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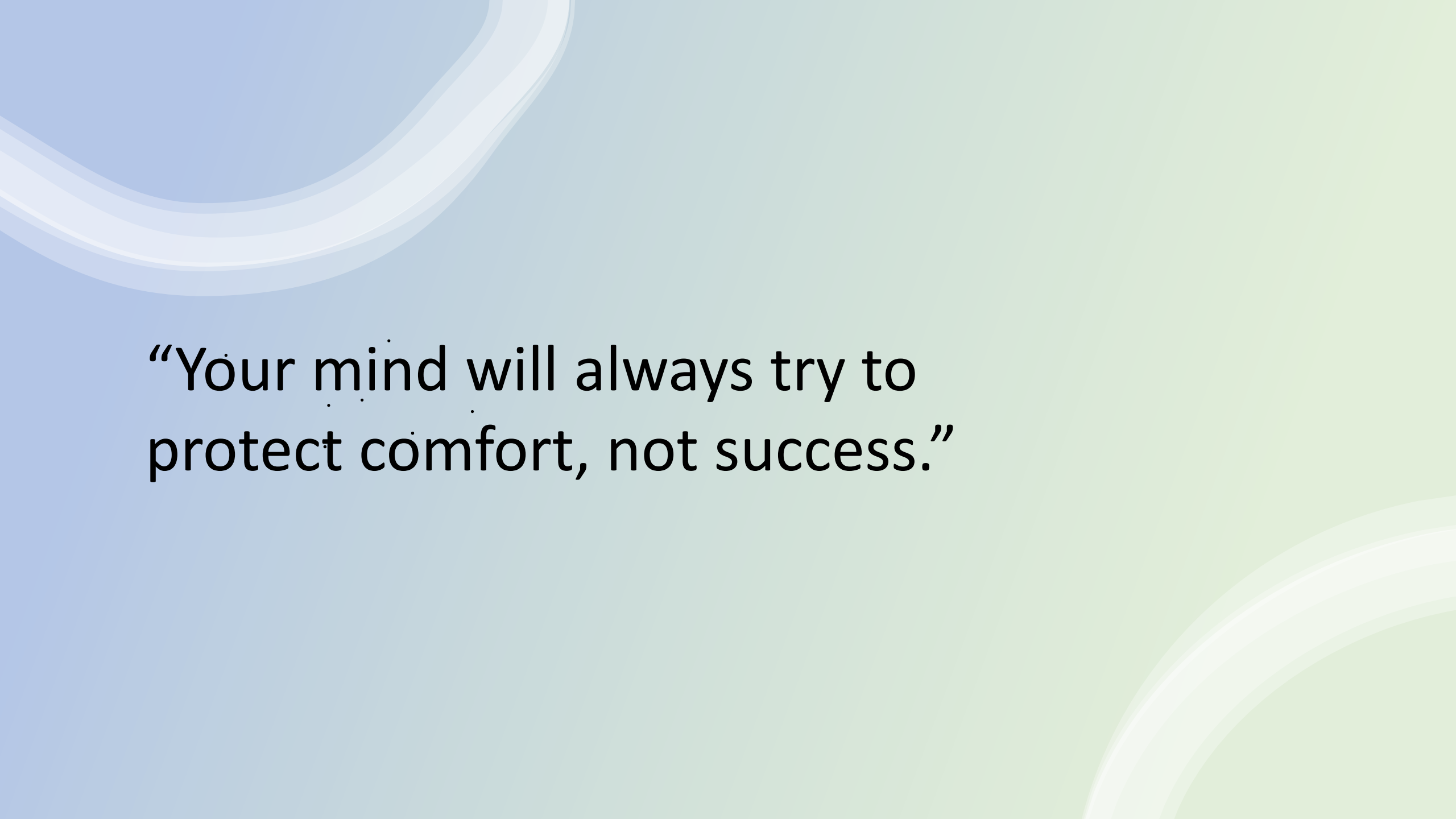


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“Your mind will always try to protect comfort, not success.”

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Will not appear before Delhi HC judge Kejriwal
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No immediate need for petrol, diesel imports: govt
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INSIDE

Meta
China on Monday blocked U.S. tech giant Meta's acquisition of artificial intelligence startup Manus, in an unexpected move
BUSINESS

China on Monday blocked U.S. tech giant Meta's acquisition of artificial intelligence startup Manus, in an unexpected move that reverses a deal that reportedly assuaged Beijing's concerns about the transfer of advanced technology. The country's top planning agency did not elaborate on the reasons for the ban. **» PAGE 18**

Nida Khan's links to Malaysia 'need custodial probe'
NEWS

The Karachi Police on Monday told a local court that Nida Khan, whom the police disclosed as an accomplice accused in the alleged ICS sexual exploitation and forced religious conversion case, needs to be interrogated in custody. The court was hearing Ms. Khan's anticipatory bail application. **» PAGE 8**

Suspect charged with attempting to kill Trump
WASHINGTON

The man who authorities say tried to storm the White House for re-election, Association for American Action has been charged with the attempted assassination of U.S. President Donald Trump. Code Thomas Allen, 31, appeared in Washington federal court on Monday to face charges in a chaotic encounter. **» PAGE 14**

Fertilizer supply strong and stable, says Ministry
NEW DELHI

Amid criticism by the Opposition that the Centre had failed to ensure availability of cooking gas and fertiliser, the Union Fertiliser Ministry on Monday said that the country's fertilizer security remained "strong, stable, and well managed," with availability exceeding requirement. **» PAGE 22**

India, New Zealand sign 'historic' trade deal

Deal will be implemented following ratification by the New Zealand Parliament later this year | Trade pact is a milestone, showing 'convergence of values, trust and shared ambition', says PM | This FTA is one of the fastest negotiated by India; talks began in March and concluded in Dec, 2020

E.L.A. Sheetal Kashyap
NEW DELHI

India and New Zealand on Monday signed a Free Trade Agreement (FTA) that Prime Ministers of both the countries hailed as a "historic" step towards deepening trade, investment, and people-to-people ties.

The FTA, signed by Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal and his New Zealand counterpart Todd McClay in New Delhi, will see New Zealand removing tariffs on all goods imported from India, while India will remove or reduce tariffs on 98% of current imports from New Zealand.

