Daily Current Affairs

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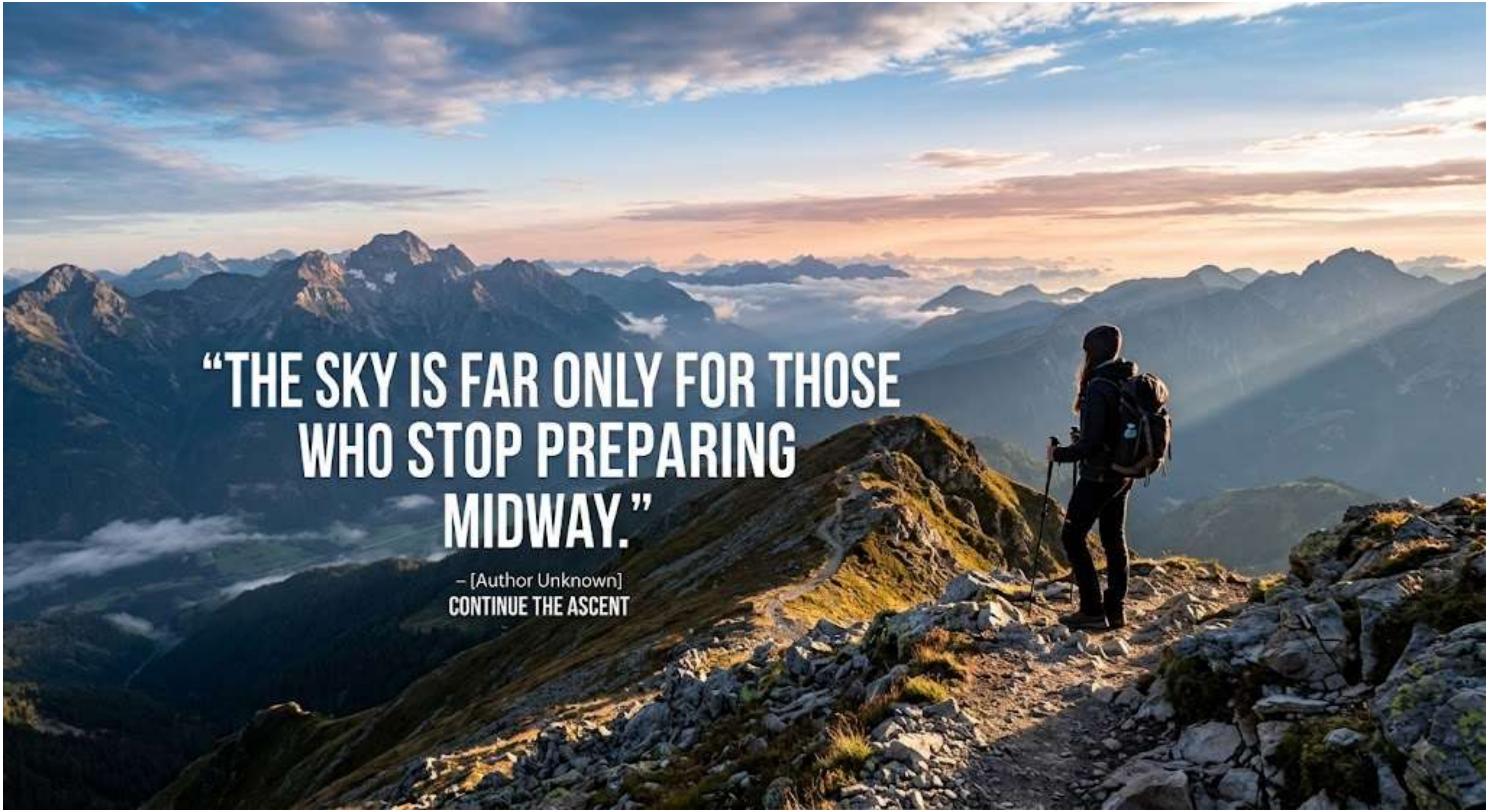
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– [Author Unknown]
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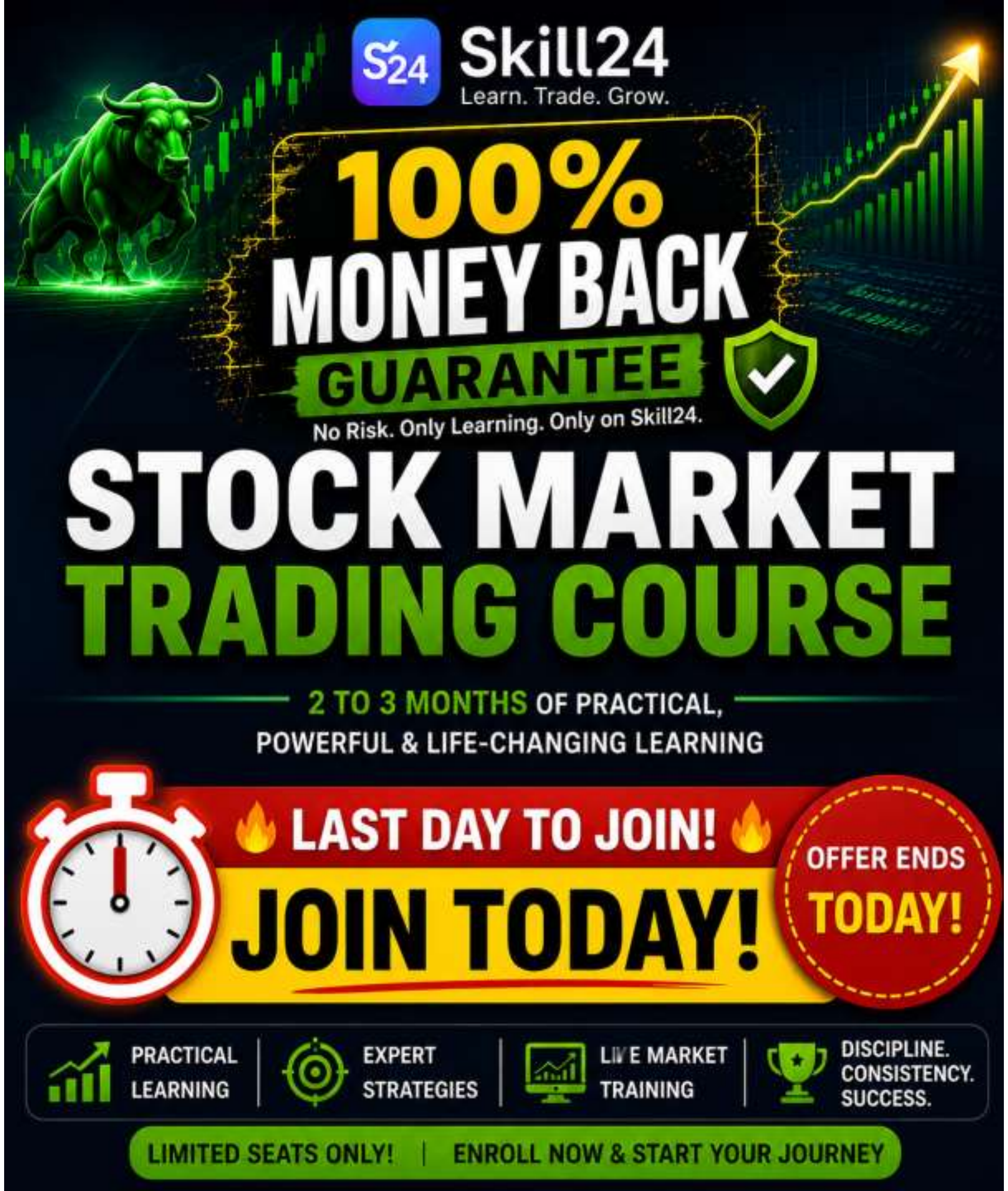
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India helps China evade tariffs: U.S. report

- White House report identifies over 40 countries through which Chinese traders route goods to U.S.
- It has named 'Pune-Gujarat-Chennai' belt as one of the areas 'enabling' China to evade U.S. tariffs
- In these countries, illegal transshipment risk is embedded within legitimate trade flows, it says

T.C.A. Sharad Raghavan
WASHINGTON

India is once again in U.S. crosshairs, this time for allegedly allowing China to evade U.S. tariffs by routing its exports through the country. The latest allegations are part of a new White House report called "The Great Transshipment Scam".

