

Daily Current Affairs





Privacy is power.

What people
don't know,
they can't ruin.





Russia targets Ukraine's port in new strikes

KEY FIGURES
A Russian attack targeted port infrastructure in Ukraine's small district in the southern region of Odessa overnight, Ukrainian authorities said on Monday. Fires caused by the attack have been extinguished, the authorities added on Telegram app. > PAGE 14



Adilabad tribals name hamlet after Collector

HYDRABAD
The Nizam families of Golapota, under Pappaladri Gannu Pannaboy in Telangana's Adilabad have named their recent settlement colony 'Rajesh Shah' after Collector Rajesh Shah, acknowledging his role in helping them rebuild their lives. > PAGE 2

Cauvery row: SC to monitor water sharing

NEW DELHI
The Supreme Court on Monday decided to wait and watch the progress in Cauvery water sharing between Karnataka and Tamil Nadu, even as Karnataka said it had complied with the Cauvery Water Management Authority and released over 12,000 cusecs by 8 a.m. on August 17. > PAGE 5

Tata Sons AGM in Mumbai likely to be adjourned

MUMBAI
The Annual General Meeting (AGM) of Tata Sons Pvt. Ltd, the holding company of the Tata Group, scheduled to be held on Tuesday may be adjourned. Sir Ratan Tata Trusts is under a court from Maharashtra's Charity Commissioner and is unable to nominate representatives for the meeting resulting in likely lack of a quorum, analysts said. > PAGE 12

Twisha cases: CBI accuses in-laws of abetting suicide

MUMBAI
The CBI on Monday filed a charge sheet against former Mumbai judge Girdhar Singh and his son Samarth Singh in connection with the death of Twisha Sharma. The CBI accused the mother son duo of abetment of suicide, mental cruelty, common intent, and demanding dowry. > PAGE 8

Soren scraps key examinations as student protests rock Jharkhand

On the 24th day of protests, Jharkhand CM announces cancellation of JSSC-CGL exam as well as those held by blacklisted TDP, since 2014; State is to implement reforms to ensure transparency; str to continue over CBI probe, says student leader

Amrit Bhaskari
PATNA
Jharkhand Chief Minister Hemant Soren on Monday announced the cancellation of the Jharkhand Staff Selection Commission Combined Graduate Level (JSSC-CGL) examination 24 days after students and job aspirants began a protest over alleged irregularities in recruitment exams in the State.



Resistant cheer! Protesters celebrate in Ranchi on Monday after the Jharkhand CM's announcement of exam cancellations. ANI

The decision was taken during a four-hour emergency Cabinet meeting. Mr. Soren also announced that all examinations conducted since 2014 by TDR Data Processing Private Ltd (TDPL), a blacklisted agency, will be cancelled. He said a committee will be formed under senior IAS officer Anandh Kishore to suggest reforms in the conduct of examinations in the State. Hundreds of students

who have gathered at the Jai Singh Munda Stadium in Ranchi demanding that all examinations conducted by the CBI tripartite take place in the irregularities. However, Ravindra Paswan, leader of the JSSC-JSC Reform March, one of the groups leading the protest, said the agitation would continue as the key demand of a Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) probe into alleged irregularities had not been met. "This is the first step and first victory; our protest will continue until the CBI tripartite takes place in the irregularities. The demand for a CBI inquiry has not been accepted yet. We have won a major battle, but there is still more to be done," Mr. Paswan said. Jharkhand Loktantrik Kisanik Morcha leader Devendra Nath Mahato, who has been on a hunger strike for the past 11 days,

said, "Congratulations to all the protesting students, and also congratulate CM Hemant Soren, who listened to our demands. The most important thing is that the investigation should be conducted meticulously and every corrupt individual involved be apprehended. The minds behind these gangs must be caught." Earlier, addressing the press, Mr. Soren said, "Today, we held a special Cabinet meeting to bring this matter to a conclusion. After considering all aspects, we have decided to cancel all examinations conducted by the TDPL, the results published by the TDPL, and the selection or participation of any candidates through it. All activities undertaken by the TDPL in this regard have also been cancelled. The Government also decided to cancel the JSSC-CGL exam."

Mr. Soren added that had the previously established Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) been strictly adhered to, such flaws would not have arisen. He noted that the State government has enacted stringent laws to curb malpractice in examinations and is now set to implement several new reforms in the examination process to ensure complete transparency. Investigations by both the SIT (Special Investigation Team) and the CBI (Crime Investigation Department of the State police) have revealed several irregularities. The investigation is ongoing, it is not possible to disclose any detail openly. The CBI will investigate all examinations conducted from 2014 to the present," Mr. Soren said.

Deluge duty



Wading through: Kolkata police wade through a waterlogged street during heavy rain in Kolkata on Monday. ANI

SC halts HC move against Rahul Gandhi in assets case

KOLKATA, KOLKATA
The Supreme Court on Monday ordered an immediate halt on disproprietate assets proceedings initiated by the Allahabad High Court against the Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha, Rahul Gandhi, while observing that at least courts should uphold "principles of natural justice."

A bench headed by Chief Justice K.J. Somaya was reacting to submissions made by senior advocate Kapil Sibal and advocate Prashant K. Mehta appearing for Mr. Gandhi. The Supreme Court on Monday ordered an immediate halt on disproprietate assets proceedings initiated by the Allahabad High Court against the Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha, Rahul Gandhi, while observing that at least courts should uphold "principles of natural justice."

7 killed, over a dozen injured in stampede at temple in Bihar

At least seven devotees, all of them women, were killed and over a dozen injured in a stampede at the Ashok Bhain temple in Lakhisarai district of Bihar on Monday.

The incident happened at 6.40 a.m. due to a heavy rush of devotees. A barricade broke down, which triggered the sudden stampede. Lakhisarai District Magistrate Shashendra Kumar said. Eyewitnesses said two trains full of devotees reached the Lakhisarai railway station at the same time on Monday, considered an auspicious day in the Hindu month of Shrawan. The devotees, mostly women, rushed towards the temple located close to the railway station to offer water from the tanga to the deity, Lord Shiva. In the surge, a bamboo barricade fell, while an electric pole toppled at the site. This triggered a rumour of power leakage, causing panic and resulting in the stampede.

Ex-greffe announced
Bihar Chief Minister Nitya Kumar (Congress) expressed grief over the incident and announced an ex-greffe of 14 lakh to the kin of the deceased. The amount was later handed over to the families. "Necessary instructions have been issued to the administration to ensure proper and prompt medical care for the injured," he wrote on X. President Pranab Mukherjee and Prime Minister Narendra Modi expressed their sorrow over the incident.

Tejendra Yadav, Leader of the Opposition in the Bihar Assembly, accused the State's NDA government of failing to provide adequate security arrangements to manage the crowd during the festival. Minister Divisional Commissioner Preet Singh Meena and Deputy Inspector General of Police Rajesh Kumar visited the Lakhisarai Sadar (Town) government hospital to meet the injured. "An inquiry will be conducted and the cause will come out," Mr. Meena told presspersons. Chairman of Bihar State Board of Religious Trusts, Ramesh Chandra, said the board too will launch a probe.

