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“One decision today can quietly change  
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**Wang Yi set to skip BRICS meet in Delhi**  
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**IMD unveils weather model for block-level forecasts**  
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**British PM Starmer says he will not quit**  
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**Unemployment among youth above average**  
9.9% of people aged 15 to 29 stay unemployed  
OPINION PAGE 9



**Fifans root Sunrisers, climb to the top**  
SPORTS PAGE 16

**NEARBY**

**Russia, Ukraine end truce after trading attacks**  
KYIV Russia ended a three-day ceasefire with Ukraine on Tuesday by launching over 200 attack drones that damaged energy facilities and buildings, killing one person, Ukrainian officials said. Moscow's army announced it had also launched its retaliatory attack on Russia. PAGE 14

**Suspense over Kerala CM pick continues**  
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM In the prolonged bid to clear the cloud of uncertainty over the Congress' Chief Minister nominee for Kerala, party president Mallikarjun Jorgu and senior leaders Sonia Gandhi and Rahul Gandhi agreed consultations with top state leaders in New Delhi on Tuesday. PAGE 6

**U.S. must accept our peace plan or face failure**  
NEW HAVEN Israeli chief negotiator said on Tuesday that Washington must accept Tel Aviv's latest peace plan or face failure, after U.S. President Trump warned the peace in the West Asia war was on the brink of collapse. The longer they drag their feet, the more American taxpayers will pay for it. PAGE 14

**McNREGS union workers to strike on Friday**  
NEW DELHI The NREGA Sanghask Manch and All India Kisan Sabha have called for an all India strike by MGNREGS workers on May 12, against the Centre's decision to discontinue the scheme. The Act will stand repealed on July 1, as per a notification issued by the Union government on Monday. PAGE 8

**New citizens can 'feel the jail' for a nominal fee**  
HYDERABAD As part of a new initiative at Hyderabad's Chenchiguda Central jail, incoming citizens can feel the prison life first-hand. Launched by the Telangana Prisons Department, the paid programme allows members of the public to live like inmates, complete with prison food and regulated routines. PAGE 4

# NEET-UG 2026 is cancelled after paper leak

Exam held on May 3 deemed compromised after probe into whistleblower's message | CBI to probe the leak, Maharashtra Police arrest one suspect; re-test in 'minimal possible time' | No new registration, no extra fees for retest, says NTA while promising to issue refund

**Multi-Purpose**  
NEW DELHI The National Testing Agency (NTA) on Tuesday cancelled the National Entrance-cum-Bridging Test Undergraduate (NEET-UG) scheduled on May 3 after evidence emerged that the paper was leaked. The NTA is expected to announce the schedule for the re-test in seven to 10 days. The re-test will be conducted in the 'minimal possible time', NTA Director-General Abhishek Singh said. No new registration will be required, and no fee will be charged for the re-test; in fact, the NTA has promised to refund fees already paid. About 22 lakh students appeared for this year's NEET-UG, which is mandatory for retest examination for admission to undergraduate medical programmes across the country. Four days after the exam was held, a whistleblower's message led investigators to a "guess paper", which included a significant number of questions in the question paper. The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) has registered a case to probe the alleged paper leak, following a reference from the Department of Higher Education under the Ministry of Education, the agency said on Tuesday. The Maharashtra Police said on Tuesday that one suspect has been arrested from Nashik after receiving a request from the Rajasthan Police about an accused involved in the paper leak. "The exact point where the leak happened will only be disclosed when the CBI inquiry is completed. We have complete footage of up to 1,50,000 CCTV in strong



Students' Federation of India members protest against cancellation of NEET-UG 2026 in New Delhi on Tuesday. (Sonia Senanayake)

rooms on the date of exam and post-exam," Mr Singh said. "However, a whistleblower complaint on May 7 led us to inquire into a hand-written note circulating digitally among groups which matched the NEET exam question paper." "Signal to examiners" The inputs received by NTA, taken together with the findings shared by the law enforcement agencies, established that the pre-exam examination process could not be allowed to stand," Mr Singh said. "The question is not whether the leak occurred or not, it is that if time-gate of the process was violated, it was violated. However, we will conduct re-exam in minimum possible time, and we will ensure that nothing of that sort is repeated."

The NTA came to the conclusion that the pre-exam exam was compromised, Mr Singh told *The Hindu*. "Any move short of the exam would have led to the system, which we are trying to beat the system, which the system would have succeeded," he said. The CBI has constituted a special team, which has been dispatched to various locations to follow up on leads. It has invoked provisions related to criminal conspiracy, cheating, criminal breach of trust, theft, and destruction of evidence under the Prevention of Corruption Act and the Public Examination (Prevention of Malpractice) Act, Mr Singh said. The Rajasthan Special Directorate Group was previously investigating the case to establish the time and the hand-written "guess" paper was circulated in Rajasthan's Sikar

a couple of days before the examination and most of the questions allegedly matched the actual paper. "On the basis of the inputs subsequently examined by NTA in coordination with the Central agencies, and the investigative findings shared by the law enforcement agencies and in order to ensure that there is transparency in the system, the NTA, with the approval of the Government of India, has decided to cancel the NEET-UG 2026 examination conducted on 3 May 2026, and to re-conduct the examination on dates that will be notified separately," the NTA said in a statement. Zero error policy Mr Singh said that though a re-test will cause significant inconvenience to candidates and their families, "the alternative would have caused greater and more lasting damage" to public trust. When Mr Singh, who had earlier headed the India AI Mission, assumed charge of the NTA forty days ago, he had declared a "Zero Error Zero Tolerance" policy towards conducting entrance tests. "We had assured students and parents that it will be zero error examination," Mr Singh told *The Hindu*. "In fact, we had done a complete review before the NEET exam was conducted on May 3, and there were no complaints at the time. We had mentioned that there will be Zero Error Zero Tolerance" policy and heading to that, we had blocked Telegram channels. We had urged students to not fall prey to any people who were trying to scam them," he added.

**SCORE REPORTS**  
PAGE 9

## Still in the saddle



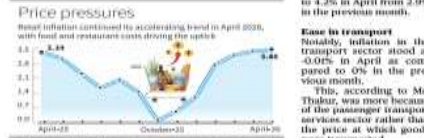
Union Minister Hardeep Singh Puri on Tuesday reassured consumers about the adequacy of retail fuels, but indicated that a prolonged West Asia crisis could force the Centre to pass on the pressure to domestic consumers, as oil-marketing companies continue to face losses from holding petrol, diesel, and LPG stocks. (How long would oil marketing companies be able to hold it?)

## Minister hints at fuel price hike as OMCs' losses mount

**Santapano Ghosh**  
NEW DELHI Union Minister Hardeep Singh Puri on Tuesday reassured consumers about the adequacy of retail fuels, but indicated that a prolonged West Asia crisis could force the Centre to pass on the pressure to domestic consumers, as oil-marketing companies continue to face losses from holding petrol, diesel, and LPG stocks. "How long would oil marketing companies be able to hold it?"

## Pricey food, dining out push retail inflation to a 13-month high of 3.5%

**E.C.A. Sharan Reddy**  
NEW DELHI Retail inflation quickened to a 13-month high of 3.5% in April 2020, although still coming in lower than what was expected by most economists. The price rise was largely driven by higher food inflation as well as higher prices at restaurants as they passed on higher fuel prices to consumers. Data on the Consumer Price Index (CPI) for April showed that inflation quickened from the 3.4% registered in March, the first month following the start of the war in West Asia. "However, the outlook remains clouded with upside risks amid supply-side disruptions from geopolitical and IT issues," Mr Bharadwaj said, a sentiment echoed by Madan Mohan, chief economist at the Bank of Baroda as well as Chief Thinker economist at IAT Finance. "However, the outlook remains clouded with upside risks amid supply-side disruptions from geopolitical and IT issues," Mr Bharadwaj said, a sentiment echoed by Madan Mohan, chief economist at the Bank of Baroda as well as Chief Thinker economist at IAT Finance.



## Rebel AIADMK faction to back Vijay in Tamil Nadu Assembly floor test today

**The Hindu Bureau**  
CHENNAI On the eve of the floor test in the Tamil Nadu Assembly, Chief Minister C. Joseph Vijay on Tuesday called on rebel AIADMK leaders led by former Minister S.P. Velumani and C.V. Shanmugam to back him after they announced support to the ruling Tamil Nadu Government (TVG). Earlier, in the Assembly, the newly elected Speaker, J.C.D. Palanisami, allowed Mr. Velumani to speak but he was not allowed to speak since the AIADMK general secretary Edappadi K. Palanisami delineated the floor test by congratulating the Speaker on his election. In the morning, the rebels declared Mr. Velumani as the AIADMK Legislative Party leader. Mr. Palanisami's supporters, however, said he was the leader of the Legislature Party. Mr. Velumani would vote against the confidence motion to be moved by the TVG government, senior leaders said. In an interview with *The Hindu*, the Speaker acknowledged that the rebel group represents in any pre-political alliance. Mr. Velumani requested the media not to spread rumours that his group was seeking to create a split in the party. The group said C. Hari (Thiruvananthapuram) was elected the deputy leader of Vijayabaskar (former Minister), the whip; and Kannaiah, the secretary. However, AIADMK senior leader O.S. Manian, a supporter of Mr. Palanisami, accused Mr. Shanmugam of spreading false

information and attempting to lure MLAs. While he claimed that all AIADMK legislators had signed a letter electing Mr. Palanisami as the Legislature Party leader, presently, 26 members were on his side. "The signatures of all members supporting Mr. Palanisami prove the AIADMK remains united. The desire to become Ministers or hold powerful positions is what is driving such statements (from rebels). While the media says they [rebel] are 30 MLAs and we have 37, we actually have 26 members with us," Mr. Manian told journalists. Pointing out under Mr. Palanisami's leadership, various challenges were overcome and the "Two Leaves" symbol reclaimed, he said. He said that a split after Jayalalitha's death, he said in the election, the NDA secured nearly 1.54 crore votes. He dismissed as "carelessly handled" Mr. Shanmugam's claim of alliance talks with the DMK. The rebels were driven by a desire to become Ministers, he added.

