

# Daily Current Affairs





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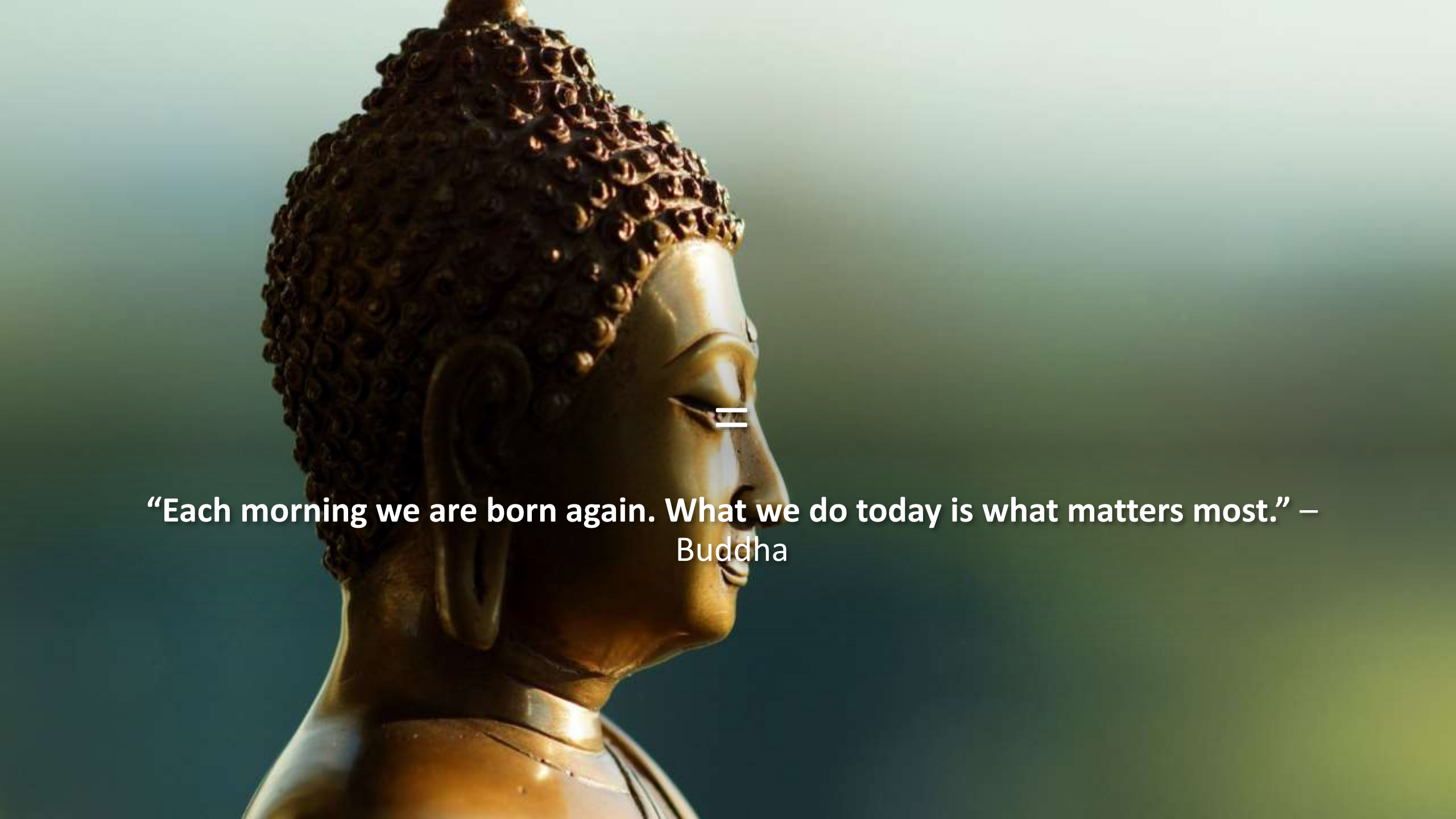


PDF



10 MCQ QUIZ





**“Each morning we are born again. What we do today is what matters most.” –  
Buddha**



**INDIAN IN RUSSIA'S WAR**  
MEA flags issue with  
Moscow authorities  
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**ANTI-MAOIST OPERATION**  
Top Maoist among 10  
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Chhattisgarh  
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**PABLEY**  
Is BJP helping  
or hobbling  
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Saffron party's growing  
interest in affairs of ally  
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**CENTRAL IN COMMAND**  
Saranath and Kartikeya  
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## INSIDE



### India, Mauritius not just partners but family: Modi

**LUCKNOW**  
India and Mauritius are not just partners but a family, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said in Varanasi on Thursday, at the signing of agreements framed to deepen ties between the two countries. > PAGE 8

### Kerala to initiate SIR of electoral rolls soon: CEO

**THIRUVANANTHAPURAM**  
After Bihar, it is now Kerala's turn for the special intensive revision (SIR) of electoral rolls ahead 2024 Assembly elections. Chief Electoral Officer, Kerala, said on Thursday that his office was awaiting a formal announcement. > PAGE 9

### Britain's envoy to U.S. sacked over links to Epstein

**LONDON**  
U.K. Prime Minister Keir Starmer sacked the country's Ambassador to the U.S., Peter Mandelson, over his ties with convicted sex offender Jeffrey Epstein, days ahead of U.S. President Donald Trump's visit to the U.K. > PAGE 16

### 'Netanyahu has 'killed hope' of hostage release'

**DOHA**  
Qatar's Prime Minister Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman al Thani said Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu "killed any hope" of releasing hostages still held in the Gaze after Israel attacked Hamas leaders in Doha. > PAGE 14

## Trump ally and conservative activist Charlie Kirk assassinated by sniper during Utah meet

Associated Press  
OREM

Authorities searched on Thursday for a sniper who assassinated Charlie Kirk, a conservative activist and close ally of President Donald Trump, with one bullet and then slipped away amid the confusion resulting from the latest act of political violence in the United States.  
Kirk was killed with a gunshot from a distant rooftop at the Utah Valley University campus, where he was speaking on Wednesday, authorities said. Federal, state and local authorities were working what they called "multiple active crime scenes".  
As the search stretched



into a second day, they sought answers to questions about the shooter's identity, motive, location or residence and were reviewing grainy security videos of a mysterious person in dark clothing.  
"This is a dark day for our state. It is a tragic day for our nation," Utah Governor Spencer Cox said. "I want to be very clear this is a political assassination." The FBI released two photos of a person of interest. The release of photos of a person in a hat, sun

glasses and a long-sleeve black shirt, as well as a \$200,000 reward for information leading to an arrest, reflected law enforcement's urgent appeal for public help in locating the shooter.  
Two people were detained on Wednesday, but neither was determined to be connected to the shooting and both were released, public safety officials said.  
The circumstances of the shooting drew renewed attention to a escalating threat of political violence in the United States that in the last several years has cut across the ideological spectrum. The assassination drew bipartisan condemnation.  
Videos posted to social media from Utah Valley University show Kirk speaking into a handheld microphone while sitting under a white tent emblazoned with the slogans "The American Comeback" and "Prove Me Wrong".  
A shot rang out, and Kirk can be seen reaching up with his right hand as blood gushes from the left side of his neck.  
Vice President J.D. Vance and his wife, Usha, were set to visit with Kirk's family on Thursday in Salt Lake City.  
Mr. Trump announced Kirk's death on social media and praised the 34-year-old as "Great, and even Legendary."

### New lease of life



**Moving heart:** The heart harvested from Isaac George, 33, of Kollam in Kerala, being taken to a hospital in Kochi on Thursday for transplant. George met with an accident on September 7 and was declared brain dead in Thiruvananthapuram on Wednesday. 11A AG 04007

## CJ says SC will not sit idle if constitutional authority fails to discharge its duties

Krishnakumar Balagopal  
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court will not "sit idle" and power-hike if constitutional authority fails to discharge its duties, no matter how high he may be, Chief Justice of India R.N. Gavai has said.  
The CJ voiced the court's firm resolve on the final day of a Presidential Reference hearing, which has brought into sharp focus the schism between Opposition-led States and their Governments over delay in enacting law.  
"However high an authority may be, he is not above the law. I am a strong believer in the doctrine of separation of powers. If one wing of democracy fails in the discharge of its duties, would the court, which is the custodian of the Constitution, be powerless and forced to sit idle?"  
Representing the Union government, Solicitor-General Tushar Mehta said the court's attempt to compel a "one-size-fits-all" solution by "imposing" a uniform time frame for all bills would prove "self-destructive".  
"Every bill has its own context-based issues. Some may require the Governor to have further deliberations and consultations. There are times when a State, while knowing that a bill may eventually harm the State, is forced to bow to public pressure to pass it. In such cases, the State may tell the Governor to hold the bills. Thus, imposing straightjacket time limits may become self-destructive. Each case has to be decided on its own peculiar facts," the Solicitor General argued.  
Mr. Mehta said the apex court cannot issue a mandatory order to Governors to assent to bills. Constitutional assent was part of legislative process. Courts cannot interfere in law-making.  
The court had, in the past, held that if a Governor to take a decision in a particular man-



ner, but the court can very well ask the Governor to take a decision. A mandamus can be issued to the Governor to decide," Justice Kant replied pithily.  
Mr. Mehta challenged the narrative that Governors were consistently delaying bills. He said a majority of bills in the last 50 years, were given assent by Governors to a month's time.  
"Even in the case of T.N. Seshu, except for 10 disputed bills, assent was usually given in a month. The Governor does not sit over bills endlessly," Mr. Mehta submitted.  
Chief Justice Gavai said he had envisaged an atmosphere of mutual accord while envisaging the role of the Governors in States.  
Mr. Mehta renewed that State-Governor relationships had seen decades of harmony before the 14th government, during the Atal Bihari Vajpayee regime, started filing with petition under Article 32 of the Constitution against the Lieutenant-Governor.  
Attorney General K. Venkatesh said the Governor should be given the discretion to either assent or withhold a bill after testing its constitutionality.



