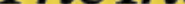


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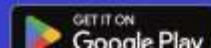
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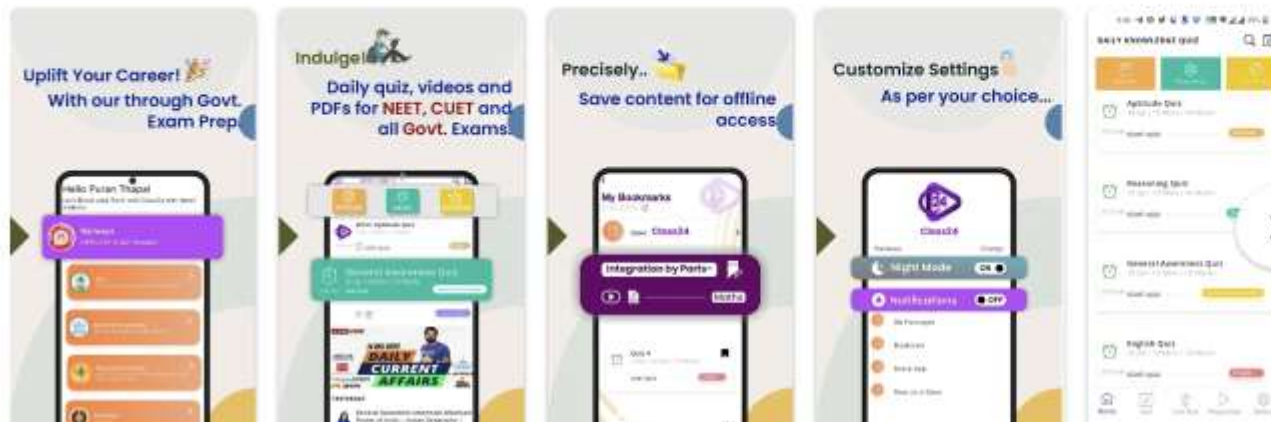
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over 400
tonnes of illegal coal
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Should India
restart dialogue
with Pakistan?
Breaking down the
neighbours' standpoints
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ALL-CRISIS FINAL
Mucrova gets past
Gaufr. meets Naskova
SPORT PAGE 12

INSIDE



Ukrainian drones
set two Russian
tankers ablaze

KEY
Ukrainian drones hit more
Russian oil facilities and set
two oil tankers ablaze in the
Sea of Azov on Thursday, a day
after U.S. President Donald
Trump pledged to grant Kyiv a
license to manufacture the
Patriot air defence systems to
protect its cities. A top
Ukrainian official, meanwhile,
contended that it could take a
year or more for the country to
produce Patriot intercepter
missiles. » PAGE 14



Gangster killed
sought to kill S.K.
to instil fear U.S.

NEW DELHI
The United States Department
of Justice (DoJ) said between
2012 and 2016, jailed gangster
Laxman Bhatnagar announced
his intention "to murder S.K., a
well-known Indian actor" to
instil fear in the public. Though
the name is not expanded in
the DoJ's court records, the
initials and details match with
the threats against actor
Salman Khan in Mumbai
during the period. » PAGE 4



Debris slip toll
rises as 3 more
bodies found

KOZHIKODE
The intensive search and
rescue operations at Kozhikode
in Western's Malabar panchayat
entered its final phase on
Thursday evening, following
the recovery of three more
bodies. Despite torrential rain
and a heavy fog of debris,
rescue teams pushed through,
on the third day of the
challenge mission, bringing
the confirmed death toll from
Tuesday's disaster to six.
According to officials, the
mission is nearing completion,
with only two people still
reported missing. » PAGE 5

India, Australia move to deepen cooperation in the Indo-Pacific

Amid geopolitical uncertainties, Prime Minister Modi, his Australian counterpart, Albanese, adopt declaration to expand maritime security ties and defence collaboration; the countries also seal pacts on civil nuclear energy and critical minerals

By Anshu Tiwari

NEW DELHI

India and Australia on Thursday adopted a joint Declaration on Defence and Security Cooperation, committing to significantly deepen military engagement, strengthen defence industrial collaboration, and expand maritime security cooperation amid growing geopolitical uncertainties in the Indo-Pacific region. The two countries also sealed pacts on civil nuclear energy and critical minerals sectors.

The declaration, adopted by Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his Australian counterpart, Anthony Albanese, outlines an ambitious road map to elevate defence ties through strategic consultations, enhanced interoperability between the armed forces, expanded military exercises, and greater collaboration in defence research, technology, and industrial supply chains.

A statement released by the office of the Australian Prime Minister mentioned that, under the declaration, the two sides agreed to hold regular consultations

on defence-related developments in the Indo-Pacific affecting their shared interests, increase the complexity of bilateral and multilateral military exercises, accelerate efforts to improve interoperability and information sharing between their armed forces, and expand aircraft deployments from each other's territories. The deal also envisages deeper personnel exchanges, through education, training, and liaison appointments, while exploring opportunities to cooperate in recruiting skilled personnel for their respective defence workforces.

Mr. Modi emphasised

the importance of a free and stable Indo-Pacific and highlighted the growing engagement between the two nations in the defence domain. "The Indo-Pacific is not just the confluence of two oceans. It also signifies the shared aspiration of like-minded democracies like India and Australia," he said.

The agreement on civil nuclear energy to facilitate the commercial supply of uranium from Australia to India to fuel nuclear power projects came nearly 12 years after the two countries inked a historic civil nuclear cooperation pact. "Today, we have signed an important agreement in

the field of nuclear energy. This will open the way for India to import nuclear fuel from Australia to India and give new impetus to our clean energy objectives," he said. He also announced the launch of the Australia-India Partnership on Cyber, Critical Technologies, and Emerging Industries, in which both sides will also work together on a critical minerals council.

Under the provisions of the energy security framework, India and Australia vowed to strengthen energy security by maintaining a stable, secure and reliable supply of coal, diesel, other liquid fuels and natural gas. The two countries

Modi hails Australia's social media ban on minors, signals curbs

By Anshu Tiwari

NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday praised Australia's ban on social media access for teenagers, in the clearest indication so far that the Union government is mulling similar curbs.

"I have followed you closely and the way you have legislated and worked to protect society in IT and social media is inspiring the world," Mr. Modi told Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese in his remarks, officials at the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) have said that India is exploring a "gradual" set of restrictions that would allow some social media access while blocking some categories of content depending on the age cohort of a minor.

It is not yet clear if the government is planning to bring this into action with a law in Parliament or with amendments to the Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules, 2021, which have been the main legal way for the government to introduce rules for regulating content on the internet.

Digital control

Several countries are following Australia's lead to restrict social media use by children

Malaysia's children have been banned from using social media

Indonesia's minors blocked from high-risk platforms

France's bill aimed to limit minors' access to social media

France's bill aimed to limit minors' access to social media

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France's bill aimed to limit minors' access to social media



The iconic clock tower of Bangladesh railway station that collapsed amid heavy rain on Thursday. It was set for a controlled demolition later in the day after developing cracks recently. » SOURCE: AP/WIDE WORLD

SC considers referring of 'grounds of arrest' clause

By Anshu Tiwari

NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Thursday indicated Megha's appeal against grant of bail to Sonam Raghuvanshi, accused of murdering her, may have to be referred to a larger bench in view of conflicting decisions of coordinate benches.

The State was appealing against an order of Megha's High Court, which had granted bail to Mr. Raghuvanshi, saying the police had failed to communicate grounds of her arrest.

The Bench, comprising

Four Indian nationals pushed into Bangladesh return home

By Anshu Tiwari

NEW DELHI

Four people from Burdham in West Bengal, detained by the Odisha Police last year and pushed into Bangladesh, were brought back to India on Wednesday after a year-long legal battle. The group of four, two included Suresh Bhat, her two minor sons, and Danish Sheikh, who were picked up by the police along with two others from the national capital in May last year over suspicion of illegal infiltration, had been pushed across the border into Bangladesh.