**EDITORIAL**  
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# NEET-UG 2026 is cancelled after paper leak

Exam held on May 3 deemed compromised after probe into whistleblower's message

CBI to probe the leak, Maharashtra Police arrest one suspect; re-test in 'minimal possible time'

No new registration, no extra fees for retest, says NTA while promising to issue refund

**Maitri Porecha**  
NEW DELHI

The National Testing Agency (NTA) on Tuesday cancelled the National Entrance-cum-Eligibility Test-Undergraduate (NEET-UG) conducted on May 3 after evidence emerged that the paper was leaked.

The NTA is expected to announce the schedule for the re-test in seven to 10 days.

The re-test will be conducted in the "minimal possible time", NTA Director-General Abhishek Singh said. No new registration will be required, and no fee will be charged for the re-test; in fact, the NTA has promised to refund fees already paid.

Almost 22 lakh students appeared for this year's NEET-UG, which is the gateway examination for admission to undergraduate medical programmes

across the country.

Four days after the exam was held, a whistleblower's message led investigators to a "guess paper", which included a significant number of questions in the question paper.

The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) has registered a case to probe the alleged paper leak, following a reference from the Department of Higher Education under the Ministry of Education, the agency said on Tuesday. The Maharashtra Police said on Tuesday that one suspect has been arrested from Nashik after receiving a request from the Rajasthan Police about an accused involved in the paper leak. "The exact point where the leak happened will only be disclosed when the CBI inquiry is completed. We have complete footage of up to 1,50,000 CCTVs in stron-



Student's Federation of India members protest against cancellation of NEET-UG 2026 in New Delhi on Tuesday. SHASHI SHEKHAR KASHYAP

grooms on the date of exam and post exam," Mr. Singh said. "However, a whistleblower complaint on May 7 led us to inquire into a hand-written note circulating digitally on messaging groups which matched the NEET main exam question paper."

#### 'Signal to scammers'

"The inputs received by NTA, taken together with the findings shared by the

law enforcement agencies, established that the present examination process could not be allowed to stand," Mr. Singh said.

"The question is not whether the leak was localised or not, it is that if integrity of the process was violated, it was violated. However, we will conduct re-exam in minimal possible time, and we will ensure that nothing of that sort is repeated."

The NTA came to the conclusion that the present exam was compromised, Mr. Singh told *The Hindu*. "Any move short of cancelling exams would signal that those who are trying to beat the system, scam the system would have succeeded," he explained.

The CBI has constituted special teams, which have been dispatched to various locations to follow up on leads. It has invoked provisions related to criminal conspiracy, cheating, criminal breach of trust, theft, and destruction of evidence under the Prevention of Corruption Act and the Public Examination Prevention of Unfair Means Act.

The Rajasthan Special Operations Group was previously investigating the case. Preliminary inquiry indicated that a handwritten "guess" paper was circulated in Rajasthan's Sikar

a couple of days before the examination and most of its questions allegedly matched the actual paper.

"On the basis of the inputs subsequently examined by NTA in coordination with the Central agencies, and the investigative findings shared by the law enforcement agencies and in order to ensure that there is transparency in the system, the NTA, with the approval of the Government of India, has decided to cancel the NEET (UG) 2026 examination conducted on 3 May 2026, and to re-conduct the examination on dates that will be notified separately," the NTA said in a statement.

#### Zero error policy

It added that though a re-test will cause significant inconvenience to candidates and their families, "the alternative would have caused greater and

more lasting damage" to public trust.

When Mr. Singh, who had earlier headed the India AI Mission, assumed charge of the NTA forty days ago, he had declared a 'Zero Error Zero Tolerance' policy towards conducting entrance tests.

"We had assured students and parents that it will be zero error examination," Mr. Singh told *The Hindu*. "In fact, we had done a complete review before the NEET exam was conducted on May 3, and there were no complaints at the time. We had mentioned that there will be 'Zero Error Zero Tolerance' policy and leading to that, we had blocked 120 Telegram channels. We had urged students to not fall prey to any people who were trying to scam them," he added.

**MORE REPORTS**

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# Multiple controversies

Since NEET was introduced in 2013, the test has faced multiple controversies, including allegations of paper leaks, impersonation, and aspirant deaths

**2013:** NEET was introduced as a single entrance examination for medical admissions across India in 2013. However, the Supreme Court struck it down as unconstitutional on July 18, 2013

**2016:** The Supreme Court revived NEET in 2016 after recalling its earlier judgment

**2017:** An aspirant, S. Anitha of Tamil Nadu who had challenged NEET in court, killed herself after failing to secure admission. The case led to severe political opposition to the test in the State

**2019:** A major impersonation racket

was uncovered in 2019, revealing that several candidates had used proxy candidates to write the test and secure admission in medical colleges. Many were arrested and the controversy prompted tighter biometric checks and scrutiny during admissions and examinations

**2020:** The conduct of NEET during the COVID-19 pandemic sparked nationwide debate. Students and Opposition parties sought postponement, citing public health risks, transport restrictions, and flooding in some regions. The Supreme Court,



however, allowed the examination to be conducted

**2022:** A controversy erupted in Kerala after female candidates said they were asked to remove innerwear containing metal hooks before entering examination centres

**2024:** NEET-UG 2024 witnessed massive controversy over alle-

gations of paper leaks and award of grace marks. Questions were raised after an unusually high number of candidates secured top ranks. In July 2024, the Supreme Court declined to order a nationwide re-test, saying there was insufficient evidence to establish a systemic breach affecting the entire examination

Why in News?	NTA cancelled <b>NEET-UG 2026</b> after evidence emerged that the paper was leaked.	NTA ने पेपर लीक के प्रमाण मिलने के बाद <b>NEET-UG 2026</b> रद्द कर दिया।
Exam Date	The exam was conducted on <b>May 3, 2026</b> .	परीक्षा <b>3 मई 2026</b> को आयोजित हुई थी।
Conducting Body	National Testing Agency / NTA.	राष्ट्रीय परीक्षण एजेंसी / NTA।
Nature of Exam	Entrance test for admission to undergraduate medical programmes.	स्नातक मेडिकल कोर्स में प्रवेश हेतु परीक्षा।
Number of Candidates	Around <b>22 lakh students</b> appeared.	लगभग <b>22 लाख छात्र</b> परीक्षा में शामिल हुए।
Reason for Cancellation	Paper was deemed compromised after probe into whistleblower's message.	व्हिसलब्लोअर के संदेश की जांच के बाद पेपर को प्रभावित माना गया।
Investigation Agency	Central Bureau of Investigation / CBI.	केंद्रीय अन्वेषण ब्यूरो / CBI।
Police Action	Maharashtra Police arrested one suspect from Nashik.	महाराष्ट्र पुलिस ने नासिक से एक संदिग्ध को गिरफ्तार किया।
Retest	Re-test will be conducted in the <b>minimum possible time</b> .	पुनर्परीक्षा <b>न्यूनतम संभव समय</b> में कराई जाएगी।
Registration / Fee	No new registration and no extra fee for the retest.	पुनर्परीक्षा के लिए नया पंजीकरण और अतिरिक्त शुल्क नहीं लगेगा।
Refund	NTA promised to refund fees already paid.	NTA ने पहले से जमा फीस वापस करने का आश्वासन दिया।

Law / Provision

Prevention of Corruption Act

Public Examination Prevention of Unfair Means Act

Criminal Conspiracy

Cheating

Destruction of Evidence

Relevance

Used where corruption or misuse of position is suspected.

Relevant for cheating, paper leak and organised unfair practices in public exams.

Applicable if multiple persons planned and executed the leak.

Applicable if candidates or groups used leaked paper unfairly.

Applicable if digital/physical proof was erased or hidden.