# President urges restraint as Nepal talks stall

Poudel says protesters' demands being addressed, while staying within the constitutional framework

Gen Z campaigners divided on who should lead an interim govt. and who should be a mediator

Pro-monarchy, pro-Hindu activist Durga Prasai meets with Army chief General Ashok Sigdel

**Sanjeev Satgainya**

KATHMANDU

Members of Nepal's Gen Z movement, whose massive protests led to the fall of the K.P. Sharma Oli government on Tuesday, remained divided on who should lead the next interim administration, even as President Ram Chandra Poudel on Thursday urged restraint in order to restore order and security.

Nepal has experienced an uneasy calm over the past two days after youth-led protests turned violent, with the death toll rising to 34. But the political crisis remains unresolved.

## Efforts under way

Amid growing calls for Mr. Poudel to address the nation, his office on Thursday afternoon said in a statement that all possible efforts were being made to address the protesters' de-

mands. "I urge everyone to remain confident that efforts are under way to address the protesters' demands as quickly as possible, while staying within the constitutional framework," said Mr. Poudel. "I am engaged in consultations and deliberations regarding the challenging situation that has arisen following the Gen Z movement."

With the Nepal Army appointed as the chief negotiator to help identify a leader for the interim government, many are questioning whether it is an appropriate or constitutional role for the military.

Meanwhile, Gen Z campaigners remained divided – both over who should head the interim government and whether to negotiate with the President or the military.

Nepal's youth took to the streets on September 8, after weeks of online



**Tanking up:** People queue up at a fuel station amid extended prohibitory orders on public movement in Birgunj in Nepal on Thursday. PTI

consultations, demanding "an end to corruption and misgovernance". The protests were triggered by the Oli government's controversial social media ban. Protests turned violent on Tuesday, with campaigners alleging infiltration by

"unwanted forces". By the time Mr. Oli resigned, much of the state's infrastructure was under attack.

On Wednesday, former Chief Justice Sushila Karki emerged as frontrunner in online voting conducted by the protesters. Kath-

mandu Mayor Balendra Shah, widely seen as Gen Z's first choice, stepped aside and extended his support to Ms. Karki, 73, the first female Chief Justice of Nepal. But not all campaigners agreed.

A brief clash erupted in

front of the Army headquarters on Thursday, as supporters of Mr. Sampang clashed with other groups.

On Wednesday, pro-monarchy, pro-Hindu activist Durga Prasai met with Army chief General Ashok Sigdel. Mr. Prasai is a controversial figure and was charged with inciting violence during the March 28 pro-monarchy protests. He had fled to India but was later arrested. Last month, a court released him on bail.

## Curfew remains

The Army has also been in contact with the Rastriya Swatantra Party (RSP), a new political force that rose to prominence in the last election riding an anti-establishment wave.

RSP chief Rabi Lamichhane is also a divisive figure in Nepal – while he has a massive following, he has been charged with embezzling cooperative funds. He was "released"

from jail on Tuesday.

Gen Z leaders say they are not against the Constitution but want Parliament dissolved, a demand that echoes what Mr. Shah has been advocating.

Meanwhile, Nepal's major political parties on Thursday called for resolving the crisis through dialogue and constitutional means. The Nepali Congress, Mr. Oli's Communist Party of Nepal (Unified Marxist-Leninist), and CPN (Maoist Centre) issued separate statements, urging that the current political deadlock be resolved within the framework of the Constitution. Prohibitory orders and a curfew remain in place in Kathmandu and several other districts of Nepal.

(Sanjeev Satgainya is a journalist based in Kathmandu)

**PRISON ESCAPEES HELD**

» PAGE 4

## . President's Appeal

- **Ram Chandra Poudel** urged:
    - Restraint from all sides.
    - Efforts underway to address protesters' demands **within the constitutional framework**.
    - Engaged in consultations to restore order.
- 

## . Military's Role

- **Nepal Army appointed as chief negotiator** for interim govt. leadership.
- Raises concern: **Is this constitutional?**
- Army also in contact with **Rastriya Swatantra Party (RSP)** (anti-establishment).

## Protest Dynamics

## Demands of Gen Z campaigners:

End corruption,  
misgovernance, social  
media restrictions.

Many want  
**Parliament dissolved**  
but not Constitution  
scrapped.

## Divisions within protestors:

Who should lead  
interim govt.?

Should negotiations  
be with President or  
military?



## Key Figures in Political Crisis

### **Sushila Karki** (Former Chief Justice, 73):

- Emerged as frontrunner for interim PM (first female CJ of Nepal).
- Popular in online voting by protesters.

### **Balen Shah** (Mayor of Kathmandu):

- Initially popular Gen Z choice.
- Stepped aside, backed Sushila Karki.

### **Durga Prasai** (Pro-monarchy, pro-Hindu activist):

- Met Army Chief Gen. Ashok Sigdel.
- Controversial; charged with inciting March 28 riots.

### **Rabi Lamichhane** (RSP leader):

- Popular figure, but accused of corruption (embezzlement cases).

# Trump ally and conservative activist Charlie Kirk assassinated by sniper during Utah meet

**Associated Press**

OREM

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Kirk was killed with a gunshot from a distant rooftop at the Utah Valley University campus, where he was speaking on Wednesday, authorities said. Federal, state and local authorities were working what they called “multiple active crime scenes”.

As the search stretched



**Ongoing investigation:** Law enforcement scour the scene of the killing at Utah Valley University to collect evidence. AFP

into a second day, they provided little information about the shooter's identity, motive, location or evidence and were reviewing grainy security videos of a mysterious person in dark clothing.

“This is a dark day for

our state. It is a tragic day for our nation,” Utah Governor Spencer Cox said. “I want to be very clear this is a political assassination.”

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Vice President J.D. Vance and his wife, Usha, were set to visit with Kirk's family on Thursday in Salt Lake City.

Mr. Trump announced Kirk's death on social media and praised the 31-year-old as “Great, and even Legendary.”

### Incident:

- Charlie Kirk, conservative activist and close ally of Donald Trump, assassinated by a **sniper** at Utah Valley University (Orem, Utah).
- Killed by one bullet while addressing a gathering under a tent with slogans *“The American Comeback”* and *“Prove Me Wrong”*.

### Security Response:

- Federal, state, and local law enforcement declared **“multiple active crime scenes”**.
- Shooter escaped after the attack.



### Suspect Search:

- FBI released two photos of **person of interest**: seen in sunglasses, long-sleeve black shirt.
- **\$100,000 reward** announced for info leading to arrest.
- Security footage shows **mysterious person in dark clothing**.

### Detentions:

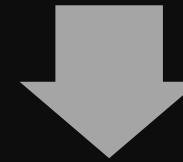
- Two people held on Wednesday but released (not connected to attack).

## U.S. Political Assassinations:

- Abraham Lincoln (1865), John F. Kennedy (1963), Martin Luther King Jr. (1968), Robert F. Kennedy (1968).
- Recent: Attempt on Ronald Reagan (1981); Trump (2024, survived).



## Constitutional & Governance Angle



**Secret Service:** Protects President, VP, and their families – not activists like Kirk, leaving vulnerability gaps.



**First Amendment Tension:** Political rallies central to free speech, but vulnerable to attacks.





# India and Mauritius not just partners but a family: Modi

Free and secure Indian Ocean is our shared priority, he says, speaking alongside Mauritius PM Navinchandra Ramgoolam; MoUs inked for cooperation in technology, development projects

**Mayank Kumar**  
LUCKNOW

**I**ndia and Mauritius are not just partners but a family, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said in Varanasi on Thursday, at the signing of agreements to deepen ties between the two countries.

Following bilateral discussions with his counterpart from Mauritius, Navinchandra Ramgoolam, Mr. Modi said that a stable, prosperous, free, open and secure Indian Ocean was a joint priority of both countries.

"Centuries ago, our culture and traditions travelled from India to Mauritius, and became a part of everyday life there. Just like the eternal flow of Maa Ganga in Kashi, the continuous stream of Indian culture has enriched Mauritius. And today, when we are welcoming friends from Mauritius in Kashi, it is not just a formality but a spiritual union. That is why I proudly say that India and Mauritius are not just partners but a family," said Mr. Modi.

