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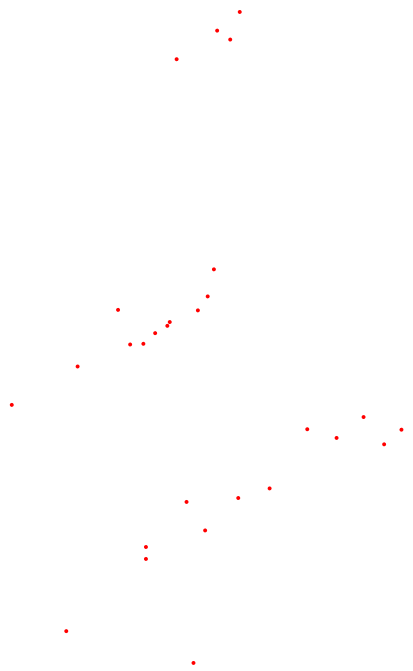
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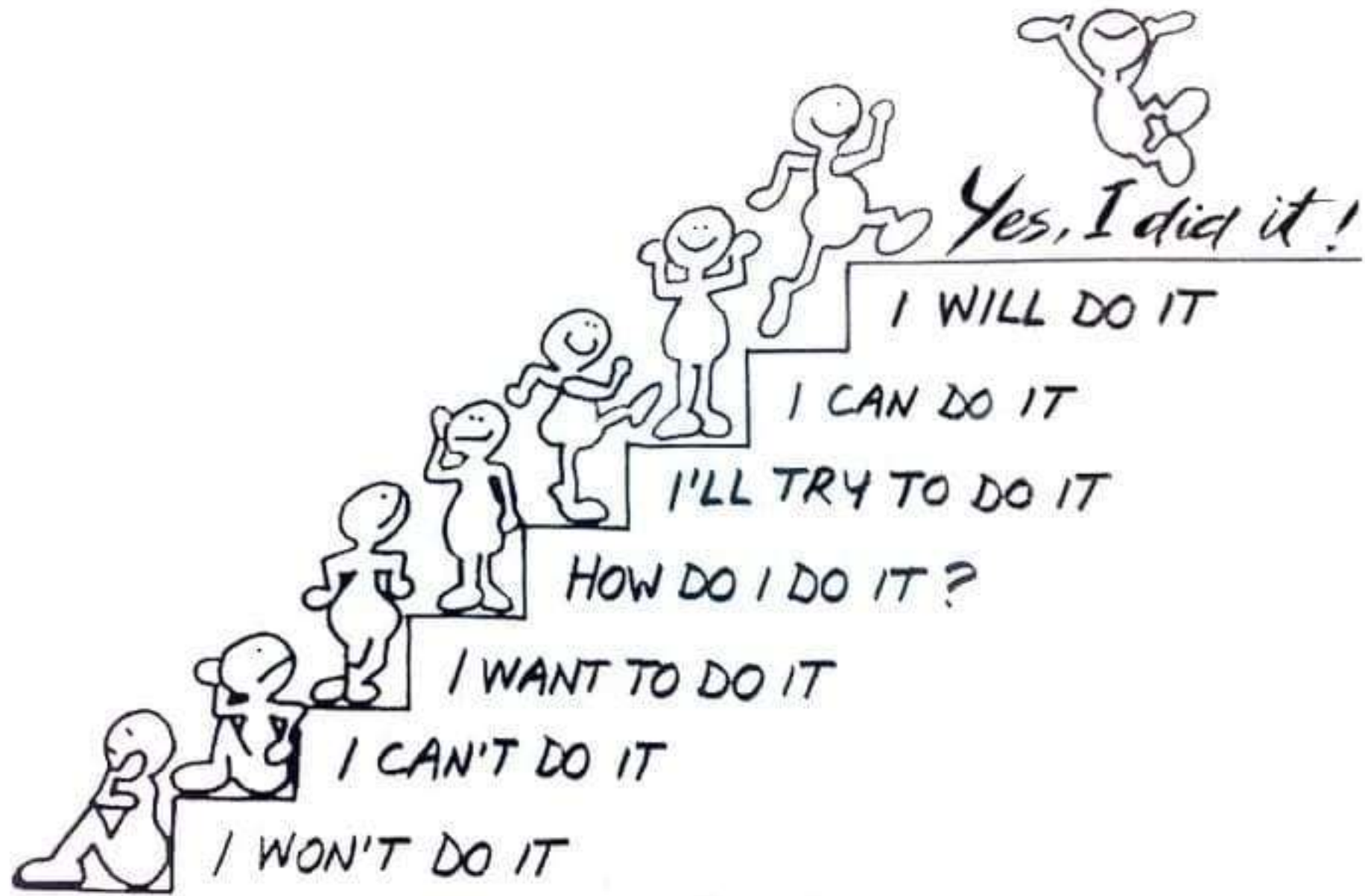


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WHICH STEP HAVE YOU REACHED TODAY?

Russian oil: India calls out 'double standards'

Centre responds to U.S. Bill seeking to impose duties on India and others buying Russian oil

NATO Secretary-General Mark Rutte also issued a threat, in particular to China, India, and Brazil

Union Petroleum Minister Hardeep Puri says India would 'deal' with sanctions when they are passed

Suhasini Haidar
NEW DELHI

India has cautioned against "double standards", even as U.S. lawmakers consider a Bill that would impose 500% duties on India and other countries buying Russian oil.

The Ministry of External Affairs's (MEA) comments comes after indications that U.S. President Donald Trump is backing the Russian Sanctions Act, 2025, introduced by Republican Senator Lindsey Graham, and threat of secondary tariffs of 100% on countries that continue trade on sanctioned Russian products.

On Wednesday, NATO Secretary-General Mark Rutte, who met with Mr. Trump and members of the U.S. Congress, also is-

sued a threat, in particular to China, India, and Brazil, who are among the top buyers of Russian crude oil, oil products, and coal. "Beijing and Delhi" should push Russian President Vladimir Putin towards ending the war in Ukraine, or face tariffs, the chief of the military alliance said.

Responding to questions on the issue on Thursday, the MEA said it was following the developments closely.

'Diverse sources'

"Securing the energy needs of our people is understandably an overriding priority for us. In this endeavour, we are guided by what is there on offer in the markets, as also by the prevailing global circumstances," MEA spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said.

"We would particularly

Strong stand

The 'Sanctioning Russia Act of 2025', expected to be introduced in U.S. Congress in August, mandates 500% duties on goods and services from countries buying Russian oil

What the NATO chief said

- India, China, and Brazil should tell Vladimir Putin to be serious about peace talks with Ukraine
- Continuing to do business with Russia will 'slam back' on these countries
- The secondary sanctions by U.S. will hit these countries 'very hard'

Centre's response

- Securing energy needs is an 'overriding priority' for the government
- India is guided by what markets offer and global circumstances
- Maintain caution against double standards on the matter



caution against any double standards on the matter," he added.

At an industry event in Delhi on Thursday, Union Petroleum Minister Hardeep Puri said that India would "deal" with sanctions when they are passed, pointing out that

India has diversified its supply sources, buying oil from about 40 countries now, as opposed to 27 in the past.

However, despite requests from Tehran, India has not so far reversed a decision taken under pressure from the first Trump

administration in 2017, to stop all oil imports from Iran.

However, while Russia sells about half its oil exports to China, and about 38% to India (as of February 2025), it exports only about 6% to the EU countries.

