

Daily Current Affairs





4
The Hindu



1
**PIB, PRS & Other
newspaper**



2
**The Indian
Express**



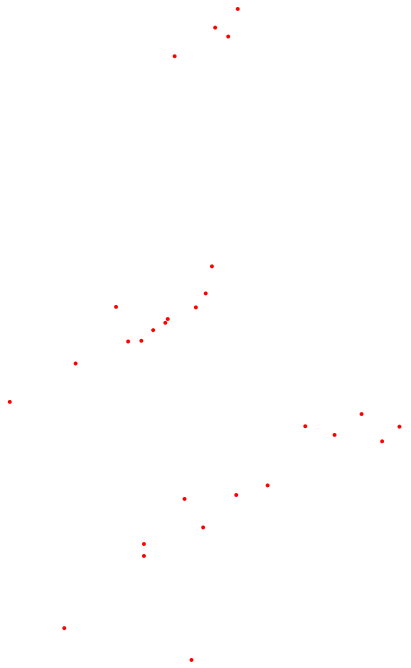
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2
**Financial
Express**



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10 MCQ QUIZ



“Your best life
begins each
morning.”

JOEL OSTEEN



THE EMPATHY EFFECT

How Kerala's young are stepping up

Across the State, school and college students are training as palliative caregivers and offering support and comfort to the aged and terminally ill, fostering a culture of care

MAGAZINE • PAGE 3



Complainant arrested for perjury in Dharmasthala mass burial case NEWS • PAGE 3



Tobacco control laws are out of step with smokeless tobacco SCIENCE • PAGE 10



Messi's Argentina to play a friendly in Kerala SPORT • PAGE 13

INSIDE



Census 2027 to retain urban area definition

NEW DELHI The upcoming Census 2027 proposes to retain the same definition of an urban area as that used during Census 2011 to ensure uniformity while comparing the urbanisation trends in the country according to an official communication. ■ PAGE 3

ICMR's handheld low-cost device to scan the brain

NEW DELHI Aimed at reducing mortality and disabilities caused by brain injuries, the Indian Council of Medical Research is offering a portable diagnostic tool for brain injury. The ICMR is now seeking support from the State governments to leverage the relatively low-cost technology. ■ PAGE 5

Draft curriculum framework is primitive: SFI

NEW DELHI Terming the draft learning outcome-based curriculum framework released by the University Grants Commission recently primitive, the SFI has said that it would take out a protest march to the UGC's office, and its regional centres on Wednesday. ■ PAGE 8

₹2,929-cr bank loan fraud case against RCom

NEW DELHI The CBI on Saturday conducted searches at two locations in Mumbai after registering a case against Reliance Communications Limited, its then director Anil D. Ambani, on the charge of causing a loss of ₹2,929.05 crore to the bank. ■ PAGE 11



Ranil shifted to hospital a day after arrest

COLOMBO Sri Lanka's former President Ranil Wickremesinghe was sent to the National Hospital on Saturday, a day after he was arrested on charges of misusing public funds, the wall-journalist reported and under the ICU, hospital said. ■ PAGE 12

Flash floods in Uttarakhand leave one dead

Houses and roads washed away, with heavy damage reported to property in Tharali in Chamoli district | 30 people injured in flood-related accidents; SDRF, NDRF teams sent to the affected area, say officials | IMD issues orange, red alerts across several districts with heavy rain being forecast

Jyoti Mishra NEW DELHI

Havy rain followed by flash floods killed a 21-year-old woman in Tharali, a town on the banks of the Pindar river in Uttarakhand, in the early hours of Saturday. The debris-filled rush of water engulfed homes, vehicles, and roads, leaving at least one missing, and caused heavy damage to private and public property.

An official said that more than 30 people were injured, out of which six were sent to the All India Institute of Medical Sciences, Delhi.

The incident occurred less than 20 days after the August 5 flash floods that washed away the entire village of Dharali on the banks of the Ganga in Uttarakhand district, leaving two dead and 68 missing.



Flash flood: A police official and residents during a rescue operation in an affected area in Chamoli district of Uttarakhand after heavy rain on Saturday. PTI

Tharali town in Chamoli district was hit by flash floods around 12:40 a.m., according to the district administration. The debris which flowed down with the water damaged the market and residential area. Many houses were damaged,

including the residence of the sub-divisional magistrate, along with shops in the Chhapda and Kothi-wan markets. Many vehicles were buried under the debris.

Red alerts issued

"As soon as the information was received, the district administration and a local police team reached the spot for relief and rescue work. At the same time, the SDRF and NDRF teams have left for the disaster area. The Karna-prayag-Gwaldam road has been damaged in many places due to heavy rain. The work of making it motorable is being done on a priority basis," said Vinod Kumar Numan, Uttarakhand secretary for Disaster Management and Rehabilitation. The India meteorological

Department has issued orange and red alerts for various areas of Uttarakhand, with Chamoli among the districts at risk for the next 48 hours.

A temporary relief and rehabilitation centre was prepared at a polytechnic in Kharai and a college in a neighbouring village, where around 180 people displaced by the floods were given shelter. Schools and anganwadi centres have been closed.

A team of 50 Army personnel from the Joshimath base immediately rushed to Tharali to help in relief operations. A medical team has been mobilised along with search and rescue dogs and surveillance drones to assist in locating survivors and providing relief, an Army statement said. "Efforts are being made

to ensure power and communication supply is restored in the area on priority basis. Roads are also being cleared. Indian Army and Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP) are also assisting the district administration in relief and rescue operations," Mr. Numan added. Uttarakhand Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhami expressed grief over the incident.

"A tragic report of a flash flood was received in the Tharali area of Chamoli district last night. The district administration, SDRF, and police have reached the spot and are engaged in relief and rescue operations. I am personally closely monitoring the situation. I pray to God for everyone's safety," the CM said. (With PTI inputs)

Safe steps



Security personnel stand guard as students go to school at Rawalpindi in Srinagar on Saturday. The J&K government had announced the takeover of the management of 215 schools run by Fatah-e-Aam Yousaf, a J&K-affiliated body formed in 2019. (AP/WIDEWORLD) (PTI)

SC did not bar fight against Naxals, says Justice Reddy

Rohitha K. Nair, NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court never told the Centre not to fight the Naxals, but the state cannot outsource its responsibility to protect its people, the Opposition's Vice-Presidential candidate Justice B. Sudesh Kumar Reddy said on Saturday.

The ex-SC judge was responding to a question on Home Minister Amit Shah's accusation that he supported Naxalism and that had he not delivered Sahasr Jyoti judgement, left-wing extremism would have been eradicated before 2020. He said he did not want to join issue with Mr. Shah, since a Supreme Court judgment was not meant for public debate.

FULL REPORT • PAGE 4

Centre is denying fair share of funds, acting politically, says Stalin

The Hindu Bureau CHENNAI

Though Tamil Nadu contributes significantly to Union tax revenue through direct taxes and the Goods and Services Tax (GST), the Centre does not give the State its due share when it comes to financial devolution, acting with "narrow political motives," Chief Minister M.K. Stalin said on Saturday, accusing the Centre of undermining the independence of the Finance Commission.

Addressing a national seminar on Union-State relations, Mr. Stalin urged other States to join the fight to protect their rights. "All those who truly care about national unity should lend their voice to the cause of State autonomy. Like Tamil Nadu, other States should also constitute similar committees to take forward the demand for rights and federalism," he said.

"In 2002, at the instance of the DMK, the UPA government constituted the Punchhi Commission. One of its key recommendations was that Governors should be appointed in consultation with the respective Chief Ministers, in a non-partisan manner. This was never implemented, as is evident from the actions of the present Tamil Nadu Governor," he said. The Union government continues to trouble Opposition-led States through direct intervention, Mr. Stalin said. Recounting the histo-



M.K. Stalin

ry of the battle for State autonomy in the federal system, he recalled former Chief Minister C.N. Annadurai's demand in 1967 for a review of the Constitution to secure State rights and former Chief Minister M. Karunanidhi's initiative in setting up the Justice Rajagopal Committee in 1980 to examine Union-State relations.

Even though the Sarkaria Commission, formed in 1983, highlighted the dangers of excessive centralisation, Mr. Stalin said that it had failed to recommend meaningful constitutional amendments to empower the States. "Since then, successive amendments and legislations have only vested more powers with the Union," he noted.

Language policy

He said that the Union government is pushing Hindi, and Tamil Nadu has successfully resisted such attempts. Today, resistance to Hindi imposition and demands for State rights are being echoed by other States, he said, emphasising that it is only through self-reliance and self-reliance that a united India can grow stronger.

India Post suspends high-value bookings to U.S.

The Hindu Bureau COMBATOR

The Department of Posts will suspend booking and commission of all categories of mail items, except letters, documents, and gifts worth up to \$100, to the U.S. from August 28. The decision comes in the wake of an executive order issued by the U.S. administration, ending duty-free imports and mandating collection of pre-paid duty and customs data from August 29.

U.S.-bound carriers have expressed their inability to carry postal shipments in the absence of fully defined mechanisms for duty collection and data exchange, in a communication, the postal department said it is taking steps to restore the services. The Global Trade Research Initiatives said the move follows the U.S. Executive Order 14124, which ends duty-free imports under the \$800 de minimis threshold, and mandates pre-paid duty collection



People can continue to book letters, documents and gifts worth up to \$100 to the U.S., says the Department of Posts, but even advanced customs data will attract tariffs, but international postal shipments remain duty-free

until the U.S. Customs and Border Protection establishes a new entry process. After that, such shipments will face one of two duty structures — ad valorem duty or a flat rate. The ad valorem duty will be based on the effective tariff rate of the U.S. (U.S. legislation), while the flat rate duty — \$80, \$160, or \$200 per item — will depend on the country's tariff. The flat rate duty will be levied on 16.25%, or above 25% respectively.

Flash floods in Uttarakhand leave one dead

Houses and roads washed away, with heavy damage reported to property in Tharali in Chamoli district

30 people injured in flood-related accidents; SDRF, NDRF teams sent to the affected area, say officials

IMD issues orange, red alerts across several districts with heavy rain being forecast

Ishita Mishra
NEW DELHI

Hheavy rain followed by flash floods killed a 21-year-old woman in Tharali, a town on the banks of the Pindar river in Uttarakhand, in the early hours of Saturday. The debris-filled rush of water engulfed homes, vehicles, and roads, leaving at least one missing, and caused heavy damage to private and public property.

An official said that more than 30 people were injured, out of which six were sent to the All India Institute of Medical Sciences, Rishikesh.

The incident occurred less than 20 days after the August 5 flash floods that washed away the entire village of Dharali on the banks of the Ganga in Ut-



Flood fury: A police official and residents during a rescue operation in an affected area in Chamoli district of Uttarakhand after heavy rain on Saturday. PTI

tarkashi district, leaving two dead and 68 missing.

Tharali town in Chamoli district was hit by flash

floods around 12.40 a.m., according to the district administration.

The debris which

flowed down with the water damaged the market and residential areas. Many houses were damaged,

including the residence of the sub-divisional magistrate, along with shops in the Chepado and Kotdweep markets. Many vehicles were buried under the debris.

Red alerts issued

"As soon as the information was received, the district administration and a local police team reached the spot for relief and rescue work. At the same time, the SDRF and NDRF teams have left for the disaster area. The Karna-prayag-Gwaldam road has been damaged in many places due to heavy rain. The work of making it mot-orable is being done on a priority basis," said Vinod Kumar Suman, Uttarakhand Secretary for Disaster Management and Rehabilitation.

The India Meteorologi-

cal Department has issued orange and red alerts for various areas of Uttarakhand, with Chamoli among the districts at risk for the next 48 hours.

A temporary relief and rehabilitation centre was prepared at a polytechnic in Kulsari and a college in a neighbouring village, where around 150 people displaced by the floods were given shelter. Schools and anganwadi centres have been closed.

A team of 50 Army personnel from the Joshimath base immediately rushed to Tharali to help in relief operations. A medical team has been mobilised along with search and rescue dogs and surveillance drones to assist in locating survivors and providing relief, an Army statement said.

"Efforts are being made

to ensure power and communication supply is restored in the area on priority basis. Roads are also being cleared. Indian Army and [Indo-Tibetan Border Police] ITBP are also assisting the district administration in relief and rescue operations," Mr. Suman added.

Uttarakhand Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhami expressed grief over the incident.

"A tragic report of a flash flood was received in the Tharali area of Chamoli district last night. The district administration, SDRF, and police have reached the spot and are engaged in relief and rescue operations. I am personally closely monitoring the situation. I pray to God for everyone's safety," the CM said.

(With PTI inputs)

1. Incident Overview

- A 21-year-old woman died due to **flash floods in Tharali**, Chamoli district, Uttarakhand.
- Triggered by **heavy rainfall**, the **Pindar River** overflowed, damaging homes, roads, and vehicles.
- The incident occurred around **12:40 AM** on a Saturday.

2. Impact on Population & Property

- Over **30 people were injured** in flood-related incidents.
- Heavy destruction was reported in **residential and market areas**.
- Key properties affected included the **residence of the sub-divisional magistrate**, shops in Chepado and Kotdweep markets.

3. Rescue and Relief Operations

- **SDRF** and **NDRF** teams rushed for rescue and relief.
- **50 Indian Army personnel** from Joshimath helped in rescue efforts.
- Use of **drones** and **search teams** to locate survivors.
- A **relief center** set up in a polytechnic and nearby college for 150 displaced people.
- Schools and Anganwadi centers shut.

4. Weather Alerts & Administration Response

- **IMD issued orange and red alerts** across several Uttarakhand districts.
 - Roads being cleared and **communication restored** on a priority basis.
 - Uttarakhand CM Pushkar Singh Dhami expressed grief and assured full support.
-

Geographical Relevance

- **Pindar River:** A major tributary of the Alaknanda, originating from **Pindari Glacier** in Kumaon Himalayas.
 - **Chamoli district:** Prone to landslides and floods; part of the **Central Himalayas**, sensitive to tectonic activity and glacial melts.
 - **Tharali:** A small hilly town located near the Pindar River; strategically located near pilgrimage routes.
-



Historical Context

- Chamoli was also affected in the **2021 glacier burst (Raini)** causing devastation near **Joshimath and Tapovan**.
 - Flash floods and landslides are recurrent events in Uttarakhand, especially post-**2013 Kedarnath floods** which killed over 5,000 people.
 - Increasing frequency linked to **climate change**, glacial retreat, and haphazard infrastructure development in eco-sensitive zones.
-



Economic Impact

- Losses from flash floods include:
 - Destruction of **public infrastructure (roads, bridges, buildings)**.
 - Impact on **tourism** — a vital source of income for the region.
 - **Agricultural loss** due to land erosion and silt deposition.
- Relief efforts put **strain on state disaster budgets** and insurance systems.