The Prime Minister said Mauritius is an integral part of India's "Neighbourhood First" policy.



**Deep ties:** Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Mauritius PM Navinchandra Ramgoolam in Varanasi on Thursday. PTI

At a press conference, Mr. Modi said, "Today, we have announced a special economic package designed to support Mauritius's needs and priorities. This will strengthen infrastructure, create new employment opportunities, and further enhance healthcare facilities. The first Jan Aushadhi Kendra outside India has now been established in Mauritius."

## **AYUSH centre**

India also announced that it would extend cooperation in establishing an AYUSH Centre of Excellence,

a 500-bed Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam National Hospital, as well as a veterinary school and animal hospital in Mauritius. The two countries also signed memorandums of understanding to enhance cooperation in science and technology, oceanographic research, power sector and implementation of Phase 2 of small development projects.

In a proposed hydrography project, the countries will work together on joint surveys, navigation charts, and hydrographic data of the exclusive economic zones of Mauritius.

"Very soon, we will also launch the training modules of Mission Karmayogi [capacity building for government officials] in Mauritius. The Indian Institute of Technology, Madras, and the Indian Institute of Plantation Management have entered into agreements with the University of Mauritius. These agreements will elevate our partnership in research, education, and innovation to new heights," added Mr. Modi, lauding the unique "civilisational ties" between the two countries.

Earlier, Mr. Modi landed at Lal Bahadur Shastri International Airport in Varanasi where he was received by Uttar Pradesh Governor Anandiben Patel and Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath. Mr. Modi's convoy was welcomed at six major locations, including Kachahari and Ambedkar Chauraha.

Mr. Ramgoolam, who arrived in Varanasi on Wednesday, witnessed the Ganga Aarti from a cruise in the evening. On Friday morning, he is scheduled to offer prayers at Shri Kashi Vishwanath Dham before leaving for Ayodhya.

(With PTI inputs)

PM Narendra Modi met Mauritius PM  
**Navinchandra Ramgoolam** in Varanasi.