The latest comments from the government come as lawmakers in the U.S. prepare to go forward with the Russian Sanctions Act, 2025 that has been introduced in the House and Senate, with 87 and 84 co-sponsors respectively, cutting across party lines.

Section 17 of the Act proposes to impose 500% *ad valorem* duties on countries that buy, sell or transfer "oil, uranium, natural gas, petroleum products, or petrochemical products that originated in the Russian Federation".

In Washington on July 2, External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar had confirmed that India's "concerns" about the Bill and "interests in energy security" had been conveyed to Mr. Graham who, along with Democrat Senator Richard Blumenthal, is sponsoring the Bill.

Mr. Graham has said that he believes Mr. Trump supports the law which would give him the power to waive the duties for a period of six months. However, the Republican lawmaker has urged the U.S. President to impose the sanctions earlier than the 50-day deadline proposed at present.

Talks on trade, tariffs

Amidst intense negotiations over tariffs, as well as market access to India, particularly in the areas of

agriculture, dairy and genetically modified produce, New Delhi has also been coordinating with the U.S. government about the deportation of Indians illegally resident in the U.S.

On Thursday, Mr. Jaiswal said that 1,563 Indian nationals have been deported in the first six months of Mr. Trump's second tenure, from January 20 to July 15 this year.

According to ICE statistics, 1,529 immigration violators were deported in all of 2024, and far less than in the three preceding years. After protests in India over the first few batches of deportees being handcuffed and shackled on board military flights in February this year, the U.S. agreed to send Indians back by commercially chartered flights, including as recently as last week.

- The **U.S. Congress** is considering a “**Sanctions Act 2025**”, which proposes **500% duties** on countries (like **India, China, Brazil**) that continue to **import Russian oil/products**.
- The **NATO Secretary-General** and U.S. lawmakers urged these countries to **pressurize Russia** by stopping trade.

 **India’s Official Response (MEA & Ministerial):**

Key Point	Details
Energy Security Priority	India says its priority is securing energy needs from multiple sources.
Market-driven approach	India buys oil based on global circumstances and market offers .
Rejects pressure	India hasn't responded to pressure, including past U.S. sanctions on Iran.
Double standards	India criticizes Western nations for hypocrisy on selective sanctions.

- India now sources oil from **around 40 countries**, up from 27 earlier.
- **Russia** exports **~38% of oil to India** (as of Feb 2025).
- Proposed **Section 17** of the U.S. Bill includes:
 - **500% ad valorem duties** on oil-related imports from sanction-violating countries.
 - Threat of **secondary sanctions**.
- **U.S. Senators Graham & Blumenthal** introduced the Bill.
- **India raised concern on:**
 - Energy security
 - Deportation of illegal Indian immigrants
 - Trade access (agriculture, dairy, GMO goods)

Q. Consider the following statements regarding India's response to the proposed U.S. Sanctions Act 2025:

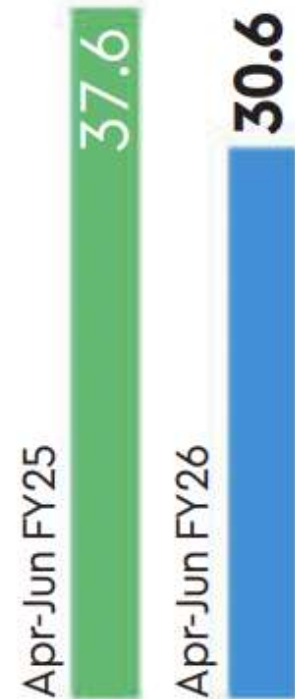
1. India has decided to reduce its oil imports from Russia under pressure from the United States.
2. The proposed U.S. law plans to impose 500% tariffs on countries continuing to import Russian energy products.
3. India emphasized that its oil purchase decisions are based on market offers and global circumstances.
4. The U.S. sanctions act includes provisions for secondary sanctions against non-complying nations.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

- A. 2 and 3 only
- B. 1, 2 and 3 only
- C. 2, 3 and 4 only
- D. 1 and 4 only

SUPPLY BASKET

Crude oil import bill
(\$ billion)



Source: PPAC

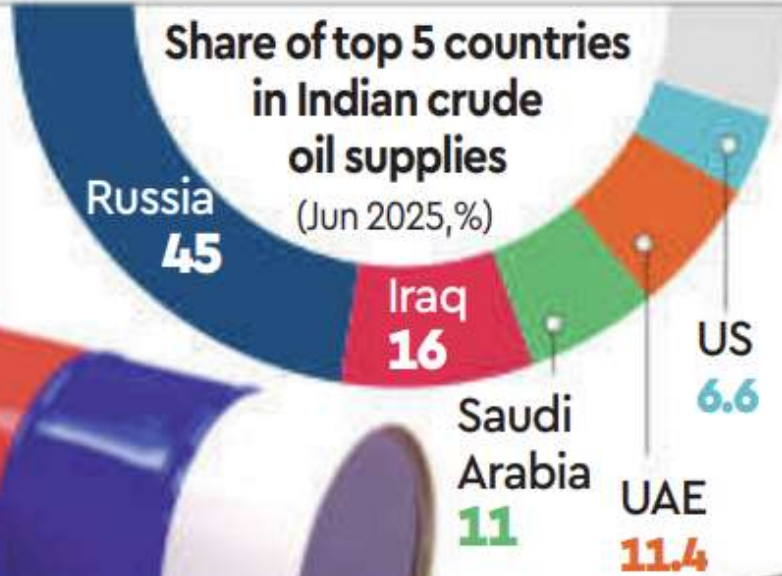


Russia's
share in
India's oil
imports



0.2% Early 2022 (before
Russia-Ukraine
conflict)

45% June 2025



HARDEEP SINGH PURI
PETROLEUM AND NATURAL
GAS MINISTER

We will buy (oil)
from wherever we
have to because the
prime minister's
commitment
is to the
Indian
consumer



Ahmedabad sparkles as the cleanest big city in India

The Hindu Bureau

NEW DELHI

Ahmedabad was named the cleanest big city in India, followed by Bhopal and Lucknow, in the Centre's annual "Swachh Survekshan" cleanliness survey.

Indore, Surat, Navi Mumbai, and Vijayawada were among 23 cities that entered the newly introduced "Super Swachh League", which recognises sustained excellence in cleanliness among cities, in the "million-plus population" category.

President Droupadi Murmu gave away the "Swachh Survekshan 2024-25" awards to the winners on Thursday.

Noida, Chandigarh, and Mysore, among others, entered the league in the "3 to 10 lakh population" ca-

Pristine places

The 'Swachh Shahar', or Clean City category, was introduced this year to promote new cities in the cleanliness rankings

Million-plus cities (More than 10 lakh population)

- Ahmedabad (Gujarat)
- Bhopal (Madhya Pradesh)
- Lucknow (Uttar Pradesh)

Big cities (3 lakh-10 lakh population)

- Mira-Bhayandar (Maharashtra)

- Bilaspur (Chhattisgarh)

- Jamshedpur (Jharkhand)

Medium cities (50,000-3 lakh population)

- Dewas (Madhya Pradesh)
- Karhad (Maharashtra)
- Karnal (Haryana)

Small cities (20,000-50,000 population)

- Panaji (Goa)
- Aska (Odisha)
- Kumhari (Chhattisgarh)

Very small cities (Less than 20,000 population)

- Bilha (Chhattisgarh)
- Chikiti (Odisha)
- Shahganj (Uttar Pradesh)



tegory while New Delhi made the cut in the "50,000 to 3 lakh population" category of the league.

