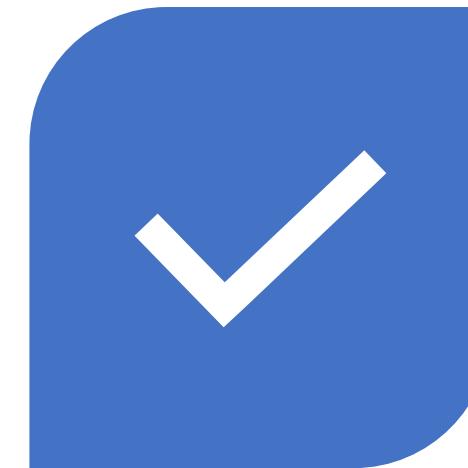# Daily Current Affairs

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**UNOPPOSED CANDIDATE**
### Nitin Nabin set to take over as BJP president
NEWS » PAGE 5

**GREENLAND QUESTION**
### EU, U.K. attempt negotiating with Trump
WORLD » PAGE 14

**INFIGHTING CASUALTY**
### Third tiger dead in a fortnight in Kaziranga
NEWS » PAGE 6

**INFLUX CONCERNS**
### A Centrist lens on 'illegal immigration'
People do not buy Opposition's argument
OPINION » PAGE 9

**MARCHING ON**
### Royal Challengers enter the playoffs
SPORT » PAGE 16

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## INSIDE

### Unnao rape case convict Sengar is denied relief
NEW DELHI
The Delhi High Court on Monday denied relief to Kuldeep Singh Sengar in a case related to the custodial death of the father of the Unnao rape victim. Her father was arrested at Sengar's behest. He died in custody allegedly due to police brutality. » PAGE 2

### M.P. has to decide in two weeks on booking Minister
NEW DELHI
The Supreme Court on Monday gave the Madhya Pradesh government two weeks to decide on a request for sanction to prosecute Minister Kunwar Vijay Shah accused of making disparaging remarks against Army officer Colonel Sofiya Qureshi following Operation Sindoor. » PAGE 4

### India and Poland bicker over ties to regional rivals
NEW DELHI
India and Poland sparred over their respective regional rivals as External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar and Polish Foreign Minister and Deputy Prime Minister Radosław Sikorski aired their differences over Pakistan and Russia on Monday as they met for talks in New Delhi. » PAGE 4

### Surge in airfares during festivals exploitative: SC
NEW DELHI
The Supreme Court on Monday said that unpredictable fluctuations in airfares were "exploitative", and flagged the exorbitant surge in ticket prices during festivals and peak travel periods. » PAGE 5

---

# SC flags 'stress' triggered by SIR in Bengal

■ Top court asks EC to display names of voters falling under 'logical discrepancies' category

■ SC takes note of notices sent to 1.3 crore people in Bengal under that category during the SIR

■ Petitioners' counsel asked how 'progeny' was relevant to the EC, or if it was based on statute

**Krishnadas Rajagopal**
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Monday urged the Election Commission to avert causing "stress and strain" through its ongoing special intensive revision (SIR) exercise to the ordinary people of West Bengal, where approximately 1.36 crore people, almost 20% of the population, have received notices from the poll body to explain "logical discrepancies in their names and family backgrounds".

The "logical discrepancies" include having more than six "progenies", a mismatch in the spelling of names like 'Ganguly' and 'Datta', only a 15-year age gap between children and parents, and a difference in age with grandparents being less than 40 years.

"Look at the strain and stress being caused to ordinary people. Over one crore people have been issued notice," Justice Joy-malya Bagchi, a member of the three-judge Bench headed by Chief Justice of India Surya Kant, addressed the poll body, represented by senior advocate Rakesh Dwivedi.

Justice Bagchi asked how a 15-year gap between a parent and child would defy logic, asking whether "we live in a country where there is no child marriage".

In a series of directions to ameliorate the sufferings of the people of the State, the court ordered that the names of persons coming under the 'logical discrepancies' category be displayed at gram panchayat bhavans and block offices in rural areas and ward offices in the urban centres.

The court also extended by 10 days the time for people to submit objections and records following the publication of this list.

The EC authorities have to give people receipts detailing the documents submitted before them by ap-plicants during the verification hearing.

Senior advocate Shyam Divan, appearing for the petitioners who include ruling Trinamool Congress MPs, asked what was the need for the EC to know "how many progenies my parents had". He said the EC was sending instructions on WhatsApp, submitting that "There is no transparency".

"In one district alone, over 2.31 lakh people got notices to explain 'logical discrepancies' found against them. In the 'progenies' category, 2.12% of the population have been issued notice... Where do all these criteria come from? This kind of profiling admit cards issued by the statutory sanction? What has the electoral roll got to do with progeny? Can it even be a relevant consideration for the EC? I believe not. Do they have a statute to back all this? I believe not. How could they act on such criteria?" Mr. Divan asked the court.

Mr. Dwivedi said seven persons were found with 100 children, two with 50 children.

Senior advocate Kapil Sibal said the largest number of notices to file objections or submit records for verification were sent to people caught under the 'logical discrepancies' category. He said the EC had held only 800 venues for conducting the hearing for these 1.36 crore people, when over 1,900 venues were required.

### Trinamool welcomes SC direction on SIR
KOLKATA
The Trinamool Congress has welcomed the Supreme Court's intervention on notices sent to voters citing "logical discrepancies" in the forms submitted by them during the special intensive revision (SIR) in West Bengal. » PAGE 5

Thirty-two lakh people were found "unmapped" (those whose names or their family members' names do not figure in the electoral rolls prepared in the earlier 2002 SIR in West Bengal) and sent notices to produce documents and file objections. The third category is those who were able to be "mapped".

Mr. Sibal submitted that people of West Bengal were losing time and probably a place in the electoral roll, amid the chaos following the publication of the draft rolls. Only 27 days remain for the final publication of the electoral rolls.

He said that only 18 lakh hearings had been held since December 16.

Mr. Sibal submitted that Booth-Level Agents of political parties were not allowed to attend the verification hearings.

"There is no question of running everything through WhatsApp. Instructions have to go out as circulars," Chief Justice Kant observed.

Applicants having objections to the exclusion of their names from the draft list would be permitted to file their records and please either themselves or through their authorised representatives. The authorising letter should be signed or thumb-marked to avoid foul play.

The State government and the State Election Commission have been directed to provide the EC with the necessary human resources for the smooth functioning of the objections phase of the SIR.

**'Admit card'**
Senior advocate Kalyan Bandhyopadhyay, representing the petitioners, said the EC was not accepting admit cards issued by the State school and secondary school boards as proof during verification. "These are statutory documents. There is no way the EC cannot accept them," Justice Bagchi reacted.

**Burden of proof:** People wait in queues during hearings under the ongoing SIR in Birbhum district, West Bengal, on Monday. PTI

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**High-speed disaster**

**Twisted metal:** Emergency personnel near one of the two high-speed trains that derailed on Sunday night after colliding in Cordoba, Spain. At least 40 people were confirmed dead and efforts were on to recover bodies, the Spanish police said on Monday. REUTERS (REPORT: PAGE 14)

---

# Include proposal to link digital currencies on the BRICS agenda, says RBI

**Reuters**
MUMBAI/NEW DELHI

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has recommended to the Centre that a proposal connecting the central bank digital currencies (CBDCs) of BRICS countries be included on the agenda for the 2026 summit of the grouping, two sources have said. They requested anonymity as they were not authorised to speak publicly.

The proposal seeks to make cross-border payments easier, in a move that could reduce reliance on the U.S. dollar as geopolitical tensions rise. The RBI's recommendation builds on a 2025 declaration at the BRICS summit in Brazil which pushed for interoperability between members' payment systems to make cross-border transactions more efficient.

The RBI has publicly expressed interest in linking India's digital rupee with other nations' CBDCs to expedite cross-border transactions and bolster the currency's global usage. It has, however, said its efforts to promote the rupee's global use are not aimed at promoting de-dollarisation.

India will host the next BRICS summit later this year. If the RBI's recommendation is accepted, a proposal to link the digital currencies of BRICS members would be put forward for the first time. The initiative could irritate the U.S., which has warned against any moves to bypass the dollar. U.S. President Do-nald Trump has previously said the BRICS alliance is "anti-American" and he threatened to impose tariffs on its members.

While none of the BRICS members have fully launched their digital currencies, all five main members have been running pilot projects.

India's digital currency has attracted a total of 7 million retail users since its launch in December 2022, while China has pledged to boost the international use of the digital yuan.

The RBI has encouraged the adoption of the e-rupee by enabling offline payments, providing programmability for government subsidy transfers and allowing fintech firms to offer digital currency wallets.

The RBI and the central bank of Brazil did not respond to emails seeking comment. The People's Bank of China said it had no information; the South African and Russian central banks declined to comment.