Today marks a historic milestone in India's journey towards global engagement and shared prosperity," a statement read out by Commerce Minister Narendrasingh Puri. "The deal will be implemented following ratification by the New Zealand Parliament later this year."

New Zealand Prime Minister Christopher Luxon, in a statement read out by Mr. McClay, said that during a time of global uncertainty, this FTA is a clear commitment by both sides to a stable, predictable and rules-based trade.

"And the India-New Zealand story is about more

than trade," Mr. Luxon said. "New Zealand and India are building a relationship that is bigger, deeper and more exciting every year — across trade, investment, defence, sport, and innovation."

Mr. Goyal said, "It is a comprehensive framework separating market access, investment, and mobility, which data is available. Imports from New Zealand grew 75.2% to \$877.4 million over the same period."

"This FTA is far more than an agreement on tariffs and rules of origin," Mr. Goyal said. "It is a comprehensive framework separating market access, investment, and mobility, designed to benefit manufacturing, farmers, artisans, MSMEs, women entrepreneurs, students, and more professionals across both nations."

Part of the tariff concessions, the FTA also includes several provisions for people, mobility, working professionals and students from India to invest, and mobility, Mr. McClay exuded confidence that the deal would benefit New Zealand exporters substantially.

The FTA includes a provision where New Zealand has committed to facilitate \$20 billion in investments into India over the next 10 years.

"Our Make in India flagship initiative offers synergy to New Zealand's investment commitment of \$20 billion in India and delivers a vibrant partnership that goes beyond trade," Mr. Modi said in his statement.

Health services," President of the Federation of Indian Export Organisations S.C. Bahan said.

The Consideration of India industry, in a statement, said that New Zealand's commitment to facilitate \$20 billion in investment is expected to spur the development of industrial infrastructure, manufacturing ecosystems, and innovation across India.

India has managed to negotiate the exclusion of several key items from the deal, including all dairy products such as milk, cream, whey, yoghurt, cheese, etc., animal products other than sheep wool, vegetable products such as onions, chana, peas, corn, almonds, etc., sugar, artificial honey, animal, vegetable or microbial fats and oils, arms and ammunition, guns and jewellery, and copper and aluminium and products.

Industry hails deal
Industry bodies and exporters welcomed the deal.

"The FTA will open new avenues for Indian exporters by enhancing market access to New Zealand across key sectors such as agriculture, textiles, pharmaceuticals, engineering goods, and services such as IT & FTES, business services, engineering, education, construction and

Receding winter



Making way: Army personnel clear snow at Chandanow Hermand Sahib in Chhattisgarh, on Monday. The receding of the snow, scheduled for next month, marks the beginning of summer in the region. **»**

Chairman of Rajya Sabha recognises the merger of AAP defectors with BJP



Making way: Rajya Sabha members Bhupendra Chaudhary and others meeting BJP president Jagan Mohan Reddy in New Delhi on Friday. **»**

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Rajya Sabha secretary on Monday updated the party-wise list of members in the House, counting seven Aam Aadmi Party MPs, including Raghu Chaudhary, with the Bharatiya Janata Party, indicating that Chairman C.P. Radhakrishnan has accepted their request to switch side.

With the change, the BJP's strength in the Upper House has risen to 113 while the Congress, the largest Opposition party, remains a distant second with 20 members.

Welcoming the seven MPs in a good old-fashioned manner, the BJP secretary of State, Mr. P. Venkatesh, said, "For a long time, I have observed that these seven Hon'ble

disappeared, calling the move a violation of the anti-defection law.

"The Chairman has taken cognizance of the letter submitted by those seven MPs and, based on that, accepted their request to switch sides," Mr. Radhakrishnan said.

Under the anti-defection law, the party has to disqualify members who have resigned or have been expelled from the party. The Chairman has taken cognizance of the letter submitted by those seven MPs and, based on that, accepted their request to switch sides.

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Iran offers to reopen Strait of Hormuz if the U.S. lifts naval blockade, ends war



Russian President Vladimir Putin with Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi in St. Petersburg on Monday. **»**

Associated Press
CAIRO

Iran has offered to end its chokehold on the Strait of Hormuz if the U.S. lifts its blockade on the country and ends the war in a proposal that would prompt discussions on the Islamic Republic's nuclear programme, two regional officials said on Monday.

U.S. President Donald Trump seems unlikely to accept the offer, which was passed to Americans by Palestinians and would leave unresolved the disagreements that led the U.S. and Israel to go to war on February 26. Mr. Trump has said one of the major reasons he went to war was to deny Iran the ability to develop nuclear weapons.

Accuse France-France
DELT

Hezbollah leader Naim Qassem on Monday rejected Lebanon's Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi's plea to restart talks with Israel, calling them a "give away" that will destabilise Lebanon.

Later, Lebanese President Joseph Aoun took a job at the Iran-backed group, saying those who dragged the country to war had committed "treason".

Lebanon and Israel's U.S. ambassadors met twice in Washington over the past weeks, the first of their kind in decades.

Full report on
PAGE 14

Iran wants to persuade Oman to back a mechanism to collect tolls from vessels passing through the strait, according to a regional official. The official, who is involved in mediation efforts, also says Iran insisted on ending the U.S. blockade before new talks and that Pakistan-led mediators are trying to bridge significant gaps between the countries.

Mr. Trump told journalists on Saturday that after he called off a trip by his spouse to Pakistan, the Iranian said a "much better" proposal.

India, New Zealand sign 'historic' trade deal

Deal will be implemented following ratification by the New Zealand Parliament later this year

Trade pact is a milestone, showing 'convergence of values, trust and shared ambition', says PM

This FTA is one of the fastest negotiated by India; talks began in March and concluded in Dec. 2025

T.C.A. Sharad Raghavan
NEW DELHI

India and New Zealand on Monday signed a Free Trade Agreement (FTA) that Prime Ministers of both the countries hailed as a "historic" step towards deepening trade, investment, and people-to-people ties.

The FTA, signed by Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal and his New Zealand counterpart Todd McClay in New Delhi, will see New Zealand removing tariffs on all goods imported from India, while India will remove or reduce tariffs on 95% of current imports from New Zealand.

"Today marks a historic milestone in India's journey towards deeper global engagement and shared prosperity," a statement read out by Mr. Goyal quoted Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who is currently in West Bengal, as saying.

"The signing of the India-New Zealand Free Trade Agreement reflects our strengthening economic partnership and a convergence of values, trust and shared ambition between two vibrant democracies."

