

# Daily Current Affairs





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**The Hindu**



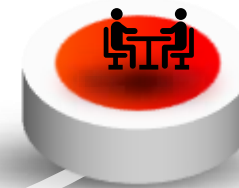
1  
**PIB, PRS & Other  
newspaper**



2  
**The Indian  
Express**

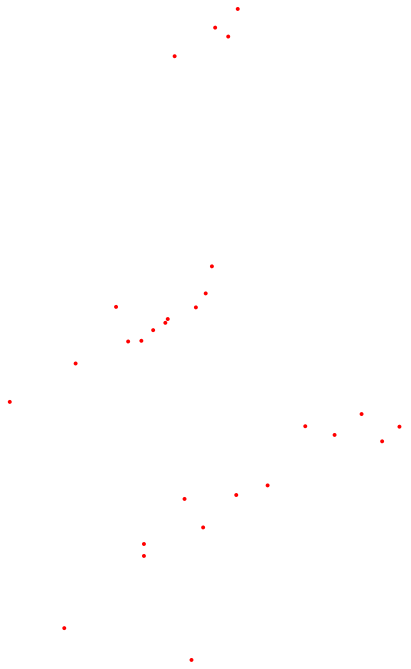


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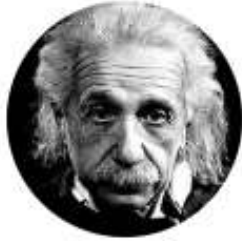
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“Try not to become a man of success. Rather become a man of value.”

— Albert Einstein







# India, U.S. inch closer to limited trade agreement

Deal is likely to be signed by November; the earlier goal was to finalise an initial agreement by July 9, when U.S. tariffs kick in; sticky issues include high U.S. tariffs on steel, aluminium imports

T.C.A. Sharad Raghavan  
NEW DELHI

An India-U.S. trade deal, including a potential initial “mini-deal” of limited concessions, will likely be firmed up by the original deadline of the fall season – between September and November in the U.S., according to sources aware of the progress of the negotiations.

Earlier, officials on both sides had expressed confidence of finalising an initial deal before July 9.

## Delegation visits

An Indian team led by Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal visited the U.S. last month to further the negotiations, followed by a week-long trip to India by a U.S. team of negotiators, which ended on June 10.

Despite “productive” talks, however, certain sticky issues remained that are stymieing the finalisation of an initial deal.

“India and the U.S. are working towards negotiating the first tranche of a mutually beneficial, multi-sector Bilateral Trade



**Negotiations on:** Union Minister Piyush Goyal meeting U.S. Secretary of Commerce Howard Lutnick in May.

Agreement (BTA) by fall 2025,” a government official told *The Hindu*.

The fall deadline had first been mentioned following Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s visit to the U.S. in February this year. In a joint statement following the visit, the two countries said that “the leaders announced plans to negotiate the first tranche of a mutually beneficial, multi-sector Bilateral Trade Agreement by fall of 2025”.

The official added that the negotiations with the U.S. “were productive” and helped in making progress towards crafting a “mutually beneficial and balanced agreement”, but added that some “sticky is-

suues” remained.

“One of our major issues is the tariffs they have imposed on steel and aluminium,” the official said. “We are trying to get a concession on this, but they are not yet agreeing to it.”

On June 4, U.S. President Donald Trump signed an executive order doubling tariffs on steel and aluminium imports to 50%. This came after his March decision to hike the import duties on these metals to 25%.

Following the March tariff hike, the Indian government had protested and had in May informed the World Trade Organisation that it reserved the right to impose reciprocal tariffs

## Trade troubles

Though India and the U.S. are keen to conclude a mutually beneficial Bilateral Trade Agreement at the earliest, hurdles remain

- U.S. wants greater agri-products **market access**, but India is resistant

- India wants **relaxations** on higher U.S. steel & aluminium tariffs, but the U.S. is reluctant

- U.S. President Donald Trump’s 90-day pause on tariff hikes ends on **July 9**

on the U.S. Since then, the matter has been discussed bilaterally between the two countries.

“On [the U.S.] side, they want us to open up our agriculture market too much, much more than we can afford to do and also protect our own farmers,” the official added.

Earlier this month, U.S. Secretary of Commerce Howard Lutnick had said a trade deal with India would materialise in the “not too distant future”.

The July 9 notional deadline for the trade deal is significant because that is the day when Mr. Trump’s 90-day pause on his ‘Liberation Day’ tariff hikes is set to end.

- India and the United States are nearing a **limited trade agreement**—or "mini-deal"—aimed at resolving long-pending trade tensions. Although the initial deadline was July 9, when U.S. tariffs on Indian steel and aluminium are scheduled to take effect, the deal is now expected to be signed by **November 2025**.





## ◆ 1. Key Elements of the Proposed Deal

Feature	Details
🤝 Agreement Type	Limited or “mini-deal” with phased concessions
🇺🇸 U.S. Demand	Greater market access for U.S. agricultural products
🇮🇳 India's Demand	Removal/reduction of high tariffs on Indian steel & aluminium
⌚ New Timeline	Fall season (Sept–Nov) 2025
📅 Earlier Deadline	July 9 (when 90-day U.S. tariff pause ends)
🔄 Format	First phase of <b>Bilateral Trade Agreement (BTA)</b>

## ◆ 2. Background & Timeline

Date/Event	Description
Feb 2025	PM Modi's visit to U.S. to kickstart trade talks
May 2025	Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal visits U.S.
June 4, 2025	Trump signs order doubling tariffs on Indian aluminium & steel (up to 50%)
July 9, 2025	Deadline for "Liberty Act" 90-day tariff pause
Sept–Nov 2025 (Fall Deadline)	Expected finalization of initial deal

### ◆ 3. Trade Troubles: Key Disagreements

Issue	India's Position	U.S. Position
Steel & Aluminium Tariffs	Wants removal	Reluctant
Agri Market Access	Protective	Seeks more
Intellectual Property	Sensitive	Seeks stronger compliance

🧠 *Quote from Indian official:*

"We are trying to get a concession on this (tariffs), but they are not yet agreeing to it."



Aspect	Details
Trade Volume (2024-25)	Over <b>\$200 billion</b> in bilateral trade
Major Indian Exports to USA	Pharmaceuticals, Gems & Jewelry, Textiles, Software Services, Organic Chemicals
Major US Exports to India	Aircraft, Defense Equipment, Electronics, Medical Devices, LNG, Agricultural Products
Framework Agreement	No formal Free Trade Agreement (FTA) yet; ongoing dialogues under <b>India-US Trade Policy Forum (TPF)</b>



## Key Trade Dialogues

- India-US TPF (restarted in 2021)
- Commercial Dialogue
- Strategic Energy Partnership

## Tariff Issues

Tariff barriers on agriculture, medical devices (India); steel & aluminum tariffs (USA)

## WTO Disputes

Multiple disputes settled amicably in 2023–2024 (e.g., poultry, ICT products, solar cells)

## Investment Treaty Talks

Discussions ongoing for a **Bilateral Investment Treaty (BIT)**

## Digital Trade & E-commerce

Contentious issues: Data localization, digital services taxes, IP protection

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### Digital Trade & E-commerce

Contentious issues: Data localization, digital services taxes, IP protection

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### Defense & Strategic Trade

Strengthened via **BECA, COMCASA, LEMOA** agreements; defense trade now exceeds \$20 billion

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### Clean Energy & Tech

Collaboration in **green hydrogen, solar, nuclear, and semiconductors**

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### Recent Developments (2025)

- Talks for a **Mini Trade Deal** resumed
  - Focus on **supply chain resilience**, tech cooperation
- 

### Visa & Mobility Issues

India seeks relaxed visa norms for **skilled professionals (H-1B)**

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### India's Trade Surplus with US

Over **\$35 billion**, despite efforts for more balanced trade



**Q. Consider the following statements about the recent India–U.S. trade negotiations:**

1. India has requested tariff relief on exports of steel and aluminium to the U.S.
2. The U.S. has demanded greater access to India's pharmaceutical market.
3. A "mini-deal" is being discussed as the first phase of a larger bilateral trade agreement.

**Which of the statements given above is/are correct?**

- A. 1 and 2 only
- B. 1 and 3 only
- C. 2 and 3 only
- D. All three

# Aadhaar mandatory for Tatkal bookings from July 1; curbs imposed on agents

**The Hindu Bureau**  
NEW DELHI

To ensure equitable access to Tatkal tickets and curb misuse, the Indian Railways on Wednesday announced a series of modifications to the Tatkal ticket booking system.

The new provisions include Aadhaar-based authentication as a prerequisite for online Tatkal bookings. "Effective from July 1, Tatkal tickets booked through IRCTC's official website and mobile app will be available only to users authenticated with Aadhaar," said a spokesperson of the Ministry of Railways. Aadhaar-based OTP authentication would be mandatory for all online Tatkal bookings from July 15, the spokesperson said.