Census 2027 to retain urban area definition of previous count in 2011

Vijaita Singh
NEW DELHI

The upcoming Census 2027 proposes to retain the same definition of an urban area as that used during Census 2011 to ensure uniformity while comparing the urbanisation trends in the country, according to an official communication.

During Census 2011, other than statutory areas such as municipal corporation, cantonment Board, notified town area committee, town panchayat, and nagar palika, an urban unit or a "census town" was defined as "all other villages" with a minimum population of 5,000 persons with a density of population of 400 persons per sq. km and where 75% of the male working population is engaged in non-agricultural pursuits.

According to that Census, out of the total population of 121 crore, around 83.3 crore Indians, or near-



People pass a population clock board outside the International Institute for Population Sciences in Mumbai. EMMANUAL YOGINI

ly 68.8%, live in rural areas, while 37.7 crore, or 31.2%, reside in urban areas. During the 1951 Census, the first after Independence, the percentage of urban areas in the country stood at 17.3%. In 2011, there were 6,40,867 villages in India, while there were 15,870 urban units, towns, and cities.

The Registrar-General of India and Census Commissioner, Mrityunjay Kumar Narayan, in a letter dated August 14 to the States' Directorates of Census Oper-

ations (DCO), said: "It is proposed to retain the same definition for urban areas for Census 2027 as this will ensure comparability with the previous Census and provide the basis for analysis of urbanisation trends in the country."

The letter said that as the preparatory work for Census begins, the first task to be handled by DCOs is the demarcation of rural and urban areas by preparing an updated list of villages and towns/wards after incorporating the jurisdic-

tional changes that have taken place since Census 2011 up to December 31, 2025.

The letter added that for finalising the rural-urban frame for Census 2027, the statutory towns will be counted as they exist on January 1, 2026, the day when the administrative boundaries across the country will be frozen, ahead of the first phase of the Census which starts on April 1 the same year.

"For the purpose of identification of urban units based on the demographic criteria, i.e., population size and proportion of workers, like in the previous Censuses, all villages having a population of 4,000 or more at the preceding Census 2011 are required to be taken up for examination because a village having a population of 4,000 or more in Census 2011 expected to cross the population mark of 5,000 persons by Census 2027," the letter said.

◆ **Uniformity in Urban Definition:**

- Census 2027 will retain the **same definition of urban areas** used in **Census 2011**.
- Aim: To ensure **comparability in urbanisation trends** over time.

◆ **Definition as per Census 2011:**

- **Statutory urban areas** include:
 - Municipal corporations
 - Cantonment boards
 - Nagar palikas (municipal councils)
 - Notified town area committees
- **Census Towns:**
 - Population of **$\geq 5,000$**
 - **$\geq 75\%$** of male working population in **non-agricultural activities**
 - **Density ≥ 400 persons per sq. km**

◆ Population Stats (2011):

- Total population: **121 crore**
 - Rural: **83.3 crore (68.8%)**
 - Urban: **37.7 crore (31.2%)**
- 2011:
 - **6,40,867 villages**
 - **15,870 urban units** (towns/cities)
- In 1951: Urban population was only **17.3%**

◆ Process and Timeline:

- The **jurisdictional freeze** will happen on **January 1, 2026**.
- Census begins from **April 1, 2026**.
- Urban/rural demarcation will be updated to reflect **statutory and jurisdictional changes** till **December 31, 2025**.

◆ Key Role of DCOs (Directorates of Census Operations):

- Will use demographic criteria for defining urban areas.
- Villages with population **≥4,000 in 2011** will be examined for status change if expected to cross **5,000 by 2027**.

The **urban definition** affects state revenues, resource distribution, planning commissions' data, and **14th/15th Finance Commission allocations**.

Important for **urban governance reforms**, sustainable city planning, and **SDG 11** (Sustainable Cities and Communities).

**Urban Population in India –
Present Status (2025
estimate)**

As per the **World Bank & UN
World Urbanisation
Prospects**, about **36–37%** of
India's total population lives
in urban areas (2025
estimate).

In **1951**, India's urban
population was only **17%**.

By **2011 Census**, it rose to
31.2% (approx. 377 million
people).

In **2023**, India's urban share
crossed **36%** (~515 million
people).

By **2035**, it is projected to
touch **43%**, and by **2050**,
nearly **50%** of Indians will live
in urban areas.

•**States with highest urbanisation (2011 Census):**

- Tamil Nadu (48.4%),
- Kerala (47.7%),
- Maharashtra (45.2%),
- Gujarat (42.6%).


•**States with lowest urbanisation:**

- Himachal Pradesh (10%),
- Bihar (11.3%),
- Assam (14%).

•India has **53 cities with population over 1 million (2011 Census)**; this will increase in 2025 data.

•**Megacities (10+ million):** Delhi, Mumbai, Kolkata, Bengaluru, Chennai, Hyderabad.

Urbanisation in India vs China (1990–2023)

Year	India Urban Population (% of total)	China Urban Population (% of total)	
1990	~25%	~26%	
2000	~28%	~36%	
2010	~31%	~50%	
2020	~35%	~61%	
2023	~36–37%	~65%	
2025 (proj.)	~37%	~66%	

India

- **Slow but steady growth:** from ~25% (1990) to ~37% (2025 projected).
- Still a **predominantly rural country** (majority lives in villages).
- Urbanisation mainly driven by **natural increase + migration** to Tier-1/Tier-2 cities.
- Challenges: **urban poverty, slums, poor infrastructure, environmental stress.**

China

- **Rapid urbanisation:** from ~26% (1990) to ~65% (2023).
- Major push since **1978 economic reforms (Deng Xiaoping)** → special economic zones (SEZs), industrialisation, export-oriented growth.
- Aggressive **rural–urban migration** (over 300 million people moved to cities in 30 years).
- Now more than **2/3rd of Chinese live in urban areas** → one of the fastest urban transitions in world history.

Q. Consider the following statements regarding the Census 2027 and urban area definition:

1. The definition of urban areas in Census 2027 will be revised to include villages with a population above 4,000.
2. The urban area definition used in Census 2027 will be the same as that used in Census 2011.
3. All villages with a population above 5,000 will be automatically reclassified as census towns in Census 2027.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

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

IN BRIEF



Chargesheet names four in law college gang-rape case

The Kolkata Police on Friday filed a chargesheet against four accused, including Monish Mishra, 19, allegedly the "mastermind" of the Trinamool Congress's student wing at the South Calcutta Law College, in connection with the gang rape of a student on the campus. The chargesheet has been filed within 90 days of the June 26 incident. The police on Saturday said that Mr. Mishra, a former student and staff member of the college; the current students Zaid Ahmed, 19, and Pramit Mukherjee, 20, and the security guard on duty at the time, Pinaki Banerjee, 35, had been charged under several sections of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita.

CBI extradites extortion case fugitive from Azerbaijan

The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) on Saturday coordinated the return from Azerbaijan of a fugitive wanted by the Bhubaneswar Police in an extortion case through Interpol channels. The police registered a case against Sanal Kumar in 2022 for allegedly sending threatening messages through social media to extort money. "The subject Sanal Kumar is a member of Anjan Sahu gang using the fake name Mayank Singh. Anjan Sahu is a gangster of Bhubaneswar whose associates are operating as an organised criminal gang," the agency said. The CBI had got an Interpol Red Notice issued against him on October 10, 2021, following a request from the State police.

Ivory weighing 4.6 kg seized in Assam, man being quizzed

The Assam Police and officials of the Wildlife Crime Control Bureau seized two elephant tusks weighing 4.6 kg from a man on Saturday. A police officer said the man was being interrogated to get to a wider network of ivory smugglers suspected to be active in the region bordering Arunachal Pradesh. "Our objective is to identify the network of illegal ivory trade linked to organised crime in Assam and the region beyond," the officer said. On the left-hand side, forest officials rescued an elephant calf trapped in a muddy pit near a village on the fringes of the Katragar National Park on Friday. Assam is estimated to have 5,700 wild elephants.

Trinamool MLAs house raided by CBI in fraud case

The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) on Saturday searched the residence of Trinamool Congress MLA and doctor Sudipta Roy for his alleged involvement in financial irregularities in the K.G. Kar Medical College and Hospital. Two CBI officials went to the house of Mr. Roy at Sirohi in north Kolkata and conducted a search for hours. The legislator's house has been searched before on multiple occasions by both the CBI and the Enforcement Directorate, and the MLA himself has been questioned for his alleged involvement in the financial irregularities case. Mr. Roy denied all allegations and asked for proof against him.

SUDOKU

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6				9	2	
	3					4
		8	4			5
	6				2	7
8			1	7	3	
2	5		8			

DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★★★★

Solution to yesterday's Sudoku

2	6	8	5	3	7	4	1	9
4	9	3	7	6	8	5	1	2
1	5		2					8
6				9	2			
	3							4
		8	4					5
	6					2	7	
8			1	7	3			
2	5		8					

ICMR's handheld device to scan brain

CEREBRO is a portable, non-invasive diagnostic tool that can come in handy in places where advanced diagnostic tools such as CT and MRI scanners are inaccessible; it provides colour-coded, radiation-free, and cost-effective results to detect brain injury; it's safe for infants and pregnant women

Bhishajhaan Perampadan
NEW DELHI

Aimed at reducing mortality and disabilities caused by traumatic brain injuries, especially in rural areas, the Indian Council of Medical Research is offering a portable, non-invasive diagnostic tool for brain injury.

The handheld machine, named CEREBRO, developed using advanced near-infrared spectroscopy technology powered by machine learning, will come in handy in places where advanced diagnostic tools such as computerised tomography or magnetic resonance imaging scans are inaccessible or delayed.

The ICMR is now seeking support from the State governments to train paramedical staff and even unskilled personnel can run the machine.

Transcending brain injuries are a significant public health challenge, particularly in emergency settings. Traditional methods, such as the Glasgow coma



Deep eyes: A demonstration of the portable diagnostic tool being held in New Delhi. (IICR)

of training, paramedical staff and even unskilled personnel can run the machine.

Transcending brain injuries are a significant public health challenge, particularly in emergency settings. Traditional methods, such as the Glasgow coma

scale, are prone to errors and edema within a minute, and provide colour-coded, radiation-free, and cost-effective results, he said.

"Designed for deployment in ambulances, trauma centres, rural clinics, and disaster response units,

the new device can detect intracranial bleeding and edema within a minute, and provide colour-coded, radiation-free, and cost-effective results, he said.

"Designed for deployment in ambulances, trauma centres, rural clinics, and disaster response units,

it enhances early TBI detection and patient outcomes," Dr. Bal said.

Developed in a collaboration among the ICMR's Medical Device and Diagnostics Mission Secretariat (MDMS), All India Institute of Medical Sciences, IIT-Patna, National Institute of Mental Health and Neurosciences, Bengaluru, and Bioscan Research, the machine has undergone clinical validation, regulatory approvals, and feasibility studies, "paving the way for global adoption in emergency and military healthcare systems", Dr. Bal said.

Testing, evaluation

The ICMR said multi-centre clinical performance evaluation and utility trials supported by the NPKIDS scheme of the ICMR were underway and leading trauma care and neurological centres to generate robust, prospective evidence on diagnostic accuracy, time-to-decision

benefits, and integration feasibility within emergency care pathways.

The council is seeking to enhance the device's adoption in tertiary care to accelerate emergency diagnosis, and reduce costs.

India has the highest incidence of head injuries in the world, according to the Indian Head Injury Foundation, claiming more than 1,00,000 lives every year, over one million people suffer from serious head injuries.

Half of those who die do so within the first two hours of injury. It's now known that only a portion of neurological damage occurs because of impact (the primary injury), and damage progresses during the ensuing minutes, hours, and days. The secondary brain injury can result in increased mortality and disability. Consequently, early and appropriate management is critical in securing better outcomes for patients.

Clocks calling time on Navic; ISRO now building indigenous devices

Jacob Kozhik
NEW DELHI

Officials at the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) said here on Saturday that they were looking to launch at least three satellites before 2026-end to replace the defunct Navic satellites that are part of the Indian GPS, or the Navic (Navigation with Indian Constellation) system. However, a key challenge impeding the launch seems to be the development of indigenous clocks.

These high-precision clocks — one for every satellite — are what provides accurate timing (and hence accurate location services) to users on the ground. The Navic satellites provide more accurate location services to the military and slightly less accurate for civilian purposes.

Nine satellites of the Indian Regional Navigation Satellite System (IRNSS), an alternative to the GPS, have been launched since 2013. Only eight reached the orbit. The IRNSS-1E, the last satellite (IRNSS-1I) of the constellation, was launched in 2018. The constellation is akin to the Russian GLONASS, the Chinese Beidou, the American GPS, and European Galileo providing location services to do so only within a radius of 1,500 km in India. It is viewed more as a fallback system if India is denied access to these foreign constellations during future global conflicts.

Last month, the ISRO revealed via a Right to Information request that five of the Navic satellites were completely defunct with



The IRNSS-1E, launched in January, did not reach the desired orbit and the mission remained incomplete, ISRO.

all three of their clocks in each satellite not working. In one of the three with functioning atomic clocks, two of the three elements have failed.

Only two satellites of the constellation, therefore, have functional atomic clocks. The atomic clock in this constellation was imported by the ISRO from SpectraTime.

For the next series of satellites to replace the impaired and ageing fleet of IRNSS satellites, the ISRO

has decided to install multi-junction developed rubidium clocks. Two of the three satellites now being used have passed, or are close to, their rated shelf life of 10 years though it's possible for these systems to function beyond.