The deceased were identified as Manmata Devi, 44; Bina Devi, 50; Hemlata Devi, 50; Lalita Devi, 50; Savita Kumar, 38; Sangi Devi, 48; and Nandini Devi, 40. Among those injured, three are in critical condition and have been referred to Patna for better medical assistance. Meanwhile, devotees kept thronging the temple and offering prayers.

'Dismantled' ISI-backed gang ahead of Independence Day: Shah

Vishnu Singh
NEW DELHI

In a major counter-terror operation ahead of Independence Day, security agencies dismantled the Pakistan-based Shahadat Bhait Network, detaining 253 people across 14 States and arresting more than 200 operatives linked to the syndicate backed by Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI), Union Home Minister Amit Shah said on Monday. According to a statement issued by the Union Home Ministry, the Shahadat Bhait Network has been linked to grenade attacks, improvised explosives device (IED) blasts, petrol bomb incidents, and targeted killings in various parts of the country. Investigators said the syndicate paid local operatives to conduct reconnaissance of police establishments, and religious sites, besides installing CCTV cameras to facilitate surveillance. Launching the operation against cross-border terrorism, the Union Home Minister said coordinated raids conducted by security forces on August 12 had thwarted plans by the network to carry out adversive activities around Independence Day.

253 people across 14 States were detained, and more than 200 operatives were arrested, he said.

The crackdown was carried out through a real-time intelligence-sharing mechanism involving Central agencies and State police forces. In a post on X, Mr. Shah said the operation, which "ripped apart" the ISI-backed network, reflected the Narendra Modi government's "zero-tolerance" policy towards terrorism. The Union Home Minister said security forces

Indian security forces ripped apart the network by launching coordinated operations across different locations in 14 States, upholding a brilliant example of zero tolerance towards terrorism.

launched simultaneous operations against the network across multiple locations in 14 States and recovered IEDs, grenades bearing Pakistan Ordnance Factory markings, petrol bombs, live cartridges, and CCTV cameras allegedly used for espionage. The operation resulted in detentions in Uttar Pradesh 62 persons, Haryana, 51, Punjab, 45, Rajasthan, 15, Maharashtra, 12, and West Bengal, 14. Karnataka, Gujarat, and Bihar accounted for three

each, while two each were held in Telangana, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu and Kashmir, and Kerala. Fresh FIRs were registered in Delhi and Karnataka, the Union Home Minister said. The Ministry said that cumulatively, more than 60 FIRs have been registered and over 200 arrests made in connection with the network under provisions of the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA), the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS), the Arms Act, the NDPS Act and the Explosive Substances Act. The operation resulted in detentions in Uttar Pradesh 62 persons, Haryana, 51, Punjab, 45, Rajasthan, 15, Maharashtra, 12, and West Bengal, 14. Karnataka, Gujarat, and Bihar accounted for three

Odisha floods hit 7.85 lakh people across six districts

The Hindu Bureau
Bhubaneswar

The flood situation in Odisha on Monday worsened with 7.85 lakh persons affected in six districts due to heavy rain received in these major river systems. Districts such as Jagats, Bhadrak, Balasore, Khurda, Kendrapara, and Keonjhar were hit by floodwaters due to high Average Annual Precipitation (AAP). Full report on > PAGE 5

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Soren scraps key examinations as student protests rock Jharkhand

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Amit Bhelari
PATNA

Jharkhand Chief Minister Hemant Soren on Monday announced the cancellation of the Jharkhand Staff Selection Commission-Combined Graduate Level (JSSC-CGL) examination, 24 days after students and job aspirants began a protest over alleged irregularities in recruitment exams in the State.

The decision was taken during a four-hour emergency Cabinet meeting.

Mr. Soren also announced that all examinations conducted since 2014 by TSR Data Processing Private Ltd. (TDPL), a blacklisted agency, will be cancelled.

He said a committee will be formed under senior IAS officer Amitabh Kaushal to suggest reforms in the conduct of examinations in the State.

Hundreds of students



Resilient cheers: Protesters celebrate in Ranchi on Monday after the Jharkhand CM's announcement of exam cancellations. ANI

who have gathered at the Jaipal Singh Munda Stadium in Ranchi demanding that the 2025 JSSC-CGL examination be cancelled celebrated the announcement.

However, Ravindra Paswan, leader of the JPSC-JSSC Reform Manch, one of the groups leading the protest, said the agitation would continue as their key demand of a Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) probe into alleged ir-

regularities had not been met. "This is the first step and first victory; our protest will continue until the CBI inquiry takes place into the irregularities. The demand for a CBI inquiry has not been accepted yet. We have won a major battle, but there is still more to be done," Mr. Paswan said.

Jharkhand Loktantrik Krantikari Morcha leader Devendra Nath Mahto, who has been on a hunger strike for the past 16 days,

said, "Congratulations to all the protesting students, and I also congratulate CM Hemant Soren, who listened to our demands. The most important thing is that the investigation should be conducted meticulously and every corrupt individual involved be apprehended. The masterminds behind these gangs must be caught."

Earlier, addressing the press, Mr. Soren said, "Today, we held a special Cabinet meeting to bring this matter to a conclusion. After considering all aspects, we have decided to cancel all examinations conducted by the TDPL, the results published by the TDPL, and the selection or participation of any candidates through it. All activities undertaken by the TDPL in this regard have also been cancelled. The Cabinet has also decided to cancel the JSSC-CGL exam."

Mr. Soren added that had the previously esta-

blished Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) been strictly adhered to, such flaws would not have arisen.

He noted that the State government has enacted stringent laws to curb malpractice in examinations and is now set to implement several new reforms in the examination process to ensure complete transparency.

"Investigations by both the SIT [Special Investigation Team] and the CID [Crime Investigation Department of the State police] have revealed several shocking facts. Since the investigation is ongoing, it is not possible to disclose every detail openly... The CID will investigate all examinations conducted from 2014 to the present," Mr. Soren said.

EDITORIAL

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CONG. TARGETS NTA

» PAGE 5

What happened?

After **24 days of protests by students and government-job aspirants**, Jharkhand Chief Minister Hemant Soren announced:

1. Cancellation of the **2025 JSSC Combined Graduate Level examination**.
2. Cancellation/review of examinations conducted through the controversial outsourced agency **TSR Data Processing Private Limited (TDPL)** since 2014.
3. Cancellation of results and incomplete selection processes connected with the agency, subject to detailed government orders.
4. A comprehensive investigation by the State CID.
5. Formation of a committee headed by senior IAS officer **Amitabh Kaushal** to reform the examination system.
6. Introduction of stronger measures to prevent paper leaks, manipulation and other malpractice.

The cancellation was announced after a four-hour emergency Cabinet meeting.

Important: No fresh JSSC-CGL re-examination date was officially available at the time of reporting. Candidates must wait for the formal notification on the JSSC or Jharkhand government website.



Category

Examination held but result not declared

Result declared but appointments not issued

Appointment letters issued but candidates have not joined

Candidates already appointed and working

Candidate individually involved in fraud

Innocent appointee from a tainted examination



Likely immediate position

Can be cancelled comparatively easily

Selection process may be cancelled, subject to legal challenge

Government must follow the formal order and applicable service law

Their services cannot necessarily be terminated automatically through a press statement

Appointment can be cancelled after evidence and due process

Courts may examine whether the entire process was irretrievably vitiated

Why retrospective cancellation is legally difficult

Cancelling examination processes extending back to 2014 could affect thousands of candidates, including individuals who may have served in government for years.