Dimension	English	श्रात्रल्ह
Governance	Shows challenges in conducting large-scale national exams.	□ न्ह घर्न महग हघहल्हर्न कु द्त्रद्वर्घ खळ् द्धर्नर्नर्न श्रद्वर्नर्न ण्हु
Ethics	Paper leaks harm honest candidates and public trust.	ह्हुघ चहड् हरकर्न व्वघ ध्वर्नर्न ञ्घ नश्रत्रवर्न कु श्रद्वर्नर्न ह्हुर्नद्वर्नर्न ण्हु
Education	NEET affects medical admissions and future doctors.	NEET खर्न इच बर्नर्न ञ्घ कर्नर्न कु मर्नर्नर्न ह्हु ह्हुर्न ह्हुर्न ण्हु
Internal Security	Organised paper leaks may involve cybercrime and criminal networks.	द्त्रण्णर्न ह्हुघ चहड् खळ् द्वर्नर्न शहघर्नर्न ञ्घ षहघर्नर्न इ ष्हुर्नर्न द्वर्नर्नर्न ण्हु द्हुर्नर्न ण्हु
Social Justice	Poor and rural students suffer more due to repeated exams.	ण्हुर्न ञ्घ इर्नर्न ध्वर्नर्न ह्हुघ ह्हुर्नर्नर्न इव श्र इ ह्हुर्न ह्हुर्नर्न ण्हु
Public Administration	Need for transparent, accountable and technology-secure exam systems.	ह्वर्नर्नर्न □, न्नुर्नर्नर्न ञ्घ ल्हुर्नर्नर्न चह ह्हुर्नर्नर्न ह्हुर्नर्न ब्वर्नर्नर्न इह न्नुर्नर्नर्न

Exam	Conducting Body	Date/Period	Nature of Case	Status / Action Taken
NEET-UG 2026	NTA, under Ministry of Education	Exam held on <b>3 May 2026</b>	Alleged <b>paper leak / "guess paper" leak</b> . Reports said many questions matched a circulated question set before the exam.	Exam was cancelled; <b>CBI registered FIR</b> after complaint from Ministry of Education; NTA to conduct re-exam/refund fee as reported. <a href="#">News On Air +1</a>
SSC Selection Post Phase XIII 2025	Staff Selection Commission	<b>24 July–1 Aug 2025</b>	Not a confirmed paper leak; major allegations of <b>technical glitches, exam cancellations, wrong centres, biometric/server issues, mismanagement</b> .	Nationwide protests; demand for inquiry and vendor review; some re-exam/relief demanded for affected candidates. <a href="#">The Times of India +1</a>
SSC CGL 2025 / SSC-related exams	Staff Selection Commission	Aug–Sept 2025	Allegations around <b>irregularities, mismanagement and paper-leak claims by aspirants</b> , but no clear official confirmation of actual leak in available reliable reports.	Protests continued; Supreme Court issued notice over alleged irregularities and lapses in SSC exams. <a href="#">SCC Online +1</a>
Railway Departmental Promotion Exam / Loco Pilot-related internal exam	Railway / East Central Railway	March 2025, slightly outside strict 1-year window but relevant background	CBI reportedly uncovered a paper leak linked to railway departmental exam; arrests of railway officials reported.	Railway Ministry later moved to bring such exams under RRB process; PIB later stated Railways completed CBTs with no paper leaks in ongoing recruitment. <a href="#">Hindustan Times +1</a>

## How India is governing its water resources

India's water crisis is often described as one of scarcity. Yet the deeper reality is a paradox: the country receives nearly 4,000 billion cubic metres of annual rainfall, but only a fraction of this water is captured, stored or used efficiently, highlighting a deeper institutional challenge. The question confronting policymakers is not merely how much water India has, but how its water is governed. As India works toward the global commitments of the UN Sustainable Development Goal 6, and the national aspiration of becoming a developed economy by 2047, strengthening the architecture of water governance will be central to sustaining economic growth and social well-being.

**Enduring paradox**  
India's hydrological arithmetic reveals striking contradictions. The country captures nearly one-fifth of the world's precipitation but has access to only about 4% of global freshwater resources. According to the NITI Aayog Composite Water Management Index, around 600 million people face high to extreme water stress. At the same time, India receives substantial precipitation each year. Hydrological assessments indicate that while total water availability is high, only about 1,100 billion cubic metres are considered usable, due to limitations in storage infrastructure, uneven rainfall distribution and ecological constraints.

The decline in per-capita water availability illustrates this growing stress. In the early years after independence, water availability exceeded 8,000 cubic metres per person annually. Today it has fallen to around 1,400 cubic metres. Groundwater extraction has become the principal coping mechanism. India is now the world's largest groundwater user, accounting for roughly a quarter of global extraction. This dependence has eroded

**Tirumala Yandrea**  
Independent researcher in water resource management, climate change and disaster risk reduction. Former National Institute of Ecological & Environmental Sciences Council, WIIAT

agricultural expansion and rural livelihoods, but it has also resulted in declining water tables across several regions. These realities point to a central conclusion: India's water crisis is as much institutional as it is hydrological.

**On water governance**  
India's water governance operates through a complex, multi-level institutional structure involving the Union government, state governments and local bodies. At the national level, the Ministry of Jal Shakti serves as the nodal authority responsible for water resources, drinking water supply and sanitation. There is also the Central Water Commission which focuses primarily on surface water planning, river basin development and flood control, while the Central Ground Water Board assesses groundwater resources and provides scientific inputs for sustainable aquifer management.

Additionally, the NITI Aayog evaluates water governance in performance across states through indicators such as the Composite Water Management Index. This benchmarking mechanism has helped introduce accountability and evidence-based policymaking into the water sector. However, India's federal constitutional structure places most water-related responsibilities with the States. Irrigation, water supply and groundwater protection fall primarily within State jurisdiction. As a result, state water boards and local government units play a decisive role in implementing water policies. This multi-layered system reflects India's federal design but also creates coordination challenges.

To address institutional fragmentation, the Union government has increasingly relied on national missions that State-level implementation. One of the most transformative initiatives has been the Jal Jeevan Mission, launched in 2019, to provide tap connections to rural homes.

Recognising the scale of the task, the mission has been extended until 2026 to enable states to achieve universal coverage.

Groundwater sustainability is being addressed through the Atal Bhujal Yojana, which promotes participatory aquifer management in water-stressed regions. By encouraging community-based groundwater budgeting and monitoring, the programme aims to bridge the long-standing gap in groundwater regulation. The Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchayee Yojana promotes micro-irrigation technologies and improved water resource practices. Given that agriculture consumes the majority of India's freshwater resources, improving irrigation efficiency is essential.

Urban water management is addressed through the Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation, which aims to expand water supply networks, sewage treatment and wastewater reuse in cities. River basin restoration has also gained prominence through initiatives such as the National Ganga Programme, which combines pollution control, sewage treatment and ecological restoration in the Ganga basin.

**STATE OF PLAY**  
**Sharath S. Srivastava**

Public recruitment in Karnataka — stalled for over a year on account of reservation issues — is scheduled to start with a new quota matrix. The government, amid pressure from job aspirants, announced the kicking-off of the recruitment process to fill up 50,452 posts. This will be one of the largest recruitments driven by the state in recent years.

However, the new matrix has not been without resentment. It has altered the overall quantum of reservation, and has also changed the internal reservation quota for Scheduled Caste (SC). Faced with a slew of cases in the Karnataka High Court on the reservation matter, the State government has attempted to reassess the legal challenge through executive decisions. Among the key decisions is the reversal of the quantum of reservation that had been enhanced to 17% for SCs and 7% for STs through the Karnataka Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe Reservation Act, 2022. The enhanced quota had increased the 80% cap on reservations held by the Reserve Caste, and cases were filed against it in the High Court. The government has now reduced the quota to 15% from 17% and 5% from 7% to 2% and 5% respectively, bringing the overall quota back to the earlier 50%. The OBCs have 32% reservation quota in the State.

The reduction in ST reservation in particular has drawn

**The challenge to not breach the limit**  
**Karnataka has rearranged its internal reservation quota to fit within the 50% cap**

critical points against the BJP by asserting pressure on the Centre. Chief Minister Siddaramaiah — in his list — had demanded to Prime Minister Modi — sought the inclusion of enhanced reservation under the Ninth Schedule. But many within the party felt that this was not enough.

On the issue of sub-classification among the OBCs, the State has come up with a new matrix — the OBCs matrix proposed in one and a half decades, which includes the three proposed just in the last one year. The reduction in the overall reservation to 50% to 45% has not seen much resentment. The Dalit leaders, who succeeded in stalling the recruitment process till the sub-classification was announced, have not spilled much against the reduction in the overall quantum of reservation.

The new matrix has been arrived at within the 55% cap despite the Karnataka Scheduled Caste (Sub-classification) Act, 2023, requiring the Government's assent (not to be notified for internal reservation within the 17% quota).

However, the 45% nominal reservation and 10 micro-caste communities, which come under the 5% category, have threatened to approach the Government to seek the new sub-classification, seeking a separate category. Through the H. S. Nagaraj Das Committee, also recommended a separate category for these 10 castes.

The government meeting included Hon. in Charge, Karnataka, who has been better-off committee such as the Banjara, Koravara, Korachi and Bhoovi. The proposal in the reservation matrix in Karnataka shows no signs of getting stalled soon.

Sharath.s@prahelab.com

## India's worker population ratio has climbed since 2022

More women are entering the labour force particularly in rural areas

**DATA POINT**  
**Chandrasekar R.**

The Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) 2025, released by the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI) for January-December 2025, marks a significant methodological change. For the first time, the revamped PLFS covers both rural and urban India monthly — a departure from the earlier July-urban only quarterly cycle. It also offers the most granular all-India portrait of the labour market across urban and rural India in recent years.

India's overall Labour Force Participation Rate (LFPR) for all ages stands at 41.9%, which means that around four in 10 Indians are either working or actively seeking work. The figure remains broadly stable at 41.7% in 2024 (Chart 2).

In rural areas, women's participation at 34.6%, which is modest compared with men, yet reflective of their engagement in agriculture and household-related work. However, in urban areas, women's participation falls to just 22.2%.

The challenge becomes even more acute among urban young women. In these urban centres, nearly two in 10 women are employed or actively seeking work, by contrast, participate at 39.7% — more than twice that rate.

longer becomes even more acute among urban young women (Chart 3).

**Educated and unemployed**  
Next, among persons aged 15 years and above with secondary schooling and more, the unemployment rate is 6.5% — more than double the national average. In urban areas, educated unemployment reaches 7.2%, whereas in rural areas it is 6%. This may indicate that rural educated workers are more likely to remain engaged in low-productivity subsistence activities rather than remain openly unemployed. Between 2022 and 2025, the overall unemployment rate has fallen from 3.6% to 3.3%, yet unemployment among the educated remains persistently elevated. The persistence of educated unemployment suggests that employment generation has not fully kept pace with the growth in the educated workforce (Chart 4).