"Each satellite will have five clocks though we are still at the design stage," developing them," Nitesh Desai, Director, Space Applications, said.

The ISRO has launched NVS-01 in May 2023. Only NVS-01 has successfully reached its designated orbit and working as intended, with NVS-02 and NVS-03 still in the process of orbit required to function as a navigational satellite.

Draft curriculum framework of UGC is primitive, says SFI

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Termining the draft learning outcome-based curriculum framework released for senior subjects by the University Grants Commission (UGC) is primitive and unhelpful, says the Students' Federation of India (SFI).

"Each satellite will have five clocks though we are still at the design stage," developing them," Nitesh Desai, Director, Space Applications, said.

The ISRO has launched NVS-01 in May 2023. Only NVS-01 has successfully reached its designated orbit and working as intended, with NVS-02 and NVS-03 still in the process of orbit required to function as a navigational satellite.

Another official familiar with the ISRO said that while based on an indigenous design, there were key components that needed to be imported and this was contributing to procurement challenges and delays in commissioning.

So far, to replace the defunct fleet of IRNSS satellites, the ISRO has launched NVS-01 in May 2023. Only NVS-01 has successfully reached its designated orbit and working as intended, with NVS-02 and NVS-03 still in the process of orbit required to function as a navigational satellite.

The draft on chemistry starts with a salutation to Sarawati, while the commerce curriculum suggests teaching of Kautilya's Arthashastra.

"The students and youth of this country have no need to study the history of freedom struggle. From books written by those who betrayed the freedom struggle," the statement said.

Organisation to take out a protest march to the UGC's offices and regional centres on Wednesday

Swayamsevak Sangh agency through whom the SFI statement said.

Article 19(1) of the Constitution says it is a fundamental duty of citizens to develop a scientific temper, humanism, and the spirit of inquiry and reform. The statement said.

"Saffronisation effort" This attempt by the UGC is intended to intensify saffronisation and propagate an unscientific temper in higher education," the SFI said.

The inclusion of Sarawati, while the commerce curriculum suggests teaching of Kautilya's Arthashastra.

"The students and youth of this country have no need to study the history of freedom struggle. From books written by those who betrayed the freedom struggle," the statement said.

"This is an attempt to push the Kautilya

Ladakh administration criticised for revoking land allotment

Maita Singh
NEW DELHI

A day after *The Hindu* reported that the Ladakh administration has cancelled the land allotment made in 2018 to Himalayan Institute of Alternative Learning (HIAL), an alternative educational institute in Leh primarily run by veteran activist Sonam Wangchuk, civil society leaders in the region on Saturday termed the move a "witch-hunt".

Cherry Dorjay Lakruk, president of the Ladakh Buddhist Association and co-convenor of the Leh Apex Body, said the cancellation notice was "congratulatory to suppress the voice of Ladakh".

"This institute has been running for the past several years. Why didn't the administration put its own house in order and fulfil the technicalities associated with the lease agree-

ment earlier? This witch-hunt appears to be a conspiracy to scare us. Since we are not scared about our demands, this is a way to suppress our voice," said Mr. Lakruk. He said they would explore legal recourse.

Mr. Wangchuk, an education reformer, has been the face of protests in Ladakh for the past three years and had recently joined a three-day hunger strike in Kargil to demand constitutional safeguards for the region.

Constant protests After Ladakh became a Union Territory in 2019, following revocation of the special status of Jammu and Kashmir under Article 370 of the Constitution and bifurcation of the former state, civil society groups in Ladakh erupted in protest.

To cancel the allotment when Ladakh is demanding safeguards is a witch-hunt. This institute belongs to the entire region.

Sonam Wangchuk Director, HIAL

security of water in the region. Ladakh leaders came together and started this initiative," Mr. Wangchuk said. He said that the land was allotted in 2018 by the Ladakh Autonomous Hill Development Council (LAHDC).

The said the cancellation order was approved by the Deputy Commissioner, Leh, who in his capacity as CEO, LAHDC, signed the order while the council appeared to have been kept in the loop as the communication was not even marked to them.

The 2018 allotment letter laid down conditions that it should be used for a stated purpose and the lease amount should be paid within one year. We wrote to the administration four times to finalise the lease amount but they responded saying the lease policy is not ready," he said. The cancellation order said the HIAL flouted the stated purpose.

The 2018 proposal clearly said it is for the establishment of alternative educational institutions, which is not a regular university. 400 students including foreign students were in a convocation has happened, there are 10-20 buildings standing here. To cancel the allotment when Ladakh is demanding safeguards is a witch-hunt, this institute belongs to the entire region," Mr. Wangchuk said.

As reported by *The Hindu* on August 22, an order issued by Romil Singh

Donk, Deputy Commissioner, Leh, said that land measuring 1,078 kanal (1 ha) was allotted to the HIAL. "stands evicted to the State Le, LAHDC, and the Tehsilid, Leh shall remove all the encumbrances from the said piece of state land as per provisions of the law and effect entries in the revenue record accordingly."

"No university set up" The order said the land in village Phosung, Leh was allotted to the HIAL on a 40-year lease and the land has not been used for the purpose for which it was allotted "as no University is recognised by law has been set up" till date. It said that two lease agreement has been executed in respect of the allotted land and no normal handing over and taking over of the land has taken place through the Leh Hill date, as per record."

As reported by *The Hindu* on August 22, an order issued by Romil Singh

Donk, Deputy Commissioner, Leh, said that land measuring 1,078 kanal (1 ha) was allotted to the HIAL. "stands evicted to the State Le, LAHDC, and the Tehsilid, Leh shall remove all the encumbrances from the said piece of state land as per provisions of the law and effect entries in the revenue record accordingly."

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ICMR's handheld device to scan brain

CEREBO is a portable, non-invasive diagnostic tool that can come in handy in places where advanced diagnostic tools such as CT and MRI scanners are inaccessible; it provides colour-coded, radiation-free, and cost-effective results to detect brain injury; it's safe for infants and pregnant women

Bindu Shajan Perappadan
NEW DELHI

Aimed at reducing mortality and disabilities caused by traumatic brain injuries, especially in rural areas, the Indian Council of Medical Research is offering a portable, non-invasive diagnostic tool for brain injury.

The handheld machine, named CEREBO, developed using advanced near-infrared spectroscopy technology powered by machine learning, will come in handy in places where advanced diagnostic tools such as computerised tomography or magnetic resonance imaging scans are inaccessible or delayed.

The ICMR is now seeking support from the State governments to leverage the indigenous, relatively low-cost technology. The machine is safe for infants and pregnant women as well. With just 30 minutes



Deep eye: A demonstration of the portable diagnostic tool being held in New Delhi. FILE PHOTO

of training, paramedical staff and even unskilled personnel can run the machine.

"Traumatic brain injuries are a significant public health challenge, particularly in emergency settings. Traditional methods, such as the Glasgow coma

scale, are prone to errors and subjective interpretations, while imaging techniques require specialised infrastructure and trained personnel and are cost-intensive," Dr. Rajiv Bahl, Director-General, ICMR, said.

The new device can de-

tect intracranial bleeding and edema within a minute, and provide colour-coded, radiation-free, and cost-effective results, he said.

"Designed for deployment in ambulances, trauma centres, rural clinics, and disaster response un-

its, it enhances early TBI detection and patient outcomes," Dr. Bahl said.

Developed in a collaboration among the ICMR's Medical Device and Diagnostics Mission Secretariat (MDMS), All India Institute of Medical Sciences, Bhopal; National Institute of Mental Health and Neurosciences, Bengaluru; and Bioscan Research, the machine has undergone clinical validation, regulatory approvals, and feasibility studies, "paving the way for global adoption in emergency and military healthcare systems", Dr. Bahl said.

Testing, evaluation

The ICMR said multi-centre clinical performance evaluation and utility trials supported by the mPRIDE scheme of the MDMS were conducted at leading trauma care and neurosurgical centres to generate robust, prospective evidence on diagnostic accuracy, time-to-decision

benefits, and integration feasibility within emergency care pathways.

The council is seeking to enhance the device's adoption in tertiary care to accelerate emergency diagnosis, and reduce costs.

India has the highest incidence of head injuries in the world, according to the Indian Head Injury Foundation, claiming more than 1,00,000 lives every year. Over one million people suffer from serious head injuries.

Half of those who die do so within the first two hours of injury. It's now known that only a portion of neurological damage occurs because of impact (the primary injury), and damage progresses during the ensuing minutes, hours, and days. The secondary brain injury can result in increased mortality and disability. Consequently, early and appropriate management is critical in securing better outcomes for patients.

1. What is CEREBO?

- A **portable, non-invasive, radiation-free diagnostic tool** for brain injuries.
 - Developed by **ICMR** (Indian Council of Medical Research).
 - Uses **near-infrared spectroscopy** and **machine learning**.
 - Useful where **MRI/CT scan access is limited**, such as **rural areas** or **emergency locations**.
 - Produces **colour-coded results** for detecting intracranial bleeding and edema.
-

2. Target Use Cases

- Primarily for **traumatic brain injuries (TBIs)**.
- Safe for:
 - Infants 🧒
 - Pregnant women 🤰
- Operable by **paramedics or even unskilled staff** with minimal training.
- Designed for:
 - Ambulances 🚑
 - Trauma centres 🏥
 - Disaster response units 📞
 - Rural clinics 🏠



3. Technical & Operational Benefits

- **Quick detection:** Detects bleeding within a minute.
 - **No radiation exposure.**
 - **No reliance on expensive hospital infrastructure.**
 - Increases chances of saving lives by **speeding up diagnosis and reducing costs.**
-

4. Validation and Collaboration

- Collaboration between:
 - ICMR-MDMS (Medical Device and Diagnostics Mission Secretariat)
 - AIIMS Bhopal
 - NIMHANS Bengaluru
 - Bioscan Research
- Underwent:
 - **Clinical validation**
 - **Regulatory approvals**
 - **Feasibility studies**
- Clinical trials conducted under **mPRiDE** scheme.

**Why it's needed:
Alarming Brain
Injury Stats in
India**

India has the
**highest number of
head injuries
globally.**

1 million people
suffer serious head
injuries every year.

**Over 1 lakh deaths
annually** due to
head injuries.

Half the deaths
occur within the
first 2 hours of the
injury.

**Delayed diagnosis
= increased
disability** and
higher mortality.

Factor	CT Scan (Computed Tomography)	MRI (Magnetic Resonance Imaging)
Principle	Uses X-rays to create cross-sectional images of the body.	Uses strong magnetic fields & radio waves to generate detailed images.
Radiation	☑ Involves ionising radiation (like multiple X-rays).	✗ No radiation — considered safer for long-term use.
Image Quality	Better for bones, chest, lungs, fractures, internal bleeding .	Superior for soft tissues, brain, spinal cord, joints, ligaments, tumors .
Speed	Very fast (a few minutes). Useful in emergencies (e.g., accidents, stroke).	Slower (30–60 minutes). Not suitable for unstable patients.
Noise/Comfort	Open machine, less noisy, less claustrophobic.	Tube-like machine, loud noises, can cause claustrophobia (often need earplugs).
Safety Concerns	Radiation exposure (not ideal for repeated scans, children, or pregnancy).	Cannot be done if patient has metal implants, pacemaker, cochlear implant , etc.
Contrast Agents	Iodine-based (may affect kidneys).	Gadolinium-based (generally safer but avoided in kidney disease).
Availability	Widely available, even in smaller hospitals.	Less available, usually in big hospitals/metros.
Cost (India, 2025 approx.)	₹2,000 – ₹8,000 depending on body part & city.	₹6,000 – ₹25,000 depending on body part & city.
Best Suited For	Trauma, fractures, lung disease, cancer detection, stroke (initial scan).	Brain disorders, spinal cord injury, ligament tears, tumors, soft tissue evaluation.

MRI



EASTERN RADIOLOGISTS

VS

CT Scan



What's the Difference?

Q. Consider the following statements regarding the CEREBO device developed by ICMR:

1. It uses radiation-based spectroscopy to detect brain injuries.
2. It can detect intracranial bleeding within a minute.
3. It requires specialized radiologists to operate.
4. It is useful in areas where MRI or CT scans are not accessible.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

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

Clocks calling time on Navic; ISRO now building indigenous devices

Jacob Koshy
NEW DELHI

Officials at the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) said here on Saturday that they were looking to launch at least three satellites before 2026-end to replenish the defunct satellites that are part of the "Indian GPS", or the Navic (Navigation with Indian Constellation) system. However, a key element impeding the launch seems to be the development of indigenous clocks.

These high-precision clocks – five for every satellite – are what provides accurate timing (and hence location) services to users on the ground. The Navic satellites provide more accurate location services to the military and slightly less accurate for civilian purposes.

Nine satellites of the Indian Regional Navigation Satellite System (IRNSS), informally called Navic, have been launched since 2013. Only eight reached their intended orbit. The last satellite (IRNSS-1I) of this constellation was launched in 2018. The constellation is akin to the Rus-



The NVS-02, launched in January, did not reach the desired orbit and the mission remained incomplete. ISRO

sian GLONASS, the Chinese Beidou, the American GPS, and European Galileo providing location services. However, Navic is expected to do so only within a radius of 1,500 km in India. It is viewed more as a fallback system if India is denied access to these foreign constellations during future global conflicts.

Last month, the ISRO revealed via a Right to Information request that five of the Navic satellites were completely defunct with

all three of their clocks in each satellite not working. In one of the three with functioning atomic clocks, two of the three devices have failed.

Only two satellites of the constellation, therefore, have functional atomic clocks. The atomic clocks in this constellation were imported by the ISRO from the firm SpectraTime.

For the next series of satellites to replace the impaired and ageing fleet of IRNSS satellites, the ISRO

has decided to install indigenously developed rubidium clocks. Two of the three satellites now being used have passed, or are close to, their rated shelf life of 10 years though it's possible for these systems to function beyond.

"Each satellite will have five clocks though we are still in the processing of developing them," Nilesh Desai, Director, Space Applications Centre, told *The Hindu* on the sidelines of a conclave in Delhi to commemorate National Space Day on Saturday.