The government must balance:

- Examination integrity.
- Rights of honest candidates.
- Principles of natural justice.
- Administrative continuity.
- Findings of criminal investigation.
- Orders already passed by courts.



Agency	Jurisdiction	Who controls it?	Present relevance
CID	Serious criminal investigation within the state	State police/state government	Currently investigating the alleged examination irregularities
SIT	Special team created for a particular case	Depends on the authority constituting it	Intended to focus specifically on recruitment-exam offences
CBI	Central investigating agency	Union government, subject to legal procedures and court directions	Demanded by protesting students



CHART 1: The five commodity groups that accounted for the highest value of merchandise exports from April to July this year

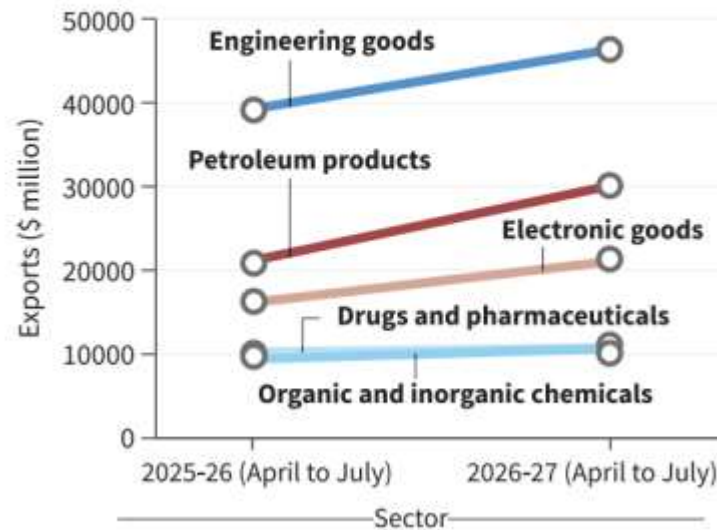


CHART 3: The share (%) of major countries in India's total merchandise exports. Countries that account for at least 2.5% of total exports are shown

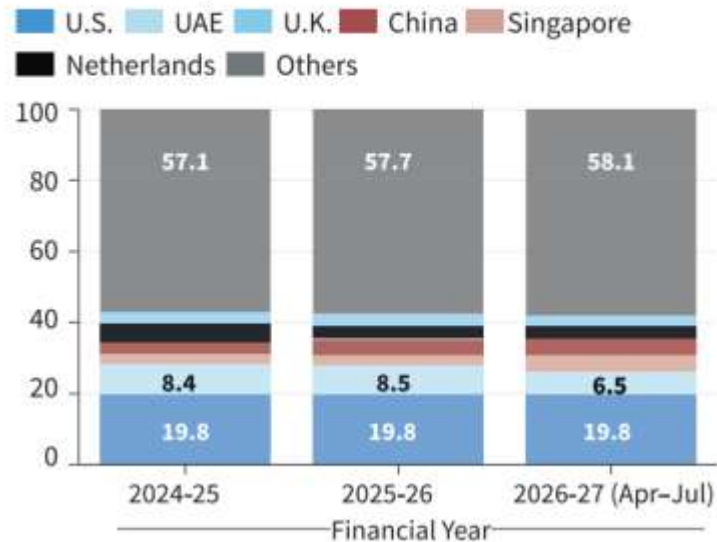


CHART 2: The share (%) of the six biggest commodity groups in India's total merchandise exports. The data for 2026-27 is only for the April-July period

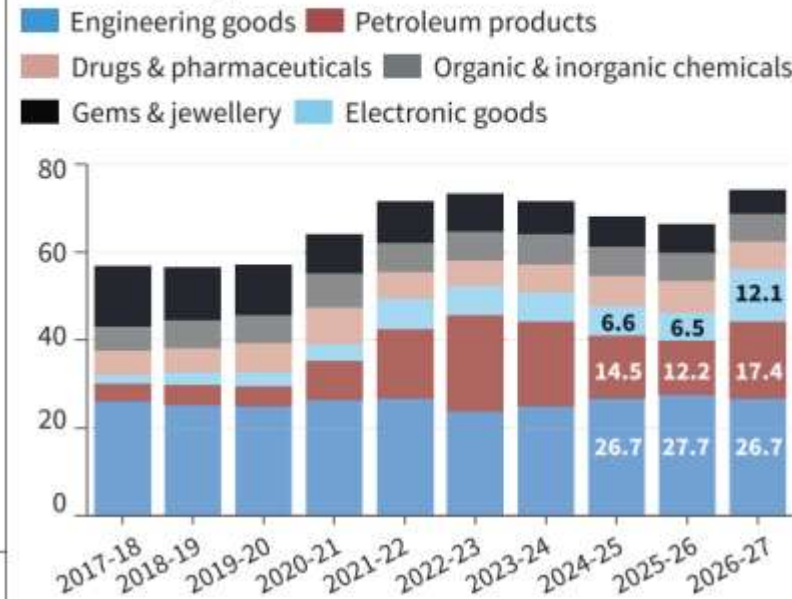
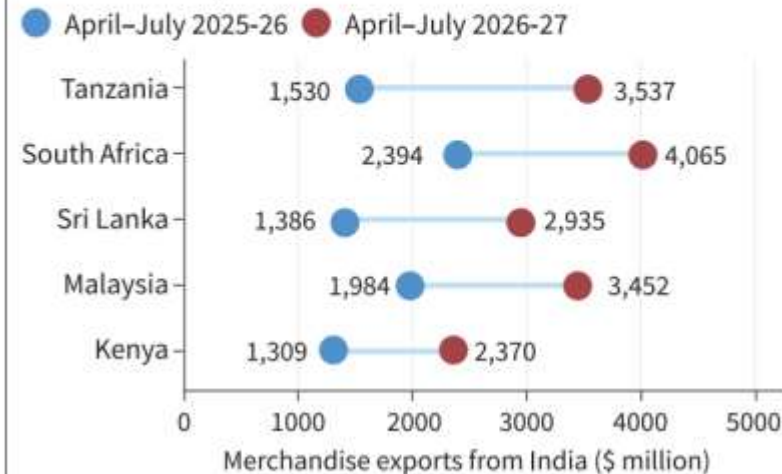


CHART 4: The top five countries in the 'Others' category in Chart 3 that saw the highest growth in value of merchandise exports



India exported goods worth approximately **\$44.2 billion in July 2026**, nearly **20% higher** than in July 2025. However, the merchandise trade deficit widened from approximately **\$28 billion to \$32 billion**, because imports also rose significantly.



The export improvement was led principally by:

Petroleum products

Electronic goods

Engineering goods



A major part of the increase in petroleum exports was caused by higher international prices following the West Asia conflict. Therefore, the headline 20% export growth does not necessarily represent an equivalent rise in the physical quantity of goods exported.