In order to promote new cities in the cleanliness rankings, this year's awards introduced the "Swachh Shahar", or Clean City category, in which Ah-

medabad, Bhopal, and Lucknow secured top three positions in the list of cities with a population of more than 10 lakh. In the "3-10 lakh population" group, Mira-Bhayandar of Maharashtra topped the list, followed by Bilaspur (Madhya Pradesh) and Jamshedpur (Jharkhand).

The award for the "Best Ganga Town" was given to Prayagraj, while Secunderabad Cantonment was honoured as the Best Cantonment Board for its exemplary sanitation efforts. Visakhapatnam, Jabalpur, and Gorakhpur were declared "Best Saifai-Mitra Surakshit Shehar"

for their outstanding commitment to the safety and dignity of sanitation workers.

The Uttar Pradesh government, Prayagraj Mela Authority and Prayagraj Municipal Corporation were recognised for their exceptional urban waste management during the *Maha Kumbh*, the world's largest religious congregation, which witnessed an estimated footfall of 66 crore earlier this year.

The 3R approach

Under this year's format, smaller cities found a level playing ground with big cities in the survey, the government said.

Also, following the "One City, One Award" principle, the top-performing cities from each State were recognised as "Promising Swachh Shehars" (Promis-

ing Clean Cities). A total of 34 cities across various States and Union Territories earned this distinction, showcasing their notable progress in urban cleanliness and sanitation excellence.

President Murmu complimented the Union Housing and Urban Affairs Ministry for promoting the "Reduce, Reuse, Recycle" (3R) approach and commended the waste-to-wealth memento presented to her.

"Waste is best" is the mantra and it gives strength to "circularity in economy", she added.

According to the government, 14 crore people participated in the survey through face-to-face interactions, the Swachhata App, MyGov and social media platforms in over 4,500 cities.

- The **Swachh Survekshan 2024–25** results were announced.
- **Ahmedabad (Gujarat)** was declared the **cleanest city among million-plus population cities**.
- The awards were presented by **President Droupadi Murmu**.

 **Rankings & Categories:**

Category	Top Cities	
Million-plus cities (>10 lakh pop.)	<div>1. Ahmedabad (Gujarat)</div> <div>2. Bhopal (MP)</div> <div>3. Lucknow (UP)</div>	
3-10 lakh population	<div>1. Mira-Bhayandar (MH)</div> <div>2. Bilaspur (CG)</div> <div>3. Jamshedpur (JH)</div>	

50,000–3 lakh	Dewas (MP), Karhad (MH), Karnal (HR)
20,000–50,000	Panaji (Goa), Aska (Odisha), Kumhari (CG)
<20,000	Bilha (CG), Chikiti (Odisha), Shahganj (UP)

Key Initiatives:

- **Super Swachh League:** 23 cities with sustained excellence.
- **Swachh Shahar / Clean City:** Introduced this year to include smaller cities.
- **One City, One Award:** Top city from each state tagged as "Promising Swachh Shehar".

Special Recognitions:

Award	Winner
Best Ganga Town	Prayagraj (UP)
Best Cantonment Board	Secunderabad Cantonment
Best Saifai Mitra Surakshit Shehar	Visakhapatnam, Jabalpur, Gorakhpur

3R Approach & Participation:

- **3R Principle:** Reduce, Reuse, Recycle.
- **Participation:** 14 crore people via Swachhata App, MyGov, social media.
- Covered **4,500+ cities**.

Aspect	Details
What is it?	<p>India's annual cleanliness & sanitation survey under Swachh Bharat Mission – Urban (SBM-U), first held in 2016</p> <p>Testbook +13 Vajiram & Ravi +3</p>
Conducted by	Ministry of Housing & Urban Affairs (MoHUA) and Quality Council of India (QCI)
Survey scope (2024–25)	Covers ~4,500+ cities across population categories; includes 10 key parameters and 54 indicators
New formats introduced	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Population-based categories (5 groups) - Super Swachh League for consistently top performers - Special awards: Ganga Towns, Safai Mitra Suraksha, Cantonment Boards, Mahakumbh
Evaluation parameters	Service-level progress, citizen feedback, direct observation, waste management (collection, processing, ODF/ODF++), quarterly assessments
Citizen engagement	Over 14 crore citizens participated in 2024–25; >5 lakh geotagged photos used
Latest awards (17 July 2025)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Super Swachh League (>10 lakh pop.):

Q. Consider the following statements regarding Swachh Survekshan 2024–25:

1. Ahmedabad was declared the cleanest city among those with more than 10 lakh population.
2. The new "Swachh Shahar" category was introduced to recognize the cleanest railway stations in India.
3. The "3R" approach promoted in the event stands for Reduce, Reuse, Recycle.
4. The award for the "Best Ganga Town" was given to Varanasi for exceptional sanitation near river ghats.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

- A. 1 and 3 only
- B. 1, 2 and 4 only
- C. 1, 3 and 4 only
- D. 2 and 4 only

INDORE, N MUMBAI, NOIDA, IN SUPER LEAGUE

SUPER SWACHH LEAGUE CITIES	
Population	Cities
Over 10 lakh	Indore, Surat, Navi Mumbai, Vijayawada
3-10 lakh	Noida, Chandigarh, Mysuru, Ujjain, Gandhinagar, Guntur
50,000-3 lakh	NDMC, Tirupati, Ambikapur, Lonavala
20,000-50,000	Vita, Sasvad, Deolali Pravara, Dungarpur
Less than 20,000	Panchgani, Patan, Panhala, Bishrampur, Bundi
CLEAN CITIES (TOP 3)	
Population	Cities
Over 10 lakh	Ahmedabad, Bhopal, Lucknow
3-10 lakh	Mira-Bhayandar, Bilaspur, Jamshedpur
50,000-3 lakh	Dewas, Karhad, Karnal
20,000-50,000	Panaji, Aska, Kumhari
Less than 20,000	Bilha, Chikiti, Shahganj



Source: Swachh
Survekshan 2024-25

U.K. govt. plans to reduce voting age from 18 to 16

LONDON

The U.K.'s Labour government on Thursday announced plans to reduce the voting age from 18 to 16, a campaign promise for the Labour. The proposals, published in a 'policy paper' on Thursday, also included curbs on election interference from abroad via donations. The new proposals, if they become law, are likely to benefit Labour, because younger U.K. voters tend to vote for centre-left and left parties. » **PAGE 14**

- The UK's **Labour government** has announced its plan to:
 - **Reduce the voting age from 18 to 16**
 - Curb **foreign interference** in elections via political donations.
-

Major Proposals:

1. Voting Age Reform:

- **Current voting age:** 18
- **Proposed new age:** 16
- Would align UK's voting laws with **Scotland and Wales**, which already allow 16+ to vote in local elections.
- **Significance:**
 - First major electoral reform since **1969** (when age was reduced from 21 to 18).
 - Aims to include **young voters (16–17 age group)**, a demographic that generally supports **centre-left parties like Labour**.

2. Curbing Foreign Donations:

- Proposals to **bar 'shell companies'** from making donations.
 - Only companies with **substantial income in the UK or Ireland** would be eligible.
- Triggered by concerns after reports of billionaire **Elon Musk** potentially funding UK far-right party.

3. Digital & Automatic Registration:

- **Automatic voter registration** to start at **age 14**.
- Acceptance of:
 - **UK bank-issued ID cards**
 - **Digital IDs** (like passports, driving licences, etc.)
for **voter identity verification**.