In December 2018, Danish Sheikh, wife of Mr. Bhat, and her minor son had returned to India after the Supreme Court inter-



Suresh Bhat, one of the four returnees, in Mumbai, West Bengal, on Wednesday. (PTI)

vened. Mr. Bhat was pregnant at that time and her father had argued that if his daughter gave birth to a child, the child would have no claim to an Indian citizenship. After her return, Mr. Bhat gave birth to a child in a State-run hospital in West Bengal in January.

Tripinmod Congress leader Samir Talam on Thursday applauded the Indian judiciary for its help in bringing back the returning four, who returned through the border in Malda district. He said that while there is no problem with the deportation of illegal migrants, Indian nationals should not be subjected to injustice and harassment. They stayed there (Bangladesh) for over a year. Even Bangladesh had written letters that Indians who were pushed into Bangladesh illegally must be taken back, but it took such a long time," Mr. Talam, Tripinmod MP and former chairman of the West Bengal Migrant Welfare Board, told The Hindu on Thursday.

Monsoon has covered the entire country, a day later than normal, says IMD

By Anshu Tiwari

NEW DELHI

The southwest monsoon covered the entire country on Thursday, a day later than its normal date, after advancing into the remaining parts of the month area of the country on Wednesday, according to IMD data.

Debit and the National Capital Region received significant rainfall overnight and on Thursday, causing waterlogging and traffic disruptions. In several areas, the rain was heavy, but not enough to indicate heavy rainfall will develop through the rest of the month. The IMD has forecast below-normal rainfall for the country as a whole in July, defined as less than 94% of the long-period average, even as some parts of northwest and north-



Water soaks children have fun in a waterlogged road after a heavy spell of rain in New Delhi on Thursday. SOURCE: AP/WIDE WORLD

east India, west-central India and the eastern peninsula may receive normal to above-normal rainfall. July receives the highest rainfall among the monsoon months and is critical for agriculture.

The current monsoon rainfall deficit stands at 15%, a sharp improvement from 38% in June 30. Historical data show no similar relationship between the date of nationwide monsoon coverage

completed on July 3, while in 2019 it occurred relatively early, on June 26. The contrasting dates underline that the speed of the monsoon's geographical advance is not, by itself, a reliable indicator of seasonal rainfall. El Niño can weaken monsoon circulation and offset the amount and distribution of rainfall even if the monsoon has traditionally covered the entire country.

India, Australia move to deepen cooperation in the Indo-Pacific

Amid geostrategic uncertainties, Prime Minister Modi, his Australian counterpart, Albanese, adopt declaration to expand maritime security ties and defence collaboration; the countries also seal pacts on civil nuclear energy and critical minerals

Saurabh Trivedi
NEW DELHI

India and Australia on Thursday adopted a Joint Declaration on Defence and Security Cooperation, committing to significantly deepen military engagement, strengthen defence industrial collaboration, and expand maritime security cooperation amid growing geostrategic uncertainty in the Indo-Pacific region. The two countries also sealed pacts on civil nuclear energy and critical minerals sectors.

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A statement released by the office of the Australian Prime Minister mentioned that, under the declaration, the two sides agreed to hold regular consulta-



Tactical ties: Prime Minister Narendra Modi being greeted by his Australian counterpart, Anthony Albanese, in Melbourne on Thursday. AP

tions on defence-related developments in the Indo-Pacific affecting their shared interests, increase the complexity of bilateral and multilateral military exercises, accelerate efforts to improve interoperability and information sharing between their armed forces, and expand aircraft deployments from each other's territories.

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"Today, we have signed an important agreement in

the field of nuclear energy. This will open the way for uranium supplies from Australia to India and give new impetus to our clean energy objectives," he said.

He also announced the launch of the Australia-India Partnership on Cyber, Critical Technologies, and Supply Chains and said both sides will also work together on a critical minerals corridor.

Under the provisions of the energy security framework, India and Australia vowed to strengthen energy security by maintaining a stable, secure and reliable supply of coal, diesel, other liquid fuels and natural gas. The two countries

will implement an India-Australia Maritime Security Collaboration Road Map to strengthen coordination across the Indian Ocean and the wider Indo-Pacific.

Both sides committed to encouraging greater integration between their defence industries, building resilient supply chains and expanding collaboration in defence innovation, science and technology.

The leaders noted that the new declaration builds upon the India-Australia Joint Declaration on Security Cooperation signed in 2009 and complements existing institutional mechanisms, including the Foreign Ministers' Framework Dialogue, 2+2 Foreign and Defence Ministerial Dialogue, and Defence Ministers' Dialogue. They also reiterated support for regional institutions, including the Indian Ocean Rim Association, ASEAN-led regional architecture and the Pacific Islands Forum, describing them as key platforms for addressing regional challenges.

(With inputs from PTI)

RELATED REPORT ON

» PAGE 4

Area	Major decision	Significance for India
Defence	New Joint Declaration on Defence and Security Cooperation	Higher level of strategic coordination
Maritime security	Maritime Security Collaboration Road Map	Stronger Indian Ocean and Indo-Pacific cooperation
Military exercises	More complex bilateral and multilateral exercises	Greater interoperability
Military access	Expansion of aircraft deployments and operational cooperation	Improved strategic reach
Defence industry	Cooperation between defence industries	Technology and supply-chain opportunities
Civil nuclear energy	Framework for regular Australian uranium supplies	Nuclear fuel security
Critical minerals	Cooperation and critical-minerals corridor	Reduces strategic dependence on concentrated supply chains
Cyber & technology	Australia–India partnership on cyber and critical technologies	Cooperation in emerging strategic technologies
Energy security	Coal, LNG and other energy-supply cooperation	Diversification of India's energy sources
Indo-Pacific	Greater strategic consultation	Stronger coordination amid regional uncertainty

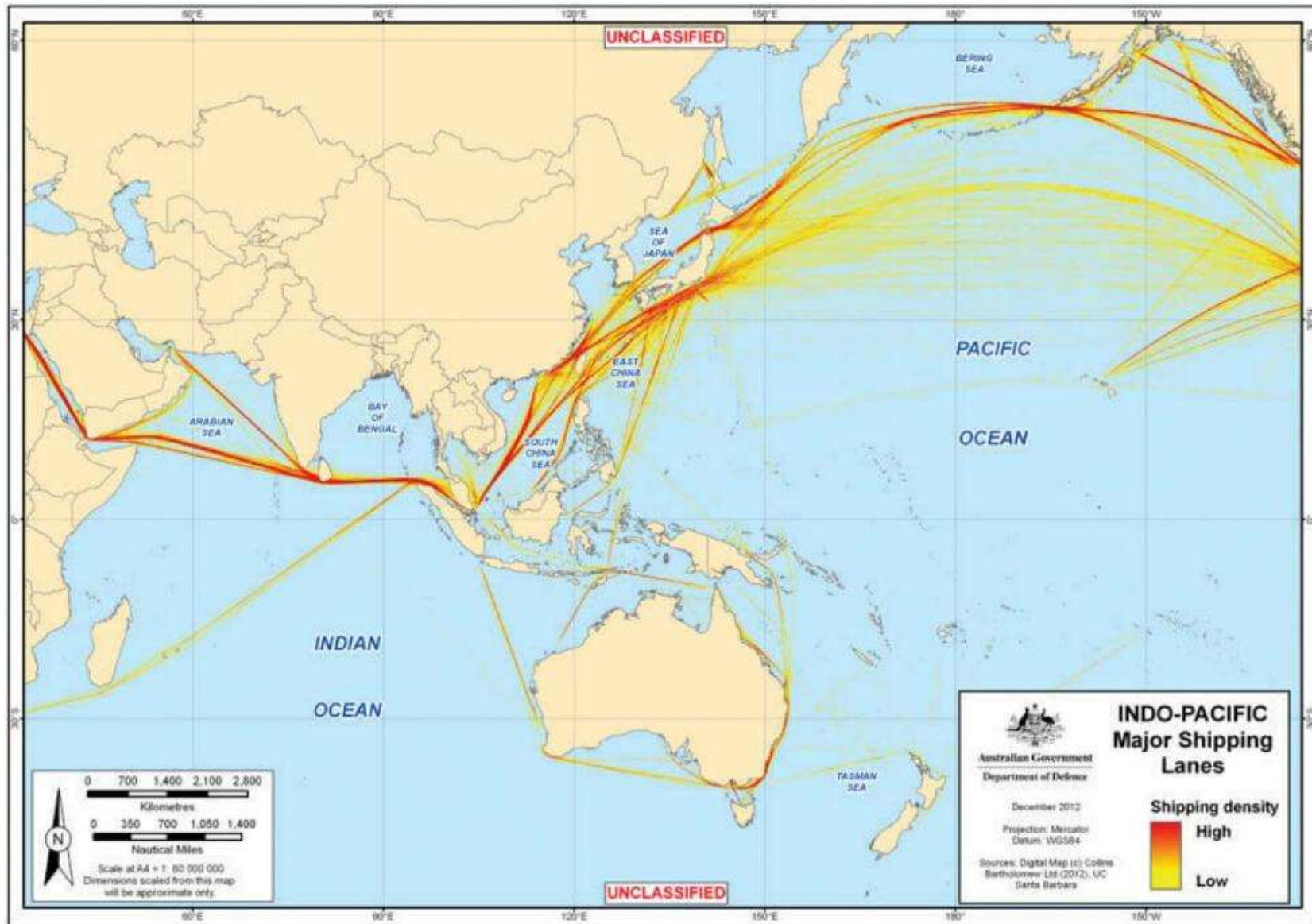
2. Why is the new Defence Declaration important?