Indicator	July 2025	July 2026	Change
Merchandise exports	Approximately \$36.8 billion	\$44.2 billion	Nearly +20%
Merchandise trade deficit	Approximately \$28 billion	\$32 billion	+\$4 billion
Implied merchandise imports	Approximately \$64.8 billion	Approximately \$76.2 billion	Around +17.5%

Merchandise exports

Petroleum products

Electronics

Machinery

Pharmaceuticals

Textiles

Agricultural products

Services exports

Information technology

Business-process services

Financial services

Tourism

Consulting

Transport services

Commodity group	Contribution to July export increase	Share of total increase
Petroleum products	Approximately \$2.8 billion	39%
Electronic goods	Approximately \$2.16 billion	30%
Engineering goods	Approximately \$1.84 billion	25%
Other commodities combined	Approximately \$0.46 billion	Around 6%
Total increase	\$7.26 billion	100%

Period

Petroleum-product exports

April–July 2025

Approximately \$21 billion

April–July 2026

Approximately \$30 billion

Increase

Approximately \$9 billion

Growth

42.6%–42.9%

Why does India export petroleum products despite importing crude oil?

India is a major importer of crude petroleum but also possesses large and sophisticated refining capacity.

The process is:

- India imports crude oil.
- Indian refineries process it.
- Refined products such as diesel, petrol, aviation fuel and naphtha are exported.
- India earns the refining margin and value addition.

Therefore, India can simultaneously be:

- A major crude-oil importer, and
- A major refined-petroleum-product exporter.

Price effect versus volume effect

Suppose India exports 10 units of fuel:

Situation	Price per unit	Export value
Before conflict	\$100	\$1,000
After price increase	\$140	\$1,400

Export value increases by 40%, even though the physical quantity remains 10 units.

This is why the increase in petroleum exports should not automatically be interpreted as a 42.6% increase in production or export volume.

Petroleum-related risks

- Higher crude prices also raise India's import bill.
- Refinery margins can fluctuate.
- Global prices may fall once geopolitical tensions ease.
- Petroleum growth may temporarily hide weakness in other exports.
- Dependence on refined petroleum makes export earnings volatile.



Market

Change in India's export share

United States

Around one-fifth; broadly stable

Singapore

Increased from **2.7% in 2024–25 to 4.7%** in April–July 2026–27

China

Increased from **3.3% to around 4.4%**, then remained near that level

UAE

Declined from **8.5% to 6.5%** during the corresponding period

Tanzania

Increased from approximately **1.1% to 2%**

Other markets

Combined share increased marginally



11. Fast-growing export destinations

The highest country-level growth reportedly came from:

- South Africa.
- Tanzania.
- Sri Lanka.
- Malaysia.
- Kenya.

Tanzania's share nearly doubled, from approximately 1.1% to 2%.

However, much of the increase to several of these destinations came from **refined petroleum products**.

Why this distinction matters

If India's exports to a country rise only because fuel prices rise:

- The increase may not last.
- The country's export basket remains concentrated.
- Manufacturing diversification remains limited.
- Export earnings remain exposed to commodity cycles.

Possible consequences of a persistent high deficit

Consequence	Explanation	
Current-account pressure	More foreign currency is required to finance imports	
Rupee depreciation	Demand for dollars can rise relative to the rupee	
Imported inflation	Costlier rupee makes fuel, machinery and components more expensive	
Reserve pressure	RBI may use foreign-exchange reserves to reduce volatility	
External vulnerability	Dependence on capital inflows increases	
Corporate cost increase	Import-dependent companies face higher input costs	
India's large services surplus and remittance inflows provide an important buffer.		

16. What should India's export policy focus on?

Priority	Required action	
Increase domestic value addition	Manufacture components, not only assemble final products	
Diversify destinations	Expand in Africa, ASEAN, Latin America and Europe	
Diversify products	Reduce dependence on petroleum, gems and a few major categories	
Reduce logistics costs	Improve ports, rail freight, warehousing and customs clearance	
Support MSMEs	Credit, quality certification, technology and export marketing	
Improve trade agreements	Secure better market access while protecting vulnerable sectors	
Strengthen quality standards	Meet global technical, health and environmental requirements	
Stabilise export finance	Provide accessible working capital and insurance	
Expand labour-intensive exports	Textiles, footwear, food processing, toys and handicrafts	
Build component ecosystems	Semiconductors, batteries and advanced electronic components	

WASHINGTON

Trump says Iran should surrender, threatens to bomb Oman report



U.S. President Donald Trump threatened to bomb Oman if it "gets in the way" of a U.S. deal with Iran on the Strait of Hormuz. "If Oman gets in the way, we'll bomb the shit out of them," Mr. Trump told Fox News reporter Trey Yingst. Mr. Trump said that Iran should "put up the white flag of surrender," according to Mr. Yingst's post on X. **AP**

ERBIL

Iraqi Kurdistan PM's office targeted in Iranian drone attack, officials say



Two Iranian drones targeted the office of Iraqi Kurdistan Prime Minister Masrur Barzani, and the home of the autonomous region's intelligence chief overnight, officials said on Monday. Since the start of the West Asia war, the Kurdistan region has been targeted over 1,000 times by Tehran and pro-Iran armed groups inside Iraq. **AP**

BUNDIBUGA

Congo's Ebola outbreak becomes country's worst, over 2,300 dead



A fast-spreading Ebola outbreak in the Democratic Republic of Congo is now the country's deadliest one, with 2,300 cases including 2,323 deaths in three months, government figures showed on Monday. No specific vaccine or treatment exists for the Bundibugya strain behind the current surge of the disease. **AP**

NAYPYIDAW

Myanmar confirms nearly 309,000 displaced Rohingya in Bangladesh



Myanmar's military-backed government said that nearly 309,000 displaced people in camps in Bangladesh are former residents of the Rohingya State, but repatriation will proceed only after security improves. UN estimates say more than 100,000 Rohingya fled to Bangladesh after a crackdown by security forces in 2017. **REUTERS**

Trump orders scaling back of joint military exercises with South Korea

Pentagon chief ordered to 'substantially reduce' the drills as it was too late to cancel them. U.S. President says military drills send 'inappropriate and hostile' signal to North Korea, also claims South Korean President refused to help with Iran war

Agence France-Presse
SEOUL

U.S. President Donald Trump said he ordered the Pentagon to scale back "inappropriate and hostile" military drills with South Korea, hours before the exercises began on Monday.

The U.S. leader cited his "good relationship" with North Korean leader Kim Jong-un in his latest refusal to long-standing alliances with global partners.

South Korean officials said the exercises had begun as planned and that they hoped the personal chemistry between Mr. Trump and Mr. Kim would bring them back to talks.

Seoul's Presidential office said it remained in "close coordination" with Washington over the exercises.



Heading nearby U.S. soldiers seen from military vehicles at Camp Humphreys in Pyeongyang, South Korea, on Monday. **AP**

The office "hopes that the friendly relationship between the leaders of the United States and North Korea will lead to meaningful dialogue".

North Korea has not responded publicly, although weapons depot belonging to reinforcements of the South.

The drills began as American allies in East Asia fret over North Korean displays of weapons capabilities and its growing alignment with Russia, as well as traditional backer China.

"Based on my very good relationship with Kim Jong-un, of North Korea, I am not happy with the fact

that the United States has, long ago, agreed to participate in joint military exercises with South Korea," Mr. Trump wrote on his Truth Social platform.

"These exercises are not only costly, with much of these costs paid for by the United States of America (as usual), but send a signal that is totally inappropriate and hostile, to a country that, as long as Donald J. Trump has been President, has been unthreatening and respectful," he said.

He took direct aim at American ally South Korea, writing: "I recently asked the President of South Korea if they would like to join us in the demarcation of the Islamic Republic of Iran, and they said, 'No thanks'."