## Offline bookings

The rule will be applicable to offline bookings also. "Tatkal tickets booked at computerised Passenger Reservation System (PRS) counters and through authorised agents will require OTP authentication sent to the mobile number provided by the user at the time of booking," the spokesperson said. This provi-

## Secure booking

Indian Railways has announced stricter rules for Tatkal ticket reservations to prevent fraudulent transactions

**1** Aadhaar-based authentication will be mandatory for online Tatkal bookings via IRCTC website/app starting July 1

**2** Aadhaar OTP verification will be required for all online and offline

Tatkal bookings from July 15

**3** Agents are barred from booking opening-day Tatkal tickets during the first 30 minutes of booking

Tatkal tickets shall be available for booking through computerized PRS (Passenger Reservation System) counters of Indian Railways/authorized agents only after authentication of a system-generated OTP

**RAILWAYS CIRCULAR**



sion, too, will come into effect from July 15.

To prevent bulk bookings during the critical opening window, the Railways has barred agents from booking opening-day Tatkal tickets during the first 30 minutes of the respective booking windows. "For AC classes, this restriction applies from 10 a.m. to 10.30 a.m., and for non-AC classes, from 11 a.m. to 11.30 a.m.," the spokesperson said. These changes, the Ministry noted, are intended to streng-

then user authentication mechanisms and ensure that the Tatkal quota benefits genuine passengers.

The Railways has urged passengers to link their Aadhaar numbers with their IRCTC user profiles to avoid any inconvenience.

Additionally, the Centre for Railway Information Systems (CRIS) and IRCTC have been instructed to implement the required system modifications and inform all Zonal Railways and relevant departments accordingly.




To curb misuse and ensure **equitable access to Tatkal tickets**, the Indian Railways will mandate **Aadhaar-based authentication** for online and offline Tatkal ticket bookings starting **July 1**, with further curbs on agents effective **July 15**.

## ◆ 1. Key Policy Changes

Provision	Effective Date	Details
Aadhaar mandatory for online Tatkal booking	July 1, 2025	Users must authenticate via Aadhaar OTP on IRCTC website/app
Aadhaar OTP required for offline bookings	July 15, 2025	Applies to PRS counters and authorized agents
Agents barred from booking Tatkal tickets in first 30 mins	July 15, 2025	Restriction time: 10–10:30 a.m. (AC), 11–11:30 a.m. (Non-AC)



## ◆ 2. Objective of the Reform

Goal	Description
 Prevent misuse	Prevent bulk bookings by touts during opening minutes
 Strengthen authentication	Ensure tickets go to genuine passengers via Aadhaar verification
 Modernize IRCTC booking systems	CRIS & IRCTC instructed to update backend and notify all zones

- **Q. With reference to recent reforms in Indian Railways' Tatkal ticket booking system, consider the following statements:**
- Aadhaar authentication is now mandatory for both online and offline Tatkal bookings.
- IRCTC agents can book Tatkal tickets throughout the day.
- The Centre for Railway Information Systems (CRIS) is not responsible for technical implementation.
- **Which of the statements given above are correct?**
- **A. 1 and 2 only**
  - b. 2 and 3 only**
  - c. 1, 2 and 3**
- **d. 1 only**

# U.S.-China deal is 'done', tariffs to stay at 55%, says Trump

**Associated Press**

WASHINGTON

U.S. President Donald Trump announced on Wednesday that Washington will get magnets and rare earth minerals from China under a new trade framework and that tariffs on Chinese goods will total 55%.

In return, Mr. Trump said, the U.S. will provide China "what was agreed to", including allowing Chinese students to attend American colleges and universities.

What Mr. Trump described as a "deal" actually is a framework to help the U.S. and China eventually negotiate a sought-after trade agreement, which Mr. Trump intends to do with numerous countries but so far has been unable to execute on as quickly as he promised the public he'd be able to.

A White House official, who was not authorised to discuss the terms publicly and insisted on anonymity to describe them, said the 55% was not an increase on the previous 30% tariff on China because Mr. Trump was including other pre-existing import taxes.

"OUR DEAL WITH CHINA IS DONE, SUBJECT TO FINAL APPROVAL WITH PRESIDENT XI AND ME.," Mr. Trump wrote Wednesday on his social media site.



The deal will help the U.S. and China eventually negotiate a sought-after trade agreement.

He said full magnets and any necessary rare earths will be supplied up front by China.

A Chinese statement on the talks did not reveal any details or concrete steps.

## Going to be great 'WIN'

In a follow-up social media post, the U.S. President said he and Xi "are going to work closely together to open up China to American Trade. This would be a great WIN for both countries!!!"

Senior U.S. and Chinese negotiators announced late Tuesday in London that they had agreed on a framework to get their trade negotiations back on track after a series of disputes that threatened to derail them.

The announcement came at the end of two days of talks in the British capital that wrapped up late Tuesday.



U.S. President Donald Trump announced a new **U.S.-China trade framework** agreement, under which:

China will supply the U.S. with **magnets and rare earth minerals**.

Tariffs on Chinese goods will remain at **55%** (not a hike, but includes earlier taxes).

The agreement is subject to final approval by **President Xi Jinping and President Trump**.

## ◆ Key Features of the Deal

Element	Details
🔑 Rare Earth Supply	China to supply magnets and rare earths to U.S.
🎓 Education Exchange	U.S. to allow more Chinese students to attend American universities
👛 Tariff Status	55% total tariffs on Chinese goods, <b>not a new increase</b> , includes earlier 30%
📄 Deal Type	"Framework" – sets stage for future comprehensive trade deal
← END Status	Announced as "done" but subject to <b>final leadership approval</b>

## ◆ Background Context

Date/Event	Description
June 2025	Two-day U.S.-China trade talks in London conclude
Earlier U.S. Tariffs	30% tariff on Chinese goods under earlier trade tensions
Rare Earths Importance	Used in electronics, EVs, military tech – U.S. relies heavily on Chinese supply
Trump's Strategy	Use tariffs to gain negotiation leverage; seeks bilateral deals

Use Case	Examples
Electronics	Mobile phones, LEDs
Green Tech	Wind turbines, EVs
Military	Guidance systems, radars
U.S. Dependency	~80% REEs imported from China (as of 2024)



Q. With reference to the U.S.-China trade relations, consider the following statements:

- The U.S. agreed to reduce tariffs on Chinese goods to 55% under the recent deal.
- The deal includes China supplying rare earth minerals to the U.S.
- The U.S. plans to allow more Chinese students under the agreement.
- **Which of the statements given above are correct?**
- **A. 1 and 2 only**
- **B. 2 and 3 only**
- **C. 1 and 3 only**
- **D. All three**

## IN BRIEF



## India and U.K. carry out joint naval exercise in Arabian sea

The Indian Navy's stealth frigate *INS Tabar*, a submarine, and P-8I maritime patrol aircraft participated in a passage exercise with the United Kingdom's Carrier Strike Group in the North Arabian Sea on June 9 and 10. The Ministry of Defence said on Tuesday. The U.K. formation comprised the aircraft carrier *HMS Prince of Wales* and frigate *HMS Richmond*. "The naval exercise demonstrates the deepening cooperation between the Indian Navy and the Royal Navy. The collaboration included unified control of integral helicopters, tactical manoeuvres and coordinated anti-submarine operations," the Ministry said in a statement.

## Indian Army contingent in Mongolia for 'Khaan Quest'

The Indian Army contingent arrived in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia, on Wednesday to participate in the multinational military exercise Khaan Quest, scheduled to be conducted from June 14 to 26. The annual exercise, initiated in 2003 between the U.S. and Mongolia, evolved into a multinational endeavour from 2006, bringing together military forces from across the globe to collaborate and enhance their peacekeeping capabilities. "The Indian Army contingent comprising 40 personnel is being represented mainly by troops from a battalion of the Kumaon Regiment. One woman officer and two women soldiers will also form part of the contingent," the Ministry stated.

## 'Polluting' plant in an eco-sensitive zone in Uttarkashi draws public ire

Jacob Koshy  
NEW DELHI

A solid waste incinerator installed at Gangotri, in Uttarakhand district of Uttarakhand, has enraged environmental and social-activist groups. The plant, equipped to combust municipal solid waste, is an "extremely polluting unit" and in the "red category" according to opponents, and they cannot be installed within the Gangotri National Park, which lies inside the Bhagirathi River Sonanelli Zone (BESZ), according to Central Pollution Control Board norms. "It is absolutely wrong for such an incinerator to have come up in such a location," said Hem Pandey, co-chair of the BESZ Monitoring Committee and a former official in the Union Environment Ministry. "We are a monitoring commi-



The solid waste treatment plant in Uttarakhand district.

tee and have consistently opposed this project," he told *The Hindu*. An Uttarakhand-based activist, Anant Puri, said that the plant had been installed around a year and a half ago, but has been in operation for the past two months. "The *Hindu* has been with some of the plant in action and the piles of solid waste

## 'Turn up in large numbers for Amarnath Yatra: J&amp;K L-G

The Hindu Bureau  
SRINAGAR

Jammu and Kashmir Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Wednesday performed the Pratham Pooja at the Amarnath shrine located in south Kashmir's Pahalgam, and urged devotees to turn up in large numbers for this year's pilgrimage that starts from July 1.

