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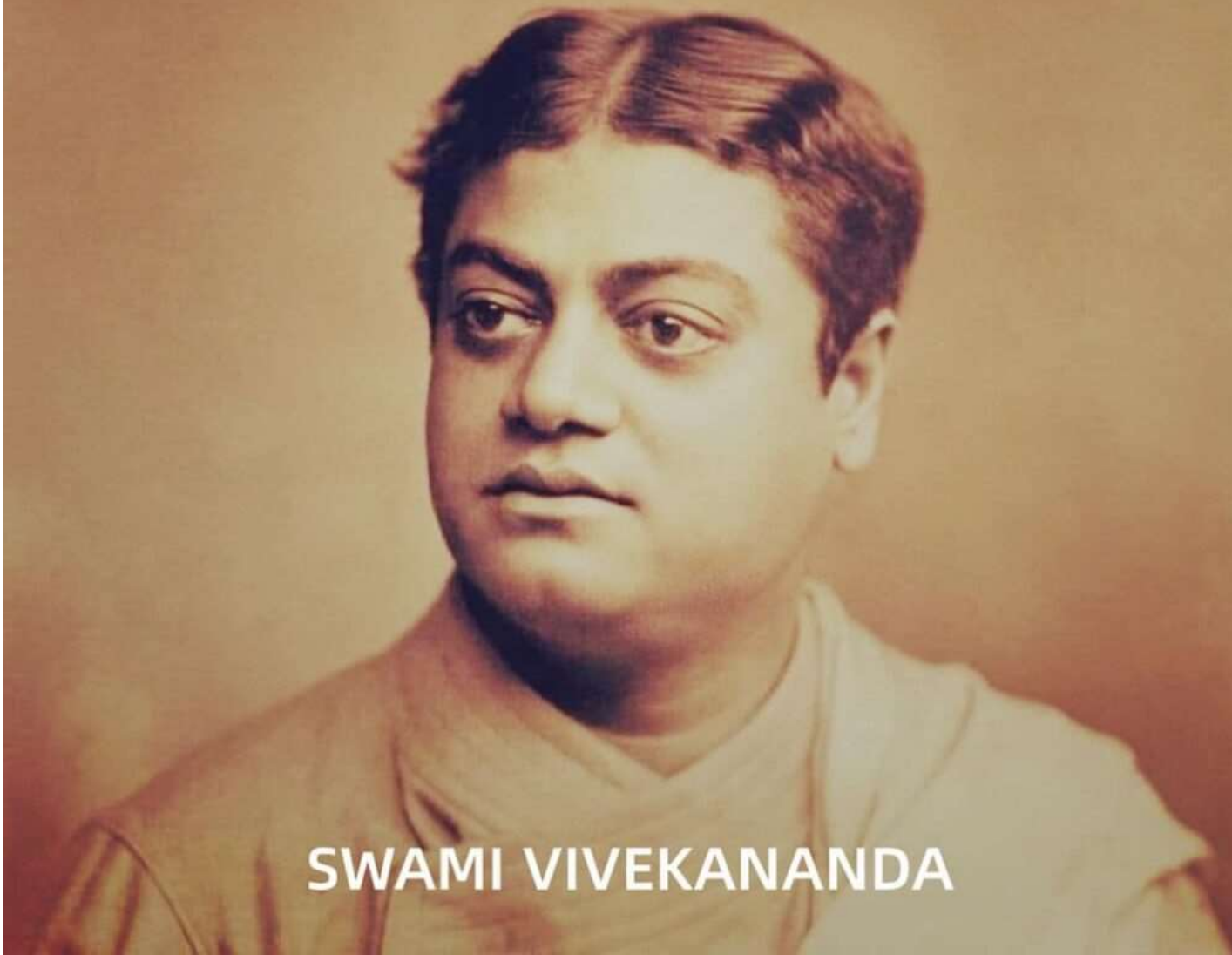


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10 MCQ QUIZ

“The power of meditation
gets us everything.”



SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

Next session 23rd August
(10th to 21st August) :
Going for 10 day Vipassana center



Navi Mumbai replaces Bengaluru as a venue
SPORTS PAGE 14

Court says voters can file objections online; they can use Aadhaar or any other valid documents

A three-judge bench comprising justices Vignarajah, Ganesan Mahipala, and N.V. Sagarika noted that the earlier mandate was intended to protect citizens

"We are not being invited to submit objections," Mr. Ibrahim said.

A three-judge bench comprising justices Vireen Math, Gaurdeep Malhotra, and N.V. Sengupta noted that the earlier mandate was intended to protect citizens

as possible, they shall be housed in separate groups or shelters after sterilization and immunization," the French said, describing its approach as a "holistic."

no inconvenience is caused due to the feeding of strays in public spaces. It stated that the animals were vaccinated by experts of "animal health

The Hatch further directed civic bodies to establish a dedicated hotline for reporting violations, adding that on receipt of such complaints, "appor-

of the ambit of the proceedings toward the Delhi-National Capital Region (NCR), directing that the matter be treated as a non-India issue to facilitate the

estimated eight lakh stray dogs. They cautioned that the large-scale capture of so many animals would result in logistical chaos and possible acts of cruelty.

liamentary vote after former
or President Gotabaya Raj-
apaksa left office in July
2012, to the value of a citi-
zens' uprising sparked by
an economic crisis.

ruled that the State Emergency declared in China in 2022, as Acting President, was "intentional, brutal and violated fundamental human rights."

[illegible]

Help EC bring back deleted voters: SC to parties

Court says voters can file objections online; they can use Aadhaar or any other valid documents

Bench directs parties and their booth-level agents to assist excluded voters in the process

It says party workers are best placed to help people, questions the distance between parties and voters

Krishnadas Rajagopal
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Friday directed political parties contesting the Bihar Assembly election to help the Election Commission (EC) bring back voters left out of the draft electoral roll published as part of the ongoing special intensive revision (SIR) exercise.

A Bench of Justices Surya Kant and Joymalaya Bagchi directed State party chiefs to instruct their booth-level agents to assist excluded voters file their claims and objections for inclusion in the rolls.

The court order conveyed a sense of urgency, with barely over a week left before the claims-and-objections stage of the SIR ends on September 1.

The court clarified that voters can file their claims and objections online in a bid to save time. Excluded

voters can either attach their Aadhaar card, as permitted by the SC, or any of the 11 indicative documents listed by the EC, as proof of identity and residence, with their claims.

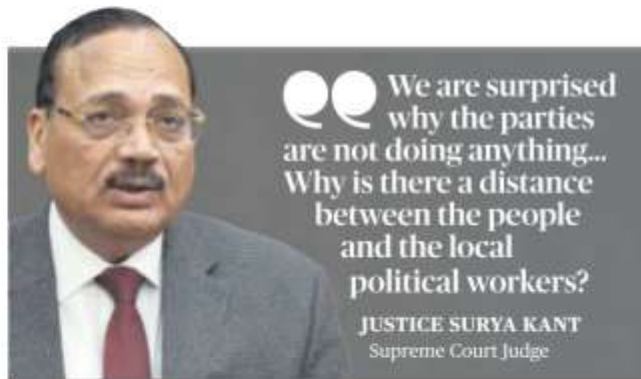
Senior advocate Kapil Sibal, representing the RJD, urged the court to extend the deadline beyond September 1.

Justice Kant asked the EC to "examine" this aspect if there was an "overwhelming response" from excluded voters.

Justice Bagchi remarked that with the inclusion of Aadhaar as a relevant document in the claims-and-objections stage, the EC may need more time to complete the verification of the pleas filed for inclusion in the electoral roll.

'Why a distance'

At one point, the court seemed to blame the political parties for not taking the initiative to assist the



voters, and for bringing things to such a pass at the eleventh hour.

"We are surprised why the parties are not doing anything. Political workers are the best persons in rural areas and villages. Why is there a distance between the people and the local political workers?" Justice Kant asked.

The EC, represented by senior advocate Rakesh Dwivedi, criticised political parties for taking a contrarian view about the SIR. He assured the court that no eligible voter would be left

out of the electoral process.

"Political parties have 1.6 lakh BLAs. Each BLA can verify 10 excluded names on the list. That would be 16 lakh names a day. It will take only five days for BLAs to verify the list. This is in addition to individual excluded voters also coming forward to file claims," Mr. Dwivedi said, conveying the EC's optimism in court.

He said that 84,305 claims have been initiated so far. Over 2.5 lakh new voters who have recently

reached the age of 18 in Bihar have come forward to join the electors' ranks, signalling the groundswell to join the electoral process.

"Political parties merely raise hue and cry to serve their political ends... Political parties could appoint more BLAs, but they will not," Mr. Dwivedi said, expressing the poll body's disappointment with the conduct of the parties.