The FTA, discussions for which were announced in March 2025 and concluded in December 2025, is one of the fastest India has negotiated.

The deal still needs to be ratified by New Zealand's Parliament, which Mr. McClay said would happen soon while adding that it would come into force within this year.

New Zealand Prime Minister Christopher Luxon, in a statement read out by Mr. McClay, said that during a time of global uncertainty, this FTA is a clear commitment by both sides to a stable, predictable and rules-based trade.

"And the India-New Zealand story is about more

Deal dynamics

The graphic lists select products on which India will be reducing or eliminating tariffs, as well as items excluded from the deal. New Zealand has removed tariffs on all items

Immediate elimination

- Wood | ■ Wool
- Leather-raw hides

Phased elimination

- Petroleum oil
- Vegetable oils
- Select electrical machinery

Tariff reductions

- Wine and pharma
- Polymers, aluminum, iron and steel articles

Products excluded by India

- Dairy products (milk, cream, whey, yoghurt, cheese etc.)
- Animal products (other than sheep meat)
- Agricultural products (onions, chana, peas, corn, almonds etc.)
- Sugar | ■ Artificial honey
- Copper and Articles thereof (Cathodes, cartridges, rods)
- Aluminium and articles thereof (Ingots, billets etc.)



Sealing the deal: Union Minister of Commerce and Industry, Piyush Goyal, with New Zealand's Minister for Trade and Investment, Todd McClay, during the signing ceremony of the FTA in New Delhi on Monday. SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA

than trade," Mr. Luxon said. "New Zealand and India are building a relationship that is bigger, deeper and more exciting every year – across trade, investment, defence, sport, and innovation."

Gains beyond trade

India's exports to New Zealand grew 32.1% in 2024-25 to \$711.1 million, the latest

full financial year for which data is available. Imports from New Zealand grew 75.2% to \$587.1 million over the same period.

"This FTA is far more than an agreement on tariffs and rules of origin," Mr. Goyal said. "It is a comprehensive framework spanning market access, agricultural productivity, investment, and mobility,

designed to benefit manufacturing, farmers, artisans, MSMEs, women entrepreneurs, students, and skilled professionals across both nations."

Apart from the tariff concessions, the FTA also includes several provisions relating to mobility of working professionals and students from India.

Mr. McClay exuded con-

fidence that the deal would benefit New Zealander exporters substantially.

The FTA includes a provision wherein New Zealand has committed to facilitate \$20 billion in investments into India over the next 15 years.

"Our Make in India flagship initiative offers synergy to New Zealand's investment commitment of \$20 billion in India and delivers a vibrant partnership that goes beyond trade," Mr. Modi said in his statement.

Industry hails deal

Industry bodies and exporters welcomed the deal. "The FTA will open new avenues for Indian exporters by enhancing market access to New Zealand across key sectors such as agriculture, textiles, pharmaceuticals, engineering goods, and services such as IT & ITES, business services, engineering, education, construction and

health services," President of the Federation of Indian Export Organisations S.C. Ralhan said.

The Confederation of India Industry, in a statement, said that New Zealand's commitment to facilitate \$20 billion in investment is expected to spur the development of industrial infrastructure, manufacturing ecosystems, and innovation clusters across India.

India has managed to negotiate the exclusion of several key items from the deal, including all dairy products such as milk, cream, whey, yoghurt, cheese, etc., animal products other than sheep meat, vegetable products such as onions, chana, peas, corn, almonds, etc., sugar, artificial honey, animal, vegetable or microbial fats and oils, arms and ammunition, gems and jewellery, and copper and aluminium and products.

Deal dynamics

The graphic lists select products on which India will be reducing or eliminating tariffs, as well as items excluded from the deal. New Zealand has removed tariffs on all items

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- Wood | ■ Wool
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- Polymers, aluminum, iron and steel articles

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Sealing the deal: Union Minister of Commerce and Industry, Piyush Goyal, with New Zealand's Minister for Trade and Investment, Todd McClay, during the signing ceremony of the FTA in New Delhi on Monday. SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA

D1. Deal Dynamics — Tariff Structure / टैरिफ संरचना

Category	Products (India's action)
Immediate elimination	Wood, Wool, Leather-raw hides
Phased elimination	Petroleum oil, Vegetable oils, Select electrical machinery
Tariff reductions	Wine and pharma, Polymers, Aluminium, Iron and steel articles
Products EXCLUDED by India	Dairy (milk, cream, whey, yoghurt, cheese), Animal products (other than sheep meat), Agricultural products (onions, chana, peas, corn, almonds), Sugar, Artificial honey, Copper & cathodes, Aluminium ingots/billets

- **New Zealand:** Removed tariffs on **ALL items** from India.
- **न्यूजीलैंड:** भारत से **सभी वस्तुओं** पर टैरिफ हटाया।

D3. Trade Statistics / व्यापार आँकड़े

- India's exports to New Zealand grew **32.1% in 2024-25** to **\$711.1 million** (latest full financial year data).
- Imports from New Zealand grew **75.2% to \$587.1 million** over same period.
- भारत का निर्यात: NZ को 2024-25 में **32.1%** बढ़कर **\$711.1** मिलियन।
- आयात: NZ से **75.2%** बढ़कर **\$587.1** मिलियन।

D4. Beneficiaries / लाभार्थी

- **India:** Agriculture, textiles, pharmaceuticals, engineering goods, IT & ITES, business services, engineering, education, construction, health services.
- **MSMEs, women entrepreneurs, students, artisans, skilled professionals.**
- **New Zealand exporters:** Substantial benefit from India's 95% tariff reduction commitment.
- **भारत:** कृषि, कपड़ा, फार्मा, IT, ITES, व्यापार सेवाएं; MSMEs, महिला उद्यमी, छात्र।