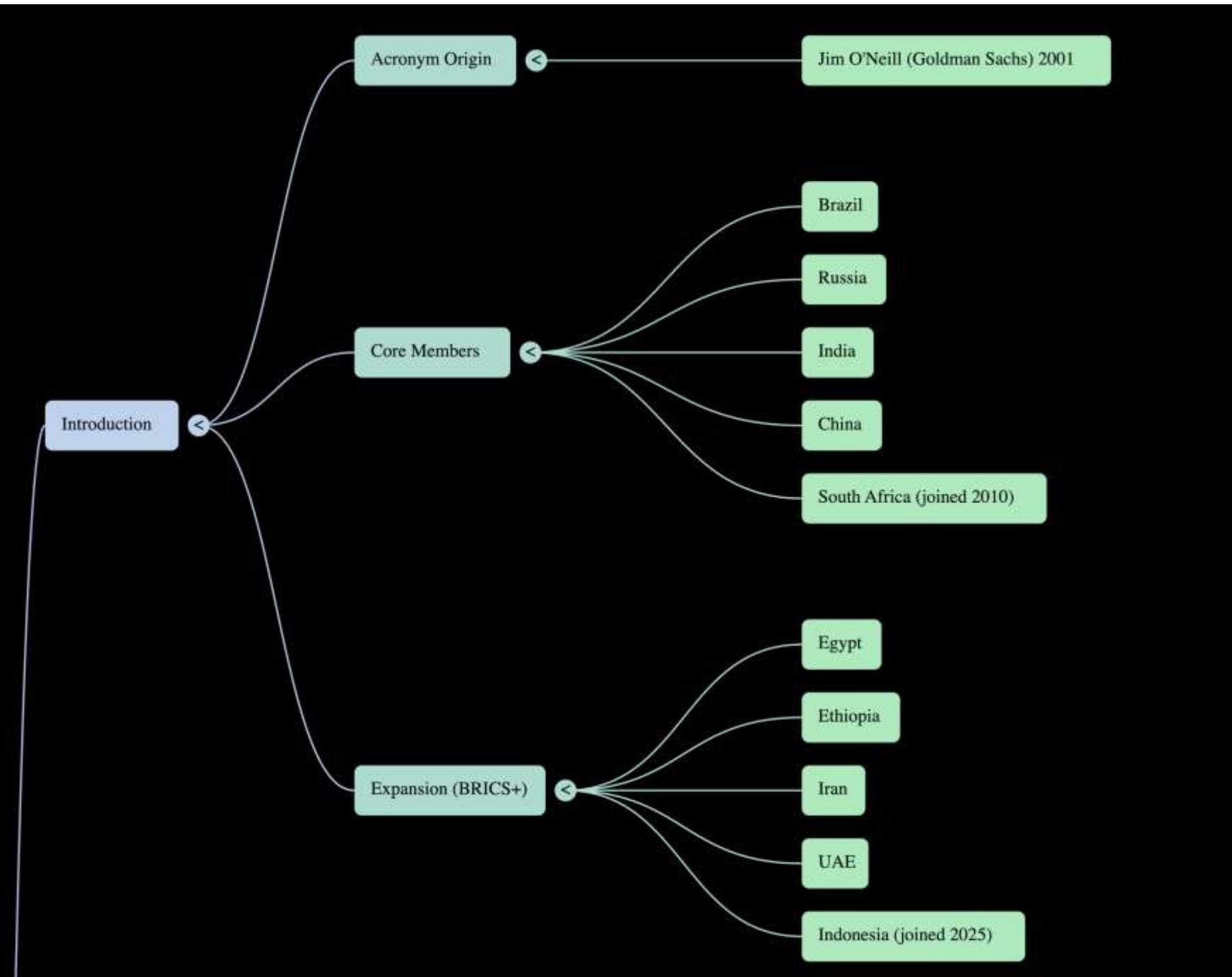For the BRICS digital currency linkages to be successful, elements like interoperable technology, governance rules and ways to settle imbalanced trade volumes would be among the discussion topics, one of the sources said.
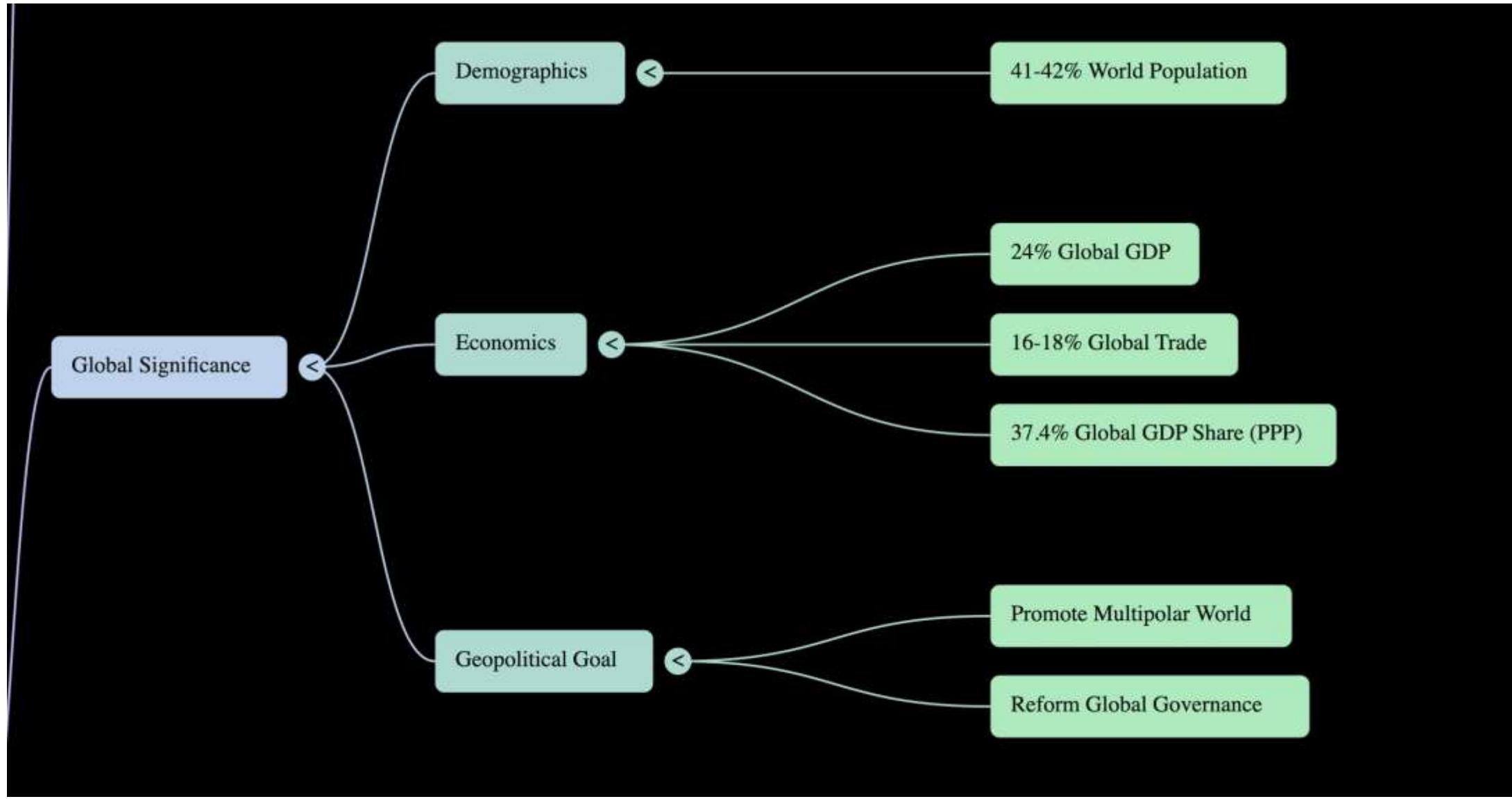
The source cautioned that hesitation among members to adopt technological platforms from other countries could delay work on the proposal and concrete progress would require consensus on tech and regulation.
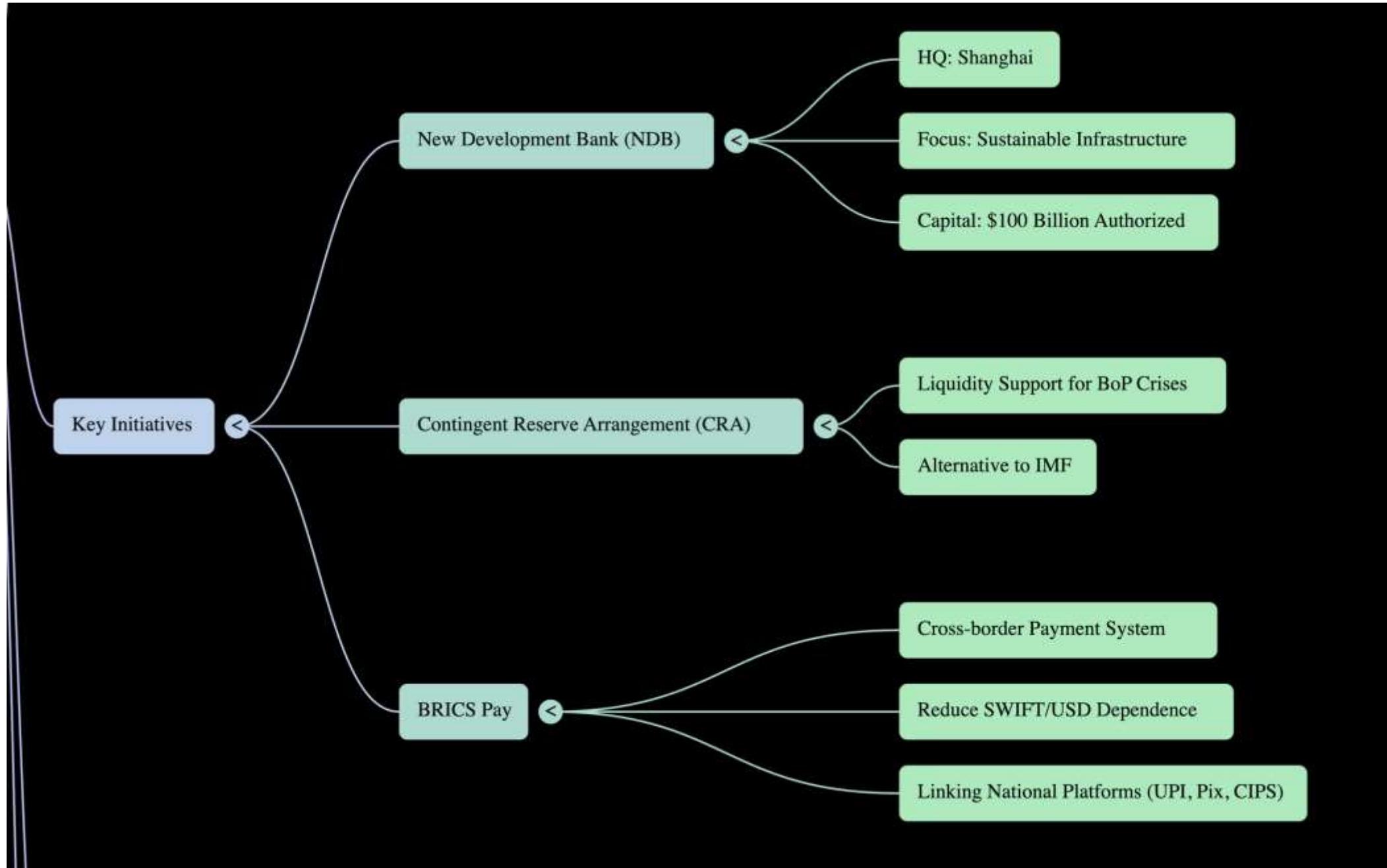
One idea that is being explored to manage potential trade imbalances is the use of bilateral foreign exchange swap arrangements between central banks, both sources said.
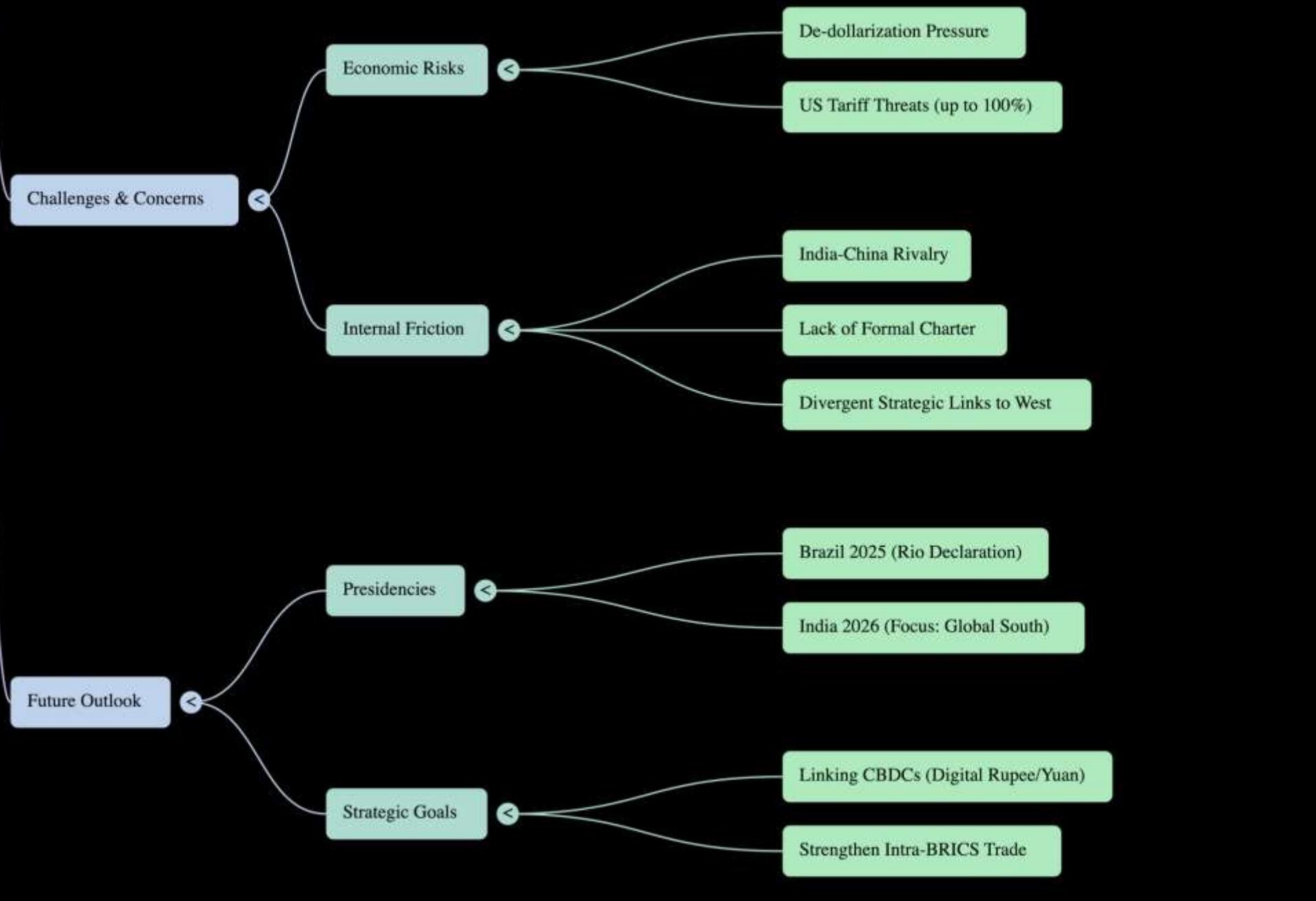
Previous attempts by Russia and Indian governments to conduct more trade in their local currencies hit roadblocks.

Russia accumulated large balances of the Indian rupee for which it found limited use, prompting India's central bank to permit the investment of such balances in local bonds. Weekly or monthly settlements for transactions are being proposed to be made via the swaps, the second source said.

### Ease of payment
If the proposal is accepted, a plan to link digital currencies will be put forward at the 2026 BRICS summit in India

■ The move could reduce reliance on the U.S. dollar as geopolitical tensions rise

■ While none of the BRICS members have fully launched their digital currencies, all five main members have been running pilot projects

■ India's digital currency e-rupee has attracted a total of 7 million retail users since its launch in December 2022

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# IMF upgrades India's growth projection to 7.3%

**The Hindu Bureau**
NEW DELHI

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) has revised upwards its estimate of India's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth in the current financial year 2025-26 to 7.3% from its earlier prediction of 6.6%.

**Slower figure**
This upward revision, the IMF said in its January 2026 World Economic Outlook update released on Monday, was primarily a reflection of stronger-than-expected growth in the third quarter, and "strong momentum" in the fourth quarter of the financial year. "In India, growth is revised upward by 0.7 percentage points to 7.3% for 2025 [FY 2025-26], reflecting the better-than-expected outturn in the third quarter of the year and strong momentum in the fourth quarter," the report said. "Growth is projected to go back to near-target levels after a decline in 2026 and 2027 as cyclical and temporary factors wane," it added.

These forecasts entail a small upward revision for 2026 and no change for 2027 as compared with the predictions made in the October 2025 World Economic Outlook. "This steady performance on the surface results from the balancing of divergent forc-es," the report said.

"Headwinds from shifting trade policies are offset by tailwinds from surging investment related to technology, including artificial intelligence (AI), more so in North America and Asia than in other regions, as well as fiscal and monetary support, broadly accommodative financial conditions, and adaptability of the private sector."

On the inflation front, the report predicted that inflation in India is expected to go back to near-target levels after a decline in 2026 driven by subdued food prices. The Reserve Bank of India's target for inflation is 4%.

### Growth forecast
IMF says the revision reflected stronger-than-expected growth in the third quarter and strong momentum in the fourth quarter

■ The Centre has predicted 7.4% GDP growth for 2025-26

■ Global economic growth projected to remain resilient at 3.3% in calendar year 2026 and at 3.2% in 2027

■ IMF projects growth to moderate to 6.4% in 2026 and 2027 as cyclical and temporary factors wane

■ Inflation expected to go back to near-target levels of 4% led by RBI, says IMF

The IMF's prediction of 7.3% growth for 2025-26 is just marginally slower than the 7.4% the Union government predicted for the same period.

For the global economy, the report projects growth to remain "resilient" at 3.3% in calendar year 2026 and at 3.2% in 2027, largely the same as the 3.3% estimated for 2025.

# Include proposal to link digital currencies on the BRICS agenda, says RBI

**Reuters**

MUMBAI/NEW DELHI

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has recommended to the Centre that a proposal connecting the central bank digital currencies (CBDCs) of BRICS countries be included on the agenda for the 2026 summit of the grouping, two sources have said. They requested anonymity as they were not authorised to speak publicly.

The proposal seeks to make cross-border payments easier, in a move that could reduce reliance on the U.S. dollar as geopolitical tensions rise. The RBI's recommendation builds on a 2025 declaration at the BRICS summit in Brazil which pushed for interoperability between members' payment systems to make cross-border transactions more efficient.

The RBI has publicly expressed interest in linking India's digital rupee with other nations' CBDCs to expedite cross-border transactions and bolster its currency's global usage. It has, however, said its efforts to promote the rupee's global use are not aimed at promoting de-dollarisation.

India will host the next BRICS summit later this year. If the RBI's recommendation is accepted, a proposal to link the digital currencies of BRICS members would be put forward for the first time. The initiative could irritate the U.S., which has warned against any moves to bypass the dollar. U.S. President Do-

## Ease of payment

If the proposal is accepted, a plan to link digital currencies will be put forward at the 2026 BRICS summit in India

- The move could reduce reliance on the U.S. dollar as geopolitical tensions rise
- While none of the BRICS members have fully launched their digital currencies, all five main members have been running pilot projects
- India's digital currency - e-rupee - has attracted a total of 7 million retail users since its launch in December 2022

nald Trump has previously said the BRICS alliance is "anti-American" and he threatened to impose tariffs on its members.

While none of the BRICS members have fully launched their digital currencies, all five main members have been running pilot projects.

India's digital currency has attracted a total of 7 million retail users since its launch in December 2022, while China has pledged to boost the international use of the digital yuan.

The RBI has encouraged the adoption of the e-rupee by enabling offline payments, providing programmability for government subsidy transfers and allowing fintech firms to offer digital currency wallets.

The RBI and the central bank of Brazil did not respond to emails seeking comment. The People's Bank of China said it had no information; the South African and Russian central banks declined to comment.