Political Implications:

- Youth support:
 - In 2024 elections, **70% of 18–20-year-olds** voted for Labour.
 - **41% of 18–24-year-olds** voted Labour overall.
- Criticism by Conservatives:
 - Former minister Jacob Rees-Mogg warned it could hurt Conservative chances.
- Labour argues:
 - If youth are **old enough to pay taxes and work**, they should vote too.

Q. With reference to the recent electoral reform proposal in the United Kingdom (2024), consider the following statements:

1. The UK proposes to lower the minimum voting age to 16, aligning with practices already in place in Scotland and Wales.
2. The reforms include mandatory voter registration for all citizens starting at age 12.
3. The proposal includes curbs on foreign donations through shell companies.
4. Digital identity documents like bank cards and driving licenses are proposed to be accepted as valid voter ID.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- A. 1, 3, and 4 only
- B. 2 and 3 only
- C. 1 and 2 only
- D. 1, 2, 3, and 4

Nurse case: India in touch with 'friendly governments'

Rahul Bhattacharjee
NEW DELHI

The Indian government is in contact with "local authorities" in Sana'a, the capital of Yemen, as well as with some "friendly governments" in the region to push for the release of Nimisha Priya, an Indian nurse who is on death row in Yemen, the External Affairs Ministry said on Thursday.

Apart from the rebel Houthis administration that controls the Yemen capital, India has been in touch with officials in Saudi Arabia, Iran, and other neighbouring countries who can influence the Houthis, officials said.

The remarks came a day after official sources confirmed that the scheduled July 17 execution of Ms. Priya had been "postponed".

Sensitive matter: MEA

"This is a sensitive matter and the Government of India has been offering all possible assistance in the case. We have provided in-



Nimisha Priya

gal assistance and appointed a lawyer to assist the family. We have also arranged regular consular visits and been in constant touch with the local authorities and the family members. This included concerted efforts in recent days to seek more time for the family of Ms. Priya," MEA spokesperson Randeep Jaiswal said.

Reports had suggested that the police reportedly opened fire on the people, mostly Bengali-speaking Muslims, after the situation spiralled out of control. One person was killed, and at least two others sustained injuries.

One killed after an eviction drive in Assam turns violent

This was the second operation in Pakan Reserve Forest since July 12; police reportedly opened fire on settlers leaving 2 others injured. CM blames Rahul Gandhi for inciting people during rally

The Hindu Bureau
GUWAHATI

One person was killed and several others, including police personnel, were injured in firing during an eviction drive in the Pakan Reserve Forest in south-western Assam's Goalpara district on Thursday morning.

District officials stated that a team of Assam Police and Forest Department personnel conducted the eviction drive in the 70-hectare forest as a follow-up to a similar operation in the area on July 12, during which some 140 hectares were cleared of encroachment.

"The Forest Department used an excavator to dig a channel between the forest and the encroachment, and a barrier against encroachment was laid in future. Nothing happened during the operation yesterday (July 16), but the people attacked the team as soon as it arrived to re-



Work by a team of Assam Police and Forest Department personnel conducted the eviction drive in the 70-hectare forest as a follow-up to a similar operation in the area on July 12, during which some 140 hectares were cleared of encroachment.

sume work today," an official said.

The police reportedly opened fire on the people, mostly Bengali-speaking Muslims, after the situation spiralled out of control. One person was killed, and at least two others sustained injuries.

Officials said most of the settlers in the reserve forest were from Barga, Dhubri, and South Salmara-Mukharpur, and were residing there without any valid land documents.

Reacting to the incident, Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma blamed Congress leaders for inciting the Goalpara settlers and accused a political rally on Wednesday.

ED files chargesheet in Haryana land deal case against Vadra

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) on Thursday filed a chargesheet against Congress MP Piyusha Gadgil Vadra's husband, businessman Robert Vadra, in connection with a money-laundering case related to a 3.53-acre land deal in Shikohpur village in Gurugram, Haryana, in 2008.

This is the first time that a probe agency has filed a prosecution against Mr. Vadra, who is indicted under the provisions of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA). He was questioned by the ED on three consecutive days in April. Apart from Mr. Vadra, it included former Union Minister P. V. N. Rao, who has been named as accused in the prosecution. The chargesheet, worth Rs 37.64 crore linked to Mr. Vadra, his critics and others have been attached.



Robert Vadra

ED officials said a provisional attachment order was issued on the land on July 16 in which 43 immovable properties, worth Rs 37.64 crore linked to Mr. Vadra, his critics and others have been attached.

CISF undergoes high-intensity training with Army to combat threats in vital installations

Vijaya Singh
NEW DELHI

In the aftermath of Operation Sindoor, the Union Home Ministry has enhanced security at vital installations across the country, including the Parliament building and nuclear power plants. The Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) personnel deployed at the Parliament building are being trained with the Army to combat terrorist attacks, drone attacks, and internal sabotage, a CISF official said on Thursday.

Their weapons will be upgraded in the coming days too, the official said. The training module of counterattacks is also being changed.

The CISF took over Par-



Keeping a close eye: The CISF Parliament security team during a specialised army commando training exercise.

liament security in June 2020 following a security breach in the new Parliament building on December 13, 2020. It replaced the Delhi Police and the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF). The Army will prepare the CISF personnel to respond swiftly to crises at high-risk

installations such as airports, nuclear facilities, government buildings, and Parliament. The emphasis is on handling complex, high-pressure scenarios such as drone incursions and coordinated terrorist attacks with precision and calm," the official said.

Critical sites surveyed: As part of the efforts to secure critical installations, the National Security Guard (NSG) also surveyed 17 religious sites, 21 nuclear installations and 11 sensitive locations across the country. Home Minister Amit Shah reviewed the security of such installations after the Delhi Police and the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF). The Army will prepare the CISF personnel to respond swiftly to crises at high-risk

"For the first time, the CISF is conducting training at Indian Army formations in the Kashmir Valley. Previously, only a limited number of CISF personnel were allotted seats for such exercises. The goal is to equip the personnel to handle contingencies such as armed infiltration, sabotage, and multi-pronged terror strikes in both urban and rural environments," the official added.

A senior official confirmed that the Army Air Defence Corps conducted the trials in collaboration with senior scientists from the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO), which developed the system "Akash Prime" in Ladakh.

The two-day trial was conducted at an altitude of over 15,000 feet in eastern Ladakh. The Akash Prime scored two direct hits on fast-moving aerial targets in the clouded high-altitude atmosphere.

Saurabh Prasad
NEW DELHI

To further strengthen the air defence system, the Army has carried out successful trials of the indigenous defence system "Akash Prime" in Ladakh.



On top: The Army carried out successful trials of the indigenous developed air defence system in Ladakh.

The latest version of the Akash system would form the third and fourth regiments of the Akash air defence system in Chandipur, Odisha. The Akash air defence system is a medium-range, surface-to-air missile platform.

Prithvi-II and Agni-I: The Ministry of Defence on Thursday confirmed that

CARA directs State adoption agencies to intensify counselling

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Central Adoption Resource Authority (CARA) has issued comprehensive directions to all State Adoption Resource Agencies (SARAs) to strengthen and institutionalise structured counselling services throughout the adoption process - from pre-adoption, to during adoption, and post-adoption stages.

These directions have been issued via a communication dated July 7 under the powers conferred by the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2015 (as amended in 2020), and are aligned with the provisions laid down under the Adoption Regulations, 2022, an official statement said here on Thursday.

CARA is a statutory body of the Ministry of Women and Child Development, which acts as the nodal agency for the adoption of Indian children, both within the country and internationally.