The pilgrimage spot lies in the same district as the Baramulla massacre where a deadly terrorist attack left 26 civilians dead on April 22.

"The J&K administration, the Amarnath Shrine Board, Army, Border Roads Organisation, Central armed police force, J&K police are working with dedication, coordination and clear objectives for hassle-free and safe pilgrimage," the Lieutenant Governor said. He urged devotees "to visit in large numbers and pray for the progress of J&K and the nation".

A Raj Bhavan spokesman said the puja marked the ceremonial beginning of the yatra.

The pilgrimage will begin from both routes — the Pahalgam track in Anantnag district and Badgam Ganderbal district and culminates on August 9.

## Three workers killed in explosion at T.N. firecracker factory

Three people sustain injuries, over 130 people were working at the unit in Virudhunagar district during blast: CM announces solatium of ₹4 lakh

The Hindu Bureau  
CHENNAI

Three workers were killed in an explosion at a firecracker manufacturing unit at Vaidyanagar village in Virudhunagar district of Tamil Nadu on Wednesday. Three more people sustained injuries.

The three who died in the blast that occurred at Vaidyanagar Fireworks near Karayampatti were identified as R. Soundarajam, 54, of Karayampatti, and A. Karuppalath, 37, and A. Ganeshan, 35, of Thandiyandam. While Soundarajam and Karuppalath died on the spot, Ganeshan succumbed to his injuries in hospital.

The blast, which killed his wife Petchiammal, 36, of Thandiyandam, were critically injured. He was admitted to Virudhunagar Government Medical College Hospital.

Mariamammal, 40, sustained head injuries after being hit by flying debris. At the time of the accident, over 130 people were



Fatal fire: Debris from the explosion at the fireworks unit in Virudhunagar district on Wednesday. SPECIAL AGENT

The Karayampatti police booked the fireworks unit's foreman, supervisor for negligence.

Working in the factory, which was licensed by the Tamil Nadu State Safety Organisation (PSE-80).

A chemical reaction led to the explosion around 11 a.m., police officials said. Finance Minister and Thiruvallur MLA Thangam Thennarasu and Virudhunagar Collector V.P. Jayasankar visited the injured

## Centre to revise AC temperature range for more efficiency

Press Trust of India  
NEW DELHI

The Bureau of Energy Efficiency (BEE) is engaged in preparing a framework to standardise default temperatures of air conditioners, including those in automobiles, in the range of 20-24 degrees Celsius to improve energy efficiency in the country.

Addressing a press conference on Tuesday, Union Power Minister Manohar Lal said the government was in talks with appliance makers and the States on standardising AC temperatures.

"Consultations are on, and once it's over, guidelines will be finalised accordingly. Some States have requested to consider region-wise humidity factor while making the guidelines," Mr. Lal said without sharing further details.

Asked if AC in cars will also have such standardised temperature, the Minister said the government was in consultation with automakers as well.

**Power demand** The announcement comes at a time when India's peak power demand has been rising and hit 241 GW on June 5.

Power Secretary Pankaj



Some States want region-wise humidity to be a factor while setting guidelines, it says

Agarwal said the move was aimed at improving energy efficiency in the country. Reduction of even 1 degree helps save 6% of energy. "There are cores of ACs in the country and every year new ones are getting installed, so you can imagine the savings," he said.

The BEE, under the Power Ministry, promotes the use of energy-efficient processes, equipment, devices and systems. It takes steps to encourage preferential treatment for the use of energy-efficient equipment or appliances.

"Discussions are under way on the subject but no final decision has been taken so far on the exact range of temperature or any timeframe to come out with the guidelines," an official said.

## India unlikely to ratify 'High Seas Treaty' at U.N. Ocean Conference

Jacob Koshy  
NEW DELHI

India is unlikely to ratify the biodiversity-focused National Jurisdiction (BIOJD) agreement — also known informally as the 'High Seas Treaty' — at the upcoming United Nations Ocean Conference in Nice, France, sources indicated to *The Hindu*.

Though India signed the agreement in September 2024, formal ratification is pending. Before proceeding, the government is required to amend certain laws, including the Biological Diversity Act. It is learnt, "This will probably be taken up after the Monsoon Session (July 12-August 12) and needs to be passed in Parliament. There are other issues that need to be sorted out," a person familiar with the negotiations said.

Union Minister for Science and Technology Jitendra Singh, who is representing India at the conference, which opens on June 13, stated in France that India was in



India had signed the agreement in 2024, pending ratification. Here, Jitendra Singh at the Ocean Conference 2025, in Nice.

As of June 10, 49 countries have ratified the treaty. Over 60 countries complete the process, the treaty will enter into legal force.

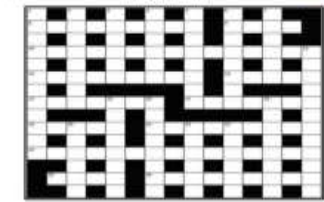
The high seas, beyond the exclusive economic zones (EEZs) of nations, are not under the jurisdiction of any single state, which explains its far-reaching and unique marine life. While com-

mercial extraction remains technically challenging, a clear mechanism for equitable sharing of potential economic benefits has not been finalised.

In his address on June 10, Mr. Singh highlighted India's progress on Sustainable Development Goal 14, the country's manned submersible mission, which is expected to reach ocean depths of up to 6,000 metres and is slated for a trial mission in 2025. He also referred to India's nationwide ban on single-use plastics and highlighted more than \$80 billion in blue economy investments.

India reiterated its call for a legally binding Global Plastics Treaty and launched the 'SAHAJ' digital ocean data portal at the conference, underscoring its growing leadership in global marine conservation efforts.

## THE CROSSWORD 14509



Across  
8 Spooner's stomach aid for gymnastic posture (9)  
9 First to list, dirty paintings (4)  
10 Rugby Union team rep, lively, consumed by disposition to be feverish (3,1,1)  
12 Abnormally thin English couple catching a cold, one died (9)

To solve this puzzle online, go to <https://www.hindu.com/crossword> or <https://www.hindu.com/crossword>

- 13 Record ton on betting left-handed (5)  
14 Observer, required when husband replaces rule (7)  
17 European cycling champs are superior in organisation (7)  
19 Regrets circumventing lecturer's principles (6)  
21 Wretched place concealing start of potential viral disease (6)  
24 Model of one, expect I am in line for this? (15)  
25 Discharge brat (4)  
26 Neurotome, one curiously odd? Yes, strangely delivered (9)  
**Down**  
3 Chase rashly down ending in acute muscle cramp (7,5)  
2 One nobody picked up before steady foot (8)  
4 African thug climbing this to start boxing session (8)  
4 Rodent damage mounding to millions (8)  
5 Damsi dude, lousy rider (8)  
6 Spot of balm coating bit of chapped area (8)  
7 Top bookish, contemptible person (6)  
11 Performers in street near ground (13)  
13 Fellow ends up supporting American nit pickers (8)  
15 Letter's entering indisposed party (4,2,2)  
18 Delay over pilot flying coach for drugs (8)  
20 First infiltrates security, seconds later stays under cover? (3,3)  
22 Sultana's rule repeatedly saving lives (8)  
23 Don quickly reversing operation divides family (4,2)

## SUDOKU

3		8		9	
	1				6
4	2			5	7
8		9	5		6
	7		2	4	
4	2	6			1
1				9	3
	3		1		5

DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★☆☆

8	3	9	6	7	4	5	6
1	5	1	9	4	8	3	2
3	4	6	7	4	1	8	2
9	8	7	4	1	5	6	3
4	7	3	1	2	9	6	5
6	9	3	1	2	4	8	5
5	1	2	8	7	9	3	4

## FAITH

## Listening to good advice

A person who commits mistakes will not readily admit his faults. He can get out of any quagmire if he listens to sound advice. A person should lend an ear to his spouse's advice, to the Yaksha Prastana of the Mahabharata, when the Yaksha asked Yudhishthira who the best companion for a man was, Yudhishthira replied that a person's wife would always be a great source of support. If the wife possesses a noble soul, what more does a man want? If she lacks this what is there in life for him? *(Gita Utharav - Kural 53.3)*

Trichy Sri Kalyanaraman said in a discourse that Tara, Vaali's wife, cautioned him when Vaali's brother Sugreeva challenged him to a fight. She told him that she had come to know Sugreeva acquainted with a friend called Rama. Tara said Rama's brothers are like the air of life to the kingdom to Bharatha, who ruled after the death of his brother Rama. But "you set out to wage a war with your brother," she said. When Rama hit Vaali with an arrow from behind, Vaali questioned Rama's act and argued with him. Vaali said others should study and follow dharma, but it flows in your blood. Rama replied that you abducted your brother Sugreeva's wife and also fought with your brother, who surrendered at your feet. You punished. After a series of arguments and counterarguments, Vaali accepted his mistakes. Vaali said Rama's arrow not only pierced his chest but also purified him. Vaali further said that at his last moment, Rama not only cleansed him from his sins but also protected his soul. He said to Sugreeva, "Rama gave you only the kingdom, but he gave me the everlasting happiness of moksha."