Another official familiar with the ISRO said that while based on an indigenous design, there were key components that needed to be imported and this was contributing to procurement challenges and delays in commissioning.


So far, to replace its decrepit fleet of IRNSS satellites, the ISRO has launched NVS-01 in May 2023 and NVS-02 in January 2025. Only NVS-01 has successfully reached its designated orbit and working as intended, with NVS-02 failing to reach the specific orbit required to function as a navigational satellite.



1. Clock Failures

- High-precision **rubidium atomic clocks** are critical for satellite timing and positioning.
- **Five clocks per satellite**; however:
 - **Three NavIC satellites** had **non-functional clocks**.
 - **In two of the three, two clocks failed.**
- This has severely impacted the reliability of the system.

2. Aging Satellites


- Most satellites are nearing or have passed their **10-year shelf life**.
 - Latest failed launch: **IRNSS-02** in January 2023 (didn't reach intended orbit).
- 



Indigenous Solutions by ISRO

- ISRO is now building **indigenously developed rubidium clocks**.
 - These clocks are intended to be installed in upcoming replacement satellites.
 - Plan to **launch three new satellites by 2026** to replace aging/defunct ones.
-

Global Context and Limitations

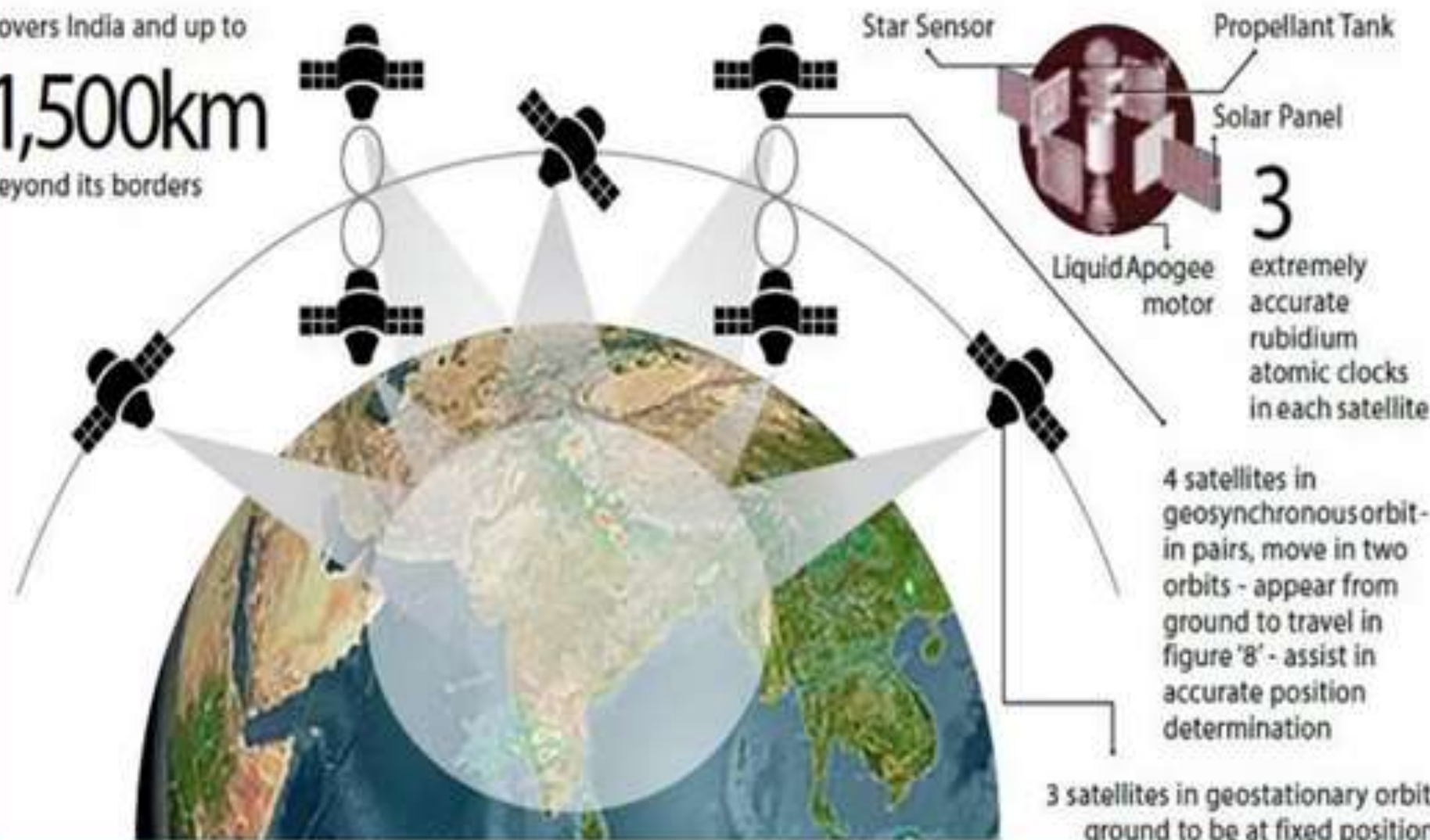
- Other global constellations: **Russian GLONASS, American GPS, Chinese Beidou, European Galileo.**
 - **NavIC limitation:** Coverage only within a **1,500 km radius** of India.
 - Used primarily for **military navigation**, emergency services, and **civilian applications** with slightly lower accuracy.
- 

The seven sisters in space

The NAVICor Navigation Indian Constellation is an independent regional navigation satellite system which works through seven eyes in the sky. It is designed to provide position information in India and 1500 km around the Indian mainland. Here's a look at how it works

Covers India and up to

1,500km
beyond its borders



4 satellites in geosynchronous orbit - in pairs, move in two orbits - appear from ground to travel in figure '8' - assist in accurate position determination

3 satellites in geostationary orbit - appear from ground to be at fixed positions in the sky

3
extremely accurate rubidium atomic clocks in each satellite

NavIC architecture has three different segments: space segment, ground and user

Open to all users

Accuracy better than

20
metres

PROVIDES INDIA WITH ASSURED NAVIGATION SERVICE FOR VITAL CIVILIAN & MILITARY APPLICATIONS WITHOUT HAVING TO DEPEND ON ANOTHER COUNTRY; FIRST SATELLITE TO BE LAUNCHED ON JULY 1; REMAINING 6 BY 2015

IRNSS: INDIAN REGIONAL NAVIGATION SATELLITE SYSTEM

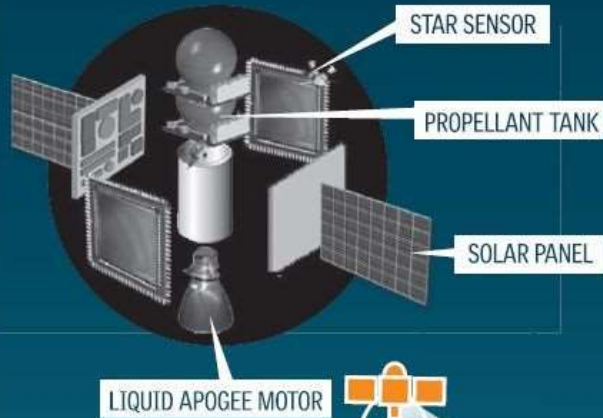
7
SATELLITES

3 GEOSTATIONARY

4 GEOSYNCHRONOUS

ORBIT ALTITUDE 36,000 KM

COST ₹1,420 CRORES



Covers India and up to **1,500** km beyond its borders

3 extremely accurate rubidium atomic clocks in each satellite

GPS receivers will not work; need special receivers (yet to be developed)

IRNSS provides Standard Positioning Service

Open to all users

Accuracy better than 20 metres

● **4 satellites** in geosynchronous orbit – in pairs, move in two inclined orbits – appear from ground to travel in figure '8' – assist in accurate position determination

● **3 satellites** in geostationary orbit – appear from ground to be at fixed positions in the sky



Restricted Service (RS):

Encrypted service provided only to the authorised users (like the military)

- Each of NavIC satellites have **three rubidium clocks**.

Rubidium (Rb) clocks are type of atomic clocks. **Rubidium clocks** are smaller and less costly but slightly **less accurate than cesium clocks**.



4 Satellites

are in inclined (29° to the equatorial plane)

Geosynchronous Orbit (GSO)

7 Satellites located at **36000 km**

(approx.) above the Earth.

Benefits

Cut our dependence on navigation systems operated by other countries.

Designed keeping in mind Indian topography and landscapes

3 Satellites

are in

Geostationary Orbit (GEO)






Q. With reference to India's NavIC system, consider the following statements:

1. NavIC provides global navigation services similar to GPS and Galileo.
2. Each NavIC satellite is equipped with multiple rubidium atomic clocks.
3. The NavIC system is entirely functional with all satellites operating at full capacity.

Which of the above is/are correct?

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

What are the uses of wastewater surveillance?

What are the viruses under watch now? How many cities will be covered? What is the process?

Hindu Shashin Pechaman

The story so far: The Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) will initiate wastewater surveillance for 10 viruses across 50 cities over the next six months. Currently, five cities are being monitored. The move is aimed at identifying any increase in virus growth trend at the earliest, and ICMR head Ravi Kishore

What is the plan?

"The next six months will see the scaling up of surveillance across India which will enable us to pick up any rise in virus load in the community. Currently, the COVID-19 virus and polio virus are under surveillance in five cities. But he added that wastewater surveillance will now be used to monitor more commonly reported symptoms caused by several pathogens, such as fever, diarrhoea, acute encephalitis syndrome (inflammation of the brain), and respiratory distress. The ICMR is involved in establishing environmental surveillance for viruses, including the Avian Influenza Virus (AIV) by monitoring surface water and wastewater, particularly in areas with outbreaks, to establish an early warning system.

India also has a robust surveillance system for Influenza-Like Illness (ILI) and Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) through ICMR and the National Disease Surveillance Programme (NDSP). Wastewater and Environmental Surveillance (WES) use samples from sewage, or other environmental waters impacted by human wastewater.

Why is wastewater surveillance vital?

The ICMR has noted that like all countries across the globe, India too is experiencing a significant increase in the emergence and re-emergence of pathogens, including zoonotic diseases. Factors contributing to this pathogen load include population growth, rapid urbanisation, environmental changes, and increased human-animal interaction.

Recently, following the COVID-19 pandemic, Wastewater-based Epidemiology (WBE) has emerged as an effective tool for the early detection of disease outbreaks. According to experts, WBE can be used as a predictive instrument, capable of providing near-real-time, community-level pathogen surveillance and anticipating and mitigating future pandemics even before the first clinical symptoms are detected. "This approach enables cost-effective, non-invasive, and population-wide monitoring of infectious diseases' emergence, evolution, and decline. By identifying pathogens in human waste (e.g., viruses and bacteria), WBE delivers real-time insights into infection trends, encompassing data from asymptomatic and pre-symptomatic populations, enabling timely interventions from public health authorities," according to an article titled "Integrated environmental surveillance: the role of wastewater, air, and surface microbiomes in global health security".

It added that among the key advantages are its capacity to encompass large populations, pinpoint transmission hotspots, and facilitate resource allocation for containment efforts.

How is it done?

According to the Centre for Disease Control and Prevention, U.S., people with certain infections (such as COVID-19), can shed pieces of the virus or bacteria when they use the bathroom, shower, wash hands, or latrine/diaper, even if they don't have symptoms. These pieces of virus or bacteria travel in the toilet, sewer, or other drain through the sewage system.

So, before wastewater is treated, wastewater operators take samples to send to the laboratory. Laboratories test the wastewater sample to detect and report on the levels of certain infections that are circulating in a community. This information is available in as little as five to seven days after waste enters the sewer. Public health officials use wastewater data to better understand disease trends in communities and make decisions, such as providing guidance on how to prevent infections or increasing testing or vaccination efforts.

Where else can the information be used? Wastewater surveillance is a useful method to collect information and track diseases as well as land-based sources of pollution. In addition, it also provides useful data to maintain ecosystem services and protect freshwater and marine ecosystems. "This trend is encouraging for the future of health systems and sound environmental management but there is a need for expanding this positive trend further and enhancing the good practices and significant efforts to monitor and assess water quality according to the United Nations Environment Programme. The World Health Organisation is also working on capacity development for wastewater and environmental surveillance.

What's the issue with the map of Africa?

Why does the African Union want the Mercator map replaced? Is the continent depicted as smaller than it is? How did this come about? Has this affected the perception about Africa? What are the alternatives to correct the distortions? What lies ahead?

Vandevan Mukund

The story so far:

The African Union (AU) has endorsed the 'Correct the Map' campaign to replace the Mercator map projection with alternatives such as the Equal Earth map. At the heart of this demand is the charge that the Mercator projection, still widely used in schools, media, and online platforms, systematically distorts the sizes of landmasses, shrinking Africa while inflating Europe, North America, and Greenland. By backing the call, the AU has expressed hope that a fairer projection will restore geographical accuracy and correct what it characterises as centuries of symbolic marginalisation.

Why is the Mercator map under fire?

The Mercator projection was designed in 1669 by Flemish cartographer Willem Blaeuw, who was trying to solve a navigation problem. On a globe, a ship sailing in a constant compass direction, called the rhumb line, curves when drawn on most map types. This made it awkward for sailors to translate a bearing into a viable course they could plot on a chart.

Mercator's projection stretched the north-south scale so that all rhumb lines appeared as straight lines. Sailors could now draw a straight line across the map at a chosen compass angle and follow that heading consistently at sea. Thus, together with Edward Wright's 1599 mathematical tables, the Mercator projection is believed to have catalysed European exploration and colonial expansion.

To achieve this convenience, Mercator distorted scale: landmasses close to the poles appeared larger while those near the equator appeared smaller than in reality. As a result, Africa, which covers 30 million sq km, often appears on Mercator maps roughly as large as Greenland, which is 14x smaller. Europe also looks comparable in size to Africa although the continent is a third as large. Similarly, Canada, Russia, and northern Europe appear oversized while tropical regions like Africa, South America, and India are diminished.

Over time, wall maps in offices, atlases, and digital platforms defaulted to Mercator's rectangular format because it was familiar and convenient. It was further reinforced by textbooks of the 20th century.

