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10 MCQ QUIZ

-
- *“Happiness is not something ready made. It comes from your own actions.”* — **Dalai Lama**

India's Kabul mission to be upgraded to embassy

Jaishankar announces this while meeting Taliban's Muttaqi; condemns refugee repatriation by Pak.

Muttaqi welcomes decision; says diplomats will go to Afghan Embassy, may not send Ambassador initially

Jaishankar says India, Afghanistan share growth goals; cross-border terror a common challenge

Kallol Bhattacharjee
NEW DELHI

India will upgrade its 'technical mission' in Kabul to the status of an embassy, External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar said on Friday.

The announcement came during Mr. Jaishankar's meeting with Amir Khan Muttaqi, Foreign Minister of the Taliban administration in Afghanistan, at Hyderabad House. Mr. Jaishankar also raised India's concerns over the forced repatriation of Afghan refugees by Pakistan and described "cross-border terrorism" as a common challenge to both India and Afghanistan.

"India is fully committed to the sovereignty, territorial integrity and independence of Afghanistan. Closer cooperation bet-

ween us contributes to your national development, as well as regional stability and resilience. To enhance that, I am pleased to announce today the upgrading of India's technical mission in Kabul to the status of Embassy of India," said Mr. Jaishankar.

India had shut its embassy in Kabul in 2021 after the U.S.-led forces withdrew from Afghanistan.

In an interaction at the Embassy of Afghanistan, Mr. Muttaqi welcomed the decision and said, "We will send our diplomats to the Embassy of Afghanistan." He clarified that the Taliban may not send an ambassador at the beginning.

TTP leader killed

Mr. Jaishankar noted that India and Afghanistan share a "common commitment towards growth and



Reaching out: S. Jaishankar with Afghanistan's Foreign Minister Amir Khan Muttaqi in New Delhi on Friday. ANI

prosperity" but cautioned that "these are endangered by the shared threat of cross-border terrorism that both our nations face." He did not name Pakistan but urged Mr. Muttaqi to "coordinate efforts" to counter the threat.

The meeting took place

hours after an explosion in Kabul reportedly killed Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) leader Mufti Noor Wali Mehsud, a claim later denied by TTP sources.

Mr. Jaishankar thanked Kabul for condemning the terror attack in Pahalgam on April 22, which killed 26

Pak. violating Kabul's sovereign territory: Taliban

KABUL

The Taliban regime on Friday accused Pakistan of "violating Kabul's sovereign territory", a day after two explosions were heard. The Taliban have previously accused Islamabad of border strikes, but this is the first time they have alleged an incursion deep into their territory, calling it an "unprecedented act". » **PAGE 12**

people, saying, "We appreciate your sensitivity towards India's security concerns." He also reiterated India's commitment to facilitating travel for Afghan nationals through a new visa module introduced in April 2025, with more medical, business, and stu-

dent visas being issued.

A joint statement issued after the meeting of the officials said that scholarships from the Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR) and other organisations are "under active consideration" to enable more Afghan students to study in India.

Mr. Muttaqi had earlier met Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri in Dubai on January 8, where the two sides discussed the roadmap for bilateral relations amid evolving regional developments. Since assuming power, the Taliban has established diplomatic ties with several countries, including Russia and China. Mr. Muttaqi arrived in New Delhi from Moscow, where he attended the Moscow Format Dialogue.

Global recognition of the Taliban government –

the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan – has been impeded by concerns over the human rights situation in the country, which did not feature in Mr. Jaishankar's remarks. Highlighting the importance of Mr. Muttaqi's first visit to New Delhi, Mr. Jaishankar said, "...a meeting between us in person has a special value in allowing us to exchange perspectives, identify common interests and forge closer cooperation." The Minister also announced six new health projects for Afghanistan, with details to be shared soon. India will gift 20 ambulances to Afghanistan as a "symbolic step". The visiting side also invited Indian companies to invest in the mining sector of Afghanistan.

'WON'T ALLOW TERRORISTS'
» **PAGE 3**

- **External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar** announced that India’s ‘**technical mission**’ in **Kabul** will be **upgraded to the status of an Embassy of India**.
- The announcement came during his meeting with **Amir Khan Muttaqi**, the **Taliban’s Foreign Minister**, who was visiting India.
- This is the **first high-level engagement between India and the Taliban administration** since it took power in August 2021.

2. Background Context

Event	Details
India’s withdrawal (2021)	India shut its Kabul embassy in August 2021 after the U.S. troop withdrawal and Taliban takeover.
Technical Mission (2022)	India reopened a small “technical mission” in June 2022 to handle humanitarian aid and consular functions.
Current Decision (2025)	Mission to be upgraded to <i>Embassy</i> , signalling formal diplomatic re-engagement, though no ambassador to be sent initially.

● By India (Jaishankar)

- Upgradation of the **technical mission** → **Embassy of India, Kabul**.
- India will **not send an ambassador immediately**, but will station senior diplomats.
- Announced **20 ambulances** and **six new health projects** for Afghanistan.
- Stressed **cross-border terrorism** as a **common threat** to both India and Afghanistan.
- Raised concerns over **refugee repatriation** by **Pakistan**, urging humane treatment of Afghan refugees.

● By Taliban (Muttaqi)

- Welcomed the embassy upgrade; pledged **non-use of Afghan soil for terrorism**.
 - Invited India to **invest in mining and infrastructure**.
 - Requested **greater trade** via **Wagah border** (Pakistan route) and **Chabahar Port** (Iran route).
 - Stated that **terror groups like Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT)** have been pushed out of Afghan territory.
 - Condemned the **terror attack in Pahalgam (April 2025)**, showing willingness for counter-terror cooperation.
-

4. India's Key Objectives

Goal	Strategic Purpose
Reopen full diplomatic presence	To restore influence in Afghanistan's political and humanitarian affairs.
Counter Pakistan's dominance	Prevent Pakistan from monopolizing Kabul's diplomatic space.
Safeguard investments	India has invested over \$3 billion in Afghan infrastructure and capacity building (e.g., Zaranj–Delaram Highway, Parliament building, dams).
Engage Taliban pragmatically	Without formal recognition, maintain dialogue on security, trade, and development.

5. Taliban's Assurances

- Afghanistan will **not allow any terror group** to use its soil against another country (a veiled assurance to India).
- Rejected **joint military operations** with India but agreed on "coordinated anti-terror efforts."
- Denied U.S. demand to hand over **Bagram airbase** and asserted national sovereignty.
- Sought **recognition and investment** from India and other countries.

6. Areas of Cooperation

Area	Current / Future Scope
Health	6 new projects + 20 ambulances announced by India.
Education	ICCR scholarships "under active consideration" for Afghan students.
Infrastructure	Mining, connectivity (Chabahar Port), and physical infrastructure cooperation.
Trade	Emphasis on routes via Pakistan (Wagah) and Iran (Chabahar) for cost-effective trade.

7. Security and Terrorism Issues

- India continues to be wary of **terror groups like LeT and Jaish-e-Mohammed** using Afghan soil.
- **TTP leader Mufti Noor Wali Mehsud** was reportedly killed in a Kabul explosion recently (denied by TTP).
- Jaishankar and Muttaqi both condemned **terrorism as a cross-border problem**, hinting at Pakistan's role.
- Taliban accused **Pakistan of violating Afghanistan's sovereignty** after recent border incidents.

Country

Current Engagement with Taliban

Russia & China

Full diplomatic missions in Kabul.

Iran

Active trade and energy cooperation.

Pakistan

Deep political and economic linkages, though strained by TTP tensions.

India

Limited engagement, now expanding diplomatically and developmentally.

Venezuela's Opposition leader María Machado wins Nobel Peace Prize 'promoting democracy'

Associated Press

OSLO

Venezuelan Opposition leader María Corina Machado won the Nobel Peace Prize on Friday for her struggle to achieve a democratic transition in the South American nation, winning recognition as a woman "who keeps the flame of democracy burning amid a growing darkness".

The former Opposition presidential candidate is a "key, unifying figure" in the once deeply divided Opposition to President Nicolas Maduro's government, said Jørgen Watne Frydnes, chair of the Norwegian Nobel committee.

Reacting to the honour, Ms. Machado said she was



María Corina Machado is a 'key, unifying figure' in the once deeply divided Opposition to President Nicolas Maduro's government. AFP

confident the Opposition would succeed in securing a peaceful transition to democracy in her country.

"We're not there yet. We're working very hard to achieve it, but I'm sure that we will prevail," she told Kristian Berg Harpviken, the director of the Nobel

Institute and secretary of the Nobel Committee.

Dedicates win to Trump

"I dedicate this prize to the suffering people of Venezuela and to President Trump for his decisive support of our cause!" she later wrote on X.

"This is something that the Venezuelan people deserve," Ms. Machado said in a call with the Norwegian Nobel Institute. "I'm honored not only by this recognition, but I'm honored to be part of what's going on in Venezuela today."

"In the past year, Ms. Machado has been forced to live in hiding," Mr. Frydnes said. "Despite serious threats against her life, she has remained in the country... When authoritarians seize power, it is crucial to recognise courageous defenders of freedom who rise and resist."