In particular, the U.S. has named "the Pune-Gujarat-Chennai belt" as one of the areas "enabling" China to evade tariffs to the detriment of supply chains in the U.S.

This comes at a time when the U.S. has already imposed a 10% tariff on India for not doing enough to stop the import of goods made with forced labour, and is in the process of enacting legislation that would see tariffs of up to 100% imposed on India for its import of Russian oil.

An ongoing investigation by the U.S. Trade Representative (USTR) related to excess capacity could see further tariffs on top of all this.

The U.S. had in 2018 levied tariffs ranging from 7.5% to 100% on goods from China under Section 301 of the Trade Act of 1974 for unfair trade and tech practices. On July 24, 2026, it added a further 12.5% tariff for forced-labour compliance gaps.

'Different origin'

"After their imposition, Chinese exporters increasingly routed goods through third countries," the White House report noted. "Products that previously moved directly from China to the U.S. were shipped through jurisdictions where limited assembly, finishing, repackaging, relabelling, or documentation changes could create the appearance of a different national origin."

The report has identified more than 40 countries associated with "elevated illegal transshipment risk", with India among the top "enablers" of China's evasion of tariffs. "The Pune-Gujarat-Chennai production belt absorbs pumps and compressors... affecting industrial supply chains in Cincinnati, Dayton, and Columbus," it said.

"The [40-odd] countries that comprise China's Shadow Transshipment Network include many of America's largest trading partners," the report said.

"China's biggest enablers range from Mexico and Canada on U.S. land borders to the European Union, India, Japan, and South Korea."

The report classifies the 40-odd countries into three tiers based on how big a transgressor the U.S. feels they are.

The top tier comprises "countries and trading blocs that account for large absolute volumes of China-linked goods while maintaining diversified industrial bases and major U.S.-bound export platforms".

The report added that in these economies, illegal transshipment risk is embedded within broad legitimate trade flows. This Tier I includes Canada, the European Union, India, Israel, Japan, Mexico, South Korea, and Taiwan.

Citing an analysis, the report says Mexico, India and Vietnam produced an estimated $28 billion in lost tariff revenue

Working of the 'scam'

The report goes on to explain that tariff arbitrage lies at the heart of this transshipment arrangement. When a Chinese product that faces a high U.S. tariff is routed through a country with a lower tariff rate, that difference simultaneously becomes a loss of revenue for the U.S. government and a profit for the exporter.

"Such tariff arbitrage creates the financial engine behind the Great Transshipment Scam," the report added. "The savings are more than sufficient to finance the capital equipment, logistics infrastructure, light assembly plants, repackaging operations, and 'screwdriver factories' needed to support the scam across Southeast Asia, Mexico, India, and Eastern Europe."

It added that such assembly factories are designed for tariff evasion and tariff avoidance rather than true manufacturing.

"The Office of Trade and Economic Analysis (OTEA) estimates that approximately $67 billion in U.S.-bound goods were transshipped from China through the top hubs – Mexico, India, and Vietnam – in 2025, producing an estimated $28 billion in lost tariff revenue," the report said.

Tariff maze

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INSIDE

Lower oil prices now top priority, says J.D. Vance

WASHINGTON
The top U.S. priority now in the Iran war is no longer its nuclear programme but to bring gasoline prices down for American consumers, Vice President J.D. Vance said on Thursday. The comments by the U.S. Vice President illustrate the powerful leverage Tehran has gained by shutting down the crucial Strait of Hormuz. » PAGE 12

Two killed in attack by 'Kuki extremists'

GUWAHATI
Alleged Kuki extremists attacked a Liangmai Naga village in Manipur's Kangpokpi district on Friday morning, killing two people and injuring two others. The incident The Working Committee of Tangkhul Naga Long (WC-TNL), an apex body of the Tangkhul community, claimed that 50 gunmen, backed by Kuki extremist groups attacked the village. » PAGE 3

'Flight-control issues hit Air India plane'

NEW DELHI
An Airbus dossier sent to Air India's engineering team after a Phuket-Delhi flight experienced a sudden 300-foot drop on August 4 corroborated the flight control abnormalities reported during the incident. The observations were based on the company's preliminary analysis of the aircraft's digital flight data recorder. AAIB has categorised the incident as "serious". » PAGE 6

Riding ahead

Parade ready: NCC cadets of 1 Kerala Remount and Veterinary Squadron, Thrissur practise their equestrian skills as part of preparations for Independence Day celebrations at the Central Stadium in Thiruvananthapuram on Friday. NIRMAL HARINDRAN

Uttarakhand hydro tunnel water surge leaves 7 dead, 12 injured; 3 still trapped

Ishita Mishra
NEW DELHI

Rescue personnel conduct search operations inside the tunnel being built for a hydroelectric project in Chamoli on Thursday. PTI

Seven workers were killed and 12 injured after a sudden surge of water and debris entered a hydro tunnel being constructed at the THDC India project site in the Pipalkoti area of Uttarakhand's Chamoli district on Thursday evening.

According to officials, three workers were still believed to be trapped inside as of Friday evening even as rescue teams continued efforts to reach them amid challenging weather conditions.

"It has been raining since morning, which is making the rescue operation difficult. Approximately 900 metres of the 4.5-km-long tunnel is filled with water and sludge... while underwater visibility is extremely poor. As a result, Rescuers are unable to determine the conditions beneath the water, and the search is therefore being carried out manually," Chamoli District Magistrate Gaurav Kumar said.

Teams from the State Disaster Response Force (SDRF), National Disaster Response Force (NDRF), the Army, Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP), local police, and the Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) have been deployed at the site. SDRF personnel were seen using makeshift boats made from plastic drums to carry out rescue operations inside the tunnel.

'No time to react'

There were 22 workers, from Uttar Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, and Himachal Pradesh, trapped inside the tunnel, which is being built by the Hindustan Construction Company (HCC). At the time of the incident, at around 7 p.m., construction work was under way.

Jageshwar Gaur, one of the workers who managed to escape from the tunnel, said the conditions inside the tunnel had changed without any warning, as a powerful rush of air swept through the site.

"We had virtually no time to react," he said.

The 12 injured workers were taken to the district hospital. Doctors said the condition of two workers remained critical.

Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhami reached Pipalkoti on Friday to review the rescue operation and meet the injured workers. The safe evacuation of every worker trapped inside the tunnel remained the government's top priority, the Chief Minister said.