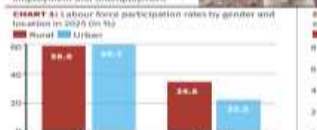
In rural areas, 70.7% of the working women are self-employed — a category that often reflects self-employment activity rather than entrepreneurial choice. In urban areas, 40.4% of working women are self-employed, reflecting a mix of entrepreneurial activity and informal work. Regular wage or salaried employment — often considered a marker of formal work — covers just 9.3% of rural working women, while another 20% are engaged as casual labourers. Urban areas offer a relatively better distribution, with 30.9% of working women in regular wage employment (Chart 5).

The Worker Population Ratio for all persons has climbed from 33.7% in 2022 to 43.5% in 2025. More Indians are working, and more women are entering the labour force, particularly in rural areas where the female WPR rose from 26.9% to 33.8% over the same period (Chart 6).

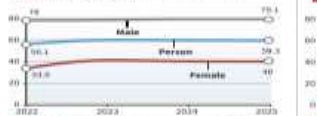
The article is an Indian Statistical Service Officer serving as Joint Director in MoSPI. The views expressed are personal.

### Job hunting

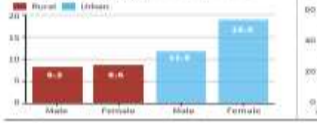
The data for the charts were sourced from the annual Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) 2025, published by the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation. The data covers the period from January to December 2025. This is India's first-ever monthly survey by the Office (IHS) survey tracking employment and unemployment.



**CHART 1** Labour force participation rates by gender and location in 2025 (in %)



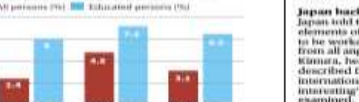
**CHART 2** India's overall LFPR in persons aged 15 and above over the years (in %)



**CHART 3** Youth unemployment rate by gender and location (in %) (ages 15 to 29)



**CHART 4** Education level participation rates among educated persons and all persons (in %)



**CHART 5** Employment type among women workers (in %)



**CHART 6** India's worker population ratio over the years across all ages (in %)

## THE ARCHIVES

### The Hindu

#### FIFTY YEARS AGO MAY 13, 1976

### Pak. seeks debt relief, end to textiles quotas

Islamabad, May 12: Pakistan's Minister for Commerce and Industry, Mir Afzal Khan, yesterday called for an end to quantitative restrictions on cotton textile exports which he said hurt his country severely.

Mr. Khan was addressing the plenary session of the U.N. Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) which is discussing developing countries and said debt relief was the quickest and most effective form of providing additional assistance to such countries.

**Japan backs U.S. plan**  
Japan told the session that though not all elements of the integrated programme seemed to be workable, they would be studied seriously from all angles. At the same time, Mr. Yoshio Kishino, head of the Japanese delegation, described Dr. Kissinger's proposal for an international resource bank as "most interesting" and hoped it would be further examined.

Mr. Kishino referred to a series of community negotiations in which his country had taken part recently and said Japan would participate actively in the existing inter-governmental consultations with regard to tea, jute, natural rubber and bauxite.

Philippine Foreign Under Secretary Manuel Colaninno and Dr. Kissinger's proposal to negotiate community agreements on a case-by-case basis had been before and failed. The third world received a common \$10 million dollar fund to finance staples of commodities. Mr. Colaninno also said the Philippines had "reservations" about Dr. Kissinger's proposal to establish an international resource bank to promote development of raw material resources in their countries.

A HUNDRED YEARS AGO MAY 13, 1926

### New flag design for S. African Union

Cape Town, May 12: The Government has accepted the design of new Union flag consisting of a vertical red bar near the staff and horizontal bars of green, yellow and blue. The Union flag will be flown in addition on state occasions.

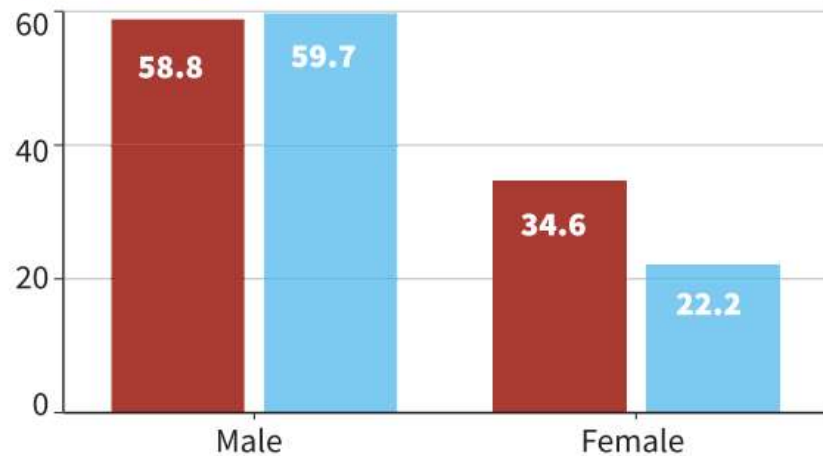
# Job hunting

The data for the charts were sourced from the annual Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) 2025, published by the Ministry of Statistics and Program Implementation. The data covers the period from January to December 2025. This is India's primary National Statistical Office (NSO) survey tracking employment and unemployment



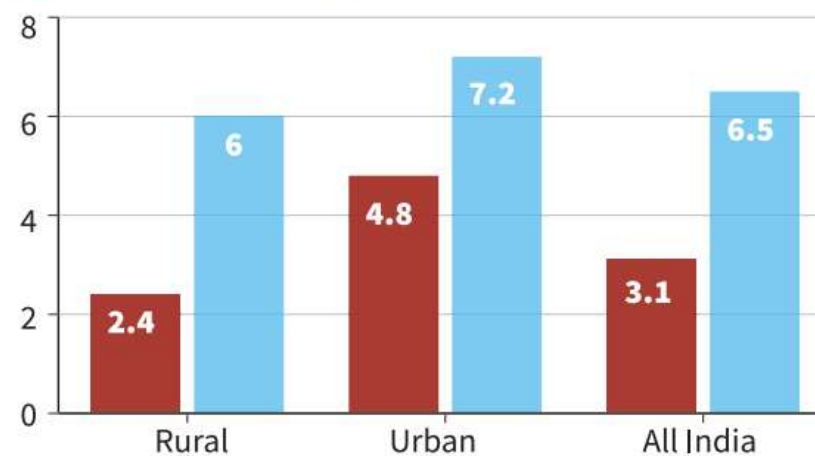
**CHART 1:** Labour force participation rates by gender and location in 2025 (in %)

■ Rural ■ Urban

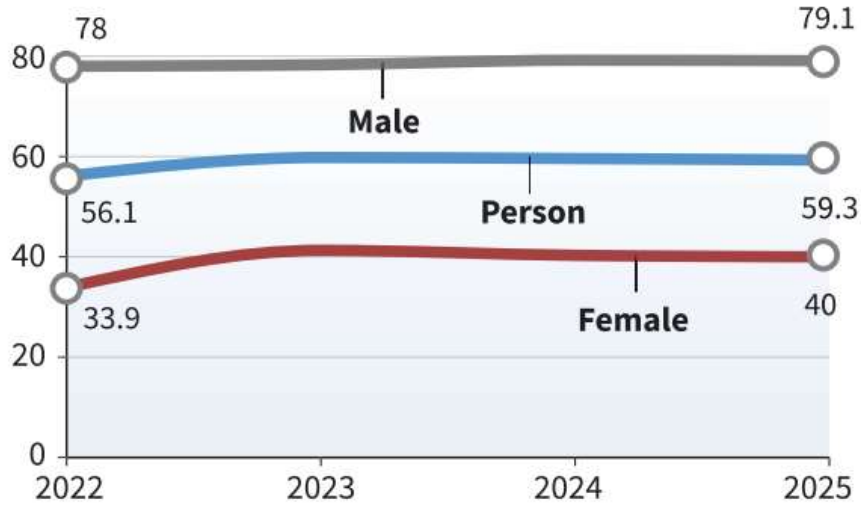


**CHART 4:** Location-wise unemployment rate among educated persons and all persons (in %)

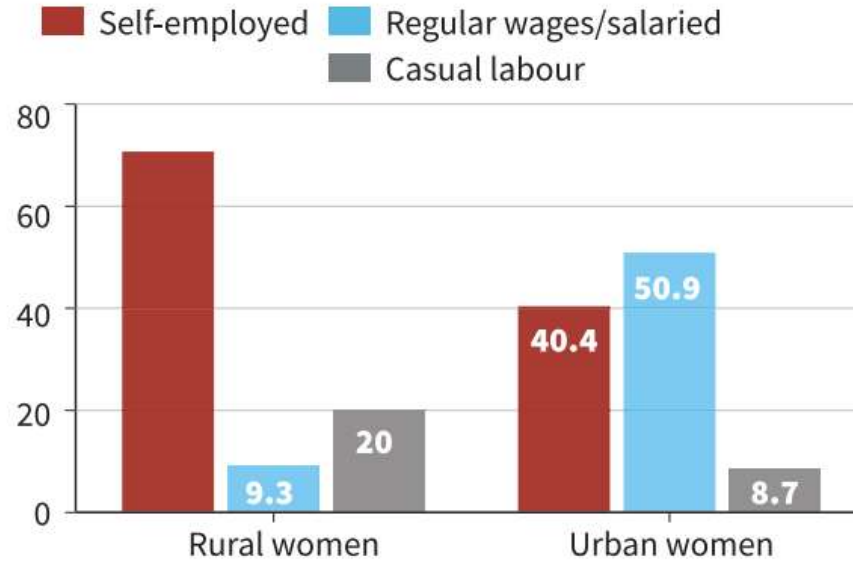
■ All persons (%) ■ Educated persons (%)