## India and U.K. carry out joint naval exercise in Arabian sea

The Indian Navy's stealth frigate *INS Tabar*, a submarine, and P-8I maritime patrol aircraft participated in a passage exercise with the United Kingdom's Carrier Strike Group in the North Arabian Sea on June 9 and 10, the Ministry of Defence said on Tuesday. The U.K. formation comprised the aircraft carrier *HMS Prince of Wales* and frigate *HMS Richmond*. "The naval exercise demonstrates the deepening cooperation between the Indian Navy and the Royal Navy. The collaboration included unified control of integral helicopters, tactical manoeuvres and coordinated anti-submarine operations," the Ministry said in a statement.

## Indian Army contingent in Mongolia for 'Khaan Quest'

The Indian Army contingent arrived in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia, on Wednesday to participate in the multinational military exercise Khaan Quest, scheduled to be conducted from June 14 to 28. The annual exercise, initiated in 2003 between the U.S. and Mongolia, evolved into a multinational endeavour from 2006, brings together military forces from across the globe to collaborate and enhance their peacekeeping capabilities. "The Indian Army contingent comprising 40 personnel is being represented mainly by troops from a Battalion of the Kumaon Regiment. One woman officer and two women soldiers will also form part of the contingent," the Ministry stated.

Project/Initiative	Details
 Samudrayaan	India's manned submersible mission – to dive 6000m in 2026
 Plastics Ban	Nationwide ban on single-use plastics
 Blue Economy	India showcased >\$80 billion in investments
 Global Plastics Treaty	India reiterated demand for legally binding agreement
 SHAHAV Portal	Digital ocean data portal launched by India



# India unlikely to ratify 'High Seas Treaty' at U.N. Ocean Conference

**Jacob Koshy**

NEW DELHI

India is unlikely to ratify the Biodiversity Beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ) agreement – also known informally as the 'High Seas Treaty' – at the ongoing United Nations Ocean Conference in Nice, France, sources indicated to *The Hindu*.

Though India signed the agreement in September 2024, formal ratification is pending. Before proceeding, the government is required to amend certain laws, including the Biological Diversity Act, it is learnt. "This will probably be taken up after the Monsoon Session (July 12-August 12) and needs to be passed in Parliament. There are other issues that also need to be sorted out," a person familiar with the negotiations said.



India had signed the agreement in 2024, pending ratification. (Seen here) Minister Jitendra Singh at the Ocean Conference 2025. AFP

As of June 10, 49 countries have ratified the treaty. Once 60 countries complete the process, the treaty will enter into legal force.

Union Minister for Science and Technology Jitendra Singh, who is representing India at the conference, which continues until June 13, stated in France that India was in

the "process of ratifying the treaty".

One of the most contentious aspects of the BBNJ is the sharing of resources. The high seas, lying beyond the exclusive economic zones (EEZ) of nations, are not under the jurisdiction of any single country, and are known to harbour unique and exotic marine life. While com-

mercial extraction remains technically challenging, a clear mechanism for equitable sharing of potential economic benefits is yet to be finalised.

In his address on June 10, Dr. Singh highlighted India's progress on *Samudrayaan*, the country's manned submersible mission, which is expected to reach ocean depths of up to 6,000 metres and is slated for a trial dive in 2026. He also referred to India's nationwide ban on single-use plastics and highlighted more than \$80 billion in Blue Economy investments.






India reiterated its call for a legally binding Global Plastics Treaty and launched the 'SAHAV' digital ocean data portal at the conference, underscoring its growing leadership in global marine conservation efforts.

India has signed but is unlikely to ratify the **High Seas Treaty (BBNJ – Biodiversity Beyond National Jurisdiction)** at the ongoing U.N. Ocean Conference 2025 in Nice, France.

The treaty aims to regulate the conservation and sustainable use of marine biodiversity in areas beyond national jurisdiction.

Feature	Details
Full Name	Biodiversity Beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ) Treaty
Nickname	High Seas Treaty
Aim	To protect and share marine biodiversity in <b>areas beyond exclusive economic zones (EEZs)</b>
Key Provision	<b>Equitable sharing of marine genetic resources</b>
Adoption Date	2023
India's Status	Signed in Sept 2024; ratification pending
Current Ratifiers	49 countries (as of June 10, 2025); 60 needed for enforcement

# ◆ India's Concerns and Pending Steps

Concern	Description	
 Legal Amendments Needed	Biological Diversity Act and other domestic laws must be amended	
 Parliamentary Approval Required	Expected to be discussed in Monsoon Session (July 12–August 12, 2025)	
 Resource Sharing Dispute	No clarity on mechanisms for economic benefit-sharing from marine resources	
 Technical Challenges	Commercial extraction of marine genetic material is still difficult	



## Q. Consider the following statements about the High Seas Treaty (BBNJ Agreement):

- It applies only to the Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZ) of coastal states.
- India has signed but not yet ratified the treaty.
- The treaty requires equitable sharing of marine genetic resources.
- **Which of the statements given above is/are correct?**
  - A. 1 and 2 only**
  - B. 2 and 3 only**
  - C. 1 and 3 only**
  - D. All three**

## Bad blood

### India and Canada must use every opportunity to reset ties

Ten years after he last visited Canada, Prime Minister Narendra Modi will travel to Kananaskis, Alberta, as a special invitee to the G-7 summit outreach (June 15-17), with some hopes that the invitation from Prime Minister Mark Carney will give the two countries a chance to reset bilateral ties. Mr. Carney's call to Mr. Modi last Friday, much many by surprise, as it appeared to come at the last minute, and possibly after some back-channel talks to ensure either side would be embarrassed by the outcome. Under fire for the invitation despite a pending trial against Indian government agents in Canada, Mr. Carney said, quite rightly, that India, as a major world economic force, deserves to be part of the G-7 outreach deliberations. Regardless of the reasoning, both the invitation and its acceptance indicate a desire on both sides to take India-Canada ties out of the present fumes. In the past two years, after former Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau went public with thus far unsubstantiated allegations that India was behind the assassination of Khalistani leader Hardeep Singh Nijjar, and was targeting other Canadian nationals, and after Mr. Carney's harsh words in Parliament, both countries have cut mission strengths down to a third. Canada suspended talks with India over a trade agreement, while India temporarily stopped issuing visas to Canadians, citing persistent threats to Indian diplomats. Apart from considerable trade and investment, India and Canada are inextricably bound by their people, who have settled in Canada, but remain connected to India. Given the tough task ahead, teams preparing for the Carney-Modi meeting must work with the utmost sensitivity. While ties have roadblocked since 2023, they have not been severed, with a dating back to the 1970s, primarily over the Khalistani issue. It would be naïve to imagine that these issues can be resolved through the summit. Considered decision by both leaders to publicly show respect for each other's positions is necessary. Rotating the high commissioners and other diplomats to their posts is an imperative, along with a possible temporary suspension of trade talks. Speaking in Parliament, Mr. Carney said that Mr. Modi has agreed to a "low emotion dialogue" where, he decided, the major issues over Khalistani threats to Indian diplomats and community centres will come up and the public messaging from the meeting will be the most important part of ensuring a path to improved relations. "Summit-level meetings" such as the one planned in Kananaskis can only open a door toward bettering ties. It is the necessary tedious and painstaking talks behind the scenes that will actually allow the two countries to step through those doors and essay a different way of engaging each other.