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Previous attempts by Russia and Indian governments to conduct more trade in their local currencies hit roadblocks.

Russia accumulated large balances of the Indian rupee for which it found limited use, prompting India's central bank to permit the investment of such balances in local bonds. Weekly or monthly settlements for transactions are being proposed to be made via the swaps, the second source said.

Global Significance
- Demographics → 41-42% World Population
- Economics
  - 24% Global GDP
  - 16-18% Global Trade
  - 37.4% Global GDP Share (PPP)
- Geopolitical Goal
  - Promote Multipolar World
  - Reform Global Governance

# Challenges & Concerns

- **Economic Risks**
  - De-dollarization Pressure
  - US Tariff Threats (up to 100%)
- **Internal Friction**
  - India-China Rivalry
  - Lack of Formal Charter
  - Divergent Strategic Links to West

# Future Outlook

- **Presidencies**
  - Brazil 2025 (Rio Declaration)
  - India 2026 (Focus: Global South)
- **Strategic Goals**
  - Linking CBDCs (Digital Rupee/Yuan)
  - Strengthen Intra-BRICS Trade

1. What RBI recommended / RBI की सिफारिश क्या है

- Reuters report says the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has recommended to the Centre that a proposal to **connect BRICS countries' central bank digital currencies (CBDCs)** be included on the agenda of the **2026 BRICS summit**.

  रॉयटर्स के अनुसार RBI ने केन्द्र सरकार को सुझाव दिया है कि **BRICS देशों की CBDC को आपस में जोड़ने** वाला प्रस्ताव **2026 BRICS शिखर सम्मेलन** के एजेंडा में रखा जाए।

2. Why this is being pushed / इसका उद्देश्य क्या है

- The proposal aims to make **cross-border payments easier**, and could reduce reliance on the **U.S. dollar** as geopolitical tensions rise.

  लक्ष्य **सीमा-पार भुगतान को आसान** बनाना है; भू-राजनीतिक तनाव बढ़ने पर **अमेरिकी डॉलर पर निर्भरता** घटाने में भी मदद हो सकती है।

3. Link to earlier BRICS decision / BRICS के पहले के फैसले से कड़ी

- RBI's recommendation builds on a **2025 BRICS declaration (Brazil summit)** that pushed for **interoperability** between members' payment systems to make cross-border transactions more efficient.

  यह सिफारिश **2025 BRICS घोषणा (ब्राज़ील शिखर सम्मेलन)** से जुड़ी है, जिसमें सदस्य देशों की भुगतान प्रणालियों के बीच **interoperability (आपसी संगतता)** पर जोर था।

4. India's stance: not "de-dollarisation" / भारत का रुख: "डी-डॉलराइज़ेशन" नहीं

- RBI said its efforts to promote the rupee's global use are **not aimed at de-dollarisation**.
  RBI ने कहा कि रुपये के वैश्विक उपयोग को बढ़ाने की कोशिशों का लक्ष्य **डी-डॉलराइज़ेशन** नहीं है।

5. Status of digital currencies in BRICS / BRICS में डिजिटल करेंसी की स्थिति

- The report notes that **none of the BRICS members has fully launched** their digital currencies, but the **five main members** have been running **pilot projects**.
  रिपोर्ट के अनुसार BRICS के **किसी भी सदस्य ने पूरी तरह** डिजिटल करेंसी लॉन्च नहीं की है, लेकिन **पाँच मुख्य सदस्य पायलट प्रोजेक्ट** चला रहे हैं।

6. India's e-rupee update / भारत की e-rupee स्थिति

- India's digital currency **e-rupee** has attracted **about 7 million retail users** since its launch in **December 2022**.
  भारत की डिजिटल करेंसी **e-rupee** ने **दिसंबर 2022** में लॉन्च के बाद से लगभग **70 लाख रिटेल यूज़र्स** जोड़े हैं।

7. China & RBI feature-push / चीन और RBI की रणनीति

- China has pledged to boost international use of the **digital yuan**; RBI has encouraged e-rupee adoption via **offline payments, programmability for government subsidy transfers**, and enabling fintech firms to offer **digital currency wallets**.
  चीन ने **डिजिटल युआन** के अंतरराष्ट्रीय उपयोग को बढ़ाने की बात कही है; RBI ने **ऑफलाइन पेमेंट, सरकारी सब्सिडी ट्रांसफर हेतु programmability**, और फिनटेक के जरिए **डिजिटल करेंसी वॉलेट** जैसी सुविधाओं से e-rupee को बढ़ावा दिया है।

| Term/Theme | Quick fact (exam-ready) | Why it matters in questions |
|---|---|---|
| CBDC | Central Bank Digital Currency = central bank-issued digital form of sovereign money | हिन्दिक्रम CBDC ए व्रप्रमर benefits/risks |
| Retail vs Wholesale CBDC | Retail = public use; Wholesale = interbank/large-value settlements | पक्ष ढ़ इुइ श्रड्चम type MCQs |
| Interoperability | Different payment/CBDC systems working seamlessly with common standards | BRICS context रक्ड़ core keyword |
| Cross-border payment pain points | High cost, slow settlement, multiple intermediaries, compliance friction | Mains: "challenges + reforms" |
| Programmability | Rule-based payments (e.g., targeted subsidy use) | e-rupee features ए २ कार ट्॥ |
| Offline digital payment | Ability to transact with limited/no internet (design varies) | "financial inclusion" linkage |
| FX swap | Agreement to exchange currencies between central banks; can support liquidity/settlement | Trade imbalance/settlement angle |
| "Five main BRICS members" (as per report context) | Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa | २ ए घ group-membership हिन्दिक्रम |

- **With reference to the news on BRICS and digital currencies, consider the following statements:**

- RBI has recommended that a proposal to connect BRICS countries' CBDCs be included on the agenda for the 2026 BRICS summit.

- The proposal aims to ease cross-border payments and may reduce reliance on the U.S. dollar as geopolitical tensions rise.

- India's e-rupee has attracted about 7 million retail users since its launch in December 2022.

- The report noted that none of the BRICS members has fully launched their digital currencies, but the five main members have been running pilot projects.

- Which of the statements given above are correct?
(a) 1 and 2 only
(b) 1, 2 and 3 only
(c) 2, 3 and 4 only
(d) 1, 2, 3 and 4

Fit to width


Security forces keep watch near the site of the encounter with terrorists in Kishtwar on Monday. ANI

## Paratrooper dies as search operations resume in Kishtwar

**Press Trust of India**
JAMMU

A paratrooper, who was critically injured in a gunfight with terrorists, succumbed to his injuries on Monday, while the ongoing search operation uncovered a suspected terror hideout packed with rations for winter in Jammu and Kashmir's Kishtwar district, officials said.

The operation was launched in Sonar village near Mandral-Singhpora in the Chatroo belt on Sunday, leading to a gunfight that left eight soldiers injured, primarily due to splinter injuries caused by a sudden grenade attack from the hiding terrorists.

The operation was suspended late on Sunday night in the challenging terrain marked by thick vegetation and steep slopes, limiting visibility and movement, officials said.

In a post on X, the White Knight Corps said 'Operation Trashi-I' continues in Chatroo. "The cordon has been further tightened with search operations expanded. Troops of the corps, along with police and CRPF, remain deployed to dominate the area."

Multiple teams of the army, police, and paramilitary forces, supported by drones and sniffer dogs, are combing the area while maintaining a tight security cordon to ensure that the terrorists are not able to escape, the officials said.

They said search teams have busted a terrorist hi-


Havildar Gajendra Singh

deout and recovered a large quantity of food items, including rations, utensils, a gas cylinder and a stove near the site of yesterday's gunfight. Two or three terrorists allegedly affiliated with Pakistan-based Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM) are believed to be hiding in the area, officials said.

One of the injured troopers, Havildar Gajendra Singh, died during treatment at a military hospital here during the intervening night of January 18 and 19, officials said.

"The General Officer Commanding, White Knight Corps and all ranks pay solemn tribute to Havildar Gajendra Singh of the Special Forces, who made the supreme sacrifice while gallantly executing a counter terrorism operation in the Singpora area during the ongoing Operation Trashi I.

"We honour his indomitable courage, valour and selfless devotion to duty and stand firmly with the bereaved family in this hour of profound grief," the Army said in a separate post on X.

## India signs Letter of Intent to elevate defence ties with UAE

The signing of the pact comes amid increasing Saudi-Pakistan defence cooperation in the Arabian peninsula and especially in Yemen; the two sides also ink energy deal during UAE President's visit

**Kallol Bhattacherjee**
NEW DELHI

Against the backdrop of growing military tension in the Gulf region, the United Arab Emirates and India signed a "Letter of Intent for a Bilateral Strategic Defence Partnership" on Monday. The Letter of Intent was sealed during the three-hour visit by the President of the United Arab Emirates, Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, when the two sides set a goal of doubling bilateral trade to $200 billion by 2032.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi received the UAE leader at the Palam airport and the two leaders discussed, among other issues, the situation in Gaza where U.S. President Donald Trump's peace plan will be tested in the coming weeks as well as the protests in Iran. In a press briefing after the departure of the dignitaries, Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri said


PM Narendra Modi with UAE President Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan during a meeting, at the PM's residence in New Delhi. PTI

the two leaders also discussed the situation in Yemen over which Saudi Arabia's relation with the UAE has resolved.

In response to a question on whether the India-UAE strategic defence partnership could drag India into a future conflict scenario in the Gulf region, Mr. Misri said the Letter of Intent was aimed at the "work on concluding a framework agreement for Strategic Defence Partner-

ship". "So I would really characterise it as a natural evolution from the already considerable defence cooperation between the two countries and not necessarily a response to any specific event that may have taken place in the region or of any intent to get involved in a hypothetical future scenario in the region," said Mr. Misri.

There has been greater involvement of Pakistani military in safeguarding

Saudi defence and security interests in the Arabian peninsula and especially in Yemen. The Saudi-Pakistan defence cooperation has intensified since the two countries signed a mutual defence agreement on September 17, 2025.

The Saudi-Pakistan military alliance has been active in the Yemen theatre and that has increased pressure on the UAE.

During the brief visit, the two sides also signed an energy deal involving the Hindustan Petroleum Company Ltd (HPCL) and Abu Dhabi National Oil Company Gas (ADNOC) that will allow purchase of 0.5 Million Metric Tonnes Per Annum (MMPTA) LNG by the HPCL from ADNOC over 10 years starting from 2029.

Another Letter of Intent was signed between the Indian National Space Promotion and Authorisation Centre and the Space Agency of the UAE for the development of space industry in the UAE.


External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar with Poland's Foreign Affairs Minister Radoslaw Sikorski in New Delhi on Monday. PTI

## Foreign Ministers of India, Poland spar over neighbours

**Suhasini Haidar**
NEW DELHI

India and Poland sparred over their respective regional rivals as External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar and Polish Foreign Minister and Deputy Prime Minister Radoslaw Sikorski aired their differences over Pakistan and Russia on Monday as the two Ministers met for talks in New Delhi.

Taking aim at Poland's renewed ties with Pakistan, External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar told visiting Mr. Sikorski that India rejects its partners ties to help "fuel" terrorism in the neighbourhood. Mr. Jaishankar also delivered a severe message to the visiting dignitary about the European Union's sanctions against India's trade and oil imports from Russia, calling it "selective targeting".

In another opening remarks at Hyderabad House, Mr. Jaishankar said he wanted to "discuss some of [Mr. Sikorski's] recent travels to the region", a direct reference to the Polish FM's visit to Pakistan in October 2025, where he had met Pakistan's top leadership. The visit to Pakistan by Mr. Sikorski appears to have upset the government as it came a few months after the India-Pakistan conflict in May.

"Poland should display zero tolerance for terrorism and not help fuel the terrorist infrastructure in our neighbourhood," Mr. Jaishankar said.

Speaking to reporters after the meeting at Hydera-

bad House, Mr. Sikorski said that the conversation about India and Poland's respective regions had been "frank", and said that while the two sides agreed on concerns over terrorism, India's participation in "Zapad-2025" military exercises in Russia and Belarus was seen as "threatening".

"We all have regional concerns and we all have neighbours, and with neighbours you have opportunities and challenges," Mr. Sikorski said, adding that on terrorism India and Poland are of "one mind".

"We also have concerns. India took part in the Zapad exercises in Russia that we find threatening," he stated.

The exchange of differences between Delhi and Warsaw was seen as unusual given that the two countries have been improving relations in recent years, and India and the European Union are close to a major trade agreement next week.

During talks, Mr. Jaishankar turned to the issue of India's imports of Russian oil that he said Mr. Sikorski had been speaking about "publicly" during his visit. In Jaipur on Monday, the Polish Foreign Minister had said that he was "pleased" that India had cut its purchase of Russian oil.

"I have repeatedly underlined that the selective targeting of India is both unfair and unjustified. I do so again today," Mr. Jaishankar said.

## SC gives two-week deadline for sanction to prosecute Vijay Shah

**The Hindu Bureau**
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Monday gave the Madhya Pradesh government two weeks to decide on a request for sanction to prosecute State Minister Kunwar Vijay Shah, accused of making disparaging remarks against Army officer Colonel Sofiya Qureshi.

Ms. Qureshi had briefed the media during Operation Sindoor. The top court had taken serious exception against Mr. Shah, setting up a special investigation team (SIT) to probe the case against him.


Vijay Shah

The request for prosecution sanction was made to the State government in August 2025.

"We are in January 2026 now," Chief Justice of India Surya Kant addressed senior advocate Sridhar Potraraju, appearing for the

State. Mr. Pottaraju said the hold-up may be due to the fact that Mr. Shah's present petition seeking quashing for the FIR against him was pending in the highest court of the land.

Senior advocate Maninder Singh, for Mr. Shah, said he had apologised online. Mr. Singh said his client was cooperating with the investigation.

"You keep on cooperating. It is too late now for all that [apology]," Chief Justice Kant observed heading a three-judge Bench of Justices Dipankar Datta and Joymalya Bagchi.

The Court said the State must file a status report before the next hearing.

In July 2025, the Supreme Court had questioned the nature of the "online" apology issued by Mr. Shah for his remarks against Col. Qureshi.

At the time, the top court had said the Minister was "testing the court's patience".

"What do you mean by an apology like this? He made the statement on the first date itself. We are talking about a public apology. Where is it on record?" the court had asked Mr. Shah's side.

## Responsibilities to be assigned to ex-Agniveers yet to be decided: CISF D-G

**Vijaita Singh**
NEW DELHI

Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) Director-General Praveer Ranjan said on Monday that an internal committee had been formed to determine the responsibilities that would be assigned to former Agniveers who are absorbed into the force.