Mukesh Semwal, Uttarakhand State Coordinator of the Socialist Unity Centre of India (Communist), said that repeated tunnel collapses and industrial accidents in Uttarakhand highlighted serious concerns over worker safety and environmental safeguards in large infrastructure projects.

Seeking accountability

The deaths and injuries at the Chamoli tunnel could not simply be treated as an unavoidable accident, he warned.

"Inadequate safety measures, reckless construction practices, and the prioritisation of corporate interests over workers' lives were responsible for the tragedy," he said, calling for greater accountability from both the government and companies.

Govt. taking steps to make exams transparent: Murmu

Sandeep Phukan
NEW DELHI

President Droupadi Murmu addressing the nation on the eve of 80th Independence Day, in New Delhi on Friday. ANI

President Droupadi Murmu on Friday hailed students as the "architects of India's future," declaring the youth its "most valuable asset," given that 65% of the population is under the age of 35.

In her address to the nation on the eve of 80th Independence Day, she said the government was undertaking comprehensive reforms to make public examinations transparent, secure and trustworthy, and to completely curb paper leaks and the use of unfair means.

"Public examinations become gateways to opportunities for our students," Ms. Murmu said, stressing that the government and society had a shared responsibility to safeguard the present and future of young Indians.

Her remarks assume significance against the backdrop of recent student-led protests demanding systemic reforms.

The country's expanding start-up ecosystem, she said, reflected the talent and dedication of its youth. Major global enterprises were impressed by the talent of Indian youth and entrusted them with leadership roles, she added.

Ms. Murmu stressed the importance of the physical and mental well-being of young people, saying families and society had a collective responsibility to motivate and support them. Sports, she said, had emerged as an important vehicle for youth development and nation-building, with the Khelo India programme building an ecosystem from the grassroots to the national level.

National security featured prominently in the address. Praising the "unmatched valour" of the armed forces, she cited Operation Sindoor as an example of India's ability to conduct precision counter-terror operations. It had sent a "clear and firm message" to terrorists and their supporters that they would face the consequences of their actions.

She described the suspension of the Indus Waters Treaty as a "decisive step" in national interest, particularly that of farmers. On internal security, she termed the progress towards making India "Naxal-free" a major achievement.

On foreign policy, she reiterated India's commitment to peace, dialogue and cooperation, rooted in the principle of *Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam* (the world is one family). India would continue to seek greater representation for the Global South in the United Nations and other multilateral institutions, she added.

Women empowerment

The President cited welfare and financial-inclusion milestones, saying more than 25 crore people had been lifted out of poverty.

Women's empowerment remained another key theme, with the President referring to the Nari Shakti Vandan Adhiniyam to provide one-third reservation for women in the Lok Sabha and State Assemblies and make Indian democracy more inclusive, the target of creating three crore new *lakhpati didis*, women flying combat aircraft and 'drone didis' in the agriculture sector.

On sustainable development, she said India had achieved many Sustainable Development Goals ahead of the 2030 deadline.

India helps China evade tariffs: U.S. report

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- The tariff difference in arbitrage simultaneously becomes a loss of revenue for the U.S. government and a profit for the exporter, it adds
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The top tier comprises "countries and trading blocs that account for large absolute volumes of China-linked goods while maintaining diversified industrial bases and major U.S.-bound export platforms".

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Point	Explanation
Report	**The Great Transshipment Scam: Rise, Scope, and Costs**
Issued by	White House / Trump administration
Main target	Chinese exporters allegedly avoiding U.S. tariffs
Countries identified	More than **40 countries/economies**
India	Listed among important alleged “enablers”/transshipment locations
Indian belt highlighted	**Pune–Gujarat–Chennai production belt**, according to the newspaper report
Other major economies named	Mexico, Canada, EU, Japan, South Korea and others
Basic allegation	Chinese-origin goods/components enter another country → undergo limited processing/assembly/repackaging → are exported to the U.S. as originating from that country
Why do it?	To exploit the difference between the high tariff applicable to China and a lower tariff applicable to another country
U.S. concern	Loss of tariff revenue + weakening of tariffs intended to constrain Chinese trade
India's position in the story	A potential transshipment hub—not an accusation that all Indian exports or Indian manufacturing are fraudulent

- According to the report as described in the article, the **Pune–Gujarat–Chennai belt** is highlighted because of its integration into industrial supply chains.
- The report alleges that Chinese-linked supply chains can use manufacturing facilities involving activities such as:
  - assembly,
  - finishing,
  - repackaging,
  - relabelling,
  - and documentation changes
- before products are exported onward.
- But this does **not automatically make the activity illegal**. If an Indian factory genuinely manufactures or substantially transforms imported components, exporting the resulting product as Indian can be entirely legitimate.
- That distinction is central to evaluating the report.

4. What does “tariff arbitrage” mean?

This is the economic concept at the heart of the article.

Suppose:

Route	Hypothetical tariff
China → USA	50%
India → USA	10%
Difference	**40 percentage points**

A Chinese exporter has an incentive to make the product qualify—or falsely appear to qualify—as Indian-origin.

If a $100 product genuinely enters the U.S. from China:

Tariff = $50

If the same $100 Chinese product is falsely declared Indian:

Tariff = $10

Potential saving:

$40 per $100 of imports

That saving creates the economic incentive for fraudulent transshipment.

The White House describes this tariff differential as generating profit for exporters while creating tariff-revenue losses for the U.S. government. AP News

5. How big does the U.S. claim the problem is?

There are **different estimates**, so don't memorize all figures as if they measure exactly the same thing.

The AP reports that the White House estimates roughly **$19–26 billion per year in lost tariff revenue**, while estimates of the amount of goods affected can vary substantially depending on methodology.

AP News

The newspaper image specifically cites another analysis estimating that:

Mexico + India + Vietnam → approximately $28 billion in lost tariff revenue in 2025.

Separately, reporting on the U.S. analysis discusses roughly **$67 billion of Chinese goods** allegedly rerouted through major hubs including India, Mexico and Vietnam. The Economic Ti...

Exam caution

Don't confuse:

Value of transshipped goods ≠ tariff revenue lost.

If $100 billion of goods are transshipped, the tariff loss isn't automatically $100 billion. It depends on the tariff differential that would otherwise have applied.

6. Why did this become a problem after 2018?

The turning point was the U.S.–China trade war.

Section 301

Section 301 of the U.S. Trade Act of 1974 empowers the U.S. Trade Representative to investigate and respond to foreign practices considered unfair or burdensome to U.S. commerce.

Beginning in 2018, the first Trump administration imposed major additional tariffs on Chinese products under Section 301.

That changed incentives:

Before tariffs

China → USA

was often economically straightforward.

After high China-specific tariffs

China → Third Country → USA

could become financially attractive if the third country's goods faced lower U.S. tariffs.

The White House argues that this led to increasingly sophisticated supply-chain restructuring and tariff evasion. Financial Times

8. Why is the allegation controversial?

There is a major problem in distinguishing **tariff evasion** from modern global manufacturing.

Take an iPhone-like product.

Its:

- chips could come from Taiwan,
- display from South Korea,
- components from China,
- software from the U.S.,
- assembly from India,
- raw materials from several countries.

The existence of Chinese inputs doesn't automatically make the final product **Chinese-origin**.

This is why **Rules of Origin (RoO)** matter.

Rules of Origin

They determine the economic nationality of a product.

Authorities may examine:

Value addition + manufacturing transformation + change in tariff classification + processing performed + source of major components.

A genuine transformation can establish a new country of origin.

