनसाथी रोजगार प्रावधानों की कमी बताती है कि वापसी करने वाले भारत को स्थायी पुनर्स्थापन के बजाय **अस्थायी नियुक्ति** के रूप में देखते हैं।

H-1B policy shift एच-1बी नीति में बदलाव



- With nearly **71% H1-B approvals in FY2024**, India's dominance in the **H-1B visa programme** is unparalleled.
वित्त वर्ष 2024 में लगभग 71% एच-1बी स्वीकृतियों के साथ, एच-1बी वीजा कार्यक्रम में भारत का प्रभुत्व अद्वितीय है।
- This dominance makes **India** highly sensitive to **U.S. policy shifts**.
यह प्रभुत्व भारत को अमेरिकी नीति परिवर्तनों के प्रति अत्यधिक संवेदनशील बनाता है।
- According to the **U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services**, in **FY 2024**, **71% of 3,99,395 total H1-B approvals were Indian nationals**.
अमेरिकी नागरिकता और आव्रजन सेवाओं के अनुसार, वित्त वर्ष 2024 में कुल 3,99,395 एच-1बी स्वीकृतियों में 71% भारतीय नागरिक थे।
- And **46% of total beneficiaries held a master's degree**.
और कुल लाभार्थियों में से 46% के पास मास्टर डिग्री थी।
- The **educational profile** of H-1B holders has shifted markedly over time.
समय के साथ एच-1बी धारकों की शैक्षणिक प्रोफाइल में उल्लेखनीय बदलाव आया है।
- The **proportion of workers with a master's degree rose from 31% in 2000 to 57% in 2021**.
मास्टर डिग्री वाले श्रमिकों का अनुपात 2000 में 31% से बढ़कर 2021 में 57% हो गया।
- While those with only a **bachelor's degree declined from 57% to 34%**.
जबकि केवल स्नातक डिग्री वाले श्रमिकों का अनुपात 57% से घटकर 34% हो गया।
- Following **policy revisions in September 2025**, the **U.S. introduced limited exemptions to the proposed \$1,00,000 filing fee**.
सितंबर 2025 में नीति संशोधनों के बाद, अमेरिका ने प्रस्तावित 1,00,000 डॉलर फाइलिंग शुल्क पर सीमित छूट दी।
- **Particularly for applicants already in the country transitioning from F-1 student to H-1B status**.
विशेष रूप से उन आवेदकों के लिए जो पहले से देश में हैं और एफ-1 छात्र से एच-1बी स्थिति में जा रहे हैं।
- This provides **short-term relief for U.S.-educated Indian graduates** but affects **new overseas applicants**.
यह अमेरिका में शिक्षित भारतीय स्नातकों को अल्पकालिक राहत देता है लेकिन नए विदेशी आवेदकों को प्रभावित करता है।
- **Conditions are ripe for a shift from brain drain to brain circulation**.
स्थिति ब्रेन ड्रेन से ब्रेन सर्कुलेशन की ओर बदलाव के लिए अनुकूल है।
- Retaining talent remains equally challenging.
प्रतिभा को बनाए रखना उतना ही चुनौतीपूर्ण बना हुआ है।
- **India's R&D investment is only 0.64% of GDP**, far below **U.S. (3.47%), China (2.41%), and Israel (5.71%)**.
भारत का अनुसंधान एवं विकास निवेश जीडीपी का केवल 0.64% है, जो अमेरिका 3.47%, चीन 2.41% और इज़राइल 5.71% से काफी कम है।
- **Due to limited private sector incentives**.
यह निजी क्षेत्र के सीमित प्रोत्साहनों के कारण है।



- Otherwise, the next generation of **highly qualified workers** will pursue their futures elsewhere.
अन्यथा, अगली पीढ़ी के **उच्च योग्य श्रमिक** अपना भविष्य कहीं और तलाशेंगे।

The evolving nature of trade agreements

U.S. President Donald Trump's trade agreements create a new category within established international trade agreements. The fact, however, that these deals are not in accordance with the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade and the World Trade Organization make them legally suspicious

ISS: III: Economics

MOB

ECONOMIC NOTES

Prabhash Ranjan

U.S. President Donald Trump has signed several trade agreements with countries such as Malaysia, Cambodia, Argentina, and Bangladesh. These agreements have been signed under the shadow of intimidating and illegal tariffs. The U.S. has also announced a trade agreement with India, for which the two sides have issued a joint statement. Trade agreements exemplify the legalisation of international trade relations. But are all trade agreements the same? Can the India-U.S. trade deal, once finalised, be compared to India's recent agreements with the EU or the U.K.?

The U.S. refers to agreements signed by Mr. Trump as Agreements on Reciprocal Trade (ART), as opposed to Free Trade Agreements (FTAs). This creates a new category in international trade deals, which now consists of three typologies.

Multilateralism

At the core of international trade treaties is the robust multilateral trade agreement established by the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) and the World Trade Organization (WTO). The GATT unthrew the global American project of creating a non-discriminatory trading regime firmly grounded in the most-favoured-nation (MFN) rule (this WTO rule specifies that if a special favour is granted to one country, such as lower tariffs, then it has to be extended to all other WTO members as well).

The U.S. established a multilateral trading arrangement, based on an unconditional MFN rule, due to the pursuit of trade protectionism during the interwar years. Further, the formation of the WTO in 1995 provided an institutional architecture to this multilateral trade project. The WTO expanded trade beyond goods to include services and intellectual property, and established an



New terms: PM Narendra Modi with U.S. President Trump, at Hyderabad House in New Delhi in 2020. PTI

intricate dispute settlement mechanism. While some view the WTO as part of a global imperialist state, its one-country-one-vote principle provides developing countries with some agency and an opportunity to forge alliances and bargain with the developed world.

Preferential trade agreements

Interestingly, while the WTO establishes a trading regime based on non-discrimination, it allows its members to sign preferential trading agreements on a non-MFN basis. Two such arrangements are recognised in Article XXIV of GATT – free trade areas and Customs Unions (CUs). However, since these arrangements are an exception to the MFN principle, they are subject to stringent conditions. For instance, an FTA creating a free trade area should cover 'substantially all trade' between its constituents. Likewise, a CU

should not only cover 'substantially all trade' but also have a common external trade policy for non-members. These stringent conditions aim to make FTAs and CUs building blocks rather than impediments to trade multilateralism.

Until the 1980s, these arrangements were not popular among countries. However, in the last three decades, there has been a proliferation of FTAs. While most FTAs are bilateral, some are quite large, covering 10 to 15 countries, such as the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) agreement. Many of these FTAs are WTO-plus, that is, they go beyond the topics covered by the WTO, by including rules on labour, environment, and foreign investment protection. These FTAs are criticised for thrusting new obligations on developing countries. However, as these FTAs are notified to the WTO as a mandatory legal

requirement, they provide countries adversely affected by them with an opportunity to raise questions and scrutinise them.

Agreements on reciprocal trade
The ARTs that the Trump administration has been signing with WTO members are not signed under Article XXIV of the GATT. This makes these agreements legally suspicious. While GATT Article XXIV-type FTAs have an institutional linkage with the WTO, ARTs are completely independent. The most alarming element of these ARTs is that they exemplify the Trump administration's 'America First' trade policy. While the U.S. continues to impose tariff rates inconsistent with its WTO obligations, its trading partner is strong-armed into either eliminating or drastically reducing tariff rates on U.S. goods. Moreover, in addition to WTO-plus characteristics, these ARTs contain several one-sided provisions aimed at bolstering U.S. interests. For instance, Article 4.1 of the U.S.-Bangladesh ART provides that if the U.S. adopts a trade measure to protect its economic or national security, and notifies Bangladesh of the same, the latter, too, in accordance with its domestic laws, shall adopt a complementary restrictive action in support of the former. A provision like this effectively ties the interests of the U.S.' partner to the U.S. Another key feature of these ARTs is that they restrict the data sovereignty of U.S.' treaty partners. For instance, Article 3.4 of the U.S.-El Salvador ART proscribes El Salvador from imposing customs duties on electronic transactions.

In sum, the U.S. ARTs are imperial in nature. Additionally, because these ARTs are not notified to the WTO, other countries can't scrutinise them. These agreements are an attempt to deracinate trade multilateralism and should be stoutly resisted by developing countries. Prabhash Ranjan is Professor and Vice Dean (Research), Jindal Global Law School. Views are personal.

THE GIST

At the core of international trade treaties is the robust multilateral trade agreement established by the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) and the World Trade Organization (WTO).

In the last three decades, there has been a proliferation of FTAs. While most FTAs are bilateral some are quite large, covering 10 to 15 countries, such as the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) agreement.

The most alarming element of U.S. President Trump's ARTs is that they exemplify the Trump administration's 'America First' trade policy.