Mr. Maduro's government has routinely targeted its real or perceived opponents.

Ms. Machado, 58, was

set to run against Mr. Maduro in last year's presidential election, but the government disqualified her.

The crackdown on dissent only increased after the country's National Electoral Council, which is stacked with Maduro loyalists, declared him the winner despite credible evidence to the contrary. The election results announced by the Electoral Council sparked protests to which the government responded with force that ended with more than 20 people dead.

Ms. Machado becomes the 20th woman to win the Nobel Peace Prize.

(With inputs from AFP)

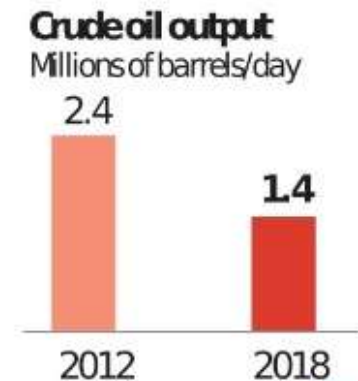
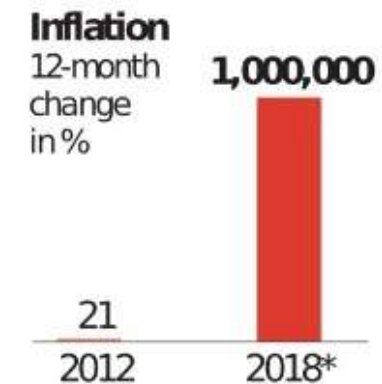
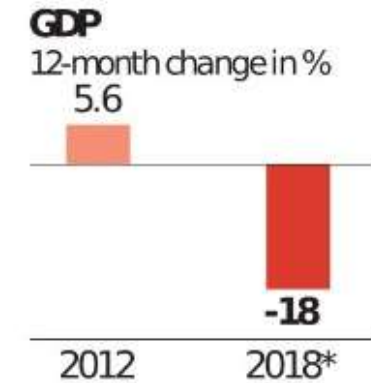
TRUMP'S QUEST

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Venezuelan migration routes

Hundreds of thousands flee economic crisis



Source: UNHCR/IOM/USAID/UN DESA/IMF (*forecast)/OPEC

Main destinations for Venezuelan migrants in 2018



Figures for Spain and United States are latest available

Source: UN International Organisation for Migration, November 2018.

Routes of Venezuelan migration



Google

BBC Source: UNHCR

BBC

Nobel Prizes 2025



PHYSICS

III. Niklas Elmehed © Nobel Prize Outreach

John Clarke
Michel H. Devoret
John M. Martinis

For the discovery of macroscopic quantum mechanical and energy quantization in electric circuit.

Their experiments on a chip revealed quantum physics in action.

© Johan Jarnestad/The Royal Swedish Academy

CHEMISTRY

III. Niklas Elmehed © Nobel Prize Outreach

Susumu Kitagawa
Richard Robson
Omar M. Yaghi

For the development metal-organic frameworks (MOFs). Their molecular architecture contains room for use for chemistry, used to harvest carbon, CO₂, and catalyze reactions.

III. Niklas Elmehed © Nobel Prize Outreach

PHYSIOLOGY OR MEDICINE

III. Niklas Elmehed © Nobel Prize Outreach

Mary E. Brunkow
Fred Ramsdell
Shimon Sakaguchi

For their discoveries concerning peripheral immune tolerance. They understood how the immune system checks, laying the foundation for new treatments for autoimmune diseases.

© Johan Jarnestad/The Royal Swedish Academy, II. Niklas Elmehed

LITERATURE

III. Niklas Elmehed © Nobel Prize Outreach

László Krasznahorkai

For his compelling and visionary work that, amidst the pulse of terror, reaffirms the power of art. A great epic writer whose words extend through Kafka to Thomas Bernhard.

© The Swedish Academy

- **María Corina Machado**, Venezuelan Opposition leader, has been awarded the **2025 Nobel Peace Prize** for her **"struggle to achieve democratic transition"** in Venezuela.
- The **Norwegian Nobel Committee** recognized her as a **"key, unifying figure"** who kept "the flame of democracy burning amid growing darkness."

2. About María Corina Machado

Category	Details
Country	Venezuela (South America)
Political Affiliation	Opposition leader against President Nicolás Maduro
Profession	Former presidential candidate; founder of "Vente Venezuela" (political party)
Notable Traits	Outspoken advocate for democracy, human rights, and political freedom
Quote	"This prize belongs to the Venezuelan people... I dedicate it to the suffering people of Venezuela and to President Trump for his support."

3. Background

- Venezuela has faced **authoritarian rule, economic collapse, and political repression** under President **Nicolás Maduro**.
 - Ms. Machado was **barred from contesting** the 2024 presidential election despite widespread public support.
 - Despite **death threats** and **house confinement**, she continued to lead opposition protests and advocate for **democratic reforms**.
-

4. Nobel Committee's Citation

- Honoured Machado for:
 - "Tireless efforts to achieve peaceful democratic transition."
 - "Courageous defense of freedom under authoritarian power."
- The committee highlighted her **symbolic role in representing hope and civic resistance** in Latin America.

5. Venezuela's Political Context

Issue	Details
Regime Type	De facto authoritarian under Maduro since 2013
Crisis	Economic sanctions, political persecution, hyperinflation, mass migration (7M+ refugees)
Opposition	Deeply fragmented until Machado's leadership unified resistance
Repression	Election manipulation, arrests, media censorship, military control of institutions

6. International Reactions

- U.S. and EU leaders praised the award as a "symbol of democratic courage."
- President Maduro's government dismissed the Nobel Committee as politically motivated.
- Machado dedicated the prize to:
 - The suffering Venezuelan people, and
 - Donald Trump, recognizing his "decisive support" to anti-Maduro efforts.

Aspect	Fact
Prize	2025 Nobel Peace Prize
Laureate	María Corina Machado
Country	Venezuela
Reason	Promoting democracy and peaceful transition
Awarding Body	Norwegian Nobel Committee
Total Women Peace Laureates	20 (as of 2025)

Trump's quest for Nobel Peace Prize falls short again despite nominations

The White House is responding bitterly to U.S. President being passed over for the Nobel Peace Prize despite efforts from Republicans and world leaders; it also did not comment on Machado's recognition; Trump has been outspoken about his desire for the honour during presidential terms

Associated Press
WASHINGTON

U.S. President Donald Trump was passed over for the Nobel Peace Prize on Friday despite jockeying from his fellow Republicans, various world leaders and – most vocally – himself.

Venezuelan Opposition leader María Corina Machado was awarded the prize. The Norwegian Nobel Committee said it was honouring her “for her tireless work promoting democratic rights for the people of Venezuela and for her struggle to achieve a just and peaceful transition from dictatorship to democracy.”

The White House responded bitterly, with communications director Steven Cheung saying members of “the Nobel Committee proved they place politics over peace” because they didn’t recognise Mr. Trump.

“He has the heart of a humanitarian, and there will never be anyone like him who can move mountains with the sheer force of his will,” Mr. Cheung wrote on social media.

The White House did not comment on Ms. Machado’s recognition. Her opposition to President Nicolás Maduro in Venezuela aligns with the Trump administration’s own stance on Venezuela, and Secretary of State Marco Rubio



No dice this time: President Donald Trump and his supporters are likely to view the decision to pass over him for the award as a deliberate affront to the U.S. leader. FILE PHOTO

has praised her as “the personification of resilience, tenacity, and patriotism.”

Mr. Trump, who has long coveted the prestigious prize, has been outspoken about his desire for the honour during both of his presidential terms, particularly lately as he takes credit for ending conflicts around the world. The Republican President has expressed doubts that the Nobel committee would ever grant him the award.

“They’ll have to do what they do. Whatever they do is fine. I know this: I didn’t do it for that. I did it because I saved a lot of lives,” Mr. Trump said on Thursday.

The Hostages Families Forum in Israel issued a statement on Friday conti-

nuing to support Mr. Trump. “President Trump’s unprecedented achievements in peace-making this past year speak for themselves, and no award or lack thereof can diminish the profound impact he has had on our families and on global peace,” it said.

Crossed deadline

Although Mr. Trump received nominations for the prize, many of them occurred after the February 1 deadline for the 2025 award, which fell just a week and a half into his second term. His name was, however, put forward in December by Republican Rep. Claudia Tenney of New York, her office said in a statement, for his broker-

ing of the Abraham Accords, which normalised relations between Israel and several Arab states in 2020.

Nevertheless, Mr. Trump and his supporters are likely to view the decision to pass over him for the award as a deliberate affront to the U.S. leader, particularly after his involvement in getting Israel and Hamas to initiate the first phase of ending their devastating two-year-old war.

Jørgen Watne Frydnes, chair of the Norwegian Nobel Committee, said the committee has seen various campaigns in its long history of awarding the peace prize. “We receive thousands and thousands of letters every year of peo-

ple wanting to say what for them leads to peace,” he said. “This committee sits in a room filled with the portraits of all laureates, and that room is filled with both courage and integrity. So we base only our decision on the work and the will of Alfred Nobel.”