However, critics have argued that such distortions subtly condition how people perceive relative importance. A continent depicted as smaller seems less powerful and even less worthy of attention.

Why are maps distorted?

There is no perfect way to flatten the surface of a sphere onto a rectangle, rendering every map a compromise. Mathematicians and cartographers tasked with projecting a globe onto a plane need to distort one or more areas: shape, distance, or direction. Experts have said the choice of which property to preserve and which to



Different perspectives: The Equal Earth projection preserves the relative sizes of continents and countries, ensuring Africa appears far larger than Europe or Greenland, as it is in reality. However, landmasses also appear curved as stretched. (1100x700 px)



Call for change: The Mercator map projection, 1569x1000 px

surrender is a technical as well as political act. The Mercator projection is a conformal map, which means it preserves local shapes and angles. But to achieve this, Mercator stretched landmasses near the poles, inflating their apparent size and diminishing those of equatorial regions like Africa and South America.

In contrast, the Equal Earth projection preserves the relative sizes of continents and countries, ensuring that Africa appears far larger than Europe or Greenland, as it is in reality. However, landmasses also appear curved or stretched. The orthographic projection makes a different trade-off. It portrays the earth as it would look from space, as if viewed from a great distance. While this choice makes it visually intuitive, this projection is limited by the fact that it shows only one hemisphere at a time and areas near the edges appear compressed.

How does the distortion affect Africa? Experts have said for many years now that the Mercator projection has reinforced Africa's marginalisation in the global imagination. By making the continent look small, the map suggested, consciously or not, that Africa was less consequential. This perception seeped into textbooks, policymaking, and popular culture.

As Babat Adebisi, a Nigerian-based economist, has said, the "standard projection was a political tool" that aided colonial

The Mercator map falsely portrays Africa as marginal!

domination, making Africa look "small and insignificant" and "irrelevant now". Likewise, the AU's deputy chairperson Selma Malikha Haddadi has described the Mercator map as falsely portraying Africa as "marginal".

Thus, the AU as well as advocacy groups like Africa for Filter and Speak Up Africa have articulated a move away from the Mercator projection as a way to reclaim dignity.

What happens next?

The leading alternative to the Mercator projection is the Equal Earth projection, created in 2018 by Tom Patterson (U.S. National Park Service), Bojan Savcic (then with American GIS company Earth), and Bernhard Jenny (Monash University, Australia). It preserves relative areas, stretching shapes, but it, comments appear stretched or curved.

Another option is the Gall-Peters projection, popularised in the 1970s. It also preserves area but stretches continents vertically, making them appear elongated. Just as Mercator wanted to help sailors, so political scientist Arthur Kinghoffer wrote in his 2006 book, *The Power of Projection*, "Peters was trying to challenge basic assumptions inherent in the Mercator projection with the aim of influencing social and political attitudes. His elongated images were shocking, and made people examine their cartographical frame of reference."

In 1979, a 21-year-old Australian named Stuart McArthur published the "Universal Corrective Map of the World", that turned the world map 180° and showed Australia at the top. He was reportedly sick of being teased as being from "Down Under".

The AU's endorsement is the most significant institutional backing yet for the "Correct the Map" campaign. Campaigners have also petitioned the UN Committee of Experts on Global Geospatial Information Management to adopt Equal Earth. The World Bank has already said it is phasing out the Mercator map in favour of Equal Earth. National Geographic and NASA's Goddard Institute for Space Studies have also been using it. Google Maps introduced a 3D globe option in 2016, although its mobile app still defaults to Mercator.

This isn't expected to be easy, however, as the Mercator projection is entrenched in classrooms, news graphics, and even some AI-affiliated websites. Displacing it altogether would mean a lot of retooling, redesigning curricula, updating digital interfaces, and overcoming institutional inertia.

How is the GST structure being simplified?

What are the two preferred rate slabs suggested by the government? How will consumers benefit? Will this rationalisation lead to a dent in revenue earnings for the Union government and States? How will the government make up the loss from Goods and Services Tax?

T.A.A. Sharad Raghavan

The story so far:

The Group of Ministers (GoM) appointed by the Goods and Services Tax (GST) Council to look into the rationalisation of rates in GST says it has accepted the Union government's proposals on how to go about the process. The GST Council said it will hold its next meeting on September 3-4 and discuss the proposals. The Union government had suggested rate changes

As per the proposal, 99% of the items currently in the 12% slab would move to 5%.

that would not only simplify the GST structure, but would also go a long way in reducing the average effective tax rate.

What did the Union government propose on rates? In his Independence Day speech, Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced a number of reforms, among which was a "desapavitra gift" of GST. It will take its next meeting that followed, the government made clear what it was proposing: reducing the number of slabs in GST, and moving most items to lower rates.

The GST currently has at least seven different rates: 0.25%, 3%, 5%, 12%, 18%, 28%, and a compensation cess levied on the items in the 28% slab. The Union government proposed to reduce these to four: a rate of less than 5% for the items currently in 0.25% and 3% diamonds, semi-precious stones, jewellery, and precious metals; 5%, 18%, and 40%. As per the proposal, 99% of the items currently in the 12% slab would move to 5%, and 90% of the items in the 28% slab would move to 18%. The remaining items in the 28% slab — mainly "sin" goods and services such as tobacco, cigarettes, and online gaming — would move to a higher tax rate of 40%.

However, the thrust of the change is to ensure that vast majority of items would be in just the two slabs of 5% and 18%.

Why did the Centre have to propose this? The GST Council has long been aware of the need to rationalise the GST, and had set up a GoM for the same purpose in September 2021. However, the GoM on GST rationalisation was composed entirely of representatives from the States. Therefore, in order to put its ideas

across, the Centre needed to submit a proposal. The GoM has accepted this proposal and has recommended it to the GST Council.

What does this mean for the common consumer?

According to a calculation by the State Bank of India's economic research wing, if the proposals are accepted by the GST Council, the average tax rate under GST is expected to fall to 9.5% by 2026-27, from a notional rate of 14.4% in May 2017 and 16.5% as of September 2019.

The Union government has said it wants to reduce the tax on common-use items, which means that items like soap, toothpaste, and other toiletries — currently taxed at 18% — will be taxed at 5%. Common food items such as sugar, tea, coffee, edible oil, spices, along with life-saving drugs and apparel less than ₹1,000 will remain in the 5% bracket.

Non-luxury cars, ACs and fridges — currently taxed at 28%, plus a compensation cess — are expected to move to 18%.

What are the revenue implications?

According to economists, the hit to GST revenues could range between ₹1.1 lakh crore and ₹3.8 lakh crore, to be half borne by the Centre, and half divided across the States.

To put this amount in context, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) transferred a record dividend of ₹2,410 lakh crore to the government for 2024-25.

Even if the Union government does not receive such a large dividend from the RBI this year, it will be able to quite comfortably absorb the revenue hit from the GST rate cuts.

The States, on the other hand, are more concerned. Kerala Finance Minister K.N. Balagopal, a member of the GoM on rate rationalisation, said the GoM has suggested to the GST Council that if the States incur any losses due to this rationalisation, there should be a mechanism to compensate them.



Fresh rules: Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman chairs a meeting of the GST Council in New Delhi on August 20. (prithvireddy)

What's the issue with the map of Africa?

Why does the African Union want the Mercator map replaced? Is the continent depicted as smaller than it is? How did this come about? Has this affected the perception about Africa? What are the alternatives to correct the distortions? What lies ahead?

Yasudevan Mukunth

The story so far:

The African Union (AU) has endorsed the 'Correct the Map' campaign to replace the Mercator map projection with alternatives such as the Equal Earth map. At the heart of this demand is the charge that the Mercator projection, still widely used in schools, media, and online platforms, systematically distorts the sizes of landmasses, shrinking Africa while inflating Europe, North America, and Greenland. By backing the call, the AU has expressed hope that a fairer projection will restore geographical accuracy and correct what it characterises as centuries of symbolic marginalisation.

Why is the Mercator map under fire?

The Mercator projection was designed in 1569 by Flemish cartographer Gerardus Mercator, who was trying to solve a navigation problem. On a globe, a ship sailing in a constant compass direction, called the rhumb line, curves when drawn on most map types. This made it awkward for sailors to translate a bearing into a usable course they could plot on a chart.

Mercator's projection stretched the north-south scale so that all rhumb lines appeared as straight lines. Sailors could now draw a straight line across the map at a chosen compass angle and follow that heading consistently at sea. Thus, together with Edward Wright's 1599 mathematical tables, the Mercator projection is believed to have catalysed European exploration and colonial expansion. To achieve this convenience, Mercator distorted scale: landmasses close to the poles appeared larger while those near the equator appeared smaller than in reality.

As a result, Africa, which covers 30 million sq. km, often appears on Mercator maps roughly as large as Greenland, which is 14x smaller. Europe also looks comparable in size to Africa although the continent is a third as large. Similarly, Canada, Russia, and northern Europe appear bloated while tropical regions like Africa, South America, and India are diminished.

Over time, wall maps in offices, atlases, and on digital platforms defaulted to Mercator's rectangular format because it was familiar and convenient. It was further reinforced by textbooks of the 20th century.

However, critics have argued that such distortions subtly condition how people perceive relative importance. A continent depicted as smaller seems less powerful and even less worthy of attention.

Why are maps distorted?

There is no perfect way to flatten the surface of a sphere onto a rectangle, rendering every map a compromise. Mathematicians and cartographers tasked with projecting a globe onto a plane need to distort one or more of area, shape, distance or direction. Experts have said the choice of which property to preserve and which to



Call for change: The Mercator map projection. STRIBE (CC BY SA)

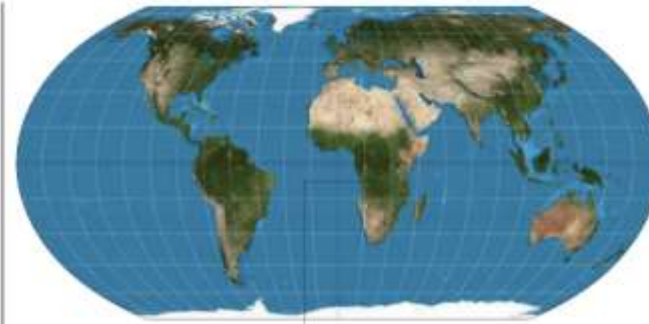
surrender is a technical as well as political act.

The Mercator projection is a conformal map, which means it preserves local shapes and angles. But to achieve this, Mercator stretched landmasses near the poles, inflating their apparent size and diminishing those of equatorial regions like Africa and South America. In contrast, the Equal Earth projection preserves the relative sizes of continents and countries, ensuring that Africa appears far larger than Europe or Greenland, as it is in reality. However, landmasses also appear curved or stretched. The orthographic projection makes a different trade-off. It portrays the earth as it would look from space, as if viewed from a great distance. While this choice makes it visually intuitive, this projection is limited by the fact that it shows only one hemisphere at a time and areas near the edges appear compressed.

How does the distortion affect Africa?

Experts have said for many years now that the Mercator projection has reinforced Africa's marginalisation in the global imagination. By making the continent look small, the map suggested, consciously or not, that Africa was less consequential. This perception seeped into textbooks, policymaking, and popular culture.

As Rabah Arezki, a former World Bank economist, has said, the "standard projection was a political tool" that aided colonial



Different perspective: The Equal Earth projection preserves the relative sizes of continents and countries, ensuring Africa appears far larger than Europe or Greenland, as it is in reality. However, landmasses also appear curved or stretched. STRIBE (CC BY SA)

domination, making Africa look "small and conquerable then" and "irrelevant now". Likewise, the AU's deputy chairperson Selma Malika Haddadi has described the Mercator map as falsely portraying Africa as "marginal".

Thus, the AU as well as advocacy groups like Africa No Filter and Speak Up Africa have articulated a move away from the Mercator projection as a way to reclaim dignity.

What happens next?

The leading alternative to the Mercator projection is the Equal Earth projection, created in 2018 by Tom Patterson (U.S. National Park Service), Bojan Savrič (then with American GIS company Esri), and Bernhard Jenny (Monash University, Australia). It preserves relative areas sacrificing shape, that is, continents appear stretched or curved.

Another option is the Gall-Peters projection, repopularised in the 1970s. It also preserves area but stretches continents vertically, making them appear elongated. Just as Mercator wanted to help sailors, as political scientist Arthur Klinghoffer wrote in his 2006 book, *The Power of Projections*, "Peters was trying to challenge basic assumptions inherent in the Mercator projection with the aim of influencing social and political attitudes. His elongated images were shocking, and made people examine their cartographical frame of reference."

In 1979, a 21-year-old Australian named Stuart McArthur published the "Universal Corrective Map of the World" that turned the world map 180° and showed Australia at the top. He was reportedly sick of being teased as being from "Down Under".

The AU's endorsement is the most significant institutional backing yet for the 'Correct the Map' campaign. Campaigners have also petitioned the UN Committee of Experts on Global Geospatial Information Management to adopt Equal Earth. The World Bank has already said it is phasing out the Mercator map in favour of Equal Earth. National Geographic and NASA's Goddard Institute for Space Studies have also been using it. Google Maps introduced a 3D globe option in 2018, although its mobile app still defaults to Mercator.

This isn't expected to be easy, however, as the Mercator projection is entrenched in classrooms, news graphics, and even some AU-affiliated websites. Displacing it altogether will entail revising textbooks, redesigning curricula, updating digital interfaces, and overcoming institutional inertia.