25F. The evolving nature of trade agreements व्यापार समझौतों की विकसित होती प्रकृति

- U.S. President **Donald Trump** has signed several **trade agreements** with countries such as **Malaysia, Cambodia, Argentina, and Bangladesh**.
अमेरिकी राष्ट्रपति **डोनाल्ड ट्रंप** ने **मलेशिया, कंबोडिया, अर्जेंटीना और बांग्लादेश** जैसे देशों के साथ कई **व्यापार समझौते** किए हैं।
- These agreements have been signed under the **shadow of intimidating and illegal tariffs**.
ये समझौते डराने वाले और अवैध **टैरिफ** की छाया में किए गए हैं।
- The **U.S.** has also announced a **trade agreement with India**, for which the two sides have issued a **joint statement**.
अमेरिका ने **भारत के साथ व्यापार समझौते** की भी घोषणा की है, जिसके लिए दोनों पक्षों ने एक **संयुक्त वक्तव्य** जारी किया है।
- The **U.S.** refers to agreements signed by Mr. Trump as **Agreements on Reciprocal Trade (ART)**, as opposed to **Free Trade Agreements (FTAs)**.
अमेरिका, ट्रंप द्वारा हस्ताक्षरित समझौतों को **एग्रीमेंट्स ऑन रेसिप्रोकल ट्रेड (ART)** कहता है, न कि **फ्री ट्रेड एग्रीमेंट (FTA)**।
- This creates a new category in international trade deals, which now consists of **three typologies**.
इससे अंतरराष्ट्रीय व्यापार समझौतों में एक नई श्रेणी बनती है, जिसमें अब **तीन प्रकार** शामिल हैं।



Multilateralism

बहुपक्षवाद

- At the core of international trade treaties is the robust multilateral trade agreement established by the **General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT)** and the **World Trade Organization (WTO)**.
अंतरराष्ट्रीय व्यापार संधियों के केंद्र में **जनरल एग्रीमेंट ऑन टैरिफ्स एंड ट्रेड (GATT)** और **विश्व व्यापार संगठन (WTO)** द्वारा स्थापित मजबूत बहुपक्षीय व्यापार व्यवस्था है।
- The **GATT aimed to create a non-discriminatory trading regime grounded in the most-favoured-nation (MFN) rule.**
GATT का उद्देश्य **भेदभाव रहित व्यापार व्यवस्था** बनाना था, जो **सर्वाधिक अनुकूल राष्ट्र (MFN) नियम** पर आधारित हो।
- The **MFN rule specifies that if a special favour such as lower tariffs is granted to one country, it must be extended to all WTO members.**
MFN नियम के अनुसार यदि किसी एक देश को कम टैरिफ जैसी विशेष रियायत दी जाती है, तो वह सभी **WTO सदस्य देशों** को भी देनी होगी।
- The **U.S. established a multilateral trading arrangement based on an unconditional MFN rule in response to trade protectionism during the interwar years.**
अमेरिका ने **दो विश्व युद्धों के बीच के काल में व्यापार संरक्षणवाद** के जवाब में **बिना शर्त MFN नियम** पर आधारित बहुपक्षीय व्यापार व्यवस्था स्थापित की।
- The formation of the **WTO in 1995** provided an institutional architecture to this multilateral trade project.
1995 में WTO की स्थापना ने इस बहुपक्षीय व्यापार परियोजना को संस्थागत ढांचा प्रदान किया।
- The **WTO expanded trade beyond goods to include services and intellectual property, and established a detailed dispute settlement mechanism.**
WTO ने व्यापार को वस्तुओं से आगे बढ़ाकर **सेवाओं और बौद्धिक संपदा** तक विस्तारित किया और एक विस्तृत **विवाद निपटान तंत्र** स्थापित किया।
- While some view the **WTO as part of a global imperialist state, its one-country-one-vote principle provides developing countries with some agency.**
हालांकि कुछ लोग WTO को वैश्विक साम्राज्यवादी व्यवस्था का हिस्सा मानते हैं, लेकिन इसका **एक देश-एक वोट सिद्धांत** विकासशील देशों को कुछ स्वायत्तता देता है।
- This principle allows developing countries to forge alliances and bargain with the **developed world.**
यह सिद्धांत विकासशील देशों को **विकसित देशों** के साथ गठबंधन बनाने और सौदेबाजी करने का अवसर देता है।

Preferential trade agreements

प्राथमिकता वाले व्यापार समझौते

- Interestingly, while the **WTO** establishes a trading regime based on **non-discrimination**, it allows its members to sign **preferential trading agreements** on a non-MFN basis.
दिलचस्प रूप से, जबकि **WTO** **भेदभाव-रहित** व्यापार व्यवस्था स्थापित करता है, यह अपने सदस्यों को गैर-**MFN** आधार पर **प्राथमिकता वाले व्यापार समझौते** करने की अनुमति देता है।
- Two such arrangements are recognised in **Article XXIV of GATT** — **free trade areas and Customs Unions (CUs).**
ऐसी दो व्यवस्थाएँ **GATT के अनुच्छेद XXIV** में मान्यता प्राप्त हैं — **मुक्त व्यापार क्षेत्र** और **कस्टम्स यूनियन (CU)**।
- However, since these arrangements are an exception to the **MFN principle**, they are subject to **stringent conditions.**
चूंकि ये व्यवस्थाएँ **MFN सिद्धांत** का अपवाद हैं, इसलिए ये **कड़े नियमों** के अधीन होती हैं।
- For instance, an **FTA** creating a free trade area should cover '**substantially all trade**' between its constituents.
उदाहरण के लिए, मुक्त व्यापार क्षेत्र बनाने वाला **FTA** अपने सदस्यों के बीच '**लगभग समस्त व्यापार**' को कवर करना चाहिए।



- Likewise, a **CU** should not only cover '**substantially all trade**' but also have a **common external trade policy** for non-members.
इसी प्रकार, **CU** को न केवल 'लगभग समस्त व्यापार' कवर करना चाहिए बल्कि गैर-सदस्यों के लिए सामान्य बाहरी व्यापार नीति भी होनी चाहिए।
- These stringent conditions aim to make **FTAs and CUs building blocks** rather than impediments to **trade multilateralism**.
इन कड़े नियमों का उद्देश्य **FTA और CU** को **बहुपक्षीय व्यापार** के अवरोध नहीं बल्कि निर्माण खंड बनाना है।
- Until the **1980s**, these arrangements were not popular among countries.
1980 के दशक तक ये व्यवस्थाएँ देशों के बीच लोकप्रिय नहीं थीं।
- However, in the last **three decades**, there has been a **proliferation of FTAs**.
लेकिन पिछले **तीन दशकों** में **FTA का तेजी से विस्तार** हुआ है।
- While most **FTAs** are bilateral, some are quite large, covering **10-15 countries**, such as the **Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP)** agreement.
जहाँ अधिकांश **FTA** द्विपक्षीय हैं, वहीं कुछ बड़े हैं जो **10-15 देशों** को कवर करते हैं, जैसे **RCEP समझौता**।
- Many of these **FTAs** are **WTO-plus**, going beyond **WTO** topics by including rules on **labour, environment, and foreign investment protection**.
इनमें से कई **FTA** **WTO-plus** हैं, जो **WTO** विषयों से आगे बढ़कर **श्रम, पर्यावरण और विदेशी निवेश सुरक्षा** के नियम शामिल करते हैं।
- These **FTAs** are criticised for thrusting **new obligations on developing countries**.
इन **FTA** की आलोचना की जाती है क्योंकि ये **विकासशील देशों पर नए दायित्व** थोपते हैं।
- However, as these **FTAs** are notified to the **WTO** as a mandatory legal requirement, adversely affected countries can **raise questions and scrutinise them**.
हालाँकि, चूंकि ये **FTA** **WTO** को सूचित किए जाते हैं, इसलिए प्रभावित देश **प्रश्न उठा सकते हैं और जांच कर सकते हैं**।

Agreements on reciprocal trade पारस्परिक व्यापार समझौते

- The **ARTs** signed by the **Trump administration** with **WTO** members are **not under Article XXIV of GATT**.
ट्रंप प्रशासन द्वारा **WTO** सदस्यों के साथ किए गए **ART समझौते** **GATT के अनुच्छेद XXIV** के अंतर्गत नहीं आते।
- This makes these agreements **legally suspicious**.
इससे ये समझौते **कानूनी रूप से संदिग्ध** हो जाते हैं।
- While **GATT Article XXIV-type FTAs** have institutional linkage with the **WTO**, **ARTs** are **completely independent**.
जहाँ **GATT अनुच्छेद XXIV प्रकार के FTA** का **WTO** से संस्थागत संबंध होता है, वहीं **ART पूरी तरह स्वतंत्र** हैं।
- The most alarming element of these **ARTs** is that they reflect the '**America First**' **trade policy**.
इन **ART** का सबसे चिंताजनक पहलू यह है कि ये '**अमेरिका फर्स्ट**' **व्यापार नीति** को दर्शाते हैं।
- While the U.S. imposes **tariff rates inconsistent with WTO obligations**, its partner is forced to **eliminate or drastically reduce tariffs** on U.S. goods.
जहाँ अमेरिका **WTO नियमों के विपरीत टैरिफ** लगाता है, वहीं उसका साझेदार **अमेरिकी वस्तुओं पर टैरिफ कम या समाप्त** करने को मजबूर होता है।
- These **ARTs** contain **several one-sided provisions** aimed at strengthening **U.S. interests**.
इन **ART** में कई **एकतरफा प्रावधान** होते हैं जो **अमेरिकी हितों** को मजबूत करते हैं।
- For instance, **Article 4.1 of the U.S.-Bangladesh ART** requires Bangladesh to adopt **complementary restrictive action** if the U.S. takes a trade measure for **economic or national security**.
उदाहरण के लिए, **अमेरिका-बांग्लादेश ART के अनुच्छेद 4.1** के अनुसार यदि अमेरिका **आर्थिक या राष्ट्रीय सुरक्षा** के लिए कोई व्यापार उपाय अपनाता है तो बांग्लादेश को भी **पूरक प्रतिबंधात्मक कार्रवाई** करनी होगी।
- Such a provision effectively **ties the partner's interests to the U.S.**
ऐसा प्रावधान प्रभावी रूप से **साझेदार के हितों को अमेरिका से जोड़ देता है**।



- Another feature of these ARTs is that they **restrict data sovereignty** of partner countries. इन ART की एक और विशेषता यह है कि ये साझेदार देशों की डेटा संप्रभुता को सीमित करते हैं।
- For example, **Article 3.4 of the U.S.-El Salvador ART** prevents El Salvador from imposing **customs duties on electronic transactions**.
उदाहरण के लिए, अमेरिका-एल साल्वाडोर ART के अनुच्छेद 3.4 के अनुसार एल साल्वाडोर इलेक्ट्रॉनिक लेनदेन पर सीमा शुल्क नहीं लगा सकता।
- In sum, the **U.S. ARTs are imperial in nature**.
सार रूप में, अमेरिकी ART समझौते साम्राज्यवादी प्रकृति के हैं।
- Because these ARTs are **not notified to the WTO**, other countries **cannot scrutinise them**.
चूंकि ये ART WTO को सूचित नहीं किए जाते, अन्य देश इनकी जांच नहीं कर सकते।
- These agreements attempt to **undermine trade multilateralism** and should be **resisted by developing countries**.
ये समझौते बहुपक्षीय व्यापार व्यवस्था को कमजोर करने का प्रयास हैं और इन्हें विकासशील देशों द्वारा विरोध किया जाना चाहिए।

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TOPICS COVERED	25 February 2026
25F	Health Ministry set to roll out free HPV vaccination plan targeting girls aged 14 स्वास्थ्य मंत्रालय 14 वर्ष की आयु की लड़कियों को लक्षित मुफ्त HPV टीकाकरण योजना शुरू करने जा रहा है
25F	Panel to probe repeated failures of PSLV, says ISRO PSLV की बार-बार असफलताओं की जांच के लिए पैनल, ISRO ने कहा
25F	Amid DoT push, WhatsApp appears to test SIM-binding डॉट के दबाव के बीच, व्हाट्सएप लगता है कि सिम-बाइंडिंग का परीक्षण कर रहा है
25F	Scientists confirm HIV capsid is a good drug target despite resistance वैज्ञानिकों ने पुष्टि की कि प्रतिरोध के बावजूद HIV capsid एक अच्छा drug target है
25F	Why don't left-handed persons make up half the population? बाएँ हाथ वाले लोग आबादी का आधा हिस्सा क्यों नहीं बनाते?
25F	The rise of blue: the colour that moved kings and the royals before poets नीले रंग का उदय: वह रंग जिसने कवियों से पहले राजाओं और शाही वर्ग को प्रभावित किया



Health Ministry set to roll out free HPV vaccination plan targeting girls aged 14

GS III: S&T

Bindu Shajan Perappadan
NEW DELHI

The Union Health Ministry is set to launch a nationwide Human Papillomavirus (HPV) vaccination programme targeting girls aged 14.