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graph TD; A[PM Narendra Modi met Mauritius PM Navinchandra Ramgoolam in Varanasi.] --> B[Message: India and Mauritius share ties beyond partnership – “a family relationship”]; B --> C[Focus Areas: Technology cooperation, healthcare, infrastructure, development, and Indian Ocean security.];
```

**Message:** India and Mauritius share ties beyond partnership – *“a family relationship”*.

**Focus Areas:** Technology cooperation, healthcare, infrastructure, development, and Indian Ocean security.

- **Special Economic Package** for Mauritius:
  - Strengthen **infrastructure**, create **jobs**, enhance **healthcare facilities**.
  - **First Jan Aushadhi Kendra** outside India set up in Mauritius.
- **AYUSH Centre:**
  - Cooperation to establish **AYUSH Centre of Excellence**.
  - Includes a **500-bed Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam National Hospital**, **veterinary school**, and **animal hospital**.
- **Education & Research Partnerships:**
  - **IIT Madras + Indian Institute of Plantation Management** signed MoUs with **University of Mauritius**.
  - Areas: Research, education, innovation, technology transfer.
- **Mission Karmayogi (Capacity Building):**
  - Training modules for Mauritian government officials.
- **Science & Technology MoUs:**
  - Oceanographic research.
  - Hydrographic surveys & navigation charts.
  - Power sector cooperation.
  - Phase 2 of small development projects.



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- **Indian Ocean Region:**

- Stable, free, secure, open Indian Ocean = priority for both countries.
- Joint cooperation in **hydrography, navigation, maritime security**.

- **Civilisational Ties:**

- Historical migration from India → Mauritius shaped culture & identity.
- Mauritius seen as part of India's "**Neighbourhood First Policy**".
- Spiritual bond: Modi compared flow of **Maa Ganga in Kashi** with Indian cultural flow to Mauritius.

- 

- **4. Symbolic & Cultural Engagements**

- Modi attended **Ganga Aarti** at Varanasi.
- Scheduled visit to **Shri Kashi Vishwanath Dham** before leaving for **Ayodhya**.
- Highlighted "shared civilisational heritage" (temples, traditions, Indian diaspora).

### Mauritius–India Relations:

Large Indian diaspora (~68% of population of Indian origin).

Mauritius was the **first country to sign a CECPA (Comprehensive Economic Cooperation and Partnership Agreement) with India (2021).**

### Strategic Importance:

Mauritius hosts **Agalega Islands project** (India building airstrip & naval facilities).

Key partner in **SAGAR (Security and Growth for All in the Region)** policy.

# Home Minister launches faster immigration clearance at 5 airports

**Press Trust of India**

NEW DELHI

Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Thursday launched the Fast Track Immigration-Trusted Traveller Programme (FTI-TTP), which accelerates the immigration process for preverified Indian nationals and Overseas Citizen of India (OCI) cardholders, at five more airports.

After launching the FTI-TTP at Lucknow, Thiruvananthapuram, Tiruchirappalli, Kozhikode and Amritsar airports, Mr. Shah said travellers would no longer experience long queues or manual checking and would receive immigration clearance in just 30 seconds without delays.

He said the programme had been launched in alignment with Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision of



Amit Shah inaugurating the programme at five more airports through video conferencing in New Delhi on Thursday. ANI

“speed, scale and scope”. The special initiative was first rolled out at the Indira Gandhi International Airport in July 2024, and two months later, extended to Mumbai, Chennai, Kolkata, Bangalore, Hyderabad, Cochin and Ahmedabad.

Mr. Shah said the facility would not only enhance the convenience of travellers but also provide an op-

portunity to introduce them to the changes taking place in the country.

Mr. Shah said with the FTI-TTP, seamless immigration facilities would be available at the designated airports and emphasised that merely providing convenience was not enough, action must be taken to ensure that the maximum number of travellers bene-

fited from it.

“To achieve this, efforts should be made to enable registration at the time of issuing passports and OCI cards,” he said, adding that if this could be implemented, travellers did not need to return for fingerprinting or documentation and they could travel using their passports whenever they wished.

“OCI cardholders will benefit the most,” he said, adding that the Home Ministry has planned to integrate this programme with the upcoming Navi Mumbai and Jewar airports.

About three lakh travellers have registered on this portal, of which 2.65 lakh have utilised it and efforts should be made to increase this number, he said. The FTI-TTP will eventually be launched at 21 major airports in the country.



- **Event:** Union Home Minister **Amit Shah** launched the **Fast Track Immigration–Trusted Traveller Programme (FTI-TTP)** at 5 more airports.
  - **Objective:** Speed up immigration clearance for:
    - Pre-verified **Indian nationals**.
    - **Overseas Citizens of India (OCI)** cardholders.
- 

## 2. Expansion of Programme

- **Newly added airports:**
  - Lucknow, Thiruvananthapuram, Tiruchirappalli, Kozhikode, Amritsar.
- **Earlier rollout:**
  - July 2024 → Indira Gandhi International Airport, Delhi.
  - Later extended to: Mumbai, Chennai, Kolkata, Bangalore, Hyderabad, Cochin, Ahmedabad.
- **Future expansion:**
  - Will cover **21 major airports**, including Navi Mumbai & Jewar (Noida).

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## Key Features of FTI-TTP

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**Immigration clearance within 30 seconds.**

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**No manual checking** or long queues.

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Registration suggested at the time of **passport/OCI card issue** → avoids re-fingerprinting later.

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**Three lakh travellers registered**, with 2.65 lakh already using it.

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## 4. Benefits

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**Convenience:** Reduced waiting time → smoother passenger movement.

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**Special focus: OCI cardholders** benefit the most.

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- Inspired by **Global Trusted Traveller Programmes**:

- **US**: Global Entry.
- **EU**: Registered Traveller Programme.
- **Singapore**: Frequent Traveller Programme.

- **Economic Context**

- Faster immigration = boost to **tourism, business travel, aviation sector**.
- Expected to reduce congestion in major Indian airports.

- **Geopolitical Angle**

- Facilitates travel for Indian diaspora (esp. in **Gulf, US, UK, Canada**).
- Enhances India's global connectivity & ease of doing business.



# Clearing the fog: need for revised strategies against *Aedes* mosquitoes

While top-down measures such as the use of *Wolbachia* mosquitoes are showing promise, they are hampered by high costs at present. Personal protection and community mobilisation, removing larval breeding sites offer the best ways to combat *Aedes* mosquitoes and the diseases they transmit

by **Arjun K. Memon**

**A**edes-borne viral diseases (DENV) – dengue, Zika, and chikungunya – hurt India's productivity. Local governments and society focus their efforts on vector management. This method prevents, despite evidence that it is ineffective. It also does not have backing from national agencies as a control measure.

The *Aedes* mosquito adapts well to human settings. It breeds indoors during the day, and at night under artificial light. Methods like outdoor fumigation, repellents, and bed nets are thus ineffective against it.

Top-down measures, such as the use of *Wolbachia* mosquitoes, which use a naturally occurring bacteria, *Wolbachia*, to help suppress mosquito populations at large, have been shown to be cost-effective. But high costs and weak institutional support limit their adoption. Dengue vaccine trials are underway, but they offer no protection against Zika or chikungunya.

The best way to fight *Aedes* mosquitoes at present (despite, as through personal protection and community mobilisation).

**First line of defence**  
Traditional personal and household measures, especially used in households are of limited use, as *Aedes* activity is minimal at night and they are avoiding fumigation in these households. An effective strategy focuses on protecting us from mosquito bites rather than killing them.

Lower clothing that covers as much of our body as possible, from head to toe, is a simple first step. First, safe use of insecticides (topical repellents) can be applied on the skin. By releasing volatile compounds, these repellents keep the mosquito away from us, making us essentially invisible to them. The World Health Organization (WHO) recommends using several effective and safe *Aedes* repellents. DEET is the gold standard for insect repellents. Each year, more than 300 million people use it safely. A 20% concentration provides about six hours of protection.

Pure picaridin-based PMPR, derived from the essential oil of the lemon eucalyptus plant (*Eucalyptus citriodora*) is also effective. It is one of the three picaridin-based repellents endorsed by the United States Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and Prevention. Picaridin, a compound similar to piperidine found in black pepper, and 2-undecanone, extracted from the wild tomato plant, are also effective repellents. BAKSIL, derived from the naturally occurring amino acid  $\beta$ -alanine, also works well.

Global public health agencies and experts approve DEET (20%, picaridin, 3-undecanone, and BAKSIL for use in breastfeeding, pregnant women, and



**Clearing the fog:** The *Aedes* mosquito has a short range of 100-200 metres. Access to remove larval breeding sites can have a quick and powerful impact on a community.

children. Agencies do not recommend DDT/PMR in children under 10 years of age.

In contrast, many well-known natural products, including citronella oil, are unreliable. They tend to lose their effectiveness within 1-2 hours due to evaporation from the skin. Unfavourable concentrations cause severe skin irritation. Experts advise against using them until high-quality studies and safety tests are available.

The *Aedes* mosquito has a short range of 100-200 metres. Thus, local community actions to remove larval breeding sites can have a quick and powerful impact.

The influential Canine Verde randomised study (CVCV) used community actions. Trained local leaders taught communities about mosquito behaviour and larval breeding sites. Households removed stagnant water from plant pots. They also cleaned and covered

drains. The study found that community actions reduced the risk of dengue by 20%.

Surprisingly, the Canine Verde study found that the larval breeding sites (larvae) increased the risk of dengue. Researchers concluded that the most likely reason is a false sense of security among users, leading them to let their guard down.

Many studies from South Asia have also confirmed that *Aedes* larvae can develop resistance to mosquito coils.

Plastic pollution is directly linked to the risk of Aedes transmission. Greater clean-

**Aedes-borne viral diseases (DENV) – dengue, Zika, and chikungunya hurt the productivity of the country.**

up measures, such as the use of *Wolbachia* mosquitoes, which use a naturally occurring bacteria, *Wolbachia*, to help suppress mosquito populations at large, have been shown to be cost-effective. But high costs and weak institutional support limit their adoption.

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BAKSIL, derived from the naturally occurring amino acid  $\beta$ -alanine, also works well. Global public health agencies and experts approve DEET (20%, picaridin, 3-undecanone, and BAKSIL for use in breastfeeding, pregnant women, and