Mr. Trump said he had ordered Defense Secretary Henshaw to "substan-

tially reduce" the drills because it was too late to cancel them.

"I have decided" that the U.S. Senate Democratic on military affairs, described Mr. Trump's order as "insane", and said China and Russia were "watching how easily this President abandons America's military commitments".

"This is another insane, haphazard decision by President Trump and his chaotic administration," the Senate Armed Services Committee ranking member said in a statement.

The 11-day Uchi Freedom Shield exercises are designed to prepare for a possible war with North Korea. Pyongyang, however, describes the drills as "provocative" and "unilateral".

Russia targets Ukraine's port infrastructure in new strikes

Reuters

A Russian attack targeted port infrastructure in Ukraine's Zerkov district in the southern region of Odessa overnight, Ukrainian authorities said on Monday.

Ports caused by the attack have been extensively damaged, the authorities added on the Telegram messaging app.

Russia's Defence Ministry said its forces had hit military targets in the port, which it described as "a berthing terminal used for unloading vessels carrying military cargo, hangars housing Western military equipment, and depots for naval drones".

Ukraine, close to the Romanian border, is home to Ukraine's largest port on the Danube river.

In a separate strike, Russia said its forces had hit a patrol boat and fuel storage tanks in Odessa. The local governor there said a civilian Tigris-2000 vessel



The ship An-12 helicopter flies over Ukrainian servicemen as they avoid parachute training in an undisclosed location. **AP**

was damaged and four people were injured.

Russian drones and missiles struck facilities in several regions of the country, with one asset hit multiple times during the week, Naftegaz said.

DNK Group, a coal mining and power production company which says it is the largest private investor in Ukraine's energy sector, also said a Russian attack started a fire at one of its mines, killing a 32-year-old man.

(With inputs from The Associated Press)

Yemen Houthis claim attack on Saudi ship, four boats in Red Sea

Agence France-Presse
RIYADH

Yemen's Houthi rebels said on Monday they had targeted a Saudi military vessel and four accompanying boats in the Red Sea as part of their maritime blockade of Saudi Arabia that was announced last month.

Valuya Saree, military spokesperson for the Iran-aligned group, said it had "succeeded in targeting a military landing ship belonging to the Saudi enemy, accompanied by four military patrol boats, in the

Red Sea off the coast of Mokha, using several ballistic missiles", he went on to claim that the ship and number of other boats were sunk or harmed.

A Yemeni government military source said on Monday that seven missiles had targeted the Bah al-Mahdih Strait, and the coastline in Mokha, which is government-controlled.

The Houthis later said they fired a rocket "a weapons depot belonging to reinforcements of the Saudi enemy" in the oil-rich province of Marib.

Broken sanctuary



A child stands inside the damaged St. Francis Xavier Church, in the aftermath of an earthquake, in Buring, Mangrove region, Indonesia, on Monday. The 7.7 magnitude quake on Saturday has left at least 64 people and 1,300 displaced. **AP**

Cambridge head slams 'racist feeding frenzy' over death of black academic

Agence France-Presse
LONDON

The head of Cambridge University on Monday condemned a "racist feeding frenzy" prompted by plagiarism claims against the black academic Jason Arday, who was found dead last week after resigning from his post.

After Arday, Cambridge's youngest ever black professor, was found dead on August 14, following multiple plagiarism accusations, Chris Smith, the university's chancellor, told the BBC he believed it was important that claims of plagiarism were "rigorously investigated".

But Mr. Smith said it was also right to "refuse to join



Jason Arday, Cambridge's youngest ever black professor, was found dead last week after resigning from his post. **AP**

in a racist feeding frenzy over a particular academic", without naming Arday directly.

Arday resigned on August 11 after accusations he had plagiarised parts of his doctoral thesis were co-

alumnus, called Arday's death "a tragedy on so many levels".

Arday's family have blamed a "misinformation campaign". A petition demanding a public inquiry into the media coverage Arday had gathered almost 32,000 signatures. James Cleverly, an opposition MP, told the BBC on Monday that "quite possibly" some scrutiny of Arday was motivated by racism. But the situation would "never have come this far if people within the university establishment - not just Cambridge - had done due diligence and checking that should have been with any senior academic appointment", he said.

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Afghanistan consulate in Delhi marks first-ever 'Taliban victory day' event

Kallol Bhattacharjee
NEW DELHI

Afghanistan has left the era of warfare and has started a journey towards stability and reconstruction under the umbrella of the Islamic system, said the diplomatic representative of the Taliban administration at an event in the Afghan consulate in New Delhi that, for the first time, celebrated the 2021 'victory' of the Taliban.

Presenting what he described as Taliban-led Afghanistan's initiatives, Mullah Noor Ahmad Noor, Chief of Mission at the Embassy of Afghanistan, said on Monday that Afghanistan's territory should not be a space of



Taliban officials Dr. Ibrahim Khalil and Mullah Noor Ahmad Noor in New Delhi on Monday. **REUTERS**

"competition" and should serve as an arena of cooperation and connectivity. "We have left the chapter of war behind and embarked on a new chapter in which Afghanistan, under

Kushner holds talks with Netanyahu on plan to end Gaza war

Agence France-Presse
JERUSALEM

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and U.S. envoy Jared Kushner discussed putting an American general in charge of verifying Hamas's disarmament on Monday, an Israeli official said, as the premier insisted there would be no pullout from Gaza until then.

Mr. Kushner, President Donald Trump's son-in-law, flew to the region after Mr. Netanyahu, facing a tough re-election fight, pu-

blicly rejected the latest part of a U.S. plan aimed at ending the Gaza war.

Mr. Kushner met Mr. Netanyahu in Jerusalem a day after holding rare, three-hour talks with Hamas, which was committed itself to the plan and to disarmament.

The two sides "agreed that no redeployment or reconstruction would take place in the Gaza Strip before Hamas is disarmed", a senior Israeli official said.

Mr. Kushner was joined in the talks by former British Prime Minister Tony Blair.