The vaccination will be voluntary and free of cost, ensuring equitable access across socio-economic groups.

India will use Gardasil, a quadrivalent HPV vaccine, for protection from HPV types 16 and 18, which cause cervical cancer, and types 6 and 11.

“Global and Indian scientific evidence confirms that a single dose provides robust and durable protection when administered to girls in the recommended age group,” a senior Health Ministry official said.

“The nation-wide programme will target girls aged 14 years, an age at which the HPV vaccine offers maximum preventive benefit, well before potential exposure to the virus,” they said.

To ensure uninterrupted availability and quality, India has secured HPV vaccine supplies through a transparent, globally supported procurement mechanism.

“Under India’s partnership with Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance, Gardasil vaccines, which are approved by India’s drug regulator and widely used internationally, have been made available for the national programme. The procurement follows stringent quality and cold chain standards, enabling the government to provide the vaccine free of cost to eligible girls across all States and Union Territories,” the official said.

Safety shot

The Centre’s nation-wide HPV vaccination programme targeting girls aged 14 will begin soon

■ A single-shot of Gardasil, a vaccine that provides protection against HPV types 16 and 18, which cause cervical cancer, and types 6 and 11 will be used

■ The vaccination will be voluntary and free of cost. It will be administered exclusively at designated government health facilities

■ Cervical cancer remains the second most common cancer among women in India



HPV vaccination under the national programme will be conducted exclusively at designated government health facilities, including the Ayushman Arogya Mandirs (Primary Health Centres), Community Health Centres, Sub-District and District Hospitals, and Government Medical Colleges. Each vaccination session will be carried out in the presence of trained medical officers, supported by skilled healthcare teams, and equipped for post-vaccination observation and management of any rare adverse events.

Common ailment

Cervical cancer remains the second most common cancer among women in India, with nearly 80,000 new cases and over 42,000 deaths reported annually. Scientific evidence establishes that almost all cases of cervical cancer are caused by persistent infection with high-risk types of HPV, particularly HPV types 16 and 18, which together account for more than 80% of cervical cancer cases in India.

Despite being largely preventable through vaccination and early screening, cervical cancer continues to impose a heavy burden on women and families.

“The forthcoming HPV vaccination programme directly addresses this challenge by preventing HPV infection before it can progress to cancer,” the Health Ministry said.

HPV vaccines are among the most extensively studied vaccines worldwide, with evidence demonstrating 93-100% effectiveness in preventing cervical cancer caused by vaccine-covered HPV types. The vaccine is non-live, does not cause HPV infection, and has a good safety record, supported by more than 500 million doses administered globally since its introduction in 2006.

Meanwhile, globally, over 90 countries are implementing single-dose HPV vaccination schedules, improving coverage and affordability. Several countries have already demonstrated substantial reductions in HPV infection, precancerous lesions, and cervical cancer incidence following widespread vaccination.

India’s approach is grounded in global best practices, national disease burden evidence, and expert recommendations of the National Technical Advisory Group on Immunisation, a Health Ministry official said.

25F. Health Ministry set to roll out free HPV vaccination plan targeting girls aged 14

स्वास्थ्य मंत्रालय 14 वर्ष की आयु की लड़कियों को लक्षित मुफ्त HPV टीकाकरण योजना शुरू करने जा रहा है

• The Union Health Ministry is set to launch a nationwide **Human Papillomavirus (HPV) vaccination programme** targeting girls aged 14.

केंद्रीय स्वास्थ्य मंत्रालय 14 वर्ष की आयु की लड़कियों को लक्षित करते हुए देशव्यापी **ह्यूमन पैपिलोमावायरस (HPV) टीकाकरण कार्यक्रम** शुरू करने जा रहा है।

• The vaccination will be **voluntary and free of cost**, ensuring equitable access across socio-economic groups.

टीकाकरण **स्वेच्छा से और मुफ्त** किया जाएगा, जो विभिन्न सामाजिक-आर्थिक समूहों के बीच समान पहुँच सुनिश्चित करता है।

• India will use **Gardasil**, a quadrivalent HPV vaccine, for protection from HPV types 16 and 18, which cause **cervical cancer**, and types 6 and 11.

भारत **गार्डसिल** का उपयोग करेगा, जो एक चार-घटक वाला HPV टीका है, HPV प्रकार 16 और 18 से सुरक्षा के लिए, जो **सर्वाइकल कैंसर** का कारण बनते हैं, और प्रकार 6 और 11 से भी।

• “Global and Indian scientific evidence confirms that a **single dose provides robust and durable protection** when administered to girls in the recommended age group,” a senior Health Ministry official said.

“वैश्विक और भारतीय वैज्ञानिक साक्ष्य पुष्टि करते हैं कि **सिफ़ल डोज़ मजबूत और दीर्घकालिक सुरक्षा प्रदान करता है**, जब इसे अनुशंसित आयु वर्ग की लड़कियों को दिया जाता है,” एक वरिष्ठ स्वास्थ्य मंत्रालय अधिकारी ने कहा।

• “The nation-wide programme will target girls aged 14 years, an age at which the HPV vaccine offers **maximum preventive benefit**, well before potential exposure to the

virus,” they said.

“देशव्यापी कार्यक्रम 14 वर्ष की आयु की लड़कियों को लक्षित करेगा, वह आयु जिस पर HPV टीका **अधिकतम रोकथाम लाभ** प्रदान करता है, वायरस के संभावित संपर्क से बहुत पहले,” उन्होंने कहा।

• To ensure **uninterrupted availability and quality**, India has secured HPV vaccine supplies through a **transparent, globally supported procurement mechanism**.

अविरल उपलब्धता और गुणवत्ता सुनिश्चित करने के लिए, भारत ने HPV टीका आपूर्ति को **पारदर्शी, वैश्विक समर्थन प्राप्त खरीद तंत्र** के माध्यम से सुनिश्चित किया है।

• “Under India’s partnership with **Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance**, Gardasil vaccines, which are approved by India’s drug regulator and widely used internationally, have been made available for the national programme.

भारत की **गावी, द वैक्सीन अलायंस** के साथ साझेदारी के तहत, गार्डसिल टीके, जिन्हें भारत के दवा नियामक



द्वारा अनुमोदित किया गया है और अंतरराष्ट्रीय स्तर पर व्यापक रूप से उपयोग किया जाता है, राष्ट्रीय कार्यक्रम के लिए उपलब्ध कराए गए हैं।

- The procurement follows stringent **quality and cold chain standards**, enabling the government to provide the vaccine **free of cost** to eligible girls across all States and Union Territories," the official said.
खरीद प्रक्रिया **कड़े गुणवत्ता और शीत श्रृंखला मानकों** का पालन करती है, जिससे सरकार सभी राज्यों और केंद्र शासित प्रदेशों की योग्य लड़कियों को **मुफ्त में टीका** प्रदान कर सकती है," अधिकारी ने कहा।
- HPV vaccination under the national programme will be conducted exclusively at **designated government health facilities**, including the **Ayushman Arogya Mandirs (Primary Health Centres), Community Health Centres, Sub-District and District Hospitals, and Government Medical Colleges**.
राष्ट्रीय कार्यक्रम के तहत HPV टीकाकरण केवल **नामित सरकारी स्वास्थ्य सुविधाओं** पर किया जाएगा, जिनमें **आयुष्मान आरोग्य मंदिर (प्राथमिक स्वास्थ्य केंद्र), सामुदायिक स्वास्थ्य केंद्र, उप-जिला और जिला अस्पताल, और सरकारी मेडिकल कॉलेज** शामिल हैं।
- Each vaccination session will be carried out in the presence of **trained medical officers**, supported by **skilled healthcare teams**, and equipped for **post-vaccination observation and management of any rare adverse events**.
प्रत्येक टीकाकरण सत्र **प्रशिक्षित चिकित्सा अधिकारियों** की उपस्थिति में आयोजित किया जाएगा, जो **कुशल स्वास्थ्य टीमों** द्वारा समर्थित होंगे, और इसे **टीकाकरण के बाद की निगरानी और किसी भी दुर्लभ प्रतिकूल घटना के प्रबंधन** के लिए सुसज्जित किया जाएगा।