The peace prize, first awarded in 1901, was created partly to encourage ongoing peace efforts. Alfred Nobel stipulated in his will that the prize should go to someone “who shall have done the most or the best work for fraternity between nations, for the abolition or reduction of standing armies and for the holding and promotion of peace congresses.”

Three U.S. leaders

Three sitting U.S. Presidents have won the Nobel Peace Prize: Theodore Roosevelt in 1906, Woodrow Wilson in 1919 and Barack Obama in 2009. Jimmy Carter won the prize in 2002, a full two decades after leaving office. Former Vice President Al Gore received the prize in 2007.

Mr. Obama, a Democrat who was a focus of Mr. Trump’s attacks well before the Republican was elected, won the prize early in his tenure as president.

“He got the prize for doing nothing,” Mr. Trump said of Mr. Obama on Thursday. “They gave it to

Obama for doing absolutely nothing but destroying our country.”

As one of his reasons for deserving the award, Mr. Trump often says he has ended seven wars, though some of the conflicts the President claims to have resolved were merely tensions and his role in easing them is disputed. But while there is hope for the end to Israel and Hamas’s war, with Israel saying a ceasefire agreement with Hamas came into effect on Friday, much remains uncertain about the aspects of the broader plan, including whether and how Hamas will disarm and who will govern Gaza. And little progress seems to have been made on Russia’s war in Ukraine, a conflict Mr. Trump claimed during the 2024 campaign that he could end in one day – he later said he made that remark in jest.

The full list of people nominated is secret, but anyone who submits a nomination is free to talk about it.

Others who formally submitted a nomination for Trump for the Nobel Peace Prize – but after this year’s deadline – include Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Manet and Pakistan’s government, all citing his work in helping end conflicts in their regions.

- Former U.S. President **Donald Trump** was **nominated multiple times** for the Nobel Peace Prize (2020–2025) for:
 - The **Abraham Accords (2020)** — normalization deals between Israel, UAE, Bahrain, and Sudan.
 - His role in the **hostage release forum** and **peace efforts in the Middle East**.
 - However, the **Nobel Committee awarded the 2025 Prize to María Machado**, not Trump.
-

2. Trump's Response

- Expressed disappointment, claiming the decision was **"a deliberate snub"** from the Nobel Committee.
 - Said, "I did it for peace, not for prizes — but I did more for world peace than anyone else."
 - His supporters accused the Committee of **political bias**, noting **Barack Obama's 2009 Nobel Peace Prize**.
-

3. Nobel Committee's Position

- Chair **Jørgen Watne Frydnes** emphasized that the award is for **ongoing global peace efforts**, not "self-promotion or past deals."
- The committee recognized Machado's **grassroots democracy work** as "more pressing in today's context."

U.S. Presidents Who Won Nobel Peace Prize	Year
Theodore Roosevelt	1906
Woodrow Wilson	1919
Jimmy Carter	2002
Barack Obama	2009

Theme	Venezuela (Machado)	U.S. (Trump)
Focus	Democracy & civil resistance	Diplomatic accords
Nature of Work	Grassroots struggle under dictatorship	High-level political negotiation
Recognition Basis	Human rights, democratic courage	State diplomacy & peace talks
Outcome	Awarded Nobel Peace Prize 2025	Rejected by Nobel Committee
Message	Emphasis on people-led democratic change	Shift away from political power recognition

Hydropower project on Chenab gets clearance

The Sawalkote project was first accorded an environmental clearance in 2017; the suspension of the Indus Waters Treaty with Pakistan added momentum to the approval process, says official

Jacob Koshy
NEW DELHI

An apex committee of the Environment Ministry has accorded a fresh environmental clearance to the Sawalkote hydroelectric project, proposed to come up on Chenab river in Ramban, Jammu and Kashmir.

Planned as a run-of-the-river project utilising the flow of the Chenab to generate electricity, it is reportedly the first major hydropower project on the Indus rivers to be accorded environmental clearance following India's suspension of the Indus Waters Treaty (IWT) on April 23, following the Pahalgam terror attack.

"The Expert Appraisal Committee (EAC), after examining the information submitted and detailed deliberations, reiterated its earlier recommendation on the project and recommended the proposal for grant of prior Environmental Clearance to Sawalkote H.E. Project," said the minutes of a meeting conducted on September 26.

The project was first accorded an environmental clearance by a designated committee in 2017, when it



Earliest project: A view of the Salal Dam on the Chenab river in Jammu and Kashmir. ANI

was originally being steered by the Jammu and Kashmir Power Development Corporation (JKPDC). However, the JKPDC signed a deal with the National Hydro Power Corporation (NHPC) Ltd. in 2021 to build and commission the project and be effectively in charge of it until 2061.

Despite the designated committee's nod, the Environment Ministry could not clear the project as the JKPDC could not procure a forest clearance - which follows a parallel approval process. In September 2023, the project was first accorded a 'stage 1 forest clearance' as per publicly

available records.

While the process of transferring the project to the NHPC has been on since 2021, a slew of approvals from the Central Electricity Authority and the Central Water Commission were accorded in July 2025. Public hearings, required to be done under the provisions of the Forest Rights Act, were done between December 2022 to February 2023.

"The Sawalkote project was already going through various stages of approval. Given its size - though it does not have a storage dam - it will be the largest project of its kind and has always had certain strateg-

ic importance. The suspension of the IWT and the plan to utilise the full potential of the eastern Indus rivers have added momentum to the approval process," a senior official, aware of the approval process of hydroelectric projects, told *The Hindu*, but declined to be identified.

Project cost goes up

From an earlier estimate of about ₹22,000 crore, estimated cost of the project has ballooned to ₹31,380 crore.

It is projected to have an installed power capacity of 1,856 MW and generate about 8,000 million units of electricity annually.

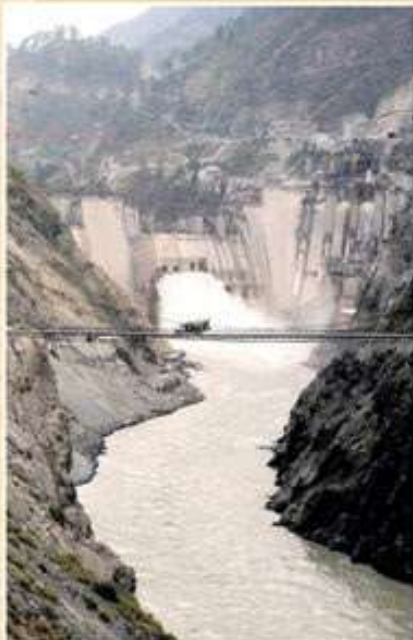
The Indus Waters Treaty (IWT)

- The distribution of waters of the Indus and its tributaries between India and Pakistan is governed by the Indus Water Treaty (IWT).
- Was signed on Sept 19, 1960, between India, Pakistan and a representative of World Bank after eight years of negotiations.
- Partition of India cut across the Indus river basin, which has the Indus river, plus five of its main tributaries.

Western rivers

Chenab, Jhelum, Indus

India's rights over these rivers: Limited — can set up certain irrigation, run-of-the-river power plants, very limited storage, domestic and non-consumptive use, all subject to conditions