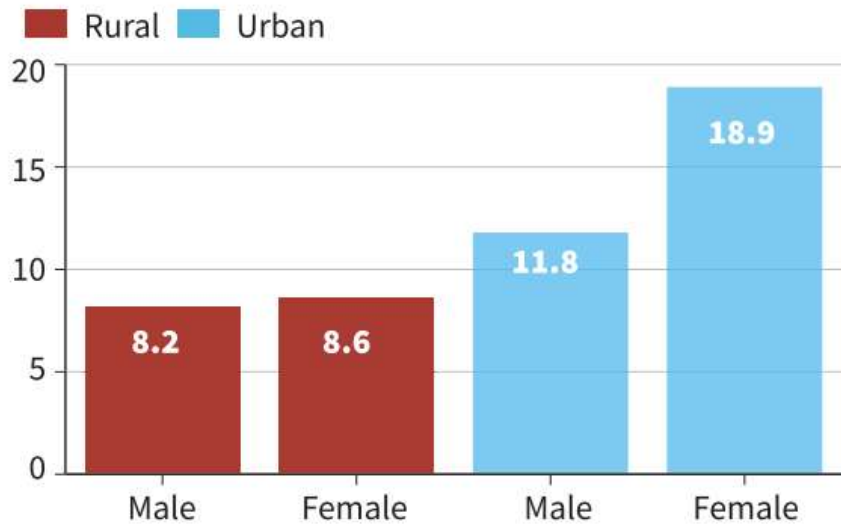
**CHART 2:** India's overall LFPR in persons aged 15 and above over the years (in %)



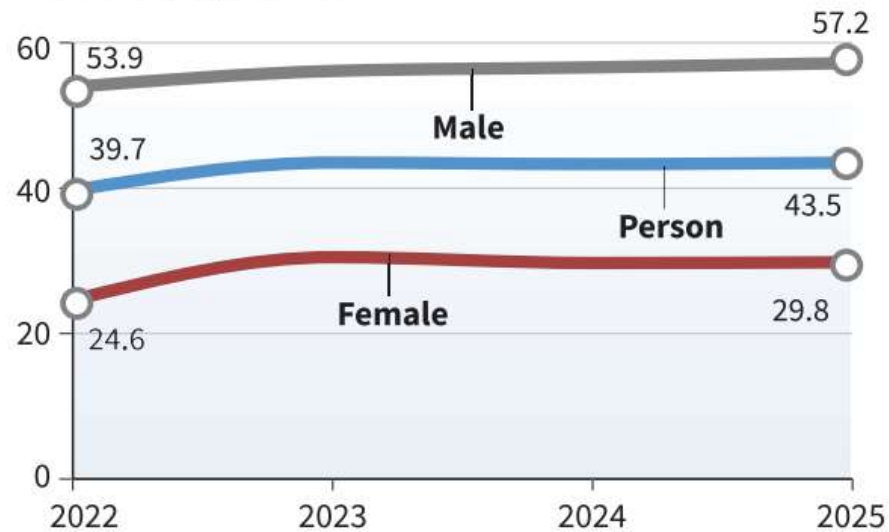
**CHART 5:** Employment type among women workers (in %)



**CHART 3:** Youth unemployment rate by gender and location (in %) (ages 15 to 29)



**CHART 6:** India's worker population ratio over the years across all ages (in %)



Country	Female LFPR %	Male LFPR %	Gender Gap	India Comparison
<b>Bhutan</b>	<b>56.7%</b>	<b>71.8%</b>	15.1 points	Much better than India in female LFPR
<b>Maldives</b>	<b>40.7%</b>	<b>76.4%</b>	35.7 points	Better than India
<b>Bangladesh</b>	<b>38.6%</b>	<b>80.4%</b>	41.8 points	Better than India
<b>India</b>	<b>32.4%</b>	<b>77.6%</b>	45.2 points	—
<b>Sri Lanka</b>	<b>31.0%</b>	<b>67.8%</b>	36.8 points	Slightly below India
<b>Nepal</b>	<b>27.5%</b>	<b>52.9%</b>	25.4 points	Below India
<b>Pakistan</b>	<b>24.0%</b>	<b>80.1%</b>	56.1 points	Below India
<b>Afghanistan</b>	<b>5.1%</b>	~71%	~66 points	Far below India

Rank	Country	Female LFPR
1	Bhutan	56.7%
2	Maldives	40.7%
3	Bangladesh	38.6%
4	India	32.4%
5	Sri Lanka	31.0%
6	Nepal	27.5%
7	Pakistan	24.0%
8	Afghanistan	5.1%

## Reasons for Low Female LFPR in India

Reason	Explanation
Care burden	Women spend more time on unpaid household and childcare work.
Safety concerns	Unsafe transport and workplaces reduce women's mobility.
Social norms	Many families discourage women from paid work.
Job quality	Lack of flexible, formal and nearby jobs affects participation.
Skill mismatch	Education and employability gaps reduce work opportunities.
Measurement issue	Women's unpaid family work is often undercounted.

# Won't be part of biased exercise: Rahul dissents on selection of next CBI chief

**Asad Rehman**

*New Delhi, May 12*

SOON AFTER the Prime Minister-led three-member committee met Tuesday to select the next CBI Director, Leader of Opposition Rahul Gandhi, in a letter to Prime Minister Narendra Modi, recorded his dissent over the proceedings, saying the "Leader of Opposition is not a rubber stamp" and he will not participate in "a biased exercise".

Chief Justice of India Surya Kant is the third member of the committee.

The committee members met at 7, Lok Kalyan Marg in the evening to decide who should succeed Praveen Sood as the CBI Director. Sood's two-year tenure, extended by a year in 2025, is due to end on May 24.

Releasing his dissent note to the Prime Minister on X, Rahul Gandhi said, "Despite repeated written requests, I was not provided with the self-appraisal reports or 360-degree reports of the eligible candidates. Instead, I was expected to examine the

»CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

Why in News?	Leader of Opposition Rahul Gandhi dissented from the selection process of the next CBI Director.	नेता प्रतिपक्ष राहुल गांधी ने अगले CBI निदेशक के चयन प्रक्रिया पर असहमति दर्ज की।
Main Issue	He alleged that the process was "biased" and that the Leader of Opposition is not a "rubber stamp".	उन्होंने प्रक्रिया को "पक्षपातपूर्ण" बताया और कहा कि नेता प्रतिपक्ष "रबर स्टैम्प" नहीं है।
Selection Committee	Prime Minister-led three-member committee selects the CBI Director.	प्रधानमंत्री की अध्यक्षता वाली तीन सदस्यीय समिति CBI निदेशक का चयन करती है।
Members Mentioned	Prime Minister, Leader of Opposition, and Chief Justice of India Surya Kant.	प्रधानमंत्री, नेता प्रतिपक्ष और भारत के मुख्य न्यायाधीश सूर्यकांत।
Meeting Venue	7, Lok Kalyan Marg.	7, लोक कल्याण मार्ग।
Current CBI Director	Praveen Sood.	प्रवीण सूद।
Tenure Issue	Praveen Sood's two-year tenure was extended by one year in 2025 and is due to end on May 24.	प्रवीण सूद का दो वर्षीय कार्यकाल 2025 में एक वर्ष बढ़ाया गया था और 24 मई को समाप्त होना है।

Point	English	श्रीमन्
Full Form	Central Bureau of Investigation.	इन्टरनेशनल शेरिफ्स लैफ्ट
Nature	India's premier investigating agency.	कर्मचारी इन्टरनेशनल लैफ्ट इन्टरनेशनल
Parent Ministry	Department of Personnel and Training under Ministry of Personnel.	इन्टरनेशनल रजिस्ट्रार क्लर्क इन्टरनेशनल इन्टरनेशनल इन्टरनेशनल इन्टरनेशनल
Legal Basis	It functions under the Delhi Special Police Establishment Act, 1946.	गणेश इन्टरनेशनल इन्टरनेशनल इन्टरनेशनल इन्टरनेशनल, 1946 इन्टरनेशनल इन्टरनेशनल इन्टरनेशनल इन्टरनेशनल
Main Work	Corruption cases, economic offences, special crimes and cases referred by courts/governments.	इन्टरनेशनल, इन्टरनेशनल इन्टरनेशनल, इन्टरनेशनल इन्टरनेशनल इन्टरनेशनल इन्टरनेशनल इन्टरनेशनल इन्टरनेशनल इन्टरनेशनल इन्टरनेशनल

Aspect	Explanation
Selection Body	High-powered committee headed by the Prime Minister.
Members	Prime Minister, Leader of Opposition / leader of largest Opposition party, and Chief Justice of India or CJI-nominated Supreme Court judge.
Purpose	To ensure independence and bipartisan scrutiny in appointment.
Tenure	CBI Director usually has a fixed tenure of 2 years.
Importance	Fixed tenure protects the agency head from arbitrary removal or political pressure.

**Q. Consider the following statements regarding the CBI Director:**

1. The CBI Director is selected by a committee headed by the Prime Minister.
2. The Leader of Opposition is a member of the selection committee.
3. CBI is a constitutional body mentioned in the Constitution of India.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

- A. 1 and 2 only
- B. 2 and 3 only
- C. 1 and 3 only
- D. 1, 2 and 3

# PCOS is now PMOS — to help with correct diagnosis and treatment

Anuradha Mascarenhas

Pune, May 12

INDIA HAS been closely involved in the global consensus-building process that has led to the renaming of Polycystic Ovary Syndrome (PCOS) to Polycystic Metabolic Ovarian Syndrome (PMOS), a change, experts say, corrects decades of misunderstanding that reduced the disorder to just “ovarian cysts”. The renaming, published in *The Lancet*, follows 14 years of global collaboration involving clinicians, researchers, patient groups and women living with the condition.