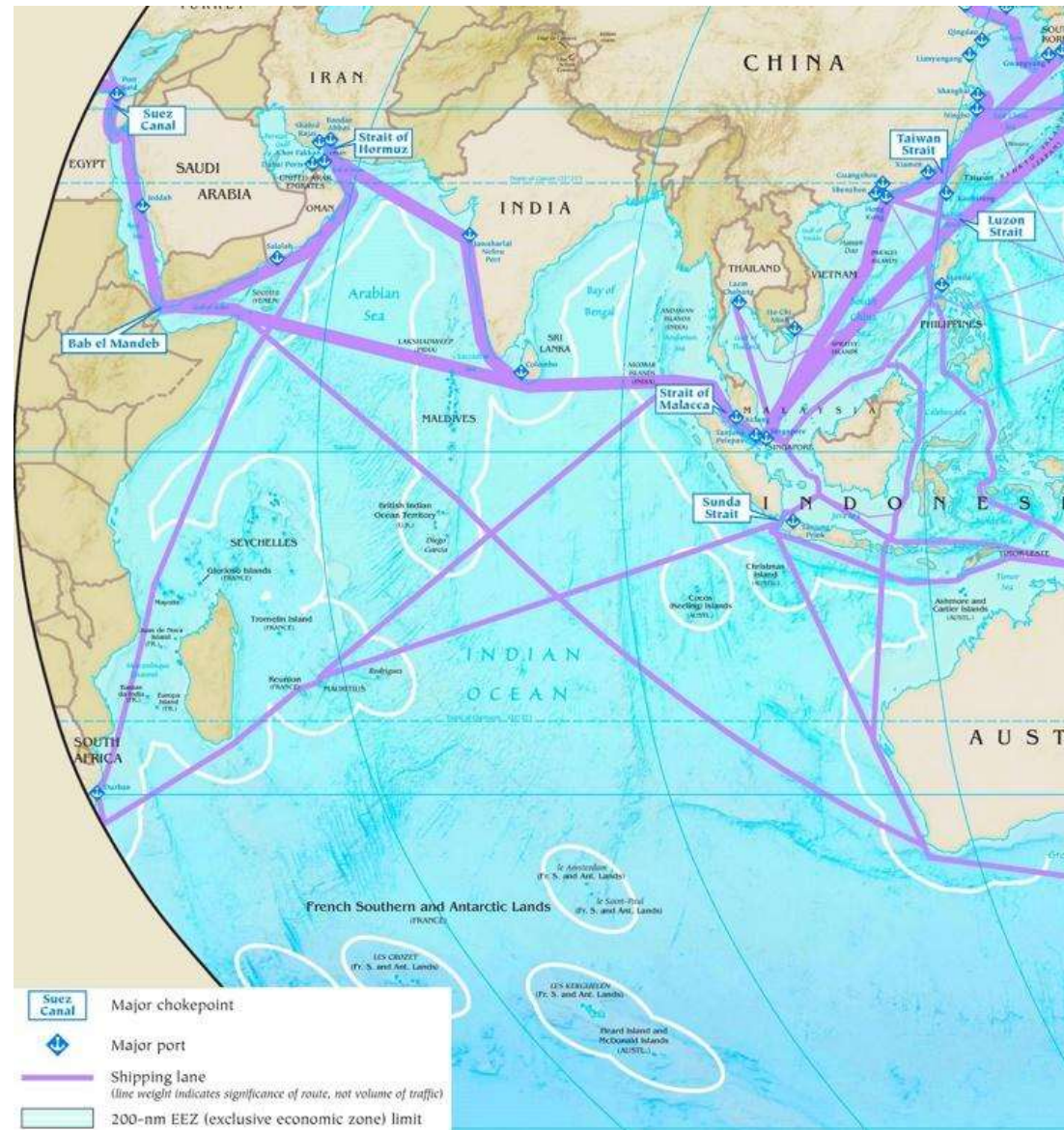
The new declaration builds on the **2009 India–Australia Joint Declaration on Security Cooperation**, but the 2026 framework is much broader in scope.

Evolution of the relationship

Phase	Nature of relationship
Before 2000s	Limited strategic engagement
2009	Joint Declaration on Security Cooperation
2014	Civil nuclear cooperation agreement
2020	Comprehensive Strategic Partnership
2022	ECTA trade agreement enters into force
2026	Deeper defence, maritime, uranium, cyber and critical-mineral cooperation

The latest declaration envisages expanded military engagement, defence-industrial collaboration, personnel exchanges, training, liaison appointments, information sharing and greater operational interoperability.





4. Civil Nuclear Agreement and Uranium: The biggest energy development

One of the most significant developments is progress toward the **commercial supply of Australian uranium to India**.

Australia and India originally signed their civil nuclear cooperation agreement in **September 2014**; the agreement created the framework for peaceful nuclear cooperation and possible long-term uranium supplies.  MP-IDSA +1

Historical background

Year	Development
1998	Australia opposed uranium exports to India after India's nuclear tests
2008	India received an NSG waiver enabling international civil nuclear commerce
2011	Australian Labor Party changed its policy toward uranium sales to India
2014	India–Australia Civil Nuclear Cooperation Agreement signed
2015	Agreement entered into force
2026	New momentum toward regular commercial uranium supply

Australia’s safeguards framework requires its uranium exports to be used exclusively for peaceful purposes and supplied under bilateral nuclear cooperation arrangements.  High Commission... +1

Indicator	Figure
Bilateral goods trade, FY 2024–25	About \$24.1 billion
FY 2025–26, up to February 2026	\$19.3 billion
Major Indian exports	Petroleum products, engineering goods, pharmaceuticals and manufactured goods
Major imports from Australia	Coal, gold and other mineral resources

India exports to Australia

Refined petroleum

Pharmaceuticals

Engineering goods

Textiles and garments

Machinery

Services

India imports from Australia

Coal

Gold

Minerals

Agricultural commodities

Energy resources

Raw materials

Exercise	Participants	Nature
AUSINDEX	India–Australia	Naval
Malabar	India, US, Japan, Australia	Naval
Pitch Black	Multinational; India participates	Air combat exercise
AUSTRAHIND	India–Australia	Tri-service exercise



Precious legacy: A Nandi sculpture, a Karthikeya (Shanmukha) idol and a Bhadrakali trident are among the antiquities that are to be returned. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Antiquity	Material	Associated deity/concept	Original temple/location
Bhadrakali Trident	Bronze	Goddess Bhadrakali	Sri Kasi Viswanatha Swamy Temple, Kollumangudi, Tiruvarur district
Nandi Idol	Granite	Sacred bull and vahana of Shiva	Temple in Tamil Nadu identified through investigation
Kartikeya/Shanmukha Sculpture	Basalt	Six-headed form of Kartikeya	Naganathaswamy Temple, Manambadi, Thanjavur

10. International Convention: UNESCO 1970

A major international instrument is the:

1970 UNESCO Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property.

Objective	Explanation
Prevent illegal export	Countries regulate movement of cultural objects
Prevent illicit import	Discourages acquisition of trafficked heritage
International cooperation	Supports cooperation between governments
Restitution	Facilitates return mechanisms in appropriate cases
Documentation	Encourages inventories and provenance records

Exam distinction

UNESCO instrument	Subject
1970 Convention	Illicit trafficking of cultural property
1972 World Heritage Convention	Protection of cultural and natural heritage sites
2003 Convention	Safeguarding intangible cultural heritage

Possible Question

Antiquities returned by which country?