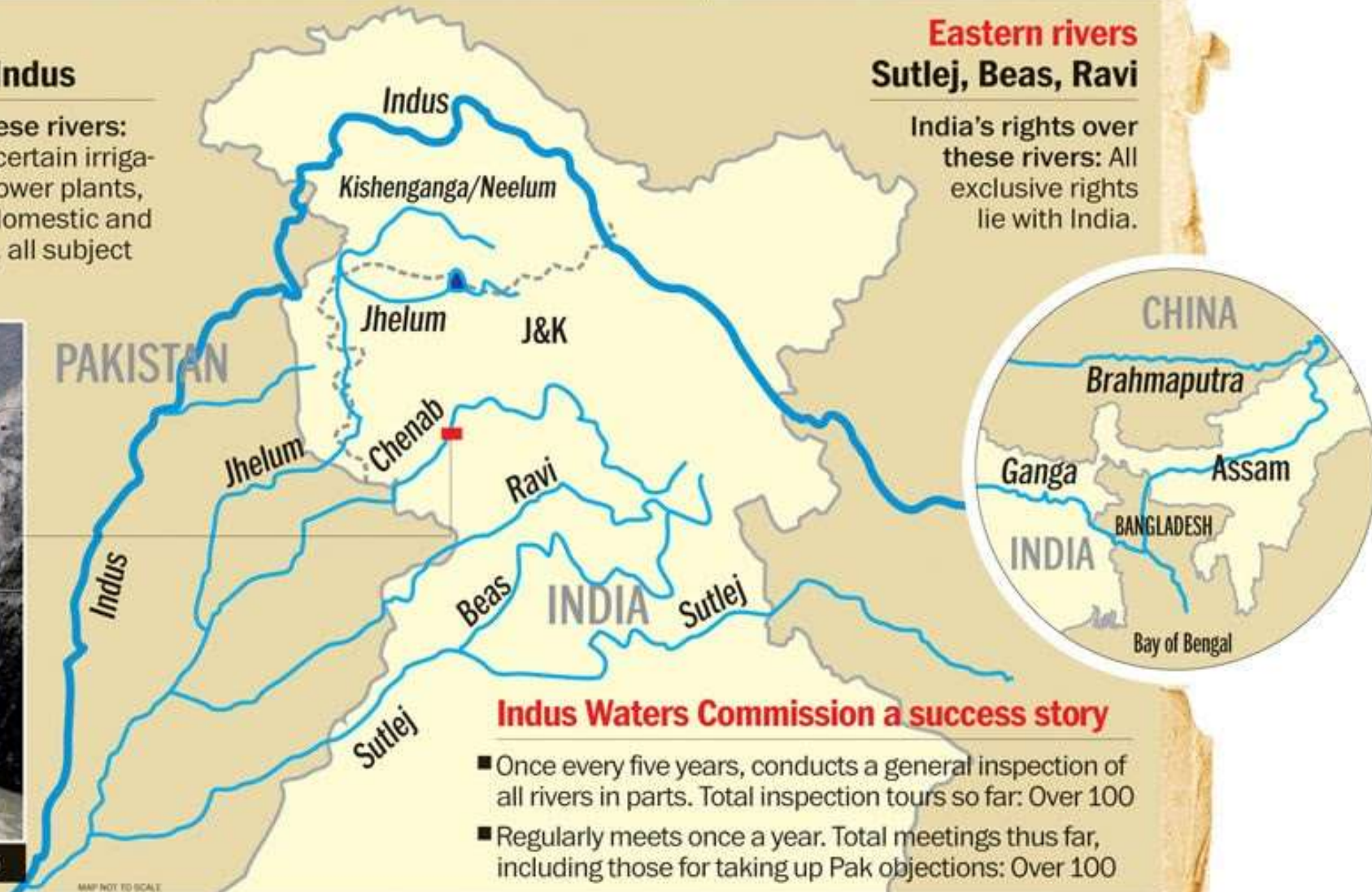


Baglihar dam on Chenab

Eastern rivers

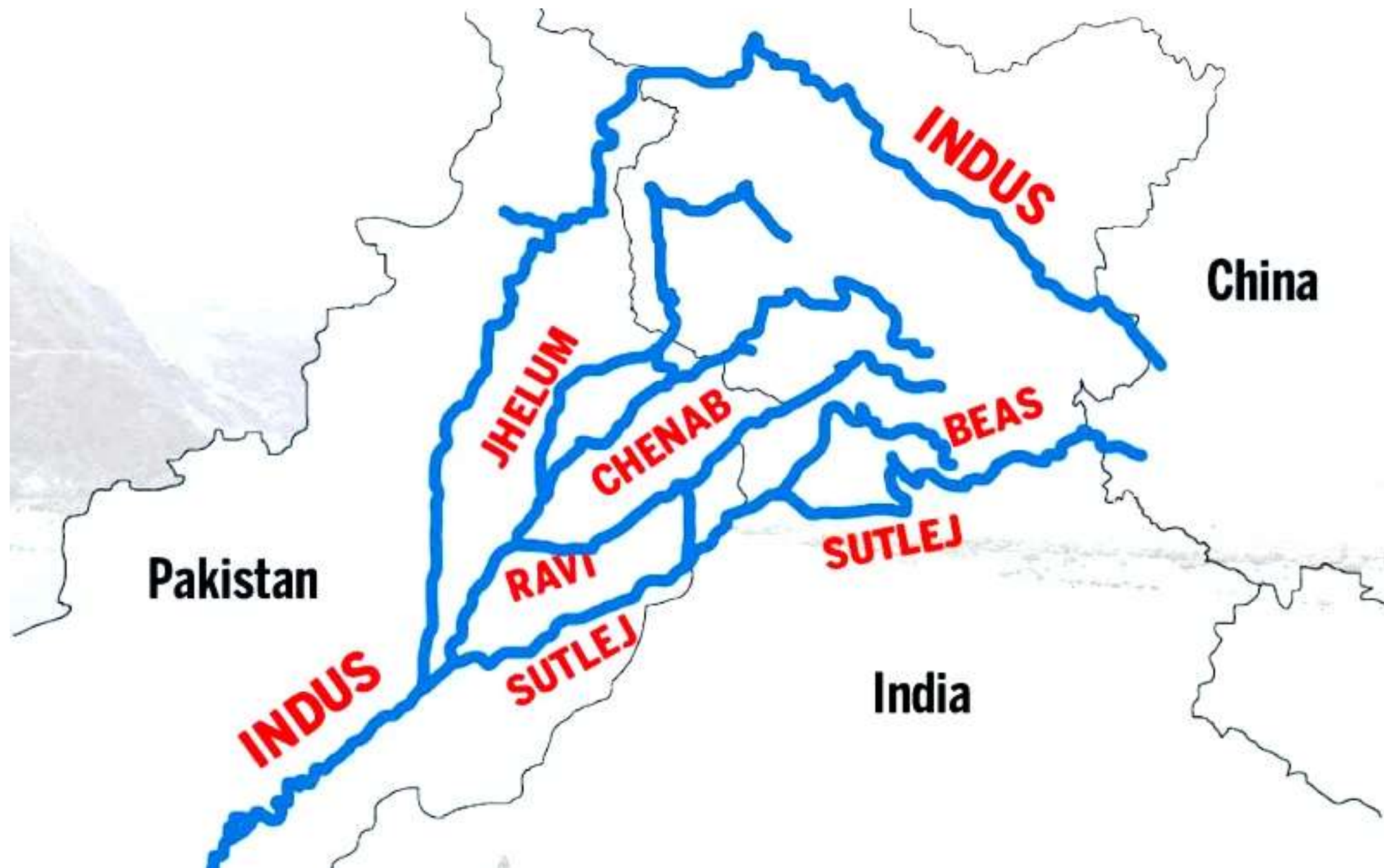
Sutlej, Beas, Ravi

India's rights over these rivers: All exclusive rights lie with India.





Indus Waters Commission a success story

- Once every five years, conducts a general inspection of all rivers in parts. Total inspection tours so far: Over 100
- Regularly meets once a year. Total meetings thus far, including those for taking up Pak objections: Over 100



- The **Sawalkote Hydroelectric Project (HEP)** on the **Chenab River** has received **fresh environmental clearance** from the **Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC)**.
- It is the **first major hydropower project on the Indus basin** to get such clearance after the **suspension of the Indus Waters Treaty (IWT)** with Pakistan in April 2023.

2. About the Sawalkote Hydroelectric Project (HEP)

Parameter	Details	
River	Chenab River	
Location	Ramban district, Jammu & Kashmir	
Type	Run-of-the-river project	
Installed Capacity	1,856 MW	
Estimated Cost	₹31,380 crore (earlier estimate ₹22,000 crore)	
Power Generation	Approx. 8,000 million units annually	
Implementing Agency	National Hydro Power Corporation (NHPC)	
Project Owner (initially)	Jammu & Kashmir Power Development Corporation (JKPDC)	
Project Transfer	Transferred from JKPDC to NHPC in 2021 	

Year

Development

2017

Project first received environmental clearance.

2021

JKPDC signed MoU with NHPC Ltd. to implement and complete the project.

2023 (Feb)

Public hearings and forest clearance under the **Forest Rights Act** completed.

2023 (Apr)

India suspended the **Indus Waters Treaty (IWT)** with Pakistan following the **Pahalgam terror attack**.

2023 (Sep)

Project received Stage-I forest clearance.

2025 (Oct)

Final environmental clearance granted by MoEFCC Expert Appraisal Committee (EAC).

4. Project's Strategic and Environmental Significance

Hydrological Importance

- The Chenab River is one of the three **western rivers** (along with Jhelum and Indus) allocated to **Pakistan** under the **Indus Waters Treaty (1960)**.
- The project aims to **maximize India's utilization** of its share of Indus basin waters post-IWT suspension.

Energy & Infrastructure Goals

- Will be **largest hydroelectric project in J&K**, boosting local grid stability and employment.
- Supports India's **clean energy transition** and **energy security goals** under the **National Hydropower Policy 2024**.

Strategic Importance

- Enhances India's **control over upstream flows** of the Chenab — a crucial **geo-strategic asset** in J&K's river basin management.
- Strengthens India's **water leverage** with Pakistan after IWT's suspension.