The officer said they were awaiting instructions from the Union Home Ministry on the reservation percentage for Agniveers in the CISF and also on the pattern of reservation to be followed, whether horizontal or vertical.

The government launched the Agnipath recruitment scheme in June 2022, under which candidates are enrolled into the Army, the Navy, and the Air Force as Agniveers for four years. Of them, 25% are retained after four years, while the remaining 75% exit the services.

Subsequently, the Home Ministry announced that 10% of all vacancies in the Central Armed Police Forces would be reserved for Agniveers who have completed four years of ser-


The CISF is awaiting instructions from the Home Ministry on the reservation percentage for Agniveers. SHENBAG TAMILS

vice. The first batch of such Agniveers is set to exit the services in the coming months. The Hindu earlier reported that the Ministry had decided to enhance reservation for former Agniveers in the Group C posts of all CAPFs from the existing 10% to 50%.

On December 19, 2025, the Ministry notified that 50% vacant constable posts in the Border Security Force would be reserved for ex-Agniveers.

Mr. Ranjan said the Ministry had decided to assimilate Agniveers into the force. "We are looking into the induction protocol. They can be used for port security. The Agniveers in Navy can be used to ensure the seaports. We will make

a blueprint and a committee is studying the aspects," Mr. Ranjan said.

**'Coastal cyclothon'**

Briefing about the "Vande Mataram Coastal Cyclothon 2026", he said Indian coasts were "very porous" and there was a need to reach out to coastal communities that would help in gathering information and strengthen national security.

Two teams of 130 CISF personnel will cycle along 6,553 kilometre of coastline covering 72 districts to sensitise local people about the threats emanating from the smuggling of drugs, weapons and explosives, said Sonia Narang, Inspector-General, CISF.

## Bihar govt. is shielding the accused in NEET aspirant's death case: Cong.

**Amit Bhelari**
PATNA

Congress workers on Monday staged a protest in Patna against the Bihar government, alleging lapses in investigation into the death of a National Eligibility-cum-Entrance Test (NEET) aspirant in the State capital.

A large number of Congress workers, led by Bihar Congress in-charge Krishna Allavaru, and the party's State president Rajesh Ram, gathered near the Income Tax Crossing, holding placards and raising slogans against Chief Minister Nitish Kumar and the police. They also burnt an effigy of the Chief Minister.

The Congress leaders alleged that even girls preparing for competitive exams were not safe under the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) rule in Bihar. They claimed that the government was protecting the people responsible for the heinous crime in the girls' hostel and the police's actions were questionable.

The 16-year-old girl from Bihar's Jehanabad district was found in an unconscious state on January 6 in the girl's hostel in Patna.


Congress workers protest following the alleged rape and murder of a NEET student in Patna on Monday. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

She died in a private hospital during treatment five days later on January 11. Later the post-mortem report confirmed sexual violence.

Leading the protest, Mr. Allavaru said the situation for women and girls in every State was worsening under the NDA government and there was a constant atmosphere of fear with regard to the safety of female students. "Samrat Chaudhary, Deputy Chief Minister and Home Minister, only makes statements in the media about law and order and bulldozer action, but the reality is that even the State capital Patna is not safe for our women and girls, and the situation in other districts is at the mercy of God," Mr. Allavaru said.

Mr. Allavaru questioned the delay in filing the First Information Report and the release of the hostel operator after questioning.

Mr. Ram on the other hand said a major incident could occur in a posh area of the capital, and yet the police had not arrested the accused. He demanded answers from the government regarding the failure to arrest the hostel operators.

"The hospital administration and doctors attempted to destroy evidence and yet the perpetrators have not been arrested. Why has the hospital not been sealed yet? These questions remain unanswered. Under the NDA rule in Bihar, the safety of women, girls, and or-

dinary citizens is left to God," Mr. Ram said.

Leader of the Legislative Council, Madan Mohan Jha, asked the Bihar government why the investigation was proceeding slowly or attempts were being made to suppress the case.

Mr. Jha also alleged whether the government was trying to protect the influential accused. "If the accused were being given time to destroy evidence and manage the case, this reflects the true state of law and order in the State," he added.

Additional Director General (ADG) of Criminal Investigation Department (CID) Paras Nath told reporters that it might take five to six days for the Forensic Science Laboratory (FSL) report in the case.

Asked when the report would be shared, Mr. Nath said, "Until the entire investigation process is complete, the official report cannot be shared. The DNA report, in particular, takes time."

He added that the FSL team had conducted a detailed investigation at the hostel by visiting the PO (Place of Occurrence) to examine the site closely and collect evidence.

## There are four triggers of litigation, says Justice Datta

**Krishnadas Rajagopal**
NEW DELHI

Violence, greed, desire and anger have become the four triggers of modern litigation in India, Justice Dipankar Datta orally observed in the Supreme Court during the hearing of a land deal case on Monday.

"Hinsa (violence), lobha (greed), kama (desire) and krodha (anger) are the triggers for litigation now," Justice Datta said. The judge was part of a Bench headed by Chief Justice of India Surya Kant, who said it was "absolutely true".

The Bench was hearing a petition filed by the Yamuna Expressway Industrial Development Authority against Laureous Mega Projects Private Limited.

Justice Datta's remarks came after the Chief Justice observed that officials were "hand in glove" with private builders in the subversion of land laws.

"Please introspect… lobha has gone up to such an extent that it has become unmanageable. We [the Bench] have no control over either citizens, we cannot give them a mandamus to abstain from hinsa or lobha," Justice Datta said.

# India signs Letter of Intent to elevate defence ties with UAE

**The signing of the pact comes amid increasing Saudi-Pakistan defence cooperation in the Arabian peninsula and especially in Yemen; the two sides also ink energy deal during UAE President's visit**

**Kallol Bhattacherjee**
NEW DELHI

PM Narendra Modi with UAE President Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan during a meeting, at the PM's residence in New Delhi. PTI

Against the backdrop of growing military tension in the Gulf region, the United Arab Emirates and India signed a "Letter of Intent for a Bilateral Strategic Defence Partnership" on Monday. The Letter of Intent was sealed during the three-hour visit by the President of the United Arab Emirates, Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, when the two sides set a goal of doubling bilateral trade to $200 billion by 2032.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi received the UAE leader at the Palam airport and the two leaders discussed, among other issues, the situation in Gaza where U.S. President Donald Trump's peace plan will be tested in the coming weeks as well as the protests in Iran. In a press briefing after the departure of the dignitaries, Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri said the two leaders also discussed the situation in Yemen over which Saudi Arabia's relation with the UAE has nosedived.

In response to a question on whether the India-UAE strategic defence partnership could drag India into a future conflict scenario in the Gulf region, Mr. Misri said the Letter of Intent was aimed at the "work on concluding a framework agreement for Strategic Defence Partnership". "So I would really characterise it as a natural evolution from the already considerable defence cooperation between the two countries and not necessarily a response to any specific event that may have taken place in the region or of any intent to get involved in a hypothetical future scenario in the region," said Mr. Misri.

There has been greater involvement of Pakistani military in safeguarding Saudi defence and security interests in the Arabian peninsula and especially in Yemen. The Saudi-Pakistan defence cooperation has intensified since the two countries signed a mutual defence agreement on September 17, 2025.

The Saudi-Pakistan military alliance has been active in the Yemen theatre and that has increased pressure on the UAE.

During the brief visit, the two sides also signed an energy deal involving the Hindustan Petroleum Company Ltd (HPCL) and Abu Dhabi National Oil Company Gas (ADNOC) that will allow purchase of 0.5 Million Metric Tonnes Per Annum (MMPTA) LNG by the HPCL from ADNOC over 10 years starting from 2028.

Another Letter of Intent was signed between the Indian National Space Promotion and Authorisation Centre and the Space Agency of the UAE for the development of space industry in the UAE.

| Aspect | English | श्रारह |
|---|---|---|
| **Total Bilateral Trade** | ~USD **85–90 billion** annually (recent years) | चण्क्रण तड़–थज़श घा म्छ्मघ अक्षु्ह |
| **India's Exports to UAE** | Petroleum products, gems & jewellery, engineering goods, food items | ह्ड्ड्म्थागरव क्द्ृवक् घ्ट्घष क्रज़ड्र रू्ह्र.गप्ण्भा ऑछ्क ढेवॉ ह व्रक्ष |
| **India's Imports from UAE** | Crude oil, LPG, gold, petrochemicals | ड़ व्र ल्ख LPG, क्ुक्ष्रच ह्ख्रझ्क्ष्वड़ च |
| **Trade Balance** | Generally **favourable to UAE** due to oil imports | ल्ख ष व्रल डु़ड्वघर् UAE इड़ ह्ल रक्ळ |

| Aspect | English | श्रामह |
|---|---|---|
| **Agreement Name** | Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) | व्रहड ष्श्रक्क्ष द्व्रप्ड्व्रघ्क्ष द्र्खप्ऴल्व्रज (CEPA) |
| **Signed** | 2022 | 2022 |
| **Objective** | Reduce tariffs, boost trade & investments | द्स्द् त्ह्रव्ष्र व्रह्व्रघ त्र श्रक्क्र् प्रव्ष्र |
| **Trade Target** | USD **100 billion** in goods trade | त्रक्ष व्रह्व्रघ झ़ज़१ घ्र म्ठ्व्रघ त्रव् |
| **Special Focus** | MSMEs, services, digital trade | MSME, द्ठ्रक्क्ठ् श्र्भ्र ह्त्र व्रह्व्रघ |

| Aspect | English | श्रामह |
|---|---|---|
| UAE Investment in India | Infrastructure, ports, energy, real estate | १ अर्ट्रघर्ट्ष्वा॰ ।कृघ्राएव्रण॰ र न्क्रा॰ ।ष्रागच ड्क्रू |
| Indian Investment in UAE | IT, construction, hospitality, retail | IT,श्र.रक्राक्र् ॰ ए श्र ल्हू॰ द्क्क्रघ्र |
| Services Trade | IT services, tourism, finance | IT द्क्रुक्रक्रि॰ ह्रगक्रष ॰ श्राट्ट् |
| Diaspora Role | ~3.5 million Indians in UAE | UAE रक्रूट 3.5 श्रक्क्रग्रष क्रक्रघ्रल्हग्र |

1. What happened / क्या हुआ

- India and the United Arab Emirates signed a **Letter of Intent (LoI)** to work towards a **Bilateral Strategic Defence Partnership**.

  भारत और संयुक्त अरब अमीरात (UAE) ने **Letter of Intent (LoI)** पर हस्ताक्षर किए, ताकि **Bilateral Strategic Defence Partnership** की दिशा में काम किया जा सके।

2. Context / पृष्ठभूमि

- The signing is seen against **rising military tension in the Gulf region** and **increasing Saudi–Pakistan defence cooperation**, especially linked to the Yemen theatre.

  यह कदम **खाड़ी क्षेत्र में बढ़ते सैन्य तनाव** और **सऊदी–पाकिस्तान रक्षा सहयोग** (खासकर यमन संदर्भ) की पृष्ठभूमि में देखा जा रहा है।

3. Visit details / यात्रा का संदर्भ

- The LoI was sealed during UAE President **Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan's** short visit to India.

  यह LoI UAE राष्ट्रपति **शेख मोहम्मद बिन जायद अल नहयान** की भारत यात्रा के दौरान तय हुआ।

4. Wider agenda discussed / व्यापक मुद्दे

- Leaders discussed regional developments including **Gaza** and **Iran**, and the situation around **Yemen** was also referenced in briefings.

  नेताओं ने **ग़ाज़ा** और **ईरान** सहित क्षेत्रीय घटनाक्रमों पर चर्चा की, तथा **यमन** की स्थिति का भी उल्लेख हुआ।

5. India's stand on defence LoI / रक्षा LoI पर भारत का पक्ष

- India's official briefing indicated the LoI is meant to build a **framework for strategic defence cooperation**, described as a **natural progression** of existing cooperation—not an intent to be drawn into future conflicts.

  आधिकारिक ब्रीफिंग के अनुसार यह LoI **रणनीतिक रक्षा सहयोग के फ्रेमवर्क** हेतु है; इसे मौजूदा सहयोग की **स्वाभाविक प्रगति** बताया गया, न कि भविष्य के संघर्षों में शामिल होने का संकेत।

6. Trade goal / व्यापार लक्ष्य

- India and UAE reiterated the aim to take bilateral trade to **about $200 billion by 2032**.

  भारत–UAE ने **2032 तक द्विपक्षीय व्यापार लगभग 200 अरब डॉलर** तक ले जाने के लक्ष्य को दोहराया।

7. Energy deal signed / ऊर्जा समझौता

- An energy agreement was signed involving **HPCL** and **ADNOC Gas** for LNG supply: **0.5 MMTPA** for **10 years**, starting **2028** (as reported).

  **HPCL** और **ADNOC Gas** के बीच LNG आपूर्ति से जुड़ा समझौता: **0.5 MMTPA, 10 वर्ष, 2028 से** (रिपोर्ट अनुसार)।

8. Space cooperation LoI / अंतरिक्ष सहयोग

- Another LoI was signed between **IN-SPACe** and the **UAE Space Agency** to support development of the space industry (as reported).

  **IN-SPACe** और **UAE Space Agency** के बीच अंतरिक्ष उद्योग विकास हेतु एक और LoI (रिपोर्ट अनुसार) हुआ।

- **With reference to India–UAE ties consider the following statements:**

- India and UAE signed a Letter of Intent to work towards a Bilateral Strategic Defence Partnership.

- During the visit, an energy deal involved HPCL and ADNOC Gas for supply of 0.5 MMTPA LNG for 10 years starting 2028.

- Another Letter of Intent was reported between IN-SPACe and the UAE Space Agency related to space industry development.

- The trade target mentioned was to take bilateral trade to about $300 billion by 2032.