This latest initiative aims to reinforce the psychosocial support framework for

CARA is a statutory body which acts as the nodal agency for the adoption of Indian children.

all key stakeholders - prospective adoptive parents, authorised counselling agencies, and the families involved. The memorandum reiterates the mandatory nature of structured and need-based - counselling services, as prescribed under the Adoption Regulations, 2022.

NHRC seeks report on Haryana gang rape

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) on Thursday issued notice to the Haryana government and Railway Ministry in the case of a gang rape of a woman in an empty compartment of a statutory train in Panipat city of Haryana.

The victim was later thrown on the rail tracks by the perpetrators, where a train ran over her leg. She is being treated at a hospital after being found on the railway tracks in Sonapat on the night of June 26.

Observing that the matter raises concerns on serious violation of human rights, the Commission is directed to the Chairman, Railway Board, Ministry of Railways and the Haryana government for a detailed report on the matter within two weeks.

FIRs over sheltering Tablighi attendees quashed by Delhi HC

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court on Thursday quashed 16 cases filed against 70 Indian nationals accused of sheltering foreign attendees of the Tablighi Jamaat congregation held in Nizamuddin in March 2020, allegedly in violation of COVID-19 restrictions.

Justice Neena Bansal Krishna said, prosecuting the verdict. The Delhi Police had opposed the petitions, arguing that the sheltering of foreign nationals in mosques and private residences, despite prohibitory orders on movement and public gatherings.



The judgment came in response to 16 petitions.

However, the petitioners claimed there was no evidence to show that any of them were COVID-positive or had facilitated the spread of the virus. They contended that the evidence was weak and exaggerated. While many foreign nationals sheltered in the area were repatriated, others chose to contest the charges. All those who stood trial were acquitted or discharged.

Constitutional validity of UAPA upheld by High Court

The Hindu Bureau
MUMBAI

The Bombay High Court on Thursday dismissed the writ petition challenging the constitutional validity of the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA) and also of Section 124A (sedition) of the Indian Penal Code (IPC).

A Division Bench comprising Justices G. S. Gokhale and N. V. Jadhav, who were issued a notice by the National Information Agency (NIA) in July 2020 in connection with the Nagar Parishad case. He had challenged the validity of the UAPA, and the sedition law of the IPC, and prayed for a declaration that the laws were unconstitutional, and to quash and set aside the NIA notice issued to him.

Prisoner admitted in private hospital shot dead in Patna

Anil Bhaskari
PATNA

A prisoner out on parole was shot dead inside a private hospital in Patna. Chandra Mishra is a dreaded criminal and has more than a dozen cases registered against him.

The incident took place on Thursday morning when four unidentified persons entered the hospital and shot dead the prisoner. The police, who were alerted, arrived at the hospital and found the prisoner lying on the floor, bleeding.

The police, who were alerted, arrived at the hospital and found the prisoner lying on the floor, bleeding. The police, who were alerted, arrived at the hospital and found the prisoner lying on the floor, bleeding.

He further said, "We have the faces of the shooter captured in the CCTV footage and we have already shared it with Bihar police to identify them. Investigation is on and soon police will arrest the culprits."

Earlier this week, a local businessman in Sitamarhi, a farmer and an advocate was shot dead by the criminal in Patna raising serious questions on the law and order situation in Bihar.

Police officials, including Patna Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) Karishma K. Sharma, reached the spot soon after.

Asked about how bullets

Akash Prime successfully tested in Ladakh by Army

Saurabh Trivedi

NEW DELHI

To further strengthen the air defence system, the Army has carried out successful trials of the indigenously developed air defence system “Akash Prime” in Ladakh.

A senior official confirmed that the Army Air Defence Corps conducted the trials in collaboration with senior scientists from the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO), which developed the missile system.

The two-day trial was conducted at an altitude of over 15,000 feet in eastern Ladakh. The Akash Prime scored two direct hits on fast-moving aerial targets in the rarefied high-altitude atmosphere.



On top: The Army carried out successful trials of the indigenously developed air defence system in Ladakh. X/DRDO

The latest version of the Akash system would form the third and fourth regiments of the Akash air defence systems in the Indian Army. The Akash air defence system is a medium-range, surface-to-air missile platform.

Prithvi-II and Agni-I

The Ministry of Defence on Thursday confirmed that

short-range ballistic missiles – Prithvi-II and Agni-I – were successfully test-fired from the Integrated Test Range in Chandipur, Odisha.

The launches validated all operational and technical parameters. These tests were conducted under the aegis of the Strategic Forces Command, added the Ministry.









Feature	Akash Prime	Benefits
Active RF Seeker	Indigenous terminal seeker	Enables fire-and-forget , reduces operator workload, enhances accuracy vajiramias.com +15 News on Air +1 India Sentinels +13
Range	~30 km (20% more than Mk-1)	Extended engagement envelope
Ceiling	~18 km altitude	Handles high-altitude threats
Environmental Hardening	Modified ground radar, cold resilience	Enables robust performance above 4,500 m



- The **Indian Army** conducted **successful trials of Akash Prime**, an indigenously developed **air defence missile system**, in **Ladakh**.
- Trials were held at **15,000 feet altitude**, targeting **fast-moving aerial threats** in a **high-altitude atmosphere**.

 **Key Facts:**

Feature	Details
System Name	Akash Prime
Type	Medium-range, Surface-to-Air Missile (SAM)
Developed By	DRDO (Defence Research and Development Organisation)
Test Conducted By	Army Air Defence Corps in collaboration with DRDO
Trial Location	Eastern Ladakh

Trial Outcome	2 direct hits on aerial targets
---------------	---------------------------------

Altitude of Test	15,000 feet
------------------	-------------

Additional Info:

- Akash Prime to form the **3rd & 4th regiments** in the Indian Army's air defence structure.
- Also tested: **Prithvi-II and Agni-I** (short-range ballistic missiles) at **Chandipur, Odisha**.
- These tests were conducted under the **Strategic Forces Command**.

Q. With reference to the Akash Prime missile system, consider the following statements:

1. It is a long-range, surface-to-surface missile developed by DRDO.
2. The trials were conducted by the Indian Air Force at sea level to test performance in dense atmosphere.
3. Akash Prime is a surface-to-air missile designed to hit aerial targets in high-altitude areas.
4. The Akash Prime trials were conducted at over 15,000 feet in Ladakh.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- A. 1 and 2 only
- B. 3 and 4 only
- C. 1, 2 and 3 only
- D. 2, 3 and 4 only

● UPSC window for those who don't make final cut

the local school. The job position at the new employer was more in sync with his academic qualifications, and duly acknowledged his performance in what is regarded as the toughest qualifying examination in India.

And for this, he has to thank an initiative of the UPSC called the Public Disclosure Scheme (PDS), through which the Commission has started sharing details of the non-recommended, willing candidates of the Commission's examinations with the private sector since early this year. Non-recommended candidates are essentially those who qualify in the written examinations but are not recommended post interview.

The logic for this is simple. The UPSC conducts 10 regular examinations every year and recommends some 6,400 successful candidates for appointments in various services; but approximately 26,000 candidates, who have already demonstrated their proficiency by clearing the rigorous written examinations, are declared not successful at the end of the process.

Arun was one among the 26,000, who did not qualify the interview, but ended up in the above 97 percentile in his examination category, and over-qualified for an entry-level job, but also overaged as compared to peers, and lacking in any work experience.