'Parties can assist EC'

The Bench said that claims and objections may not come from all the 65 lakh excluded voters. It quoted the EC's figures that 22 lakh among the 65 lakh were dead, while 36 lakh had migrated out of Bihar, and eight lakh were duplicate entries on the roll. "So, it is just that names from the migrated 36 lakh have to come forward with claims," Justice Kant summarised.

"Political parties could

play a role in assisting the EC. They could verify the names. The Chief Election Commissioner had held a press conference inviting political parties, mass organisations, etc, to assist the EC," Mr. Dwivedi appealed.

The court impleaded the parties as respondents, issued notice and directed status reports to be filed on September 8, the next date of hearing.

Senior advocate Gopal Sankaranarayanan, intervening on behalf of voters' groups from Bihar, objected to the emphasis on "minutiae" when the very legality of the SIR process was under dispute in the top court.

"All this minutiae is being presented as if the entire SIR is legal. There is no legal basis for filing enumeration forms. One day they will come in Delhi with pre-filled enumeration forms," Mr. Sankaran-

arayanan objected.

Justice Kant replied that larger questions would be looked into later on.

'Voter-friendly'

Mr. Sibal and senior advocate A.M. Singhvi, appearing for several other Opposition parties, including the Congress, said the present litigation was "not about BLAs, but the rights of the ordinary voters of Bihar".

Justice Kant made a brief comment that "the entire exercise should be voter-friendly".

Advocates Prashant Bhushan and Neha Rathi, for the Association for Democratic Reforms, countered the EC's submission that only two claims and objections had been received through the BLAs so far.

"BLAs are not being permitted to submit objections," Mr. Bhushan submitted.

- **Event:** Supreme Court directed political parties in Bihar to **assist the Election Commission (EC)** in bringing back deleted voters during the ongoing **Special Intensive Revision (SIR)** of electoral rolls.
 - **Deadline:** September 1, 2024, for filing claims & objections.
 - **Bench:** Justices **Surya Kant** and **Joymala Bagchi**.
 - **Court's Concern:**
 - Parties not doing enough to help excluded voters.
 - Emphasized role of **Booth-Level Agents (BLAs)**.
 - Questioned "distance between people and local political workers."
-

2. Key Directions

- Voters can file **objections online** and use **Aadhaar** or any valid documents (11 listed by EC).
- Political parties must **assist voters** in filing claims and verifying names.
- Each BLA can verify **10 excluded names daily** → total **16 lakh names/day** possible across 1.6 lakh BLAs.
- Over **84,305 claims** already filed; **2.5 lakh new voters** turning 18 in Bihar.
- SC asked for **status reports by Sept 8**.

3. Concerns Highlighted

- EC's View:
 - Optimistic about restoring names via BLAs & individual claims.
 - Court's View:
 - Criticized political parties for only raising "hue and cry" but not assisting ground-level process.
 - Petitions:
 - Senior advocates (Kapil Sibal, A.M. Singhvi, Prashant Bhushan) argued case was about **ordinary voters' rights**, not BLAs' technicalities.
 - Raised concern of **illegal deletions**, duplicate entries, and denial of voting rights.
-

4. Political & Legal Context

- **Voter Deletion Issue:** Allegations of mass deletion/migration of voters in Bihar electoral rolls.
- **Court's Position:** Voter inclusion = **constitutional right under Article 326** (universal adult franchise).
- **Parties' Responsibility:** Since parties benefit from voters, they must help in restoring their names.
- **Larger Issues:** SC noted broader questions (like deletion legality & EC's accountability) will be looked into later.

Former Sri Lankan President Ranil held for 'misusing' funds

Meera Srinivasan
COLOMBO

Sri Lanka's former President and six-time Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe was on Friday arrested on charges of misusing state funds during his Presidency. The 76-year-old leader was remanded in custody by the Colombo Magistrate Court until August 26, when the next hearing is due.

A senior official told *The Hindu* that Mr. Wickremesinghe was taken into custody after the Sri Lanka Police's Criminal Investigation Department questioned him about his visit to a British university in September 2023 when he was head of state, to attend a ceremony where his wife, a senior academic, was honoured.

His party has denied any misuse of state funds in connection with the visit. The former President, while returning from the G-77 summit in Cuba, had travelled to the U.S. to address the United Nations General Assembly in New York, and later stopped over in the U.K., where he also held diplomatic meetings, his office earlier said.

This marks the first instance of an ex-President being arrested and comes amid the government's efforts to probe corruption.

Mr. Wickremesinghe, leader of the centre-right United National Party, one of Sri Lanka's oldest political parties, was elected President in an urgent Parliamentary vote after former President Gotabaya Rajapaksa quit office in July 2022, in the wake of a citizens' uprising sparked by an economic crash.



Ranil Wickremesinghe in a prison bus in Colombo on Friday. AFP

Mr. Wickremesinghe helmed the country's top office for two years and is credited with steering the crisis-hit island nation towards recovery. He ran for the presidency in 2024 and lost to Anura Kumara Disanayake.

'Major setback'

Former President Maithripala Sirisena, several politicians and Opposition parliamentarians, including Namal Rajapaksa, son of former President Mahinda Rajapaksa, were seen at the Colombo Magistrate Court, expressing support to the arrested leader. While some former politicians and Opposition figures slammed the government for arresting a former head of State, Minister of Public Security Ananda Wijepala told Parliament that the law was being "applied equally" to everyone.

Friday's arrest is the second major setback for the former President in recent months. Last month, Sri Lanka's Supreme Court ruled that the State of Emergency declared by him in 2022, as Acting President, was "unconstitutional and violated fundamental human rights".

- **Event:** Former Sri Lankan President and six-time Prime Minister **Ranil Wickremesinghe** (76) arrested on charges of **misusing state funds** during his presidency.
 - **Court Order:** Colombo Magistrate's Court remanded him till **August 26**.
 - **Arrest Context:** Sri Lanka Police's **Criminal Investigation Department** questioned him about his **September 2023 UK visit** (as Head of State, attending ceremony for wife).
-

2. Defence & Party Response

- Wickremesinghe's party **denied misuse of funds**, claiming:
 - Trip was official: addressed **UNGA in New York**, later diplomatic stopovers in UK.
- His arrest marks **first time** an ex-President in Sri Lanka has been arrested as part of **anti-corruption efforts**.

Leader of **United National Party (UNP)**, one of Sri Lanka's oldest political parties.



Became President in **July 2022** after **Gotabaya Rajapaksa resigned** following mass protests and economic collapse.



Contested 2024 Presidential election, lost to **Anura Kumara Dissanayake**.



Credited with steering recovery during crisis.

5. Legal Setback Preceding Arrest

- **July 2024:** Supreme Court ruled Wickremesinghe's **2022 State of Emergency declaration** as unconstitutional, violating fundamental rights.
 - Now, this arrest is his **second major legal setback** within two months.
-

6. Regional & Historical Context

- **Sri Lanka's Political Instability:**
 - Frequent leadership changes.
 - Rajapaksa family dominance in recent decades.
- **Economic Crisis (2022):**
 - Led to citizen protests, collapse of Rajapaksa govt, and Wickremesinghe's emergency presidency.
- **Corruption Probes:**
 - Part of IMF-backed reforms demanding **good governance** and anti-corruption measures.

Court modifies 'harsh' order, allows release of stray dogs

Aaratrika Bhaumik
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Friday modified its earlier *suo motu* directive requiring civic authorities in Delhi and four adjoining districts to capture all stray dogs and confine them in shelters within six to eight weeks.

The court, terming its August 11 order "too harsh," directed that the animals undergo sterilisation, deworming, and immunisation before being released back to the localities where they were captured.

A three-judge Bench comprising Justices Vikram Nath, Sandeep Mehta, and N.V. Anjaria noted that the earlier mandate was intended to protect citizens

from attacks by "aggressive and rabid" canines.

However, an absolute prohibition on their release would run contrary to Rule 11(19) of the Animal Birth Control (ABC) Rules, 2023, framed under the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act, 1960.

The court clarified that this would not apply to dogs infected or suspected to be infected with rabies, or those displaying aggressive behaviour.

"Such dogs shall be sterilised and immunised, but under no circumstances should they be released back on the streets. As far as possible, they shall be housed in separate pounds or shelters after sterilisation and immunisation," the Bench said, describing its approach as a "balanc-



Animal lovers react after the Supreme Court's verdict on stray dogs, at Jantar Mantar, in New Delhi, Friday. PTI

ing exercise."