Number of antiquities?

Originating state?

Broad historical period?

Present custodian before return?

Investigating Indian agency?

Legal cooperation mechanism mentioned?

Nandi is associated with?

Shanmukha refers to?

Chola bronze technique?

Indian antiquities legislation?

International illicit cultural property convention?

Answer

Australia

Three

Tamil Nadu

Chola period

National Gallery of Australia

Tamil Nadu Idol Wing CID

MLAT

Shiva

Kartikeya/Murugan

Lost-wax technique

Antiquities and Art Treasures Act, 1972

UNESCO Convention, 1970

One in ten Indians faces risk of cancer before 75: Here is what WHO data reveals

Anuradha Mascarenhas
New Delhi, July 9

CANCER IS steadily becoming one of India's defining health challenges. According to the latest GLOBOCAN estimates, nearly one in ten Indians is at risk of developing cancer before the age of 75, while about seven in every hundred face the risk of dying from the disease before reaching that age.

India recorded 1.41 million new cancer cases and 916,827 deaths in 2022, while more than 3.25 million people were living with a cancer diagnosis made within the previous five years.

The burden is already increasing. According to estimates presented in the WHO Global Status Report on Cancer 2026, India had approximately 1.6 million new cancer cases in 2024, with around 900,000 deaths. Experts now project that annual new cases could

climb to 2.8 million by 2050, driven by population growth, ageing and changing lifestyles.

India and China together account for more than half of the global cancer burden, making Asia the epicentre of the disease. Without stronger prevention and early detection, experts warn the region will shoulder an even larger share of the global burden in the coming decades.

India's growing cancer burden is due to multiple forces acting together. One is the increase of life expectancy as it rises so does the number of people vulnerable to cancer.

Equally important are lifestyle changes accompanying rapid urbanisation. Rising obesity, unhealthy diets, reduced physical activity, excessive alcohol consumption and prolonged exposure to air pollution are contributing to increasing rates of several

cancers. Smoking continues to drive lung cancer, while smokeless tobacco products — including gutkha, khaini and betel quid — remain a major reason India has one of the world's highest burdens of oral cancer. Improved diagnostic facilities have also resulted in more cancers being detected than in previous decades; experts stress that this does not fully explain the rising incidence.

Dr Isabelle Soerjomataram, Deputy Head of the Cancer Surveillance Unit at the International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC) said, prevention has become important in India because lung, oral cavity, cervical, breast and colorectal cancers account for a substantial proportion of the country's disease burden. She points to stark differences in access to

healthcare between metropolitan centres and nearby rural districts, where delayed diagnosis is common. India's cancer pattern differs significantly from that seen in many Western countries.

Breast cancer emerged as the country's most common cancer, accounting for 192,020 new cases in 2022, followed by lip and oral cavity cancer (143,759 cases), cervical cancer (127,526), lung cancer (81,748) and oesophageal cancer (70,637).

Among women, breast cancer accounts for more than one in four new diagnoses, while cervical cancer remains the second leading cancer despite being largely preventable through HPV vaccination and regular screening.

SALUTE THE SOLDIER

Indicator	India data
Risk of developing cancer before age 75	Nearly 1 in 10 people
Risk of dying from cancer before age 75	About 7 in 100 people
New cases in 2022	1.41 million
Cancer deaths in 2022	916,827
5-year cancer prevalence in 2022	Over 3.25 million people
Approx. new cases in 2024	1.6 million
Approx. deaths in 2024	Around 900,000
Projected annual new cases by 2050	About 2.8 million

Term

Meaning

Incidence

Number of new cancer cases during a particular period

Mortality

Number of deaths caused by cancer

Prevalence

Number of people living with a cancer diagnosis in a specified period

Risk before age 75

Probability of developing or dying from cancer before reaching 75

5-year prevalence

People alive who were diagnosed during the previous five years

Rank	Cancer type	New cases, 2022
1	Breast cancer	192,020
2	Lip and oral cavity cancer	143,759
3	Cervical cancer	127,526
4	Lung cancer	81,748
5	Oesophageal cancer	70,637

India

Breast cancer is the largest individual burden

Very high oral cancer burden

Cervical cancer remains a major challenge

Smokeless tobacco plays a major role

Late diagnosis remains common

Global pattern

Lung, breast and colorectal cancers dominate globally

Oral cancer is less dominant in many Western countries

Lower burden in countries with strong HPV vaccination and screening

Cigarette smoking is a dominant tobacco exposure in many countries

Many richer countries have stronger organised screening systems

3. Why is cancer increasing in India?

India's rising cancer burden is not due to one cause. It is the result of a combination of **demographic transition + epidemiological transition + lifestyle change + environmental exposure + better detection**.

Driver	How it increases cancer burden
Population growth	More people means a larger absolute number of cases
Population ageing	Cancer risk generally increases with age
Urbanisation	Lifestyle and environmental exposure changes
Tobacco consumption	Oral, lung and several other cancers
Obesity	Associated with multiple cancers
Unhealthy diet	Higher risk for several cancers
Physical inactivity	Increases obesity and metabolic risk
Alcohol consumption	Risk factor for several cancers
Air pollution	Associated particularly with lung cancer
Infections	HPV, HBV, HCV and <i>H. pylori</i> are linked with particular cancers
Better diagnostics	More previously undetected cases are now identified

4. Tobacco: India's distinctive cancer challenge

The Indian tobacco problem has two dimensions:

Tobacco form	Examples	Major cancer association
Smoked tobacco	Cigarettes, bidis	Lung, oral cavity, laryngeal and other cancers
Smokeless tobacco	Gutkha, khaini, zarda and tobacco mixtures	Oral cavity and other cancers

The article highlights an important difference between India and many Western countries: **smokeless tobacco products remain a major reason for India's exceptionally high oral-cancer burden.**

Cancer causation chain

Tobacco exposure → carcinogen exposure → DNA damage → mutation accumulation → abnormal cell growth → invasion → metastasis

For exam purposes, remember that tobacco is not linked only to lung cancer. It is associated with multiple cancers, including cancers of the:

- oral cavity;
- pharynx;
- larynx;
- oesophagus;
- lung;
- pancreas;
- bladder and other sites.

5. Cancer in Indian women: the major concern

Breast and cervical cancer together form a major public-health challenge

Cancer	Major issue	Prevention/control approach
Breast cancer	Rising incidence and late detection	Awareness, timely diagnosis and treatment
Cervical cancer	Largely preventable but still a major burden	HPV vaccination + screening

Why cervical cancer is particularly important

Cervical cancer is strongly associated with persistent infection by **high-risk Human Papillomavirus (HPV)**.

The prevention model is:

HPV vaccination → primary prevention

Cervical screening → secondary prevention

Early diagnosis and treatment → mortality reduction

This makes cervical cancer different from many cancers because a large proportion of cases can potentially be prevented through a combination of vaccination and organised screening.

6. What exactly is cancer?

Cancer is not one disease; it is a broad group of diseases characterised by abnormal cell growth.