While this Scheme was launched in 2018 with a view to provide employment opportunities to these talented young people in government organisations and Public Sector Undertakings, there has been only marginal success in placing these candidates in a handful of PSU and government. This includes organisations such as the Cabinet Secretariat, Department of Water Resources, River Development and Ganga

Rejuvenation, the Delhi Jal Board and the Unique Identification Authority of India, but the numbers were really small. The only way to expand this was to cast the net wider.

In order to widen the scope of PDS, which has been subsequently been rebadged as Pratibha Setu, the Commission has launched a dedicated portal, where registered private companies can, alongside government-owned entities, also get access to the information of candidates using an identification number (a Ministry of Corporate Affairs-verified API that allows businesses to access and verify company information directly from the MCA database in India). They can then peruse the list of non-recommended candidates who have expressed their willingness to share their information, wherein their percentile (not absolute or percentage marks) is being made available.

Short biodatas of the candidates with their educational qualifications, contact numbers etc. have also been made available for those logging in, including players from the private sector. The portal also provides subject and discipline-wise search facilities to registered organisations in order to identify suitable candidates in line with their requirements.

The list of candidates is now being shared for the Civil Services Examination; as well as a number of other UPSC examinations include the Engineering Services Examination; the Indian Forest Service Examination; the Central Armed Police Forces (ACs) Examination; the Combined Geo-Scientist Examination; the CISF Assistant Commandants (Executive) LDCE; the Combined Medical Services Examination; the Indian Economic Service/Indian Statistical Service Examination;

the National Defence Academy and Naval Academy Examination; and the Combined Defence Service Examination. The list, with all the relevant details, is put up on the portal, which industry can access by simply logging in after registering.

What is interesting is that the UPSC is also duly tracking the selection process of the candidates once they are shortlisted by the organisations, until the issue of appointment letters. This involves calls being made from the Commission on a regular basis to the companies that register for this scheme and generate logins. The status of selections from the master list is being updated at the backend on a near real-time basis, an official said. The facility for uploading a copy of the appointment letter has also been provided on the portal, which is being tabulated for calibrating the success rates.

"The portal shares the information of the non-recommended candidates of examinations conducted by the UPSC only for the restricted purpose of evaluation of suitability of the candidates for employment purpose and those assessing it are not expected to use the details for any other purpose or disclosure whatsoever," the official said.

The Secretary, UPSC is learnt to have written to multiple government departments to disseminate the information about the portal to private companies working with each of these departments.

A detailed query to the UPSC seeking the progress on the uptake of candidates did not elicit a response. An official said it was still "early days" for the scheme, but the response has been far better now that the private sector has been involved in the scheme.

- UPSC has launched a system to **help non-recommended candidates** (those who clear written exams but are not selected in final interviews).
 - This initiative is called the **Public Disclosure Scheme (PDS)**, now renamed **Pratibha Setu**.
-

Key Features of the Scheme:

1. Who are Non-Recommended Candidates?

- Candidates who clear the written stage but are **not selected** after the interview.
- In exams like CSE, ~6,400 are recommended annually but ~26,000 clear the written part.

2. Information Sharing Platform:

- UPSC now shares the details of such candidates on a **dedicated online portal**.
- Includes:
 - Candidate's **short biodata, percentile** (not raw marks),
 - Contact information,
 - Educational qualifications.



3.  Access Given to:

- Government organizations
- Private sector companies (through MCA-verified API)
- Must register via the portal to access data.
- Only **verified recruiters** can access it.

4.  Purpose-Limited Use:

- Data is meant **only for recruitment purposes**, not for publication or any other usage.

5.  Search Features:

- Portal provides **subject/discipline-wise filters**.
- Tracks **selection outcomes** and tabulates **success rates**.

6.  List of Exams Covered:

- Civil Services
- Engineering Services
- Indian Forest Service
- CAPF (ACs)
- CDS, NDA, CMSE, IES/ISS, Geo-Scientist,  ; LDCE, etc.

Q. With reference to the UPSC's Public Disclosure Scheme (PDS), now called Pratibha Setu, consider the following statements:

1. The scheme allows only the final recommended candidates to upload their biodata for employment in government organizations.
2. Private sector companies can also access the portal after registration and MCA verification.
3. The scheme shares absolute marks and raw scores of candidates publicly.
4. The scheme is applicable to multiple UPSC examinations including CSE, ESE, IFS, CAPF, and CMSE.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- A. 2 and 4 only
- B. 1, 2, and 3 only
- C. 1 and 3 only
- D. 2, 3, and 4 only

A photograph of a small, vibrant green plant with several leaves growing out of the center of a weathered, cracked tree stump. The wood of the stump shows concentric growth rings and a rough, textured surface. The word "Euthanasia" is written in white, sans-serif font across the middle of the image, partially overlapping the plant and the wood.

Euthanasia



- The Kerala government has decided to allow local bodies to carry out euthanasia of diseased stray dogs by making use of the provisions of the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (Animal Husbandry Practices and Procedures) Rules 2023.

-

- **Do you know?**

- Under Section 8 of the Animal Husbandry Rules, euthanasia of an animal is allowed if it is severely diseased and poses a risk of spreading the disease, or if it is mortally or severely injured.
- A registered veterinary practitioner must certify that keeping the animal alive would be cruel.

- **Euthanasia**

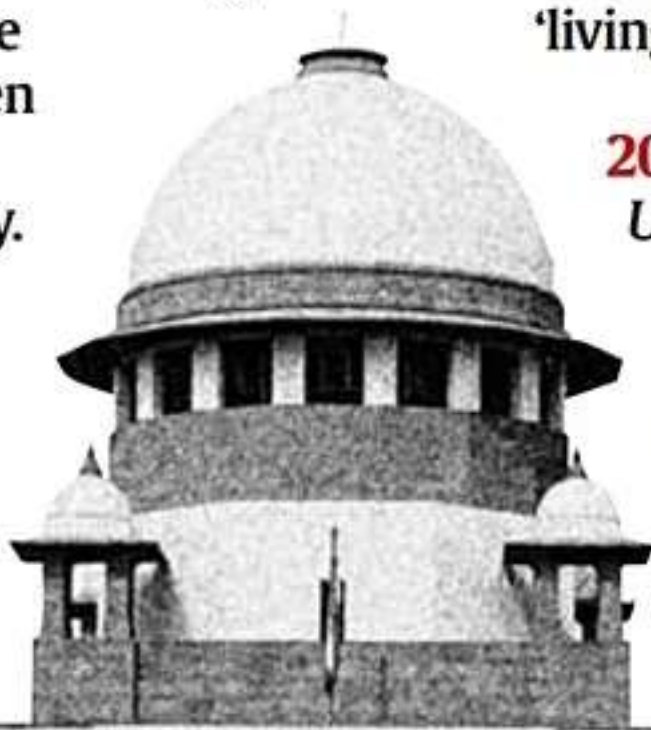
- It refers to the practice of an individual deliberately ending their life, oftentimes to get relief from an incurable condition, or intolerable pain and suffering.
- It can be administered only by a physician, and can be either 'active' or 'passive'.
- **Active euthanasia** involves an active intervention to end a person's life with substances or external force, such as administering a lethal injection.
- **Passive euthanasia** refers to withdrawing life support or treatment that is essential to keep a terminally ill person alive

IN THE SUPREME COURT

2011: *Aruna Shanbaug v. Union of India* recognised that life-sustaining treatment could legally be withheld/ withdrawn even from persons without decision-making capacity.

2018: *Common Cause v. Union of India* recognised the right to die with dignity as a fundamental right under Article 21 of the Constitution

of India, and legalised the use of advance medical directives or 'living wills'.