- Which of the statements given above are correct?
(a) 1 and 4 only
(b) 1, 2 and 3 only
(c) 1, 2, 3 and 4
(d) 2 and 3 only

| Exam (common pattern) | Asked area (repeated in PYQs) | PYQ-style question (practice) | Correct answer |
|---|---|---|---|
| RRB | West Asia mapping | UAE's capital is: (a) Dubai (b) Abu Dhabi (c) Sharjah (d) Al Ain | **Abu Dhabi** |
| UPSC/PSC/SSC | Strait & sea-lanes | Strait of Hormuz connects: (a) Red Sea–Med Sea (b) Persian Gulf–Gulf of Oman (c) Black Sea–Aegean (d) Caspian–Aral | **Persian Gulf–Gulf of Oman** |
| Banking/SSC/Railway | Energy basics | LNG stands for: (a) Liquefied Natural Gas (b) Liquid Nitrogen Gas (c) Light Natural Gas (d) Low Net Gas | **Liquefied Natural Gas** |
| UPSC/PSC | International relations | "Strategic partnership" usually involves: (a) only cultural ties (b) long-term cooperation across multiple sectors (c) only tourism (d) only sports | **Long-term multi-sector cooperation** |
| Defence/UPSC | Security in Gulf | A major reason Gulf matters to India is: (a) timber trade (b) energy imports + Indian diaspora + sea-lanes (c) polar research (d) desert farming | **Energy + diaspora + sea-lanes** |

## A Centrist lens on 'illegal immigration'

**Anando Bhakto**
*covers national politics, Kashmir and elections in the Hindi heartland*

The Special Intensive Revision (SIR), which omitted nearly 6.5 crore electors from draft rolls of nine States and three Union Territories, has triggered widespread procedural disputes. The Opposition appears determined to seize this moment to move forward with its "vote chori" campaign on which its politics has exhaustively relied.

**The Opposition's mistake**

But it will be naïve to mistake the people's annoyance for anger. Despite the Election Commission of India's low credibility, and discontent over its shoddy handling of the SIR, few buy the Opposition's account, which depicts elections as fraudulently manufactured to suit the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), and the SIR as a tool to perfect that machination.

The overwhelming sense is that a voter list revision is necessary to remove dead, shifted, and duplicate voters. The approval for the SIR also draws from mobilisation of emotion over the vexing question of 'illegal immigrants', with verifiable incidents, tendentious assertions, and inflammatory rhetoric creating a tangle that threatens to dominate Indian politics, particularly electoral possibilities in the northern States.

When Home Minister Amit Shah said recently in poll-bound West Bengal that "even Kolkata is facing a threat from infiltrators," it echoed the telling apprehensions of a sizeable section of Bengalis. The Opposition is loath to recognise the potency of the issue, often deploying lacerating wit to evade the question. Trinamool Congress leader Mahua Moitra's jibe — "Who wants to come to India?" — is an example.

This behavioural pattern tinged with sourness — either you agree with me, or you are a bigot — has been counterproductive for liberal parties the world over. It was the European Union's uncritical support for wide-open borders that precipitated the steady trickle of voters of the centre-left to populist, anti-immigration parties, more notably in Germany, Italy, Hungary and Poland.

The Opposition's denial of undocumented immigrants in the face of evidence alienates people. Last November, several hundred Bangladeshi nationals were intercepted by Border Security Force personnel at the Hakimpur check post in West Bengal, allegedly attempting to return to Bangladesh. In December, 19 Bangladeshis were among the 511 people arrested in Uttarakhand under Operation Kalraini.

The Opposition sees acting on undocumented immigrants as corrosive to universal human rights. But national security concerns are not corrosive; fulminations aimed at hijacking them are. Opposition leaders show proclivity to confuse illegal immigration with immigration, housing everyone who talks about border security as foot-soldiers of the Right tasked with manufacturing xenophobia. While reviewing the 2024 U.S. presidential election, I found that in the battleground States, this boxing triggered negative sentiment. The anger was more palpable among immigrants who came to the U.S. legally. Donald Trump's share of Hispanic votes climbed from 32% in 2020 to 46% in 2024.

The more the Opposition chastises people who talk about border security, the easier it gets for right wing provocateurs to depict immigration as chaotic, and build consensus for violent crackdown. A June 2025 report by the European Policy Centre emphasised that conspiracy theories, such as those surrounding population replacement, find acceptance as they provide "a sense of control" and "understanding" for individuals who otherwise felt powerless and unheard.

A reason why the BJP under Prime Minister Narendra Modi was able to monopolise nationalism was because in the decade preceding 2014, the Congress nearly jettisoned expositions of national pride — at least the animating kind invoking India's spiritual traditions and heritage — as though they were impediments to secularism. That misjudged fear induces its studied silence on the immigration issue.

**A nuanced conversation**

In June 2025, Parliament passed the Immigration and Foreigners Bill, to regulate the entry and stay of foreigners in a tech-driven, time-bound manner; the Opposition staged a walkout. A prudent course would have been to build a more nuanced conversation on immigration, reflecting its complexity and multifaceted nature, delineating both the challenges and the benefits it brings along. It must focus on legal work authorisations, spending versus contributions, and negotiations with allied countries for easing refugee intakes, as Italy's Georgia Meloni attempted with Albania.

In Europe, the Left drastically reoriented its politics to sync with public attitudes on immigration. In Denmark, Social Democrats led by Mette Frederiksen passed a law allowing asylum claims to be processed and refugees to be resettled in partner countries such as Rwanda. This ebbed the appeal of the anti-immigration Danish People's Party. It plummeted to one seat in the 2024 European Parliament election.

The Congress is mistaken that whatever weighs heavily on the minds of its think tankers weighs on the minds of the public. Its preoccupation with "saving" Indian democracy before every election bears that out. It misses the point that the people are divided on where the threat to democracy comes from. People have less anxiety over weakening institutions and "vote chori" and more over the alleged immigrant influx. Centrist politics must reconstruct itself. An aptitude to reckon with people's evasive issues and give a positive spin to them is imperative to that effort.

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## The rising cost of poll promises

### The AIADMK is promising more freebies instead of promoting fiscal prudence

STATE OF PLAY

**T. Ramakrishnan**
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With Tamil Nadu going to Assembly polls in April-May, AIADMK general secretary Edappadi K. Palaniswami recently made some promises. He announced an expansion of the monthly assistance scheme for women, promising to provide ₹2,000 per month to the woman head of every ration card-holding family; and the expansion of the free travel scheme, which is currently limited to women, to cover men as well. Mr. Palaniswami termed the promises as the "first dose", with more to be made in the manifesto.

In response, the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK) regime deployed two Ministers – S. Regupathy and T.R.B. Rajaa – to criticise Mr. Palaniswami for having "copied the succeeded schemes" of the government. Mr. Rajaa, who is also a member of the DMK's election manifesto committee, said that the country would turn its attention to the DMK's manifesto once it was out, "as was the case in the past." Indeed, Mr. Palaniswami's announcement may prompt the DMK to come out with many other assurances at a time when the State government is struggling to sustain its welfare and popular schemes. As the Election Commission of India is expected to announce the poll schedule in late February, the incumbent government has time to launch more popular schemes.

If the AIADMK chief's two offers are implemented, it would mean an additional burden of ₹40,000 crore annually. In other words, these two components alone would be around 11% of the projected revenue receipts of the State for 2026-27. There is a qualitative difference between the DMK's Kalaignar Magalir Urimai Thittam, which provides ₹1,000, and the AIADMK's proposed scheme. Kudumba Vilakku Thittam, which will offer ₹2,000. While the first scheme covers 1.3 crore people because of some conditions, the second will include 2.23 crore.

In addition, this year's estimated expenditure for the free bus ride is ₹3,600 crore. Its expanded coverage would double the subsidy bill.

For about 15 years, until the mid-2000s, the two parties had a different approach while they were in power. As economic reforms were unveiled in 1991, the AIADMK and the DMK favoured greater space for the private sector, shrinking the role of the government and its enterprises, and experimenting with the gradual reduction of subsidies. In 2002-03, the AIADMK regime led by Jayalalithaa withdrew free power supply for farmers and fixed a two-slab pricing system for rice supplied through the public distribution system. However, she rolled back these schemes when her party performed disastrously in the 2004 general elections.

Since then, the DMK and the AIADMK have been aggressively resorting to competitive populism. In 2006, the DMK said that it would reduce the price for rice supplied through PDS uniformly to ₹2 per kg, distribute free colour television sets to all ration cardholders, and waive off crop loans taken through cooperative societies for all categories of farmers. In September 2008, the regime led by M. Karunanidhi cut the price of rice further to ₹1 per kg. In 2011, the AIADMK government went one step further by providing 20 kg of rice free for all ration cardholders. It also supplied a table fan, a mixer, and a grinder as free bies to every woman covered by the ration card system. In May 2016, Jayalalithaa retained power. Since then, about 2 crore domestic consumers of electricity have been getting free power up to 100 units bimonthly. In 2021, the DMK promised a monthly basic income scheme for women. Those who claim to be alternatives to the Dravidian majors are also no exception to the freebies culture, which seems to have become an all-India phenomenon.

Mr. Palaniswami has not committed to the restoration of the Old Pension Scheme (OPS) for State government staff. Yet his promises have caused concern among those who follow the State's financial position, which are under strain owing to several domestic and international events. Besides, the DMK regime announced the Tamil Nadu Assured Pension Scheme, effective January 1, as a partial fulfilment of its electoral promise to revert to the OPS. This will, at least initially, further cause stress to the State's finances.

With his promises, the AIADMK leader appears to have strengthened the logic of advocates of freebies when he should have promoted the agenda of fiscal prudence instead. This is something Tamil Nadu needs.

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## Wikipedia has 3,000 iPhones worth of content

### It would take 38 years of continuous reading to finish every English article on the site

Wikipedia has amassed 775 terabytes of data, equivalent to the storage capacity of 3,000 iPhones, according to a recent Pew Research Center report. The site hosts over 7 million English articles, the language with the highest volume of content (**Chart 1**).

As of 2025, Wikipedia features articles in 342 languages. However, much of the content in other languages may be generated by automated bots translating English entries. Cebuano — a language spoken in the southern Philippines — is a prime example; the vast majority of the millions of articles in Cebuano was created by bots.

Wikipedia averages 508 million daily views, with nearly half of that site traffic directed specifically towards the English edition (**Chart 2**). Remarkably, web crawlers, automated bots, and non-human agents generated 88 billion page views throughout 2025. Meanwhile, organic human page views declined by 8% year-over-year during October 2025, likely influenced by automated summaries.

The Wikipedia article on U.S. President Donald Trump was the most viewed page between 2015 and 2025 (**Chart 3**). During this decade, 46% of the most-viewed English Wikipedia articles focused on prominent personalities, while 14% involved the FIFA World Cup, and 31% were dedicated to TV shows or movies (**Chart 4**). The list of WWE personnel was the most frequently edited information on the platform (**Chart 5**).

The biography of American political activist Charlie Kirk received 18 million visits on September 10, 2025, the day he was killed. This is the highest single-day viewership for any page in the last 28 years. The article covering the 2008 London Bombings holds the record for the most edits in a single day.

### How big is Wikipedia?
The charts were sourced from the Pew Research Center

**CHART 1:** Number of Wikipedia articles by language over time (in million)

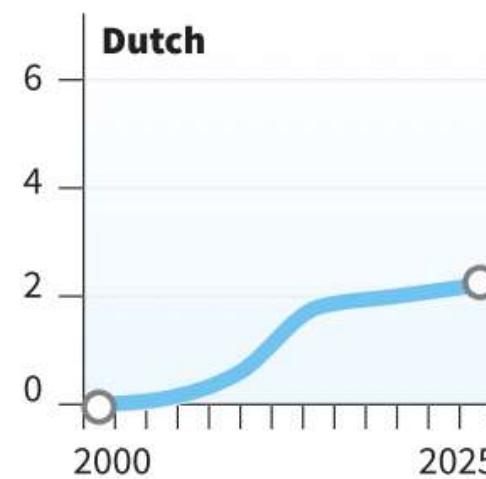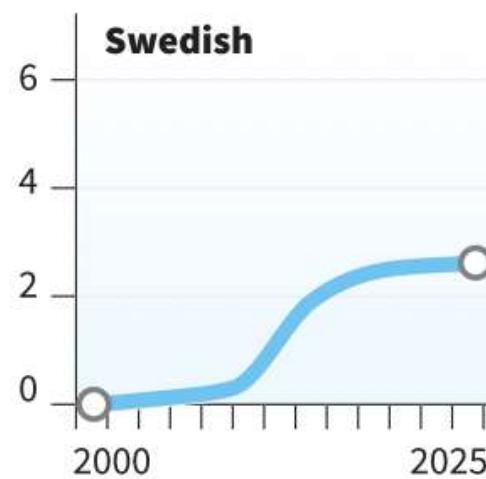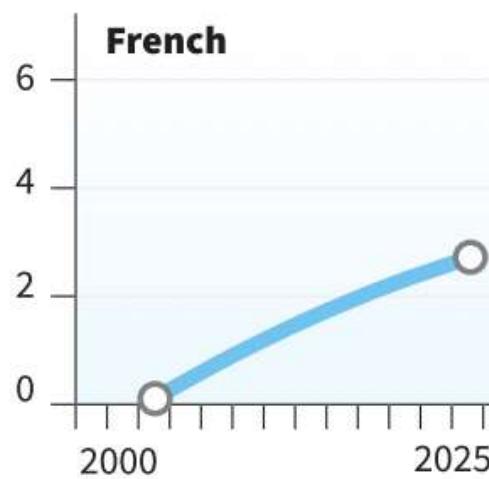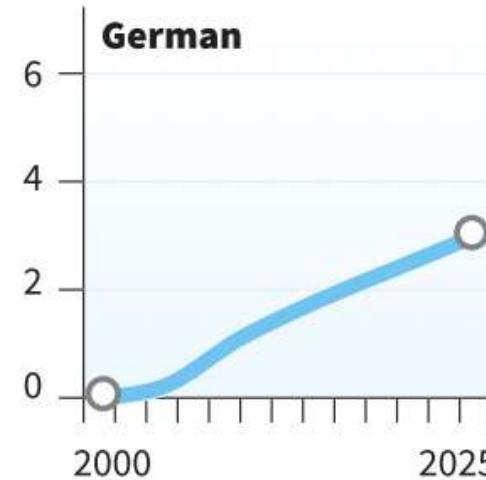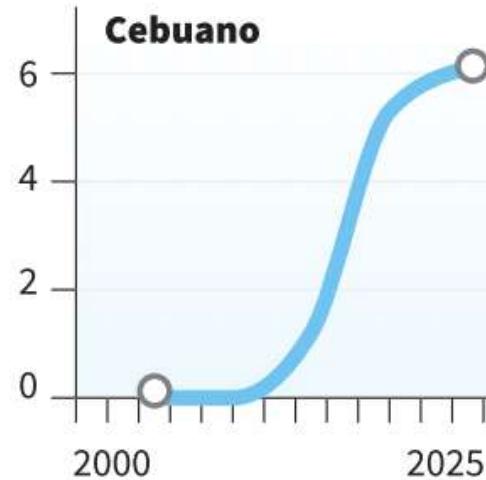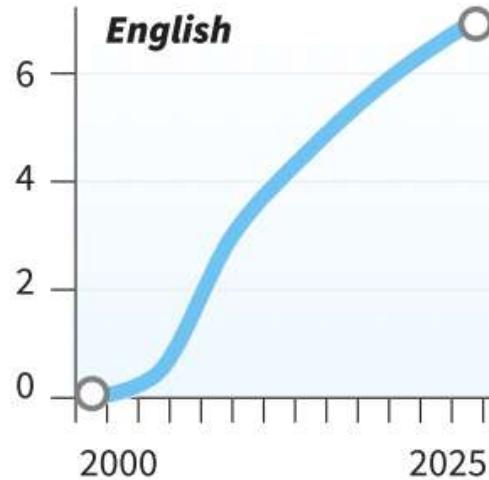English, Cebuano, German, French, Swedish, Dutch

**CHART 2:** Percentage of all Wikipedia page views of articles written in the following languages (since 2015)

English, Japanese, Spanish, German, Russian, French, Italian, Mandarin Chinese

**CHART 3:** Most viewed English language Wikipedia articles, 2015-2025

Cristiano Ronaldo 186, U.S. 187, Joe Biden 111, Donald Trump 295, Elizabeth II 106, ChatGPT 113, India 124, Elon Musk 103, Lionel Messi 121

List of Marvel Cinematic Universe films 116

**CHART 5:** Most edited English language Wikipedia articles, 2015-2025, by total revisions

List of WWE personnel, Donald Trump, List of current UFC fighters, List of Netflix original programming, United States, George W. Bush, ATP Tour records, Michael Jackson

Legalism (Chinese philosophy) Wikipedia

**CHART 4:** Most viewed English Wikipedia article topics each month, 2015-2025

Person, Others, Movie/ TV, Events

July 15 ... July 25

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**FIFTY YEARS AGO** JANUARY 20, 1976

### Madurai Mahal to be converted into museum

Madras, Jan. 19: The Tamil Nadu Government has sanctioned the opening of a historical museum in the Thirumalai Naicken Mahal in Madurai. The museum will lay special emphasis on the art, culture and history of South Tamil Nadu, once known as the South Pandya Nadu.