The court directed municipal authorities to set up dedicated feeding zones in every ward to ensure that no inconvenience is caused due to the feeding of strays in public spaces. It noted that the measure was necessitated by reports of "untoward inci-

dents" caused by unregulated feeding, which had created "great difficulties for the common man walking on the streets".

The Bench further directed civic bodies to establish a dedicated helpline for reporting violations, adding that on receipt of such complaints, "appro-

priate measures shall be taken against the individuals/NGOs concerned". It also made it clear that anyone obstructing a public servant acting in compliance with the directions would face punitive action.

However, Justice Nath permitted animal lovers desirous of adopting canines to apply to the concerned municipal body, but underscored that the responsibility would rest on the adopter to ensure that the dogs do not return to the streets.

National policy

Notably, the court expanded the ambit of the proceedings beyond the Delhi-National Capital Region (NCR), directing that the matter be treated as a pan-India issue to facilitate the

framing of a uniform national policy. It accordingly ordered the impleadment of the Secretaries of the relevant departments of all States and Union Territories in the proceedings.

The Bench also said it would transfer to itself similar petitions pending before various High Courts to prevent multiplicity of proceedings.

The earlier directives had provoked strong opposition from animal rights activists, welfare organisations, and public figures, who stressed that the region lacked the infrastructure to accommodate an estimated eight lakh stray dogs. They cautioned that the large-scale capture of so many canines would result in logistical chaos and possible acts of cruelty.

- **Event:** Supreme Court modified its earlier **August 11 suo motu directive** that ordered civic bodies in Delhi & adjoining districts to capture and shelter all stray dogs.
 - **New Order:**
 - Earlier order termed **"too harsh."**
 - Stray dogs can be **sterilised, dewormed, immunised, and then released** in the same locality.
 - Aggressive/rabid dogs excluded (to be kept in shelters).
-

2. Legal Framework

- **Relevant Law:**
 - **Animal Birth Control (ABC) Rules, 2023**, framed under **Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act, 1960**.
 - Rule 11(19): prohibits absolute ban on re-release of sterilised dogs.
- **Court's Clarification:**
 - Immunised/sterilised dogs → return to localities.
 - Rabid/aggressive dogs → to be confined in shelters.

3. Court's Directions

- Municipal authorities must:
 - Establish **feeding zones** in each ward.
 - Ensure **no public inconvenience** from stray feeding.
 - Set up **helplines** for complaints.
 - **Punitive action:** Against NGOs/individuals obstructing compliance or misusing feeding rights.
 - **Adoption:** Animal lovers may adopt dogs, but **responsibility to prevent return to streets lies on adopter.**
-

4. Policy Implications

- Court expanded scope beyond NCR, treating it as a **pan-India issue**.
- Ordered Secretaries of relevant departments (States/UTs) to be impleaded.
- Directed framing of a **uniform national policy** on stray dog management.
- Will transfer similar petitions from High Courts to itself to avoid conflicting orders.

5. Social & Administrative Context

- Earlier directive had faced **strong opposition** from:
 - Animal rights activists.
 - Welfare organisations.
 - Public figures → cited lack of infrastructure to shelter ~8 lakh s
- Concerns:
 - **Logistical chaos.**
 - Possible **cruelty in mass capture.**
- New order aims at **balancing public safety & animal welfare.**



4. Key Provisions Highlighted

- **Dedicated feeding zones:** To be set up in every ward to regulate feeding.
 - **Identification of feeders:** For first time, individuals feeding strays recognised officially.
 - **Supervisory role:** Court asked for a system to monitor sterilisation & feeding scientifically.
 - **ABC Programme shift:** From purely government-run to **public–private collaborative model**.
-

Consider the following statements regarding the Supreme Court's order on stray dogs (2024):

1. The Court allowed release of sterilised and immunised stray dogs back into their original localities.
2. Aggressive or rabid dogs are to be released after treatment into their localities.
3. The order referred to Animal Birth Control (ABC) Rules, 2023, under the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act, 1960.
4. The Court directed framing of a uniform national policy on stray dog management.

Which of the statements given above are correct?

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

TAIPEI
Taiwan to hike defence spending to 5% of GDP in line with NATO



Taiwan's government aims at increasing defence spending to 5% of GDP by 2020, President Tsai Ing-wen said. The United States pushes Taipei to invest more in its own security. Spending was expected to "reach 5% of GDP by 2020, in line with NATO standards," Mr. Lai said, according to a presidential statement. AP

SULAIMANYAH
Iraqi Kurdistan Opposition figure held after deadly clashes, officials



Three members of the security forces in the autonomous Iraqi Kurdistan region were killed and 19 wounded during the arrest of an Opposition figure on Friday, two security officials said. Laker Shleik Jangi from the influential Talabani family "surrendered" after hours of armed clashes, while his brother Badar was arrested. AP

PABIN
Macron, Merz and Tusk to visit Moldova to back its 'sovereignty'



French President Emmanuel Macron, German Chancellor Friedrich Merz and European Council President Donald Tusk are to visit Moldova on Friday to "affirm their full support" for its "security, sovereignty, and European path," Paris said on Friday. The visit is at the invitation of President Ileana Stancu. AP

MOON/DW
Russia rejects Zelenskyy meeting as diplomatic tension simmers



Russia on Friday ruled out an immediate meeting with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, as diplomatic tensions rose. Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov said "no meeting" between Vladimir Putin and Mr. Zelenskyy was planned, as NATO chief Mark Rutte visited Kyiv, largely to discuss security guarantees for Ukraine. AP

UN declares famine in Gaza, blames Israel for 'systematic aid obstruction'

Famine is affecting 500,000 people in the Gaza governorate, which covers about a fifth of the Palestinian territory, says Rome-based Integrated Food Security Phase Classification Initiative, Israeli Defence Minister threatens to destroy Gaza City

AGENCE FRANCE PRESSE
JERUSALEM

The UN officially declared a famine in Gaza on Friday, blaming "systematic obstruction of aid" by Israel, hours after Defence Minister Israel Katz threatened to destroy the territory's largest city.

Israel rejected the UN-backed report as "based on Hamas lies" launched through organisations with vested interests.

Hamas urged the UN and UN Security Council to "stop the war and lift the siege", calling for unrestricted access for food, medicine, water and fuel.

The Rome-based Integrated Food Security Phase Classification Initiative (IPC) said famine was affecting 500,000 people in the Gaza governorate, which covers about a fifth of the Palestinian territory.



Overcrowded waiting a child surrounded by pills, waiting to get food from a charity kitchen in Khan Younis, Gaza, on Thursday. REUTERS

including Gaza City.

Israel has pressed ahead with plans to seize Gaza City despite an international outcry, saying it is key to defeating Hamas.

The IPC projected that the famine would expand to four other towns and Khan

Yunis governorate by the end of September, covering around two-thirds of Gaza.

With the vast majority of the population displaced at least once, the UN said nearly a million people currently

live in Gaza governorate. UN agencies and aid groups had warned for months of a looming famine in Gaza, where Israel has severely restricted aid and at times completely cut it off during its nearly two-year war with militant group Hamas.

UN and chief Tom Fletcher said the famine was entirely preventable, saying food could not get through to the Palestinian territory "because of systematic obstruction by Israel".

War crime

UN human rights chief Volker Turk said it was "a war crime to use starvation as a method of warfare" and said it "may also amount to a war crime of willful killing".

UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said, "We cannot allow this situation to continue with impunity".

After 22 months of relentless conflict, over half a million people in the Gaza Strip are facing catastrophic conditions characterized by starvation, destitution and death," the IPC report said.

In early March, Israel completely banned aid from Gaza for two months, leading to severe shortages of food, medicines and fuel.

Speaking earlier on Friday, Mr. Katz warned: "The gates of hell will open upon the heads of Hamas's murderers and rapists in Gaza - until they agree to Israel's conditions for ending the war, primarily the release of all hostages and their disarmament."

"If they do not agree, the gates of hell will open upon the heads of Hamas's murderers and rapists in Gaza," he said, referring to a ceasefire on Friday.

Wang meets Pak. Army chief Munir, discusses regional security, counter-terrorism

DEKHA TOOT of India
ISLAMABAD

Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi on Friday met Pakistan Army Chief Asim Munir and discussed regional security, counter-terrorism and matters of mutual interest.

Mr. Wang, who arrived in Pakistan on Wednesday to attend the fifth round of the Foreign Ministers' Strategic Dialogue in Islamabad, also met Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and President Arif Alvi. The two sides agreed to strengthen their "all-weather strategic partnership" and to work with Pakistan to promote regional peace, development, and stability.

China expressed "steadfast support" for the sovereignty and development of Pakistan as the two sides agreed to strengthen their "all-weather strategic partnership" and to work with Pakistan to promote regional peace, development, and stability.