Possible consequence	Impact on India
Greater U.S. customs scrutiny	More documentation required
Rules-of-origin checks	Exporters must prove Indian value addition
Supply-chain audits	Chinese components may receive additional scrutiny
Customs investigations	Possible delays at U.S. ports
Retrospective duties	Duties could potentially be demanded where origin declarations are found false
Trade negotiations	U.S. may demand tougher anti-circumvention commitments
China+1 strategy	Companies genuinely manufacturing in India need clearer origin documentation
FDI	Genuine manufacturing investment may become more valuable than assembly-only operations

A file photo of demonstration of the gloves at at the Oklahoma County Detention Center in March 2023. AP

'Shock' gloves for U.S. immigration agents trigger row

Agence France-Presse
WASHINGTON

Plans to equip U.S. immigration enforcement agents with gloves capable of delivering debilitating electric shocks have fuelled concerns over potential abuses by a force that critics say is already over-zealous and under-trained.

"As if assaulting people and shooting people in the streets wasn't enough," Representative Maxwell Frost, a Democrat from Florida, said on X. "Now, they're spending $20 million of YOUR taxpayer dollars on painful electric shock gloves for their masked, lawless goons."

"ICE must be stopped," Mr. Frost said in a reference to Immigration and Customs Enforcement, the agency primarily charged with carrying out President Donald Trump's plan to deport millions of undocumented migrants.

ICE has come in for criticism for a series of fatal shootings during enforcement operations. Critics have focused on the forceful tactics used by ICE agents in rounding up migrants and on an alleged lowering of the standards of training for new recruits.

The plan to purchase the shock gloves calls for the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), the ICE parent agency, to spend $10 to $20 million on what are described as "distraction and de-escalation" devices.

The glove delivers a shock that is not as strong as that of a Taser, another device used by law enforcement to subdue suspects.

John Sandweg, who served as the acting ICE director under Democratic president Barack Obama, expressed concerns about the electric gloves.

"Deploying this admittedly less than lethal technology, in an era when we're really not all that interested in providing training to the officers about how to use that technology, really is alarming," Mr. Sandweg said.

Representative Pramila Jayapal, a Democrat from Washington state, expressed similar concerns.

New BNP govt. in Bangladesh faces public ire as power outages last hours

Natural gas shortage leaves several power plants running at lower capacity; protests spill onto streets in many places and Opposition targets the govt. over the crisis; Power Minister says 'there is nothing I can do right now'; Dhaka asks New Delhi to supply more diesel through cross-border pipeline

NEWS ANALYSIS

Rahiul Alam
DHAKA

Hours-long power cut and sweltering heat are disrupting daily life across Bangladesh, exposing the six-month-old BNP government to mounting public anger and Opposition criticism as officials concede the crisis could persist for at least another week.

Abdur Rahman (32), a resident of Kamalnagar, a rural upazila in the southern district of Lakshmipur, said the power cuts had become so relentless that residents could no longer plan their day around them. "It doesn't matter if it's morning, noon or night, the electricity supply simply won't be there. We're lucky if it lasts an hour before vanishing for the next ten," he told *The Hindu*. The blackouts, he said, showed little mercy even after dark, occurring in the middle of the night without warning and lasting for hours.

Gas shortage

The crisis is not confined to the countryside. Bijoy Talukdar, who works for a private firm in Dhaka and lives in the capital's Moghbazar area, said he had assumed that the outages afflicting his relatives in rural areas would spare the city. "The power was gone for three to four hours on Thursday, right in the heart of the city. It went off four times today alone," he said.

The immediate trigger appears to be a severe shortfall in natural gas supply, which has left several gas-fired power plants unable to run at full capacity even as electricity demand climbs with the heat.

According to officials, the country's total gas supply fell to around 2,100 million cubic feet per day (mmcfd) against the demand of roughly 3,800 mmcfd. Domestic gas fields contributed about 1,630 mmcfd, while two floating LNG terminals supplied up to 410 mmcfd – the lowest combined supply since a July 21 fire disabled the U.S.-owned Excelerate Energy terminal.

That terminal partially resumed operations on August 8, but a second, Summit-operated terminal began cutting off supply from August 10 after it was unable to unload LNG from incoming tankers, citing bad weather and technical problems. Coal shortages have also kept several major power plants from running at full capacity, while electricity imports from India have declined, compounding the shortfall.

The shortage was particularly acute between August 11 and 12. Load-shedding peaked at 3,592 MW at midnight on August 11, when a demand of 17,523 MW outstripped supply of 13,931 MW. Demand peaked again at 18,043 MW at 9 p.m., against supply of 15,036 MW – a deficit of over 3,000 MW that persisted past 1 a.m. and 2 a.m. the next day.

Though conditions eased somewhat the following morning, load-shedding climbed again to 2,688 MW by noon and 3,382 MW by 3 p.m. on August 12. National grid load-shedding now regularly exceeds 3,000 MW a day, with rural areas bearing the brunt: some are receiving as little as five to seven hours of electricity a day, while others go without power for 17 to 20 hours at a stretch. To ease the burden on villages, load-shedding has now begun in cities, including Dhaka.

Falling gas pressure has also pushed households towards electric stoves, adding further strain to the grid. At the same time, industries reliant on their own gas-fired generation have been forced to switch to grid power as well, compounding demand alongside heavier use of fans and air-conditioners in the heat. Amid all this, the Summit-operated terminal's supply of LNG was halted on Thursday afternoon due to bad weather, further reducing the country's already strained gas supply.

Rage on road: Jamaat-e-Islami takes out a march in protest over the power outages in Dhaka on Friday. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

In response to the crisis, the Power Division on Wednesday ordered shopping malls, markets and shops nationwide to shut by 8 p.m., an hour earlier than the previous 9 p.m. cut-off, effective from Wednesday. All illuminated billboards must now be switched off by 7 p.m., and decorative lighting has been banned entirely.

Anger boils over

Public frustration over the outages has already turned violent in places, with electricity offices in several areas facing attacks, vandalism and staff being confined by angry residents. Public anger over the relentless power and gas crisis has spilled onto the streets in recent days.

CNG-run auto-rickshaw drivers blockaded the Dhaka-Sylhet highway after filling stations ran dry, while residents in several districts stormed electricity offices, smashing property and confining staff inside in protest over outages stretching to 18-20 hours a day.

Reports from Gopalganj, Netrokona, Rangpur, and Kishoreganj indicated violent protests by residents at substations and discom offices. To pre-empt further unrest, the Bangladesh Rural Electrification Association has written to the Inspector General of Police seeking security for their offices, substations and other key installations.

'Govt. irresponsible'

The crisis has become a political flashpoint as well.

Jamaat-e-Islami, the main Opposition party, accused the BNP-led government of failing to take "effective" steps to resolve the crisis, calling it a sign of the administration's "irresponsibility" towards the public. In a statement on Thursday evening, Jamaat secretary-general Mia Golam Parwar said gas supply on Wednesday had stood at just 2.03 billion cubic feet against demand of 3.8 billion cubic feet, and blamed the crisis on the government's "mismanagement, inefficiency, lack of foresight, corruption in various institutions and politicisation". Mr. Parwar also flagged the absence of long-term planning in power-sector management.

The National Citizen Party (NCP) also weighed in, with its convenor and Chief Whip of the Opposition, Nahid Islam, saying the current power and energy crisis stemmed from a lack of planning and indecision in energy procurement. Mr. Islam alleged that although the BNP had come to power promising a government of the people, what was actually taking shape was a "government of oligarchs".