Extensive repairs are being carried out to the Mahal by the State Department of Archaeology, to which the Palace was recently handed over. Built by the illustrious ruler (Thirumalai Naick) in the first half of the 17th Century AD, the surviving portion is believed to be only a fourth of its original size. Another part was pulled down by a successor to construct an exactly similar palace at Tiruchi – the demolished material was carried from Madurai – though the objective was never realised. The cupolas of the original palace were gilded with gold, it is stated.

The British Government which was interested in preserving the Mahal for posterity spent as much as Rs. two lakhs even 100 years ago, to repair the decaying portions and preventing the break up of the structures. The Mahal later housed the Madurai and Ramanathapuram District Courts, and the Public Works Department was attending to the Mahal's maintenance.

The Mahal had been brought back to its shape, Dr. R. Nagaswami, Director, said to-day. Another important work was to get rid of the thousands of bats, adopting special techniques.

**A HUNDRED YEARS AGO** JANUARY 20, 1926

### Campaign against theatre queue

Rugby, Mid. Jan 19/20: Of late a campaign has been waged against theatre queue, and a Society has been formed aiming at its abolition. It appears that official action has now been taken in the matter. Lord Cromer, the Lord Chamberlain, by virtue of the control which he exercises over London theatres, has asked their proprietors to notify queues when there is no possibility of obtaining seats. His action will remove one of the chief grievance of the theatre-goers, namely, that they often wait in queue ignorant of the fact that the queue already numbers more persons than can be accommodated.

As of 2025, Wikipedia features articles in 342 languages. However, much of the content in other languages may be generated by automated bots translating English entries. Cebuano – a language spoken in the southern Philippines – is a prime example; the vast majority of the millions of articles in Cebuano was created by bots.

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The biography of American political activist Charlie Kirk received 15 million visits on September 10, 2025, the day he was killed. This is the highest single-day viewership for any page in the last 25 years. The article covering the 2005 London Bombings holds the record for the most edits in a single day.

The charts were sourced from the Pew Research Center

**CHART 1:** Number of Wikipedia articles by language over time (in million)

**CHART 5:** Most edited English language Wikipedia articles, 2015-2025, by total revisions



| List of WWE personnel | Donald Trump | List of current UFC fighters | List of Netflix original programming |
| United States | George W. Bush | | ATP Tour records |
| | | | Michael Jackson |
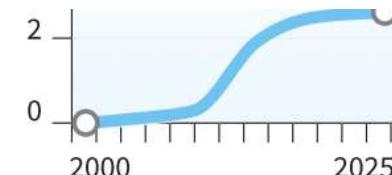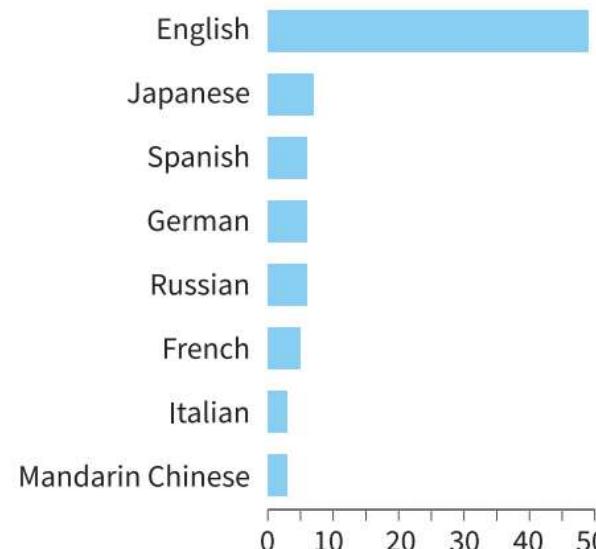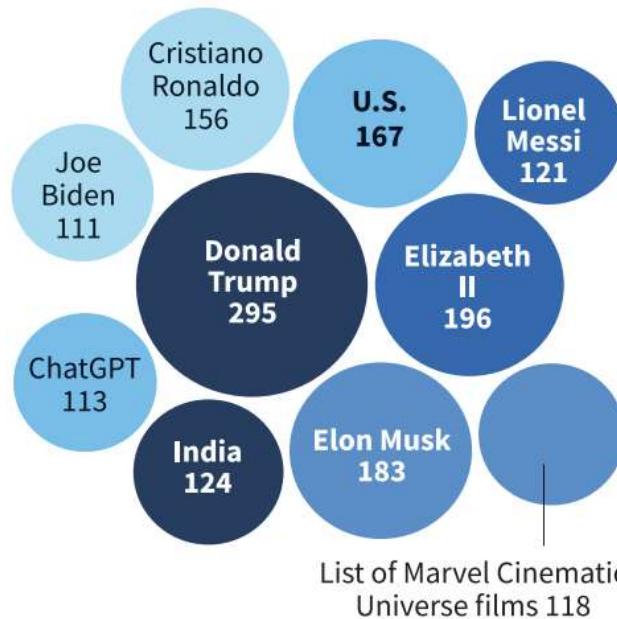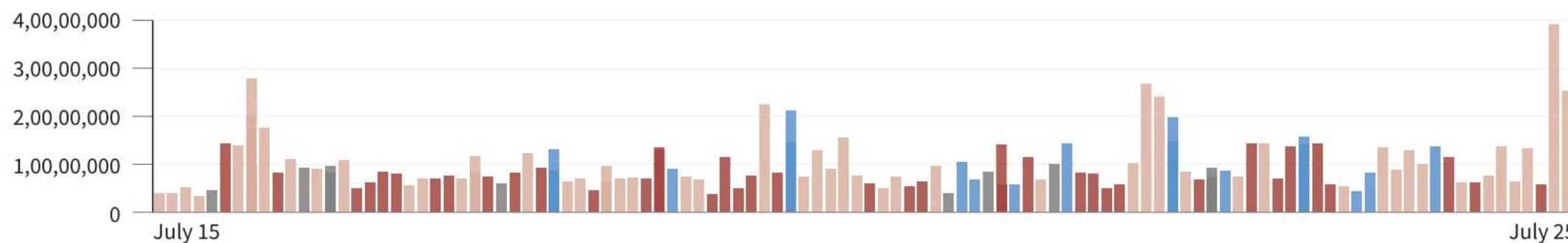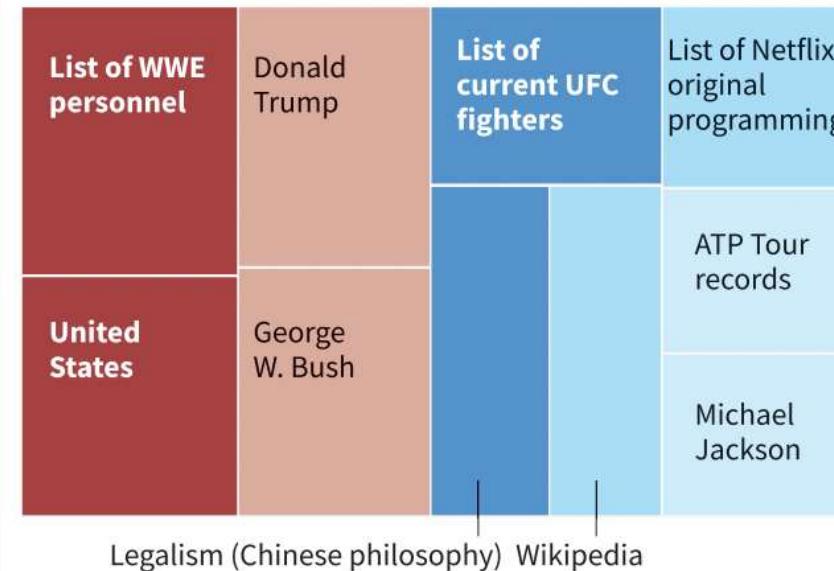
Legalism (Chinese philosophy)    Wikipedia

*Many of the pages with the most revisions are also lists of regularly updated information, such as current UFC fighters, Netflix original programming and ATP Tour records.*

*The data for the charts were sourced from the Wikimedia analytics API, accessed by Pew Research Center.*

**CHART 2:** Percentage of all Wikipedia page views of articles written in the following languages (since 2015)

English
Japanese
Spanish
German
Russian
French
Italian
Mandarin Chinese

0  10  20  30  40  50

**CHART 3:** Most viewed English language Wikipedia articles, 2015-2025

Cristiano Ronaldo 156
U.S. 167
Lionel Messi 121
Joe Biden 111
Donald Trump 295
Elizabeth II 196
ChatGPT 113
India 124
Elon Musk 183
List of Marvel Cinematic Universe films 118

**CHART 4:** Most viewed English Wikipedia article topics each month, 2015-2025

Person    Others    Movie/ TV    Events

4,00,00,000
3,00,00,000
2,00,00,000
1,00,00,000
0

July 15                                                                July 25

2000    2025
2000    2025
2000    2025

# India 16th in Responsible Nations' Index

**SINGAPORE RANKED FIRST** and India 16th in the Responsible Nations' Index (RNI) launched by former president Ram Nath Kovind in New Delhi on Monday. Switzerland was second, Denmark third and the Central African Republic stood last on the 154-nation index.

India's neighbour Pakistan was 90th. China was ranked 68th and the US 66th, according to the RNI, which is a first-of-its-kind global index that evaluates countries based on how responsibly they exercise power towards their citizens, global community and the planet. **—PTI**

1. What the news says / खबर क्या कहती है

- India is ranked **16th** in the **Responsible Nations' Index (RNI)**.

  भारत **Responsible Nations' Index (RNI)** में **16वें** स्थान पर रहा।

2. Who topped & key ranks / टॉप कौन और प्रमुख रैंक

- **Singapore** ranked **1st**, **Switzerland 2nd**, **Denmark 3rd**.

  सिंगापुर पहला, स्विट्ज़रलैंड दूसरा, डेनमार्क तीसरा।

- **Central African Republic** was **last** on the **154-nation** index.

  **154 देशों** की सूची में **Central African Republic** सबसे **अंतिम** रहा।

3. India's neighbourhood & major powers (as mentioned) / पड़ोसी व बड़े देश (जैसा लिखा है)

- India's neighbour **Pakistan** ranked **90th**.

  भारत का पड़ोसी **पाकिस्तान 90वें** स्थान पर रहा।

- **China** ranked **68th** and the **US 66th**.

  **चीन 68वाँ** और **अमेरिका 66वाँ** स्थान पर रहा।

4. Launch & what the index measures / लॉन्च और इंडेक्स क्या मापता है

- RNI was launched in New Delhi (reported as launched by former President **Ram Nath Kovind**).

  RNI का लॉन्च नई दिल्ली में हुआ (रिपोर्ट के अनुसार पूर्व राष्ट्रपति **राम नाथ कोविंद** द्वारा)।

- It evaluates countries on how responsibly they exercise power towards **their citizens, the global community, and the planet**.

  यह इंडेक्स देशों को इस आधार पर आंकता है कि वे **अपने नागरिकों, वैश्विक समुदाय, और धरती/पर्यावरण** के प्रति सत्ता/शक्ति का **कितनी जिम्मेदारी से** उपयोग करते हैं।

↓

- **With reference to the Responsible Nations' Index (RNI), consider the following statements:**
- India is ranked 19th in the Responsible Nations' Index.
- Singapore is ranked first, while Switzerland and Denmark are ranked second and third respectively.
- The index evaluates countries based on responsibility towards citizens, the global community and the planet.
- Pakistan was ranked 90th in the index (as mentioned in the report snippet).
- Which of the statements given above are correct?
(a) 1 and 3 only
(b) 1, 2 and 3 only
(c) 2 and 4 only
(d)  2, 3 and 4

# Govt adds 4 new sectors to mandatory greenhouse gas reduction regime

## Emission Intensity Expected To Fall 3-7% By End Of 2027

**Vishwa.Mohan**
@timesofindia.com

**New Delhi:** Three months after bringing four traditionally high-emission sectors such as aluminium, cement, chlor-alkali and pulp and paper into targeted greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions intensity reduction regime, Centre has included four more sectors—petroleum refinery, petrochemicals, textiles and secondary aluminium—in its ambit to help meet specific reduction targets by 2026-27 compared to a 2023-24 baseline.

The rules, notified by environment ministry last week, make it mandatory for as many as 208 industrial units spread across the country to reduce GHG emissions per unit of product (emission intensity), beginning 2025-26.

These industrial units will be liable to pay a penalty for non-compliance. The rules — Greenhouse Gases Emission Intensity Target (Amendment) Rules — have been notified under the compliance mechanism of the Carbon Credit Trading Scheme, 2023.