children. Agencies do not recommend DDT/PMR in children under 10 years of age. In contrast, many well-known natural products, including citronella oil, are unreliable. They tend to lose their effectiveness within 1-2 hours due to evaporation from the skin.

Unfavourable concentrations cause severe skin irritation. Experts advise against using them until high-quality studies and safety tests are available. The influential Canine Verde randomised study (CVCV) used community actions.

Trained local leaders taught communities about mosquito behaviour and larval breeding sites. Households removed stagnant water from plant pots. They also cleaned and covered drains. The study found that community actions reduced the risk of dengue by 20%.

Surprisingly, the Canine Verde study found that the larval breeding sites (larvae) increased the risk of dengue. Researchers concluded that the most likely reason is a false sense of security among users, leading them to let their guard down.

Many studies from South Asia have also confirmed that *Aedes* larvae can develop resistance to mosquito coils. Plastic pollution is directly linked to the risk of Aedes transmission. Greater clean-

up measures, such as the use of *Wolbachia* mosquitoes, which use a naturally occurring bacteria, *Wolbachia*, to help suppress mosquito populations at large, have been shown to be cost-effective. But high costs and weak institutional support limit their adoption.

Dengue vaccine trials are underway, but they offer no protection against Zika or chikungunya. The best way to fight *Aedes* mosquitoes at present (despite, as through personal protection and community mobilisation).

First line of defence  
Traditional personal and household measures, especially used in households are of limited use, as *Aedes* activity is minimal at night and they are avoiding fumigation in these households.

An effective strategy focuses on protecting us from mosquito bites rather than killing them. Lower clothing that covers as much of our body as possible, from head to toe, is a simple first step.

First, safe use of insecticides (topical repellents) can be applied on the skin. By releasing volatile compounds, these repellents keep the mosquito away from us, making us essentially invisible to them.

The World Health Organization (WHO) recommends using several effective and safe *Aedes* repellents. DEET is the gold standard for insect repellents. Each year, more than 300 million people use it safely.

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## THE GIST

The *Aedes* mosquito adapts well to human settings. It breeds indoors during the day, and at night under artificial light. Methods like outdoor fumigation, repellents, and bed nets are thus ineffective against it.

Top-down measures, such as the use of *Wolbachia* mosquitoes, which use a naturally occurring bacteria, *Wolbachia*, to help suppress mosquito populations at large, have been shown to be cost-effective. But high costs and weak institutional support limit their adoption.

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## Looking beyond suicide helplines to tackle mental health issues and care

by **Arjun K. Memon**

**WORLD MENTAL PREVENTION DAY**

**The Hindu**

**Arjun K. Memon**

A 25-year-old woman from Hyderabad, an MBA graduate preparing an exam, had been struggling with depression, crying spells, and suicidal thoughts for over two years. This was worsened by personal setbacks and a strained relationship with her mother. Although she had received counselling and online therapy, the best discomfort with, feeling like there was no one to talk to. She then reached out to the NAA, the government's mental health helpline. She was connected to a psychologist who provided a personal and ongoing support. She was connected to a psychologist who provided a personal and ongoing support. She was connected to a psychologist who provided a personal and ongoing support.

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# Looking beyond suicide helplines to tackle mental health issues and care

## WORLD SUICIDE PREVENTION DAY

### The Hindu Bureau

A 25-year-old woman from Hyderabad, an MBBS graduate preparing an exam, had been struggling with depression, crying spells, and suicidal thoughts for over two years. This was worsened by personal setbacks and a strained relationship with her mother. Although she had tried medications and online therapy, she had discontinued both, finding little benefit.

She then reached out to Tele-MANAS, the government's round-the-clock mental health helpline. Here, on a call, she was able to open up to a psychiatrist, who provided a patient ear and coping strategies. She was counselled to communicate with her father and to gradually rebuild her relationship with her mother.

Follow-up calls revealed a marked improvement. She reported feeling significantly better. The helpline

also remains open for her to reconnect in future.

Mental health helplines have been an important resource to help those in distress. Multiple helplines operate across States, some run by State governments and others by NGOs, in addition to the Tele-MANAS helpline, which was launched by the Central government in 2022. But while they provide critical and timely help to thousands, this World Suicide Prevention Day, experts say there are some gaps that need plugging and that helplines must be part of a broader, systemic approach to tackling mental health issues and suicide in particular, in order to provide better care for all.

### Gaps in the system

One critical gap is a shortage of trained mental health professionals. Estimates indicate that India has 0.75 psychiatrists per 1,00,000 population, dismally lower than the World Health Organization's recommended 3. There is also a shortage of clinical



**Call for help:** While helplines provide essential immediate care, they must be part of a wider, systemic approach. FILE PHOTO

psychologists and psychiatric nurses. In Kerala for instance, this shortage is a huge problem in the mental health sector, says P.S. Indu, professor of psychiatry, Government Medical College, Kasaragod.

"At present, we are training persons with MSW or MA psychology degrees to help people with mental health troubles. What we actually need are more clinical psychologists who can be trained to offer therapy, help people manage their thoughts better and improve their general sense of well being," Dr. In-

du says. Another issue is inadequate resources. V. K. Gupta, founder-director, Silverstreak Multispeciality Hospital, Gurgaon, says that while a compassionate voice and emotional support at the right time can make the difference between life and death, helplines alone cannot be the solution to India's growing suicide crisis. While helplines provide essential immediate care, they must be part of a wider, systemic approach, he points out.

Devdeep Roy Chowdhury, senior clinical psychologist at Monoshij, a plat-

form for mental health services based in Kolkata says that a lack of resources and experts who can volunteer for this work, offering free help, is the problem. "There is a window of crisis when people make the call. At that point, if the helpline does not work, it can feel like the whole society is failing you," he says.

### Efforts in States

Broader, community efforts have been trialled in some States, often linking existing or new services to the Tele-MANAS helpline, to stem suicide numbers.

In Karnataka for instance, where the suicide rate stands at 20.2 per lakh population as of 2022, significantly higher than the national average of 12.4, several initiatives have been tried.

Anish V. Cherian, additional professor of psychiatric social work at NIMHANS, who is spearheading N-SPRITE, the NIMHANS Suicide Prevention, Research, Implementation, Training, and

Engagement Centre, says one such was the SU-RAKSHA project a comprehensive community-based suicide prevention model in Ramanagara district of Karnataka.

Another project with the NIMHANS in collaboration with the Health Department managed to counsel and save the lives of over 15,623 persons who reported repeated suicide attempts or self-harm in 19 government hospitals across 11 districts.

Kerala too, has community-level interventions. Jeevanraksha, a district-level service has community gatekeepers stepping in to prevent suicides. Trained people are given periodic refresher training to recognise warning signs of suicide, give psychological first aid and refer people to professionals.

In Tamil Nadu, TeleMANAS also collaborates with the helplines of the School Education and Social Welfare Departments. "We have been reaching out to students who were unsuccessful in the Class X and

XII board examinations, and those who appeared for NEET. We counsel and follow up with students for at least a month," says V. Venkatesh Mathan Kumar, psychiatrist.

### The road ahead

While Vishal Akula, National Direct Council Member of the Indian Psychiatric Society, notes that awareness is growing and many more people are now approaching psychiatrists for timely help, reflecting a positive change in society, more needs to be done.

Suicides are not a one dimensional affair, points out P.S. Kiran, Kerala's State Nodal Officer for Mental Health. They are multifactorial, and solutions must reflect this. "We must acknowledge that suicide is not only a mental health issue but also deeply rooted in social determinants such as poverty, discrimination, gender inequity, and isolation," says Dr. Gupta. Addressing systemic drivers of distress must be undertaken, he says, adding that suicide

prevention must include building an ecosystem of empathy, inclusion, and timely care.

Increasing government funding for awareness and trained human resources, building strong school and college-level mental health programmes, addressing social determinants, and above all, combating stigma are some steps that need to be urgently undertaken, say experts.

*(With inputs from C. Maya in Thiruvananthapuram, Afshan Yasmeen in Bengaluru, Bindu Shajan Perappadan in Delhi, Serena Josephine M. in Chennai, Siddharth Kumar Singh in Hyderabad and Shrabana Chatterjee in Kolkata)*  
([health@thehindu.co.in](mailto:health@thehindu.co.in))

*Those in distress can call the following numbers: Tele-MANAS: 1800-89-14416; Tamil Nadu health helpline - 104; Karnataka: Arogya Sahayavani - 104; Kerala: Maithri - 0484-2540530; New Delhi: Sanjivini - 011-4076 9002; Kolkata Lifeline Foundation - 033-24637401)*

## Case study:

- 25-year-old MBBS graduate from Hyderabad.
- Struggling with depression, suicidal thoughts for 2 years.
- Tried medication & therapy but discontinued.
- Found help via **Tele-MANAS helpline** → spoke to psychiatrist, improved family relationships.

**Occasion:** World Suicide Prevention Day.

**Message:** Helplines critical but insufficient — need broader systemic approach.



## Current Status of Helplines

### Types:

- State govt. helplines, NGO-led helplines, **Tele-MANAS (launched 2022 by Centre)**.

**Role:** Provide immediate counselling & strategies.

### Limitations:

- Shortage of trained professionals.
- Gaps in follow-up care.
- Lack of integration into wider mental health ecosystem.

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- **Gaps in India's Mental Health System**

- **Human Resources:**

- Only **0.75 psychiatrists per 1,00,000 people** (WHO recommends 3).
- Shortage of psychologists, psychiatric nurses, and social workers.

- **Infrastructure:**

- Limited mental health institutions & resources.
- Kerala, for example, faces a huge professional shortage.

- **Resource Challenges:**

- Inadequate funding for training & awareness.
- Stigma prevents timely care-seeking.

---

- **State-Level Efforts**

- **Karnataka:**

- **SU-RAKSHA project** – community-based suicide prevention.
- NIMHANS project saved **15,623 lives** via counselling in 19 districts.

- **Kerala:**

- **Jeevanraksha** – community gatekeepers trained to prevent suicides.

- **Tamil Nadu:**

- Tele-MANAS works with **school education helplines** to support students appearing for exams (X & XII boards, NEET).



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- **What experts suggest:**

- Mental health care must address **systemic issues**:
  - Poverty, discrimination, gender inequity, social isolation.