- **India's FTA history:** India has signed FTAs with ASEAN (2009), South Korea (2010), Japan (2011), UAE (2022), Australia (ECTA 2022); ongoing negotiations with UK, EU, Canada.
- **भारत का FTA इतिहास:** ASEAN (2009), दक्षिण कोरिया (2010), जापान (2011), UAE (2022), ऑस्ट्रेलिया (ECTA 2022)।
- **India-New Zealand historical ties:** British Commonwealth connection; Indian diaspora in NZ (~250,000); traditionally warm but limited economic ties.
- **भारत-न्यूजीलैंड ऐतिहासिक:** राष्ट्रमंडल; ~250,000 भारतीय प्रवासी।
- **India's FTA policy evolution:** Post-2014 — selective approach; 2020s — renewed focus on high-quality FTAs with like-minded democracies (UK, Canada, EU, NZ, Australia).
- **FTA नीति विकास:** 2014 के बाद चयनात्मक; 2020s में समान मूल्यों वाले लोकतंत्रों के साथ।

Geography / भूगोल

- **New Zealand:** Located in South Pacific Ocean; capital Wellington; largest city Auckland; ~5 million population; Maori indigenous people (~17%); two main islands (North Island, South Island).
- **न्यूजीलैंड:** दक्षिण प्रशांत महासागर; राजधानी वेलिंगटन; सबसे बड़ा शहर ऑकलैंड; ~50 लाख जनसंख्या; माओरी (~17%); दो मुख्य द्वीप।
- **Strategic location:** Part of **Five Eyes** intelligence alliance (USA, UK, Canada, Australia, NZ); member of **CPTPP** (Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership).
- **रणनीतिक स्थान:** **Five Eyes** खुफिया गठबंधन; **CPTPP** का सदस्य।
- **India's Indo-Pacific strategy:** India's QUAD (India, USA, Japan, Australia) — NZ not in QUAD but geographically relevant to Indo-Pacific; this FTA deepens India's Pacific footprint.

Polity / राजव्यवस्था

- **Constitutional basis for trade agreements in India:** Article 253 — Parliament has power to make laws to implement international agreements; trade agreements ratified by Cabinet (executive action); Parliament approval not mandatory in India (unlike NZ).
- **भारत में व्यापार समझौतों का संवैधानिक आधार:** अनुच्छेद 253 — अंतर्राष्ट्रीय समझौतों को लागू करने के लिए संसद की शक्ति; कैबिनेट अनुसमर्थन।
- **New Zealand Parliament ratification:** NZ requires parliamentary ratification — its parliament will ratify this year.
- **न्यूजीलैंड संसद अनुसमर्थन:** NZ संसदीय अनुसमर्थन आवश्यक।
- **WTO framework:** FTAs must comply with WTO rules — under GATT Article XXIV (goods) and GATS Article V (services) — must cover "substantially all trade" to be WTO-compatible.
- **WTO ढाँचा:** GATT अनुच्छेद XXIV (वस्तुएं) और GATS अनुच्छेद V (सेवाएं) — "पर्याप्त सभी व्यापार" कवर होना आवश्यक।
- **Ministry responsible in India: Ministry of Commerce and Industry** — Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal signed.
- **भारत में जिम्मेदार मंत्रालय:** वाणिज्य और उद्योग मंत्रालय।

- **Types of trade agreements:**
 - **FTA (Free Trade Agreement):** Eliminates/reduces tariffs on goods
 - **CETA (Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement):** Broader — includes services, investment
 - **PTA (Preferential Trade Agreement):** Limited tariff concessions on selected goods
 - **CEPA (Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement):** Broadest — goods + services + investment + cooperation
 - India-NZ deal is an FTA; PM Modi described it as "comprehensive framework" beyond just tariffs
 - **FTA बनाम CEPA बनाम PTA:** FTA (वस्तुएं), CEPA (व्यापक), PTA (सीमित)।
- **India's excluded items and rationale:**
 - **Dairy products** (milk, cream, whey, yoghurt, cheese): Protects Indian dairy farmers (200 million+ dependent); NZ is world's largest dairy exporter; competition would devastate Indian dairy sector; NDDB (National Dairy Development Board) concerns
 - **Agricultural products** (onions, chana, peas, corn, almonds): Food security; farmer protection; NZ is major agri-exporter
 - **Sugar and artificial honey:** Sensitive for Indian farmer income
 - **Copper and aluminium:** Protecting domestic metal industries
 - **Arms and ammunition, gems and jewellery:** Sensitive sectors
 - **भारत के बाहर रखे गए आइटम:** डेयरी (200 मिलियन+ किसान); कृषि उत्पाद (खाद्य सुरक्षा); चीनी; धातु।

- **India's FTA/CEPA Partners (complete list for exam):**

Agreement	Partner	Year
SAFTA	South Asian Countries	2006
ASEAN FTA	10 ASEAN nations	2009
CEPA	South Korea	2010
CEPA	Japan	2011
CECPA	Mauritius	2021
CEPA	UAE	2022
ECTA	Australia	2022
FTA	New Zealand	2025
Ongoing	UK, EU, Canada, Oman	Negotiating

1	UPSC CSE Prelims	2023	With reference to the India-Australia Economic Cooperation and Trade Agreement (ECTA) signed in 2022, which of the following is correct?	(a) It covers only goods trade (b) Dairy products are included with zero tariff (c) It covers goods, services and aims to boost two-way trade substantially (d) Australia will impose tariffs on all Indian goods	(c) Covers goods, services; dairy excluded
2	UPSC CSE Prelims	2022	Under the WTO framework, which GATT Article allows countries to form Free Trade Agreements and Customs Unions if they cover 'substantially all trade'?	(a) Article XX (b) Article VI (c) Article XVI (d) Article XXIV	(d) GATT Article XXIV
3	UPSC CSE Prelims	2021	Which of the following is the CORRECT distinction between an FTA and a CEPA?	(a) FTA covers services; CEPA covers only goods (b) CEPA is broader, covering goods, services, investment and economic cooperation; FTA primarily covers goods (c) FTA is multilateral; CEPA is bilateral (d) There is no difference between the two	(b) CEPA is broader — goods + services + investment + cooperation