Common ailment सामान्य रोग

- **Cervical cancer remains the second most common cancer among women in India, with nearly 80,000 new cases and over 42,000 deaths reported annually.**
भारत में **महिलाओं में सर्वाइकल कैंसर दूसरा सबसे आम कैंसर** बना हुआ है, जिसमें लगभग 80,000 नए मामले और 42,000 से अधिक मौतें हर साल दर्ज की जाती हैं।
- Scientific evidence establishes that **almost all cases of cervical cancer are caused by persistent infection with high-risk types of HPV**, particularly HPV types 16 and 18, which together account for **more than 80% of cervical cancer cases in India**.
वैज्ञानिक साक्ष्य स्थापित करते हैं कि **लगभग सभी सर्वाइकल कैंसर के मामले उच्च जोखिम वाले HPV प्रकार के लगातार संक्रमण के कारण होते हैं**, विशेष रूप से HPV प्रकार 16 और 18, जो भारत में **सर्वाइकल कैंसर के 80% से अधिक मामलों** के लिए जिम्मेदार हैं।
- **Despite being largely preventable through vaccination and early screening, cervical cancer continues to impose a heavy burden on women and families.**
टीकाकरण और प्रारंभिक स्क्रीनिंग के माध्यम से अधिकांशतः **रोकथाम योग्य होने के बावजूद, सर्वाइकल कैंसर महिलाओं और परिवारों पर भारी बोझ डालता है।**
- **"The forthcoming HPV vaccination programme directly addresses this challenge by preventing HPV infection before it can progress to cancer,"** the Health Ministry said.
"आगामी HPV टीकाकरण कार्यक्रम इस चुनौती को सीधे संबोधित करता है, **HPV संक्रमण को कैंसर में बढ़ने से पहले रोककर,**" स्वास्थ्य मंत्रालय ने कहा।
- The **vaccine is nonlive, does not cause HPV infection**, and has a **good safety record**, supported by more than **500 million doses administered globally since its introduction in 2006**.
टीका **नॉन-लाइव** है, HPV संक्रमण नहीं करता, और इसका **अच्छा सुरक्षा रिकॉर्ड** है, जिसे 2006 में इसके परिचय के बाद **दुनिया भर में 500 मिलियन से अधिक खुराकों के प्रशासन** से समर्थन मिला है।
- Meanwhile, globally, **over 90 countries are implementing single-dose HPV vaccination schedules, improving coverage and affordability.**
इस बीच, वैश्विक स्तर पर, 90 से अधिक देश **एकल खुराक HPV टीकाकरण कार्यक्रम** लागू कर रहे हैं, जिससे कवरेज और सुलभता में सुधार हुआ है।
- Several countries have already demonstrated **substantial reductions in HPV infection, precancerous lesions, and cervical cancer incidence** following widespread vaccination.
कई देशों ने पहले ही व्यापक टीकाकरण के बाद **HPV संक्रमण, प्रीकैंसर घाव, और सर्वाइकल कैंसर की घटनाओं में पर्याप्त कमी** दिखाई है।



- India's approach is grounded in **global best practices, national disease burden evidence, and expert recommendations of the National Technical Advisory Group on Immunisation**, a Health Ministry official said.

भारत का दृष्टिकोण वैश्विक सर्वोत्तम प्रथाओं, राष्ट्रीय रोग भार साक्ष्यों और राष्ट्रीय टीकाकरण तकनीकी सलाहकार समूह की विशेषज्ञ सिफारिशों पर आधारित है, एक स्वास्थ्य मंत्रालय अधिकारी ने कहा।

Panel to probe repeated failures of PSLV, says ISRO

CS III: S&T

Jacob Koshy
NEW DELHI

A committee that includes K. Vijay Raghavan, former Principal Scientific Adviser, and S. Somanath, former Chairman, India Space Research Organisation (ISRO), will probe "systemic issues" underlying the successive failures of the ISRO's Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle (PSLV).

While technical committees probe and submit 'failure analysis reports' when mishaps occur, this committee, *The Hindu* has reliably learnt, will investigate questions on whether "organisational" problems may have played a role in the debacles involving the PSLV.

On January 12, the PSLV-C62 failed in its mission to deliver 16 satellites into orbit, and crashed into the sea after the third stage of the rocket failed to ignite. This was similar to the May 18, 2025 failure of the PSLV-C61, in which, too, the third stage failed to



On January 12, the PSLV-C62 failed in its mission to deliver 16 satellites into orbit as the rocket failed to ignite in the third stage. PTI

fire, destroying as a result the EOS-09 satellite intended for the government's strategic needs.

The committee members consist of experts who are external to the ISRO, and are expected to table their findings to ISRO Chairman V. Narayanan before April.

On February 3, *The Hindu* reported that National Security Adviser Ajit Doval, who is also a member

of India's Space Commission, visited the Vikram Sarabhai Space Centre, reportedly in connection with the failure of the PSLV-C62 mission.

"A national-level expert committee has been constituted and is reviewing the reason for the anomaly in the PSLV vehicle," the ISRO said in a statement to *The Hindu*.

The PSLV's failures would be the core focus of

the report, and the committee would be looking into the processes in the manufacture, procurement, and assembling of various components of the rocket. This has implications for other rockets, too, *The Hindu* was told, because they have commonalities.

Report in a week

India's space ecosystem now involves several private companies and, therefore, the probe will not only be about which part or component failed, and who was responsible, but also whether there is a process in place to fix accountability, and how it may be improved.

A technical committee of the ISRO will first table a report on the PSLV-C62 incident this week, *The Hindu* has learnt through reliable sources.

The ISRO's historical response to rocket failures has been to have a Failure Analysis Committee probe the reasons, and publicise its findings. This, however,

has not taken place in the case of both the PSLV-C61 and PSLV-C62.

The Failure Analysis Committee report of the May 18 mishap was sent to the Prime Minister's Office before the PSLV-C62 launch, but its details have not been made public.

The Failure Analysis Committee, constituted by the ISRO Chairman, is a body of experts within ISRO to lead in the event of a major incident. It is expected to reconstruct the chain of events leading up to a failure, and recommend corrective action before the rocket is cleared to fly again. The committee members include experts within ISRO as well as relevant experts from academia.

At a press conference on February 2, the Union Minister of State for Science and Technology, Jitendra Singh, said that a "third party appraisal" was ongoing.

(With inputs from Hemant C.S. in Bengaluru)

25F. Panel to probe repeated failures of PSLV, says ISRO

PSLV की बार-बार असफलताओं की जांच के लिए पैनल, ISRO ने कहा

- A committee that includes **K. Vijay Raghavan, former Principal Scientific Adviser, and S. Somanath, former Chairman, India Space Research Organisation (ISRO)**, will probe "systemic issues" underlying the successive failures of the ISRO's **Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle (PSLV)**.

एक समिति जिसमें **K. विजय राघवन, पूर्व मुख्य वैज्ञानिक सलाहकार, और S. सोमनाथ, पूर्व अध्यक्ष, भारतीय अंतरिक्ष अनुसंधान संगठन (ISRO)** शामिल हैं, ISRO के पोलर सैटेलाइट लॉन्च व्हीकल (PSLV) की लगातार असफलताओं के पीछे के "सिस्टमिक मुद्दों" की जांच करेगी।

- While **technical committees** probe and submit 'failure analysis reports' when mishaps occur, this committee, *The Hindu* has reliably learnt, will investigate questions on whether "**organisational**" problems may have played a role in the debacles involving the PSLV.

जब तकनीकी समितियां दुर्घटनाओं के होने पर 'फेल्योर एनालिसिस रिपोर्ट' तैयार करती हैं और प्रस्तुत करती हैं, इस समिति, जैसा कि *The Hindu* ने विश्वसनीय रूप से जाना, यह जांच करेगी कि क्या **संगठनात्मक** समस्याओं ने PSLV से संबंधित असफलताओं में भूमिका निभाई हो सकती है।

- On January 12, the **PSLV-C62** failed in its mission to deliver 16 satellites into orbit, and crashed into the sea after the **third stage of the rocket failed to ignite**.

12 जनवरी को, **PSLV-C62** अपने मिशन में 16 उपग्रहों को कक्षा में पहुंचाने में असफल रहा, और **रोकेट के तीसरे चरण के प्रज्वलित न होने** के बाद समुद्र में दुर्घटनाग्रस्त हो गया।



- This was similar to the May 18, 2025 failure of the **PSLV-C61**, in which, too, the third stage failed to fire, destroying as a result the **EOS-09 satellite** intended for the government's strategic needs.
यह 18 मई, 2025 की **PSLV-C61** की असफलता के समान था, जिसमें भी तीसरे चरण ने प्रज्वलित नहीं किया, जिससे सरकार की रणनीतिक आवश्यकताओं के लिए निर्धारित **EOS-09 उपग्रह** नष्ट हो गया।
- The committee members consist of **experts who are external to the ISRO**, and are expected to table their findings to **ISRO Chairman V. Narayanan** before April.
समिति के सदस्य **ऐसे विशेषज्ञ हैं जो ISRO के बाहरी हैं**, और उम्मीद की जाती है कि वे अपनी खोजों को अप्रैल से पहले **ISRO अध्यक्ष V. नारायणन** के सामने प्रस्तुत करेंगे।
- On February 3, The Hindu reported that **National Security Adviser Ajit Doval, who is also a member of India's Space Commission**, visited the **Vikram Sarabhai Space Centre**, reportedly in connection with the failure of the **PSLV-C62 mission**.
3 फरवरी को, The Hindu ने बताया कि **राष्ट्रीय सुरक्षा सलाहकार अजीत डोवल**, जो भारत के अंतरिक्ष आयोग के सदस्य भी हैं, ने **विक्रम साराभाई स्पेस सेंटर** का दौरा किया, कथित रूप से **PSLV-C62 मिशन की असफलता** के संबंध में।
- "A national-level expert committee has been constituted and is reviewing the reason for the **anomaly in the PSLV vehicle**," the ISRO said in a statement to The Hindu.
"एक राष्ट्रीय-स्तरीय विशेषज्ञ समिति का गठन किया गया है और वह **PSLV वाहन में असामान्यता** के कारण की समीक्षा कर रही है," ISRO ने The Hindu को एक बयान में कहा।
- The PSLV's failures would be the **core focus of the report**, and the **committee would be looking into the processes in the manufacture, procurement, and assembling of various components of the rocket**.
PSLV की असफलताएं रिपोर्ट का **मुख्य केंद्र बिंदु** होंगी, और समिति **रॉकेट के विभिन्न घटकों के निर्माण, खरीद और संयोजन की प्रक्रियाओं** की जांच करेगी।