It said discussions between Army chief Munir



Wang Yi

and Mr. Wang focused on regional security, counter-terrorism and matters of mutual interest.

'Steadfast support'

"Both sides reaffirmed their resolve to strengthen the all-weather strategic partnership and enhance coordination at regional and international forums," it said. "Wang Yi reiterated China's steadfast support for Pakistan's sovereignty and development."

UN says attacks by RSF paramilitaries in Darfur killed 89 civilians in 10 days

ASSOCIATED PRESS
CAIRO

The United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights on Friday said it was appalled by "brutal" attacks by Rapid Support Forces (RSF) in Sudan's Darfur, which killed at least 89 civilians, including 46 who were summarily executed, in a span of 10 days this month.

The attacks occurred between August 1-20 in the city of el-Fasher and the nearby Abu Shouk displacement camp, Jeremy Laurence, a spokesperson



Sudanese residents gather to receive free meals in Al Fasher, in Darfur region, on August 11. AP

for Commissioner Volker Turk, said in a Geneva briefing. He said the death toll is likely higher.

The dead include at least 57 who were killed in

attacks on August 11, Mr. Laurence said. "Another 32 were killed between August 16-20. Among the dead were 16 civilians, mostly from the African

Zaghawa tribe, who were summarily executed in the Abu Shouk camp," he said. "Another one was killed in el-Fasher by RSF fighters when he said he belonged to the African Berti tribe."

"This pattern of attacks on civilians and willful killing, which are serious violations of international humanitarian law, deepens our concerns about ethnically motivated violence," he said. The RSF also reportedly attacked another displacement camp, Zamzam, which was once Sudan's largest with over 500,000 people.

Emergency measures



An aircraft drops fire retardant on the Pickett fire in California on Thursday. A fast-moving wildfire erupted north of California in Inyo County, spreading over 4,000 sq. km within hours as it prompted evacuation orders for nearby rural communities. AP

Iran and European trio to meet as snapback sanctions loom

AGENCE FRANCE PRESSE
TEHRAN

Iran will meet with Britain, France and Germany on its nuclear program next week, the parties said Friday, as the European powers wanted Tehran to engage swiftly to avoid snapback sanctions by the end of August.

Iran suspended cooperation with IAEA in July in the wake of its 12-day war with Israel

have threatened to trigger a "snapback mechanism" by the end of August.

The move would resume suspending UN sanctions lifted under the 2015 agreement unless Iran agree to curb its uranium enrichment and restore cooperation with IAEA inspectors.

The EU agreed that Iran's talks with the three European countries and the European Union would

continue next Tuesday at the level of Deputy Foreign Ministers," Iran's foreign ministry said after a phone call between Foreign Minister Abbas Araqchi and senior European diplomats.

"We have just made an important call to our Iranian counterparts regarding the nuclear programme and the sanctions against Iran that we are prepared to reimpose," said French Foreign Minister Jean-Noel Barrot on X, noting he was joined on the call by his British and German counterparts and the EU's top diplomat.

FBI searches home of former U.S. National Security Adviser

ASSOCIATED PRESS
WASHINGTON

The FBI is searching the Maryland home of former U.S. National Security Adviser John Bolton as part of an investigation into the handling of classified information, a person familiar with the matter said on the condition of anonymity on Friday.

Mr. Bolton served as Mr. Trump's third national security adviser for 17 months and clashed with him over Iran, Afghanistan and North Korea.



John Bolton

publication of a Bolton book that it said contained classified information.

China calls for regional solidarity ahead of SCO summit in Tianjin

YIYUANSHI F. YUANSHI
BEIJING

It is important to have regional solidarity and to balance its international landscape, China said on Friday as it prepared to host heads of states and international organizations for the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) summit in Tianjin on August 21 and September 1.

Chinese President Xi Jinping will chair the summit, which is expected to be attended by a host of world leaders, including Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Pakistani Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, Russian President Vladimir Putin, and UN

Secretary-General Antonio Guterres.

Bringing reporters about the summit, China's Assistant Foreign Minister Liu Bin said it will follow new visions to overcome "cultural wars and cold war mentality," while looking into new measures to advance development, maintain security, and promote prosperity.

The meeting, lasting more than 20 world leaders, comes against the backdrop of uncertainties in global trade, triggered by the tariffs imposed by U.S. President Donald Trump.

"In today's world, outdated mindsets of hegemonism and power politics still have influence, with certain countries attempting to privilege their own interests above others, seriously threatening world peace and stability," Mr. Liu said without naming any specific country while emphasizing on practising multilateralism and safeguarding regional stability.

(The writer is in Beijing at an invitation from the China Public Diplomacy Association)

UN declares famine in Gaza, blames Israel for 'systematic aid obstruction'

Famine is affecting 500,000 people in the Gaza governorate, which covers about a fifth of the Palestinian territory, says Rome-based Integrated Food Security Phase Classification Initiative; Israel's Defence Minister threatens to destroy Gaza City

Agence France-Presse
JERUSALEM

The UN officially declared a famine in Gaza on Friday, blaming "systematic obstruction of aid" by Israel, hours after Defence Minister Israel Katz threatened to destroy the territory's largest city.

Israel rejected the UN-backed report as "based on Hamas lies laundered through organisations with vested interests".

Hamas urged the UN and UN Security Council to "stop the war and lift the siege", calling for unrestricted access for food, medicine, water and fuel.

The Rome-based Integrated Food Security Phase Classification Initiative (IPC) said famine was affecting 500,000 people in the Gaza governorate, which covers about a fifth of the Palestinian territory



Unending wait: A child surrounded by pots, waiting to get food from a charity kitchen in Khan Younis, Gaza, on Thursday. REUTERS

including Gaza City.

Israel has pressed ahead with plans to seize Gaza City despite an international outcry, saying it is key to defeating Hamas.

The IPC projected that the famine would expand to Deir el-Balah and Khan

Yunis governorates by the end of September, covering around two-thirds of Gaza.

With the vast majority of the territory's population displaced at least once, the UN said nearly a million people currently

live in Gaza governorate.

UN agencies and aid groups had warned for months of a looming famine in Gaza, where Israel has severely restricted aid and at times completely cut it off during its nearly two-year war with militant group Hamas.

UN aid chief Tom Fletcher said the famine was entirely preventable, saying food could not get through to the Palestinian territory "because of systematic obstruction by Israel".

War crime

UN human rights chief Volker Turk said it was "a war crime to use starvation as a method of warfare" and said it "may also amount to the war crime of wilful killing".

UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres called for a ceasefire, saying: "We cannot allow this situation to continue with impuni-

ty." "After 22 months of relentless conflict, over half a million people in the Gaza Strip are facing catastrophic conditions characterised by starvation, destitution and death," the IPC report said.

In early March, Israel completely banned aid from Gaza for two months, leading to severe shortages of food, medicines and fuel.

Speaking earlier on Friday, Mr. Katz warned: "The gates of hell will open upon the heads of Hamas's murderers and rapists in Gaza – until they agree to Israel's conditions for ending the war, primarily the release of all hostages and their disarmament."

"If they do not agree, Gaza, the capital of Hamas, will become Rafah and Beit Hanoun," he added, referring to two cities in Gaza largely razed during previous Israeli operations.

- **Event:** UN officially declared a **famine in Gaza** on Friday.
 - **Cause:** Blamed on Israel's "**systematic obstruction of aid.**"
 - **Impact:** Around **500,000 people affected** in Gaza governorate ($\approx 1/5$ th of Palestinian territory).
 - **Agency Report:** Rome-based **Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC)**.
-

2. UN & Global Response

- **UN Chief Antonio Guterres:** Called for **ceasefire**.
- **UN aid chief Tom Fletcher:** Said famine was "**entirely preventable**" but aid blocked.
- **UN Human Rights Office:** Starvation as a method of warfare = "**war crime.**"
- **UN projection:** By September, famine could expand to **Deir el-Balah & Khan Yunis**, affecting **two-thirds** of Gaza.

3. Israel's Response

- Rejected UN report as **propaganda influenced by Hamas**.
 - **Defence Minister Israel Katz:**
 - Threatened to destroy Gaza City.
 - Said aid will remain blocked until Hamas releases hostages & disarms.
 - Warned of **"gates of hell"** opening on Hamas fighters.
-

4. Humanitarian Crisis

- **22 months of war:** Severe restrictions, near-total blockade of food, water, medicine, and fuel.
 - **March 2024:** Israel banned aid into Gaza for **two months** → widespread shortages.
 - **UN estimate:** Nearly **1 million displaced people** currently in Gaza.
 - **Conditions:** Starvation, destitution, disease, and death.
-



A Ukrainian serviceman checks an unmanned ground vehicle before running it on a training ground. AP

Ukrainian medics rely on robots for battlefield rescues

Agence France-Presse
CERAMIC

When Magician, a Ukrainian serviceman, was remotely steering a robot hauling a wounded soldier away from the front line towards safety, the worst-case scenario played out on his monitor.