- Build **ecosystem of empathy, inclusion, and timely care**.
- Increase funding for:
  - Awareness campaigns.
  - Human resource training.
  - School & college mental health programmes.
- Combat stigma through education.

- **Positive sign:**

- More people approaching psychiatrists reflects changing attitudes.


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- **Global Context**

- **WHO data:** ~700,000 people die by suicide annually.
- Suicide = **4th leading cause of death among 15–29 years** worldwide.

- **Indian Context**

- Suicide rate in India: **12.4 per lakh population (2022).**
- Karnataka (20.2 per lakh) & southern states have higher rates.
- NCRB 2022:
  - Students = 13% of suicides.
  - Family issues & illness major causes.

- 
- A solid orange header bar at the top of the slide, with a white wavy line separating it from the white content area below.
- **Government Schemes**
  - **National Mental Health Programme (NMHP, 1982).**
  - **Manodarpan (2020)** – psychosocial support for students.
  - **Tele-MANAS (2022)** – 24x7 tele-mental health services.



# Text & next

THE HINDU

## NEWS IN NUMBERS

**Green area declared as a Biodiversity Heritage Site in Bengaluru**

**8.61** In acres. The Karnataka government has declared a green area with 371 trees near the Cantonment railway station as a Biodiversity Heritage Site. The move follows long public support after activists opposed plans to lease the land for commercial use. **IN**

**Loan agreement signed between India and ADB for tourism**

**126.42** In U.S. dollars. India and the Asian Development Bank (ADB) have signed a loan agreement to promote sustainable tourism and rural development in the Tehri Lake region of Uttarakhand. **IN**

**Losses from cybercrime in southwest Delhi**

**30** In ₹ crores. Residents of southwest Delhi lost nearly 30 crores to cybercrime in just over two-and-a-half years, police data show. In 2023 alone, 90 cases were registered till September 8, with fraudsters duping victims of ₹8.07 crore. Police arrested 147 accused this year. **IN**

**Telugu people cleared for boarding at Kathmandu airport**

**154** The Andhra Pradesh government said 154 Telugu passengers, including 10 stricken from Pabars, have been issued boarding passes at Kathmandu airport. The passengers and vehicles are being arranged to bring all evacuees back to Andhra Pradesh. **IN**

**Prisoners recaptured in Nepal after mass jailbreaks**

**192** The Nepal Army has recaptured prisoners after mass jailbreaks during protests that toppled the government. Around 1,350 detainees had escaped from prisons across the country, leaving security forces struggling to restore order. **IN**

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## Can vultures help prevent pandemics?

How do vultures reduce the risk of disease spillover? What does their decline mean for public health? Why is protecting vultures cheaper than fighting outbreaks? Can communities be frontline actors in their protection?

### EXPLAINER

Ratul Saha

The story so far:

When most of us think of pandemic preparedness, images of vaccines, laboratories, and health workers in protective gear spring to mind. Rarely do we picture a bird, wings outstretched, circling high in the sky. Yet, one of South Asia's guardians of public health is the vulture, nature's most efficient waste manager.

**Where are India's vultures?**

For centuries, vultures have played a vital role in keeping landscapes clean and preventing the spread of pathogens like anthrax, *Clostridium botulinum*, and rabies. Photos of carcass dumping sites with hundreds of vultures feeding for meal were common in the 1960s. In India, the population once numbered over 40 million, but since the 1990s, it has declined by more than 95% due to diclofenac use. This loss is more than an ecological concern; it represents a slow-burning public health challenge, tying biodiversity decline to the risk of future pandemics.

India's vulture populations are part of the Central Asian Flyway (CAF), a migratory route connecting breeding grounds in Central Asia to wintering areas across South Asia. This corridor spans more than 30 countries and is traversed by millions of migratory birds each year. When vultures and other raptors move along this flyway, they link ecosystems (and disease risks) across borders. Carcass dumps, stopover sites, or poorly managed landfills can quickly turn into spillover hotspots, highlighting why the issue is regional in scope. The CAF is therefore a biodiversity and a public health corridor. Aligning conservation with pandemic prevention along this flyway offers a



Conservation programmes for vultures remain underfunded in the global arena. **IN** PICTO

unique opportunity to address risks at scale while strengthening global health security.

However, the ambition to act regionally is undermined by structural and financial gaps. Conservation programmes for vultures remain underfunded and fragmented in the global arena, with limited integration into national One Health strategies. Infrastructure risks, particularly electrocution from power lines and poisoning from toxic veterinary drugs, persist unchecked.

**How are vultures related to pandemics?**

As India's National Action Plan for Vulture Conservation (2018-28) nears completion, the next phase offers an opportunity to position vulture conservation as integral to pandemic preparedness. Vultures protect public health by removing carcasses that could otherwise fuel zoonotic spillovers.

As the first animals to encounter carcasses, they can play a pivotal role in surveillance and safe carcass management. Yet their contribution has rarely been formalised. Communities

living alongside vultures are also critical but underutilised partners. Financial mechanisms have not recognised vulture conservation as pandemic prevention, despite the relatively small investments required compared to the immense costs of outbreak response.

**How can India protect its vultures?**

A post-2025 national strategy could rest on five pillars. First, nationwide satellite monitoring to map habitats, carcass dumps, and spillover hotspots. Second, a Decision Support System (DSS) that integrates wildlife, livestock, and human health data for real-time risk analysis, aligned with International Health Regulations. Third, stronger cross-sector coordination under a One Health framework linking environment, veterinary, and public health agencies. Fourth, transboundary collaboration through the CAF, aligned with commitments under the Convention on Migratory Species and stronger regional disease preparedness. Finally, community stewardship that empowers women, youth, and local groups as

frontline actors in surveillance and awareness.

These five pillars could conserve a keystone species, reinforce public health infrastructure, reduce future pandemic risks, and align directly with the World Health Organization South-East Asia Regional Office Strategic Roadmap for Health Security (2023-27).

Overall, by building on the foundations of the current Vulture Action Plan and embedding health security dimensions, India can transition from species recovery to a broader resilience framework. This would not only conserve a keystone species but also reduce spillover risks and position India as a global leader in biodiversity-linked health security.

**What are India's opportunities?**

By integrating surveillance across human, animal, and environmental health, reducing the time from detection to response, and fostering regional collaboration, the new approach can create systemic resilience. It could also be cost-effective: the resources required to protect vultures, through telemetry, safe veterinary practices, and infrastructure mitigation, are modest compared to the financial and human toll of an outbreak. With its last phase of CAF-connected vulture populations – including Himalayan griffon, cinereous vultures, and Eurasian griffon – and its demonstrated capacity for innovation, India can showcase how biodiversity conservation doubles as pandemic prevention. By scaling telemetry, operationalising a risk and unfolding vulture protection into national and regional One Health strategies, India can also present a model that other countries in the region, and beyond, may follow.

The presence of vultures overhead is not only an ecological marker; it's also a reminder that protecting biodiversity can protect public health.

*Ratul Saha is Director - Raptor Conservation Programme, WWF-India*

### THE GIST

Vultures act as public health guardians by safely removing carcasses and reducing the risk of zoonotic spillover from pathogens such as anthrax and rabies.

Their populations have crashed by more than 95% since the 1990s, turning biodiversity decline into a slow-burning public health challenge.

Conserving vultures through One Health strategies, Central Asian Flyway collaboration, and community stewardship is a cost-effective way to strengthen pandemic preparedness and health security.

## Why are European nations now moving to recognise Palestine?

Can the European Union coordinate a unified response to Palestine?

Francoisek Kuszki

The story so far:

In a significant diplomatic shift, several European nations, including Spain, Ireland, and Norway, have formally recognised the state of Palestine. The move has created a ripple effect, prompting major powers like France to clarify their own positions. French President Emmanuel Macron stated he is "totally ready to recognise a Palestinian state," but stressed such a move "must come at a useful moment." This wave of recognition is the culmination of overlapping geopolitical, moral, and domestic pressures that have reached a tipping point.

**What makes recognition urgent now?** The primary catalyst has been the war in Gaza following the October 7 attacks. The scale of the subsequent Israeli military response, resulting in widespread destruction and a humanitarian catastrophe, has shocked European sensibilities and made the previous status quo untenable. This has been

compounded by the official stance of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's government, which has rejected the two-state solution, the foundational principle of decades of international diplomacy. The legal proceedings at the International Court of Justice, where South Africa has accused Israel of violating the Genocide Convention, have further intensified the pressure on European nations to take a definitive stance. For many governments, recognition is no longer a final reward for a reluctant but a necessary act to preserve the very possibility of a two-state solution.

**How has Ukraine reshaped Europe's stance on sovereignty?**

The Russian invasion of Ukraine in 2022 forced Europe to adopt a principled stand on national sovereignty and the inadmissibility of acquiring land by force. However, this robust defence of international law has thrown Europe's decade-long inaction on the Israeli occupation of Palestinian territories into sharp relief. Intellectuals, media

commentators, and civil society across the continent have increasingly pointed out this glaring hypocrisy, weakening the moral authority of European foreign policy. Governments now face immense pressure to demonstrate consistency. This "consistency gap" has become a significant liability, prompting a re-evaluation of their position. Recognising Palestine is thus partly an attempt to realign their policies and project a more coherent and principled stance on the world stage.

**What are the domestic political pressures inside European countries?**

The foreign policy shift is also a direct response to rolling domestic politics. Across Europe, public opinion has shifted palpably. The European Parliament's own Eurobarometer survey (2023) showed that 72% of Europeans support upholding international law in all conflicts – a principle increasingly seen as applying to Palestine as well. The harrowing images from Gaza have fuelled massive public demonstrations, student-led university encampments from Paris to Dublin, and