Approval Stage**Authority / Year****Remarks**

Environmental Clearance

EAC, MoEFCC (2017 &
2025 renewed)Needed updated EIA &
public hearings

Forest Clearance (Stage-I)

MoEFCC, 2023

For diversion of forest land

Central Electricity Authority
(CEA)

2021

Technical feasibility
approvedCentral Water Commission
(CWC)

2021

Hydrological & dam design
vetted

Public Hearings

2022–23

Under Forest Rights Act,
2006

Treaty Aspect

Signed

Rivers Allocated to India

Rivers Allocated to Pakistan (with limited Indian use)

India's Rights

Suspension (2023)

Key Details

1960 (India–Pakistan; mediated by World Bank)

Eastern Rivers – Ravi, Beas, Sutlej

Western Rivers – Indus, Jhelum, Chenab

Run-of-river hydro projects permitted without altering flow volume

India halted cooperation after Pakistan's inaction on terror and repeated objections on Kishanganga & Ratle projects

8. Current Relevance

- With IWT suspended, India can now:
 - Fully **utilize western river potential** under its territorial jurisdiction.
 - Expedite projects like **Ratle (850 MW)**, **Baglihar (900 MW)**, and **Pakal Dul (1000 MW)** on the Chenab.
 - Strengthen **energy sovereignty** in J&K region.

9. Broader Impact

Domain	Impact
Economic	Boosts regional infrastructure, job creation, and industrial power availability.
Environmental	Promotes renewable energy but risks biodiversity loss.
Strategic	Enhances water resource control; bolsters national security.
Diplomatic	May trigger renewed debate on India–Pakistan water sharing.

Parameter

Project

River

Capacity

Location

Implementing Agency

Project Type

Cost

Power Generation

Clearance Granted

Fact

Sawalkote Hydroelectric Project

Chenab River

1,856 MW

Ramban district, Jammu & Kashmir

NHPC Ltd.

Run-of-the-river

₹31,380 crore

~8,000 million units annually

MoEFCC Expert Appraisal Committee (2025)

VIENNA

Austria finds Microsoft 'illegally' tracked students, watchdog says



Austria's data protection authority has determined that Microsoft "illegally" tracked students using its education software and must grant them access to their data, privacy watchdog says. On Friday, it had complained that the Microsoft 365 education software violated EU data protection rights for children. **AP**

KYIV

At least 20 wounded, child killed in Russian strikes across Ukraine



Russian drone and missile strikes wounded at least 20 people in Kyiv, damaged residential buildings and caused blackouts across Ukraine on Friday. Five people were hospitalized, while others received first aid at the scene, authorities said. A 7-year-old boy was killed in separate attacks in southwestern Zaporizhzhia region. **AP**

TOKYO

Japan's ruling coalition collapses, putting Takaichi's PM bid in a bind



Japan's ruling coalition collapsed on Friday as junior partner Komeito quit, putting in peril Liberal Democratic Party chief Sanae Takaichi's bid to become the country's first woman Prime Minister. Komeito's decision to end the alliance that has governed Japan for almost 25 years has stirred up a new political crisis. **AP**

LIMA

Peru lawmakers oust President blamed for failing to stem crime



Lawmakers in Peru removed President Dina Boluarte from office just after midnight on Friday, ending a stint plagued by protests, corruption probes and rampant crime. Congress chief Jose Art, who assumed the South American country's presidency, will lead a transitional government until elections in April 2026. **AP**

Taliban slam 'violent, heinous' Pakistani attack in Afghanistan

Pakistan violated Afghanistan's airspace, bombing a civilian market near the Durand Line and also violating Kabul's sovereign territory, says the Taliban regime, Islamabad says to safeguard Pakistani lives, 'what should be done will be done'

AGENCE FRANCE PRESSE
KABUL

The Taliban regime on Friday accused Pakistan of "violating Kabul's sovereign territory", a day after two explosions were heard in the capital.

The Taliban have previously accused Islamabad of border strikes, but this time, they allege a deep territorial incursion. **AP**

"Pakistan violated Afghanistan's sovereignty," the Defence Ministry said in a statement on Friday. "This is an unprecedented, violent, and heinous act in the history of Afghanistan and Pakistan," it added.



The Taliban have previously accused Islamabad of border strikes, but this time, they allege a deep territorial incursion. **AP**

The statement did not specify how Kabul's territory had been violated, but AFP journalists heard two loud blasts in the capital late on Thursday. The same evening, residents in the border town of Margh reported that a market selling second-hand weapons had been bombed. If the situation becomes more tense after these actions, the consequences will be attributed to the Pakistani army," the statement added.

It comes as Afghan Foreign Minister Amir Khan Muttaqi made his first visit to India.

Anti-TTP raid Pakistan's military spokesman, in a televised press conference on Friday, did not directly confirm or deny the allegations. He questioned whether Pakistan was responsible for the attacks. "The safeguard of Pakistani lives and prop-

erty, what measures need to be taken will be taken," Gen. Ahmed Sharif Chaudhry told reporters in the city of Peshawar.

The Pakistani Taliban (TTP), a separate, but linked group to the Afghan Taliban, along with its affiliates, are behind most of the violence — largely directed at security forces.

Meanwhile, the Pakistani Army said 30 Taliban fighters were killed during a raid on a village in the district of Northwest Pakistan. Eleven military personnel were killed in clashes with the TTP earlier this week.

Violence in Pakistan after Islamists clash with police at rally

Associated Press
LAHORE

Violent clashes erupted on Friday between police and Islamists in Pakistan's Lahore after security forces tried to stop thousands of demonstrators from leaving for the capital, Islamabad, where they planned to stage a pro-Palestinian rally outside the U.S. Embassy, officials said.

The clashes in the capital on Thursday but intensified Friday after police baton-charged the demonstrators and fired tear gas to disperse them at multiple locations. Protesters

hurled stones at officers in response. Tehreek-e-Labbaik Pakistan party (TLP) claimed that two of its supporters had been killed and 80 others injured. There was no immediate comment from the Punjab provincial government, headed by Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif.

The protest comes after Hamas and Israel agreed to a ceasefire plan brokered by U.S. President Donald Trump.

Earlier, authorities had closed major roads leading to the capital and suspended mobile Internet services.

Where there's a will



Education first: Students receive lessons in a classroom inside a concrete bunker to protect against air strikes in a village in Myanmar's Sagaing region. The military has increased air strikes every year since triggering the civil war with the 2021 coup. **AP**

Taiwan President pledges to build air defence system in face of China threat

Associated Press
TAIPEI

Taiwan will accelerate the building of a "Taiwan Shield" or "T-Dome" air defence system in the face of the military threat from China, its leader said on Friday.

President Lai Ching-te also pledged to raise defence spending to more than 2% of GDP and to reach 8% by 2030.

"The increase in defence spending has a purpose," he said in an address to an outdoor crowd on Taiwan National Day. "It is a clear necessity to counter enemy threats and a driving force for developing our defence industries."

Mr. Lai called Taiwan a



Lai Ching-te

"beacon of democracy" in Asia, drawing a distinction with China's one-party state.

"Democratic Taiwan will strive to maintain the status quo, protect peace and stability in the Taiwan Strait, and promote regional prosperity and development," he said. The Chinese military

regularly sends fighter jets and warships into the skies and waters off Taiwan and has staged major military exercises in the area in recent years.

"T-Dome" system Mr. Lai said his government would establish a rigorous defence system with high-level detection and effective interception capabilities. His use of the phrase "T-Dome," short for Taiwan Dome, was an apparent reference to the Iron Dome system that Israel has developed.

It was not immediately clear if the "T-Dome" referred to a new defence system or if it was a new name for existing initiatives.

Mr. Trump has pressured Taiwan to increase military spending to 10% of its GDP. The "T-Dome" also refers to Taiwan's signal to the U.S. that it is increasing its defence spending rapidly, while keeping its military buildup defensive in nature, said Wen Ti-fung, a fellow with the Atlantic Council.

A Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson on Friday criticized U.S. arms sales to Taiwan and military ties between Washington and Taipei.

"The Lai Ching-te authorities' attempt to seek independence through military means and resist reunification with force will only drag Taiwan into a perilous situation of military conflict," said spokesperson Guo Jakun.

Multiple people dead, several missing as blast rocks explosives factory in U.S.

AGENCE FRANCE PRESSE
WASHINGTON

Multiple people were dead or missing after a massive explosion rocked a U.S. explosives factory on Friday, sending emergency responders rushing to the site and prompting official warnings for the public to avoid the area, authorities said.

"We can confirm there has been an explosion at Accurate Energetic Systems in the Backscott area," located in Hickman County, Tennessee, the local sheriff's office wrote on Facebook. "Emergency services are currently on the scene working to address the situation," it added.

The manufacturing



Smoke fills the air as debris covers the ground after a blast ripped through a military explosives plant in Tennessee, U.S. on Friday. **AP**

plant is owned by a company that manufactures explosives for the military, aerospace and commercial demolition industries, according to the company's website.

The mayor's office told AFP that it could not immediately confirm any fa-

U.S. proposes ban on Chinese airlines from flying over Russia

AGENCE FRANCE PRESSE
WASHINGTON

The United States has proposed prohibiting Chinese airlines from using Russian airspace while flying to or from American airports. A U.S. document has shown, on Friday, that the rival superpowers try to thrash out a trade deal.