WHO defines the central biological feature as the creation of abnormal cells that grow beyond their normal boundaries, invade adjoining tissues and may spread to distant organs—a process known as **metastasis**. [World Health Org...](#)

Normal cell vs cancer cell

Feature	Normal cell	Cancer cell
Cell division	Controlled	Uncontrolled
Response to signals	Normal	May ignore growth-control signals
Cell death	Programmed cell death can occur normally	Can evade cell death mechanisms
Tissue boundaries	Usually respected	May invade surrounding tissue
Spread to other organs	No	Possible through metastasis
Genetic stability	Relatively stable	Mutations and genomic abnormalities accumulate

Infectious agent

HPV

Hepatitis B virus

Hepatitis C virus

Helicobacter pylori

Epstein–Barr virus

Associated cancer

Cervical and several other anogenital/oropharyngeal cancers

Liver cancer

Liver cancer

Stomach cancer

Certain lymphomas and nasopharyngeal cancer

Indicator	Global picture
Annual new cancer cases	About 20.6 million
Annual cancer deaths	Close to 10 million
Deaths per day	More than 26,000
Projected cases by 2050	Nearly 35 million annually
Global mortality ranking	Second leading cause after cardiovascular disease

14. WHO Global Status Report on Cancer 2026

The report was published on **8 July 2026** and provides a global assessment of cancer incidence, mortality, survival, risk factors, prevention, health-system capacity and inequalities in access to care.

 World Health Org... +1

Its major message is that the world needs a shift towards:

- prevention;
- tobacco control;
- vaccination;
- early diagnosis;
- equitable treatment;
- universal health coverage;
- palliative and supportive care;
- people-centred cancer systems.

A striking global finding is that **fewer than one in three countries currently include cancer care within universal health coverage packages**, demonstrating that financial protection remains a major global challenge.  World Health Org...

Lessons for India from Brazil's ethanol pathway



ANIL SASI

IN THE mid-1970s, faced with surging oil import bills and an imploding global sugar market, Brazil made a bold bet: it would run its cars on alcohol. Half a century later, this Brazilian push to ramp up ethanol use in its auto fuel mix is now a masterclass in bio-fuel adoption.

There are perhaps three key enabling factors that have made this a success: a graded, spaced-out approach to fuel blending with predefined milestones; the vehicular ecosystem being given enough time to adapt to this transition in tandem with clear guidance to motorists; and offering choice and price incentives for consumers to shift to ethanol that is now enshrined in a national law. This is a contrast to India's rushed efforts to incorporate ethanol into its fuel mix.

Context for adoption

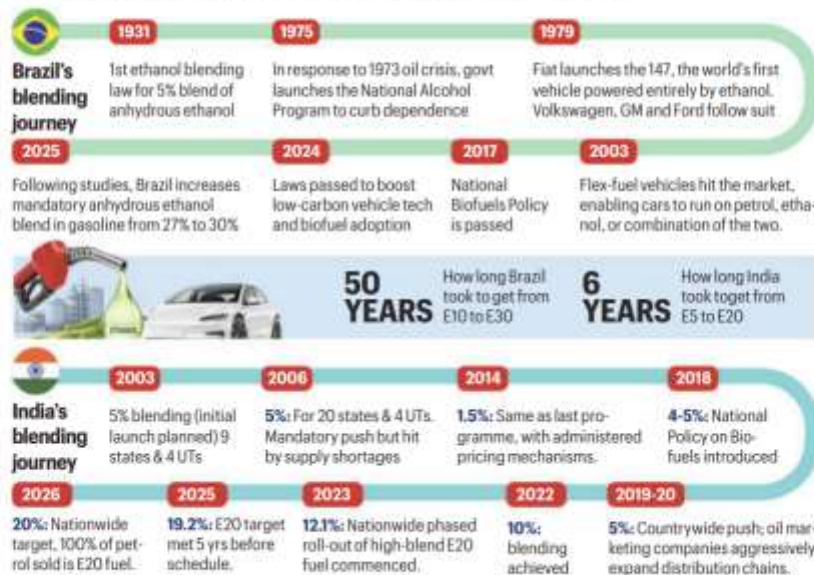
Let's consider the timing. In response to the 1973 global oil crisis, the Brazilian government launched the National Alcohol Program (Proálcool) in 1975 to reduce petroleum dependence by promoting ethanol additives. But its first ethanol blending law, Brazil's legislation requiring a 5% blend of anhydrous ethanol into petrol, goes all the way back to 1931. This decades-long arc culminated in the 2024 'Fuel of the Future' and 'Mover Program' legislation to boost low-carbon vehicle tech and biofuel adoption, with E30 petrol blend mandated in 2025.

The timeline of India's ethanol-blended petrol programme technically spans 2003 to 2026. Even in that, much of the action is front-loaded. It was only in 2022 that 10% ethanol blending was achieved, with a rapid increase to 20% in just three years.

The government originally planned to dispense petrol blended with 20% ethanol only by 2030, but E20 is now the nationwide standard. Since then, there has been a move to shift to E25 as the base fuel, with a simultaneous push for E85-100 fuels for specialised flex-fuel vehicles (FFVs).

FFVs are essentially internal combustion engine vehicles engineered to operate on more than one type of fuel — typically petrol blended with ethanol or methanol. These

THE DIVERGENT ETHANOL BLENDING ARCS



BRAZILIAN SUGARCANE AND BIOENERGY INDUSTRY ASSOCIATION; MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS; MINISTRY OF ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS

vehicles use a fuel composition sensor to automatically adjust fuel injection and ignition timing based on the blend in the tank, allowing seamless switching between petrol and ethanol and varying degrees of blends.

Getting the infra ready

On the second aspect of readying the vehicular ecosystem, too, big differences emerge. Brazil started early with its policy to promote FFVs. These vehicles, running for over two decades now, are seen as the drivers of the country's transition to a cleaner mobility model.

It was way back in 1979 that Italian auto major Fiat launched the 147, the world's first vehicle powered entirely by ethanol in Brazil. Volkswagen, GM, and Ford quickly followed suit amid a global oil crisis. That tempo was lost as oil prices fell. The Brazilian auto industry subsequently started producing FFVs at scale from early 2003, when ethanol seemed economically viable again.

On March 23 that year, Volkswagen introduced the first flex-fuel vehicle to the

Brazil's FFV push

Flex-fuel vehicles (FFVs) are engineered to operate on more than one fuel.

FFVs have been driving cleaner mobility in Brazil for around two decades now.

Brazilian market, and other companies — including GM and Ford — followed suit, according to data from consultancy Argus. Toyota brought in its Corolla flex. FFVs went from selling just 48,178 units in 2003, or under 4% of total light motor vehicle demand, to 1.63 million vehicles last year, or nearly 90% of the Brazilian car fleet. The domestic car industry also reached a milestone of having delivered 40 million flex-fuel vehicles as of February since 2003, according to Brazilian industry body Anfavea.

In India, as E85 fuel dispensing stations are being established nationwide, only a few vehicle prototypes are in the works.

While the flex fuel setup entails an entirely separate vehicle category and a range of fresh vehicle readiness certifications, as of now, India has only a handful of cars in the category: the newly launched WagonR flex fuel model and the Toyota Hycross hybrid flex fuel prototype, the Tata Punch and Hyundai Creta flex fuel versions, alongside some two-wheeler makers including Hero and TVS. Most cars and two-wheelers on

Brazil's first ethanol blending law goes all the way back to 1931. Its success story was built over decades of policy and offering choices to consumers

Indian roads are not geared up for handling higher blends of ethanol in the fuel mix.

Commuter choice

Over the past five decades, Brazil has worked to give the power of choice to its motorists. At nearly every petrol pump in Brazil now, people have an option to choose between blended petrol, which typically includes E27 ethanol, and E100, which is pure hydrous ethanol. Alongside that, since Brazilians got carmakers to switch to FFVs, consumers can fill up with whichever option is cheaper at the pump on a particular day. Often, E100 is cheaper by 25-35% compared to lower blended petrol.

Flex fuel cars were a hit with Brazilian consumers, largely because government price support made the blended fuel cheaper than petrol. Ethanol also improves acceleration and reduces knocking (the sound that occurs when fuel ignites unevenly inside the engine cylinder). By the late 1980s, nine out of every 10 new cars sold in Brazil were capable of running on ethanol alone.

In India, motorists were told that performance would not be affected. But the definition of performance did not include mileage. That has come back to bite the decision-makers, as vehicle owners noticed a sharp dip in fuel efficiency, with the promise of more efficiency loss as blending increases. Concerns over vehicle damage appear somewhat overstated, though there are concerns about plastic and rubber parts getting degraded in older vehicles.