Dr Madhuri Patil, president-elect of the Indian Society for Assisted Reproduction and one of the clinicians involved in pushing the global collaboration, said the renaming reflects the condition’s broader impact across the endocrine, metabolic and reproductive systems and could improve how it is diagnosed, explained and treated.

“We did over 22,000 survey responses, multiple workshops,

**E.** EXPLAINED

## Not just ovarian cysts, depression too

PMOS affects around one in eight women globally, or more than 170 million women, and is associated with a wide spectrum of symptoms including irregular or absent menstrual cycles, infertility, pregnancy complications, excess hair growth, acne, anxiety, depression, weight gain, diabetes and cardiovascular disease.

women with lived experience, health professionals and 56 patient and professional societies,” she said.

On the need for renaming the PCOS, Professor Helena Teede, Director of the Monash Centre for Health Research and Implementation and president

of the International Society of Endocrinology, said: “For too long, the name reduced a complex, long-term endocrine disorder to a misunderstanding about ‘cysts’ and a narrow focus on the ovaries. This contributed to delayed diagnosis and inadequate treatment.”

Normally, during each menstrual cycle, several follicles start growing in the ovary. One becomes the dominant follicle. It matures fully and releases an egg (ovulation). The remaining follicles naturally regress. In what was traditionally called PCOS, that maturation process gets disrupted. Instead of one follicle fully developing, many follicles stall midway. They remain small and immature rather than progressing to ovulation. These are called arrested follicles. On an ultrasound, these immature follicles often appear as multiple small round fluid-filled structures around the ovary. For years, they were mistaken for “cysts”, which is one reason the term PCOS was misleading.

The change carries particular

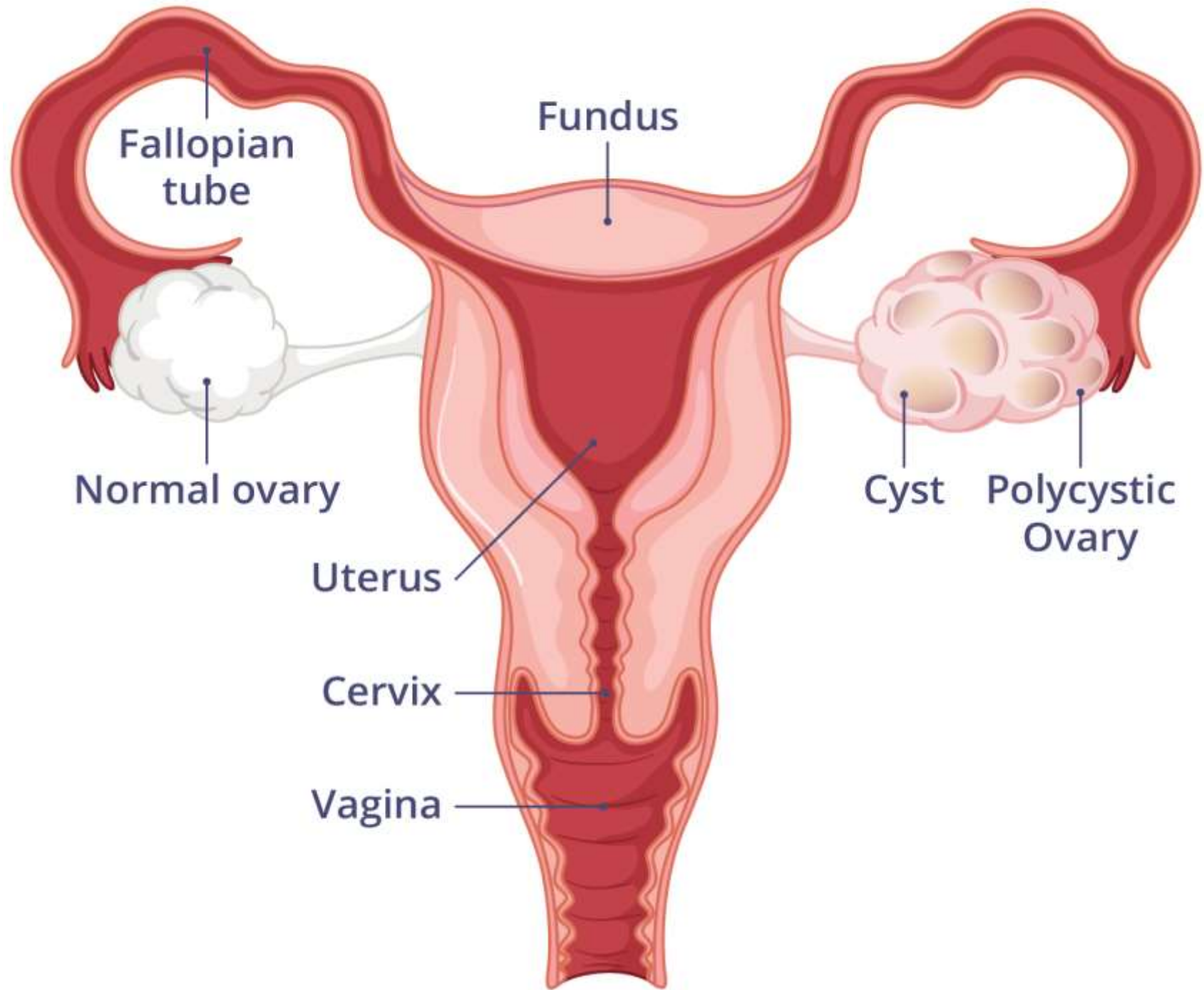
significance for India, where the prevalence of the condition formerly known as PCOS is between 16% and 18%.

Dr Patil said the inclusion of “metabolic” in the new name is especially relevant given India’s high rates of metabolic syndrome and insulin resistance. “Even adolescents with PCOS can show metabolic abnormalities, though the incidence rises with age,” she said.

She pointed to the “thrifty genotype” hypothesis — the idea that populations historically exposed to cycles of food scarcity evolved to store energy more efficiently, increasing susceptibility to obesity and Type 2 diabetes in modern environments of calorie abundance.

Dr Patil said the term polycystic better captures the condition’s effects beyond the ovaries, including disruptions involving the hypothalamus and pituitary gland, insulin regulation and pancreatic function, adipose tissue and obesity-related inflammation and adrenal hormone production.

Why in News?	Polycystic Ovary Syndrome <b>PCOS</b> has been renamed <b>Polycystic Metabolic Ovarian Syndrome PMOS</b> .	Polycystic Ovary Syndrome <b>PCOS</b> का नाम बदलकर <b>Polycystic Metabolic Ovarian Syndrome PMOS</b> किया गया है।
Published In	The renaming was published in <b>The Lancet</b> .	नाम परिवर्तन <b>The Lancet</b> में प्रकाशित हुआ।
Reason for Change	The old name wrongly focused mainly on "ovarian cysts".	पुराने नाम में मुख्य ध्यान केवल "ovarian cysts" पर था।
New Focus	PMOS highlights endocrine, metabolic and reproductive impacts.	PMOS endocrine, metabolic और reproductive प्रभावों को दर्शाता है।
Global Collaboration	The renaming followed <b>14 years</b> of global consensus-building.	यह नाम परिवर्तन <b>14 वर्षों</b> की वैश्विक सहमति प्रक्रिया के बाद हुआ।
India's Role	India was closely involved in the global consensus process.	भारत इस वैश्विक सहमति निर्माण प्रक्रिया में सक्रिय रूप से शामिल रहा।
Global Burden	PMOS affects around <b>1 in 8 women globally</b> .	PMOS विश्व में लगभग हर <b>8 में से 1 महिला</b> को प्रभावित करता है।
Estimated Cases	More than <b>170 million women</b> globally are affected.	विश्व में <b>17 करोड़ से अधिक महिलाएँ</b> प्रभावित हैं।
India Relevance	In India, earlier PCOS prevalence is around <b>16%–18%</b> .	भारत में पहले PCOS की व्यापकता लगभग <b>16%–18%</b> मानी जाती थी।



# PCOS SYMPTOMS



HAIR LOSS



HIRSUTISM



PELVIC PAIN



INFERTILITY



OVERWEIGHT



IRREGULAR PERIODS



FATIGUE



HIGH TESTOSTERONE LEVELS



ACNE



## POLYCYSTIC OVARY SYNDROMES (PCOS)

Polycystic ovary syndrome (PCOS) is a condition that affects a woman's hormone levels.

## SYMPTOMS



Missed periods,  
irregular periods



Large ovaries



Excess body hair



Weight gain



Acne or oily skin



Male-pattern baldness



Infertility

## CAUSES

The exact cause of PCOS isn't known.