The 27-year-old was navigating the bot on a journey with life-or-death stakes when grey smoke appeared on his control screen. His machine had hit a mine.

The proliferation of cheap but deadly drones deployed by Russian and Ukrainian forces has irreversibly changed how the war is being waged.

"For five minutes, that person's death was on my conscience," Magician said.

The canopy of killer drones blanketing the skies over the front line is forcing military medics to find new ways to move wounded to field hospitals for treatment, including by robot.

The excruciating helplessness has forced medics to get creative in their work.

Evacuation robots are part of the solution, but only skilled operators can carry out delicate missions.

The robots are slow, which means Russian drones can easily locate and target them, that is, if they don't hit mines.

Magician thought all was lost when his bot carrying the wounded soldier hit the mine.

But staring at the monitor, he saw a figure crawling to safety, and the team dispatched another robot. "At that moment you're driving and your whole body is shaking — except the fingers holding the joystick," he said.

"I felt a little sorry for him. Fifteen kilometres in a shaking basket is not very comfortable," Magician said. "But I pulled him out."

Decades after 1971 conflict, Pak. woos Bangladesh as India watches closely

Bangladesh is hosting Pakistan's Foreign and Trade Ministers in Dhaka, signalling a cautious thaw in ties but calls for an apology over the 1971 killings and scars remain obstacles to reconciliation, the move carries major implications for India, which has long counted Bangladesh as a key partner

Agence France-Presse
DHAKA

Decades after Pakistani troops killed his friends in Bangladesh's independence war, veteran freedom fighter Syed Abu Nasser Husein Ahmed eyes warming ties between Dhaka and Islamabad with cautious pragmatism.

Bangladesh is hosting the Foreign Minister and trade envoy this week, its most senior Pakistani visitors in years, in a bid to reset relations scarred by the bloody 1971 conflict and shaped by shifting regional power balances.

"The brutality was unbounded," said Mr. Ahmed, 79, a banker, describing the war in which east Pakistan broke away to form Bangladesh.

Handreds of thousands were killed — Bangladesh estimates say millions — and Pakistan's military was accused of widespread atrocities.

"I would have loved to see the responsible people down the ones who suffered as my friends," Mr. Ahmed said.

"I don't mind normalising relations with those who committed the atrocities," he said.

Contact between the two Muslim-majority nations was long limited to lit-



People celebrate at a government-organised event in Dhaka on August 3, marking the first anniversary of the inception of the Sheikh Mujibur Rahman regime. AP

tle more than cultural ties: a shared love of cricket, music, and Pakistan's prized cotton used to make the flowing trousers and shirt known as *shalwar kameez*.

Bangladesh instead leaned heavily on India, which almost encircled the country of 170 million people.

"Watching closely" However, a mass uprising in Dhaka last year that toppled longtime leader Sheikh Hasina has strained ties with New Delhi and opened the door for dialogue with Islamabad.

Pakistan's Commerce Minister Jam Kamal Khan

arrived in Dhaka on Thursday, and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar is expected on Saturday.

Analysis says India, which fought a four-day conflict with Pakistan in May, will be watching closely.

"Bangladesh had been one of India's closest partners in its neighbour-

hood, and now it is flirting with India's Chief Adviser," said Michael Kugel-

man, a U.S.-based analyst. The last time a Pakistani Foreign Minister visited Dhaka was in 2012, according to Bangladesh newspapers.

Pakistan's Commerce Minister Jam Kamal Khan

year, expanding government-to-government cooperation in February.

"It is the emergence of a new strategic equation — one that reduces Indian influence and instead strengthens a cooperative axis between Pakistan and Bangladesh," Asim Khalid, a New York-based interna-

tional relations expert, said.

"If sustained, this evolution has the potential to reshape South Asia's geopolitical and economic order."

Bangladesh's interim government, led by Nobel Peace laureate Muham-

mad Yunus, is furious that Ms. Hasina fled to India

and has defied a summons to answer charges amounting to "crimes against humanity."

"Under Yunus, there have been a number of high-level meetings, trade relations have expanded, the two countries have agreed to relax visa rules and there has even been some limited military cooperation," said analyst Thomas Kean from the International Crisis Group.

"Would remain open" Still, reconciliation faces obstacles.

Calls for Pakistan to apologise for the 1971 killings remain popular in Bangladesh, but foreign policy expert Qamar Chaudhry said Islamabad believes it is unlikely to make any such apology.

"Pakistan's engagement with Bangladesh is only possible if Bangladesh does not bring historical animosity in re-establishing ties," said Mr. Chaudhry, from Islamabad's Sanobar Institute for Policy Studies.

"Bangladesh always demanded an apology, which Pakistan never provided — and even today, doesn't have any such intention," he said.

Dhaka's Foreign Affairs adviser, Muhammad Touhid Hossain, said that if Bangladesh would raise the issue of a public apology, saying that "all issues will be on the table".

He said several people

for "genocide" during the 1971 war, accusing them of aiding Pakistani forces in the ethnic cleansing of Bengalis.

"As long as the wound remains open, the relationship cannot be normalised," said anthropologist Sayeed Farooqui from Dhaka's Jahangirnagar University.

Others strike a more balanced tone.

"From a victim's perspective, I can't accept a warming of bilateral relations before Pakistan meets certain conditions," said Bangladesh academic Maghna Choudhury, whose father was killed by Pakistani troops.

Islamabad "should make all information related to the war public."

However, the retired international relations professor from Dhaka University also accepted that it was "natural to have trade relations with Pakistan", and acknowledged the "geopolitical dimensions".

With elections in February, when Yunus's administration will hand over power, relations could shift once again.

"If the next government is prepared to patch up ties with India — and Delhi is willing to reciprocate, then the surge in ties with Islamabad could become a casualty," Mr. Raghunath said.

+ AI technology helps U.K. woman rediscover lost voice after 25 years

Agence France-Presse
LONDON

A British woman suffering from motor neurone disease who lost her ability to speak is once again talking in her own voice thanks to artificial intelligence (AI) and a barely audible eight-second clip from an old home video.

Narah Ezekiel, an artist, was left without the use of her voice after she was diagnosed at the age of 34 with MND while pregnant with her second child 25 years ago.

In recent years, experts have been able to use technology to create computerised versions of a person's original voice. But the technique has generally required long and good quality recordings, and even then tended to produce voices that, while sounding something like the sufferer,



Sarah Ezekiel, an artist, was left without the use of her voice after she was diagnosed at the age of 34 with motor neurone disease. AP

were "very flat and monotone", said Simon Poole of the U.K. medical communication company Smartfon.

People who are expected to lose their ability to speak due to conditions like MND are currently encouraged to record their voice as soon as possible as a way of preserving their "identity" alongside their ability to communicate.

But in the pre-smart-

phone era, having suitable recordings to draw upon was far less certain.

When Ms. Ezekiel could hear only one very short and poor quality clip, Mr. Poole said his "heart sank".

Mr. Poole turned to technology developed by New York-based AI voice experts Elevenlabs that can preserve not only voice based on very little

but can also make it sound more like a real human being.

He used one AI tool to isolate a voice sample from the clip and a second tool trained on real voices to fill the gaps — to produce the final sound. The result, so Ms. Ezekiel's delight, was very close to her original, complete with her London accent and the slight lisp that she had once noted.

"I sent samples to her and she wrote an email back to me saying she realised when she heard it," Mr. Poole said.

"The real advance with this new AI technology is the voices are really human and expressive, and they just really bring that humanity back into the voice," he said.

Personalising a voice was a way of preserving someone's "identity," he added.

Cadets in action



Caucasian cadets of the Ilon Cosack Cadet School and members of the Cosack community undergo military training, crawling and running through sand and shallow water in Rostov Region, in Russia, on Thursday. REUTERS

South Korea must navigate the 'Trump risk' at key summits in Japan and U.S.

Associated Press
SEOUL

South Korea's President Lee Jae Myung faces a delicate foreign policy test barely two months after taking office, with back-to-back summits in Tokyo and Washington that reflect the wider struggle of U.S. allies to navigate Donald Trump's unilateral push to redefine postwar orders on trade, security, and alliances.

The meetings come after Seoul and Tokyo reached trade deals with Washington that spared them from the Trump administration's highest tariffs, but only after pledging billions of dollars in new U.S. investments.