Can only wait: Minister

Power, Energy and Mineral Resources Minister Iqbal Hassan Mahmood acknowledged the crisis , saying repairs to the floating storage and re-gasification unit (FSRU) disabled in the July fire had to be completed before supply could improve.

"This is all I can say: we are working... there is nothing I can do right now, because I cannot increase gas production, and without the FSRU, I cannot unload the gas that we have," he said, adding that peak electricity demand was shifting to midnight as consumption pressures mounted, with total demand now touching around 18,000 MW.

India's help sought

Facing no immediate fix to the crisis, Bangladesh has turned to India for relief, with Minister Mahmood confirming that Dhaka had asked New Delhi to supply more diesel through the existing cross-border pipeline.

The request came up during what he described as a routine meeting last week with the Indian High Commissioner on matters of mutual interest between the two neighbours, though he did not elaborate on whether India had responded, or on any parallel request to boost electricity imports that have already declined amid the shortfall.

Lebanon abolishes death penalty; West Asia, N. Africa top in executions

Agence France-Presse
BEIRUT

Lebanon has formally abolished the death penalty, going against the grain in a region where Iran and Saudi Arabia are reportedly the second- and third-biggest executors globally, after China.

According to an Amnesty International report, of at least 2,707 people executed globally in 2025, more than 95% were in West Asia and North Africa region, almost half for drug-related offences.

Iran alone accounted for 2,159 of those executions – Tehran's highest recorded figure in more than 40 years.

According to an Amnesty International report, at least 2,707 people were executed globally in 2025. GETTY IMAGES

Saudi Arabia carried out a record high of at least 356 executions last year, Amnesty said, "driven by an alarming increase in the number of drug-related cases", most of which involved foreign nationals.

This year, Saudi authorities had already executed 130 people by August 13, according to an AFP tally.

Yemen was third regionally and fourth globally, with at least 51 executions last year.

Egypt, with 23 executions, was sixth globally, trailing the United States.

Tunisia has had a moratorium on carrying out the death penalty since 1991, and Algeria and Morocco since 1993.

In Iraq, Amnesty noted that executions were "largely on hold" last year, however thousands are still sentenced to death.

Israel has abolished capital punishment for "ordinary crimes" but retains it for some "exceptional" offences. In March, Israel passed a law making death the default punishment for Palestinians in the Israeli-occupied West Bank convicted by military courts for "terrorism".

For sale

Beauty in captivity: An Iraqi vendor offers a peacock at the pet market (al-Ghazl market), one of Baghdad's favourite destinations, on Friday. The market attracts buyers and sellers of birds, dogs, cats and exotic animals such as snakes and monkeys. AP

Sailors on U.S. carrier Abraham Lincoln hit by strain of long deployment

Agence France-Presse
WASHINGTON

Some sailors have reportedly tried throwing themselves into the sea, basic supplies can run short and sanitation is going awry: life on America's giant Abraham Lincoln aircraft carrier is increasingly difficult as the Iran war drags on.

The ship – now in its ninth month of deployment – is expected to be replaced in West Asia by another carrier, the George Washington, in a move sure to be welcomed by the Lincoln's crew and their loved ones.

But concerns about conditions on the Lincoln have prompted lawmakers to demand answers from Pentagon chief Pete Hegseth, who insists the situation has been "misrepresented".

Jonathan Schroden, chief research officer at the Center for Naval Analyses, said the warship's sailors face significant challenges from their long time at sea.

"Even in peacetime conditions, the quarters are cramped, the workdays are long, the food is not great, and it's difficult to get fresh air, exercise and even a decent night's sleep," Mr. Schroden said.

"Add to that the stress that comes with being involved in combat operations – in which your ship is constantly threatened – and you can see how difficult life becomes for these sailors," he said.

Since November 2025

The Lincoln departed California in November 2025 for duty in the South China Sea and was rerouted to West Asia before U.S.-Israeli attacks on Iran that began in late February.

Mr. Schroden noted that carrier strike groups are generally designed for six-month deployments for reasons "including sailor welfare".

Going beyond that "creates all kinds of compounding problems that the Navy then has to deal with down the line".

Sea-bound: A file photo of USS Abraham Lincoln, which is now in its ninth month of deployment. AFP

This includes increased maintenance costs and decreased readiness windows while ships are prepared to deploy again, he said.

Of special concern are accounts of suicide attempts aboard the Lincoln, with the Navy Times reporting this week that two sailors tried to jump off the ship.

Mr. Schroden said he had seen "reports of similar events occasionally over the past couple of decades" and that "it's rare but not unheard of, though tragic in every case."

The U.S. Navy did not immediately provide answers to questions from AFP, but U.S. Central Command posted on X that the crew "remain resilient and resolved after more than 200 days at sea".

It added that no service members aboard the carrier have died and one sailor who fell overboard on August 3 "was quickly and safely recovered."

'Alarming conditions'

In two recent meetings, family members clashed with Navy leadership over the difficult conditions – including food shortages – faced by the 5,000 sailors and Marines aboard the Lincoln and demanded to know when their loved ones would return home, MSNOW reported.

The Lincoln is not the only carrier to face issues due to a lengthy time at sea: the USS Gerald R. Ford also suffered various problems during a recent 326-day deployment.

The Ford took part in U.S. operations in the Caribbean, where Washington's forces have carried out strikes on alleged drug-smuggling boats and seized Venezuelan leader Nicolas Maduro, before being dispatched to West Asia.

A fire broke out in a laundry room aboard the Ford in March, injuring two sailors and causing major damage to some 100 beds, according to the U.S. military, while U.S. media reported significant problems with the ship's toilet system while at sea.

Reports of conditions on the Lincoln have sparked an outcry from some lawmakers.

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Point	Detail
Major development	**Lebanon abolished the death penalty**
Global executions in 2025	At least **2,707**
Source	Amnesty International report cited in the article
West Asia + North Africa share	**More than 95%**
Iran	**2,159 executions**
Saudi Arabia	At least **356 executions**
Yemen	At least **51 executions**
Egypt	**23 executions**
Main issue behind regional rise	Significant number of **drug-related executions**
Tunisia	Moratorium on executions since **1991**
Algeria	Moratorium since **1993**
Morocco	Moratorium since **1993**
Iraq	Executions reportedly largely on hold in 2025, but thousands remained under death sentence

Category	Meaning	Examples
Abolitionist for all crimes	Death penalty completely removed	Most European countries; now Lebanon according to this report
Abolitionist for ordinary crimes	Retained only for exceptional offences such as wartime crimes	Some states follow this model
Abolitionist in practice	Law still permits death penalty, but executions have not occurred for many years	Morocco, Algeria etc.
Retentionist	Death penalty remains legally available and executions occur	China, Iran, Saudi Arabia, etc.

2025 execution picture

Based on the figures cited in the article:

Country	Executions mentioned	Position/context
China	Exact number not publicly known	Believed to be world's largest executor; data treated as state secret
Iran	**2,159**	Reported as second globally
Saudi Arabia	**≥356**	Reported as third globally
Yemen	**≥51**	Fourth globally
United States	—	Ahead of Egypt according to article
Egypt	**23**	Sixth globally


CYPRUS
SYRIA
LEBANON
Beirut
Mediterranean
Sea
ISRAEL
JORDAN
GAZA
100km

The key constitutional doctrine is:

“Rarest of rare” doctrine

It emerged principally from the Supreme Court's judgment in:

Bachan Singh v. State of Punjab (1980)

The Supreme Court upheld the constitutional validity of the death penalty but held that it should be imposed only in the **“rarest of rare” cases** when the alternative of life imprisonment is unquestionably foreclosed.