Report in a week एक सप्ताह में रिपोर्ट

- **India's space ecosystem now involves several private companies** and, therefore, the probe will not only be about which part or component failed, and who was responsible, but also whether there is a **process in place to fix accountability**, and how it may be improved.
भारत की **अंतरिक्ष पारिस्थितिकी तंत्र अब कई निजी कंपनियों को शामिल करता है**, और इसलिए जांच केवल यह नहीं होगी कि कौन सा हिस्सा या घटक असफल हुआ और कौन जिम्मेदार था, बल्कि यह भी कि क्या **जिम्मेदारी तय करने की प्रक्रिया मौजूद है** और इसे कैसे सुधारा जा सकता है।
- A **technical committee of the ISRO** will first table a report on the **PSLV-C62 incident** this week, The Hindu has learnt through reliable sources.
ISRO की **तकनीकी समिति** इस सप्ताह **PSLV-C62 घटना** पर पहली रिपोर्ट प्रस्तुत करेगी, जैसा कि The Hindu ने विश्वसनीय स्रोतों से जाना।
- **The ISRO's historical response to rocket failures has been to have a Failure Analysis Committee probe the reasons, and publicise its findings.**
रॉकेट असफलताओं पर ISRO का ऐतिहासिक उत्तर यह रहा है कि **फेल्योर एनालिसिस कमिटी** कारणों की जांच करे, और अपनी खोजों को सार्वजनिक करे।
- This, however, has not taken place in the case of both the **PSLV-C61 and PSLV-C62**.
हालांकि, यह **PSLV-C61 और PSLV-C62** के मामले में नहीं हुआ है।
- The **Failure Analysis Committee report of the May 18 mishap** was sent to the **Prime Minister's Office** before the PSLV-C62 launch, but its details have not been made public.
18 मई की दुर्घटना की **फेल्योर एनालिसिस कमिटी रिपोर्ट** PSLV-C62 लॉन्च से पहले **प्रधान मंत्री कार्यालय** को भेजी गई थी, लेकिन इसके विवरण सार्वजनिक नहीं किए गए हैं।
- The **Failure Analysis Committee, constituted by the ISRO Chairman, is a body of experts within ISRO to lead in the event of a major incident.**
फेल्योर एनालिसिस कमिटी, जो **ISRO अध्यक्ष** द्वारा गठित की गई है, ISRO के भीतर विशेषज्ञों की एक संस्था है जो किसी बड़े घटना के मामले में नेतृत्व करती है।
- It is expected to **reconstruct the chain of events leading up to a failure**, and recommend **corrective action** before the rocket is cleared to fly again.



इससे उम्मीद की जाती है कि यह असफलता तक ले जाने वाली घटनाओं की श्रृंखला का पुनर्निर्माण करेगी, और रॉकेट को फिर से उड़ाने से पहले सुधारात्मक कार्रवाई की सिफारिश करेगी।

- The committee members include experts within ISRO as well as relevant experts from academia.
समिति के सदस्य ISRO के विशेषज्ञों के साथ-साथ अकादमिक विशेषज्ञों को भी शामिल करते हैं।
- At a press conference on February 2, the Union Minister of Science and Technology, and Earth Sciences, Jitendra Singh, said that a “third party appraisal” was ongoing.
2 फरवरी को एक प्रेस कॉन्फ्रेंस में, केंद्रीय विज्ञान और प्रौद्योगिकी, तथा पृथ्वी विज्ञान राज्य मंत्री, जितेन्द्र सिंह, ने कहा कि “तीसरे पक्ष का मूल्यांकन” चल रहा था।

Amid DoT push, WhatsApp appears to test SIM-binding

GS III: S&T
Aroon Deep
NEW DELHI

The online messaging platform WhatsApp appears to be preparing to comply with the SIM-binding directive of the Department of Telecommunications issued late last year.

The directive requires messaging platforms to ensure that a user's registered SIM card is provisioned on the handset used to access the service, and to disable access if it is not. It also includes a potentially disruptive requirement that web-based instances, such as WhatsApp Web, be logged out every six hours.

The directions were issued on November 28, 2025, by the DoT's AI & Digital Intelligence Unit, under its expanded authority to regulate Telecommunication Identifier User Entity (TIUE) – defined as any online service that uses a phone number as an identifier.

Meta, WhatsApp's parent company, had pushed back through industry bodies it is a part of, including the Internet and Mobile Association of India (IAMAI), arguing that the measures could cause “hurdles to the modern communication habits such as use of inter-



In the latest beta versions, code references to the SIM-binding directions have been detected.

national numbers during travel [or] secondary devices”.

Beta version

In the latest beta versions of WhatsApp, code references to the SIM-binding directions have been detected. A Meta spokesperson declined to comment on the development, while a DoT spokesperson did not immediately respond to queries on whether the direction would come into force this month as originally ordered.

The new code, discovered by WABetaInfo – an independent blog which tracks changes in WhatsApp's code often much before public rollout – includes a prompt on the sign-in screen saying, “Due to regulatory requirements in India, WhatsApp needs to check that your SIM card is in your device.”

25F. Amid DoT push, WhatsApp appears to test SIM-binding डॉट के दबाव के बीच, व्हाट्सएप लगता है कि सिम-बाइंडिंग का परीक्षण कर रहा है

- WhatsApp may comply with DoT SIM-binding directive
व्हाट्सएप संभवतः DoT के SIM-बाइंडिंग निर्देश का पालन करेगा
- The online messaging platform WhatsApp appears to be preparing to comply with the SIM-binding directive of the Department of Telecommunications issued late last year.

ऑनलाइन मैसेजिंग प्लेटफॉर्म व्हाट्सएप ऐसा प्रतीत होता है कि वह पिछले साल के अंत में जारी टेलीकॉम विभाग (DoT) के SIM-बाइंडिंग निर्देश का पालन करने की तैयारी कर रहा है।

- The directive requires messaging platforms to ensure that a user's registered SIM card is provisioned on the handset used to access the service, and to disable access if it is not.

निर्देश के अनुसार मैसेजिंग प्लेटफॉर्म यह सुनिश्चित करें कि उपयोगकर्ता का पंजीकृत SIM कार्ड उसी हैंडसेट पर हो जिसका उपयोग सेवा तक पहुंचने के लिए किया जा रहा है, और यदि ऐसा न हो तो पहुंच को अक्षम करें।

- It also includes a potentially disruptive requirement that web-based instances, such as WhatsApp Web, be logged out every six hours.

इसमें एक संभावित रूप से विघटनकारी आवश्यकता भी शामिल है कि वेब-आधारित संस्करण, जैसे WhatsApp Web, हर छह घंटे में लॉग आउट हो।

- Meta, WhatsApp's parent company, had pushed back through industry bodies it is a part of, including the Internet and Mobile Association of India (IAMAI), arguing that the measures could cause “hurdles to the modern communication habits such as use of international numbers during travel [or] secondary devices”.

Meta, व्हाट्सएप की मातृ कंपनी, ने जिन उद्योग निकायों का हिस्सा है

उनके माध्यम से प्रतिक्रिया दी, जिसमें Internet and Mobile Association of India (IAMAI) भी शामिल है, और तर्क दिया कि ये उपाय “आधुनिक संचार आदतों में अड़चनें पैदा कर सकते हैं, जैसे कि यात्रा के दौरान अंतर्राष्ट्रीय नंबरों का उपयोग या सहायक उपकरणों का इस्तेमाल।”

Beta version
बीटा संस्करण



- In the latest beta versions of WhatsApp, code references to the SIM-binding directions have been detected.

व्हाट्सएप के नवीनतम बीटा संस्करणों में SIM-बाइंडिंग निर्देशों के लिए कोड संदर्भ पाए गए हैं।

Scientists confirm HIV capsid is a good drug target despite resistance

A new study has found that to escape a drug called lenacapavir, HIV has to damage one of its own components, the capsid; the finding reaffirms the belief that the viral capsid is a good drug target and that the virus cannot afford to change it too much, opening the door to a new generation of drugs

ES/III/S&T
Arun Panchapakesan

In 1987, four years after the discovery of HIV as the causative agent of AIDS, scientists reported the first drug effective against the virus, called zidovudine. Zidovudine targeted a viral enzyme called reverse transcriptase, and prevented the virus from completing its life cycle. However, zidovudine was no magic bullet. It could hold the virus at bay for a while, but HIV quickly learned to outsmart it, and the resulting drug resistance meant many patients soon lost the drug's protective effect.

It quickly became clear why zidovudine alone would not keep HIV in check. The virus is prone to copying 'mistakes' when it turns its RNA into DNA, generating endless new variants. Some of these variants possess the property of drug resistance. Importantly however, these changes can't happen just anywhere. Some parts of the virus are so essential to its survival that they must remain largely unchanged. Altering them would break the virus itself.

So researchers decided to aim more drugs at these 'must keep' regions, where the virus has little room to evolve. The insight led to the development of multiple antiretroviral drugs targeting different viral proteins, including reverse transcriptase, protease, and integrase, laying the foundation for combination therapies that could suppress the virus far more effectively and durably.

Provocative question

In 1999, a paper in the journal *Science* detailed how another protein of HIV, called the capsid, folds into its unique protective shape. The study was important because the capsid is a structure that protects the virus's RNA from the environment. The work provided the breakthrough to understanding how the capsid folds into its unique 3D structure. Soon, the same team reported that most mutations in the capsid protein could render HIV incapable of infecting cells, showing that it was much more vulnerable than previously believed.

The discovery raised a provocative question: If the capsid was so essential, and so fragile, could it itself be a drug target? For years, the answer seemed to be 'no'. Scientists at major pharmaceutical companies started working on potential molecules that could latch onto the capsid and disrupt its carefully balanced structure, effectively stopping the virus in its tracks.

While one candidate seemed promising, it had a persistent problem: it didn't easily dissolve in water. Since solubility was a basic requirement for most medicines to circulate reliably in the body, the researchers had to keep tweaking it to see if they could improve its solubility while maintaining its potency.



A vial of lenacapavir at the Desmond Tutu Health Foundation's Masiphumelele Research Site, in Cape Town, South Africa. FILE PHOTO

Then, after more than two decades of persistence, the problem was turned on its head.