## Connecting bridge

### The rail link will bring Kashmir closer to the rest of India

Kashmir to Karthiyakumar is a figurative expression to denote the geographical separation of the Indian state of Jammu and Kashmir from the rest of India, and for the first time in history these are connected by rail. With the inauguration of the 273-kilometre Udhampur-Srinagar-Baramulla Rail Link (USBRL) project, which has been a long-pending issue, the Kashmir Valley has been connected to the national rail network. The tough, unromantic topography of the Himalayas challenged the engineering capabilities of the Indian Railways, but it has come out with flying colours. The engineering marvel, the Chashni Rail Bridge, that stands 18 metres higher than the Eiffel Tower, is the world's highest railway arch bridge. It spans above the riverbed, spanning 1.315 km, it will endure wind speeds of up to 260 km per hour and has been built to last 100 years. Nearby, the Auli-Kuldar Bridge, rises boldly across the rugged terrain as India's first cable-stayed bridge. Towering 331 m above the riverbed and stretching 725 m across, it is anchored by 96 high-tensile cables. 8,400 metric tonnes of structural steel went into its construction, built at a cost of ₹43,760 crore, the USBRL, the longest of mountains to set up 36 tunnels that span 119 kilometres and 943 bridges through ridges and mountainous passes. Kashmir's decades of geographical isolation have finally come to an end. The Vande Bharat Express between Srinagar in the Kashmir region and Katra in the Jammu region, which was also flagged off by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, cuts the surface journey to three hours between the two points. Later this year, a scheduled direct train service between the national capital New Delhi and Srinagar will allow commuters to touch base in just 10 hours compared to over 24 hours in the past. The Vande Bharat Express, a long-distance high-speed service, is bound to end the psychological barriers, multiply the economic growth and act as a game changer for the economy of Jammu and Kashmir (J&K). The train service has brought renewed hope to the region not only after the Pulwama terror attack in April 2023 pushed India and Pakistan to a short conflict. India's "Operation Sindoor", against terror infrastructure across Pakistan, and the ending the ceasefire agreement and targeting civilians, leaving 18 dead and over 1,300 houses damaged. While disrupting the train service in Katra, Mr. Modi rightly described the rail link as "a symbol of a new, empowered J&K". The bridge will go a long way in bringing the people of Kashmir closer to the rest of India.

## Recounting Velpur's story in ending child labour

Every year, June 12 is observed as World Day Against Child Labour (WDACL) under the auspices of the International Labour Organization (ILO). In an attempt to draw the attention of the world on the issue of child labour, the day brings together governments, employers and workers' organisations as well as civil society to work towards ending child labour. Though Sustainable Development Goal Target 8.7 calls on the global community to take effective measures to end child labour in all its forms by 2025, we are far from achieving this.

Child labour is prevalent all over the world, robbing many children of their basic right to live with dignity, enjoy their childhood and attain their full development potential. Across the world, 160 million children are estimated to be involved in child labour – which is almost one among 10 children. The Africa, Asia and the Pacific regions together account for almost nine out of every 10 children being in child labour. The COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated the situation for many underprivileged children, when their schools closed, and their parents lost their jobs/wages. Many children who dropped out of school, and who were forced to work to supplement their family income, have not returned to school.

**The extent of child labour in India**

India has a significant incidence of child labour. Census 2011 estimated that 43.53 lakh children in the age group of five to 14 were involved in child labour due to factors such as poverty, ill health, non-availability and illiteracy. Child labour is prevalent in health, carpet weaving and firework industries. Apart from considerable trade and investment, India and Canada are inextricably bound by their people, who have settled in Canada, but remain connected to India. Given the tough task ahead, teams preparing for the Carney-Modi meeting must work with the utmost sensitivity. While ties have roadblocked since 2023, they have not been severed, with a dating back to the 1970s, primarily over the Khalistani issue. It would be naïve to imagine that these issues can be resolved through the summit. Considered decision by both leaders to publicly show respect for each other's positions is necessary. Rotating the high commissioners and other diplomats to their posts is an imperative, along with a possible temporary suspension of trade talks. Speaking in Parliament, Mr. Carney said that Mr. Modi has agreed to a "low emotion dialogue" where, he decided, the major issues over Khalistani threats to Indian diplomats and community centres will come up and the public messaging from the meeting will be the most important part of ensuring a path to improved relations. "Summit-level meetings" such as the one planned in Kananaskis can only open a door toward bettering ties. It is the necessary tedious and painstaking talks behind the scenes that will actually allow the two countries to step through those doors and essay a different way of engaging each other.

The tragic deaths in a stampede in Bengaluru on June 8, 2023, of 13 people who were part of a huge crowd that had gathered near the M. Chinnappaiah Stadium to celebrate the victory of Royal Challengers Bengaluru (RCB), after RCB's first ever Indian Premier League (IPL) title in 2023, is a stark reminder of three issues. They are our national state of degradation, our indifference to the government's lack of preparedness to contain crowd movement, and of people's lack of responsibility. Despite knowing full well that such gatherings end as physically unsafe situations, we see people rush madly, throwing caution to the winds. Social media in particular and 24/7 visual media houses play a great role in adding much hype to these events. It is almost as if missing such an opportunity is akin to foregoing the most important part in one's life.

**The aim is profits**

Cricket, especially in India, has become a great money-spinning industry. Hence, those in charge do everything possible to draw in large crowds. The risk that such gatherings pose to lives is known. Every such event results in crowds of people who are far more in number than the capacity of the venues. More footfalls spell more profits for every one in the business.

It is common knowledge that the licences and the necessary permissions for hosting such events are not granted by merely adhering to the rules and the regulations on paper. Much of these are linked to the "showing of securities" on those in power. Hence, it has existed that happened during the IPL season. In a reported case during an RCB versus Chennai Super Kings match, in early May 2025, at the Chinnappaiah stadium, the family of an Indian Police Service (IPS) officer brought in the family of an Indian Revenue Service (IRS) officer over free seating in the VIP gallery. The case resulted in a first information

**REPORT ON POPULATION**

The report by the United Nations Population Fund estimating India's population to have hit the 148.39 crore mark is not surprising (Page 1, June 11). We face a ticking time bomb. At a time when the country is facing irregular and unemployment levels have risen, there is a dire need to arrest population growth on a war footing.

**Trabhu Raj R.**  
Bengaluru

While concerns over overpopulation have long

**Ansh Kumar G.**

is a former Indian Administrative Service (IAS) officer, and is currently a senior faculty member in the Centre for Policy Research

**The Velpur model**

Velpur Mandal (suburb of Nizamabad district in Telangana) has been a shining example, and was once notorious for child labour. But in a dramatic way it became a rare exception of abounding child labour in all its forms by 2025, we are far from achieving this.

Child labour is prevalent all over the world, robbing many children of their basic right to live with dignity, enjoy their childhood and attain their full development potential. Across the world, 160 million children are estimated to be involved in child labour – which is almost one among 10 children. The Africa, Asia and the Pacific regions together account for almost nine out of every 10 children being in child labour. The COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated the situation for many underprivileged children, when their schools closed, and their parents lost their jobs/wages. Many children who dropped out of school, and who were forced to work to supplement their family income, have not returned to school.

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Twenty-four years later, there is 100% retention in schools and no child labour in this mandal in Telangana

**Sudha Nimmalagadda**

is a human rights activist and advocate in the Madras High Court

report being filed. While the many uncomfortable realities are filled up in no time by those who pay for them, the VIP enclosures, which have the best seats and stadium and field view, are generally occupied by those who wield power and enjoy the benefits.

The private industry which is most lucrative, with millions made in profits, offers safety sums of compensation as compensation for those who lost their life in the stampede in Bengaluru. No amount of money can ever compensate the loss for the families, concerned and safety of those who saw the scant respect and value for a common person's life.

It is time that whenever there is a gathering for an event that is governed by economic considerations, the safety of those who are also present should be a suitable caution deposit. With the said deposit money, the state ought to ensure the security and safety of spectators or attendees.

When a small hall is granted a licence, the mandatory requirements include the number of entrance and exit points, the seating arrangements, a disaster drill, proper fire extinguishers, appropriate audio/visual systems and even parking facilities. Therefore, it is shocking that there is scant observance of safety requirements when very large crowds gather in open-air stadiums. Compliance with the rules and regulations is very poor in many such instances.

**Scant safety**

The concept of public safety in public spaces is practically absent. For example, food fairs are held in an unsafe manner and one finds open cooking running all over the floor. There is no safety when stoves are lit and there is large-scale cooking in the open. There are also combustible camping structures. There is no sense of fear and safety measures are "more

ensure that all children in the five to 14 age group in their village were sent to school. The government in turn undertook to provide access, infrastructure and teachers. This was the first time that such an agreement had been signed between panchayats and the government. There is no child labour – an achievement that is very zealously guarded by the community. To cherish this precious achievement of being the first mandal in the State to be declared child labour free and to remind them of their commitment to sustain it, villagers erected boards in every village with the words, "There is no child labour in our village".

On October 8, 2021, as a part of the "Anadi Ka Anand Ka Mahotsav", the XV, Civil National Labour Institute, OVCNLD Noida, Uttar Pradesh (under the Ministry of Labour and Employment, Government of India) organised a programme in Nizamabad. The event was to celebrate 20 years of successful intervention "to eliminate child labour and the declaration of Velpur Mandal, as Child Labour Free". All participants, including the aila parishad members and people involved in the campaign were honoured for their role in sustaining it. The challenge made to the local media to identify at least one child who was not in school had no takers. A leading news magazine had an exclusive story on this event.