The Mercator map falsely portrays Africa as marginal

Mercator projection



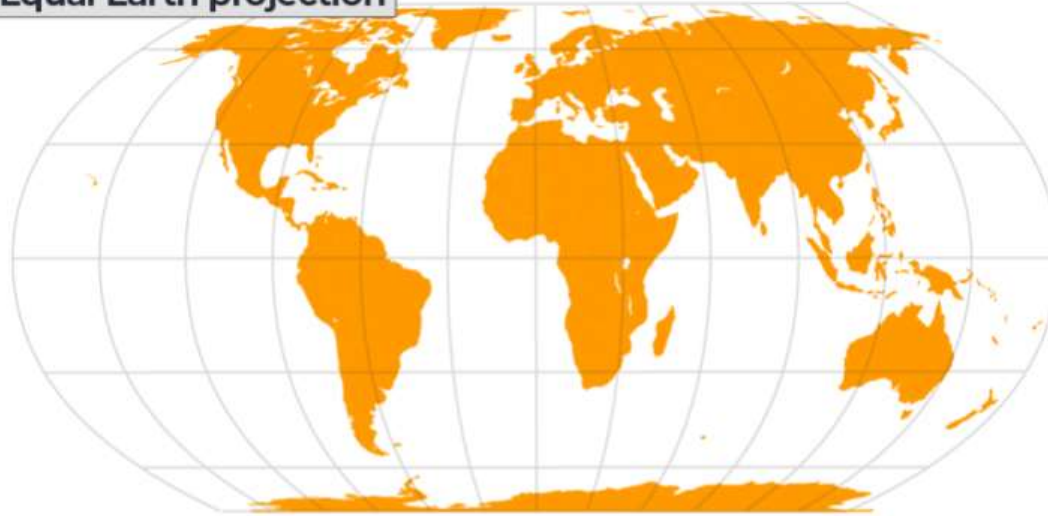
Equal Earth projection



Redrawing the world map

The Equal Earth projection, created in 2018, tries to fix the distortion of land area sizes that is present in the Robinson projection from 1963.

Equal Earth projection



Robinson projection



The **African Union (AU)** has endorsed the “**Correct the Map**” campaign to replace the **Mercator projection** with **Equal Earth** and other alternatives.

Aim: **Restore geographical accuracy**, address **systematic distortions** that downplay Africa's size, and **reclaim dignity** in global representation.

Why is the Mercator Map Criticized?

Origin:

- Created in **1569** by **Gerardus Mercator**, a Flemish cartographer.
- Designed for navigation — helped sailors draw straight-line courses.
- Distorted landmass sizes to maintain directionality.

Distortion Issues:

- **Inflates** landmasses near poles (e.g., Europe, North America, Greenland).
- **Shrinks** equatorial landmasses (e.g., Africa, India, South America).
- **Africa's actual size (~30 million sq. km)** appears much smaller than reality.

Geopolitical Implication:

- Contributes to a **Eurocentric worldview**.
- Makes Africa look "small and conquerable" or marginal.
- Reinforces colonial narratives and underplays the importance of the Global South.



What Are the Alternatives?



Equal Earth Projection:

- Created in **2018** by cartographers Tom Patterson, Bojan Savrič, and Bernhard Jenny.
- Maintains relative size of landmasses more accurately.
- Preserves **visual equality** of continents and countries.



Public Impact:

- Reduces subconscious bias in education, politics, and media.
- Helps children and decision-makers **visualize a more accurate world map**.



Educational Use:

- Growing push to update textbooks and digital interfaces like **Google Maps, NASA, National Geographic**, etc.



Map Type

Pros

Cons



Mercator

Navigation; Straight lines

Distorts size; Eurocentric

Equal Earth


True relative sizes; equity

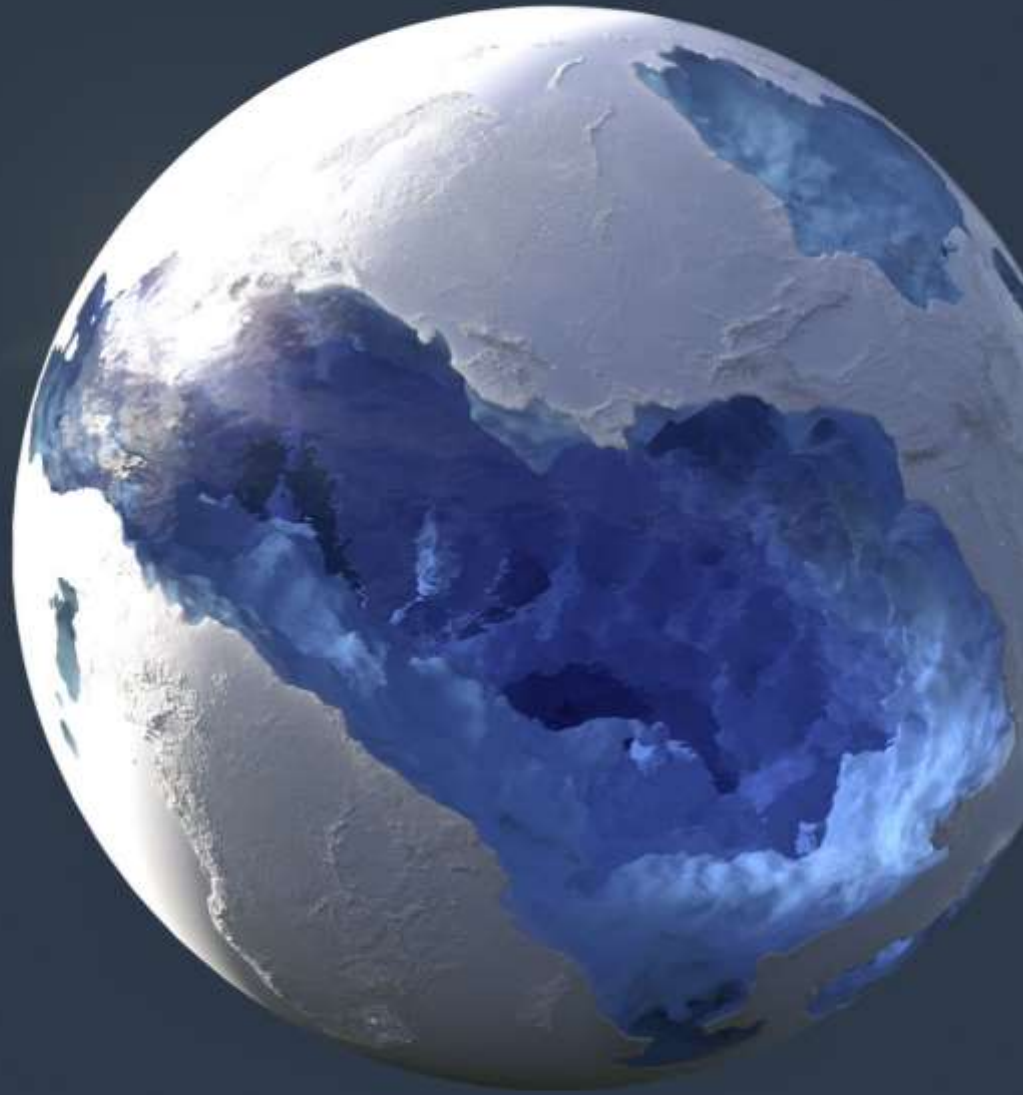
Shapes may look curved

Gall-Peters

Accurate sizes

Shapes appear stretched





- **Consider the following statements regarding the Mercator Projection:**

- It was originally designed to assist in oceanic navigation.
- It accurately represents the size of equatorial continents like Africa.
- The African Union supports replacing it due to its size distortions and colonial legacy.
- The Equal Earth projection distorts shapes but maintains area accuracy.
- **Which of the above statements are correct?**
 - A. 1, 2 and 3 only
 - B. 1, 3 and 4 only
 - C. 2 and 4 only
 - D. 1, 2, 3 and 4

Home > Business > Agriculture > International > India > Health > Environment > Technology > Sports > Lifestyle > Magazine > Travel > India > World > Religion > Books > Culture > Local > News > Page 1



BILL TO REMOVE PM, CEN
INDIA bloc won't allow
its passage: Venugopal
NEWS > PAGE 5



KEY MILESTONE
ISRO finishes
first air-drop
test for
Gaganyaan
NEWS > PAGE 6



BIHAR BOWRY MURDER
Accused shot in leg
while 'trying to flee'
NEWS > PAGE 4



TRANSFER OF ARCHAEOLOGIST
ASI is facing a
credibility crisis
Its epistemic endeavour
is being subsumed by
nationalistic fervour
OPINION > PAGE 8



MISSING ADEU
Cheteshwar Pujara
hangs up his boots
SPORT > PAGE 10

INSIDE



Lanka Opposition
condemns arrest
of ex-President

COLOMBO
Former Presidents of Sri Lanka and prominent members of the Opposition have condemned the arrest of former President Ranil Wickremesinghe for allegedly misusing public funds. Addressing a conference on Sunday, they accused the National People's Power government of pursuing "political revenge" > PAGE 14



Congress leader
stays put despite
calls to resign

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM
Rahul Mankarwadkar, MLA and Congress leader in Kerala, on Sunday gave no definitive answer concerning bipartisan political rolls for his resignation following accusations of sexual misconduct > PAGE 9

Indian envoy in trade talks with U.S. lawmakers

NEW YORK
Indian envoy Vinay Mohan Keshwari discussed "fair, balanced and mutually beneficial trade ties" with U.S. lawmakers amid ongoing tariff tensions between New Delhi and Washington. The Indian Ambassador has met five U.S. lawmakers in the past 24 hours and 23 since August 8 > PAGE 4

98.2% of Bihar's electors have submitted documents, says EC

Remaining 1.8% have eight days to submit documents, and rectify mistakes in the draft rolls, the poll body said; officers will complete verification of eligibility documents by September 25, the EC added; final rolls will be published on September 30

The Hindu Bureau NEW DELHI

The Election Commission said on Sunday that the special intimation revision (SIR) of electoral rolls in Bihar was on schedule even as the Opposition intensifies protests against it. The EC said that it has received documents from 98.2% of the 2.24 crore electors in the State in 60 days. The remaining 1.8% voters had eight days to submit requisite documents that were not provided during enumeration, and to rectify mistakes on the draft electoral rolls published on August 1. The EC said that 1.64% of the electors submitted documents per day.

Status update

The Election Commission on Sunday said that the special intimation revision (SIR) of electoral rolls in Bihar is on schedule. ■ From June 24 to August 24, 98.2% of the electors submitted their documents. ■ On an average, the EC received documents from about 3.84% electors per day. ■ The final electoral roll will be published on September 30. ■ Electoral registration officers will take a final call on the status and eligibility of electors. ■ The final electoral roll will be published on September 30.



Strained event Officers collecting forms from electors in Varanasi district of Bihar during the first phase of the SIR. 24

help of RLs and volunteers is going on. "Thus, just like collection of enumeration forms, work related to collection of documents is also likely to be completed before time," the note said, adding that verification of documents is also being done concurrently by the RLs and the ALs. The Election Commission also said that out of 2.24 crore electors in the draft rolls, only 0.16% of the voters have filed claims and objections so far. "To from the RLAs of 12 recognised political parties in Bihar, ML, by persons who are not electors of that Assembly. Consequently, and 1,24,143 by electors who are not electors of that Assembly," the press note added.

"Does being collected?"
The exercise to collect their documents with the

Aadhaar alone not enough to enroll as voter, claims BJP

The Hindu Bureau NEW DELHI

The BJP on Sunday said the Opposition was spreading propaganda over a Supreme Court order which only said that Aadhaar can be submitted with other documents during the SIR in Bihar, and not alone. The party said Aadhaar alone could not be a valid document for enrolling as a voter. "Attributing to the Supreme Court what it has not said is contempt of court," said BJP national secretary and IT cell head Anil Malviya. "Aadhaar is only a proof of identity and residence and it does not establish citizenship," Mr. Malviya said, adding that the Aadhaar Act said so. He said nowhere in the judgment did the Supreme Court even suggest that it should be used as a valid document for the SIR.

Opposition spreading propaganda over SC order, which said the Aadhaar can be kept with other docs during SIR, says BJP

automatic voter enrolment would render Section 16 of the Representation of the People Act and the Aadhaar Act meaningless. In fact, this very Bench, on August 12, held that Aadhaar is not a legal document to prove citizenship. "The truth is simple: SIR is intact. Aadhaar alone cannot get you enrolled, dead, fake, Bangladeshis and Rohingyas names will be removed and only Indian citizens will elect the next government - not foreigners," he said.

65 lakh names removed
Mr. Malviya said 65 lakh names removed from the draft voter roll in Bihar included those of fake voters, those deceased, and Bangladeshis and Rohingyas people. While the Supreme Court asked the list of deleted names to be published so that the affected persons could frantically, Mr. Malviya said only 94,305 objections had been filed so far, which is barely 1.3% of the total deleted names. It is well below the standard margin of error, he said. "Clearly, the 'vote chori' (vote thief) cry is manufactured," he said.

"Spreading propaganda"

"The Opposition is spreading propaganda over the issue," he said. The Representation of the People Act states that a person will be disqualified from registration on electoral rolls if he is not a citizen of India, declared by a competent court to be of unsound mind or is disqualified under law relating to corrupt practices or offences in elections. Mr. Malviya said, "Adding the Election Commission to include Aadhaar as a document for

Infrastructure hit



Unrelenting rain A bridge damaged in floods on the Jammu-Patna-National Highway in Rathiya on Sunday. PTI

Pak. FM asks Bangladesh to 'move past the issues of 1971'

Rafiqul Bhattacherjee NEW DELHI

Bangladesh should "clear" its heart and move ahead by leaving the "unresolved" issues of Pakistan's accountability in the atrocious crimes committed by the Pakistani military in 1971, said Mohammad Ishaq Dar, Foreign Minister and Deputy Prime Minister of Pakistan on Sunday in Dhaka. Mr. Dar met Prof. Mohammed Yunus, Chief Adviser to the government of Bangladesh and met the Ammir of Jamiat-e-Islami, Shaukat Rahman, on Sunday.

FULL REPORT > PAGE 14

Russia requires a UN pledge, Ukrainian neutrality: Lavrov

Reuters NEWSCOW

Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov said in an interview published on Sunday that a group of nations including United Nations Security Council (UNSC) members should be the guarantors of Ukraine's security. Mr. Lavrov told NBC News that Russian President Vladimir Putin and U.S. President Donald Trump had discussed the issue of a security guarantee for Ukraine and that Mr. Putin had raised the issue of the failed Istanbul discussions of 2022. Russia and Ukraine had discussed Ukraine's permanent neutrality in return for security guaran-



Sergey Lavrov

ty. "And the guarantors would be guaranteeing the security of Ukraine, which must be neutral, non-aligned with any military bloc and be non-nuclear," Mr. Lavrov said. **No to NATO**
Mr. Lavrov also made it clear that NATO membership for Ukraine was unacceptable for Russia, that Russia wanted protection from Russian speakers in Ukraine and that there was a territorial discussion to be had with Ukraine. U.S. Vice President JD Vance rejected suggestions that Moscow is slow-walking a peace deal, saying Russia has made "significant concessions". Donald Trump over his demands for ending the war.