4	UPSC CSE Prelims	2022	Under Article 253 of the Indian Constitution, Parliament can make laws:	(a) Only on Union List subjects (b) On Concurrent List subjects only (c) For implementing international agreements even on State List subjects (d) Only with state consent	(c) Implement international agreements even on State List
5	UPSC CSE Prelims	2023	New Zealand is a member of which of the following? 1. CPTPP 2. Five Eyes 3. APEC 4. QUAD	(a) 1 and 2 only (b) 1, 2 and 3 only (c) 2, 3 and 4 only (d) 1, 2, 3 and 4	(b) 1, 2 and 3 only — New Zealand is NOT in QUAD
6	UPSC CSE Prelims	2021	India exited from which trade agreement in 2019 citing concerns over dairy, MSMEs and Chinese competition?	(a) ASEAN FTA (b) CPTPP (c) RCEP (Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership) (d) TPP	(c) RCEP — India walked out in November 2019
7	UPSC CSE Mains GS-3	2022	"India's reluctance to enter large regional trade agreements like RCEP and its preference for bilateral FTAs reflects a deliberate trade strategy rather than protectionism." Critically examine this statement.	<i>(Mains descriptive)</i>	Key: RCEP exit reasons; dairy, MSMEs, services; bilateral FTAs with UAE, Australia, NZ; Make in India; trade creation vs diversion; WTO compatibility

Rajiv Gandhi assassination case convict, now a lawyer

S. Vijay Kumar
CHENNAI

A.J. Perarivalan, one of the five convicts in the Rajiv Gandhi assassination case who was released on remission in 2022, donned the black robes on Monday. He was enrolled into the Bar Association of Tamil Nadu and Pudukchery and will practice as an advocate in the Madras High Court. The Supreme Court on May 18, 2022, invoked its extraordinary powers to complete justice under Article 44 of the Constitution and ordered the release of Mr. Perarivalan in the former Prime Minister's 1991 assassination case.

The top court took into consideration Mr. Perarivalan's long incarceration for over 30 years and his release. Earlier, his death penalty was commuted to life sentence. Terrorist charges were also withdrawn.

Soon after his release from prison, Mr. Perarivalan joined L.L.R. Ambekar Law College, Bengaluru, Karnataka Law University, and completed the course in 2022. He cleared the All India Bar Examination in the same year.

Asked how he got interested in becoming a lawyer, Mr. Perarivalan said his long legal battle while in prison inspired him to study law and become an advocate. "My focus will be more on cases relating to anti-death penalty, human rights," he told *The Hindu*.

SC rejects ex-Minister's plea in evidence tampering case

Kerala HC had rejected Antony Raju's plea to suspend his conviction to fight polls: SC had earlier restored criminal proceedings against him over allegations of interference with judicial processes

The Hindu Bureau

The Supreme Court on Monday refused to entertain a special leave petition filed by former Kerala Minister Antony Raju against a Kerala High Court decision to not suspend his conviction in an over two-decade-old case of forging and planting material evidence.

In March, the High Court had refused to accept Mr. Raju's argument that his conviction should be suspended owing to the "special reasons" that he was a former Transport Minister and was contesting the Assembly elections. He



He raised the case involving the former minister dates back to 1990 when he was a junior lawyer handling a taxation case. (File photo)

fundamental right. It had said that conviction would be suspended only in exceptional circumstances.

In 2024, the top court had restored the criminal proceedings against Mr.

Raju, noting that the case at hand involved "serious allegations of interference with judicial processes which strike at the very foundation of both dispensation and the administration of justice".

The top court judgment had ordered the case records to be returned to the files of the Judicial First Class Magistrate I, Nedumangal, which was the judicial court. The case dates back to 1990 when Mr. Raju was a junior lawyer in a narcotic drugs case involving an Assistant Commissioner of Police in West Bengal, and the safe from Bagmati, Mr. Nabin said.

BJP is set for huge victory in Bengal election, says Nabin

The Hindu Bureau
JAIPUR

Bharatiya Janata Party national president Nitin Nabin on Monday said the party was set to win the Assembly election in West Bengal owing to the "hard work, struggle and sacrifice" of party workers.

"BJP's future will bloom in West Bengal, and the safe from Bagmati, Mr. Nabin said.

Mr. Nabin was on his first visit to Rajasthan after his appointment as the BJP chief. He attended a

new milestone every single day. The BJP government in Rajasthan was focused on extending the benefits of welfare schemes to the last person in society, Mr. Nabin said. Mr. Nabin's visit to Jaipur and inauguration of a party office in Jaipur were also widely reported. Mr. Nabin said the BJP government in Rajasthan was focused on extending the benefits of welfare schemes to the last person in society, Mr. Nabin said. Mr. Nabin's visit to Jaipur and inauguration of a party office in Jaipur were also widely reported.

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CAMPAINING ENDS = PAGE 5

Mangaluru cooker blast case: convict gets 10-year RI

The Hindu Bureau
MANGALURU

A special court of the National Investigation Agency (NIA) has convicted and sentenced Muhammad Sharif, to 10 years rigorous imprisonment in connection with the 2022 Mangaluru pressure cooker blast case.

The court also imposed a fine of about 592,000 under the provisions of the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA) and relevant sections of the IPC.

The incident occurred on November 19, 2022, at Nagari in Mangaluru, when a low-intensity improvised explosive device (IED) concealed in a pressure cooker exploded in a shop. The blast, which was transmitted to an auto-rickshaw, killed the driver and injured others.

Investigation revealed that the accused had planned to place the IED at the Kadi Marjanatha Temple, but the device did not explode as planned.

According to the NIA, Sharif had been radicalised into the ideology of IS by associate Anshul Ali, who is already serving a six-year sentence in the Shivajinagar IS conspiracy case.

Sharif allegedly conspired with co-accused Syed Yasir and a foreign-based IS handler to carry out terror activities aimed at creating fear through IED attacks. He was also involved in raising funds for the terror outfit.

5 killed as crane collapses at workshop of construction firm near Hyderabad

The Hindu Bureau

Five workers were killed and nearly 30 injured after a crane collapsed at a construction company's workshop at Shankarpally near Hyderabad on Monday.

The deceased, who was identified as Ali Hussain, Nagendra Singh, Jagin, Mukesh Kumar and Soma Rajith, hailing from Bihar and Jharkhand, were taken to the Shankarpally police station.

said workers from Bihar, Jharkhand, Odisha, and Uttar Pradesh were working at the site in Shankarpally village in Telangana's Raicha Reddy district. Several of them had taken shelter in a shed when the crane fell on the structure.

"Extraordinary inquiry revealed that strong winds and rain around 4 p.m. caused a gantry crane to move, collide with another crane and collapse on them. We have to verify this," said the officer.