The Velpur story is well documented and has been appreciated by the ILO and the media. Velpur has been visited by many experts in the field of education and child labour. The former President of India, A.P.J. Abdul Kalam, and members of the National Human Rights Commission, India, sent letters of appreciation.

The Velpur model, where there was the complete participation of the community in sustaining the fight against child labour, is an integral part of all training programmes that are organised by the VVOB. More aware of the sustained success, the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Labour, Textiles and Skill Development asked the then District Collector, who led this campaign, to make a presentation before him on November 24, 2022. The Parliamentary Standing Committee appreciated and acknowledged its success.

**What is vital**

This is a community-led success story that is testimony of the axiom that social issues can be successfully and sustainably addressed only if the state empowers the people's movements. It is a proud moment for this writer to have been associated with it. He was the Collector of Nizamabad district, when this drive against child labour was taken up in Velpur in 2001.

## It is profit first, life and safety second

honoured in the breach, than the observance". In an incident in Chennai, there were reports of several visitors at an amusement park stranded for hours on a giant wheel after the device experienced technical problems. They had to be rescued by the fire services department.

We, as a country, have no value for life. Most of our roads have no pedestrian walkways. There are no tracks marked for slow-moving vehicles. Motor cars and bullock carts travel along the same road in a tight for space. There is no respect for the pedestrian, who in turn faces grave danger in the form of speeding automobiles, broken pavements and aggressive stray animals.

The 14 dead in a stampede of the thousands of people who die on our roads are just cold statistics for us. We have learnt to brush aside such tragic incidents by blaming it on karma. There are no lessons learnt. There is no accountability. Some officials are suspended while others are transferred. These are sure to be revoked at a later date.

**Introduce a culture of audits**

The need is to have a detailed and scientific study of crowd management by experts and conduct their findings in an earnest way. A country with a population that has hit 148.39 crore cannot afford to falter on this issue. Without such an audit, I cannot call itself a civilised and advanced country and a nation that is safe for all its citizens. Every life is precious and there must be a dedication to ensure the safety of all.

Let us not lose life and limb by promoting the commerce of and the gains for the rich. Those who are hurt are mortals who fight battles every day for their daily bread. It is unfortunate that this will too pass with no lessons learnt. The rich will keep getting richer at the cost of the struggling masses if we do not act now for a better and safer tomorrow.

**Crime and media content**

The report, on a murder in Meghalaya, is disturbing. In this connection, questions need to be raised about content being aired on some television channels, on crimes, in the name of presenting "dramatised versions of crime cases, with a view to opening the minds of viewers". Such harm may be being caused.

**Sarah Abraham,**  
Pondicherry

Letters emailed to letters@thehindu.co.in must carry the postal address and the full name.

**Letters to the Editor**

The report by the United Nations Population Fund estimating India's population to have hit the 148.39 crore mark is not surprising (Page 1, June 11). We face a ticking time bomb. At a time when the country is facing irregular and unemployment levels have risen, there is a dire need to arrest population growth on a war footing.

**Trabhu Raj R.**  
Bengaluru

While concerns over overpopulation have long

**Cargo ship fire**

The blaze on the M.V. Viji on June 30 off the Kerala coast is more than a road-sa

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**Scant safety**

The concept of public safety in public spaces is practically absent. For example, food fairs are held in an unsafe manner and one finds open cooking running all over the floor. There is no safety when stoves are lit and there is large-scale cooking in the open. There are also combustible camping structures. There is no sense of fear and safety measures are "more

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# *It is profit first, life and safety second*

**T**he tragic deaths in a stampede in Bengaluru on June 4, 2025, of 11 people who were part of a huge crowd that had gathered near the M. Chinnaswamy Stadium to celebrate the victory of Royal Challengers Bengaluru (RCB), after RCB's first-ever Indian Premier League (IPL) title in 2025, is a stark reminder of three issues. They are our national sense of disproportionate enthusiasm for victory; of government missionaries' lack of preparedness to contain crowd movement, and of people's sense of immortality. Despite knowing full well that such gatherings end as physically unsafe situations, we see people rush madly, throwing caution to the winds. Social media in particular and 24X7 visual media houses play a great role in adding much hype to these events. It is almost as if missing such an opportunity is akin to foregoing the most important part in one's life.

## **The aim is profits**

Cricket, especially in India, has become a great money-spinning industry. Hence, those in charge do everything possible to draw in large crowds. The risk that such gatherings pose is known. Every such event results in crowds of people who are far more in number than the capacity of the venues. More footfalls spell more profits for every one in the business.

It is common knowledge that the licences and the necessary permissions for hosting such events are not granted by merely adhering to the rules and the regulations on paper. Much of these are linked to the 'showering of bounties' on those in power. Here is an example that happened during this IPL season. In a reported case during an RCB versus Chennai Super Kings match, in early May 2025, at the Chinnaswamy Stadium, the family of an Indian Police Service (IPS) officer fought with the family of an Indian Revenue Service (IRS) officer over free seating in the VIP gallery. The case resulted in a first information



**Sudha  
Ramalingam**

is a human rights  
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report being filed. While the many uncomfortable galleries are filled up in no time by those who pay for them, the VIP enclosures, which have the best seats and stadium and field views, are generally occupied by those who wield power and enjoy the freebies.

An industry which is most lucrative, with millions made in profits, offers paltry sums of money as compensation/solatium for those who lost their life in the stampede in Bengaluru. No amount of money can ever compensate the loss for the families concerned, and it only goes to show the scant respect and value for a common person's life.

It is time that whenever there is a gathering for an event that is governed by economic considerations and motives of profit, there is also provision made for a suitable caution deposit. With the said deposit money, the state ought to ensure the security and the safety of spectators or attendees.

When a small hall is granted a licence, the mandatory requirements include the number of entrance and exit points, the seating arrangements, a doctor on call, public conveniences, appropriate audio/visual systems and even parking facilities. Therefore, it is shocking that there is scant observance of safety requirements when very large crowds gather in closed/open air stadiums. Compliance with the rules and regulations is very poor in many such instances.

## **Scant safety**

The concept of public safety in public spaces is practically absent. For example, food fairs are held in an unsafe manner and one finds open wiring running all over the floor. There is no safety when stoves are lit and there is large-scale food preparation that are done under combustible camping structures. There is no sense of fear and safety measures are 'more

honoured in the breach, than the observance'. In an incident in Chennai, there were reports of several visitors at an amusement park stranded for hours on a giant wheel after the device experienced technical problems. They had to be rescued by the fire services department.

We, as a country, have no value for life. Most of our roads have no pedestrian walkways. There are no tracks marked for slow-moving vehicles. Motor cars and bullock carts traverse along the same roads in a fight for space. There is no respect for the pedestrian, who in turn faces grave danger in the form of speeding automobiles, broken pavements and aggressive stray animals.

The 11 dead in a stampede or the thousands of persons who die on our roads are just cold statistics for us. We have learnt to brush aside such tragic incidents by blaming it on karma. There are no lessons learnt. There is no accountability. Some officials are suspended while others are transferred. These are sure to be revoked at a later date.

## **Introduce a culture of audits**

The need is to have a detailed and scientific study of crowd management by experts and execute their findings in an earnest way. A country with a population that has hit 146.39 crore cannot afford to falter on this issue. Without such an audit, it cannot call itself a civilised and advanced country and a nation that is safe for all its citizens. Every life is precious and there must be a dedication to ensure the safety of all.

Let us not lose life and limb by promoting the commerce of and the gains for the rich. Those who are hurt are mortals who fight battles every day for their daily bread. It is unfortunate that this too will pass with no lessons learnt. The rich will keep getting richer at the cost of the struggling masses if we do not act now for a better and safer tomorrow.

Theme	Description
Profit over People	Events prioritize commercial gains over public safety. IPL and similar events draw large, unsafe crowds beyond venue capacity.
Lax Regulation & Oversight	Licenses for events are given despite poor adherence to safety norms. Influence and power often override safety checks.
Poor Public Safety Infrastructure	Absence of pedestrian pathways, crowd control systems, safety audits, and emergency protocols even in urban areas.
No Value for Human Life	Meagre compensation for the deceased; lack of accountability from officials. Tragedies are treated as statistics, not systemic failures.
Lack of Preventive Auditing	Author calls for mandatory, scientific crowd safety audits by experts before granting licenses.
Role of Media and Public Perception	Social media and sensationalist news exacerbate crowd surges; there's societal glorification of such events without caution.