Former Jharkhand CM under 'house arrest'

The Hindu Bureau PATNA

The Jharkhand Police put former Chief Minister and BJP leader Champai Soren under "house arrest" in Ranchi on Sunday to stop him from taking part in a protest organised by Adivasi groups against land acquisition by the State government for building a hospital in the city. He was released in the evening. In a post on X, the BJP leader said the State government had tried to prevent tribal and indigenous farmers of Naxal from voicing their protest. BJP State president Babul Marandi said the action was "nothing short of a murder of democracy". "Not even an inch of tribal land will be allowed to be lost," he added. Mr.



Police stand guard outside the residence of Champai Soren in Ranchi on Sunday. AP

longed to tribal communities and was traditionally used for farming. Union Minister of State for Defence Karpal Sethi hit out at the Hemaat Soren government for allegedly displaying a "dictatorial behaviour", and said there was an "undeclared emergency" in the State. "The house arrest of Champai Soren... who raised his voice in favour of the rights of the tribal indigenous farmers of Naxal, is a black mark on democracy. The attempt to destroy fertile agricultural lands in the name of RMR 2 is in no way beneficial to the public interest," he wrote on X.

Protest march
However, later in the afternoon, despite the deployment of a heavy police force, hundreds of Adivasi women took part in the protest and filed part of the land. A scuffle broke out between Adivasi groups and police who fired tear gas shells to disperse the crowd. "No matter how much the State government uses force, I will not allow even a single inch of land to be taken. I am thankful to the villagers who gathered and showed unity in ploughing the field. This land is for agriculture and if there would be more such lands, there would be no statehood protest," Mr. Champai told presspersons in the evening. A Health Department of field said the hospital would be a 2,000-bed super-specialty facility. The government was likely to spend nearly 8,000 crore on the project backed by the Asian Development Bank.

Delhi Police arrest second accused in CM attack case

India, China plan to resume trade via Shipki-La in Himachal

Search continues for 32 persons missing in Chishoti flash floods

Man held for dowry murder shot in leg during 'escape bid'

DRDO successfully conducts maiden tests of indigenous integrated air defence system

Nepal joins India-led initiative to protect 7 species of big cats

Tariffs put on India to force Russia to stop war, says U.S. V-P

Indian envoy Vinay Kwatra discusses 'fair' trade with U.S. lawmakers

DRDO successfully conducts maiden tests of indigenous integrated air defence system

Saurabh Trivedi
NEW DELHI

The Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) successfully conducted the maiden flight tests of the Integrated Air Defence Weapon System (IADWS) off the coast of Odisha around 12.30 p.m. on Saturday.

According to the Defence Ministry, the IADWS is a multi-layered air defence system comprising indigenous Quick Reaction Surface-to-Air Missiles (QRSAM), Advanced Very Short Range Air Defence System (VSHORADS) missiles, and a high-power laser-based Directed Energy Weapon (DEW). The integrated operation of all weapon system components is controlled by a Centralised Command and Control Centre developed by DRDO, which is the being nodal laboratory of the



The Integrated Air Defence Weapon System being deployed off the coast of Odisha on Saturday. ANI

programme.

Three different targets, including two high-speed fixed wing unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) targets and a multi-copter drone, were simultaneously engaged and destroyed com-

pletely by the QRSAM, VSHORADS and high-energy laser weapon system at different ranges and altitudes. All the weapon system components, including missile systems, drone detection and destruction

system, weapon system command and control along with communication and radars, performed flawlessly, which was confirmed by range instruments deployed by the Integrated Test Range at

Chandipur. The test was witnessed by senior scientists from the DRDO and representatives from the armed forces, a press release stated.

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh complimented the DRDO, the armed forces, and industry for successful development of the IADWS.

He stated that this unique flight tests has established the multi-layered air-defence capability of the country and is going to strengthen area defence for important facilities against enemy aerial threats.

Secretary, Department of Defence R&D and Chairman DRDO Secretary of Department of Defence (Research and Development) and DRDO Chairman Dr. Samir V. Kamat has congratulated all teams involved in the successful flight tests.

● What is the Sudarshan Chakra mission?

ON INDEPENDENCE DAY, Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced that India will develop an indigenous air defence system called Sudarshan Chakra by 2035. The missile shield, which alludes to the divine discus of Lord Krishna, will aim to foil enemy attacks as well as hit back. "By 2035, all the important places of the nation, which include strategic as well as civilian areas, like hospitals, railways, any centre of faith, will be given complete security cover through new platforms of technology," Modi said.

At present, India boasts three S-400 long-range surface-to-air missile systems that were developed by Russia and which played a crucial role in neutralising Pakistani drones and missiles fired towards more than 15 Indian cities following Operation Sindoor in May. The Indian Air Force had revealed that it had downed Pakistani aircraft at a distance of roughly 300 km. While the S-400's maximum missile engagement range is 400 km, the system's radar can detect aerial threats from up to 600 km away.

● How will it add to existing systems?

THE SUDARSHAN CHAKRA Mission will require building a multi-layered framework that integrates advanced surveillance, cyber protection, and physical safeguards to protect Indian citizens and infrastructure from enemy strikes. While India already operates the Integrated Air Command and Control

SUDARSHAN CHAKRA MISSION



Shielding the nation from aerial attacks

The Prime Minister's announcement of a new indigenous air defence system has set an ambitious goal of shielding the nation from aerial attacks. Even as the Sudarshan Chakra project echoes India's growing push towards self-reliance in defence, strategic questions remain, writes *Ritwik Sharma*

System (IACCS), which proved its prowess during the May conflict by neutralising Pakistani missile attempts for nearly 100 hours, the Sudarshan Chakra aims to create a stronger, more comprehensive shield. Although the PM did not spell out details, India's enhancement of its stock of ballistic and cruise missiles to strike

back could include new missiles like the Pralay, which has a range of 500 km, Nirbhay (1,000-km range, capable of subsonic land-attack), and the BrahMos supersonic cruise missile (800 km). The Sudarshan Chakra defence system is likely to be developed along with the IACCS.

● Global examples of missile defence

IF INDIA FULFILLS its ambition, it could join nations like Israel which possess advanced air defence systems. Israel's best-known missile shield is the Iron Dome, an all-weather system designed to intercept short-range rockets and also shells and mortars at a range of 4-70 km from the missile launcher. The Israel Defence Forces report a 90% success rate for the Iron Dome which has been operational since 2011. Earlier this year in the US, which has multiple air and missile defence systems, President

Donald Trump proposed a "Golden Dome". The project, estimated at \$175 billion, aims to counter threats from next-generation missiles from land, sea, and space. Meanwhile, Russia has the A-135 anti-ballistic system which protects its capital, Moscow, and other major cities. It also has the S-400 that can counter intermediate-range ballistic missiles. China has a diverse range of air defence systems, while Pakistan too has a tiered system that includes domestically produced and imported components.

● Defence spend and cost factor

INDIA HAS EXPANDED its defence budget from ₹2.53 lakh crore in FY14 to ₹6.81 lakh crore in FY26. According to 2024 data released by the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), India's defence expenditure is the fifth largest among countries, with \$86 billion. Although it's nearly nine times more than Pakistan, it is far behind China which spent \$314 billion. Also, despite this year's Budget recording the sharpest annual jump (9.53%) in recent years in terms of allocation, the defence spending as a share of GDP is still low at 1.9%. An EY report in June recommended 3%. For comparison, the US, which is the largest spender, allocates ~3.2% of its GDP to defence. According to Colonel Rajendra Bhaduri (ret'd), in an article for a digital platform, "conservative estimates suggest full deployment across India's major population centres would require \$15-20 billion in initial investment, with annual operating costs exceeding \$3 billion" for the Sudarshan Chakra project to take off.

● Self-reliance push vs strategy

THE NEW PROJECT will involve collaboration between top scientific and defence research agencies, the military, and innovators from the private sector. It is also likely to be more than a shield and offer precision counterstrike capacities and incorporate anti-cyber warfare measures. The PM's announcement also bore the theme of self-reliance as the country aims to achieve greater autonomy in defence manufacturing under the Make in India programme. For instance, the BrahMos, a joint venture with Russia, is largely indigenised now.

However, India is the second largest importer of major arms, only behind Ukraine, according to SIPRI. Colonel Bhaduri has argued that the Sudarshan Chakra mission's aim to set up a nationwide shield is practically impossible as no country has attained such coverage. He has also flagged an enormous economic burden, while advising "strategic restraint and targeted conventional force improvements" as better alternatives.

2035

SUDARSHAN CHAKRA SHIELD LIKELY TO BE DEPLOYED

UNLIKE ISRAEL'S IRON DOME, THIS WOULD BE FOR A SUB-CONTINENT SIZED BATTLEFIELD

₹6.81 Lcr

INDIA'S DEFENCE BUDGET IN FY26, WHICH IS JUST 1.9% OF GDP

. System Composition & Features

- IADWS is a **multi-layered air defence system** comprising:
 - **QRSAM** (Quick Reaction Surface-to-Air Missiles)
 - **VSHORADS** (Very Short-Range Air Defence System)
 - **Directed Energy Weapon (DEW)** using high-power lasers
- The system is integrated and operated by a **Centralised Command and Control Centre** developed by DRDO.

. Operational Success

- Three targets were destroyed simultaneously:
 - Two **high-speed fixed-wing UAVs**
 - One **multi-copter drone**
- System components like missiles, radars, communication modules, and laser weapons worked **flawlessly**.

1. What is the Sudarshan Chakra Mission?

- **Announcement:** PM Narendra Modi announced on Independence Day that India will develop an **indigenous air defence system** named **Sudarshan Chakra** by **2035**.
 - **Purpose:**
 - To protect India from **aerial attacks** on both **strategic and civilian assets** (hospitals, railways, religious places, etc.).
 - Inspired by **Lord Krishna's Sudarshan Chakra**, symbolizing swift and protective power.
-

2. Current Air Defence Infrastructure

- India currently uses **S-400 Triumf** system (Russia-developed):
 - **Long-range surface-to-air missile** system.
 - Engaged 15 Pakistani drones post **Operation Sindoori**.
 - Can **neutralize aircraft at 300 km** and detect aerial threats **up to 600 km**.

3. Sudarshan Chakra vs Existing Systems

- **Integration:** Will be built along with **Integrated Air Command and Control System (IACCS)**.
 - **Advancement:**
 - Enhance detection and interception.
 - Possibly use newer missiles like:
 - **Pralay:** 500 km range.
 - **Nirbhay:** 1000 km (subsonic land attack).
 - **BrahMos:** 800 km (supersonic cruise missile).
-

4. Comparison with Global Missile Defence Systems

- **Israel's Iron Dome:**
 - Known for protecting cities with **short-range interception** and **90% success rate**.
- **USA:**
 - Multiple air and missile defence systems.
 - Trump-era "**Golden Dome**" aimed at \$175 billion defence initiative.
- **Russia:**
 - S-400 and S-500 systems; focus on **strategic city protection**.
- **China:**
 - Mixed domestic + imported missile shield systems.

5. Defence Budget and Financial Viability

- **India's Defence Budget (FY26):**
 - ₹6.81 lakh crore (1.9% of GDP).
 - Comparison:
 - Pakistan: 3.2% of GDP.
 - China: 1.6% of GDP but budget is \$3x more than India's.
 - **Estimated Cost:**
 - Requires ₹15–20 billion in R&D.
 - **Estimated deployment cost:** ₹3 billion.
-

6. Self-Reliance and Strategic Autonomy

- **Make in India Push:**
 - Focus on reducing dependence on foreign systems.
 - Examples:
 - **BrahMos** (India-Russia joint venture) is now getting **indigenized**.
 - **Strategic Statement:**
 - PM stressed "**strategic restraint with technological advancement**".
-

Feature	Details
Initiative Name	Sudarshan Chakra Mission
Announcement Year	2024 (Independence Day)
Deployment Target	2035
Integration With	IACCS
Key Missiles Likely Used	Pralay, Nirbhay, BrahMos
Strategic Aim	Indigenous air defence shield
Budget FY26	₹6.81 lakh crore (1.9% of GDP)
Global Comparison	Iron Dome (Israel), S-400 (Russia), China
Self-Reliance Vision	Under Make in India, with private sector

- **Consider the following statements regarding the Integrated Air Defence Weapon System (IADWS) recently tested by DRDO:**

- It consists of only missile-based interceptors for enemy UAVs.
- The system includes a Centralised Command and Control developed indigenously.
- Directed Energy Weapons (DEWs) using lasers were tested as part of the system.

- **Which of the above statements is/are correct?**

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



130th Constitution Amendment Bill banks on power of arrest, runs the risk of politicising it

NEWS ANALYSIS

Krishnadas Rajagopal
NEW DELHI

The Constitution (One Hundred and Thirtieth Amendment) Bill, referred to the Joint Parliamentary Committee, is the Union government's response to political corruption and a move to ensure Ministers, including Prime Ministers and Chief Ministers, do not run governments from jail. The Bill primarily banks on the power of arrest, and even runs the risk of politicising the power.

The Opposition has termed the Bill "unconstitutional" with an ability to bring elected governments down.

The Bill proposes that Ministers arrested for serious offences punishable with imprisonment of five

years and above, and incarcerated as undertrials for 30 days, would lose office either by default on the 31st day or on the order of the President/Governor. The Bill employs the statutory power of arrest to detain Constitutional authorities such as the Prime Minister or a Chief Minister. The text of the Bill uses the phrase "arrested and detained in custody" but does not specify by whom. It also does not pinpoint the exact laws under which these arrests would be made and merely says "under any law for the time being in force".