Mr. Trump's transactional approach with long-standing allies extends beyond trade to security and has fueled fears in South Korea that he will demand higher payments to support U.S. troops in the country, even as he possibly seeks to scale back America's military footprint there to focus on China.

The meeting in Tokyo of Mr. Lee and Mr. Ishiba is largely about projecting leverage as the countries seek to coordinate their responses to Mr. Trump, said Choi Eunmi, an analyst at South Korea's Korea Institute for Policy Studies.

"There is a new Trump risk," Choi said. "There's especially a lot of

pressure to break isolation and evade sanctions."

A day after confirming his August 25 summit with Mr. Trump, Mr. Lee's office announced he will visit Japan on August 25-26 to meet Prime Minister Shigeru Ishiba, a rare diplomatic setup that underscores the close ties between the two often-leading neighbors.

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uncertainty in the business sector, so they might discuss ways to ease that uncertainty, not necessarily to seek closer ties with Mr. Trump, but within the framework of trilateral cooperation," Yukiko Fukagawa, a pro-

fessor at Japan's Waseda University, said Mr. Lee's visit to Tokyo will also be seen positively in Washington, long frustrated by its Asian allies' disputes over Japan's colonial rule of Korea before the end of the Second World War.

Second and Tokyo clearly share many crucial interests in the face of Mr. Trump's efforts to reset global trade and U.S. security arrangements. They are both under pressure from

Washington to pay more for the tens of thousands of American troops stationed in their countries and also to increase their own defense spending. Their vital automobile and technology industries are vulnerable to Mr. Trump's tariff

hike. They navigate a tricky balance between the U.S. and its main rival, China, a growing regional threat that is also the largest trade partner for Seoul and Tokyo.

A trilateral framework It makes more sense for South Korea and Japan to join efforts to confront Mr. Trump's efforts to reset global trade and U.S. security arrangements. They are both under pressure from

Mr. Trump mixes security and economic demands, said Ron Kilian, a professor at South Korea's National Diplomatic Academy. For example, the countries could propose a trilateral scheme to support Trump's push to expand natural gas and other energy production in Alaska, rather than negotiating potential investments bilaterally, he said.

South Korea should enter the Trump summit with a clear stance on its role in regional security, Mr. Kim said, possibly supporting U.S. efforts to maintain Indo-Pacific stability and opposing changes to the status quo, but without explicitly naming China as an adversary.

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Agence France-Presse
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"I would have loved to see the responsible people tried – the ones who killed six of my friends," Mr. Ahmed said.

"I don't mind normalising relations with those who opposed the war, but were not directly involved in the atrocities committed."

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People celebrate at a government-organised event in Dhaka on August 5, marking the first anniversary of the overthrow of the Sheikh Hasina regime. AFP

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Pakistan and Bangladesh began sea trade last

year, expanding government-to-government commerce in February.

"It is the emergence of a new strategic equation – one that reduces Indian influence and instead strengthens a cooperative axis between Pakistan and Bangladesh," Azeem Khalid, a New York-based international relations expert, said.

"If sustained, this evolution has the potential to reshape South Asia's geopolitical and economic order."

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'Wound remains open'

Still, reconciliation faces obstacles.

Calls for Pakistan to apologise for the 1971 killings remain popular in Bangladesh, but foreign policy expert Qamar Cheema believes it is unlikely Islamabad will oblige.

"Pakistan's engagement with Bangladesh is only possible if Bangladesh does not bring historical animosity in re-establishing ties", said Mr. Cheema, from Islamabad's Sanobar Institute.

"Bangladesh always demanded an apology, which (Pakistan) never provided – and even today, doesn't have any such intentions."

Dhaka's Foreign Affairs adviser, Mohammad Touhid Hossain, asked if Bangladesh would raise the issue of a public apology, saying that "all issues will be on the table".

Bangladesh courts have sentenced several people

for "genocide" during the 1971 war, accusing them of aiding Pakistani forces in the ethnic cleansing of Bengalis.

"As long as the wound remains open, the relationship cannot be sustainable," said anthropologist Sayeed Ferdous from Dhaka's Jahangirnagar University.

Others strike a more balanced tone.

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She said Islamabad "should make all information related to the war public".

However, the retired international relations professor from Dhaka University also accepted that it was "natural to have trade relations with Pakistan", and acknowledged the "geopolitical dimensions".

With elections in February, when Yunus's administration will hand over power, relations could shift once again.

"If the next government is prepared to patch up ties with India – and Delhi is willing to reciprocate – then the surge in ties with Islamabad could become a casualty," Mr. Kugelman said.

- **Event:** Pakistan's Foreign & Trade Ministers visited Dhaka (senior-most visit in years) to improve ties with Bangladesh.
 - **Backdrop:** Relations strained due to **1971 Liberation War**, in which Bangladesh broke away from Pakistan with Indian support.
 - **Significance:** Pakistan aims to reset ties with Bangladesh amid shifting regional power balances.
-

2. Historical Context

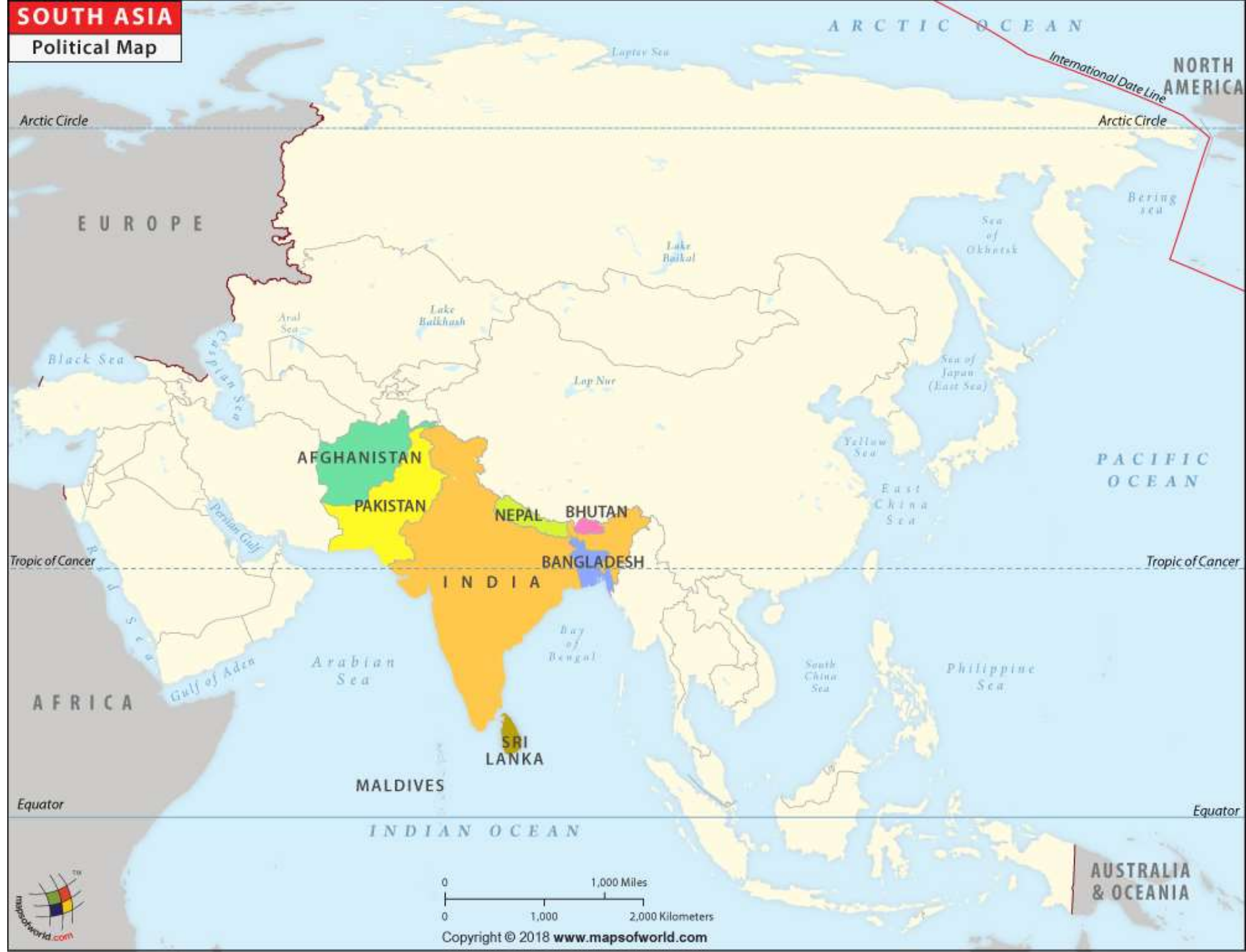
- **1971 Bangladesh Liberation War:**
 - Pakistan Army crackdown → estimated **hundreds of thousands killed**.
 - Accusations of **genocide** & war crimes against Pakistani military.
 - India intervened → creation of independent Bangladesh.
- **Post-1971:**
 - Bangladesh demanded apology for atrocities.
 - Pakistan has so far **avoided formal apology**.
- Relations worsened under PM **Sheikh Hasina**, a long-time India ally.