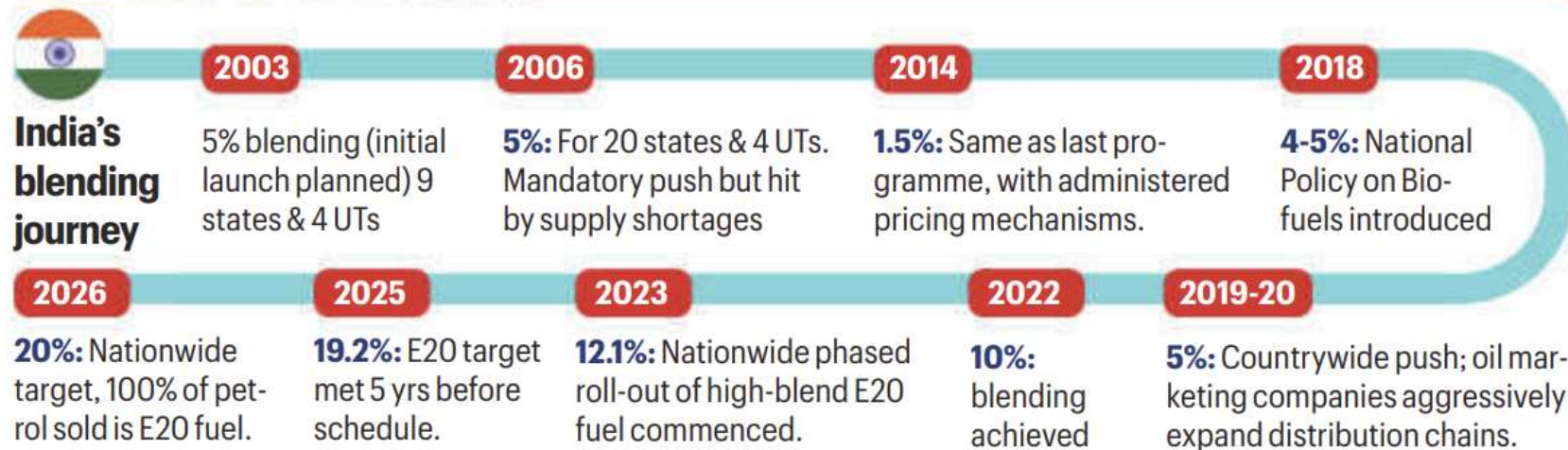
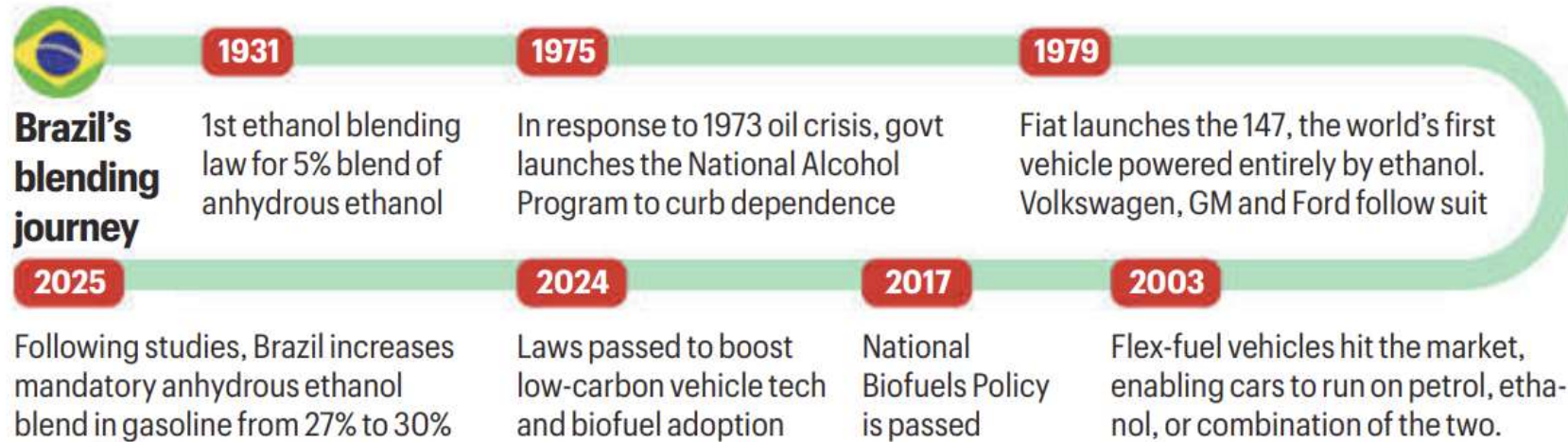
All the while, Brazil was focusing on blended fuel and ethanol, implementing policies in a phased manner to ensure that people who had bought vehicles earlier did not feel at a disadvantage.

Questions for India

In India, the push to progressively raise ethanol blending in petrol from the current E20 level to E25, before transitioning towards flex-fuel vehicles and E85-E100 fuels, is an integral part of the strategy to reduce dependence on imported fossil fuels.

According to an official, "India's future mobility ecosystem will combine EVs, bio-fuels, hydrogen and renewables in a manner suited to Indian realities". India currently imports nearly 88.5% of its crude oil requirement, making the economy and energy security vulnerable to geopolitical disruptions. But the rushed manner in which it has happened, without adequate disclaimers or preparation, raises serious questions.

• THE DIVERGENT ETHANOL BLENDING ARCS



Parameter

First major ethanol blending law

National ethanol push

First ethanol-only mass-market car

Flex-fuel vehicle mass rollout

Standard petrol blend

High-ethanol option

Consumer choice

Transition character

Main traditional feedstock

Time from lower blends to E30

Brazil

1931

Proálcool, **1975**

Fiat 147, **1979**

2003 onward

E30 from 2025

E100 widely established

High

Gradual and ecosystem-led

Sugarcane

Decades

India

EBP roots in early 2000s

Strong acceleration after 2014

No comparable mass ethanol-only ecosystem

Early-stage policy and prototypes

E20 achieved in 2025-26

E85/E100 ecosystem emerging

Limited

Rapid, mandate-led

Sugarcane products + grains, increasingly maize

E5 to E20 transition occurred rapidly





Year	Development	Significance
1931	First ethanol-blending requirement	Beginning of institutional ethanol policy
1973	Global oil crisis	Exposed oil-import vulnerability
1975	National Alcohol Programme—Proálcool	Large-scale government push for ethanol
1979	Fiat 147 ethanol car launched	Consumer vehicle technology aligned with fuel policy
1980s	Ethanol vehicle adoption expands	Ethanol becomes a mainstream mobility fuel
2003	Modern flex-fuel vehicles enter mass market	Drivers can choose fuel based on price
2017	RenovaBio framework	Links biofuels with decarbonisation policy
2024	Fuel of the Future legislation	Supports low-carbon fuels and technology transition
2025	E27 → E30	Higher mandatory ethanol blend



India's ethanol journey

Year	Development
2003	E5 programme introduced in selected states and UTs
2006	E5 expanded more widely
2014	Blending was around 1.5%; stronger pricing and procurement push followed
2018	National Policy on Biofuels introduced
2019–20	E5 distribution expanded nationwide
2022	Around E10 achieved nationally; policy target advanced
2023	Phased E20 rollout began
2025-26	20% blending achieved nationally

4. The biggest lesson: ethanol policy is not only a fuel-blending policy

Brazil created a complete system:

**Feedstock → Ethanol production → Storage → Transport → Fuel stations → FFVs → Consumer choice
→ Carbon policy**

India's approach has so far been more heavily focused on:

Production increase → OMC procurement → Mandatory blending → E20 rollout

The next stage requires deeper coordination between:

- agriculture policy;
- automobile policy;
- energy security;
- water policy;
- consumer protection;
- fuel retail infrastructure;
- climate policy.