relentless advocacy from human rights organisations. Youth and progressive constituencies, which form a crucial voter base for many ruling centre-left and green parties, are demanding concrete action beyond mere condemnation. For these governments, the political cost of inaction is rising steeply. Being perceived as passive is becoming a significant electoral risk, making recognition a signal to the domestic audience that their government is aligned with the evolving moral consensus of its electorate.

**Why are some countries moving faster than others?**

The varied pace of recognition reveals the deep historical and political fault lines within Europe. Countries like Spain, Ireland, and Norway share a long-standing sympathy for the Palestinian cause, rooted in their own experiences with national struggle or a tradition of social democratic internationalism. Norway was first to the 1953 Oslo Accords, its recognition of Palestine in 2024 was seen as admitting that the negotiated path has collapsed, and new leverage is needed. In stark contrast, nations like Germany and Austria remain reluctant, constrained by the profound historical responsibility of the Holocaust, which has forged an ingrained aversion to Israel's security. Meanwhile, many eastern European countries, such as Poland and Hungary, remain steadfastly opposed, often under Russian influence. However, today these same countries now also align their foreign policy closely with the U.S. and are hesitant to take a leading role on the

issue, prioritising transatlantic unity.

**How are these moves coordinated at the European Union level?**

This patchwork approach is a direct consequence of the European Union's institutional structure. The European Union's Common Foreign and Security Policy requires unanimity among all 27 member states to form a collective position – a consensus that is currently impossible to achieve. As a result, the decision on recognition has been left to individual member states. However, these are not entirely isolated actions. The moves by Spain, Ireland, and Norway were deliberately coordinated to create a greater political impact. This "like-minded group" approach builds momentum; when one set of countries acts, it provides political cover and encouragement for others to follow. While a unified EU position remains distant, this state-by-state process is creating a *de facto* shift in Europe's collective position. The war in Gaza, the intellectual confrontation exposed by the Ukraine conflict, and rising domestic political activism have forced a change.

This is a symbolic shift in how a growing part of Europe wants to project its values and power globally. While individual heads don't end the occupation or the conflict, it signals unequivocally that many in Europe are no longer content with the status quo and are speculating to the dismantling of the two-state solution.

*Francoisek Kuszki is a graduate of Sciences Po, Paris*



# Why are European nations now moving to recognise Palestine?

Can the European Union coordinate a unified response to Palestine?

Franciszek Snarski

## The story so far:

In a significant diplomatic shift, several European nations, including Spain, Ireland, and Norway, have formally recognised the state of Palestine. The move has created a ripple effect, prompting major powers like France to clarify their own positions. French President Emmanuel Macron stated he is "totally ready to recognise a Palestinian state," but stressed such a move "must come at a useful moment." This wave of recognition is the culmination of overlapping geopolitical, moral, and domestic pressures that have reached a tipping point.

## What makes recognition urgent now?

The primary catalyst has been the war in Gaza following the October 7 attacks. The scale of the subsequent Israeli military response, resulting in widespread destruction and a humanitarian catastrophe, has shocked European sensibilities and made the previous *status quo* untenable. This has been

compounded by the official stance of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's government, which has rejected the two-state solution, the foundational principle of decades of international diplomacy. The legal proceedings at the International Court of Justice, where South Africa has accused Israel of violating the Genocide Convention, have further intensified the pressure on European nations to take a definitive stance. For many governments, recognition is no longer a final reward for a settlement but a necessary act to preserve the very possibility of a two-state solution.

## How has Ukraine reshaped Europe's stance on sovereignty?

The Russian invasion of Ukraine in 2022 forced Europe to adopt a principled stand on national sovereignty and the inadmissibility of acquiring land by force. However, this robust defence of international law has thrown Europe's decades-long inaction on the Israeli occupation of Palestinian territories into sharp relief. Intellectuals, media

commentators, and civil society across the continent have increasingly pointed out this glaring hypocrisy, weakening the moral authority of European foreign policy. Governments now face immense pressure to demonstrate consistency. This "consistency gap" has become a significant liability, prompting a re-evaluation of their position. Recognising Palestine is thus partly an attempt to realign their policies and project a more coherent and principled stance on the world stage.

## What are the domestic political pressures inside European countries?

The foreign policy shift is also a direct response to roiling domestic politics. Across Europe, public opinion has shifted palpably. The European Parliament's own Eurobarometer survey (2023) showed that 72% of Europeans support upholding international law in all conflicts – a principle increasingly seen as applying to Palestine as well. The harrowing images from Gaza have fuelled massive public demonstrations, student-led university encampments from Paris to Dublin, and

relentless advocacy from human rights organisations. Youth and progressive constituencies, which form a crucial voter base for many ruling centre-left and green parties, are demanding concrete action beyond mere condemnation. For these governments, the political cost of inaction is rising steeply. Being perceived as passive is becoming a significant electoral risk, making recognition a signal to the domestic audience that their government is aligned with the evolving moral consensus of its electorate.

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The varied pace of recognition reveals the deep historical and political fault lines within Europe. Countries like Spain, Ireland, and Norway share a history of sympathy for the Palestinian cause, rooted in their own experiences with national struggle or a tradition of social democratic internationalism. Norway was host to the 1993 Oslo Accords; its recognition of Palestine in 2024 was seen as admitting that the negotiated path has collapsed, and new leverage is needed. In stark contrast, nations like Germany and Austria remain reluctant, constrained by the profound historical responsibility of the Holocaust, which has forged an ironclad commitment to Israel's security. Meanwhile, many eastern European countries, such as Poland and Hungary, recognised Palestine decades ago under Soviet influence. However, today these same countries tend to align their foreign policy closely with the U.S. and are hesitant to take a leading role on the

issue, prioritising transatlantic unity.

## How are these moves coordinated at the European Union level?

This patchwork approach is a direct consequence of the European Union's institutional structure. The European Union's Common Foreign and Security Policy requires unanimity among all 27 member states to form a collective position – a consensus that is currently impossible to achieve. As a result, the decision on recognition has been left to individual member states. However, these are not entirely isolated actions. The moves by Spain, Ireland, and Norway were deliberately coordinated to create a greater political impact. This "like-minded group" approach builds momentum; when one set of countries acts, it provides political cover and encouragement for others to follow. While a unified EU position remains distant, this state-by-state process is creating a *de facto* shift in Europe's collective posture. The war in Gaza, the intellectual contradiction exposed by the Ukraine conflict, and rising domestic political activism have forced a change.

This is a symbolic shift in how a growing part of Europe wants to project its values and power globally. While recognition itself does not end the occupation or the conflict, it signals unequivocally that many in Europe are no longer comfortable being passive spectators to the dismantling of the two-state solution.

Franciszek Snarski is a graduate of Sciences Po, Paris

- **Recent Diplomatic Shift:**
    - Spain, Ireland, Norway formally recognised **State of Palestine**.
    - Created ripple effect across Europe, pressuring countries like **France** to clarify positions.
    - President Macron: "Totally ready" but timing must be "useful."
- 

## 2. What Makes Recognition Urgent?

- **October 7 Hamas Attacks** → Israeli military response → humanitarian catastrophe in Gaza.
- **Status quo untenable:** Mass destruction + civilian deaths shocked Europe.
- **Legal dimension:**
  - South Africa case at **International Court of Justice** accusing Israel of genocide.
  - Rejection of two-state solution by Israeli PM Netanyahu.
- **Result:** European governments feel compelled to act, not as reward but to keep hope of two-state solution alive.

### 3. Ukraine War's Impact on Europe's Sovereignty Lens

- Russia's invasion (2022) → forced Europe to defend **territorial sovereignty principle**.
  - Exposed **hypocrisy**: Supporting Ukraine while ignoring Palestinian occupation.
  - Pressure to maintain **consistency** in foreign policy.
- 

### 4. Domestic Political Pressures

- **Public opinion shift:**
  - Eurobarometer Survey (2023): **72% of Europeans support international law in all conflicts.**
  - Increasingly applied to Palestine.
- **Popular Protests:**
  - Gaza images fuelled demonstrations, university encampments across Europe.
  - Human rights groups, progressive voters demanding firm stance.
- **Electoral Risks:**
  - Seen as passive = loss of moral authority.
  - Recognition now = necessary step to show principled leadership.



## 5. Why Some Countries Moved Faster?

- **Spain, Ireland, Norway:**
  - History of sympathy for Palestinian cause.
  - Domestic experience with nationalism & struggle.
  - Norway: past Oslo Accords mediator.
- **Germany & Austria:**
  - Hesitant due to Holocaust responsibility + close ties with Israel.
- **Eastern Europe (Hungary, Poland):**
  - Earlier recognised Palestine but today align with **U.S. & Israeli policy**.

## EU's Coordination Challenge

### EU Structure:

- Requires **unanimity of 27 states** for common foreign/security policy → impossible.
- Recognition left to individual states.

### Like-Minded Group Approach:

- Coordinated recognition by Spain, Ireland, Norway → collective impact.
- Momentum effect: encourages others to follow.

### Symbolic Shift:

- Shows Europe wants to project **values-based foreign policy** globally.
- Recognition doesn't end occupation, but signals refusal to remain passive spectators.

**Palestine  
Recognition:**

139 of 193 UN members recognise Palestine.  
India recognised Palestine in **1988**.

**EU Split:**

Sweden recognised Palestine in **2014**.  
Majority of Western EU states avoided due to U.S. & Israeli alignment.

# IIM-A opens first foreign campus in Dubai

**DUBAI CROWN PRINCE** Sheikh Hamdan bin Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum on Thursday inaugurated the Dubai campus of the Indian Institute of Management (IIM), Ahmedabad, according to the Ministry of Education.

Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan, who is on a two-day visit to the UAE, termed it another big leap towards globalisation of India's education.

"IIM Ahmedabad Dubai campus will take the best of India to the world. Dubai, today, has provided the perfect launchpad to the ethos of 'Indian in spirit, global in outlook' by hosting the IIM Ahmedabad international campus," Pradhan wrote on X.