Among the 208 industrial units are 173 textile units across sectors such as spinning, processing, fibre and composite; 21 petro refineries; 11 petrochemical units; and 3 secondary aluminium units.

PSEs ONGC, Bharat Petroleum, Hindustan Petroleum,



**CLIMATE COMPLIANCE**

Indian Oil and Numaligarh Refineries and large private-sector groups such as Reliance Industries have been covered under petroleum refinery and petrochemicals sectors.

The GEI targets (in tonnes of $CO_2$ equivalent) for 2025-26 have been calculated on a pro-rata basis for the remaining months of the current financial year. Overall reduction till 2026-27 will be in range of 3-7% compared to 2023-24 levels.

In case an industrial unit fails to comply with the GEI target or fails to submit carbon credit certificates equivalent to the shortfall for compliance, Central Pollution Control Board will impose 'environmental compensation' (penalty) for the shortfall.

The penalty will be twice

**The penalty will be twice the average price at which carbon credit certificate is traded during the trading cycle of that compliance year.**

the average price at which carbon credit certificate is traded during the trading cycle of that compliance year. It'll have to be paid within 90 days of the date of the imposition order.

The GEI targets are in sync with India's 'net zero' emission goal of 2070 and will help meet its Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) — climate action target—through the reduction, removal or avoidance of greenhouse gas emissions.

1. What the government did / सरकार ने क्या किया

- The government has **added 4 new sectors** to a **mandatory greenhouse gas (GHG) emission-intensity reduction regime**.

  सरकार ने अनिवार्य GHG (ग्रीनहाउस गैस) emission-intensity घटाने वाले ढांचे में **4 नए सेक्टर** जोड़े हैं।

2. Old + newly added sectors / पहले वाले + नए जोड़े गए सेक्टर

- Earlier covered high-emission sectors included: **aluminium, cement, chlor-alkali, pulp & paper**.

  पहले शामिल उच्च-उत्सर्जन सेक्टर: **एल्युमिनियम, सीमेंट, क्लोर-अल्कली, पल्प-एंड-पेपर**।

- Newly added sectors: **petroleum refinery, petrochemicals, textiles, secondary aluminium**.

  नए जोड़े गए सेक्टर: **पेट्रोलियम रिफाइनरी, पेट्रोकेमिकल्स, टेक्सटाइल्स, सेकेंडरी एल्युमिनियम**।

3. What the target is / लक्ष्य क्या है

- The aim is to reduce **GHG emissions per unit of product (emission intensity)**, starting 2025–26, with specific reduction targets by **2026–27** compared to a **2023–24 baseline**.

  लक्ष्य **उत्पाद की प्रति इकाई GHG उत्सर्जन (emission intensity)** घटाना है; शुरुआत **2025–26** से, और **2023–24 baseline** की तुलना में **2026–27** तक तय कटौती लक्ष्य।

4. Scale of coverage / कवरेज का पैमाना

- The rules make it mandatory for **up to 208 industrial units** across the country.

  नियमों के तहत देशभर में **कुल 208 तक औद्योगिक इकाइयों** पर यह अनिवार्य होगा।

- Break-up mentioned: **173 textile units, 21 petro refineries, 11 petrochemical units, 3 secondary aluminium units**.

  ब्रेक-अप: **173 टेक्सटाइल यूनिट, 21 पेट्रो रिफाइनरी, 11 पेट्रोकेमिकल यूनिट, 3 सेकेंडरी एल्युमिनियम यूनिट**।

5. Legal/Policy framework / कानूनी-नीति ढांचा

- The **Greenhouse Gases Emission Intensity Target (Amendment) Rules** are notified under the compliance mechanism of the **Carbon Credit Trading Scheme, 2023**.

  **Greenhouse Gases Emission Intensity Target (Amendment) Rules** को **Carbon Credit Trading Scheme, 2023** के compliance mechanism के तहत अधिसूचित किया गया है।

6. Expected reduction magnitude / अपेक्षित कटौती

- Overall emission-intensity reduction till **2026–27** is expected in the range of **3–7%** compared to **2023–24 levels**.

  **2026–27** तक कुल emission-intensity में **2023–24** की तुलना में **3–7%** तक कमी का अनुमान है।

7. Compliance & penalty / अनुपालन और दंड

- If a unit fails to meet the **GEI target** or fails to submit **carbon credit certificates** for the shortfall, **CPCB** will impose **"environmental compensation" (penalty)** for the gap.

  यदि कोई इकाई **GEI target** पूरा नहीं करती या कमी के बराबर **carbon credit certificates** जमा नहीं करती, तो **CPCB** कमी पर **"environmental compensation" (पेनल्टी)** लगाएगा।

- The penalty is **twice the average trading price** of the carbon credit certificate in that compliance year's trading cycle, and must be paid within **90 days** of the order.

  पेनल्टी = उस compliance year के trading cycle में carbon credit certificate के **औसत ट्रेडिंग मूल्य का 2 गुना**, और आदेश के **90 दिनों** में भुगतान।

| Term / Concept | Meaning (quick) | Exam angle |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Emission intensity | Emissions **per unit output** (e.g., per tonne product) | Prelims: definition-based MCQ |
| GHG / $CO_2$ equivalent ($CO_2e$) | Different gases converted into a common unit ($CO_2e$) | Data interpretation + climate basics |
| GEI targets | Greenhouse gas **Emission Intensity** targets (sector/unit specific) | Policy mechanism question |
| Carbon credit certificate | Tradable certificate used to cover/offset shortfall | Carbon market + compliance linkage |
| Environmental compensation | Penalty imposed for non-compliance/shortfall | CPCB / compliance enforcement |
| CPCB role (in this news) | Imposes penalty for shortfall under the notified regime | Institutions in environment governance |
| Net-zero 2070 & NDC | Long-term target + Paris Agreement commitments | Mains: "India's climate strategy" |

| Exam | Exam date | Question | Answer |
|---|---|---|---|
| UPSC CSE Prelims | 17 May 2009 | The concept of **carbon credit** originated from which one of the following? (a) Earth Summit, Rio de Janeiro (b) Kyoto Protocol (c) Montreal Protocol (d) G-8 Summit, Heiligendamm | (b) **Kyoto Protocol** |
| UPSC CSE Prelims | 12 June 2011 ([Press Information Bureau]) | Regarding "carbon credits", which statement is **NOT** correct? Options include: "Carbon credits are traded at a price fixed from time to time by UNEP" ( | The **UNEP price-fixing** statement is **NOT correct** |
| UPSC CSE Prelims (GS) | 28 May 2023 ([UPSC]) | Statement-I: Carbon markets are likely to be one of the most widespread tools in the fight against climate change. Statement-II: Carbon markets transfer resources from the private sector to the State. Which option is correct | **Both statements correct, but II is not the correct explanation of I** (Option B) ( |
| State PSC (pattern-based) | Date varies | Emission intensity refers to: (a) total annual emissions (b) emissions per unit output (c) emissions per capita (d) only $CO_2$ emissions | (b) emissions per unit output |
| SSC (pattern-based) | Date varies | Carbon credit is most closely associated with: (a) Kyoto Protocol (b) Basel Convention (c) Ramsar Convention (d) CITES | (a) Kyoto Protocol |
| Banking (pattern-based) | Date varies | "Cap-and-trade" primarily means: (a) fixed tax per tonne (b) cap on emissions + trading of allowances (c) ban on fossil fuels (d) only voluntary donations | (b) cap + trading |
| Railway (pattern-based) | Date varies | $CO_2e$ is used to: (a) convert all gases into $CO_2$ equivalent (b) measure only methane (c) measure ozone (d) measure rainfall | (a) convert into $CO_2$ equivalent |
| Defence (pattern-based) | Date varies | Which body is the main pollution control authority at the central level in India? | **CPCB** |

- **Consider the following statements regarding the mandatory GHG emission-intensity reduction regime (as per the news):**
- Four new sectors added include petroleum refinery, petrochemicals, textiles and secondary aluminium.
- The regime targets reduction of GHG emissions per unit of product (emission intensity) beginning 2025–26.
- Non-compliance can attract "environmental compensation" imposed by CPCB, and the penalty is linked to carbon credit certificate trading prices.
- Overall reduction till 2026–27 is expected to be in the range of 13–17% compared to 2023–24 levels.
- Which of the statements given above are correct?
(a) 1 and 2 only
(b) 1, 2 and 3 only
(c) 2, 3 and 4 only
(d) 1, 2, 3 and 4

# Mumbai to Host India's First City-Led Climate Action Initiative (Mumbai Climate Week 2026)

| Dimension | Key Point (English) | मुख्य बिंदु (अनुवाद) |
|---|---|---|
| Event Name | Mumbai Climate Week 2026 | मुंबई क्लाइमेट वीक 2026 |
| Nature of Initiative | India's **first city-led climate action initiative** | भारत की पहली शहर-नेतृत्व वाली जलवायु कार्रवाई पहल |
| Host City | Mumbai | मुंबई |
| Dates | 17–19 February 2026 (3 days) | 17–19 फरवरी 2026 (3 दिन) |
| Convening Body | Project Mumbai | प्रोजेक्ट मुंबई |
| Core Theme | Climate Action with **Child Rights Lens** | बाल अधिकार दृष्टिकोण के साथ जलवायु कार्रवाई |
| Focus Group | Children and Youth | बच्चे और युवा |
| Type of Solutions | Citizen-driven, community-based climate solutions | नागरिक-संचालित, समुदाय-आधारित जलवायु समाधान |
| Urban Governance Angle | Strengthening local governments in climate planning | जलवायु योजना में स्थानीय सरकारों को मजबूत करना |

# Achieving Climate Goals

**COP26 Panchamitra Plan**

## Non-Fossil Energy Capacity

Achieving 500 GW of non-fossil energy capacity by 2030.

## Renewable Energy Source

Sourcing 50% of energy requirements from renewable sources by 2030.

## Carbon Emission Reduction

Reducing projected carbon emissions by 1 billion tonnes by 2030.

## Economic Carbon Intensity

Lowering carbon intensity of the economy by 45% by 2030.

## Net-Zero Goal

Reaching net-zero emissions by 2070.

ECI Hosts Global Democracy Conference Featuring SIR Initiative (IICDEM 2026)

# Election Commission of India (ECI)

| Aspect | Details (English) | विवरण (हिंदी) |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Constitutional Status | Constitutional body | संवैधानिक निकाय |
| Article | **Article 324** of the Constitution | संविधान का **अनुच्छेद 324** |
| Established | 25 January 1950 | 25 जनवरी 1950 |
| Headquarters | New Delhi | नई दिल्ली |
| Nature | Independent & autonomous authority | स्वतंत्र व स्वायत्त प्राधिकरण |

# Composition & Appointment

| Aspect | English | हिंदी |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Composition | Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) + Election Commissioners (ECs) | मुख्य निर्वाचन आयुक्त + निर्वाचन आयुक्त |
| Current Structure | Multi-member body (since 1989) | बहु-सदस्यीय निकाय (1989 से) |
| Appointment Authority | President of India | भारत के राष्ट्रपति |
| Appointment Law | Chief Election Commissioner and Other Election Commissioners Act, 2023 | मुख्य निर्वाचन आयुक्त एवं अन्य निर्वाचन आयुक्त अधिनियम, 2023 |

## Tenure, Removal & Safeguards

| Aspect | English | हिंदी |
|---|---|---|
| Tenure | 6 years or up to 65 years (whichever earlier) | 6 वर्ष या 65 वर्ष (जो पहले हो) |
| Removal of CEC | Same as Supreme Court judge (impeachment) | सुप्रीम कोर्ट न्यायाधीश के समान प्रक्रिया |
| Removal of ECs | On recommendation of CEC | CEC की सिफारिश पर |
| Salary & Status | Same as Supreme Court judge | सुप्रीम कोर्ट न्यायाधीश के समान |

## Powers & Functions

| Area | English | हिंदी |
|---|---|---|
| Elections Conducted | Lok Sabha, Rajya Sabha, State Legislatures, President & Vice-President | लोकसभा, राज्यसभा, विधानसभाएँ, राष्ट्रपति व उपराष्ट्रपति |
| Electoral Rolls | Preparation, revision & supervision | मतदाता सूची का निर्माण व पुनरीक्षण |
| Model Code of Conduct | Enforces MCC during elections | चुनाव के दौरान आदर्श आचार संहिता लागू |
| Recognition of Parties | Recognises national & state parties | राष्ट्रीय व राज्य दलों की मान्यता |
| Symbols | Allots election symbols | चुनाव चिह्न आवंटन |
| Election Schedule | Announces election dates | चुनाव कार्यक्रम घोषित करना |

| Parameter | English | श्रम ह |
|---|---|---|
| Organising Authority | Election Commission of India (ECI) | क्रभ्र अ्रख्र् ष ग्ह्रुए जECI) |
| Event Name | India International Conference on Democracy and Election Management (IICDEM) 2026 | क्रभ्र श्रल्घध्नीब्ग चूह् ल्भ् ड्त्राक्ष्विन्त ह्राृ ष द्ह्ड्च्रष जICDEM) 2026 |
| Venue | New Delhi | एह श्रँ ह |
| Dates | 21–23 January 2026 | 21–23 न् एत्रघ्ह 2026 |
| Nature of Event | Global conference on democracy & elections | चूह् ल्भ् ञ घ क्ष्व्रज्ञ्रह्घ ञ्रंCड द्ह्ड्च्रष |
| Participants | Election officials, policymakers, academics | क्ष्विन्त श्भृ ड्व्रघ्ह् ए्ह्ञ्र्घ्र्व्रक्र श्रृ ल्ख्रव |
| Countries Represented | ~70 countries | च्एक्रए 70 ह्रूट् |
| Delegates | Nearly 100 delegates | च्एक्रए 100 ब्ख्र्श्भृष |

| Aspect | English | श्राह |
|---|---|---|
| **Purpose of IICDEM 2026** | Showcase India's electoral practices & strengthen democratic institutions | *(illegible Devanagari)* |
| **Key Highlight** | Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of Electoral Rolls | *(illegible Devanagari)* (SIR) |
| **Objective of SIR** | Improve accuracy and credibility of voter lists | *(illegible Devanagari)* |
| **Inclusion Focus** | Inclusion of all eligible voters | *(illegible Devanagari)* |
| **Exclusion Focus** | Systematic removal of ineligible entries | *(illegible Devanagari)* |
| **Governance Balance** | Balancing inclusiveness with accuracy | *(illegible Devanagari)* |
| **International Significance** | SIR presented as a global best practice | SIR *(illegible Devanagari)* |

| Aspect | English | श्रत्त |
|--------|---------|-------|
| **Global Replication** | SIR model may be adopted by other democracies | २ ै क्रूह् ल्क्र SIR रख्न्च २ ह्प्त द्र्ड् ल्रु्ण्ज |
| **Electoral Trust** | Enhanced voter confidence in election outcomes | क्रिवत्र ह्रघ्र्र्र्क्ल्ख्र्व्ल्व श्रCक् ़ प्क्रुष्त्र |
| **Digital Governance** | Push for data-driven, clean electoral rolls | म्ड्झ्रघ् ९क्रक्रह ् त्र Sॄ रख्ल्व्ल्व द्र्झ्र् ग्क्रझ्ज्ञ ़ प्रव्र्र |
| **India's Soft Power** | India emerges as a leader in election management | क्रक्रह् द्रिक्रवत्र ब ़्ह ् ए रख्ल्क्रC़ इ्कहु्ड ल्क्रा़ प्क्रुष्त्र |
| **Future Reforms** | More tech-enabled roll management possible | क्रक्रत्री रख्ल्ड ह्ल्ड्घृष ़९क्रक्रह् द्रिव्घ द्क्रत्र |