5. What exactly are E10, E20, E30, E85 and E100?

Fuel	Approximate ethanol content	Vehicle requirement
E5	5%	Conventional petrol vehicles generally compatible
E10	10%	Widely compatible
E20	20%	E20-compatible/tuned vehicles preferred
E30	30%	Requires technical compatibility and validation
E85	Up to around 85%	Flex-fuel vehicle
E100	Near-pure ethanol fuel	Dedicated compatible or flex-fuel system

Important concept

E20 does not mean 20% less crude-oil imports overall.

It means that the petrol blend contains **20% ethanol by volume**, but actual crude import savings depend on:

- total petrol demand;
- ethanol energy content;
- domestic ethanol production;
- crude and product trade;
- vehicle efficiency.

6. What is a Flex-Fuel Vehicle?

A **Flex-Fuel Vehicle (FFV)** has an internal-combustion engine designed to operate on different proportions of petrol and ethanol.

For example, depending on design and market fuel standards, an FFV can accommodate:

Petrol blend ↔ Intermediate ethanol blend ↔ E85 ↔ high-ethanol fuel

The vehicle's control system adjusts parameters such as:

- fuel injection;
- ignition timing;
- air-fuel ratio;
- cold-start strategy.

Brazil is a global leader in flex-fuel mobility, and the IEA describes flex-fuel cars as providing a large domestic market for ethanol. 

7. Brazil's most important innovation: consumer choice

This is perhaps the strongest lesson in the article.

In Brazil, consumers can generally choose between:

1. gasoline containing mandatory ethanol;
2. high-ethanol fuel;
3. a flex-fuel vehicle capable of adjusting to different blends.

Brazil model

Government sets standards → Industry produces FFVs → Fuel stations offer alternatives → Consumer selects fuel

India model so far

Government raises blending mandate → fuel blend changes → existing vehicle fleet adapts unevenly

The policy difference is important. A successful high-ethanol transition requires **both fuel-side and vehicle-side readiness**.

8. Why mileage can decline with ethanol

Ethanol contains less energy per litre than petrol.

Therefore:

Higher ethanol percentage → lower volumetric energy density → possible reduction in km/litre

But ethanol also has advantages:

- high octane rating;
- better resistance to engine knocking;
- potential for optimised engine performance;
- lower lifecycle fossil-carbon intensity depending on feedstock and production pathway.

The crucial point is that **fuel economy and engine efficiency are different concepts**. A driver may see lower kilometres per litre while an engine specifically optimised for high-octane ethanol can still gain performance and efficiency benefits.

Indicator	Progress
Ethanol blending, 2013-14	Below 1.5%
2018-23 period	Rapid acceleration
2025-26	20%
Original E20 deadline	2030
Achievement	Around five years ahead of original target
Production capacity, 2014	421 crore litres
Production capacity, 2026	Around 2,000 crore litres

11. But India faces a major food–fuel–water challenge

This is the most important critical-analysis section for UPSC/RAS Mains.

India and Brazil have different resource conditions.

Factor	Brazil	India
Land availability	Relatively greater	High population pressure on land
Water stress	Regionally variable	Severe in many agricultural regions
Food–security pressure	Lower relative demographic pressure	Very high
Sugarcane	Highly productive ethanol base	Important but water-intensive
Maize	Growing role	Increasing ethanol role but competing uses matter
Agricultural residues	Significant potential	Very large 2G potential

A life-cycle study of Indian ethanol blends found potential reductions in fossil-fuel use and emissions, but also highlighted **land and water-use trade-offs**, especially where sugarcane-based pathways dominate.

Feature	1G Ethanol	2G Ethanol
Feedstock	Sugar/starch-rich crops	Agricultural residues and lignocellulosic biomass
Examples	Sugarcane juice, molasses, maize	Rice straw, wheat straw, bagasse, corn cobs
Technology	Mature	More complex
Cost	Generally lower	Currently more expensive
Food competition	Potentially higher	Lower
Stubble-burning benefit	Limited	Potentially significant
Long-term Indian relevance	Important transitional source	Strategically important

13. What India should learn from Brazil

Brazil's lesson	What India should do
Gradual transition	Avoid abrupt jumps without ecosystem readiness
Consumer choice	Offer fuel alternatives where feasible
FFV ecosystem	Scale compatible vehicles before very high blends
Long-term policy certainty	Give automakers and fuel producers predictable timelines
Technical testing	Conduct transparent durability and performance testing
Retail availability	Build E85/E100 infrastructure alongside vehicle deployment
Price signals	Make ethanol fuel economically meaningful to consumers
Communication	Clearly explain mileage, compatibility and warranty implications
Diversified feedstock	Expand 2G and waste-based pathways
Integrated ecosystem	Coordinate auto, oil, agriculture and environment policies

Technology

Best strategic role

EV

Urban two-wheelers, three-wheelers, cars and buses

Ethanol

Existing ICE transition and compatible flex-fuel segments

Biodiesel

Selected diesel substitution applications

CBG

Commercial vehicles and local transport

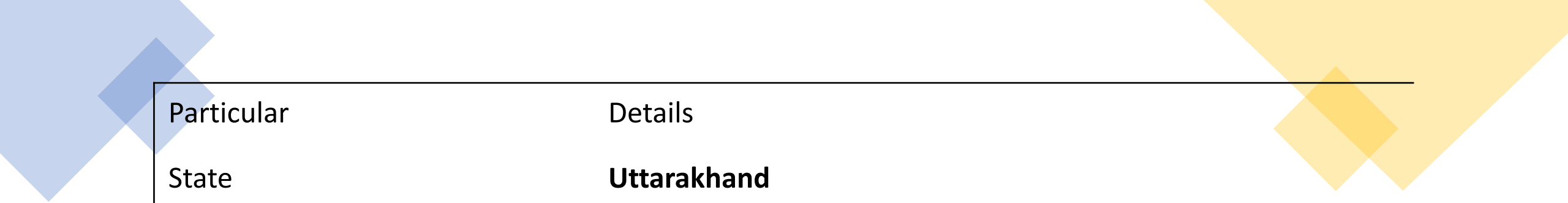
Green hydrogen

Long-term heavy transport and industrial applications

SAF

Aviation decarbonisation

Uttarakhand Becomes India's 6th Fully Literate State



Particular	Details
State	Uttarakhand
Achievement	Fully Literate State
Position in India	6th state
Programme	ULLAS
ULLAS full form	Understanding of Lifelong Learning for All in Society
Target group	Non-literate persons aged 15 years and above
Benchmark	95% or more under the programme framework
Policy connection	National Education Policy, 2020
Core approach	Volunteerism and community participation
Broad objective	Foundational literacy, numeracy and lifelong learning





Concept

100% literacy

Fully literate benchmark

General literacy statistics

ULLAS target population

Functional literacy

Explanation

Every eligible person is literate

At least **95% literacy** under the relevant programme criterion

Commonly reported for population aged **7 years and above**

Non-literate adults aged **15 years and above**

Ability to use reading, writing and numeracy in everyday life



- **Important exam trap**
- **Literacy Rate $\neq$ Adult Literacy Rate $\neq$ School Enrolment Rate**
 - A state can have:
 - high school enrolment but adult illiteracy;
 - high youth literacy but lower elderly literacy;
- high overall literacy but significant gender or regional disparities.

3. Fully Literate States: sequence and context

The current-affairs sequence needs careful attention because different reports sometimes distinguish between earlier high-literacy achievements and recognition under the newer ULLAS framework. Recent milestones include Mizoram’s ULLAS recognition in May 2025 and Tripura’s declaration at 95.6% in June 2025.

 The Economic Ti... +1

State	Key significance
Mizoram	First state declared fully literate under the ULLAS initiative
Goa	Reported attainment of full literacy under the ULLAS/Nav Bharat literacy drive
Tripura	Declared fully literate with literacy reported at 95.6%
Himachal Pradesh	Recognised among fully literate states
Sikkim	Recognised among fully literate states
Uttarakhand	6th fully literate state

Goa separately announced achievement of 100% literacy under its ULLAS-linked campaign in 2025.

 The Economic Ti...

Exam caution: If a question specifically asks “**first fully literate state under ULLAS**”, the answer is **Mizoram**.