Fatal fall: The crane that collapsed onto a shed at a village in Rangareddy district of Telangana on Monday. (ANI/PTI/Reuters)

IN BRIEF

Blaze in Seshachalam forest in A.P. brought under control

The fire that broke out in the Seshachalam forest near Tirupati district of Andhra Pradesh was brought under control on Monday morning. No casualties were reported in the blaze that affected five hectares of forest. According to forest officials, the fire started around 3:30 p.m. on Sunday at the Bejavokan-Mundhollara section in the T.S. Padma forest area in Tirupati district. Referring to suspicions that the fire may have set off by miscreants consuming alcohol, Deputy Chief Minister K. Pawan Kalyan directed officials to identify and arrest those involved.

Bodies of missing mother and son recovered in Idukki

Nearly three weeks after a 70-year-old woman and her six-year-old son went missing from Pechadi in Idukki district of Kerala, the police recovered their remains from the premises of their house on Monday. The woman's daughter had filed a complaint stating that her mother and brother have been missing. When the police personnel arrived at their residence on Monday, they noticed fresh soil in a waste pit. Upon digging the site, they found human remains. The police suspect that another son of the woman killed and buried them. He is absconding.

Kerala firework accident toll hits 16 as another victim dies

The death toll in the Mandattakode fireworks accident in Thiruvananthapuram on Monday rose to 16 with the demise of Rajesh, 25, of Kandanam, who was undergoing treatment at the Government Medical College Hospital. Meanwhile, authorities have decided to hand over the remains of four victims to their relatives as DNA examination results have confirmed their identity. The District Disaster Management Authority took the decision based on DNA reports and police records, and with the consent of the relatives.

Launch of Google AI data hub today

V. Kamalakar
VISHAKHAPATNAM

Anshul Pradeesh is set for a technological leap as Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu will lay the foundation stone for Google's massive \$18 billion (₹1.35 lakh crore) AI data centre hub at Tarlupadu, near Visakhapatnam, on April 28.

The event will be attended by Google's senior executives, including Google Cloud CEO Thomas Kurian. The groundbreaking ceremony marks the commencement of one of India's largest single foreign direct investment projects.

The project, managed by Google's subsidiary Rajshree Infosys in partnership with Adani Infra, will span 60.4 acres across three strategic locations—Adani, Adavi and Tarlupadu in Visakhapatnam.



Google's AI data centre hub project, managed by Rajshree Infosys in partnership with Adani Infra, will span 60.4 acres in three locations—Adani in Anaparthi district, and Adavi and Tarlupadu in Visakhapatnam district.

Investment in AI data centres: Google AI data centre: ₹1.35 lakh crore; Microsoft AI data centre: ₹266.6 lakh crore; Amazon AI data centre: ₹174.8 lakh crore. Total investment: ₹576.7 lakh crore.

AI data centres to full ramp for the computing capacity of Google. Data centre at Tarlupadu, a suburban area of Visakhapatnam. (R. Anil)

Janivara row: report says college staff's actions 'intentional'

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Following an inquiry into the removal of Janivara (sacred thread) of three students during the CET-2026 at the Krupasadri, II Pre-University College in Bengaluru, the Bengaluru Urban district administration has requested the government not to conduct any such examinations in the college.

Addressing presspersons on Monday, Jagadeesha G. requested the government to request the National Deputy Commissioner-headed inquiry

committee has submitted the report on the Janivara row. During the inquiry, it was proved that the act by the college staff was intentional. Based on the report, we have recommended to the Karnataka Examinations Authority not to consider the college as a centre for any of the exams in the future."

He stated that despite giving the staff training on dress code and appointing a separate dress code officer, the college staff forced the students to remove their sacred threads.

"The college has already suspended the staff, an FBI has been filed," he added.

ring cable landing stations and dedicated fiber networks, providing low-latency connectivity to global markets.

Beyond the core facility, which is slated for completion by July 2028, the project is expected to generate 2,000 jobs in data science, cybersecurity, and AI operations. It is anticipated to trigger a ripple effect in allied sectors, including renewable energy systems and advanced manufacturing, reinforcing the state's vision of building a 6.5 GW digital ecosystem. As the city prepares for the launch, the record remains optimistic, with local leaders heralding the project as a defining moment that will secure Visakhapatnam's place on the global technology map.

Best major AI-driven data centre campus in India. The infrastructure will feature high-capacity subma-

School admissions in Kerala may fall by one lakh over age rule

The Hindu Bureau
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

A decline of one lakh students is expected in the 2027-28 academic year as Kerala goes along with its plan to raise the minimum age for admission to Class I from five to six years.

The Minister for General Education, V. Sankaranarayanan, recently reiterated that the revised age criterion would come into effect from the 2027-28 academic year.

According to a report submitted by the State Council of Educational Research and Training, children who turn five during the 2027-28 academic year will not be eligible for Class I admission, effectively leaving out one

lakh. The report noted that the transition may lead to a decline in student enrolment in Class I in 2027-28.

The report by the General Education, Secretary pointed out that while implementing the transition, an additional year of half-year (5-6 years) may need to be included in the primary level for students who are not yet six and could not get Class I admission.

Parents will need to be educated about the transition for an additional year.

However, the report cautioned that the temporary drop in students in Class I would have an impact on posts, funding, and resources in schools.

Kavitha's party is not a concern to us, says her brother and BRS leader KTR

The Hindu Bureau
HYDERABAD

BRS working president K.T. Rama Rao said on Monday that the formation of a new political party was "not a matter to be taken so seriously".

He made the comments when asked about the launch of the Telangana Rashtra Sena (TRS) by former MLC and minister K. Kavitha on Saturday.

Speaking to presspersons here, he said parties keep coming and going, and only a few thrive. "Only very few regional parties have sustained in the 70-plus States for more than 25 years - first it was the TRP and now BRS (earlier Tu-



BRS chief K. Chandrababu Naidu paying floral tributes to Telangana TRS leader in Hyderabad on Monday. (ANI/PTI/Reuters)

langana Rashtra Samithi), he said. Speaking after the party's State executive committee meeting here, Mr. Rama Rao said Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy was

the path of enviable progress in 10 years.

His remarks came on Monday in response to a comment that the BRS had "outlived its purpose and was irrelevant in Telangana". "BRS is like a lifeless entity. It has a past, but no future. I have already defeated him (Chandrababu Naidu) several times since 2012, but sides making him political boss," he said as an informal chat with reporters on Monday.