"We have tentatively determined that the practice of some Chinese airlines flying over Russian territory in exercising Russian overflights in the conduct of certain China-U.S. scheduled combination service is unfair and has resulted in substantial adverse competitive effects on U.S. air

carriers," the U.S. Department of Transportation noted in a tentative order on Thursday.

China slams move China's Foreign Ministry spokesman Guo Jakun told a news conference in Beijing on Friday that American "restrictions on Chinese airline operations are detrimental to personnel exchanges between the two countries."

The U.S. proposal comes as Washington and Beijing work to negotiate a deal to end a bruising trade war, with a truce on most reciprocal tariffs extended to November 10.

talities or the cause of the explosion.

But Humphreys County Sheriff Chris Davis reported "several" fatalities and added that several people were missing in the "very devastating blast" that engulfed an entire building at the facility.

"We do have several people at this time that's unaccounted for. We are trying to identify the names of families and that situation," Mr. Davis said. "We do have some that are deceased. But we're going to go back and I can talk to these families, notify these families."

Mr. Davis said authorities had secured the area, but warned of the possibility of smaller explosions around the site.

Taliban slam 'violent, heinous' Pakistani attack in Afghanistan

Pakistan violated Afghanistan's airspace, bombing a civilian market near the Durand Line and also violating Kabul's sovereign territory, says the Taliban regime; Islamabad says to safeguard Pakistani lives, 'what should be done will be done'

Agence France-Presse

KABUL

The Taliban regime on Friday accused Pakistan of "violating Kabul's sovereign territory", a day after two explosions were heard in the capital.

The Taliban have previously accused Islamabad of border strikes, but this is the first time they have alleged an incursion deep into their territory, describing it as an "unprecedented act".

"Pakistan violated Afghanistan's airspace, bombing a civilian market in the Marghi area of Paktika near the Durand Line and also violating Kabul's



The Taliban have previously accused Islamabad of border strikes, but this time, they allege a deep territorial incursion. AP

sovereign territory," the Defence Ministry said in a post on social media. "This is an unprecedented, violent, and heinous act in the history of Afghanistan and Pakistan," it added.

The statement did not specify how Kabul's territory had been violated, but AFP journalists heard two loud blasts in the capital late on Thursday.

The same evening, resi-

dents in the border town of Marghi reported that a market selling second-hand weapons had been bombed. "If the situation becomes more tense after these actions, the consequences will be attributed to the Pakistani army," the statement added.

It comes as Afghan Foreign Minister Amir Khan Muttaqi made his first visit to India.

Anti-TTP raid

Pakistan's military spokesman, in a televised press conference on Friday, did not directly respond when questioned whether Pakistan was responsible for the attacks. "To safeguard Pakistani lives and proper-

ties, what measures need to be taken will be taken," Gen. Ahmed Sharif Chaudhry told reporters in the city of Peshawar.

The Pakistani Taliban (TTP), a separate but linked group to the Afghan Taliban, along with its affiliates, are behind most of the violence – largely directed at security forces.

Meanwhile, the Pakistani Army said 30 Taliban fighters involved in the killing of 11 soldiers, including a Lt. Col. and a Major, were "sent to hell" in a series of "retribution operations" conducted in Orakzai district of northwest Pakistan. Eleven military personnel were killed in clashes with the TTP earlier this week.





Dividing Lines of India with Neighbouring Countries

India - Afghanistan (1973)

Durand Line

India - Pakistan &
Bangladesh (1947)

Radcliffe Line

India - Tibet (China) 1914

McMohan Line

India - Sri Lanka

Palk Strait



- The **Taliban regime in Afghanistan** has accused **Pakistan** of violating its **sovereign airspace** and conducting **airstrikes inside Afghan territory**, calling it an **“unprecedented act of aggression.”**
 - The alleged strike targeted a **civilian market** in **Marghi area of Paktika province**, close to the **Durand Line** (the disputed border between the two countries).
-

2. Taliban's Reaction

- The Taliban's **Defence Ministry** stated that Pakistan's attack was **“unprecedented, violent, and heinous”**, marking a **serious breach of sovereignty**.
- It warned Islamabad that any **escalation or cross-border aggression** would have **“serious consequences.”**
- The Taliban claimed this was the **first deep incursion** into Afghan territory, not just a border skirmish.

3. Pakistan's Justification

- Pakistan's military spokesman, Gen. Ahmed Sharif Chaudhry, confirmed that operations were carried out to "safeguard Pakistani lives" and **neutralize terrorists**, saying:

"What should be done will be done."
- He did not directly acknowledge violating Afghan territory.
- Pakistan maintained that its actions were **retaliatory strikes** against the **Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP)**, responsible for killing **11 Pakistani soldiers** earlier this week.

4. Background: TTP & Cross-border Tensions

Aspect	Details
Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP)	A terrorist organization ideologically aligned with the Afghan Taliban but operating inside Pakistan.
Pakistan's Allegation	TTP enjoys safe havens inside Afghanistan under Taliban rule.
Taliban's Stand	Denies harboring TTP; calls it an internal issue of Pakistan .
Recent Context	The attack follows escalating border clashes and terror incidents in Orakzai and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa .

Date / Period

Event

Early October 2025

11 Pakistani soldiers killed by TTP in Orakzai region.

Following days

Pakistan conducts **airstrikes** near the **Durand Line**, allegedly hitting Afghan side.

Same week


Taliban Foreign Minister **Amir Khan Muttaqi** visited **India** (New Delhi).

Day after visit

Explosions reported in Kabul; Taliban accuses Pakistan of “**air incursion.**”

Aspect	Details
Length	~2,640 km border between Pakistan and Afghanistan
Origin	Drawn in 1893 by British India (Sir Mortimer Durand)
Afghanistan's View	Never officially recognized it as an international boundary
Taliban's Stance	Claims the Pashtun regions along the border are part of historic Afghan territory
Result	Frequent skirmishes, air violations, and militant movements across border areas

+ Empowering Framers through • Skill Development +

- 
- With **two-thirds of India's population dependent on agriculture, empowering farmers through skill development** has become a **priority**.
 - The government is prioritizing **skill development** to boost **farmers' productivity** and ensure **sustainable growth**.

- What are the Key Initiatives Focusing on Agricultural Skill Development?

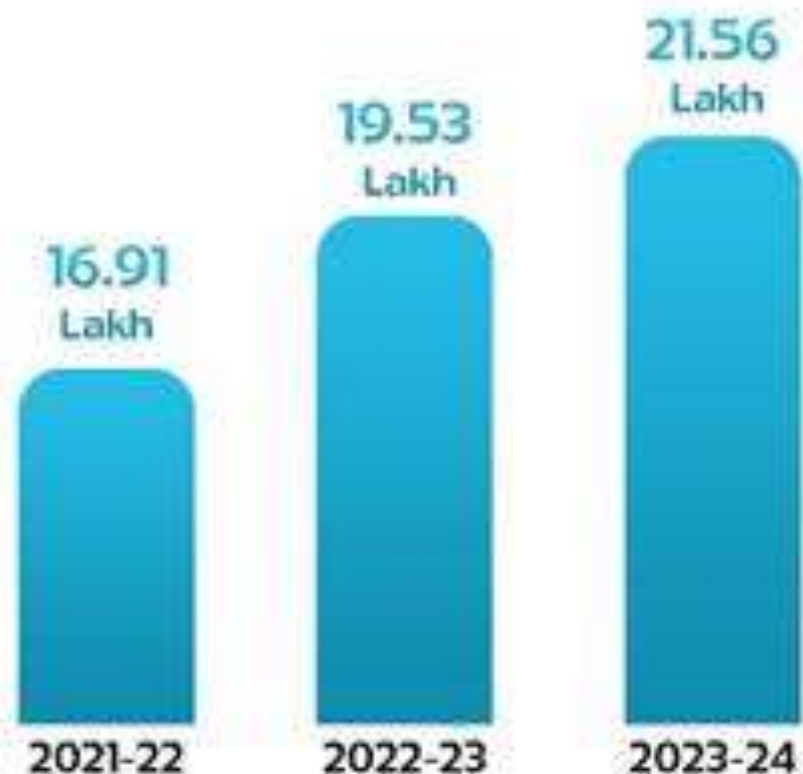
- **Institutional Platforms for Farmer Training:**

- **Krishi Vigyan Kendras (KVKs):** ICAR-established district-level KVKs providing **hands-on training**; trained **58.02 lakh farmers (2021–2024)** and **18.56 lakh till February 2025**.
- **Agricultural Technology Management Agency (ATMA):** ATMA promotes **decentralised extension reforms**; trained **1.27 crore farmers (2021–2025)** through **state-led training, demonstrations, and exposure visits**.