On June 18, 2025, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) approved lenacapavir, the world's first capsid-based HIV inhibitor. Its poor solubility, once a liability, became its greatest strength. Instead of being taken daily, lenacapavir is injected under the skin of the abdomen just once every six months, forming a slow-release reservoir that steadily delivers the drug into the bloodstream. The results were astonishing: in clinical trials, it prevented HIV infection in high-risk individuals with 100% effectiveness. Lenacapavir was not a cure but, as a *Science* article put it, it may be the next best thing to an HIV vaccine.

Acting solo

However, one hard-learned lesson from four decades of HIV research is that no single drug has ever escaped resistance. Given enough time, the virus finds a way, which is why HIV is always treated with combinations of drugs and never one alone.

In a study published recently in *Science Translational Medicine*, researchers from across the U.S., including the pharmaceutical company Gilead Sciences, examined viruses from patients who received lenacapavir as part of treatment, rather than prevention, and identified a small set of changes in the

The certainty that viral capsid is a very good drug target opens the door to a generation of drugs that target the capsid, with the reassurance that resistance will come at a high cost to the virus

capsid protein, most commonly involving positions known that reduced the drug's effectiveness.

Importantly, these resistance mutations emerged primarily when lenacapavir was acting alone, without other fully active drugs in the regimen. When lenacapavir was used in proper combination therapy, viral suppression was largely maintained, reinforcing the long-standing rule of HIV treatment: that the virus can escape one blockade but not many at once.

To test whether the resistance came at a price, the researchers engineered the drug-resistant viruses in the laboratory. They took capsid sequences from patients who had developed resistance, inserted those exact mutations into a standard laboratory HIV strain, then watched how these altered viruses behaved.

The results were striking. Viruses carrying the strongest resistance mutations often replicated at less than 20-30% of normal levels, even in the absence of the drug. In effect, escaping lenacapavir meant HIV had to damage

one of its own components, the capsid, and that was the cost of its survival.

Shells of other viruses

The study reaffirmed the longstanding belief that the viral capsid is actually a very good drug target and that the virus can't afford to change it too much. This certainty opens the door to a new generation of drugs that target the capsid, with the reassurance that resistance will come at a high cost to the virus. With this proof in hand, researchers can now explore capsid-focused strategies more aggressively, combining them with existing therapies. Beyond HIV, the work also adds to proof that it's a good idea for researchers to examine the protective shells of other viruses, which may be similarly vulnerable.

The four-plus decades of HIV research are a reminder that scientific progress is often slow, uneven, and unglamorous. For years, capsid inhibitors were under scrutiny and may have even been abandoned permanently if not for those researchers who kept at it, unwilling to abandon an idea they believed the science supported. If the story of lenacapavir teaches us anything, it is that sometimes, breakthroughs are the result of persistence and not inspiration.

(Arun Panchapakesan is an assistant professor at the Y.R. Gaitonde Centre for AIDS Research and Education, Chennai. arun.panchapakesan@gmail.com)

THE GIST

▼ The capsid is a structure that protects the virus's RNA from the environment

▼ Most mutations in the capsid protein could render HIV incapable of infecting cells

▼ Lenacapavir, the world's first capsid-based HIV inhibitor, is injected under the skin of the abdomen once every six months, forming a slow-release reservoir that steadily delivers the drug into the bloodstream

25F. Scientists confirm HIV capsid is a good drug target despite resistance वैज्ञानिकों ने पुष्टि की कि प्रतिरोध के बावजूद HIV capsid एक अच्छा drug target है

- A new study has found that to escape a drug called **lenacapavir**, HIV has to damage one of its own components, the **capsid**; the finding reaffirms the belief that the viral **capsid** is a good drug target and that the virus cannot afford to change it too much, opening the door to a new generation of drugs

एक नए अध्ययन में पाया गया है कि **lenacapavir** नामक दवा से बचने के लिए HIV को अपने ही एक घटक, **capsid**, को नुकसान पहुंचाना पड़ता है; यह खोज इस विश्वास की पुष्टि करती है कि viral **capsid** एक अच्छा drug target है और वायरस इसे बहुत अधिक बदलने का जोखिम नहीं उठा सकता, जिससे नई पीढ़ी की दवाओं के लिए रास्ता खुलता है

- In **1987**, four years after the discovery of **HIV** as the causative agent of **AIDS**, scientists reported the **first drug effective against the virus, called zidovudine**.



1987 में, एड्स के कारक एजेंट के रूप में एचआईवी की खोज के चार साल बाद, वैज्ञानिकों ने वायरस के खिलाफ पहली प्रभावी दवा की रिपोर्ट दी, जिसे जिडोव्यूडीन कहा गया।

- **Zidovudine targeted a viral enzyme called reverse transcriptase, and prevented the virus from completing its life-cycle.**

जिडोव्यूडीन ने एक वायरल एंजाइम रिवर्स ट्रांसक्रिप्टेस को लक्षित किया, और वायरस को अपना जीवन-चक्र पूरा करने से रोक दिया।

- However, **zidovudine** was no magic bullet. हालांकि, जिडोव्यूडीन कोई जादुई इलाज नहीं था।
- It could hold the virus at bay for a while, but **HIV** quickly learned to outsmart it, and the resulting **drug resistance** meant many patients soon lost the drug's protective effect. यह कुछ समय तक वायरस को रोक सकता था, लेकिन एचआईवी ने जल्दी ही इसे मात देना सीख लिया, और उत्पन्न दवा प्रतिरोध का मतलब था कि कई मरीज जल्द ही दवा के सुरक्षात्मक प्रभाव को खो बैठे।
- It quickly became clear why **zidovudine** alone would not keep **HIV** in check. जल्दी ही यह स्पष्ट हो गया कि अकेला जिडोव्यूडीन एचआईवी को नियंत्रित नहीं रख पाएगा।
- The virus is prone to copying **'mistakes'** when it turns its **RNA** into **DNA**, generating endless new variants. वायरस अपने आरएनए को डीएनए में बदलते समय गलतियाँ करने की प्रवृत्ति रखता है, जिससे अनगिनत नए प्रकार बनते हैं।

- Some of these variants possess the property of **drug resistance**.

इनमें से कुछ प्रकारों में दवा प्रतिरोध का गुण होता है।

- **On June 18, 2025, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) approved lenacapavir, the world's first capsid-based HIV inhibitor.**

18 जून 2025 को, अमेरिकी खाद्य एवं औषधि प्रशासन (एफडीए) ने लेनाकैपाविर को मंजूरी दी, जो दुनिया की पहली कैप्सिड-आधारित एचआईवी अवरोधक है।

- Its poor **solubility**, once a liability, became its greatest strength. इसकी कम घुलनशीलता, जो पहले कमजोरी थी, उसकी सबसे बड़ी ताकत बन गई।
- Instead of being taken daily, **lenacapavir is injected under the skin of the abdomen just once every six months, forming a slow-release reservoir that steadily delivers the drug into the bloodstream.**

रोज़ लेने के बजाय, लेनाकैपाविर को पेट की त्वचा के नीचे हर छह महीने में केवल एक बार इंजेक्ट किया जाता है, जिससे एक धीमी-रिलीज़ भंडार बनता है जो दवा को धीरे-धीरे रक्तप्रवाह में पहुंचाता है।

- The results were astonishing: in **clinical trials**, it prevented **HIV infection** in high-risk individuals with **100% effectiveness**. परिणाम चौंकाने वाले थे: **क्लिनिकल परीक्षणों** में, इसने उच्च जोखिम वाले व्यक्तियों में एचआईवी संक्रमण को **100% प्रभावशीलता** के साथ रोका।

- **Lenacapavir was not a cure but, as a Science article put it, it may be the next best thing to an HIV vaccine.**

लेनाकैपाविर कोई इलाज नहीं था, लेकिन जैसा कि साइंस पत्रिका में कहा गया, यह एचआईवी वैक्सीन के बाद अगली सबसे अच्छी चीज हो सकती है।

Acting solo अकेले कार्य करना

- **Given enough time, the virus finds a way, which is why HIV is always treated with combinations of drugs and never one alone.** पर्याप्त समय मिलने पर, वायरस रास्ता खोज लेता है, यही कारण है कि एचआईवी का इलाज हमेशा दवाओं के संयोजन से किया जाता है, कभी भी अकेली दवा से नहीं।
- Reinforcing the long-standing rule of **HIV treatment**: that the virus can escape one blockade but not many at once. इसने एचआईवी उपचार के लंबे समय से स्थापित नियम को मजबूत किया: कि वायरस एक अवरोध से बच सकता है, लेकिन एक साथ कई से नहीं।
- They took **capsid sequences** from patients who had developed resistance, inserted those exact mutations into a standard laboratory **HIV strain**. उन्होंने उन मरीजों से कैप्सिड अनुक्रम लिए जिन्होंने प्रतिरोध विकसित किया था, और उन्हीं उत्परिवर्तनों को एक मानक प्रयोगशाला एचआईवी स्ट्रेन में डाला।



Left and right

GS III: S&T



Q: Why don't left-handed persons make up half the population?

A: There is a neural basis for handedness but it is not due to any single part of the brain.

Hand preference reflects how the brain organises movement control. In most right-handed people, the left hemisphere has stronger control over fine hand movements and also more often dominates language. In left-handed people, these patterns are more mixed. Studies have found average differences in how motor areas are wired and how strongly the two hemispheres communicate, but these are trends and can't be the basis of diagnosis. In other words, the brain shows differences that go with handedness yet there's no scan or test that can predict handedness with certainty.

Second, handedness is partly genetic but it is polygenic, meaning it is due to many genes, each with small effects. Development also matters. Small prenatal differences in growth or early brain organisation can tip a person towards one hand, even with similar genes. In many places social pressures have also reduced the prevalence of left-handedness because children are



Hand preference reflects how the brain organises movement control KELLY SIKKEMA/UNSPASH

often trained to write with the right hand. Finally, while being left-handed may bring some advantages — like in direct combat or sports because it is rare — the world is built for right-handers, from scissors to desks with right-handed writing arms, due to which left-handedness has 'organically' stabilised at around 10% in the population.