Mr. Rama Rao alleged that the Congress government led by Mr. Nara Chandrababu Naidu was indulging in large-scale land grabbing, scams and failures to keep the declarations and promises.

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Launch of Google AI data hub today

V. Kamalakara Rao
VISAKHAPATNAM

Andhra Pradesh is set for a technological leap as Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu will lay the foundation stone for Google's massive \$15 billion (₹1.35 lakh crore) AI data centre hub at Tarluvada, near Visakhapatnam, on April 28.

The event will be attended by Google's senior executives, including Google Cloud CEO Thomas Kurian. The groundbreaking ceremony marks the commencement of one of India's largest single foreign direct investment projects.

The project, managed by Google's subsidiary Raiden Infotech in partnership with Adani Infra, will span 601.4 acres across three strategic locations—Rambilli in Anakapalli district, and Adavivaram and Tarluvada in Visakhapat-

Tech leap

Google's AI data centre hub project, managed by Raiden Infotech in partnership with Adani Infra, will span 601.4 acres in three locations—Rambilli in Anakapalli district, and Adavivaram and Tarluvada in Visakhapatnam district

Total investment: ₹1.35 lakh crore	Land allocation: 266.6 acres at Tarluvada village	174.8 acres in Rambilli mandal	160 acres in Adavivaram area
Initial power capacity: 1 gigawatt	Potential future scalability: 5 gigawatt	Targeted year for completion of Phase I: 2028	Direct technical jobs: 2,000



Arrangements in full swing for the stone-laying ceremony of Google Data Centre at Tarluvada, a suburban area of Visakhapatnam. V. RAJU

nam district. With a massive planned capacity of 1 gigawatt, the hub is designed to anchor Google's

first major AI-driven data centre campus in India. The infrastructure will feature high-capacity subma-

rine cable landing stations and dedicated fiber networks, providing low-latency connectivity to global markets.

Job generation

Beyond the core facility, which is slated for completion by July 2028, the project is expected to generate thousands of high-value jobs in data science, cybersecurity, and AI operations. It is anticipated to trigger a ripple effect in allied sectors, including renewable energy systems and advanced manufacturing, reinforcing the State's vision of building a 6.5 GW digital ecosystem. As the city prepares for Tuesday's launch, the mood remains optimistic, with local leadership hailing the project as a defining moment that will secure Visakhapatnam's place on the global technology map.

- Andhra Pradesh CM **N. Chandrababu Naidu** laid the foundation stone for **Google's \$15 billion (₹1.35 lakh crore) AI data centre hub** at **Tarluvada**, near Visakhapatnam, on April 28.
- आंध्र प्रदेश के CM **N. चंद्रबाबू नायडू** ने 28 अप्रैल को **विशाखापट्टनम** के पास **तारलुवाडा** में **Google** के **\$15 बिलियन (₹1.35 लाख करोड़) AI डेटा सेंटर हब** की आधारशिला रखी।
- **Google Cloud CEO Thomas Kurian** attended the groundbreaking ceremony.
- **Google Cloud CEO Thomas Kurian** ने भूमिपूजन समारोह में भाग लिया।
- Project managed by **Google's subsidiary Raiden Infotech** in partnership with **Adani Infra** — spanning **601.4 acres** across **THREE** strategic locations:
 - **Tarluvada** (266.6 acres) — Visakhapatnam district
 - **Rambilli mandal** (174.8 acres) — Anakapalli district
 - **Adavivaram** (160 acres) — Visakhapatnam district
- परियोजना **Google** की सहायक **Raiden Infotech** द्वारा **Adani Infra** के साथ साझेदारी में — **601.4 एकड़** में तीन स्थानों पर।
- **One of India's largest single FDI projects** — initial power capacity: **1 gigawatt**; potential future scalability: **5 gigawatt**.
- **भारत की सबसे बड़ी एकल FDI परियोजनाओं में से एक** — प्रारंभिक शक्ति क्षमता: **1 गीगावाट**; भविष्य में स्केलेबिलिटी: **5 गीगावाट**।

- A **data centre** is a large facility filled with thousands of powerful computers (servers) that store, process, and transmit enormous amounts of data — powering everything from Gmail to Google Search to AI services like Gemini.
- **डेटा सेंटर** एक बड़ी सुविधा है जिसमें हजारों शक्तिशाली कंप्यूटर (सर्वर) होते हैं जो Gmail से Google Search से AI सेवाओं तक सब कुछ के लिए डेटा संग्रहीत, संसाधित और प्रसारित करते हैं।
- An **AI data centre hub** is specifically designed to support AI computations — which require far more processing power than regular data centres because training AI models requires massive parallel computing (using GPUs/TPUs).
- **AI डेटा सेंटर हब** AI गणनाओं के लिए विशेष रूप से डिज़ाइन किया गया — क्योंकि AI मॉडल प्रशिक्षण के लिए विशाल समानांतर कंप्यूटिंग (GPU/TPU) की आवश्यकता।
- Google choosing Visakhapatnam is significant: It gives India data sovereignty (Indian data processed in India), reduces latency for Indian users, creates high-skill jobs, and positions India as a global AI infrastructure hub.
- Google का विशाखापट्टनम चुनना महत्वपूर्ण: डेटा संप्रभुता, कम विलंब, उच्च-कौशल रोजगार, और भारत को वैश्विक AI बुनियादी ढाँचा हब के रूप में स्थापित करना।
- The **Adani partnership** brings India's industrial and infrastructure capability — land acquisition, power supply, construction — alongside Google's technology.
- **Adani साझेदारी** भूमि अधिग्रहण, बिजली आपूर्ति, निर्माण में भारत की औद्योगिक क्षमता लाती है।

D1. Project Snapshot / परियोजना सारांश

Parameter	Value
Total investment	\$15 billion (₹1.35 lakh crore)
Total land	601.4 acres across 3 locations
Tarluvada (Visakhapatnam)	266.6 acres
Rambilli mandal (Anakapalli)	174.8 acres
Adavivaram (Visakhapatnam)	160 acres
Initial power capacity	1 gigawatt (GW)
Future scalability	5 gigawatt (GW)
Phase I completion	July 2028
Direct jobs	2,000 technical jobs
Managing entity	Raiden Infotech (Google subsidiary) + Adani Infra
Google senior attendee	Thomas Kurian (Google Cloud CEO)