"Both leaders reviewed bilateral cooperation in higher education and agreed to further deepen knowledge bridges, making knowledge, innovation, and research central pillars of the Comprehensive Strategic Partnership," the Ministry of Education said.

**PTI**



- **Event:** Dubai Crown Prince **Sheikh Hamdan bin Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum** inaugurated the **Dubai campus of IIM Ahmedabad (IIM-A)**.
  - **Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan** present during visit to UAE.
  - Termed as a **"big leap towards globalisation of India's education."**
- 

## 2. Significance

- **Globalisation of Indian Education**
    - IIM-A Dubai campus → **India's education brand abroad.**
    - Reflects India's ambition: *"Indian in spirit, global in outlook."*
  - **Platform for International Exposure**
    - Dubai = global hub, ideal launchpad for Indian higher education institutions.
-

## About IIM Ahmedabad

- Established: **1961**, with Harvard Business School support.
- Consistently ranked among **top management institutes in India & Asia**.
- Known for **case-study pedagogy & alumni in global leadership positions**.

## India's Education Diplomacy

- **NEP 2020** encourages:
  - Internationalisation of Indian higher education.
  - Opening campuses abroad.
  - Allowing foreign universities to open in India (GIFT City, Gujarat already hosting).
- Other Indian institutions exploring global campuses: **IITs** (e.g., IIT Delhi-Abu Dhabi project).

## India-UAE Relations

- UAE = key partner in trade, diaspora, defence, and education.
- Large Indian diaspora (~3.5 million) in UAE = demand for Indian education.

# Explainer

## ● What is the HIRE Act 2025?

**INTRODUCED BY REPUBLICAN** Senator Bernie Moreno, the HIRE Act 2025 echoes the US's increasingly protectionist stance, as it aims to discourage American companies from outsourcing jobs by imposing a 25% tax penalty on payments made to foreign workers or entities when the services benefit US consumers. It further states that companies may not claim outsourcing expenses as deductions in US federal taxes, raising the effective cost even further. This revenue would go to a new Domestic Workforce Fund to support US apprenticeships, reskilling, and workforce development. To that end, the Act states that companies must report outsourcing payments clearly, and penalties for underreporting or non-compliance have been raised. This Act will be applicable across sectors—information technology (IT), customer support, back-office, design, R&D, etc.—essentially any service work that can be offshored. Imported services make up around 3% of the US's total services consumption; however, despite being a very narrow percentage of total services, this portion is important for service exporters such as India and China.

HIRE ACT  
2025

## Why proposed US law is worrying IT sector

The Halting International Relocation of Employment (HIRE) Act could sound the death knell for Indian IT exports, if it is passed by the US Senate. **Anviti Rai** explains the nature and scope of the legislation, and why the US has a continuous cycle of protectionist stance against foreign workers

## ● What is the rationale behind the legislation?

**WHEN SENATOR MORENO** introduced the HIRE Act, he declared, "While college grads in America struggle to find work, globalist politicians and C-Suite executives have spent decades shipping good-paying jobs overseas in pursuit of slave wages and immense profits—those days are over."

His stance mirrors President Donald Trump's protectionist outlook, rooted in the America First discourse that has defined his time in office. At the AI Summit at Washington in July, Trump had said, "Many of our largest tech companies have reaped the blessings of American freedom while building their factories in

China, hiring workers in India, and slashing profits in Ireland... all the while dismissing and even censoring their fellow citizens... under President Trump, those days are over." The measure may also target service imports from India and China, which resisted Trump's trade deals during his tariff war.



25%

PENALTY PROPOSED  
ON PAYMENTS TO  
FOREIGN WORKERS  
WHEN SERVICES  
BENEFIT US  
CONSUMERS

HIRE ACT WILL BE  
APPLICABLE ACROSS  
SECTORS—IT,  
CUSTOMER SUPPORT,  
BACK-OFFICE,  
DESIGN, R&D, ETC.

1,200+

GCCs SET UP  
IN INDIA BY  
AMERICAN  
MULTINATIONALS

## ● What happens if it is passed?

**EXPERTS SAY THE** Bill is unlikely to be passed. However, if it is implemented, given the 25% penalty on compensation for foreign workers and ineligibility for tax deductions, US firms could face a spike in hiring costs. Compliance burden would also increase, as the Act mandates that companies report outsourcing costs. There could be industrial and political opposition to the proposal; however, it could be at varying degrees. For example,

when Trump demanded that Apple should not assemble its devices in India and threatened 25% tariff, it did not outrightly comply, but affirmed a \$500-billion investment in its US facilities. Finally, as this Act also applies to digital services, it will violate a WTO agreement that prevents member-nations from imposing duties. The moratorium has been renewed many times, most recently in early 2024, and will be reviewed in March 2026.

## ● How will India be affected?

**WHILE SERVICE IMPORTS** constitute only 3% of total services consumption for the US, there is much at stake for exporters like India. While the tariff war has dealt a blow to Indian exports, a blow to the services sector will be debilitating, especially for the IT industry. The US is the largest market for India's IT services and global capability centres (GCCs), with many Indian IT majors such as TCS, Wipro, and Infosys having more than half their client base there. Many multinational corporations, including American stalwarts such as Microsoft, Google, JPMorgan, and Goldman Sachs also depend heavily on Indian GCCs, and have established more than 1,200 such centres in the country so far. If passed into law, the HIRE Act would affect around two million workers employed by these GCCs, leading to internal restructuring. The impact on the industry—which, according to HSBC estimates, could reach a valuation of \$110 billion by 2030—may also shrink the number of contracts to Indian IT firms and compel US firms to adopt a near-shore or hybrid model.

## ● Protectionist sentiments

**A PART OF** the US electorate has always leaned towards protectionism, and Trump's campaigns have centred on this theme. Moreover, the American populace is sensitive to hiring trends. A 2024 Cato Institute survey showed 79% of Americans saw outsourcing as harmful for domestic manufacturing; 80% felt the US would be better off if more Americans worked in manufacturing; and 42% were not in favour of outsourcing as a whole. Official data show us why: Professional and business services firms added 158,000 fewer jobs in FY25, the US Department of Labor reported in March, while accounting for 17% of the jobs not added. Also, services employment continues to shrink. While the Institute for Supply Management's non-manufacturing purchasing managers' index was at 52 in August (a number over 50 indicates expansion), the services employment index remained at 46.5, signalling contraction in actual job creation within the sector, most likely due to outsourcing. The sectors most affected by outsourcing were IT services, customer support, back-office operations, and R&D functions.

## 1. What is the HIRE Act 2025?

- **Full Form:** *Halting International Relocation of Employment Act*.
  - **Introduced by:** US Republican Senator Bernie Moreno.
  - **Key Provisions:**
    - **25% tax penalty** on payments made to foreign workers/entities if services benefit US consumers.
    - Ban on claiming outsourcing expenses as deductions in US federal taxes.
    - Companies must **report outsourcing payments**; penalties for underreporting/non-compliance.
    - Revenue from penalties → **Domestic Workforce Fund** (apprenticeships, reskilling, workforce development).
  - **Sectors Affected:** IT, customer support, back-office, design, R&D, essentially all offshored service work.
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### Rationale Behind Legislation

### Protectionist Outlook:

- Mirrors **Donald Trump's America First** policy.
- Argument: outsourcing = job loss & wage stagnation in US.
- Senator Moreno: "Days of paying jobs overseas in pursuit of slave wages and massive profits are over."



**Target:** Countries like **India & China**, where US firms offshore IT & services.

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- **What Happens if it is Passed?**
- **Practical Impact:**
  - US firms face higher costs → reduced tax benefits + compliance burden.
  - Hiring spike in the US, but costlier operations.
  - Could face **industrial & political opposition** (as in past with Apple case).
- **Trade Dimension:**
  - Could violate **WTO rules** preventing discrimination against foreign firms.
  - Will be reviewed in **March 2026** after moratoriums.
- **Likelihood:** Experts say **unlikely to pass** in current form, but signals rising protectionist trend.

- **How Will India Be Affected?**
- **Service Imports Share:** Only **30% of US total service consumption** → but India is a major supplier.
- **IT/ITES Dependence:** US is largest market for Indian IT services & GCCs (Global Capability Centres).
  - Indian IT majors: TCS, Infosys, Wipro.
  - US MNCs (Google, JP Morgan, Goldman Sachs) heavily depend on Indian GCCs.
- **Scale:**
  - ~1,200+ GCCs in India, employing **1.3 million workers**.
  - If 25% penalty imposed → restructuring, contraction of workforce.
  - HSBC estimate: Indian GCC industry worth \$110 billion by 2030 could be hit.

- 
- **Protectionist Sentiments in US**
  - **Public Opinion:**
    - 2024 Actio Institute survey: **79% Americans view outsourcing negatively.**
    - 80% feel US economy better if jobs stayed at home.
  - **Employment Data:**
    - FY25: US lost 158,000 service jobs (17% of total job losses).
    - Protectionist policies gaining political traction.
  - **Sectors Most Affected:** Outsourced IT services, customer support, back-office ops, R&D functions.
- 

- **Historical Context**
- **US Protectionism:**
  - 2017–2021 (Trump era): tariffs, H1-B visa restrictions.
  - Biden Govt: less vocal, but continuity in “Buy American” agenda.
- **Past Similar Acts:**
  - 2004: US banned outsourcing of govt. contracts abroad.
  - 2020s: multiple attempts to penalize firms outsourcing to Asia.
- **India–US IT Ties**
- Indian IT exports to US = **~60% of India’s total IT export revenues** (~\$80 billion).
- GCCs in India = key to US tech giants’ global operations.
- **Global Trade Angle**
- WTO prohibits discriminatory taxes on foreign services.
- Rising **techno-nationalism** could reshape global IT outsourcing.



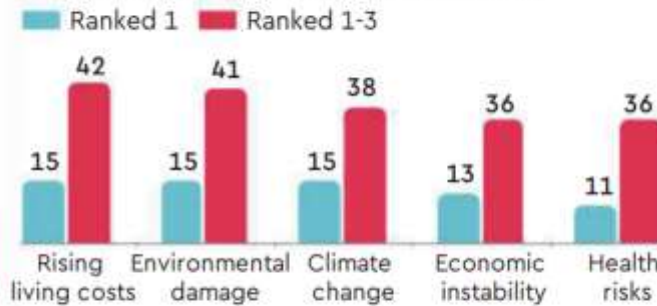
# Prioritising health and value, consumers shop smart: PwC



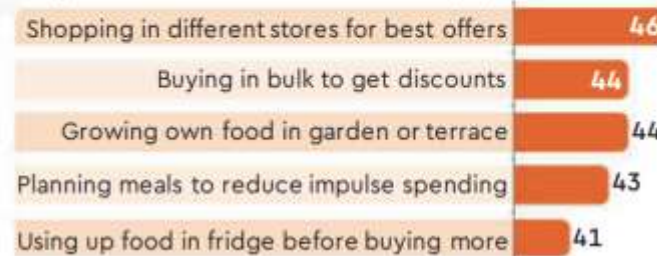
According to PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC) in its Voice of the Consumer study, nearly 84% of Indian consumers are concerned about food safety, while 63% cite rising food costs. Shoppers are adapting by buying in bulk, visiting multiple stores, and seeking discounts. Convenience matters too: over 70% use supermarkets, 60% local retailers, and 55% digital delivery platforms, the survey of 1,031 consumers shows.

**Compiled by  
Viveat Susan Pinto**

Top 5 risks over the next 12 months (%)



Steps taken to offset food costs (%)



Where have consumers shopped (%)



Use of apps to tackle health risks (%)



Source: PwC's Voice of the Consumer 2025 report

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# Word of the day

## **Temerity:**

extremely confident behaviour

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**Synonyms:** audacity, boldness, daring

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**Usage:** *He had the temerity to question the Minister.*

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

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**International Phonetic Alphabet:** /təmerɪti/

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Thank you 😊