Krishi Vigyan Kendras (KVKs) Skilling Farmers, Empowering India



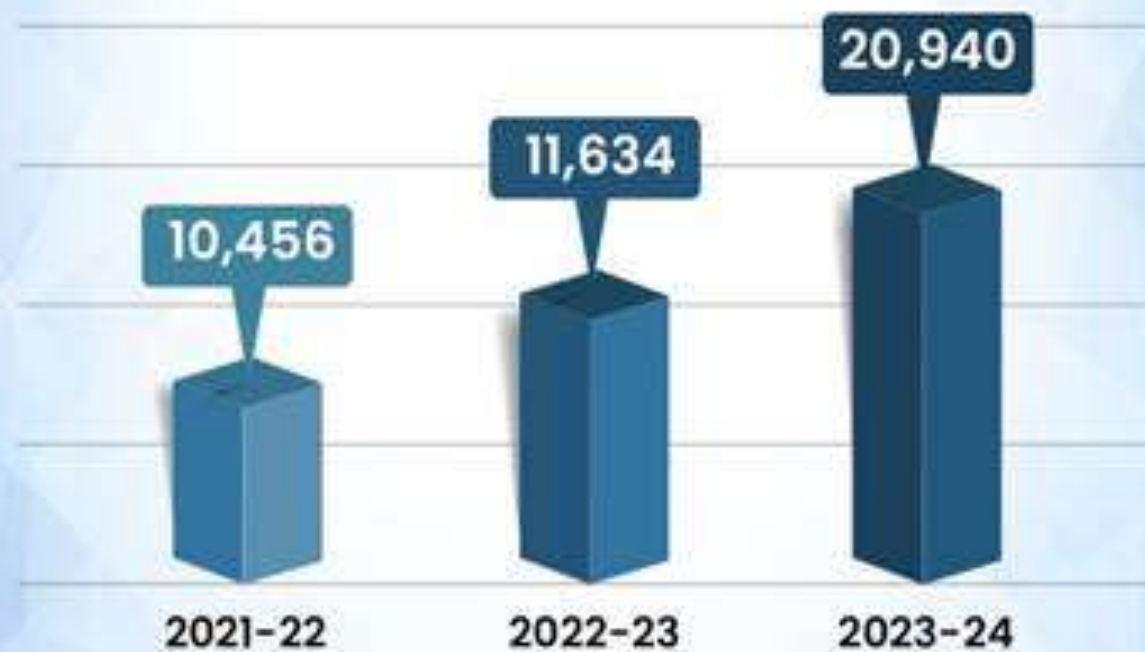
Cumulative Reach:
58.02 Lakh Farmers Trained (2021-24)





Skill Training of Rural Youth (STRY)

Cumulative Reach: 43,000+ Rural Youths Trained (2021-24)



▪ Sector-Specific Skilling Initiatives:

- **Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY 4.0)** enhances farmers' employability through large-scale agricultural skill training and certification.
 - It integrates **agriculture skills**, training **1.64 crore** and certifying **1.29 crore individuals** since 2015.
- **Mission for Integrated Development of Horticulture (MIDH)** promotes scientific horticulture practices for improved productivity and income.
 - The mission trained **9.73 lakh farmers (2014–2024)** in **horticulture practices**.
- **Rashtriya Gokul Mission (RGM)** focuses on improving livestock quality through training in breeding and artificial insemination.
 - It trained **38,736 technicians** in **artificial insemination and livestock breeding**.
- **Pradhan Mantri Kisan SAMPADA Yojana (PMKSY)** strengthens the agro-processing sector to reduce wastage and increase farmers' income.
 - The scheme approved **1,601 agro-processing projects**, benefiting **34 lakh farmers**.




SC Halts Aravalli Jungle Safari Over Ecological Concerns



The Supreme Court of India has temporarily halted the Aravalli Jungle Safari Project in Haryana, citing concerns over its environmental impact on one of India's most ecologically sensitive regions that serves as the green lung of Delhi-NCR. Aravalli Jungle Safari Project:

Announced in 2022, the project aims to build the world's largest jungle safari near Gurugram and Nuh. Inspired by Sharjah Safari (UAE) and Gir Sanctuary (Gujarat), it includes zones for big cats, bird parks, herpetarium, underwater world, and eco-tourism trails.

-
- Aravalli Range: It is considered one of the oldest mountain systems in the world. It spans over 800km from Gujarat to Delhi (through Rajasthan and Haryana).
 - The highest peak in the Aravalli Range is Guru Peak (Guru Shikhar) on Mount Abu (also known as Arbuda).
 - The range gives rise to rivers like the Banas, Sahibi (tributaries of the Yamuna), and Luni (flowing into the Rann of Kutch).

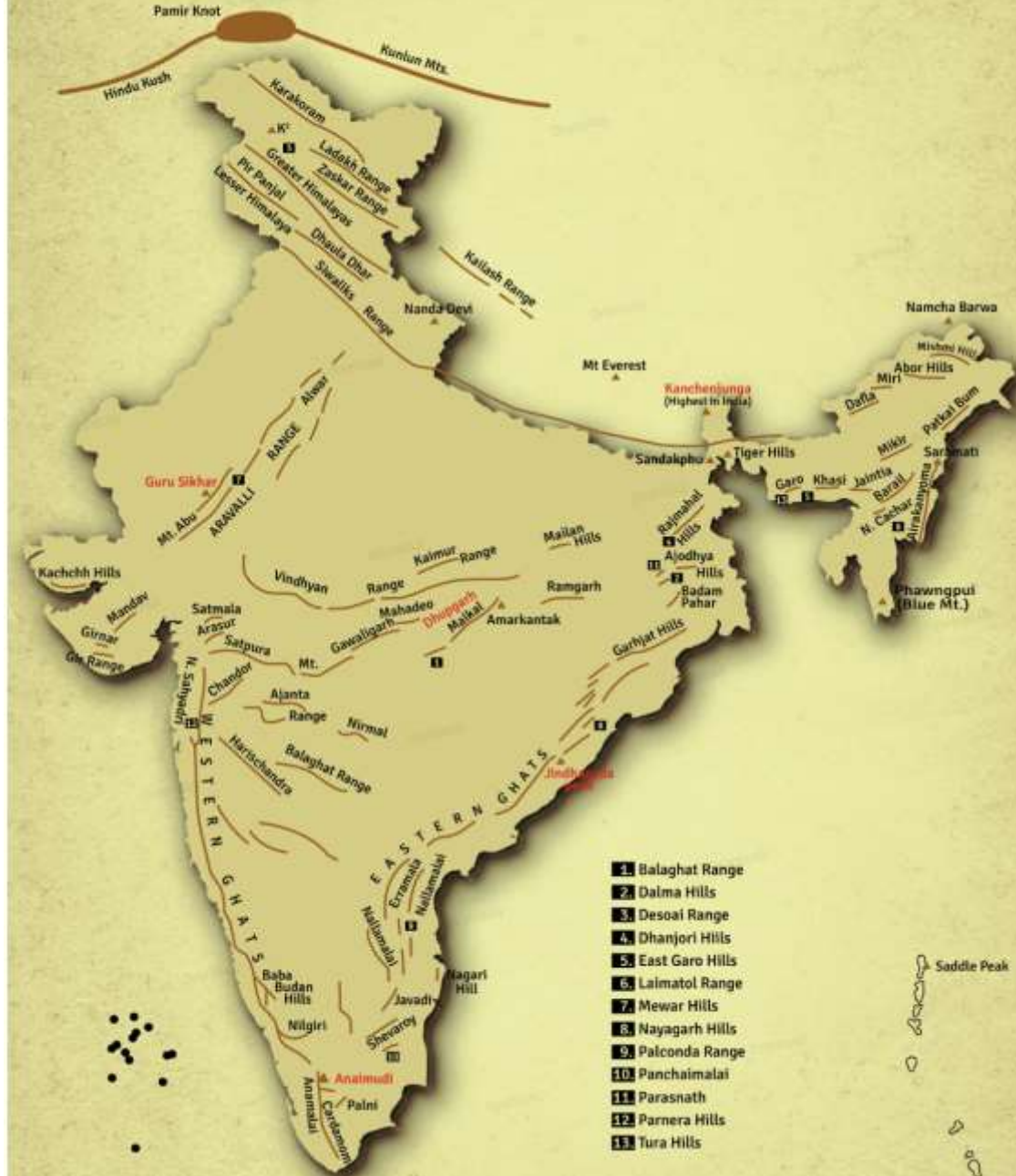


The **Aravalli Range** is divided into two sections: the **Sambhar-Sirohi range**, which includes **Guru Peak**, and the **Sambhar-Khetri range**.

Rich in **minerals and natural resources**, the range acts as a **barrier against the western desert**.

It is **densely forested in the south**, and much of the range is **rocky, sparsely populated**, and **covered with quartzite and sand**.

MOUNTAIN RANGES IN INDIA





Project Waterworth



Meta Platforms has chosen Mumbai and Visakhapatnam as the landing sites for the India leg of its multibillion-dollar undersea cable project Waterworth.

Project Waterworth: It is a subsea cable initiative by Meta Platforms aimed at strengthening global data connectivity.

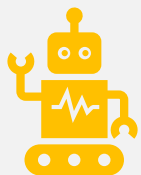
It connects the US, India, Brazil, and South Africa, making it the world's longest subsea cable, spanning over 50,000 km.