Kejriwal's bail

Supreme Court judgments have cautioned lawmakers against incentivising arrest. Recent years have witnessed summons, arrests and detentions of a sitting Chief Minister and State



Amit Shah tabled the 130th Constitution Amendment Bill in the Lok Sabha on Wednesday.

Ministers, especially in non-BJP-ruled States. The court has held against making arrest and prolonged incarceration tools of harassment and a punishment in itself.

"Arrest brings humiliation, curtails freedom and casts scars forever. Lawmakers know it, so also the police," the court had observed in *Arnesh Kumar versus State of Bihar*.

Granting bail to then Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal in a CBI case registered in the liquor policy 'scam', Supreme Court judge, Justice Ujjal Bhuyan, in a separate opinion, observed that the "power to arrest is one thing but the need to arrest is altogether a different thing. Just because an investigating agency has the power to arrest, it does not necessarily mean that it should arrest such a person".

In *Joginder Kumar Vs. State of Uttar Pradesh*, the court observed that "no arrest can be made just because it is lawful for police officers to do so... The existence of the power of arrest is one thing but justification for the exercise of it is quite another". Denying a person of his liberty is a serious matter.

In *Arnab Ranjan Goswami versus Union of India*,

the Supreme Court had observed the need to balance the requirement for the proper enforcement of criminal law on the one end and the need to ensure that the law did not become a ruse for targeted harassment on the other.

"Deprivation of liberty even for a single day is one day too many," the court had emphasised.

The Bill has come at a time when the Supreme Court has been vocally critical about arrests and incarcerations under the anti-money laundering law. Two separate Benches of the Supreme Court have questioned the "poor conviction rates" reached by the Central agency, observing that "out of about 400 Enforcement Case Information Reports you (ED) have registered, less than only 10 have reached conviction".

◆ Context and Purpose

- The **130th Constitutional Amendment Bill** has been introduced by the Union Government and tabled by **Home Minister Amit Shah**.
 - Objective: To ensure that **Ministers (PM, CM, etc.)** who are **arrested and detained** for certain offences are **automatically removed from office**.
-

◆ Key Provisions of the Bill

1. Targeted at Constitutional Authorities:

- Includes **Prime Ministers, Chief Ministers**, and other ministers.
- Uses the phrase "**arrested and detained in custody**", without specifying arresting authority.

2. Conditions for removal:

- Ministers **convicted of an offence punishable with imprisonment of 2 years or more** and detained as undertrials for **30 days** will be **removed from office**.
- Removal can be **automatic on the 31st day** or through **President/Governor's order**.

3. Legal Ambiguity:

- Bill doesn't clarify **under which laws** arrests will be made.
- Leaves room for potential **political misuse**.

◆ Criticisms and Concerns

1. Risk of Politicisation:

- Opposition claims it could be misused to **bring down elected governments**, especially in **non-BJP ruled states**.
- Described as “**unconstitutional**” due to vague language and potential misuse.

2. Judicial Cautions:

- SC in **Arnesh Kumar vs. State of Bihar**: Criticized arrest as a **tool of harassment**.
- Justice Ujjal Bhuyan in **Kejriwal bail hearing**: Power to arrest ≠ necessity to arrest.

3. Poor Conviction Rate:

- ED has registered over **400 cases** under anti-money laundering law.
 - **Only 10 convictions**, raising concerns over misuse.
-

ADR 2025 Report Highlights: Criminalisation of Politics

- **National Overview (MLAs):**

- Out of 4,092 MLAs analyzed across 28 states and 3 Union Territories:
 - **45% (1,861 MLAs)** have declared criminal cases
 - **29% (1,205 MLAs)** face **serious criminal charges** such as murder, attempted murder, kidnapping, or crimes against women [Insights On India +11](#) .

- **Top States by Criminalisation:**

- Highest overall criminal cases:
 - **Andhra Pradesh: 79%**
 - **Kerala and Telangana: 69% each**
 - **Bihar: 66%, Maharashtra: 65%, Tamil Nadu: 59%** [Insights On India +7](#) .
- Highest share of **serious charges**:
 - **Andhra Pradesh: 56%**
 - **Telangana: 50%**
 - **Bihar: 49%** [Insights On India +11](#) .

- **Party-wise Trends:**

- **Regional parties** display a **higher proportion of criminal MLAs** compared to **national parties**

Wikipedia

Insights On India +5 .

- In **2024 Lok Sabha elections**, out of 1,618 candidates:

- **16%** had pending criminal cases.
- **10%** faced **serious criminal charges** ADR India +10 .

- Breakdown by party (2024 examination):

- **RJD**: 100% of its candidates declared criminal cases.
- **BSP**: Only **13%** of candidates had declared criminal cases CrackitToday +1 ADR India .

- **Trend Over Time (MPs):**

- **2004 vs 2024:**

- Candidates contesting with criminal cases doubled from **12% to 20%**.
 - MPs with criminal cases rose from **24% to 46%**.
 - Those with serious cases increased from **11% to 31%** Google Groups +5 .
-

Q. Consider the following statements regarding the 130th Constitutional Amendment Bill:

- 1.** It mandates the removal of a minister from office if convicted of an offence punishable with imprisonment of two years or more.
- 2.** The Bill specifies the exact authority responsible for arresting a minister.
- 3.** Supreme Court has previously warned against the arbitrary use of arrests as tools of political harassment.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

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

Nagpur's Satnavari is India's first 'smart intelligent' village

Nagpur: Satnavari, a Maharashtra village with a population of just over 1,800, Sunday became India's first "smart intelligent village" under a pilot project launched by Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis. The project aims to introduce technological interventions in multiple sectors, particularly agriculture. The village, 31 km from Nagpur, awaits the complete implementation of the technology, but the pilot is ready.

Fadnavis said, "Maharashtra

government has taken a revolutionary step by launching India's first smart and intelligent village project here in Satnavari."

"Prime Minister Narendra Modi... emphasised the role of technology in creating prosperous villages, strengthening agriculture, and improving education. With this vision, the BharatNet programme was initiated, laying optical fibre across villages, just as electricity lines were laid years ago," the CM said.

ENS

◆ Location and Demographics

- **Village Name:** Satnavari
 - **District:** Nagpur, Maharashtra
 - **Distance from Nagpur:** 31 km
 - **Population:** ~1,800 people
-

🚀 Project Details:

◆ Launched Under:

- **Initiator:** Chief Minister **Devendra Fadnavis**
- **Project Type:** **Pilot project** for smart-intelligent village model

◆ Aim of the Project:

- Technological interventions in **multiple sectors**, especially:
 - **Agriculture**
 - Education
 - Connectivity
 - Rural prosperity

**Use in UPSC
Mains/Essay/GS:**



GS Paper II: Governance
and Government
schemes



GS Paper III:
Agriculture,
Infrastructure, E-
Technology in aid of
farmers



Essay: Role of
Technology in Rural
India



Ethics: Public service
delivery through
innovation

-
- **Consider the following statements regarding India's first smart-intelligent village:**
 - Satnavari village is located in Maharashtra's Nagpur district.
 - It is implemented under the BharatNet Programme directly by the Union Ministry of Rural Development.
 - The project aims to introduce technological interventions mainly in agriculture.
 - **Which of the above statements are correct?**
- A. 1 and 2
B. 2 and 3
C. 1 and 3
D. 1, 2 and 3

Jan Vishwas 2.0: What the Bill to amend 16 laws seeks to do

HARIKISHAN SHARMA

NEW DELHI, AUGUST 24

THE JAN Vishwas (Amendment of Provisions) Bill, 2025, which was introduced in Lok Sabha last week, seeks to amend 16 Central Acts in order to decriminalise and rationalise certain offences and penalties.

This is the second Jan Vishwas legislation brought in by the Narendra Modi government. The first, Jan Vishwas (Amendment of Provisions) Act, 2023, decriminalised 183 provisions in 42 central acts administered by 19 ministries/departments.

"The 2025 Bill expands this reform agenda to cover 16 Central Acts administered by 10 ministries/departments... to further enhance trust-based governance for ease of living and doing business," the press release by the Ministry of Commerce and Industry said.

Why was the Bill brought in?

A database put together by the Vidhi

Centre for Legal Policy contains 882 central laws, 370 of which have criminal provisions for 7,305 crimes. More than 75% of all crimes are defined under laws that regulate areas beyond core criminal justice, such as shipping, taxation, financial institutions, and municipal governance, Vidhi's research found.

This overreach of criminal law is criticised for a number of reasons.

■ There are some severe punishments for seemingly small offences. For instance, one can be arrested in India for milking a cow on the street or not providing proper exercise to one's pet dog.

While many such criminal provisions are rarely enforced, they leave the door open for arbitrary exercise of power by the State and run contrary to the basic legal principle of proportionality in crime and punishment. Often, such laws are a product of outdated notions of morality and an overly paternalistic outlook taken up by the State, experts believe.

■ According to a 2022 report by the Observer Research Foundation, "of the 1,536

laws that govern doing business in India, more than half carry imprisonment clauses. Of the 69,233 compliances that businesses have to follow, 37.8% carry imprisonment clauses. More than half the clauses requiring imprisonment carry a sentence of at least one year."

Such overreach of criminal law, the report argues, "[has] created barriers to the smooth flow of ideas, organisation, money, entrepreneurship and through them the creation of jobs, wealth and GDP."

■ The excessive criminalisation further impacts India's already over-burdened legal system. According to the National Judicial Data Grid, as on August 24, there were more than 3.6 crore pending criminal cases in India's district courts, more than 2.3 crore of which are more than one year old.

"The criminal consequences prescribed for technical/procedural lapses and minor defaults clog the justice delivery system and put adjudication of serious offences on the back

burner," a Commerce Ministry press release from 2023, when the first Jan Vishwas Bill was introduced, stated, adding that the amendment "would go a long way in reducing undue pressure on the justice system, reduce the pendency of cases and help in a more efficient and effective justice dispensation".

What does the Bill do?

The 2025 Bill proposes amending 355 provisions, "288 provisions decriminalised to foster ease of doing business, and 67 provisions proposed to be amended to facilitate ease of living".

The 16 laws that will be amended are: Reserve Bank of India Act, 1934; Drugs and Cosmetics Act, 1940; Road Transport Corporation Act, 1950; Tea Act, 1953; Coir Industry Act, 1953; Handlooms (Reservation of Articles for Production) Act, 1985; Delhi Municipal Corporation Act, 1957; Apprentice Act, 1961; Motor Vehicles Act, 1988 (MVA); New Delhi Municipal Council Act, 1994;

Central Silk Board Act, 1948; Textiles Committee Act, 1963; Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority Act, 1985; Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises Development Act, 2006; Legal Metrology Act, 2009 (LMA); and Electricity Act, 2003.

What are the key features of the Bill?

■ The Bill introduces concepts of "warning" and "improvement notice" for first-time offenders in 76 offences under 10 Acts, including the MVA, the Apprentice Act, and the LMA.

For instance, a first-time offender will be served an improvement notice for the use of non-standard weights and measures, an offence which currently carries a penalty of upto Rs 1 lakh. This will require the offender to rectify the non-compliance within a specified time, failing which they can be punished with a fine.

■ The Bill, like its predecessor, removes imprisonment clauses for minor, technical or procedural defaults for a number of of-

fences, and replaces them with penalties or warnings. For instance, it proposes a fine (between Rs 10,000 and Rs 10 lakh) instead of the existing three-month imprisonment for non-compliance of orders under the Electricity Act, 2003.

■ The Bill also proposes rationalisation of penalties. It proposes higher penalties for repeated offences through an automatic 10% increase in the penalty every three years. This is aimed at achieving "deterrence without legislative amendments".

"The goal of Jan Vishwas is to create a more business-friendly environment and promote ease of living by eliminating unnecessary legal hurdles and simplifying the regulatory landscape," Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal said on August 18.

This has been a key plank of the NDA government for the last 11 years.

The Bill has been referred to the Select Committee of Lok Sabha, which is supposed to submit its report by the first day of the next Parliament session.

EXPLAINED
LAW

- The **Jan Vishwas (Amendment of Provisions) Bill, 2025** aims to amend **16 Central Acts** to:
 - Decriminalise minor offences.
 - Promote ease of doing business.
 - Reduce legal burdens and penal provisions.
 - It is the **second Jan Vishwas legislation** after the 2023 Act, which amended **183 provisions across 42 Acts**.
-

2. Why was the Bill introduced?

- A **Vidhi Centre for Legal Policy report** found:
 - 882 central laws have criminal provisions.
 - 75% of these laws relate to **economic/administrative issues**, not serious crimes.
 - Overcriminalisation is **hurting entrepreneurship** and **clogging courts**.
- Criminalisation of trivial acts like:
 - Not milking a cow on the street.
 - Not exercising a pet properly.
 - Shows how outdated laws affect governance.

3. ⚖️ What does the 2025 Bill propose?

- 355 provisions affected:
 - 288 decriminalised provisions.
 - 67 rationalised provisions to reduce legal burden.
 - 16 Acts amended include:
 - Motor Vehicles Act (MVA), Legal Metrology Act, Electricity Act, Apprentices Act, Delhi Municipal Acts, Drugs and Cosmetics Act, etc.
-

4. ✨ Key Features

- Introduction of “Warning” and “Improvement Notices” for first-time offenders.
- Replacement of jail terms with fines or warnings.
 - Example: Fine of ₹10,000 to ₹10 lakh under the **Electricity Act** instead of jail.
- **Automatic 10% penalty increase** every 3 years for repeat offences.
- Promotes **deterrence without legislative amendments**.

Q. Consider the following statements regarding the Jan Vishwas (Amendment of Provisions) Bill, 2025:

1. The Bill proposes to amend 16 Central Acts by decriminalising and rationalising provisions.
2. The Bill introduces imprisonment for repeat offences as a core deterrent mechanism.
3. The Jan Vishwas initiative aims to reduce the burden on the judiciary and promote ease of doing business.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

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

Word of the day

Frigid:

extremely cold; devoid of warmth and cordiality;
expressive of unfriendliness or disdain

Synonyms: arctic, glacial, icy, frosty, cold

Usage: *She welcomed him with a very frigid greeting.*

Pronunciation: newsth.live/frigidpro

International Phonetic

Alphabet: /ˈfrɪdʒɪd/



Thank you 😊