3. Current Pakistan–Bangladesh Relations

- **Positive Signals:**
 - Relaxation in visa rules.
 - Limited **military cooperation**.
 - Focus on trade, culture, cricket.
 - **Challenges:**
 - Demand for **1971 apology** remains unresolved.
 - Public opinion in Bangladesh skeptical of Pakistan.
 - **Pakistani Strategy:**
 - Strengthen **Islamabad–Dhaka–Beijing axis** to counter India's influence.
 - Emphasis on economic and strategic partnership.
-

SOUTH ASIA

Political Map



5. Geopolitical Significance

- **Regional Balances:**
 - China deepening ties with both Pakistan & Bangladesh (Belt & Road, infrastructure).
 - Pakistan's engagement with Dhaka may open avenues for **China–Pakistan–Bangladesh axis**.
- **India's Stakes:**
 - Stability in its eastern neighborhood.
 - Preventing **China–Pakistan influence** in Bay of Bengal region.
 - Ensuring Bangladesh remains a **reliable ally**.

Question:

Consider the following statements regarding Pakistan–Bangladesh relations:

1. Bangladesh demands a formal apology from Pakistan for the 1971 killings and atrocities.
2. Pakistan's recent outreach includes relaxation of visa rules and limited military cooperation.
3. India supported Pakistan militarily in the 1971 conflict, which eventually led to creation of Bangladesh.
4. Pakistan's strategic interest in Bangladesh is partly linked to countering India's influence with help from China.

Which of the statements given above are correct?

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

Aiming for the Moon, ISRO building its heaviest rocket

As tall as 40-storey building, expected to be ready by 2035

ANONNA DUTT
NEW DELHI, AUGUST 22

THE INDIAN Space Research Organisation (ISRO) is in the process of building its heaviest rocket ever, and has named it Lunar Module Launch Vehicle, or LMLV. This new rocket would be as tall as a 40-storey building, dwarfing the LVM-3 which is its current most powerful rocket. ISRO Chairman V Narayanan said Friday that the LMLV would be ready by 2035, and would be used for the lunar missions, including the first human mission to the Moon, planned by 2040.

The LVM-3 carried Chandrayaan-3 to the Moon and since then has been human-rated for use in the Gaganyaan mission, India's human space-flight programme. Narayanan said ISRO was no longer working on the NGLV (Next Generation Launch Vehicle), a heavy-lift rocket that was supposed to carry the modules for India's space station, the Bharat Antariksh Station, or BAS. India plans to set up a five-module Bharatiya Antariksh Station (BAS) by 2035.

"This launch vehicle (LMLV)



A model of LMLV rocket (centre). On the left is a model of the LVM-3 rocket, on the right is HLVM3. *Express*

is capable of carrying much heavier payloads. NGLV was designed to carry 30 tonnes to low earth orbit, this will be capable of carrying 80 tonnes to the low earth orbit," Narayanan said.

Low-earth orbits are between 200 and 2,000 km from the Earth's surface. Moon is about 4 lakh km away. The LMLV rocket would be capable of car-

rying about 27 tonnes to the Moon.

The spacecraft carrying astronauts to the International Space Station, like the Crew Dragon of SpaceX which was used in the Axiom-4 mission recently, weigh between six to eight tonnes. But those going to the Moon would be heavier because of additional systems that are required to be fitted for the longer journey. Humans have not landed on the Moon after 1972, and as such the new generation of human-rated spacecraft for lunar missions are still under development. But it is estimated that they might fall in the 18-20 tonne weight category.

A model of the new rocket is currently displayed at the Bharat Mandapam, where ISRO is hosting a two-day event leading up to the National Space Day on Saturday. Narayanan said the design for the vehicle was prepared by the ISRO team within a few months working day and night.

"NGLV will no longer be required for setting up the BAS. A modified version of the current LVM3 rocket, using a liquid oxygen and kerosene engine, will be capable of putting all modules in space," he said.

- **ISRO's new rocket:**
 - Named **Lunar Module Launch Vehicle (LMLV)**.
 - Will be ISRO's **heaviest rocket ever**, taller than a **40-storey building**.
 - Expected readiness: **by 2035**.
 - Purpose: Carrying heavier payloads for **lunar missions, including first human missions to Moon by 2040**.
-

2. Background & Current Capabilities


- **LVM-3** (earlier GSLV Mk-III):
 - India's current most powerful rocket.
 - Carried **Chandrayaan-3** to the Moon.
 - Human-rated for **Gaganyaan Mission**.
- **Limitations:**
 - Can carry ~8 tonnes to LEO, ~4 tonnes to GTO.
 - Insufficient for **long-duration human lunar missions**.

3. LMLV Capabilities

- **Payloads:**
 - ~80 tonnes to Low Earth Orbit (LEO).
 - ~27 tonnes to the Moon.
 - **Comparison:**
 - SpaceX Crew Dragon (used in Axiom-4 ISS mission) weighs **6–8 tonnes**.
 - Human missions to Moon require **18–20 tonnes class spacecraft**.
 - **Technology:**
 - Modified from **LVM-3**, but uses **liquid oxygen & kerosene engines**.
 - Designed for **Bharatiya Antariksh Station (BAS)** by 2035 (5-module Indian space station).
-

4. Strategic Importance


- **India's Space Ambition:**
 - By 2040: Human landing on Moon.
 - By 2035: India's **own space station (BAS)** operational.
- **Replaces NGLV plan:** Earlier Next Generation Launch Vehicle (30 tonnes to LEO) now superseded by LMLV (80 tonnes to LEO).
- **Global Competition:**
 - USA: Artemis Programme (NASA).
 - China: Lunar Base plan by 2030s.
 - India positioning itself as a **major space power**.



Consider the following statements regarding ISRO's proposed Lunar Module Launch Vehicle (LMLV):

1. It will be ISRO's heaviest rocket, capable of carrying up to 80 tonnes to Low Earth Orbit.
2. It is expected to be ready by 2035 and will support India's lunar human missions by 2040.
3. The LMLV will replace the existing GSLV Mk-III (LVM-3) for all satellite launches by 2025.
4. The rocket will also support the Bharatiya Antariksh Station (BAS) project.

Which of the statements given above are correct?

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

Row over 'film on Yogi', and why Bombay HC judges want to watch movie

OMKAR GOKHALE
MUMBAI, AUGUST 22

THE BOMBAY High Court has said judges will watch a film purportedly based on the life of Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath that the Central Board of Film Certification (CBFC) has been accused of delaying.

The court said on Thursday that it would watch *Ajey: The Untold Story of a Yogi* before passing an order on a petition filed by the producers of the film. The case will be taken up again on August 25.

The film in question

The producer, Samrat Cinematics India Pvt Ltd, has said the film is inspired by Shantanu Gupta's book *The Monk Who Became Chief Minister: The Definitive Biography of Yogi Adityanath* (2017), officially endorsed by the UP Chief Minister's Office.

The purpose of the film is "not only to depict the journey of a leader in public service but also to motivate and inspire the youth of the nation through a narrative grounded in fact and integrity", the makers have said in their plea.

In the Bombay HC

Samrat Cinematics has alleged that it applied for certification of the film on June 5 this year. Under the rules for certification, CBFC was required to scrutinise the application within seven days and refer it for screening before the examining committee within 15 days, it has said.

However, after CBFC took no action for more than a month, the petitioner applied again under the "priority scheme". CBFC then scheduled the screening on July 7, but it was cancelled, according to the plea.

Since they received no further correspondence from CBFC, the filmmakers were com-

pelled to approach the HC to seek a direction to CBFC to decide on the release of the film at the earliest.

The producer has said the delay by the Censor Board in processing the application for the film, its teaser, trailer, and promotional song, is "unreasonable" and "unexplained".

On July 16, a Bench of Justices Revati Mohite-Dere and Neela K Gokhale orally remarked that CBFC was mandated to issue the certification within the stipulated time under the law.

The next day, the Board assured HC that the application would be decided within two working days, following which the court disposed of the filmmakers' writ plea. The film was scheduled for release in theatres on August 1.

The second writ plea

On July 21, CBFC wrote to the filmmak-

ers saying their application for certification had been rejected. This prompted them to file a second writ plea in the court.