Route Design: Project Waterworth features a **W-shaped route** that bypasses the **Red Sea corridor**, reducing risks from **geopolitical conflicts and cable damages**.



Timeline & Capacity: Expected to be **operational by 2030**, with a design capacity of **1 petabit per second (Pbps)**.



Strategic Significance: The chosen **landing sites in India** enhance the country's role in **global AI infrastructure**, support **data localisation**, and strengthen India's **digital ecosystem**.

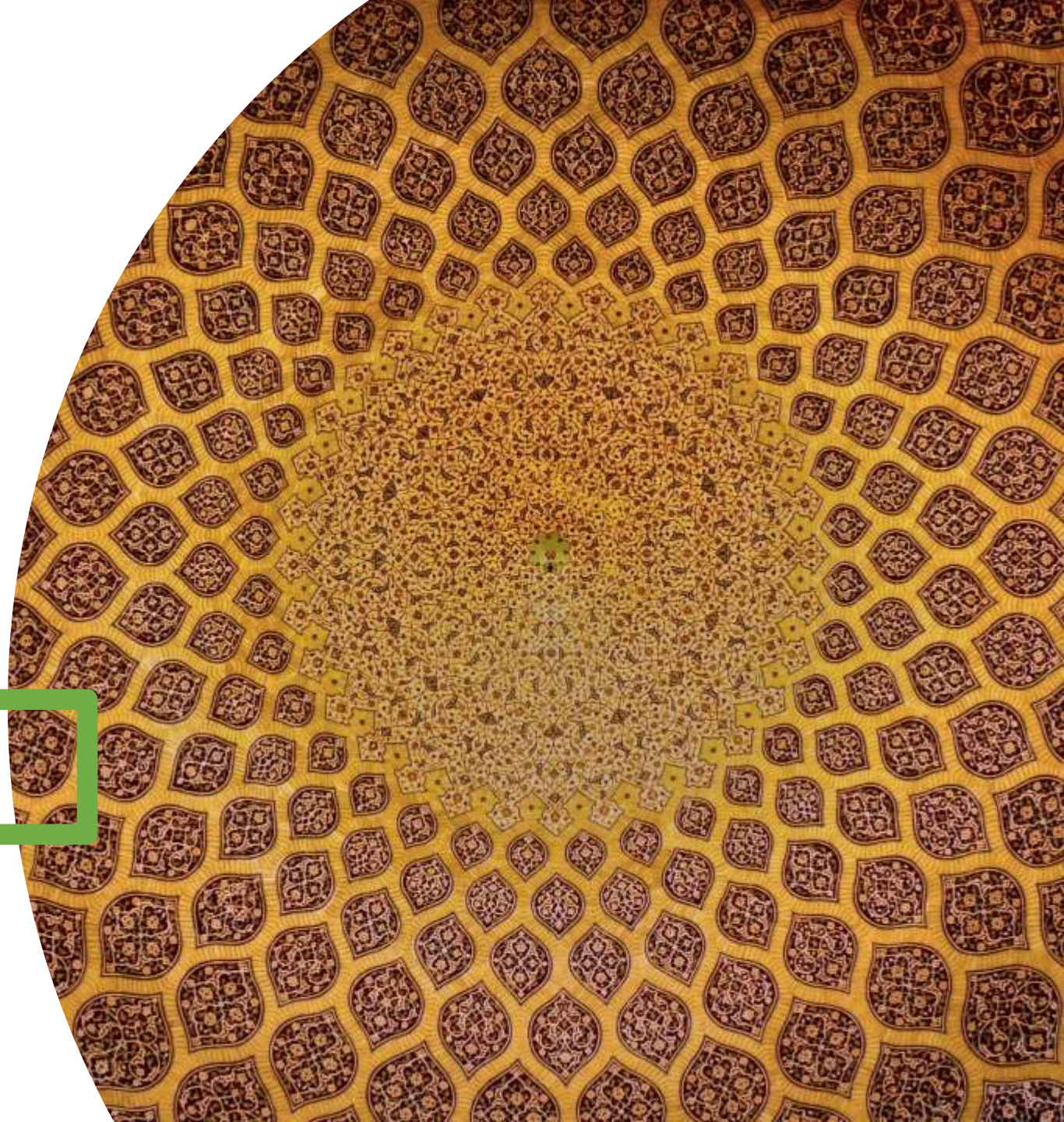
Meta's Project Waterworth Map

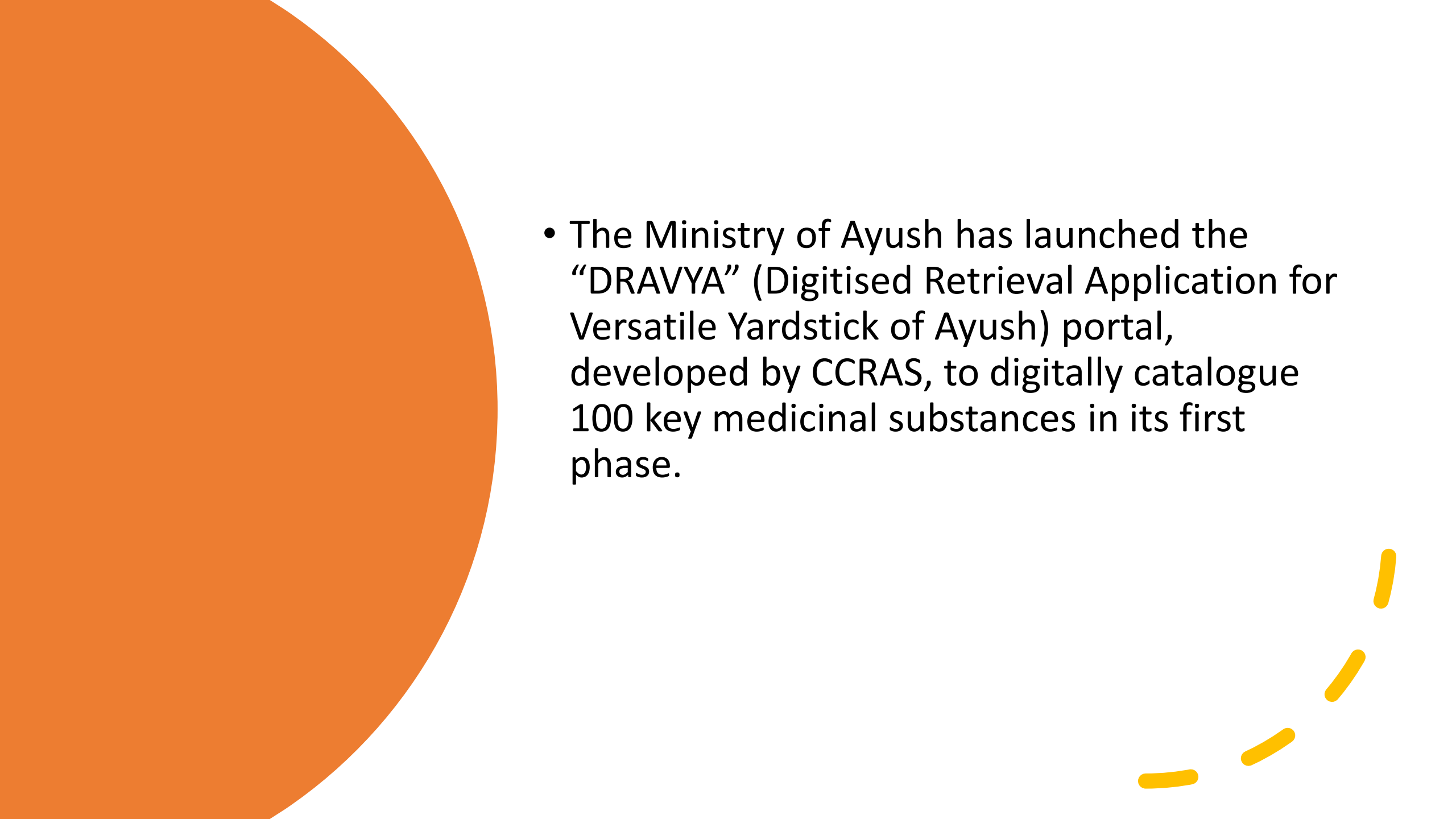




Foreign Currency Settlement System

DRAVYA Portal



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- The Ministry of Ayush has launched the “DRAVYA” (Digitised Retrieval Application for Versatile Yardstick of Ayush) portal, developed by CCRAS, to digitally catalogue 100 key medicinal substances in its first phase.



DRAVYA Portal

DRAVYA (Digitized Retrieval Application for Versatile Yardstick of AYUSH Substances) portal was launched on National Ayurveda Day (Sep 23, 2025).

About DRAVYA Portal

- ▶ **Ministry:** Initiatives of Ministry of Ayush.
- ▶ It is the **largest collection of data on Ayurvedic Ingredients and Products** made available to everyone.
- ▶ It is an ever growing, ever evolving database that covers **classical Ayurveda textbooks** as well as **contemporary scientific literature** and field studies.



सत्यमेव जयते
Ministry of AYUSH
Government of India





Thank you 😊