Important Indian cases

Case	Importance
Jagmohan Singh v. State of U.P. (1973)	Early Supreme Court decision upholding constitutionality of death penalty
Bachan Singh v. State of Punjab (1980)	Established **“rarest of rare”** principle
Machhi Singh v. State of Punjab (1983)	Elaborated application of rarest-of-rare doctrine
Mithu v. State of Punjab (1983)	Mandatory death penalty under Section 303 IPC declared unconstitutional
Shatrughan Chauhan v. Union of India (2014)	Delay in mercy petitions and other circumstances can justify commutation

DRAFT SHANTI ACT RULES RELEASED

Foreign nuclear technology must have its design certified in country-of-origin

Pratyush Deep
New Delhi, August 14

FOREIGN NUCLEAR technology sourced for a nuclear power plant or reactor must have its design certified or approved by the regulatory body in its country of origin and must already be operational there or in another foreign country, according to the draft rules of the Sustainable Harnessing and Advancement of Nuclear Energy for Transforming India (SHANTI) Act, released by the Department of Atomic Energy on Friday.

"The technology intended to be imported or acquired domestically does not adversely affect the interest of India, does not constitute an unreasonable risk to public health and safety and is in conformity with the national policies framed under the Act," the rules read.

The rules define "the country of origin" as those countries which are self-reliant in nuclear reactor design and supply chain ecosystem whose regulatory approvals are trusted globally. As per the rules, technology providers shall ensure availability of design support and all necessary permissions and supporting documents from original technology developer unless there has been a complete transfer of technology.

"Provided also that the person sourcing the technology shall ensure that all related Intellectual Property Rights vests with the technology developer," it added.

The draft rules provide for a single composite licence for building, owning, operating and decommissioning a nuclear power plant or reactor.

The rules also recognise captive nuclear power, including its use by energy intensive industries such as aluminium and cement, as well as data centres, semiconductor manufacturing and AI applications.

A key provision is the proposed "in-principle approval", which the licensing authority may grant after admitting an application where the applicant has not yet selected a site or reactor technology. The draft defines it as a "statement of support to proceed towards applying for formal licence", subject to specified conditions. "Upon receipt of a valid 'in-principle approval', the applicant may proceed with negotiation with reactor technology vendors and for acquiring the land and other necessary infrastructure," the draft rules state.

Technology providers shall ensure availability of design support and all necessary permissions and supporting documents from original technology developer, rules say. REUTERS

The approval, however, would not amount to a final licence. The draft also provides that an in-principle approval can be revoked if there is a supervening public interest or if material facts emerge indicating that the applicant is owned, controlled or dominated by entities considered inimical to defence and national security or public health and safety. It can also be revoked if obtained through misrepresentation or suppression of material facts.

On nuclear liability, operators would be required to maintain insurance or financial security for nuclear damage, with the financial security remaining in place until spent fuel is removed from the relevant storage pool. The draft also provides for a Nuclear Liability Fund, to be funded through a levy on operators. For specified government-owned installations, the Central Government would assume liability under the conditions set out in the rules. The draft rules lay out the regulatory framework for a wider nuclear power ecosystem, including private participation, captive nuclear generation, foreign reactor technology, licensing, safety oversight and nuclear liability.

The Department of Atomic Energy has invited comments and suggestions on the draft rules, with September 4, 2026 as the last date for submission.

FULL REPORT ON WWW.INDIANEXPRESS.COM

Point	Details
Development	Government released **Draft SHANTI Act Rules**
Released by	**Department of Atomic Energy (DAE)**
Date reported	August 2026
Objective	Regulatory framework for a wider nuclear-power ecosystem
Key areas	Private participation, foreign reactor technology, licensing, safety oversight, captive nuclear generation and nuclear liability
Public comments invited	Yes
Deadline mentioned	**4 September 2026**
Major foreign-tech condition	Reactor technology must have approved/certified design in its **country of origin**
Additional condition	Technology should already be operational in the country of origin or another foreign country

2. Most important provision: foreign nuclear technology

India does **not** want an untested foreign reactor design to be introduced directly into the country.

The draft provides essentially:

Foreign technology → certified/approved in country of origin → already operating somewhere → eligible to be considered for India

So, merely possessing a reactor design or obtaining technology from a foreign company would not be sufficient.

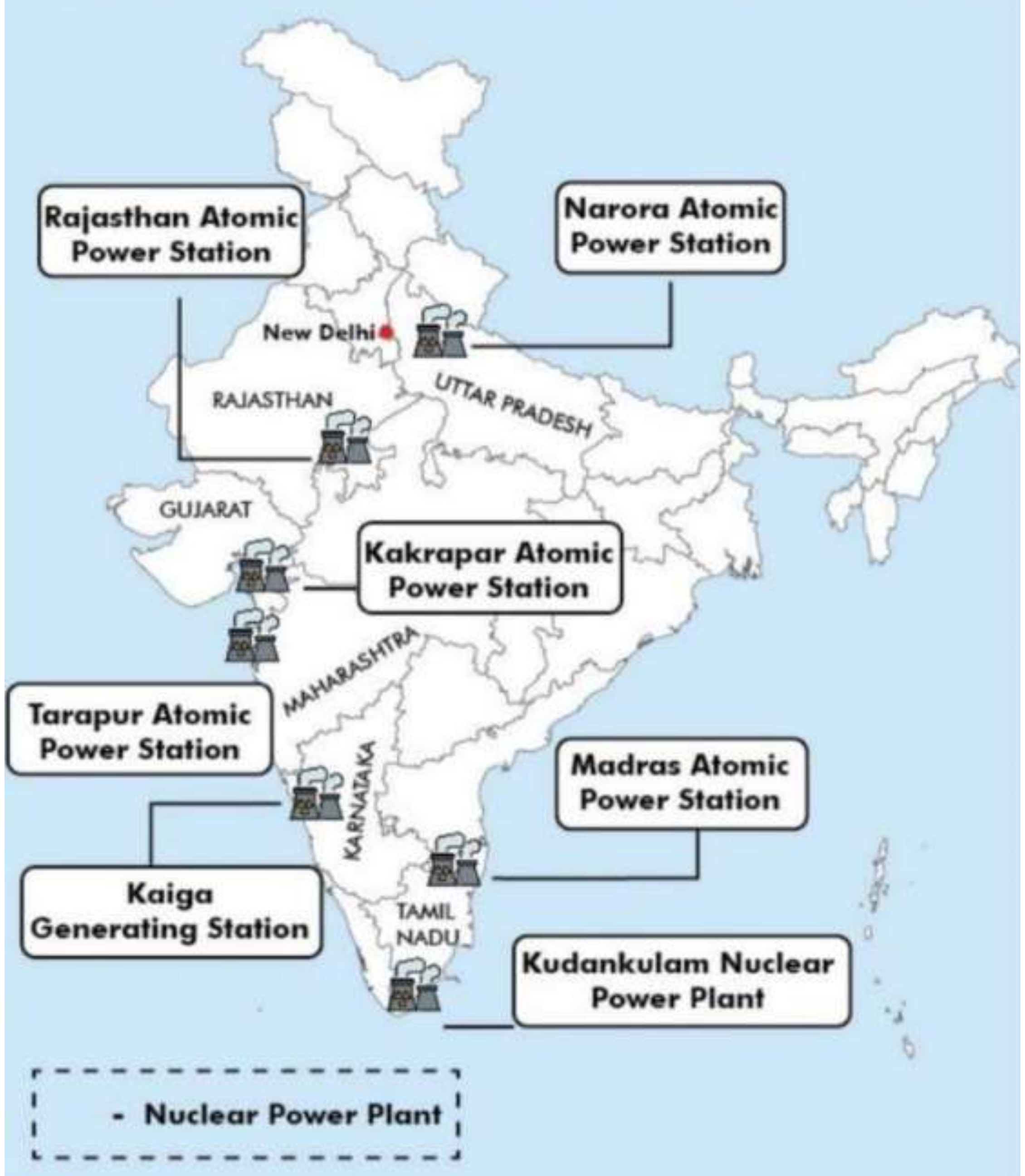
Why?