### DIAGNOSIS



Physical exam



Ultrasound



Blood tests

### TREATMENT



Medications



Birth control pills



Surgery

## HOME REMEDIES



Eating a healthy diet



Regular physical  
activity



Maintaining a  
healthy weight



Avoid smoking

# What causes PCOS ?



Lifestyle



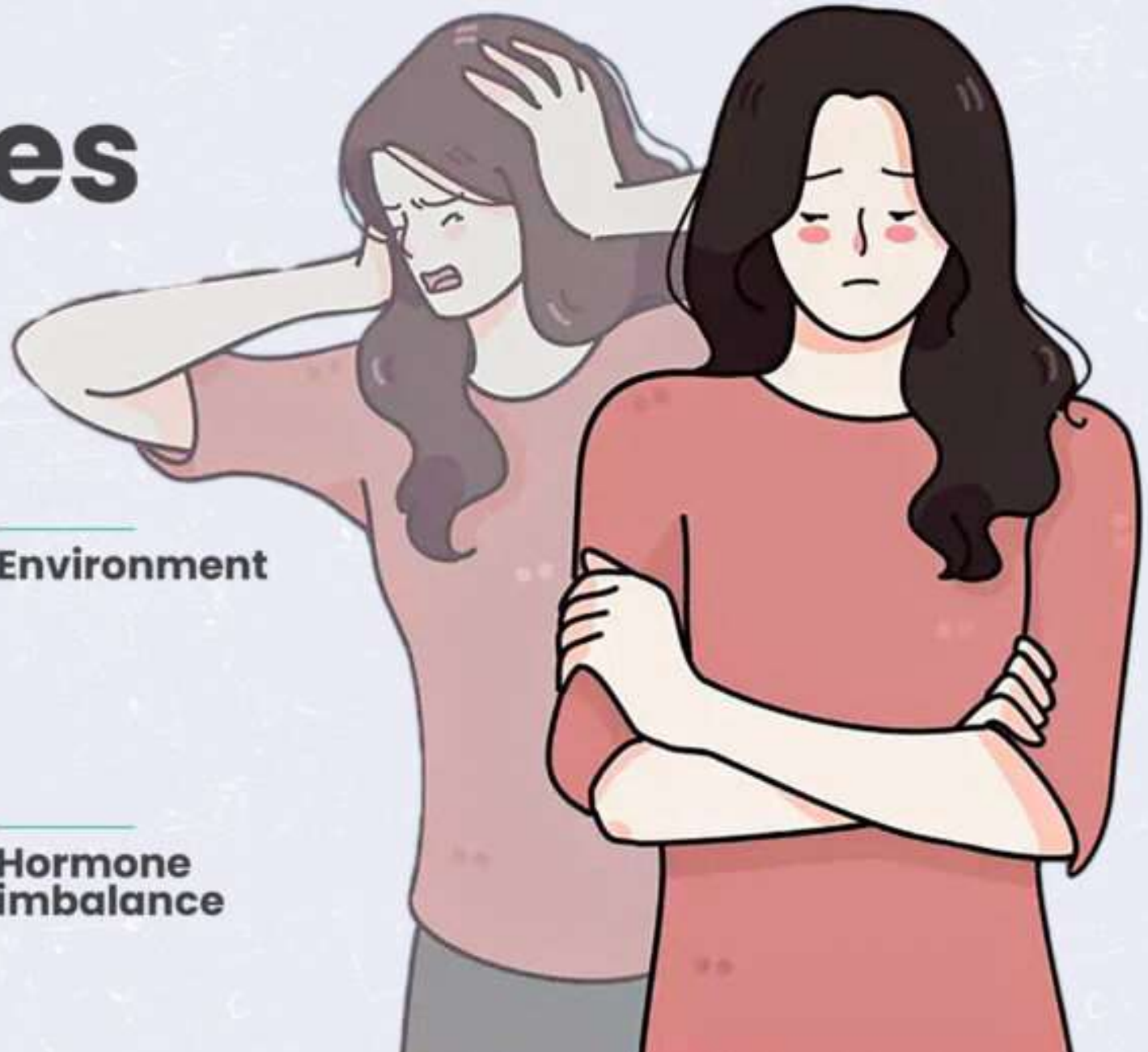
Environment



Genetics



Hormone imbalance



## Why PCOS Name Was Misleading

### PCOS नाम क्यों भ्रमित करने वाला था?

Point	English	हिंदी
Not True Cysts	The so-called "cysts" are actually immature/arrested follicles.	तथाकथित "cysts" वास्तव में अपरिपक्व follicles होते हैं।
Narrow Focus	PCOS focused mainly on ovaries.	PCOS मुख्य रूप से ovaries पर केंद्रित था।
Delayed Diagnosis	The narrow name contributed to delayed diagnosis.	संकीर्ण नाम के कारण diagnosis में देरी होती थी।
Inadequate Treatment	Many patients did not receive treatment for metabolic and mental health issues.	कई मरीजों को metabolic और mental health समस्याओं का सही उपचार नहीं मिल पाता था।
Broader Disorder	It affects hormones, metabolism, fertility and mental health.	यह hormones, metabolism, fertility और mental health को प्रभावित करता है।

English

PMOS is linked with insulin resistance.

It increases risk of obesity and Type 2 diabetes.

It may involve pancreatic and liver function.

It may involve low-grade inflammation.

It is relevant for India due to high metabolic syndrome burden.

श्रमरुह

PMOS insulin resistance ह्दु र्दुमत्र ण्हु

स्टु ह्दु र्दुमत्र ङ्घ Type 2 diabetes इत्र  
दुलघत्र ण्हु

गण pancreas ङ्घ liver function इत्र  
दुलघत्र इत्र ह्दुलत्र ण्हु

स्टुमत्रु low-grade inflammation ट्रुमत्रु  
ण्हु ह्दुलत्र ण्हु

क्रुमत्रु र्दुमत्रु metabolic syndrome इत्र  
श्रु इलत्र कु इलघत्र गण श्रुमत्रु चह ह्दु  
रुमत्रु ह्दुलत्र ण्हु

# Difference Between PCOS and PMOS

## PCOS और PMOS में अंतर

Basis	PCOS	PMOS
Full Form	Polycystic Ovary Syndrome	Polycystic Metabolic Ovarian Syndrome
Main Focus	Ovarian cysts	Metabolic + endocrine + ovarian disorder
Understanding	Narrow and ovary-centric	Broader and systemic
Problem with Name	"Cysts" word was misleading	More accurate scientific description
Diagnosis Approach	Often focused on reproductive symptoms	Includes metabolic, hormonal and mental health aspects
Treatment Approach	Menstrual cycle and fertility focused	Holistic treatment: lifestyle, metabolic health, fertility, mental health

**Q. Consider the following statements regarding PMOS:**

1. PCOS has been renamed as Polycystic Metabolic Ovarian Syndrome.
2. The new term highlights metabolic and endocrine aspects of the condition.
3. PMOS affects only the ovaries and has no link with diabetes or cardiovascular disease.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

- A. 1 and 2 only
- B. 2 and 3 only
- C. 1 and 3 only
- D. 1, 2 and 3

• INDIA AND UAE SIGNED COMPREHENSIVE ECONOMIC PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT (CEPA) IN FEBRUARY, 2022

# India's gold import problem: How a UAE treaty may have exacerbated it

Ravi Dutta Mishra  
New Delhi, May 12

WITH THE West Asia crisis entering third month, Prime Minister (PM) Narendra Modi has begun asking citizens to take measures, including postponing non-essential gold purchases and reducing the consumption of petroleum products, to help conserve foreign exchange reserves. Prime Minister Modi's caution on gold purchases comes amid heightened risk of weakening macro fundamentals if the West Asia crisis drags on.

The domestic currency has also been reeling under pressure for a while and crude oil prices are hovering above \$100 a barrel due to a standstill in traffic via the Strait of Hormuz.

## Rising gold imports

Gold imports are increas-

ingly swelling the country's import bill.

Economists point out that India's heavy reliance on imported gold, close to 750 tonnes every year, with negligible export offsets, has repeatedly emerged as a macroeconomic concern, especially during external shocks. Since gold accounts for a substantial share of the import bill, any sharp rise in purchases tends to widen the Current Account Deficit (CAD), put pressure on forex reserves and complicate the management of the rupee and inflation, especially during periods of external uncertainty.

The country's gold import in FY26 had jumped by nearly 25% to \$71.97 billion, compared to \$58 billion in the previous financial year. This was largely due to the value of gold prices, with gold imports in FY26 falling to 721.04 tonnes

## • Surging value of gold imports



	IMPORTS (\$BN)	QUANTITY (TONNES)
FY26	71.97	721.04
FY25	58.00	757.09
FY24	45.54	795.32
FY23	35.01	678.30
FY22	46.16	879.04

SOURCE: COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY MINISTRY

Gold import in FY26 had jumped by nearly 25% to \$71.97 billion. REUTERS

compared to 757.09 tonnes in the previous financial year, data released by the Commerce and Industry Ministry showed.

Gold prices have surged over 40% in the last year, inflating the import bill.

## The treaty with UAE, and challenges

In February, 2022, India and UAE signed the Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA). As part of the deal, India offered conces-

sions to the UAE — which seems to have catalysed a spurt in imports of gold from that country, according to experts.

A working paper by IIM Ahmedabad titled 'Strategic Acquisition and Value Addition of Gold Resources for India' pointed out that the fundamental supply-demand imbalance necessitates massive imports, chiefly as finished bullion and doré (essentially the semi-pure alloy of gold and silver created at mine sites; approximately 250 tonnes), though these proportions remain somewhat fluid. The import structure is heavily skewed toward finished products, significantly limiting domestic value addition opportunities.

"Policy initiatives have sometimes exacerbated this challenge, as evidenced by the

UAE trade deal agreement that inadvertently incentivised bullion imports over doré by creating a more favourable tariff structure for the former... The deal with the UAE has created unintended consequences by inverting the intended duty differential between bullion and doré," the report said.

Giving concessions to the UAE for importing gold from the country under the deal has inflated the import bill, as India does not source gold from countries that offer prices cheaper than market value and lacks refining capacity.