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KINSHASA

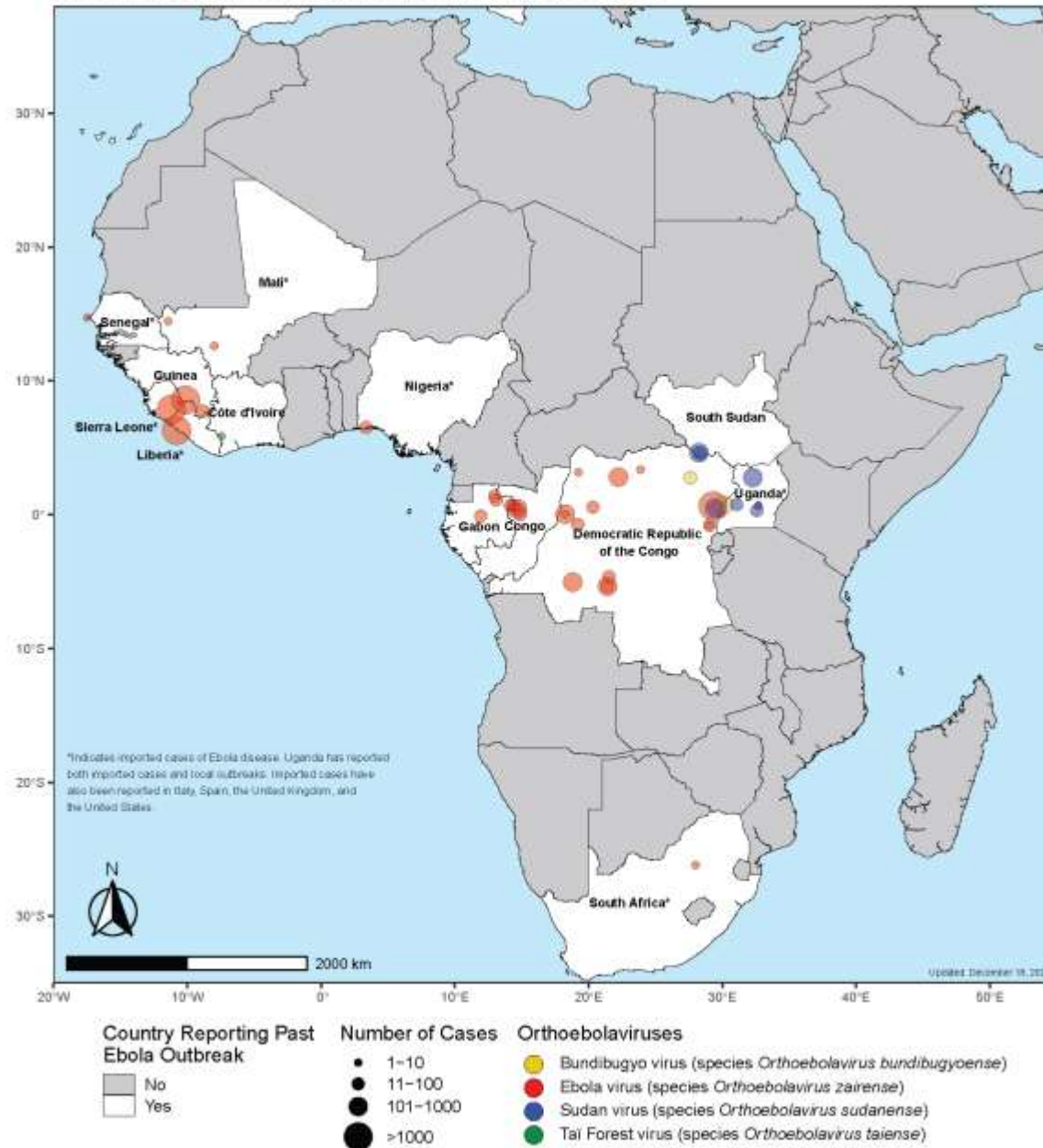
Congo's Ebola outbreak becomes country's worst; over 2,300 dead



AFP

▲ A fast-spreading Ebola outbreak in the Democratic Republic of Congo is now the country's deadliest ever, with 4,945 cases including 2,325 deaths in three months, government figures showed on Monday. No specific vaccine or treatment exists for the Bundibugyo strain behind the current surge of the disease. AFP

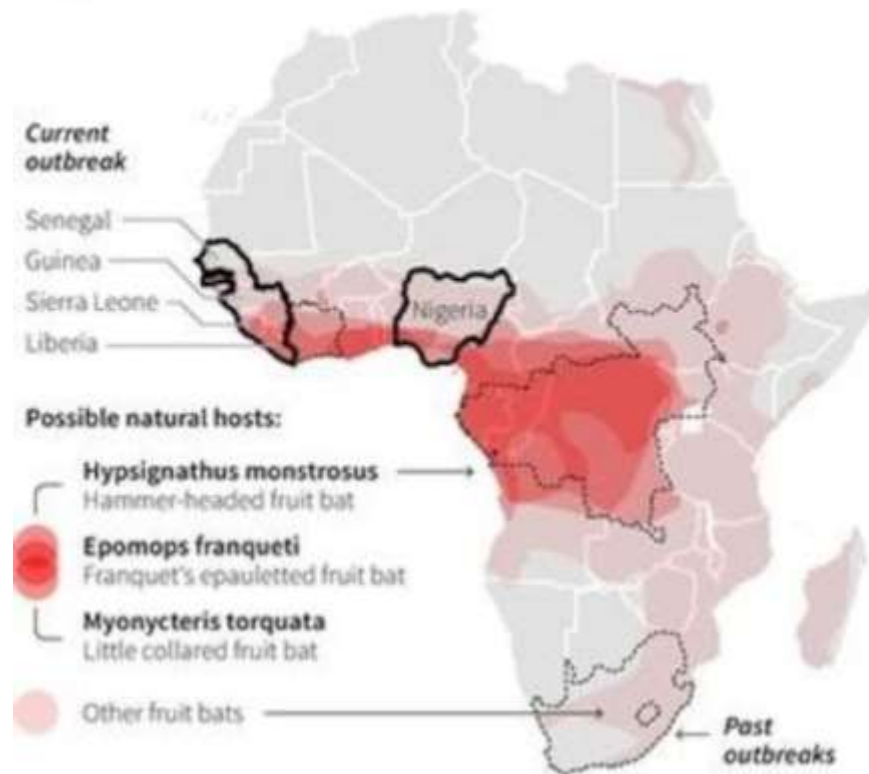
Ebola disease outbreaks by species and size, since 1976



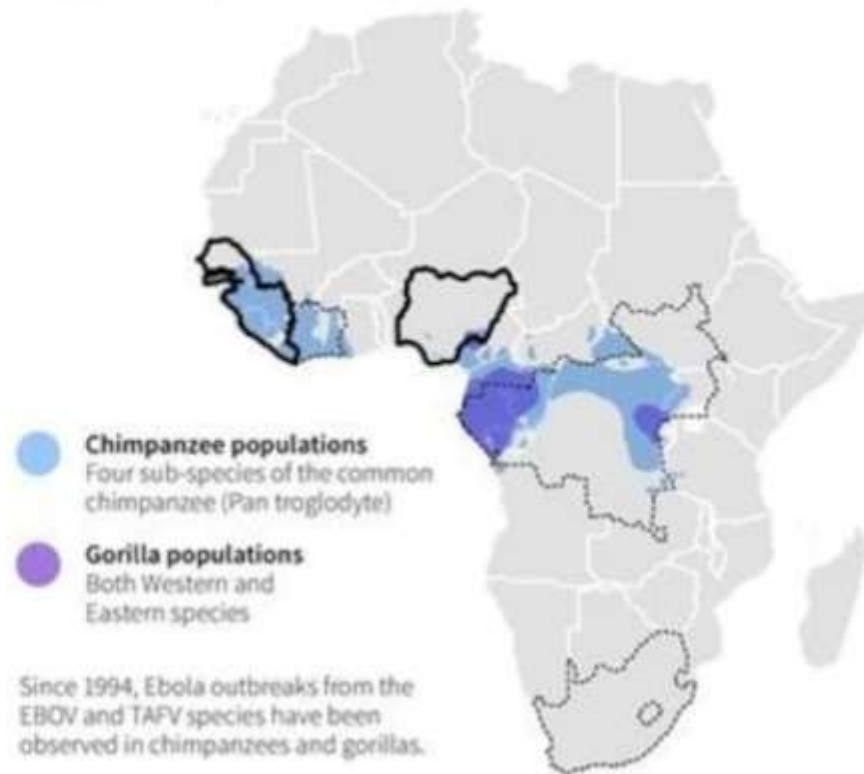
Ebola outbreak

Although fruit bats are considered possible natural hosts of the Ebola virus, direct transmission to humans is rare. However, animals that may eat fruit dropped by infected bats, like chimps and gorillas, have been linked to spreading the disease in communities that eat them.