For feedback and suggestions for 'Science', please write to science@thehindu.co.in with the subject 'Daily page'

बाएँ हाथ वाले लोगों में, ये पैटर्न अधिक मिश्रित होते हैं।

- Studies have found average differences in how **motor areas are wired and how strongly the two hemispheres communicate**. अध्ययनों में पाया गया है कि **मोटर क्षेत्रों** की संरचना और दोनों **गोलार्धों** के बीच संचार की शक्ति में औसत अंतर होता है।
- But these are trends and can't be the basis of **diagnosis**. लेकिन ये केवल प्रवृत्तियाँ हैं और **निदान** का आधार नहीं बन सकतीं।
- In other words, the brain shows differences that go with **handedness** yet there's no scan or test that can predict **handedness** with certainty. दूसरे शब्दों में, मस्तिष्क **हाथ की प्राथमिकता** से संबंधित अंतर दिखाता है, फिर भी ऐसा कोई स्कैन या परीक्षण नहीं है जो इसे निश्चित रूप से बता सके।
- Second, **handedness is partly genetic but it is polygenic, meaning it is due to many genes, each with small effects**. दूसरे, **हाथ की प्राथमिकता** आंशिक रूप से **आनुवंशिक** होती है, लेकिन यह **बहु-जीनी** है, अर्थात् कई जीनों के छोटे-छोटे प्रभावों के कारण होती है।
- In many places **social pressures** have also reduced the prevalence of **left-handedness** because children are often trained to write with the **right hand**. कई स्थानों पर **सामाजिक दबाव** ने भी **बाएँ हाथ के उपयोग** की प्रचलनता को कम किया है क्योंकि बच्चों को अक्सर **दाएँ हाथ** से लिखने का प्रशिक्षण दिया जाता है।
- Finally, while being **left-handed** may bring some advantages — like in **direct combat** or **sports** because it is rare — the world is built for **right-handers**, from **scissors** to desks with **right-handed writing arms**. अंत में, जबकि **बाएँ हाथ का उपयोग** कुछ लाभ दे सकता है — जैसे **सीधे मुकाबले** या **खेलों** में क्योंकि यह दुर्लभ है — दुनिया **दाएँ हाथ वालों** के लिए बनी है, **कैंची** से लेकर दाएँ हाथ से लिखने वाली मेजों तक।
- Due to which **left-handedness** has 'organically' stabilised at around **10%** in the population. जिसके कारण **बाएँ हाथ के उपयोग** की प्रचलनता आबादी में लगभग **10%** पर स्वाभाविक रूप से स्थिर हो गई है।

25F. Why don't left-handed persons make up half the population? बाएँ हाथ वाले लोग आबादी का आधा हिस्सा क्यों नहीं बनाते?

• There is a **neural basis** for **handedness** but it is not due to any single part of the brain.

हाथ के उपयोग की प्राथमिकता का एक **तंत्रिका आधार** होता है, लेकिन यह मस्तिष्क के किसी एक हिस्से के कारण नहीं होता।

• **Hand preference** reflects how the brain organises **movement control**.

हाथ की प्राथमिकता यह दर्शाती है कि मस्तिष्क **गतिविधि नियंत्रण** को कैसे व्यवस्थित करता है।

• In most **right-handed** people, the **left hemisphere** has stronger control over fine hand movements and also more often **dominates language**.

अधिकांश **दाएँ हाथ वाले** लोगों में, **बायाँ गोलार्ध** सूक्ष्म हाथ की गतिविधियों पर अधिक नियंत्रण रखता है और अक्सर **भाषा** पर भी प्रभुत्व रखता है।

• In **left-handed** people, these patterns are more mixed.



The rise of blue: the colour that moved kings and the royals before poets

An exploration of the historical significance of blue reveals its evolution from sacred symbolism in ancient texts to its cultural impact and classification in modern society. Newton stabilised colour into a sequence that could be taught, reproduced, and enforced

GS III: S&T

Satwik Gade

When Isaac Newton wrote *Opticks*, published in 1704, he divided the colour spectrum into the now famous VIBGYOR, a set of seven colours (the decision was not, as such, scientific because Newton's choice was dictated by '7' being a significant number in alchemy.) What Newton observed was a series of hues merging into one another, rather than discrete parcels.

The Irish chemist Robert Boyle, who inspired Newton through his experiments, had observed the same spectrum when he pinched refined quicksilver in a "syrup of violets", but spoke of only five colours. Many of Newton's readers were not really sure if they could tell indigo from blue or violet at all. And yet Newton insisted that there were seven. The number was alchemically significant. It echoed the musical scale, the number of (visible) planets, and other harmonies of yore based on which Newton intended to structure what we now see as early modern thought.

Colour was being ordered, and this ordering was optical and administrative.

Newton, who later served the British crown as Warden and Lord of the Mint, stabilised colour into a sequence that

could be taught, reproduced, and enforced.

A journey of the blues

Long before this abstraction, blue appeared in the Rig Veda, one of the earliest surviving bodies of liturgy, through Varuna, the god of cosmic order, oath, and surveillance. Varuna is described as *syama* and *krشنا* (meaning dusk-coloured and dark), terms that signal depth and enclosure rather than surface hue. The Indologist Michael Witzel has described Varuna as a figure of an early vedic kingship, a "nocturnal sovereign" whose power lies in distance, binding, and the night sky.

What is striking is that this chromatic marker of sovereignty co-evolves with a profound religious transformation. In the Mahabharata and Itihasic-Puranic traditions, *syama* and *krشنا* become the most common names of Vāsudeva Kṛشنا, who emerges not merely as a heroic figure but as the lord of the cosmos itself. Across this shift, from ritual order of the vedas to the bhakti of Puranas, blue remains a sign of totality and command.

The Greek world, by contrast, hesitated before blue. Karissa St. Clair, in her book *Secret Lives of Colours*, notes that in Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, blue is conspicuously absent. The sea is "wine-dark," and the colour of the skies is

unmentioned. Nineteenth-century thinker and politician William Gladstone famously remarked that Greeks could not see blue. And of course, this is not true. Colour theorists and historians have pointed out that in Homer's epics, colour was organised around brightness, texture, and emotional force rather than hue.

But a few thousand years before ancient Greece, the value of blue was negotiated materially through stone, right from the earliest stages of the Bronze Age. Lapis lazuli, deep blue and flecked with gold, travelled thousands of kilometres from the mines of Badakhshan in present-day Afghanistan to connect Mesopotamia, Egypt, the Indus Valley and China in trans-continental trade. Archaeological finds at the earliest agricultural sites such as Mehrgarh and Bhīrrana (6th Millennium BCE) include lapis beads imported through these long-distance trade routes. In ancient Sumer, lapis was sacred to Inanna, and in Egypt, it adorned divine brows and funerary masks apart from featuring in statuettes and seals. Lapis Lazuli marked divinity because it was rare, costly, and difficult to command.

Visibility co-evolves with value, but the tension which separates the two has always been observable. Even by the early Bronze Age, Egypt was successful in locally producing their own synthetic

colour pigments, Ceruleum, from copper, limestone and silica to reproduce the colour of lapis – marking the earliest known instances of synthetic colour production on an industrial scale under government regulation.

By the axial age, Mesopotamians were importing indigo from distant India to colour their royal robes in the colour of Lapis while China created its own synthetic blue, from barium, copper, and silicon to colour its terracotta army in Lapis so the army could serve its emperor in the afterlife.

'Stimulation of nothingness'

Seen this way, Newton's spectrum marks not the beginning of colour, but the final abstraction of a long process. When blue became a wavelength, something older was lost: its connection to effort, danger, devotion, and power.

In an effort to preserve the values associated with the colour value, Goethe, in his *Theory of Colours* (1804) wrote, "The blue colour is a kind of contradiction between excitement and repose. It is a stimulation of nothingness. Hence we feel a certain pleasure in gazing at blue, because it draws us after it."

Satwik Gade is a Chennai-based writer and illustrator. This article is part of a series on the history and development of colours.

25F. The rise of blue: the colour that moved kings and the royals before poets नीले रंग का उदय: वह रंग जिसने कवियों से पहले राजाओं और शाही वर्ग को प्रभावित किया

- When **Isaac Newton** wrote **Opticks (1704)**, he divided the colour spectrum into **VIBGYOR**, a set of **seven colours**.
जब **आइज़ैक न्यूटन** ने **ऑप्टिक्स (1704)** लिखा, तो उन्होंने रंग स्पेक्ट्रम को **VIBGYOR** में विभाजित किया, जो सात रंगों का समूह है।
- The decision was not purely scientific; it was influenced by the alchemical significance of the number '7'.
यह निर्णय पूरी तरह वैज्ञानिक नहीं था; यह संख्या '7' के रसायनशास्त्रीय महत्व से प्रभावित था।
- Newton observed a series of **hues merging into one another**, rather than discrete parcels. न्यूटन ने अलग-अलग खंडों के बजाय **रंगों का एक-दूसरे में मिलना** देखा।
- The Irish chemist **Robert Boyle**, who inspired Newton, observed the same spectrum but spoke of only **five colours**.
आयरिश रसायनज्ञ **रॉबर्ट बॉयल**, जिन्होंने न्यूटन को प्रेरित किया, ने उसी स्पेक्ट्रम को देखा पर केवल **पाँच रंगों** की बात की।
- Many readers could not clearly distinguish **indigo from blue or violet**, yet Newton insisted there were **seven colours**.
कई पाठक **इंडिगो, नीले और बैंगनी** में अंतर नहीं कर पाए, फिर भी न्यूटन ने **सात रंगों** पर जोर दिया।
- The number seven echoed the **musical scale, visible planets, and alchemical harmonies**. संख्या सात **संगीत के स्वरों, दृश्य ग्रहों और रसायनशास्त्रीय सामंजस्य** से जुड़ी थी।
- Newton later served as **Warden and Lord of the Mint**, stabilising colour into a sequence that could be taught and enforced. न्यूटन बाद में **वार्डन और लॉर्ड ऑफ़ मिंग** बने और रंगों को ऐसे क्रम में स्थिर किया जिसे सिखाया और लागू किया जा सके।
- Colour ordering became both **optical and administrative**. रंगों का क्रम निर्धारण **दृष्टिगत और प्रशासनिक** दोनों बन गया।