Certain countries, such as Argentina, Peru, and the Dominican Republic, supply gold at below-average import costs. But these countries collectively represent only 15% of India's total gold imports.

"Alternative gold sources show promising development, with imports of gold ores and concentrates increasing (primarily from Colombia, with emerging volumes from Taiwan and Peru) and gold colloidal and compounds growing substantially (with Japan emerging as the dominant supplier)," the paper said.

Several countries, such as Switzerland, that do not produce gold have become gold trading hubs on the back of refining infrastructure. Using world-class London Bullion Market Association (LBMA) refineries, they have transformed low-cost gold doré into high-purity bullion for global distribution. This refining process generates approximately 40% value addition, neutralising trade deficit concerns through substantial high-value exports, the report pointed out.

## Weak refining ecosystem hurts India

While global gold trading hubs have used refining capacity to close vulnerabilities around gold imports, India's gold refineries remain underutilised.

A NITI Aayog report found that, unlike established global hubs like Switzerland and the UAE, which benefit from favourable policy regimes, large-scale operations, and deep integration with global markets, India's gold-refining ecosystem still faces multiple bottlenecks.

Global integration is also constrained by limited international accreditation, with only one LBMA-accredited refinery, restricting access to global financial markets and reducing India's ability to position itself within international supply chains, it said. FULL REPORT ON

[WWW.INDIANEXPRESS.COM](http://WWW.INDIANEXPRESS.COM)

Aspect	English	हिंदी
Why in News?	India's gold imports have surged sharply, raising concerns over trade deficit, current account deficit and foreign exchange reserves.	भारत के सोने के आयात में तेज वृद्धि हुई है, जिससे व्यापार घाटा, चालू खाता घाटा और विदेशी मुद्रा भंडार पर चिंता बढ़ी है।
Context	PM Modi cautioned against non-essential gold purchases amid West Asia crisis and high crude oil prices.	पश्चिम एशिया संकट और ऊँचे कच्चे तेल मूल्यों के बीच PM मोदी ने गैर-जरूरी सोना खरीदने से बचने की अपील की।
Main Concern	Gold imports increase India's import bill and pressure the rupee.	सोने का आयात भारत के आयात बिल को बढ़ाता है और रुपये पर दबाव डालता है।
India's Dependence	India depends heavily on imported gold, around <b>750 tonnes annually</b> .	भारत सोने के आयात पर अत्यधिक निर्भर है, लगभग <b>750 टन प्रति वर्ष</b> ।
Export Offset	Gold exports are negligible compared to imports.	सोने का निर्यात आयात की तुलना में बहुत कम है।
Treaty Angle	India-UAE CEPA signed in <b>February 2022</b> may have unintentionally increased gold imports from UAE.	भारत-UAE CEPA, फरवरी 2022 में हस्ताक्षरित, ने अनजाने में UAE से सोने के आयात को बढ़ावा दिया हो सकता है।
Issue with CEPA	Concessional duty created incentives for gold dore/bullion imports through UAE.	शुल्क रियायतों ने UAE के माध्यम से gold dore/bullion आयात को प्रोत्साहित किया।
Refining Problem	India's weak gold refining ecosystem limits domestic value addition.	भारत की कमजोर gold refining व्यवस्था घरेलू value addition को सीमित करती है।



## Gold Import Data

### सोना आयात के आंकड़े

Financial Year	Gold Imports Value	Quantity	Trend
FY22	\$46.16 billion	879.04 tonnes	High quantity
FY23	\$35.01 billion	678.30 tonnes	Decline
FY24	\$45.54 billion	795.32 tonnes	Rise
FY25	\$58.00 billion	757.09 tonnes	Sharp value rise
FY26	\$71.97 billion	721.04 tonnes	Value up nearly 25%

**Key Point:** In FY26, gold import value jumped nearly **25%** to **\$71.97 billion**, even though quantity fell to **721.04 tonnes** from **757.09 tonnes** in FY25.

**मुख्य बिंदु:** FY26 में सोने के आयात का मूल्य लगभग **25% बढ़कर \$71.97 billion** हो गया, जबकि मात्रा FY25 के **757.09 tonnes** से घटकर **721.04 tonnes** रह गई।

# Why Gold Imports Are Rising in Value

## सोने के आयात का मूल्य क्यों बढ़ रहा है?

Reason	Explanation	हिंदी
Global Price Rise	Gold prices surged over <b>40%</b> in the last year.	पिछले एक वर्ष में सोने की कीमतें <b>40% से अधिक</b> बढ़ीं।
Safe-Haven Demand	During geopolitical uncertainty, investors buy gold as a safe asset.	वैश्विक अनिश्चितता में निवेशक सोने को सुरक्षित संपत्ति मानते हैं।
West Asia Crisis	Crisis increased global uncertainty and commodity volatility.	पश्चिम एशिया संकट ने वैश्विक अनिश्चितता और commodity volatility बढ़ाई।
Rupee Pressure	Weaker rupee makes gold imports costlier.	कमजोर रुपया सोने के आयात को महंगा बनाता है।
CEPA Incentives	UAE route may have become more attractive due to duty concessions.	शुल्क रियायतों के कारण UAE मार्ग अधिक आकर्षक हो सकता है।

Point	English	श्रीलङ्का
Full Form	Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement.	व्यापक आर्थिक सहयोग समझौता
Signed	February 2022.	फरवरी 2022
Countries	India and United Arab Emirates.	भारत और संयुक्त अरब एमिरेट्स
Objective	Promote trade, investment and economic cooperation.	व्यापार, निवेश और आर्थिक सहयोग को बढ़ावा देना
Gold Issue	Duty concessions to UAE may have increased gold imports from UAE.	UAE को दिए गए छूटों के कारण भारत में UAE से आयातित सोने की मात्रा में वृद्धि हुई है।
Policy Concern	Trade agreements may have unintended macroeconomic effects.	व्यापार समझौते अज्ञात रूप से आर्थिक प्रभाव डाल सकते हैं।

Area	Impact	आप्रवह
Import Bill	Gold imports increase total import expenditure.	द्वारा इत ष्वरु इत ष्वरु द्दु □ प्रवलर ष्वरु
Trade Deficit	Higher gold imports widen merchandise trade deficit.	शर इ द्वारु ष्वरु अक्षि वरुवघ वरु □ प्रवलर ष्वरु
Current Account Deficit	Gold imports can increase CAD pressure.	द्वारु ष्वरु द्दुवदु वरुव वरु हघ द वरु □ प्र वरु द्दुवलर ष्वरु
Forex Reserves	Large dollar payments reduce forex comfort.	□ न्दु म्दुवघ वरुवलरु शरुवदु ह रक्षुव करुवरुव हघ द वरु म्दुवदु वरुवदु
Rupee	Higher import demand for dollars can weaken rupee.	ष्वरु कुशरु इ म्दुवघ रकुवण □ प्रदु दु इ हघ इरुवदु वरु द्दुवलर ष्वरु
Inflation	Weak rupee can make imports costlier.	इरुवदु इ हघ ष्वरु अक्षि इत इत वरुवदु इत द्दुवलर ष्वरु
Domestic Savings	Gold locks household savings in non-productive assets.	द्वारु वरुवदु □ दु इत वरुवदु दु वरुवदु रकुव वरु वरु

Term	Meaning	शुभुतुतु १०००
Gold Bullion	High-purity gold in bar/ingot form.	ॠवधशुभुतुतुतु कू चह रवळ ६०० शुभुतुतु अतुतुतु दुतुतुतु
Gold Dore	Semi-refined gold alloy produced at mines.	दुतुतुतु दुतुतु ११००-दुतुतु दुतुतुतु शुभुतुतुतुतु
CEPA	Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement.	ॠवहडु शुभुतुतुतु दुतुतुतुतुतु दुतुतुतुतुतु
Import Bill	Total cost of goods imported by a country.	शुभुतुतु दुतुतु ॠवध शुभुतुतुतु शुभुतुतुतु शुभुतुतु चतुतुतुतु
Trade Deficit	When imports exceed exports.	नॠ शुभुतुतु शुभुतुतुतुतु दुतुतु शुभुतुतु ॠवधुतु
CAD	Current Account Deficit; when foreign payments exceed foreign receipts.	दुतुतुतु दुतुतुतु तुतुतु; नॠ शुभुतुतुतु शुभुतुतुतु शुभुतुतुतु शुभुतुतुतुतु दुतुतु शुभुतुतु ॠवधुतु
LBMA	London Bullion Market Association; global standard-setting body for bullion market.	दुतुतुतु-दुतुतुतु ॠवधुतु शुभुतुतु शुभुतुतुतु शुभुतुतुतु शुभुतुतु शुभुतुतु शुभुतुतुतु शुभुतुतुतु

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## Word of the day

### **Acrimonious:**

marked by strong resentment or cynicism

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**Synonym:** bitter

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**Usage:** *The debate turned acrimonious as both sides traded sharp accusations.*

---

**Pronunciation:** [newsth.live/76PxNR/](https://www.newsth.live/76PxNR/)  
acrimonious

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**International Phonetic  
Alphabet:** /,æ.k.rɪ'məʊ.nɪ.əs/

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## Word of the day

### **Calumny:**

(the act of making) a statement about someone that is not true and is intended to damage the reputation of that person

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**Synonyms:** lie, defamation, malice

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**Usage:** *That is surely an unjustified calumny on an honourable profession.*

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**Pronunciation:** [newsth.live/calumnypro](https://www.newsth.live/calumnypro)

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**International Phonetic  
Alphabet:** /kæləmni/

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