Range of fruit bats in Africa



Range of chimpanzees and gorillas in Africa



Source: International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN); World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF); World Health Organization.

Indicator	Latest reported figure
Confirmed cases	4,945
Deaths	2,325
Approximate case-fatality ratio	47%
Recoveries	More than 1,000 reported
Virus	Bundibugyo virus
Outbreak officially declared	15 May 2026
Main epicentre	Ituri Province
Other affected areas	North Kivu, South Kivu, Haut-Uélé, Tshopo and reportedly an additional province
Global status	Public Health Emergency of International Concern

Outbreak	Cases	Deaths	Significance	
West Africa, 2014–16	Over 28,000	11,325	World's deadliest Ebola outbreak	• Why is this outbreak historically significant? • The outbreak has overtaken the 2018–2020 eastern DRC Ebola outbreak, which previously held the record as the country's largest and deadliest. • The 2026 outbreak remains smaller than the 2014–16 West African epidemic in total deaths, but its early pace has been exceptionally fast.
DRC, 2018–20	Approximately 3,470	Approximately 2,287	Previously DRC's deadliest	
DRC, 2026	4,945	2,325	Now DRC's deadliest; second-deadliest globally	

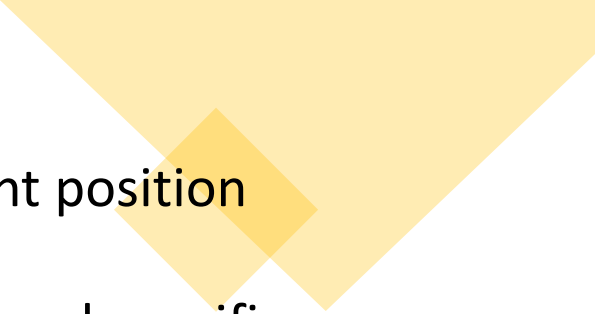
- 
- Ebola is a severe, frequently fatal illness caused by viruses belonging to the **Orthoebolavirus** genus.



Strain Virus

Human disease

Vaccine/treatment position



Zaire virus

Causes most large Ebola outbreaks

Licensed vaccine and specific antibody treatments exist

Sudan virus

Has caused outbreaks in Uganda and Sudan

No widely licensed vaccine; candidates under development

Bundibugyo virus

Current DRC outbreak

No specifically approved vaccine or proven targeted treatment

Tai Forest virus

Very rare human infections

No specific licensed vaccine

Reston virus

Mainly affects non-human primates and pigs

Has not caused severe human disease



- **How does Ebola spread?**

- Ebola is transmitted through direct contact with:
 - Blood of an infected person.
 - Vomit.
 - Faeces.
 - Urine.
 - Saliva.
 - Sweat.
 - Breast milk.
 - Semen.
 - Other infected bodily fluids.
- Contaminated needles, clothing, bedding or medical equipment.
- Bodies of people who have died from Ebola.
- Infected wild animals or their bodily fluids.

6. Incubation period and symptoms

The incubation period is usually 2–21 days.

Early symptoms

- Sudden fever.
- Severe weakness.
- Headache.
- Muscle and joint pain.
- Sore throat.
- Loss of appetite.

Later symptoms

- Vomiting.
- Diarrhoea.
- Abdominal pain.
- Rash.
- Red eyes.
- Impaired kidney or liver function.
- Confusion.
- Shock.
- Internal or external bleeding in some patients.

Why is the fatality rate so high

Cause

Late diagnosis

No approved targeted Bundibugyo treatment

Weak healthcare infrastructure

Conflict and insecurity

Community mistrust

Unsafe burials

Health-worker infections

Malnutrition and existing disease

Poor transport

Incomplete contact tracing

Effect

Patients reach treatment centres after severe organ damage

Doctors must rely mainly on supportive care

Limited beds, laboratories, oxygen and trained staff

Medical teams cannot safely reach all communities

Families may hide patients or avoid treatment centres

Contact with highly infectious bodies spreads disease

Reduces available medical personnel and spreads fear

Patients may be less able to survive severe infection

Delays isolation, testing and treatment

New transmission chains remain undetected

Afghanistan consulate in Delhi marks first-ever 'Taliban victory day' event

Kallol Bhattacharjee

NEW DELHI

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Presenting what he described as Taliban-ruled Afghanistan's initiatives, Mufi Noor Ahmad Noor, Chargé d'Affaires at the Embassy of Afghanistan, said on Monday that Afghanistan's territory should not be a space of



Taliban officials Dr. Ikramuddin Kamil and Noor Ahmad Noor in New Delhi on Monday. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

'competition' and should serve as an arena of cooperation and connectivity.

"We have left the chapter of war behind and embarked on a new chapter in which Afghanistan, under

prudent and unified leadership and within the framework of the Islamic system, has been taking steps towards stability, reconstruction, economic growth, and the expansion of relations with the world on the basis of mutual respect," said Mr. Noor in a speech delivered in Pashto.

The reception was attended by diplomats from Russia, U.S., China, Qatar, Libya, Bhutan, Mongolia, Oman and the UAE.

From the Indian side, Anand Prakash, Joint Secretary in-charge of the Pakistan-Afghanistan-Iran (PAI) division of the Ministry of External Affairs, attended the event along with other members of the Ministry.

"Despite the war in the Gulf, India-Afghanistan trade remains around \$1 billion, which is a sign of stability," said a senior Indian official.

Considering the fact that the Taliban, which does not enjoy full diplomatic recognition by India, was allowed to host a celebration of its 'Victory Day' in the Indian capital for the first time, the official said, "Taliban is a reality and we have to engage with them".

The reception was held against the backdrop of continued engagements between India and the Taliban administration in Kabul that have, in the past two years, clashed with Pakistan on multiple occasions.

Detail

Event

Venue

Date

Occasion

Host

Other Taliban representative

Indian representative

Other attendees

India's recognition position

Approximate bilateral trade

Information

Taliban "Victory Day" reception

Afghanistan's diplomatic mission in New Delhi

August 17, 2026

Fifth anniversary of the Taliban's return to power

Noor Ahmad Noor, Taliban-appointed chargé d'affaires

Dr. Ikramuddin Kamil

Anand Prakash, Joint Secretary in MEA's Pakistan-Afghanistan-Iran Division

Diplomats from Russia, US, China, Qatar, Libya, Bhutan, Mongolia, Oman and UAE

India has **not formally recognised** the Taliban government

Around **\$1 billion**

1. What does the Taliban mean by “Victory Day”?

The Taliban uses “Victory Day” to celebrate:

- Its capture of Kabul on August 15, 2021.
- The collapse of the Western-supported Afghan government.
- The end of the US-led military presence.
- Restoration of what it calls the **Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan**.

The Taliban portrays the event as victory over foreign occupation. Many Afghans, however, associate August 2021 with:

- Collapse of the elected republic.
- Mass evacuations.
- Loss of civil and political freedoms.
- Restrictions on women and girls.
- Economic disruption.
- Return of authoritarian rule.