Nuclear reactors involve extremely high:

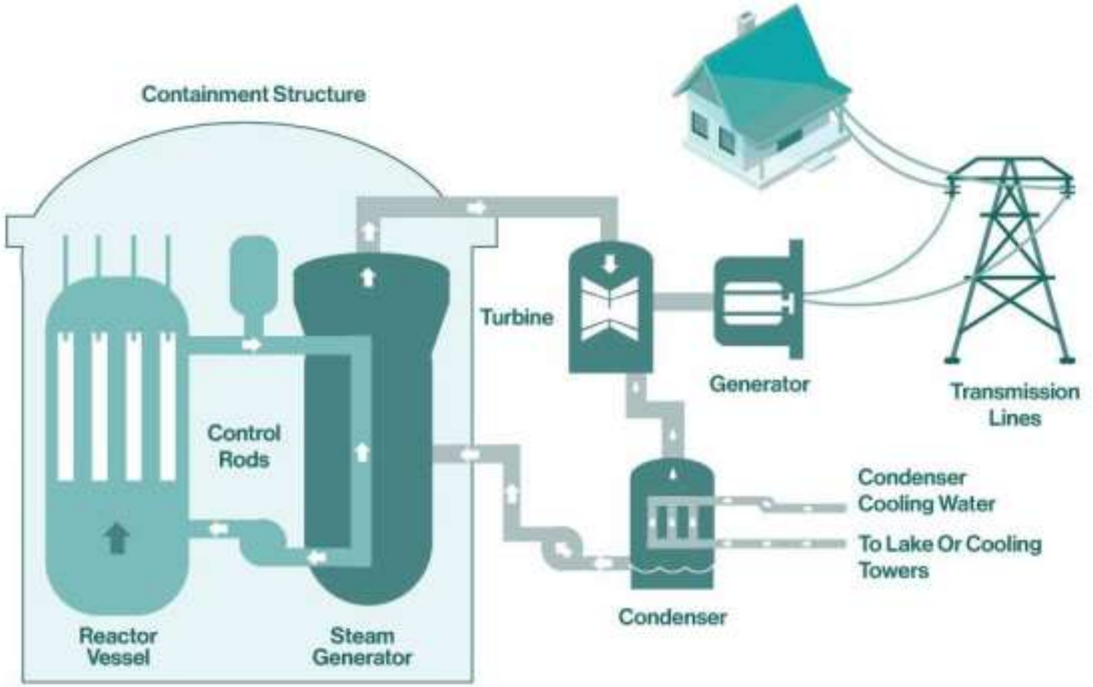
- safety risks,
- construction costs,
- operating periods,
- decommissioning obligations,
- radioactive-waste issues,
- accident liabilities.

India therefore wants foreign technology to have an established regulatory and operational record.

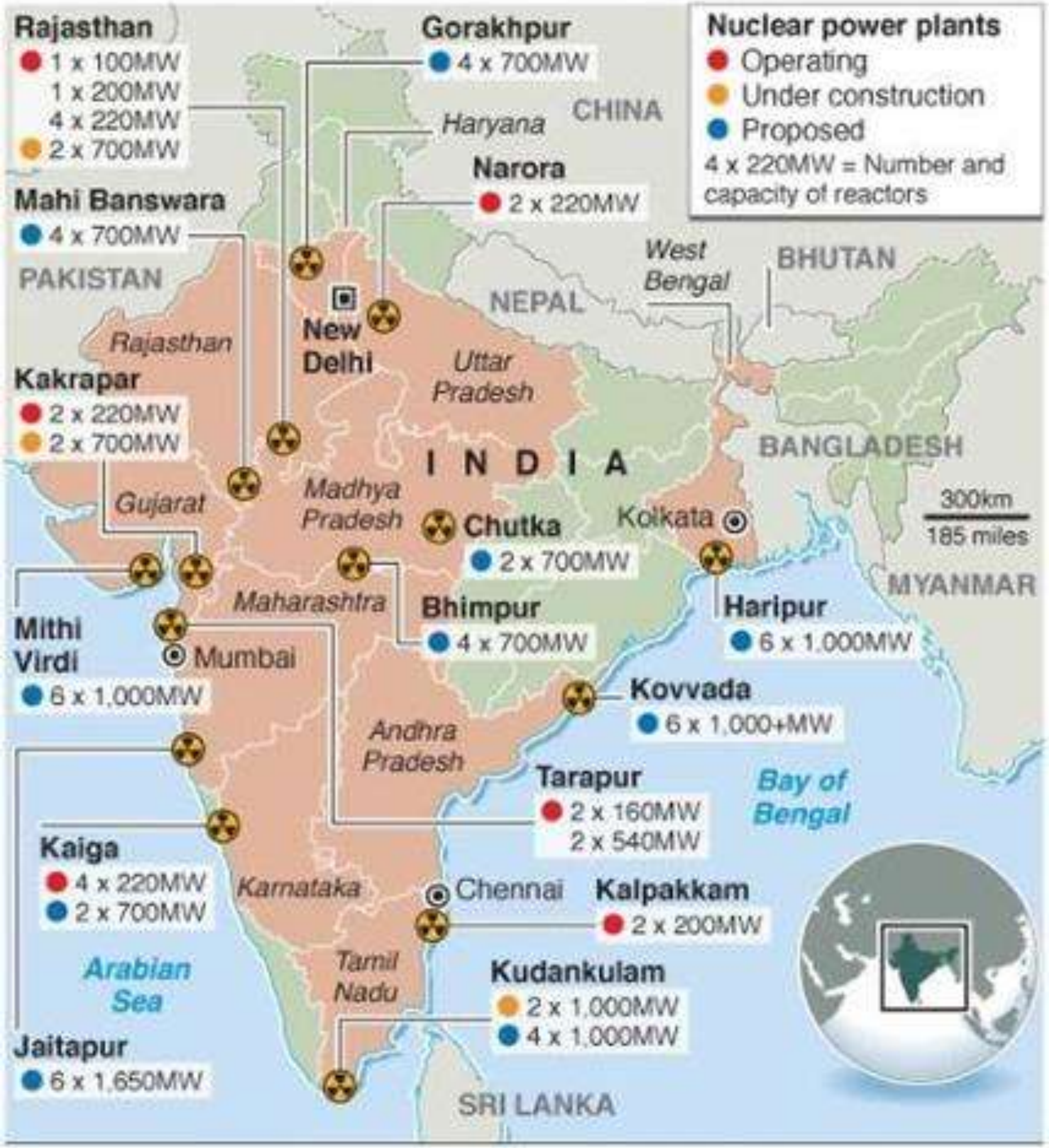
Operational Nuclear Power Plants in India



HOW A NUCLEAR POWER PLANT WORKS



1. Nuclear fission creates heat inside reactor.
2. Heat transfers to the steam generator, where steam forms.
3. The steam turns the turbine and generator, which converts the steam into electricity.
4. Steam routes to condenser. The cool water removes excess heat, condensing steam into water.
5. Water is then pumped back into the steam generator.