Paper	Relevant Topics
GS Paper 2	Governance, Role of Civil Services, Government Policies & Accountability
GS Paper 3	Disaster Management, Public Safety Infrastructure, Urban Planning
Essay Paper	Ethics in Governance, Value of Human Life, Social Responsibility of Media
GS Paper 4 (Ethics)	Public Service Ethics, Accountability, Compassion, Professional Integrity

# Next & Context

THE HINDU

## NEWS IN NUMBERS

**Number of persons affected by diarrhoea outbreak in Jajpur**

**250** The death toll in the diarrhoea outbreak in Odisha's Jajpur district rose to 250, with officials confirming the death of another person. Official reports said the disease was first reported from the Bhermalata area. Out of the affected persons, 40-50 have recovered. **21**

**Number of IPs linked to cybercrimes taken down in Singapore**

**1,000** Singapore has taken down more than a thousand internet protocols (IPs) believed to be linked to cybercrimes. Officers from the Cybercrime Command worked with the Cyber Security Agency of Singapore to take them down. **21**

**Number of fighter jets to be exported by Turkey to Indonesia**

**48** Turkey's defence sector, including the famous Bayraktar drones, accounts for a significant share of the country's export revenues. The contract, valued at \$10 billion, includes the production and delivery of the Kaan fighter jets to Indonesia over a 10-year period. **22**

**Uttarakhand villages to be revitalised under Vibrant Village 2.0**

**40** These villages are located in six development blocks spread over three districts of Uttarakhand including Chamoli, Pithoragarh and Udhampur Singh Nages. Additional Secretary and nodal officer for the Vibrant Village programme in the State, Anuradha Patel said. **21**

**The increase in Sri Lanka's power tariff ahead of IMF visit**

**15** In per cent, Sri Lankan authorities on Wednesday approved a 15% increase in electricity tariffs, effective from Thursday, aiming to address the financial challenges faced by the state-run Ceylon Electricity Board (CEB). **21**

(COMPILED BY THE HINDU DATA TEAM)

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## A different approach to the caste census

What have the Bihar caste survey and Telangana's 2025 caste survey revealed? How is a social management approach different from top-down welfare models? Would a caste census deepen social divide and undermine national unity? What about democratic accountability?

### EXPLAINER

Somy Kumbhakar  
Anil Chandra

The story so far:

The Cabinet Committee on Political Affairs, chaired by Prime Minister Modi, has decided to conduct caste enumeration in the upcoming Census. As per Article 346 of the Constitution, the Census is a Union subject listed in the 7th schedule. The caste census must be viewed beyond binaries of "for or against" to envision a more transformative idea — as a foundational tool for what might be called a social management approach to governance.

**What were the findings from State-level caste censuses?**

The Bihar caste survey (2023) found that Other Backward Classes (OBCs) and Economically Backward Classes (EBCs) together make up over 83% of the population, with EBCs alone at 36.03%. Scheduled Castes (SCs) account for 19.63%, and Scheduled Tribes (STs) for 1.68%. The general category comprises only 15.52%. Additionally, over 34% of Bihar's families live on less than ₹200 per day, with nearly 44% of SC households below that line. In Telangana's 2025 survey, Backward Classes (BCs) constituted 56.33% of the population, with 18% Muslims forming a substantial 10.06%. These numbers reveal a stark reality: India's marginalised communities form the majority but are significantly underrepresented in education, employment, and governance.

Data shared by the Union Minister of State for Education in Parliament reveals that only 4% of professors and 6% of associate professors in 48 Central Universities are OBCs, while 80% are from the general category. This imbalance exists despite the Central Educational Institutions Reservation in Teachers' (CERIT) Act, 2018.

Yet, the policy response is hindered by



**Important numbers:** An enumerator collects information for the caste census in Bihar in 2023. **21**

the absence of reliable data. India hasn't conducted a full caste census since 1931. The 2011 Socio-Economic and Caste Census (SECC) was marred by data inconsistencies and its findings were withheld. Without up-to-date caste data, affirmative action and development policies remain speculative.

**What is a social management approach?**

Top-down welfare models in India have failed to adequately address layered inequalities of caste, gender, and class. A social management approach does the opposite: It starts with data, targets need-based interventions, and treats caste as a developmental variable rather than a stigma. If we know who needs what, and how need is shaped by historical disadvantage, we can design policies with greater equity and efficiency. Caste data

becomes a lens to understand inequality structurally, rather than as isolated cases. Tamil Nadu offers a model, using data from the Backward Classes Commission to adjust policies on reservations, scholarships, and governance. Karnataka's caste survey is being used to recalibrate reservation policies in education and jobs.

A national caste census would enable such models at scale. It could inform disaggregated budgeting, where funds are allocated, not just based on geography or income but on caste-based gaps in healthcare, infrastructure, and education. It could enable diversity audits in institutions, showing who occupies power and who doesn't.

It could also track how schemes like PM Awas Yojana or Skill India are reaching caste groups, ensuring that the most marginalised aren't left out.

**Are there global precedents?**

Critics argue that a caste census deepens social divides and undermines national unity. However, the reality is that caste endures not because it is counted, but because it shapes how opportunity and wealth are distributed. Ignoring caste does not erase it. It merely obscures structural inequality behind ignorance. A caste census does not create castes; it reveals it. Other democracies don't shy away from identity-based data. The U.S. collects race and ethnicity data every 10 years and uses it for civil rights enforcement. South Africa and Israel do the same by tracking race and language categories. If these nations can use such data to address inequality, so must India, home to the most enduring and hierarchical caste system in the world.

**What about transparency?**

The value of a caste census extends beyond policymaking. It is also a vital instrument of democratic accountability. Disaggregated data enables civil society, the media, and citizens to know whether public resources are being equitably shared. A publicly accessible caste census would empower citizens to demand transparency. It could expose intra-caste inequalities and where welfare benefits are monopolised by elite sub-groups, leaving the truly disadvantaged behind.

Ultimately, the caste census is not about counting caste. It is about recognising injustice and correcting it. Thus, a caste census rooted in social management would be linked to a wider agenda of social emancipation. This includes constitutional literacy, land rights, housing, labour protection, and justice for Dalit, Backward, and Adivasi women who face intersectional exploitation. A caste census done right could offer India a data-driven democratic transformation.

**Prof. Somy Kumbhakar is the Head, Department of Studies in Social Management, Central University of Gujarat. Anil Chandra is an author, policy analyst, and columnist.**

### THE GIST

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## Why was Malta's 'golden passports' scheme scrapped?

Does the 'citizenship by investment' scheme commodify EU citizenship?

Garimella Subramanian

The story so far:

In late April, the European Court of Justice (ECJ) struck down Malta's 'golden passports' scheme — a 2020 scheme which authorises the naturalisation of foreigners in the country, and consequently the European Union, in return for hefty financial investments in the country. Brussels had launched infringement proceedings against Malta, as it presided with its own scheme, blocking the right to free movement and Belarusians consequent to Russia's war against Ukraine.

**What are CBIs and RBIs?**

Citizenship by investment (CBI), known as golden passports, and residency by investment (RBI), or golden visa, enable third country nationals to live and work in host countries in exchange for financial investments. The European Parliament

and the Commission have called for both forms of mobility to be abolished in view of the inherent risks to security, such as money laundering, organised crime, tax evasion and corruption. Between 2013 and 2019, about 1.32,000 persons had obtained entry into the EU through CBI and RBI schemes, generating financial inflows of over €20 billion, as per a 2022 European Parliament Research Service report. The European CBI and RBI have been highlighted by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development and the Financial Action Task Force. Principal among the beneficiaries of such migration are nationals from China, Russia and West Asia.

**Why is the EU against the scheme?**

Within the 27-member bloc, the acquisition or loss of nationality falls within the exclusive jurisdiction of each country. That said, the historic 1992 Maastricht Treaty inaugurated common

EU citizenship. That is to say, nationals of an EU state are simultaneously common EU citizens. Therefore, the matter of the grant or rejection of nationality must accord with EU law.

The European Commission contended that the attractiveness of Malta's CBI and RBI schemes, generating financial inflows of over €20 billion, as per a 2022 European Parliament Research Service report. The European CBI and RBI have been highlighted by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development and the Financial Action Task Force. Principal among the beneficiaries of such migration are nationals from China, Russia and West Asia.

citizenship — was incompatible with the principles of membership of the bloc. These are sincere cooperation, fairness and non-discrimination — codified in Article 4(3) of the 1992 Maastricht Treaty and under Article 20 of the 2009 Treaty on the Functioning of the EU.

**What did the ECJ verdict state?**

Upholding the Commission's claims, the court reasoned that the pillars of European citizenship are dependent on mutual trust among member states and mutual respect for national decisions. The bond of nationality of a given state is underpinned by a "relationship of solidarity, good faith and the reciprocity of rights and obligations between the state and citizens," the court added. These principles are infringed upon once citizenship is sought to be granted as a commercial transaction in exchange for an investment. The 2020 Malta scheme is tantamount to the commodification of the grant of nationality of a particular state, and by extension of the entire bloc. This is incompatible with EU treaties.

**What next?**

In theory, Malta could exercise its authority to confer nationality to those who availed the CBI scheme, minus union citizenship. This would risk diminishing its appeal as a destination of choice. The writer is Director, Strategic Initiatives, AgniShin Technologies.