2023: *Common Cause v. Union of India* simplified the process for making living wills and withholding/ withdrawing life-sustaining treatment by removing bureaucratic hurdles.



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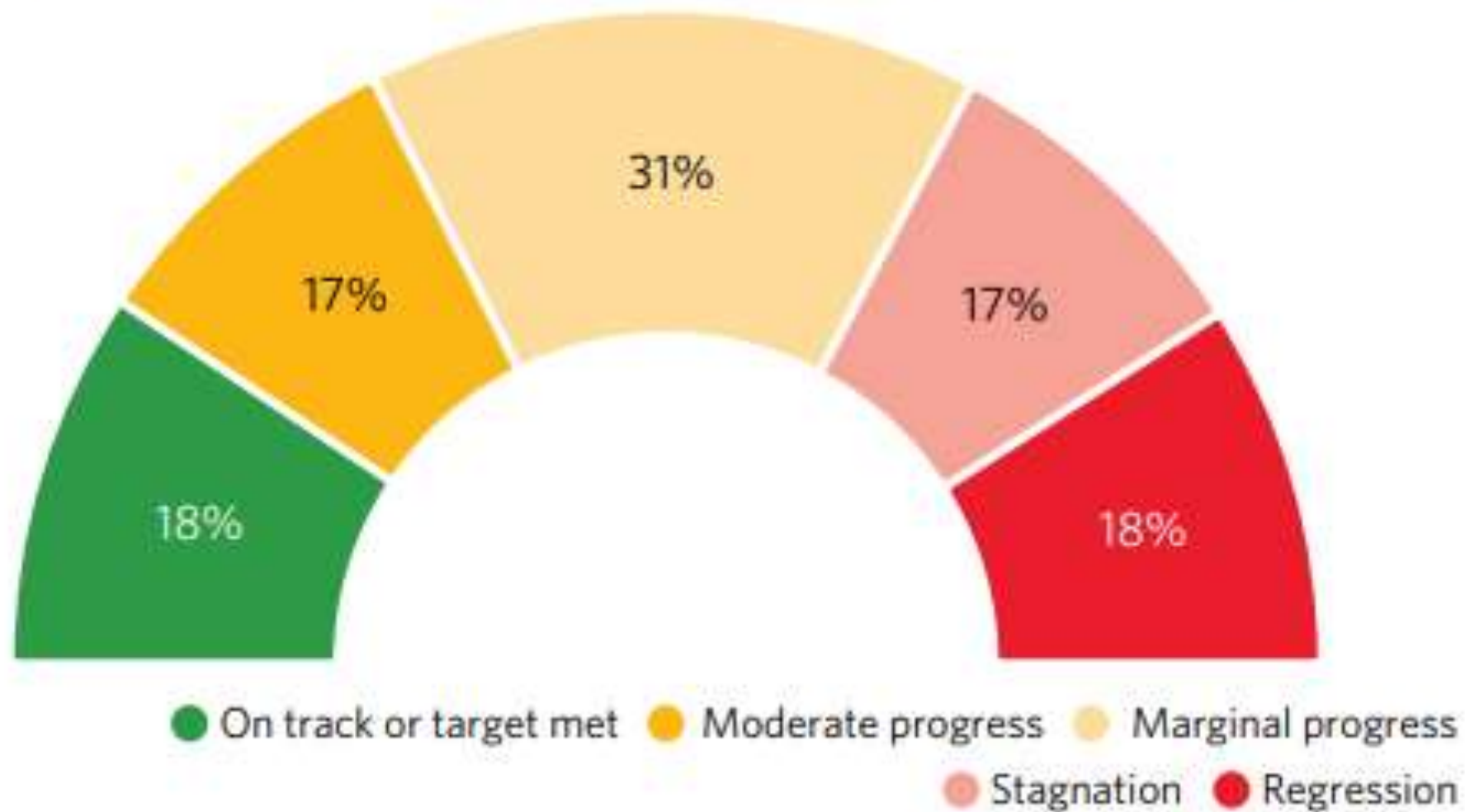
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UN SDG Report 2025



-
- The UN SDG Report 2025, released at the High-Level Political Forum, warns that 35% of measurable SDG targets are stagnating or reversing, with five years left to 2030.

Overall progress across targets based on 2015-2025 global aggregate data





**SDG 2: Zero
Hunger**

Hunger affected **9.1%** of the global population in 2023 (~713–757 million people).
2.33 billion people faced moderate or severe food insecurity in 2023.
Sub-Saharan Africa: 23.2% hunger prevalence and **Southern Asia:** 281 million hungry.

**SDG 4: Quality
Education**

57% of targets show no progress or are regressing.
School completion, foundational literacy, and gender parity remain unmet in many nations.



**SDG 6: Clean
Water &
Sanitation**

2.2 billion people lack safely managed drinking water.

3.4 billion people have no access to sanitation and **1.7 billion** lack hygiene access.

**SDG 8: Decent
Work &
Economic
Growth**

Half the targets stagnated or regressed.

57.8% of workers globally are in informal employment.

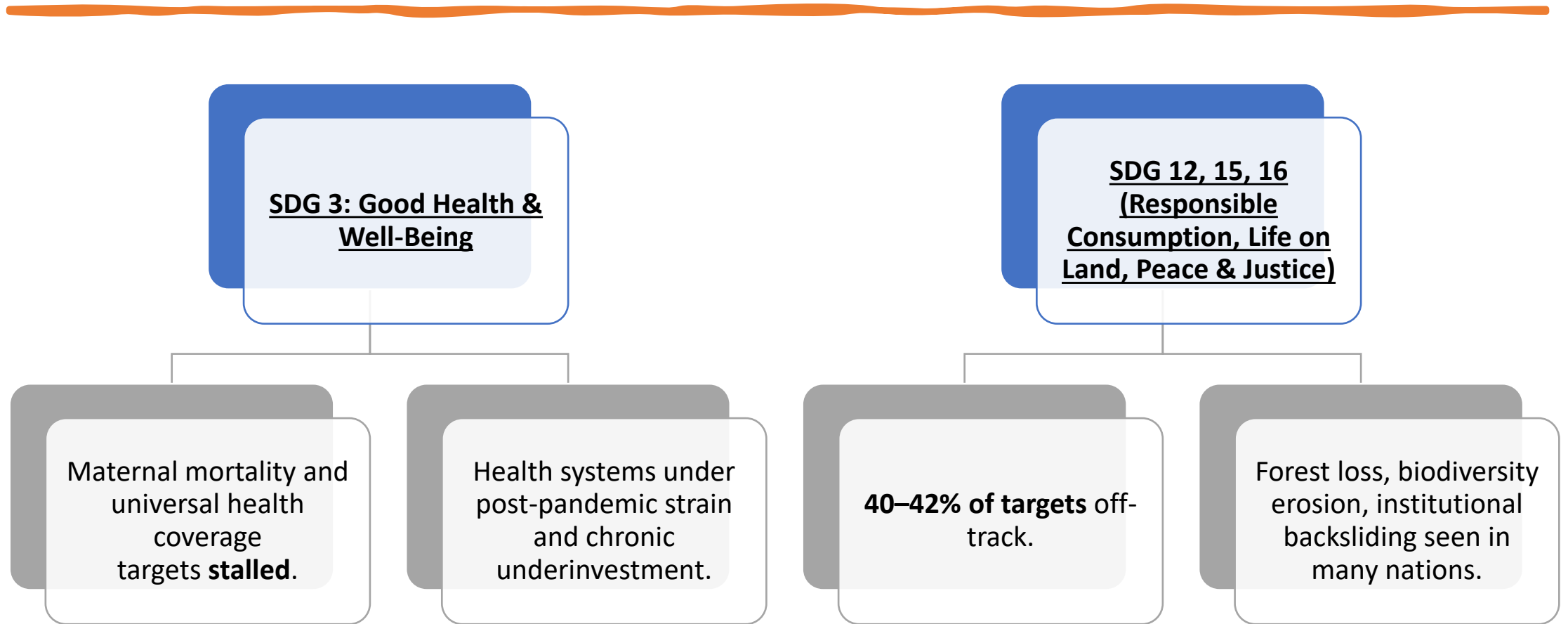
Youth unemployment in 2024 stood at **12.9%**, 3× adult rate (3.7%).