On August 1, the HC observed that CBFC had taken its July 21 decision without viewing the film, and only because it was based on a constitutional post (UP CM) and the Information and Public Relations

Department of UP had raised a "serious objection" saying it may "affect the public at large".

CBFC assured the HC that a panel would watch the film before deciding on certification. Thereafter, on August 6, it passed an order refusing to certify the film on the ground that it violated the Guidelines for Certification of Films for Public Exhibition.

According to CBFC, the film violated clauses requiring that the medium should remain responsible and sensitive to the values and standards of society.

Also, the film presented "visuals or words contemptuous of racial, religious or other groups" and "involving defamation of an individual or body of individuals, or contempt of court", CBFC said.

The producer then said it would apply to CBFC's Revising Committee. The HC had asked the Board to inform the petitioner about any content or dialogues that it found objectionable. The makers were asked to delete or rework parts of the movie.

CBFC raised 29 objections but subsequently dropped eight. The Board objected to the title of the film as being provocative, and flagged certain dialogues.

On August 17, CBFC's revising panel rejected the filmmaker's application.

Seeing for themselves

On Thursday, CBFC argued that the writ plea was not maintainable. It said the film-

maker could challenge the Revising Committee's order in an appeal before the HC under the Cinematograph Act.

The producer argued the Revising Committee's decision violated the makers' fundamental rights. It said that CBFC had in an arbitrary manner asked for a No-Objection Certificate from a private individual (Chief Minister Adityanath) before the movie could be cleared for release.

The Board was "not the guardian of the private person's fundamental rights", the petitioner said. The Bench said that although an alternative remedy to file an appeal was available, it would have to examine whether the present writ petition was maintainable. It pulled up CBFC, saying it had failed to follow the principles of natural justice.

The judges then said they would watch the film before passing an order on the plea by the maker, and consider the objections of the Revising Committee.

**EXPLAINED
LAW**

1. Core Issue

- **Film in Question:** *Ajay: The Untold Story of a Yogi* (based on Shantanu Gupta's 2017 book *The Monk Who Became Chief Minister*).
 - **Producer:** Samrat Cinematics India Pvt. Ltd.
 - **Claim:** The film aims to motivate youth and depict Yogi Adityanath's journey in public service.
 - **Controversy:** Central Board of Film Certification (CBFC) allegedly delayed certification process.
-

2. Legal Dispute

- **Producers' Petition:** Filed in Bombay HC against CBFC delays in certifying the film and its promotional material.
- **Allegation:** CBFC acted in an "unreasonable and unexplained" manner.
- **HC Observation (Aug 1):** CBFC rejected certification without watching film, based only on objections from **UP Government's Information & PR Dept.** citing possible impact on public at large.
- **CBFC's Objections:**
 - 29 objections raised initially, later reduced.
 - Concerns: "Provocative" title, visuals/dialogues that may cause communal disharmony, or defamation.

3. Fundamental Rights vs Certification

- **Producers' Argument:**
 - CBFC's requirement of a "No-Objection Certificate" (NOC) from Yogi Adityanath was arbitrary.
 - Violated **freedom of expression (Art. 19(1)(a))** and principles of natural justice.
 - **Court's Concern:**
 - CBFC failed to follow due process.
 - Board is **"not guardian of a private person's fundamental rights."**
 - **HC's Step:** Judges decided to **watch the film themselves** before ruling on certification dispute.
-

4. Broader Significance

- **Film Censorship & Law:**
 - CBFC functions under the **Cinematograph Act, 1952**.
 - Certification disputes often balance **creative freedom vs public morality/order**.
- **Political Angle:**
 - Film based on a sitting Chief Minister → raises concerns of political influence in certification.
- **Judicial Oversight:** HC asserting its role in checking arbitrary actions of statutory bodies like CBFC.

Lord Swraj Paul, whose takeover bids left a mark on Indian corporate history, dies at 94

GEORGE MATHEW
MUMBAI, AUGUST 22

UK-BASED industrialist Lord Swraj Paul, the India-born Chairman of the Caparo Group, passed away in London on Thursday evening at the age of 94. Lord Paul, who had taken ill recently, made an indelible mark in the business and industrial spheres in India, the UK and other countries. His failed takeover bids for Escorts and Shriram had created a ruckus in the Indian industrial and political circles in the '80s that eventually led to the formation of the famous 'Bombay Club', a grouping of Indian business titans.

Lord Paul, who moved to the UK in 1966, laid the foundation of the Caparo Group in the UK in

1968. The Caparo Group, with headquarters in London, has operations in the UK, India, US, Canada and UAE.

"Deeply saddened by the passing of Shri Swraj Paul Ji. His contributions to industry, philanthropy and public service in the UK, and his unwavering support for closer ties with India will always be remembered. I fondly recall our many interactions," Prime Minister Narendra Modi said in his post on X.

Lord Paul was born in Jalandhar, India on February 18, 1931, completed his high school education in Jalandhar and Bachelor's in Science from Punjab University in 1949. Thereafter, he went to the US to pursue his Bachelor's & Master's degrees in Mechanical Engineering from



Lord Swraj Paul, who started the Caparo Group in London in 1968, passed away on Thursday.

PTI File

Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

Lord Paul was active in the po-

litical and social circles in the UK. He sat in the House of Lords as a Cross-Bencher with the title Baron

Paul of Marylebone, in the City of Westminster. He was sworn in as a Privy Councillor in October 2009. He founded the Indo-British Association in 1975 to promote better understanding between India and Britain and served as its Chairman. Lord Paul was also the Chairman of the Ambika Paul Foundation, a Charitable Trust in the memory of his daughter; and he helped build the Ambika Paul Memorial Gardens & Ambika Paul Children's Zoo at the London Zoo. He was conferred with the prestigious civilian award Padma Bhushan by the Government of India in 1983.

Failed takeover bids

In the early 1980s, India's stock market was still maturing, with most companies tightly con-

trolled by promoter families and only a small public shareholding. UK-based Lord Paul, who had a close relationship with then Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, saw this as an investment opportunity and mounted takeover bids on Escorts and DCM. These takeover attempts exposed vulnerabilities in corporate governance in India. They were among India's first hostile takeover attempts, rare in that era. In 1983, through Caparo Group Investment Ltd, Lord Paul began buying large quantities of shares in Escorts Ltd., using a legal provision that allowed NRIs to invest up to 1 per cent in Indian companies without prior RBI approval. His goal was to gain management control, exploiting the fact that the Nanda family, Escorts' promoters, held under 10 per cent

of shares.

The Nandas resisted what they viewed as a hostile takeover. The Indian government, under PM Indira Gandhi, intervened. Financial institutions like LIC and UTI, which held major stakes, backed the Nandas. Rules were swiftly changed, restricting further NRI investment and freezing Paul's purchases.

Lord Paul made a similar takeover attempt with Shriram Group-owned DCM Ltd in Delhi, but again faced resistance. Regulators tightened FERA rules and closely monitored his actions. The episode drew national attention and led to political controversy. Indira Gandhi was accused of protecting Indian business elites.

FULL REPORT ON
www.indianexpress.com

- **Personality:** Lord Swraj Paul (1931–2024), UK-based India-born industrialist & philanthropist.
 - **Role:** Founder & Chairman of **Caparo Group** (1968, London-based, with global operations in India, UK, US, Canada, UAE).
 - **Demise:** Passed away in London at age **94**.
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2. Early Life & Education

- Born in **Jalandhar, Punjab** (1931).
- Studied at **Punjab University** → Bachelor's in Science.
- Went to **MIT (USA)** → Bachelor's & Master's in Mechanical Engineering.
- Moved to UK in 1966, established Caparo Group in 1968.

3. Business & Corporate Legacy

- Caparo Group: Diversified global engineering & manufacturing conglomerate.
 - Attempted **takeover bids** in 1980s:
 - **Escorts Ltd. & Shriram Group-owned DCM Ltd.**
 - Used NRI investment provisions to buy significant stakes.
 - Faced strong resistance from promoters (Nanda family, Shriram group) and intervention from Indian govt under **Indira Gandhi**.
 - Govt tightened **FERA rules** & restricted NRI investments after controversy.
 - Impact: Episodes highlighted vulnerabilities in **Indian corporate governance** & led to stricter rules.
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4. Philanthropy & Public Life

- Founded **Indo-British Association (1975)** → promoted India-UK understanding.
- Established **Ambika Paul Foundation** (in memory of daughter) → funded Ambika Paul Gardens & Children's Zoo at London Zoo.
- Political Role:
 - Sat in **UK House of Lords** as a Cross-Bencher (Baron Paul of Marylebone).
 - Sworn as **Privy Councillor (2009)**.
- Honours:
 - Awarded **Padma Bhushan (1983)** by Govt of India.



Thank you 😊