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The European Commission contended that the attractiveness of Malta's CBI scheme did not lie in the acquisition of Maltese nationality per se, but instead in the rights that accrue from the complementary EU citizenship. The implicit assumption here being the unique appeal of the absence of internal frontiers, the right to free movement and work across the bloc, the right to vote and to be elected in local as well as European parliament elections. The Commission President Ursula von der Leyen made a pointed reference to golden passports in the 2020 State of the Union address, declaring that "European values are not for sale." Brussels further argued that the grant of nationality in return for investments – a commodification of

citizenship – was incompatible with the principles of membership of the bloc. These are sincere cooperation, fairness and non-discrimination – codified in Article 4(3) of the 1992 Maastricht Treaty and under Article 20 of the 2009 Treaty on the Functioning of the EU.

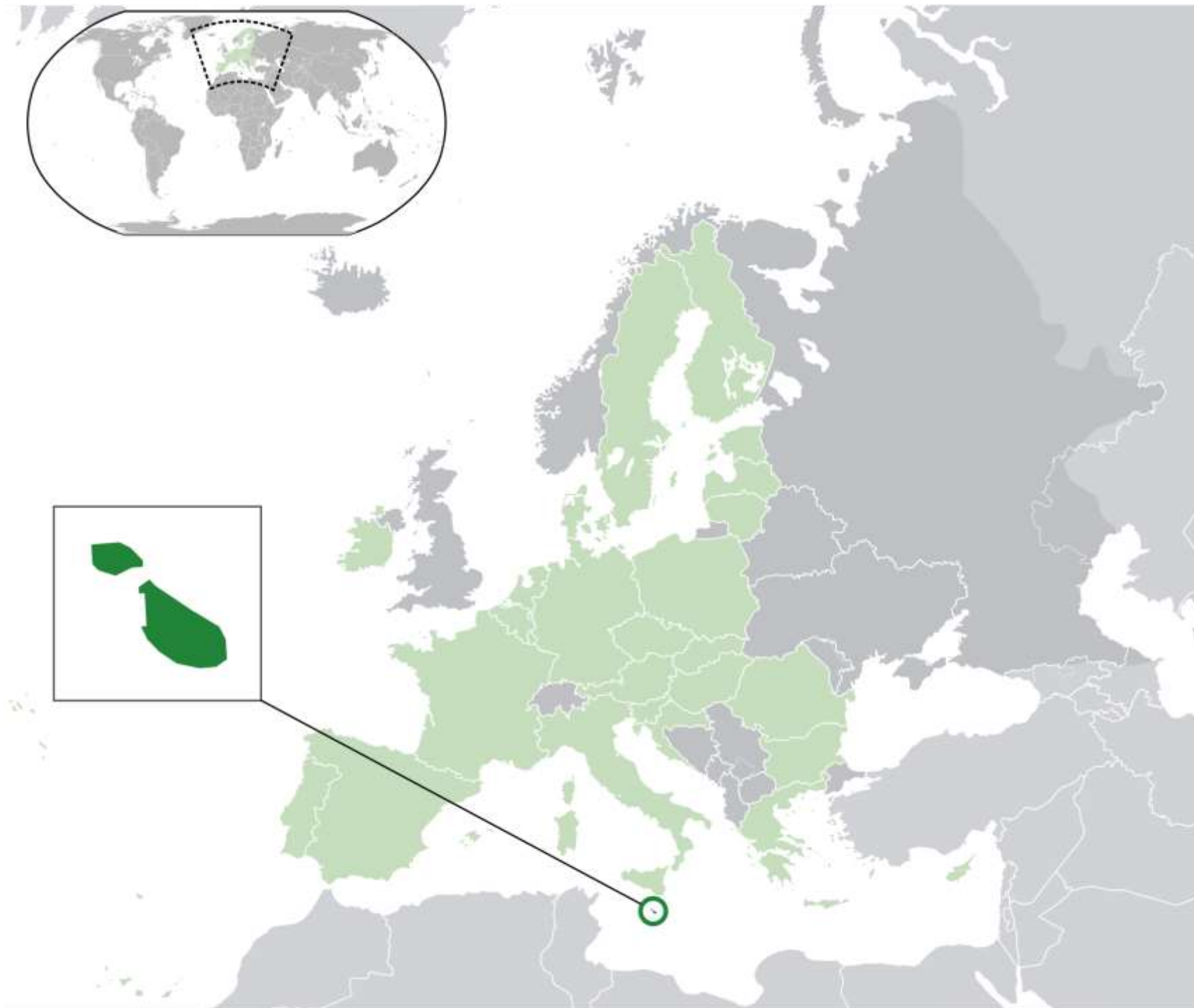
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## **What next?**

In theory, Malta could exercise its authority to confer nationality to those who availed the CBI scheme, minus union citizenship. This would risk diminishing its appeal as a destination state.

*The writer is Director, Strategic Initiatives, AgnoShin Technologies.*






- In **April 2025**, the **European Court of Justice (ECJ)** struck down **Malta's Citizenship by Investment (CBI)** scheme (also known as **golden passport scheme**) that granted EU citizenship to wealthy foreigners in return for **financial investments**.





## What Was Malta's Scheme?

Scheme	Key Features	
Citizenship by Investment (CBI)	Allowed foreigners to gain <b>Maltese citizenship</b> (and thus EU citizenship) by investing heavily in Malta.	
Residency by Investment (RBI)	Allowed long-term residence in exchange for investment (without full citizenship).	

Malta's scheme was launched in 2020 and largely benefited **wealthy nationals from China, Russia, and West Asia.**

## ! Why Did EU Oppose It?

Reason	Explanation
Security Risks	Concerns over money laundering, tax evasion, corruption, organized crime.
Loss of Sovereignty	Citizenship decisions are <b>national</b> , but they <b>impact all EU countries</b> due to shared citizenship rights.
Violation of EU Values	Citizenship granted as a "commodity" violates principles of <b>solidarity, non-discrimination</b> , and <b>fairness</b> in the <b>Maastricht Treaty (1992)</b> and <b>Treaty on the Functioning of EU (2009)</b> .
Backdoor Entry	Allowed third-country nationals to bypass regular immigration processes to access the <b>entire EU</b> .



## What Did the ECJ Say?

- The **2020 Maltese CBI scheme**:
  - “Commercialises EU citizenship and undermines mutual trust between member states.”
- It breaches the **spirit of European citizenship**, which is based on:
  - Solidarity
  - Reciprocity of rights and duties
  - Mutual trust in governance
- Citizenship cannot be treated as a "**transaction**" or be "for sale".

# Hodeidah Port





# Israel conducted its first-ever naval strike on Yemen's Hodeidah Port, targeting two key piers.

## About Hodeidah Port

**Location:** Yemen's Hodeidah Port is situated on the western coast of Yemen, along the Red Sea on the Tihāmah coastal plain.

**Historical Context:** The port has historical significance, having been shelled during the Italo-Ottoman War (1911–1912). Its location along the Red Sea has made it a focal point in regional power struggles

**Significance:** Hodeidah Port is the largest and most vital seaport for Yemen, facilitating the import of essential goods, including humanitarian aid, fuel, and commercial imports.

# YEMEN

SAUDI ARABIA

OMAN

Red Sea

ERITREA

YEMEN

Midi

SANAA

Nishtun

al-Salif

Hodeidah

al-Shihr

Balhaf

al-Mukalla

Arabian Sea

Mokha

TAIZ

Aden

Gulf of Aden

ETHIOPIA

Mandab Strait

DJIBOUTI

SOMALIA

## Key

- Ports under government control
- Ports under Houthi control





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# Word of the day

## **Nosegay:**

an arrangement of flowers that is usually given as a present

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**Synonyms:** bouquet, corsage, posy

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**Usage:** *She put out her hand and took the nosegay.*

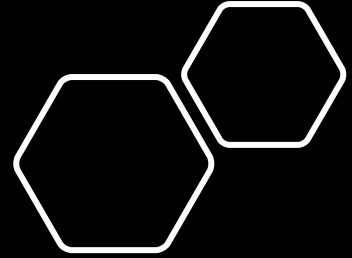
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**Pronunciation:** [newsth.live/nosegaypro](http://newsth.live/nosegaypro)

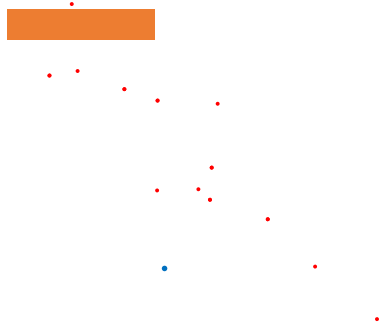
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**International Phonetic Alphabet:** /'nəʊzgeɪ/

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Thank you  
guys.

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