Therefore, the term “Victory Day” reflects the **Taliban’s political interpretation**, not a universally accepted description.

Why is holding the event in Delhi significant?

The event was not merely a cultural reception. It carries diplomatic symbolism because:

- The Taliban was permitted to celebrate its return to power in India's capital.
- A senior Indian Foreign Ministry official attended.
- Taliban-appointed officials operated publicly from the Afghan diplomatic mission.
- Diplomats from several major countries attended.
- India had historically opposed Taliban rule and supported the previous Afghan Republic.
- It demonstrates India's shift from isolation to pragmatic engagement.

Action	Does it amount to recognition?
Meeting Taliban officials	No
Providing humanitarian assistance	No
Allowing Taliban-appointed officials to work at the Afghan mission	Not necessarily
Attending an embassy reception	No
Trading with Afghanistan	No
Operating an Indian mission in Kabul	No
Formally declaring the Taliban the legitimate government	Yes
Accepting full ambassadorial credentials as government recognition	May be an important recognition step
Establishing full formal diplomatic relations with the Islamic Emirate	Yes

Concept

Meaning

Recognition of Afghanistan as a state

India recognises Afghanistan as an independent sovereign country

Recognition of the Taliban government

India accepts the Taliban administration as Afghanistan's legitimate government

Diplomatic engagement

India communicates with those exercising actual power without necessarily recognising them

De facto control

The Taliban controls Afghan territory and state institutions in practice

De jure recognition

Formal legal and diplomatic acceptance of the Taliban government

6. India's policy shift since 2021

Phase 1: Evacuation and caution

After the Taliban captured Kabul in August 2021, India:

- Evacuated diplomats and citizens through **Operation Devi Shakti**.
- Closed its embassy temporarily.
- Avoided formal recognition.
- Expressed concern about terrorism and minority rights.
- Monitored threats to Indian interests.

Phase 2: Humanitarian engagement

India subsequently provided:

- Wheat.
- Medicines.
- COVID-19 vaccines.
- Disaster-relief supplies.
- Assistance following earthquakes.
- Educational and humanitarian support.

Phase 3: Technical presence

India reopened a limited **technical mission in Kabul** to:

- Coordinate humanitarian assistance.
- Maintain contact with Afghan authorities.
- Monitor development projects.
- Facilitate trade and consular matters.

Phase 4: Higher-level political engagement

India began holding meetings with senior Taliban representatives concerning:

- Security.
- Trade.
- Chabahar Port.
- Humanitarian assistance.
- Development cooperation.
- Protection of Indian projects.
- Treatment of minorities.

7. Why is India engaging with the Taliban?

A. The Taliban controls Afghanistan

Whatever India's ideological objections, the Taliban exercises effective control over:

- Afghanistan's ministries.
- Security institutions.
- Borders.
- Customs.
- Trade routes.
- Local administration.

India cannot protect its interests in Afghanistan without communicating with the authority controlling the country.

B. Counterterrorism

India wants assurances that Afghan territory will not be used by organisations such as:

- Lashkar-e-Taiba.
- Jaish-e-Mohammed.
- Al-Qaeda.
- Islamic State-Khorasan Province.
- Other anti-India extremist organisations.

C. Protecting previous investments

Since 2001, India invested billions of dollars in Afghan reconstruction, including:

- Afghan Parliament building.
- Salma Dam, officially the Afghan–India Friendship Dam.
- Zaranj–Delaram highway.
- Electricity infrastructure.
- Schools and hospitals.
- Scholarships and capacity building.
- Community-development projects.

India wants these assets protected and retained as symbols of goodwill.

D. Strategic access to Central Asia

Afghanistan can provide India with a route towards:

- Iran.
- Central Asia.
- Energy resources.
- New commercial markets.

Because Pakistan denies India direct overland access, India relies heavily on **Iran's Chabahar Port** and connecting routes.

Issue	Pakistan's position	Taliban's position
Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan—TTP	Afghanistan shelters TTP fighters attacking Pakistan	Taliban denies or minimises responsibility
Durand Line	Pakistan treats it as the international border	Many Afghans reject its permanent legitimacy
Border fencing	Necessary for security	Seen by many Afghans as unilateral
Cross-border strikes	Pakistan claims self-defence	Afghanistan calls them violations of sovereignty
Afghan refugees	Pakistan has deported large numbers	Taliban objects to forced returns
Trade routes	Pakistan controls vital transit access	Afghanistan seeks alternatives through Iran and Central Asia

Major Afghan exports to India

- Dry fruits.
- Fresh fruits.
- Saffron.
- Asafoetida.
- Medicinal herbs.
- Agricultural produce.
- Carpets and handicrafts.

Major Indian exports to Afghanistan

- Pharmaceuticals.
- Wheat and food products.
- Sugar.
- Tea.
- Textiles.
- Machinery.
- Electrical equipment.
- Medical supplies.
- Construction material.

Route	Advantage	Problem
India–Pakistan– Afghanistan land route	Shortest	Pakistan restricts Indian transit
Chabahar Port–Iran– Afghanistan	Bypasses Pakistan	Higher cost and affected by sanctions/geopolitical instability
Air freight corridor	Fast for high-value products	Expensive
Central Asian routes	Diversifies connectivity	Long distance and weak infrastructure
UAE trans-shipment	Established commercial hub	Adds cost and time

Women's rights and recognition

The treatment of women and girls remains the main international obstacle to formal recognition.

Restrictions include:

- Ban on girls attending secondary school.
- Exclusion of women from universities.
- Restrictions on female employment.
- Limits on movement without a male guardian.
- Restrictions on access to public spaces.
- Dress and morality regulations.
- Reduced participation in humanitarian organisations.

FORTUNE 500: INDIA'S LONG ROAD TO 50



PRIME MINISTER NARENDRA

Modi has set India Inc an ambitious corporate milestone: put 50 Indian companies in the Fortune Global 500 over the next decade, up from just 10 today. The latest rankings show just how far the target is. The US dominates the revenue-based league table with 141 companies, followed by China with 116. Japan, Germany and France take the next three positions, while India is a distant 10th. Reliance Industries and LIC are among the 10 Indian companies that make the cut, with both ranking among the world's top 100. The entry barrier itself is formidable: a company needed annual revenue of at least \$33.2 billion to qualify for the Global 500.

-Compiled by Kishor Kadam

Global rank	Company	Revenue (\$ billion)
85	Reliance Industries	120
92	LIC	110
130	Indian Oil	89
136	Rajesh Exports	88
162	State Bank of India	81
208	Oil & Natural Gas	69
272	HDFC Bank	56
298	Bharat Petroleum	52
399	Tata Motors Passenger Vehicles	41
471	ICICI Bank	35

Companies by country/territory



Source: Fortune Global 500 List

Word of the day

Decadence:

the state of being degenerate in mental or moral qualities

Synonym: degeneration

Usage: *The leader's decadence became evident in his abuse of power.*

Pronunciation: newsth.live/decadence

International Phonetic Alphabet: /ˈdɛkədəns/

Word of the day

Vagary:

an unexpected and inexplicable change in something

Synonyms: whimsy, unpredictability, impulse

Usage: *His vagaries often confuse his friends.*

Pronunciation: newsth.live/vagary

International Phonetic Alphabet: /veɪgəri/





Thank you 😊