Nuclear power plants
Operating
Under construction
Proposed
4 x 220MW = Number and capacity of reactors
Rajasthan
1 x 100MW
1 x 200MW
4 x 220MW
2 x 700MW
Gorakhpur
4 x 700MW
Haryana
CHINA
Narora
2 x 220MW
Mahi Banswara
4 x 700MW
PAKISTAN
West Bengal
BHUTAN
NEPAL
New Delhi
Rajasthan
Uttar Pradesh
Kakrapar
2 x 220MW
2 x 700MW
INDIA
BANGLADESH
Gujarat
Madhya Pradesh
Chutka
2 x 700MW
Kolkata
300km
185 miles
Maharashtra
Bhimpur
4 x 700MW
Haripur
6 x 1,000MW
MYANMAR
Mithi Virdi
6 x 1,000MW
Mumbai
Kovvada
6 x 1,000+MW
Andhra Pradesh
Tarapur
2 x 160MW
2 x 540MW
Bay of Bengal
Kaiga
4 x 220MW
2 x 700MW
Karnataka
Chennai
Kalpakkam
2 x 200MW
Arabian Sea
Tamil Nadu
Kudankulam
2 x 1,000MW
4 x 1,000MW
Jaitapur
6 x 1,650MW
SRI LANKA

4. Technology provider's obligations

The foreign technology provider cannot simply sell a reactor design and withdraw.

The rules require availability of:

Design support + permissions + supporting documents + cooperation from original technology developer

through the relevant project requirements.

This becomes especially important because a nuclear reactor may operate for **40–60+ years**.

Imagine:

Foreign company → Indian operator → reactor operates for decades

If technical problems emerge 25 years later, India needs continuing access to:

- design documentation,
- safety information,
- engineering support,
- modifications,
- spare/component specifications.

5. Intellectual Property Rights

Another important provision concerns **IPR.**

The person/entity sourcing the technology must ensure that the relevant **Intellectual Property Rights vest with the technology developer**.

Why?

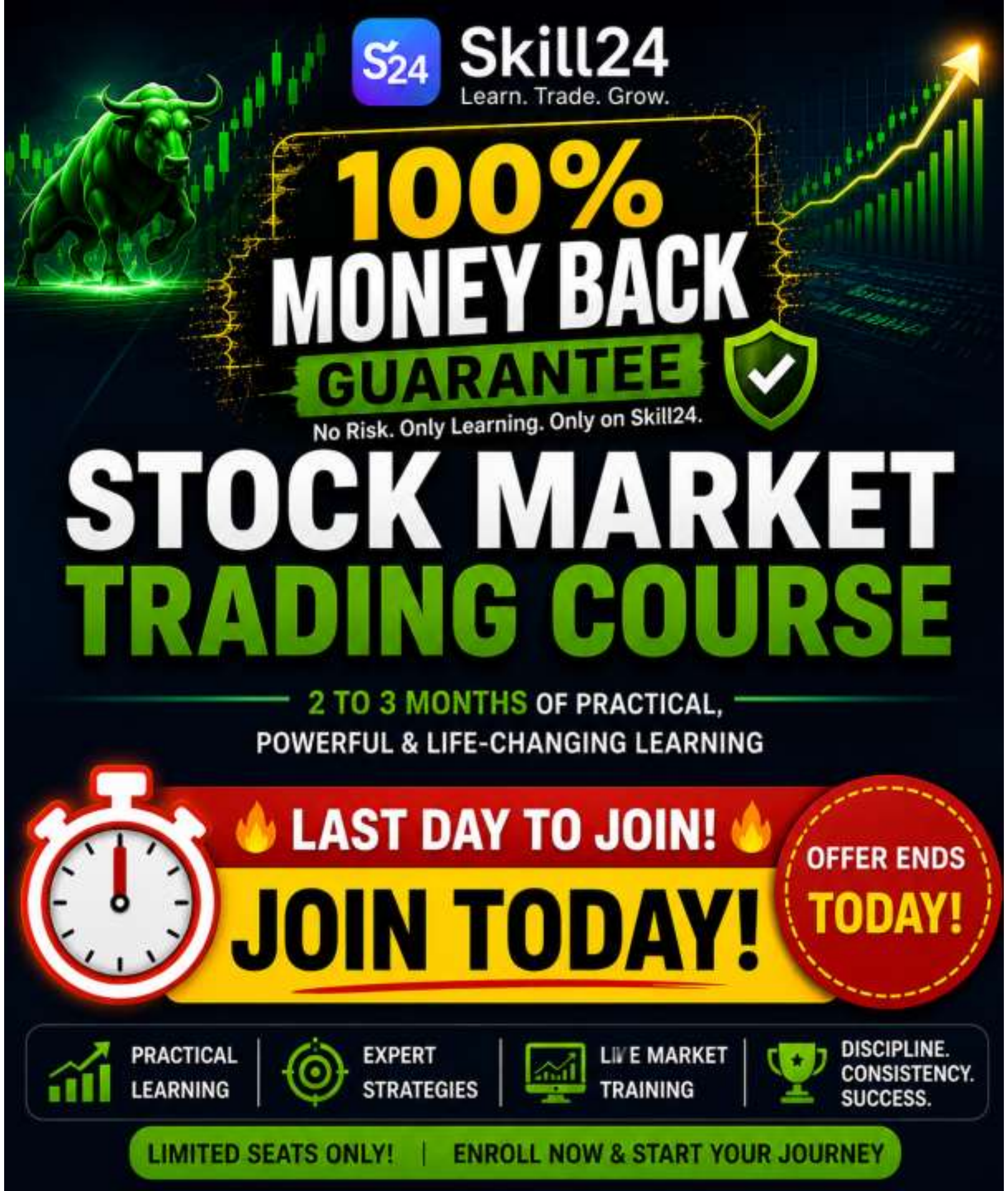
Because reactor designs can contain highly protected:

- patents,
- engineering designs,
- software,
- proprietary safety systems,
- manufacturing processes.

India needs to ensure that the technology being licensed is legally sourced and that the developer has the authority to provide it.

Traditional regulatory problem	Proposed approach
Multiple stages	Composite framework
Construction permission	Integrated
Ownership	Integrated
Operation	Integrated
Decommissioning	Integrated
Regulatory objective	More predictable lifecycle licensing

Area	Direction of reform
Private sector	Wider participation
Foreign technology	Permitted subject to strict conditions
Foreign reactor design	Must have credible certification/approval
Operating record	Technology should already be operational abroad
Technology support	Long-term documentation/support required
Licensing	Composite licence proposed
Early investment	In-principle approval
Captive plants	Recognised
AI/data centres	Potential nuclear-power users
Liability	Financial security required
Liability Fund	Levy-funded mechanism proposed
Government plants	Centre may assume liability in specified circumstances
National security	Approval can be revoked
Safety	Continues to be central regulatory requirement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