 The Economic Ti...

5. How does ULLAS work?

Stage	Process
1. Identification	Survey and identification of non-literate adults
2. Registration	Learner registration
3. Volunteer mobilisation	Teachers, students and community volunteers participate
4. Teaching	Reading, writing and numeracy training
5. Assessment	FLNAT examination
6. Certification	Successful learners receive literacy certification
7. Continuing education	Further learning and skill development

The programme is designed around functional literacy: reading, writing and numeracy that can be used in ordinary life, rather than merely recognising letters or signing one's name.

Feature

Fact

Formation

9 November 2000

State number at formation

27th State of India

Earlier name

Uttaranchal

Winter capital

Dehradun

Summer capital

Bhararisain

High Court

Nainital

Administrative divisions

Garhwal and Kumaon

Number of districts

13

Popular name

Devbhoomi

International borders

China and Nepal

Important rivers

Ganga system: Bhagirathi, Alaknanda and tributaries



Awiqli: World's First Once- Weekly Basal Insulin



On **9 July 2026**, [Novo Nordisk](#) launched **Awikli (insulin icodec)** in India. It is the world's first once-weekly basal insulin to reach the Indian market and reduces basal-insulin injections from roughly **365 per year to 52 per year**.

India is the **seventh country** where the product has been introduced, according to the launch reporting

Point	Details
Brand name	Awikli
Generic/active ingredient	Insulin icodec
Type	Ultra-long-acting basal insulin analogue
Frequency	Once every week
Company	Novo Nordisk
Country of company	Denmark
India launch	9 July 2026
Eligible patients in India	Adults with Type 1 and Type 2 diabetes , as reported for the Indian launch
Injections per year	52 , compared with about 365 for once-daily basal insulin
Device	FlexTouch pre-filled pen
India position	Seventh launch market
US indication	Adults with Type 2 diabetes only

2. What is basal insulin?

The human pancreas normally releases insulin in two broad patterns:

Insulin component	Function	Simple understanding	
Basal insulin	Controls glucose between meals and overnight	Background insulin	
Bolus/prandial insulin	Controls glucose rise after eating	Mealtime insulin	

Therefore, Awiqli is primarily a **background insulin**. A once-weekly basal insulin does **not automatically mean that every person with diabetes will need only one insulin injection per week**. Some patients, particularly those with Type 1 diabetes, may still require separate rapid-acting mealtime insulin according to their prescribed regimen.

Simple concept

Daily basal insulin:

1 injection/day × 365 days = **365 injections/year**

Awiqli:

1 injection/week × 52 weeks = **52 injections/year**

➡ Approximate reduction in basal injections = **86%**

3. How can one injection work for seven days?

The key innovation is the molecular design of **insulin icodec**.

Step	Mechanism
1	Insulin icodec is injected subcutaneously
2	The molecule binds strongly but reversibly to albumin in the bloodstream
3	Albumin acts as a circulating reservoir
4	Insulin icodec is gradually released from this reservoir
5	Its prolonged action supports once-weekly administration

Albumin is the most abundant protein in human blood plasma. For exam purposes, remember the chain:

Insulin icodec → reversible albumin binding → circulating reservoir → slow availability → prolonged basal action → once-weekly dosing

4. Why is this significant for India?

The launch has particular relevance because India has a very large diabetes burden. Reuters reported more than **101 million people with diabetes**, around **136 million with prediabetes**, and roughly **6 million insulin users**, with the insulin-treated population projected to rise further.  Reuters

Indian diabetes challenge	Potential relevance of weekly insulin
Injection fatigue	Fewer injections
Missed basal doses	Simpler schedule may improve adherence
Fear of frequent injections	Lower injection frequency
Long-term treatment burden	Greater convenience
Growing diabetes population	Expands therapeutic options
Delayed insulin initiation	Convenience may help address one barrier, though cost and clinical suitability remain important

The reported Indian context is important: fear of injections and cost can contribute to substantial delays in insulin initiation, which makes reduced injection frequency potentially meaningful from a public-health perspective.  Reuters

Pack	Total insulin	Reported price
1 ml pen	700 units	₹2,611
3 ml pen	2,100 units	₹7,833
Illustrative 70-unit weekly dose	70 units	About ₹261

Aspect

Assessment

HbA1c control

Comparable to or better than daily basal insulin in trials

Convenience

Major advantage

Treatment adherence

Potentially improved

Type 2 diabetes

Stronger regulatory acceptance internationally

Type 1 diabetes

Requires greater caution due to hypoglycaemia concerns

Main safety concern

Hypoglycaemia, or abnormally low blood glucose



Parameter	India launch reporting	United States
Type 2 diabetes adults	Approved/launched	Approved
Type 1 diabetes adults	Included in reported Indian indication	Not FDA-approved
Major concern	Appropriate dosing and hypoglycaemia monitoring	Type 1 hypoglycaemia concern influenced regulatory pathway
FDA approval date	—	March 2026

Term	Meaning
Diabetes mellitus	Chronic metabolic disorder characterised by elevated blood glucose
Type 1 diabetes	Autoimmune destruction of pancreatic beta cells causes severe insulin deficiency
Type 2 diabetes	Insulin resistance combined with progressive beta-cell dysfunction
Insulin	Peptide hormone produced by pancreatic beta cells
Basal insulin	Long-acting background insulin
Prandial insulin	Rapid/short-acting insulin used around meals
HbA1c	Indicator of average glycaemic exposure over roughly the previous 2–3 months
Hypoglycaemia	Abnormally low blood glucose
Hyperglycaemia	Abnormally high blood glucose
Albumin	Most abundant plasma protein; among its roles is transport and maintenance of oncotic pressure

Word of the day

Divagate:

lose clarity or turn aside, especially from the main subject of attention or course of argument in writing, thinking, or speaking

Synonyms: deviate, diverge, differ, drift

Usage: *She began to divagate during the meeting.*

Pronunciation: newsth.live/divagate

International Phonetic Alphabet: /daɪvəɡeɪt/



Word of the day

Lucullan:

characterised by extravagance and profusion

Synonyms: luxurious, lavish, sumptuous

Usage: *The celebration ended with a lucullan meal.*

Pronunciation: newsth.live/lucullan

International Phonetic Alphabet: /lʊkʌlən/

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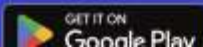


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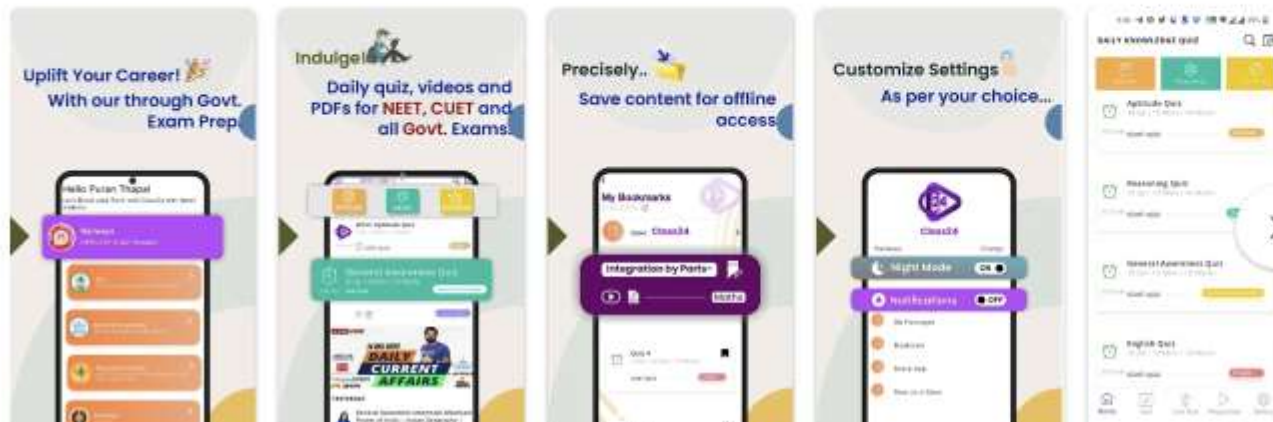
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