SDG 10: Reduced Inequalities


- Rising inequality across income, access to vaccines, digital divide, and climate vulnerability.
- No significant redistribution mechanisms expanded post-COVID-19.

SDG 14: Life Below Water

- **40% of targets** regressing.
- Ocean acidification, marine pollution, and overfishing worsening.
- Least funded SDG, as highlighted at **UN Ocean Conference 2025**.



AI Appreciation Day

- 
- India observed AI Appreciation Day on July 16 to highlight the country's rapid progress in artificial intelligence across sectors like healthcare, education, governance, and agriculture.

- **What It Is?**

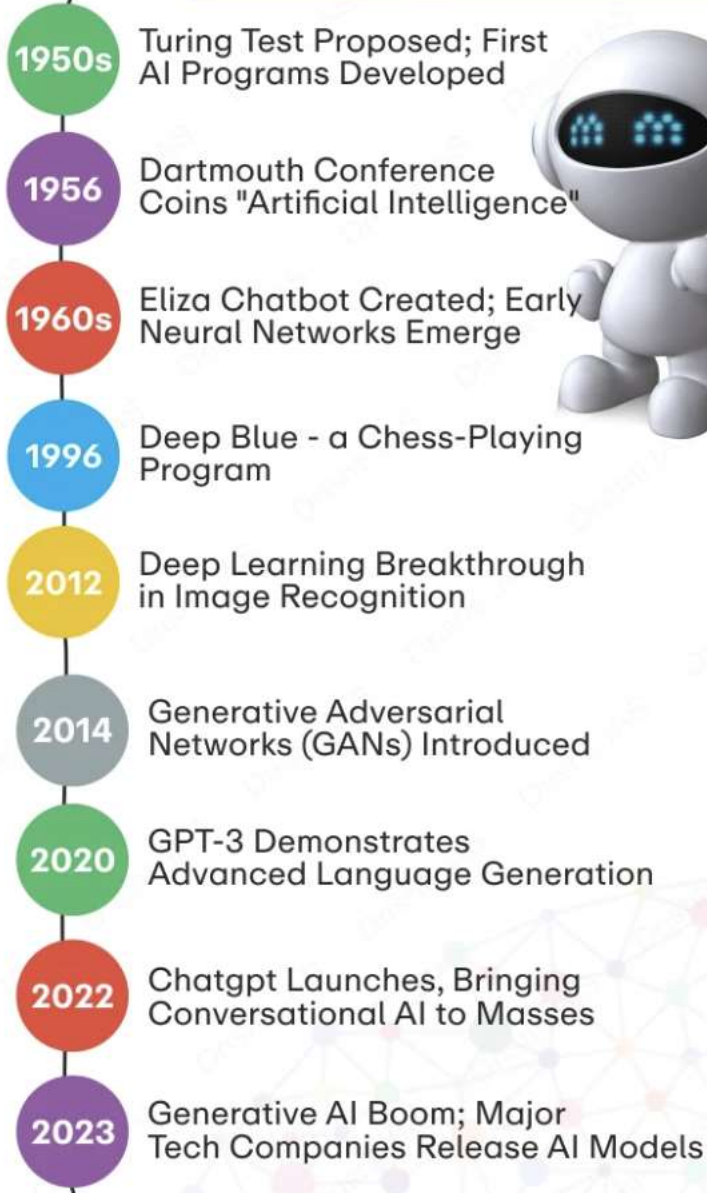
- An annual event that recognizes the **transformative role of AI** in society, and acknowledges the contributions of developers, scientists, and policymakers in advancing AI for public good.

- **Celebrated On:** July 16 every year, globally and now with active observance in India.

- **Objectives:**

- Celebrate AI innovations that solve real-world challenges.
- Raise awareness about the ethical use of AI in public and private sectors.
- Promote [inclusive growth](#) by integrating AI into governance and service delivery.
- Encourage youth participation and skilling in AI technologies.

AI Timeline - Major Milestones

- 
- 1950s** Turing Test Proposed; First AI Programs Developed
 - 1956** Dartmouth Conference Coins "Artificial Intelligence"
 - 1960s** Eliza Chatbot Created; Early Neural Networks Emerge
 - 1996** Deep Blue - a Chess-Playing Program
 - 2012** Deep Learning Breakthrough in Image Recognition
 - 2014** Generative Adversarial Networks (GANs) Introduced
 - 2020** GPT-3 Demonstrates Advanced Language Generation
 - 2022** Chatgpt Launches, Bringing Conversational AI to Masses
 - 2023** Generative AI Boom; Major Tech Companies Release AI Models



Applications of AI

- 
- ↳ **Healthcare:** Personalised medicine
 - ↳ **Finance:** Algorithmic trading
 - ↳ **Transportation:** Autonomous vehicles
 - ↳ **Marketing & Customer Service:** Targeted advertising, chatbots
 - ↳ **Education:** Adaptive learning systems, personalised tutoring
 - ↳ **Agriculture:** Crop monitoring
 - ↳ **Cybersecurity:** Threat detection
 - ↳ **Energy:** Smart grid management, consumption forecasting

Concerns

- ↳ Deepfakes & misinformation
- ↳ Algorithmic bias
- ↳ Automation & job displacement
- ↳ Privacy issues
- ↳ Data ownership & liability issue
- ↳ Ethical decision-making complexes

Regulating AI

- 
- ↳ **Global Partnership on AI (GPAI)** launched in 2020
 - ↳ **Bletchley Declaration (2023):** Enhance Global Collaboration on AI
 - ↳ **G20 New Delhi Leaders' Declaration (2023):** Harnessing AI responsibly for good and for all
 - ↳ **Hiroshima AI Process (2023)** by G7

India and AI

- ④ **National Strategy For AI 2018**
- ④ **AI For All:** Self-learning online program
- ④ **GPAI Summit 2023** hosted by India
- ④ **IndiaAI Mission 2024**
- ④ **US India Artificial Intelligence (USIAI) Initiative:**
AI cooperation in critical areas
- ④ **AIRAWAT** (AI Research, Analytics and Knowledge Assimilation Platform): Supercomputer

Word of the day

Boffo:

resoundingly successful and popular

Usage: *For years, he was a boffo box office certainty.*

Pronunciation: newsth.live/boffopro

International Phonetic Alphabet: /ˈbɒfoʊ/

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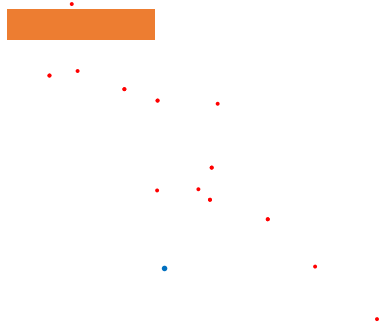


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