A journey of the blues नीले रंग की यात्रा

- Long before Newton, blue appeared in the **Rig Veda** through **Varuna**, the god of cosmic order.
न्यूटन से बहुत पहले, ऋग्वेद में वरुण के माध्यम से नीले का उल्लेख मिलता है।
- **Varuna is described as syama and krsna, meaning dusk-coloured and dark.**
वरुण को श्याम और कृष्ण कहा गया है, जिसका अर्थ सांध्यवर्ण और गहरा है।
- These terms suggest **depth and enclosure**, not surface hue.
ये शब्द सतही रंग नहीं बल्कि गहराई और आवरण का संकेत देते हैं।
- Indologist **Michael Witzel** described Varuna as a “**nocturnal sovereign**” linked to early Vedic kingship.
विद्वान **माइकल विटज़ेल** ने वरुण को प्रारंभिक वैदिक राजसत्ता से जुड़ा “रात्रिकालीन शासक” बताया।
- Blue as a symbol of sovereignty co-evolved with religious transformation from **Vedic ritual to Puranic bhakti.**
नीला रंग वैदिक अनुष्ठान से पुराणिक भक्ति तक धार्मिक परिवर्तन के साथ जुड़ा रहा।
- In the **Mahabharata and Puranic traditions**, syama and krsna became names of **Vāsudeva Krsna.**
महाभारत और पुराण परंपरा में श्याम और कृष्ण वासुदेव कृष्ण के नाम बने।
- **Blue remained a sign of totality and command.**
नीला रंग समग्रता और नियंत्रण का प्रतीक बना रहा।
- The Greek world hesitated before blue; in **Homer’s Iliad and Odyssey**, blue is absent.
ग्रीक संसार में नीले को लेकर संकोच था; होमर की इलियड और ओडिसी में नीले का उल्लेख नहीं है।

Material value of Blue before Greece ग्रीस से पहले नीले रंग का भौतिक महत्व

- But a few thousand years before **ancient Greece**, the value of **blue** was negotiated materially through **stone** from the earliest **Bronze Age.**
लेकिन प्राचीन ग्रीस से कुछ हजार वर्ष पहले ही नीले रंग का महत्व प्रारम्भिक कांस्य युग में पत्थर के माध्यम से तय हुआ।
- **Lapis lazuli**, deep blue flecked with gold, travelled thousands of kilometres from **Badakhshan (Afghanistan)** linking **Mesopotamia, Egypt, Indus Valley and China.**
लैपिस लाजुली, गहरा नीला और सुनहरे कणों वाला, बदख्शां (अफगानिस्तान) से हजारों किलोमीटर यात्रा कर मेसोपोटामिया, मिस्र, सिंधु घाटी और चीन को जोड़ता था।
- **Archaeological finds at Mehrgarh and Bhirrana (6th Millennium BCE) include lapis beads imported via long-distance trade.**
मेहरगढ़ और भिरराना (ईसा पूर्व 6वीं सहस्राब्दी) के पुरातात्विक साक्ष्यों में लंबी दूरी के व्यापार से आए लैपिस मनके मिले हैं।
- In **ancient Sumer**, lapis was sacred to **Inanna**; in **Egypt**, it adorned divine brows, funerary masks, statuettes and seals.
प्राचीन सुमेर में लैपिस इनाना के लिए पवित्र था; मिस्र में यह देवमूर्तियों, अंतिम संस्कार मुखौटों, प्रतिमाओं और मुहरों में प्रयुक्त हुआ।
- Lapis signified **divinity** because it was **rare, costly and difficult to command.**
लैपिस दिव्यता का प्रतीक था क्योंकि यह दुर्लभ, महंगा और नियंत्रित करना कठिन था।
- By early **Bronze Age**, Egypt produced synthetic pigment **Ceruleum** from **copper, limestone and silica** to imitate lapis — earliest industrial synthetic colour under **government regulation.**
प्रारम्भिक कांस्य युग तक मिस्र ने तांबा, चूना पत्थर और सिलिका से कृत्रिम रंग सेरुलियम बनाया — सरकारी नियंत्रण में औद्योगिक स्तर पर कृत्रिम रंग का प्रारम्भिक उदाहरण।
- By the **Axial Age**, Mesopotamia imported **Indigo** from **India** to colour royal robes like lapis.
अक्षीय युग तक मेसोपोटामिया भारत से इंडिगो आयात कर राजकीय वस्त्रों को लैपिस जैसा रंग देता था।
- China produced synthetic blue from **barium, copper and silicon** to colour the **Terracotta Army** for the emperor’s afterlife.



चीन ने बेरियम, तांबा और सिलिकॉन से कृत्रिम नीला बनाया ताकि टेराकोटा सेना सम्राट की परलोक में सेवा कर सके।

‘Stimulation of nothingness’ ‘शून्यता की उत्तेजना’

- Newton’s spectrum marks not the beginning of colour but the **final abstraction** of a long process.
न्यूटन का स्पेक्ट्रम रंग की शुरुआत नहीं बल्कि एक लंबे विकास की **अंतिम अमूर्तता** दर्शाता है।
- When blue became a **wavelength**, its older links to **effort, danger, devotion and power** were lost.
जब नीला तरंगदैर्घ्य बना, तब उसका **परिश्रम, खतरे, भक्ति और शक्ति** से पुराना संबंध खो गया।

GS Paper III:	
TOPICS COVERED	25 February 2026
25F	

Show of power



Aerial display: An **Indian Air Force Chinook** performing at a full dress rehearsal of **Exercise Vayu Shakti - 2026**, at the Pokhran Field Firing Range in Rajasthan on Tuesday, ahead of the February 27 firepower display. This **biennial show underscores the IAF's combat readiness, precision strike capabilities, and integrated multi-domain operations.**

Aerial display: An Indian Air Force Chinook performing at a full dress rehearsal of Exercise Vayu Shakti - 2026, at the Pokhran Field Firing Range in Rajasthan on Tuesday, ahead of the February 27 firepower display. This biennial show underscores the IAF's combat readiness, precision strike capabilities, and integrated multi-domain operations. www.patrioticias.in

DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS(GS Paper IV and Essay)	
TOPICS COVERED	25 February 2026
25F	Rights group slams treatment of viral Japanese monkey अधिकार समूह ने वायरल जापानी बंदर के साथ व्यवहार की निंदा की



Rights group slams treatment of viral Japanese monkey

GS IV: Ethics

TOKYO

The plight of a baby monkey in Japan, who has become an Internet sensation, shows the cruelty of zoos, an animal rights group said, as sales of the plush IKEA orangutan the animal clings to boomed.

Punch, a baby macaque abandoned by its mother, shot to stardom after being pictured getting bullied by other monkeys and seeking comfort from the orangutan toy at Ichikawa City Zoo outside Tokyo. "Zoos are not sanctuaries – they are places where animals are confined, deprived of autonomy, and denied the complex environments and social lives they would have in the wild," said People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA). "What some are calling 'cute' is actually a glimpse into the trauma of a young, highly social primate coping with isolation and loss," the group's Asia director, Jason Baker, said in a statement. "Until facilities stop treating sentient beings as attractions, animals like Punch will continue to suffer in captivity," Mr. Baker said, calling for Punch to be moved to a "reputable sanctuary, where he could live in a more natural environment".

Meanwhile, Swedish interior furnishings giant IKEA, the maker of the orangutan soft toy, said it was seeing "unprecedented" interest and "significantly" higher sales than usual.

In an update on Punch's plight on Sunday, the zoo said he "was meticulously groomed by two monkeys and is steadily fitting into the group". Fans are queueing for up to an hour to catch a glimpse of Punch, the Ichikawa zoo said, with more than 5,000 visitors recorded on Monday.

"जिसे कुछ लोग 'cute' कह रहे हैं, वह असल में एक युवा, अत्यंत सामाजिक प्राइमेट के अकेलेपन और नुकसान से जूझने के आघात की झलक है," समूह के एशिया निदेशक जेसन बेकर ने एक बयान में कहा।

25F. Rights group slams treatment of viral Japanese monkey

अधिकार समूह ने वायरल जापानी बंदर के साथ व्यवहार की निंदा की

The plight of a baby monkey in Japan, who has become an Internet sensation, shows the cruelty of zoos, an animal rights group said, as sales of the plush IKEA orangutan the animal clings to boomed.

जापान में एक नन्हे बंदर की दुर्दशा, जो एक इंटरनेट सनसनी बन गया है, चिड़ियाघरों की क्रूरता को दिखाती है, ऐसा एक पशु अधिकार समूह ने कहा, जबकि जिस IKEA के मुलायम ओरंगुटान खिलौने से वह जानवर चिपका रहता है, उसकी बिक्री तेज़ी से बढ़ी।

Punch, a baby macaque abandoned by its mother, shot to stardom after being pictured getting bullied by other monkeys and seeking comfort from the orangutan toy at Ichikawa City Zoo outside Tokyo.

पंच, एक नन्हा मकाक बंदर जिसे उसकी माँ ने छोड़ दिया था, टोक्यो के बाहर इचिकावा सिटी जू में अन्य बंदरों द्वारा तंग किए जाने और ओरंगुटान खिलौने से सांत्वना लेते हुए उसकी तस्वीरें सामने आने के बाद अचानक प्रसिद्ध हो गया।

"Zoos are not sanctuaries — they are places where animals are confined, deprived of autonomy, and denied the complex environments and social lives they would have in the wild," said People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA).

"चिड़ियाघर आश्रय स्थल नहीं हैं — वे ऐसी जगहें हैं जहाँ जानवरों को कैद किया जाता है, उनसे स्वतंत्रता छीनी जाती है, और उन्हें वह जटिल वातावरण और सामाजिक जीवन नहीं मिलता जो जंगल में होता," पीपल फ़ॉर द एथिकल ट्रीटमेंट ऑफ़ एनिमल्स (PETA) ने कहा।

"What some are calling 'cute' is actually a glimpse into the trauma of a young, highly social primate coping with isolation and loss," the group's Asia director, Jason Baker, said in a statement.