# India Near Upper-Middle Income Status as Economy Surges

| Income Group | GNI per capita (USD) | ष   ग्र ञफ़्ष्र |
|---|---|---|
| Low Income | Below ~$1,135 | श्र हृ ष ग्र |
| Lower-Middle Income | ~$1,136 – $4,000 | श्र हृ्घ्ररव्रेरव्र ष ग्र |
| Upper-Middle Income | ~$4,000 – $4,500 | क्ष्-इ्घ्रेरव्रेरव्र ष ग्र |
| High Income | Above ~$4,500 | क्ष्-इ्र ष ग्र |

| Parameter | English | आराफ |
|---|---|---|
| Country | India | क्रबघ्र |
| Income Classification Authority | World Bank | श्रC ड्ह |
| Metric Used | Gross National Income (GNI) per capita (USD) | ब्श्रू सर्ड् ढ्ड् च्र घ्रोहर्र ण ग ऊNI) |
| Upper-Middle Income Threshold | Around **$4,000–$4,500** | च्रएक्रए **$ठ्,000–$ठ्,ड्जज़** |
| Current Status | Lower-middle income (near transition) | श्र ह्घ्ररक्रेख् ण ग ञफ्ज्रज्ह्र्र ख्रर् ड्ड् श्र ड् ह्झ |

| Aspect | English | अर्थ |
|---|---|---|
| **Post-Independence Income Level** | India remained a low-income economy for decades | क्रिय्थर ट्ट इॄझ्माल्ड् श्रह्य ग २ क्ल॒ अ्वि घ्ग्प्र |
| **Economic Structure** | Agriculture-dominated, low industrial productivity | इ्रझ्ष्ट् ह्श्व्ष् ड्रय ्र ह्ऴाड् ह्ट्र्क्ड् ल्व |
| **Per Capita Growth** | Very slow growth until economic reforms | ह्रव्क्रष्ट्ष्ह्ण्च्ह्व्श्र ्सह्र ष ग्र ्आश्ष् श्ह्रक्ॢ |
| **Global Comparison** | Lagged behind East Asian economies | ह्रक्र इ्झ्ट् ग्व्ह २ क्ल॒ अ्व्झ्ित्र ड्डॢ ह्ह्ध्ड् |

| Aspect | English | [illegible] |
|---|---|---|
| Key Finding | India is nearing **upper-middle income status** | [illegible] |
| Source of Analysis | State Bank of India | [illegible] |
| Projected GNI per capita | Around **$4,000 by 2030** | [illegible] $0,000 |
| Economic Drivers | Rapid GDP growth, demographic dividend | [illegible] GDP [illegible] |
| Comparable Countries | China, Indonesia | [illegible] |
| Global Trend | Rise in upper-middle & high-income economies since 1990 | 1990 [illegible] |

| Aspect | English | (गिबरीश) |
|---|---|---|
| Income Transition | India likely to enter upper-middle income group | |
| Policy Impact | Shift from poverty reduction to quality growth | |
| Global Standing | Stronger role in global economic institutions | |
| Social Challenges | Inequality & job creation remain key concerns | |
| Next Long-Term Goal | Move towards high-income status | |

| Year | India – Per Capita Income (USD) | China – Per Capita Income (USD) | Key Exam Insight |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1950 | ~$70–80 | ~$50–60 | Both very poor, agrarian economies |
| 1975 | ~$150–170 | ~$160–180 | Similar levels; China slightly ahead |
| 2000 | ~$450–500 | ~$950–1,000 | China pulls ahead after 1978 reforms |
| 2025–26 | ~$2,600–2,800 | ~$12,500–13,000 | China ~5× India |

| Period | India | China |
|---|---|---|
| 1950 → 2025 | ~35× growth | ~200× growth |
| Reform Phase | 1991 onwards | 1978 onwards |
| Speed of Catch-up | Gradual | Very rapid |

| Factor | India | China |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Economic Reforms | 1991 (late) | 1978 (early) |
| Manufacturing Push | Moderate | Very strong |
| Export Orientation | Limited | Aggressive |
| Urbanisation | Slower | Rapid |
| State Capacity | Democratic, fragmented | Centralised, directive |

# China Population Declines for Fourth Year Despite Incentives

| Parameter | English | श्राह्ह |
|---|---|---|
| Country | China | द्हष |
| Year of Data | 2025 (reported Jan 2026) | 2025 ज़ ष्अघ्ह 2026 रछरूह्क्सा |
| Population Trend | 4th consecutive annual decline | च्ण्व्ल्व्घ्र द्ऊल्य ञक्ष्ह्ङ् न ष द्ऋ व्त ह्व्त्र |
| Population Size | ~1.404 billion | च्ण्क्रए 1.404 १ घ्र |
| Global Rank | 2nd most populous (after India) | द्ऊघ्र्ढ् ह्ऊ्श्श्ड् न ष द्ऋ व्त ञ्क्र ढ्ऊ ज्क्घ्र ड्ऊ व्र्ह्ल |

| Aspect | English | श्रभरुह |
|---|---|---|
| **Policy Legacy** | Long impact of One-Child Policy (1979–2015) | इड्घ॒द्व ष्ल्क्र (1979–2015झड्व व्ह्ल्क्ड्क्र्घड् ब्क्व्त्र |
| **Fertility Shift** | Fertility decline began well before 2016 | ब्न ष्ष् व्घ रख्ष्घ्त्र्त्र 2016 द्ल्ह्ण्च्क्ष्द्क्र |
| **Urbanisation** | High urban costs discouraged large families | ट्ण्घ्ष्न्ह्त्र ड्ह र्द्द्ह च्व्ण्ल ड्ष्ल्क्ह्ष्घ्क्क्र प्ह्ड्क्र्क्र्भ्ग्ल श्ष् ड् |
| **Demographic Structure** | Rapid ageing started earlier | ल्ह्ह द्ष्आष् प्ह्ष्ह्न प्व्ह्क्र ब्ह्ण्च्क्ष्ण्ह्ष्क्क्र |

| Aspect | English | श्रास्ह |
|---|---|---|
| **Population Change (2025)** | Fell by ~3 million | च्रएक्रए 30 च्रव्र्ङ् इह श्रघ्क्त्रह |
| **Births in 2025** | **7.92 million** (record low) | ण.थ्झ श्रक्भ्च्रग्रष जऋछुम्ब्रौष ऌरक्झ |
| **Year-on-Year Fall** | ↓ 1.62 million (≈17%) | ऴ62 श्रक्भ्च्रग्रष इह श्रघ्क्त्रह (≈17फ्झ |
| **Crude Birth Rate** | **5.63 per 1,000 people** (lowest ever) | इ.ढ्ट ब्श्रल झ्ज्ज्ज्जे ⬜ ऌड् ढ्⬜ढ्ङ् इरख्झ |
| **Fertility Rate** | ~1.0 (well below replacement) | ख्1.0 ज्क्भ्ल्ह्रि्ष bघ्र ढ्ङ्⬜इ्ल इ रख्झ |
| **Replacement Level** | 2.1 births per woman | 2.1 नॊं ब्श्रल रक्भ्ग्च्व |
| **Government Response** | Financial incentives, family support policies | श्रछुल्य इ.ह्व्रण ऋ ह्क्भ्क्भ्क्ड् ढ्ण्क्भ्ग्ल्व ष्ह्क्न्ग्ऋ |

# FUTURE – Implications & Way Forward

| Aspect | English | श्रास्ह |
|---|---|---|
| Demographic Outlook | Sustained population shrinkage likely | |
| Economic Impact | Labour shortages, slower growth | |
| Fiscal Stress | Rising pension & healthcare burden | |
| Policy Limits | Incentives alone unlikely to reverse trend | |
| Global Impact | Alters global labour & consumption patterns | |

| Dimension | China | India |
|---|---|---|
| Population Trend | Declining | Still growing |
| Fertility | ~1.0 | ~2.0 (near replacement) |
| Median Age | High & rising | Lower & younger |
| Demographic Dividend | Exhausted | Still available |

# Top 10 Countries with Lowest Fertility Rate (World)

| Rank | Country | Fertility Rate (≈) | Exam-Relevant Insight |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | South Korea | ~0.72 | World's lowest; severe ageing & population shrinkage |
| 2 | Hong Kong | ~0.80 | High cost of living; delayed marriages |
| 3 | Macau | ~0.80 | Urban density & lifestyle factors |
| 4 | Singapore | ~0.97 | Pronatalist incentives yet low fertility |
| 5 | Taiwan | ~0.98 | Late marriage, work pressure |
| 6 | China | ~1.00 | Post one-child policy demographic shock |
| 7 | Japan | ~1.26 | Super-ageing society |
| 8 | Italy | ~1.24 | Southern Europe fertility collapse |
| 9 | Spain | ~1.27 | Youth unemployment & housing crisis |
| 10 | Greece | ~1.30 | Economic stress & ageing |

| Rank | Country | Fertility Rate (≈) | Exam-Relevant Insight |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Niger | ~6.8–7.0 | World's highest; very young population |
| 2 | Chad | ~6.4–6.6 | Low female literacy, early marriage |
| 3 | DR Congo | ~6.2–6.4 | Rapid population growth |
| 4 | Mali | ~6.1–6.3 | Predominantly rural society |
| 5 | Somalia | ~6.0–6.2 | Limited access to family planning |
| 6 | Nigeria | ~5.8–6.0 | Africa's most populous country |
| 7 | Angola | ~5.4–5.6 | High child dependency ratio |
| 8 | Burundi | ~5.3–5.5 | Dense rural population |
| 9 | Tanzania | ~5.2–5.4 | Gradual decline but still high |
| 10 | Uganda | ~5.0–5.2 | One of the world's youngest populations |

# Paracetamol Use in Pregnancy & Neurodevelopmental Risk (Lancet Study)

| Parameter | English | श्रमह |
|---|---|---|
| Drug Name | Paracetamol (Acetaminophen) | *(garbled text)* |
| Medical Context | Use during pregnancy | *(garbled text)* |
| Study Published In | The Lancet (Obstetrics, Gynaecology & Women's Health) | *(garbled text)* |
| Main Conclusion | No evidence linking prenatal paracetamol use to autism or ADHD | *(garbled text)* ADHD *(garbled text)* |
| Study Type | Large systematic scientific review | *(garbled text)* |
| Data Coverage | 43 studies; hundreds of thousands of children | 43 *(garbled text)* |

| Aspect | English | श्रागह |
|--------|---------|--------|
| **Common Medical Practice** | Paracetamol long considered safest painkiller in pregnancy | एक्कसाति रहहराक्ष ब्रक्षम ढ़ □ ढ़ द्सभक्स रक्षव न्वल्व घण्व |
| **Earlier Concerns** | Some observational studies hinted at neurodevelopmental risks | डस्ऊ ढ़्रहग्र रे ग्ष्झर्क्ड्सभरव ड्व ट्ऋड्ड |
| **Public Confusion** | Statements by Donald Trump suggested a link with autism | स्झस्वष्ट झ्ड्ऽ ड्स □ग्रष ढ़्छश्रहेरव ढ़्क्सक्रत्र ड्ह ष ट्रड्व |
| **Policy Debate** | Raised concerns among doctors and pregnant women | स्छ्ऊ घ्हभात्र एक्कक्रल्ह रक्षग्रच्रड्त्र रछ्रव |

| Aspect | English | श्रास्ह |
|---|---|---|
| Key Finding | No causal link with autism, ADHD, or intellectual disability | छश्रहॅख़ ADHD ग्र ़ ॲस़्हॅड श्राड़ चक्ाल्व ॡॣॢज़ह इव़घ़व़ॢ़ड़ ॡ़ाछ ण्हॢ |
| Research Institution | City St George's, University of London | श्ॢछ ॡॣॢ ऩॢॼ़ ़ाभ ़ऺॺॢछ ़ ॼॱ |
| Scientific Rigor | Most rigorous analysis so far | ९ ़ ल्ड़ इव़ ढ़ॢॡ़ॢड़ ॾॾ ़ॾाड़ ॼB़ड़ॢऱ |
| Comparison with Other Drugs | Safer than NSAIDs and opioids | NSAIDs ॼ इश्रहड़ स्ॡ़ॢ ॡॣॸॵॾड़ ॡ़ाछल |
| Clinical Relevance | Reaffirms medical guidelines | श्ॾड़ ॡॢऱय ़ॱ ट्ऱॴॱ ॡॾॾहॢह ह्ाम |

| Aspect | English | श्रभह |
|---|---|---|
| **Medical Guidelines** | Continued recommendation of paracetamol in pregnancy | (illegible Devanagari text) |
| **Public Health Messaging** | Need for evidence-based communication | (illegible Devanagari text) |
| **Research Direction** | Focus on dosage & duration, not blanket bans | (illegible Devanagari text) |
| **Policy Impact** | Prevents unnecessary fear & medication avoidance | (illegible Devanagari text) |

# Word of the day

**Puerile:**
of or characteristic of a child; displaying or suggesting a lack of maturity

Synonyms: adolescent, juvenile

Usage: *Nobody liked his puerile jokes.*

Pronunciation:
newsth.live/puerilepron

International Phonetic Alphabet: /ˈpjʊɹɪl/, /ˈpjʊɹaɪl/

# Word of the day

**Cloying:**
overly sweet

Synonyms: saccharine, syrupy, treacly

Usage: *The movie had a typical cloying ending.*

Pronunciation: newsth.live/cloyingpro

International Phonetic Alphabet: /ˈklɔɪ.ɪŋ/

Thank you ☺