- **India's Data Centre Ecosystem — Current Status:**
 - India's data centre capacity: ~1,600 MW (2025), growing rapidly
 - Major hubs: Mumbai (~60% of India's data centre capacity), Hyderabad, Pune, Chennai, Bengaluru, Delhi NCR
 - Google's 1 GW (scalable to 5 GW) will be transformational — 3x India's current capacity when fully scaled
 - भारत का डेटा सेंटर: ~1,600 MW; मुंबई ~60%; Google का 5 GW = 3x वर्तमान क्षमता।
- **IndiaAI Mission (2024):**
 - Budget: ₹10,371 crore (approved March 2024)
 - Key pillars: AI compute infrastructure, foundational models, datasets platform, application development, startup ecosystem, safety/trust, skills
 - Target: Build 10,000+ GPU compute infrastructure for AI researchers/startups
 - Google's private investment complements this public initiative
 - **IndiaAI Mission: ₹10,371 करोड़; 10,000+ GPU; Google का निवेश पूरक।**
- **Digital Personal Data Protection Act (DPDPA) 2023:**
 - India's first comprehensive data privacy law
 - Key provisions: Consent-based data collection; data fiduciary responsibilities; Data Protection Board; cross-border data transfer restrictions
 - Google's India data centre = better DPDPA compliance (Indian data stays in India)
 - **DPDPA 2023:** भारत का पहला व्यापक डेटा गोपनीयता कानून; सहमति-आधारित; Data Protection Board।

- **Power requirement and renewable energy:**
 - 1 GW = 1,000 MW = power for ~700,000 Indian homes
 - Data centres require 24/7 power — not intermittent renewable; battery storage or gas backup needed
 - AP's renewable energy capacity: AP has significant solar (Kurnool Solar Park — world's 2nd largest), wind potential
 - Google's net-zero commitment: All data centres to run on carbon-free energy 24/7 by 2030
 - **1 GW:** ~700,000 घरों की बिजली; AP सौर (कुर्नूल); Google का 2030 कार्बन-मुक्त लक्ष्य।
- **Chandrababu Naidu's Tech Legacy:**
 - As CM of undivided AP (1995-2004): Transformed Hyderabad into "Cyberabad" — attracted Microsoft, IBM, Infosys, Wipro, Satyam
 - HITEC City (Hyderabad Information Technology and Engineering Consultancy City) — his brainchild
 - After AP bifurcation (2014): Hyderabad remained with Telangana; AP had to start fresh
 - Now as AP CM (2024-): Attracting Google, building Vizag as tech hub — second chapter of his IT vision
 - **नायडू की तकनीकी विरासत:** HITEC City हैदराबाद; AP विभाजन के बाद Vizag = दूसरा अध्याय।

1	UPSC CSE Prelims	2023	Which of the following is NOT correct about Artificial Intelligence?	(a) AI systems can learn from data (b) AI cannot be used in healthcare diagnostics (c) AI involves machine learning as a subset (d) AI can process natural language	(b) False statement — AI IS extensively used in healthcare
2	UPSC CSE Prelims	2022	The term 'Cloud Computing' refers to:	(a) Weather prediction using computers (b) On-demand availability of computing resources (servers, storage, databases) over the internet (c) Computing in high-altitude data centres (d) Wireless computing using satellite signals	(b) On-demand computing resources over internet
3	UPSC CSE Prelims	2021	Visakhapatnam is located on which body of water?	(a) Arabian Sea (b) Lakshadweep Sea (c) Bay of Bengal (d) Gulf of Mannar	(c) Bay of Bengal
4	UPSC CSE Prelims	2022	The 'Eastern Naval Command' of the Indian Navy has its headquarters at:	(a) Kochi (b) Mumbai (c) Chennai (d) Visakhapatnam	(d) Visakhapatnam

5	UPSC CSE Prelims	2023	The Digital Personal Data Protection Act (DPDPA) 2023 establishes which body to enforce data protection rules in India?	(a) Cyber Security Council of India (b) Data Protection Board of India (c) National Data Regulatory Commission (d) Digital India Authority	(b) Data Protection Board of India
6	UPSC CSE Prelims	2021	RINL (Rashtriya Ispat Nigam Limited), India's only shore-based integrated steel plant, is located at:	(a) Jamshedpur, Jharkhand (b) Bhilai, Chhattisgarh (c) Rourkela, Odisha (d) Visakhapatnam, Andhra Pradesh	(d) Visakhapatnam, Andhra Pradesh
7	UPSC CSE Prelims	2022	Which of the following correctly identifies the parent company of Google?	(a) Meta Platforms Inc. (b) Microsoft Corporation (c) Alphabet Inc. (d) Amazon Web Services	(c) Alphabet Inc. — Google is a subsidiary of Alphabet Inc.
8	UPSC CSE Mains GS-3	2023	"India's data localisation policies and the growth of domestic data centre capacity are crucial for both economic growth and national security." Critically examine this statement in the context of India's digital economy.	<i>(Mains descriptive)</i>	Key: DPDPA 2023; data sovereignty; foreign data centres; IndiaAI Mission; submarine cables; FDI in data centres; CLOUD Act concerns; China data risks

9	UPSC CSE Prelims	2021	'Hyperscale data centres' are characterised by which of the following? 1. Very large scale computing infrastructure 2. High energy consumption 3. Used typically by large tech companies	(a) 1 only (b) 1 and 2 only (c) All three (d) 2 and 3 only	(c) All three — scale, energy, big tech
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10	UPSC CSE Prelims	2023	The 'IndiaAI Mission' approved by the Union Cabinet is primarily aimed at:	(a) Replacing human jobs with AI across government departments (b) Developing nuclear-powered AI systems (c) Building AI compute infrastructure, foundational models, datasets and enabling India's AI ecosystem (d) Creating a single AI regulatory authority	(c) Building AI compute infrastructure and ecosystem
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IN BRIEF



Oil India reports hydrocarbon discovery in its block in Libya

State-owned Oil India has reported an oil and gas discovery from its exploration block in Libya. The oil and gas explorers hold 25% participating interest in the consortium, which also includes IndianOil, for the onshore exploration block Area 95/96 in Chadma Basin of south-western Libya. The block holds eight exploratory wells, with drilling of five wells completed and four reporting discoveries between 2012 and 2014.

ONGC okays JV with MRPL, OPAI on petrochemicals

State-owned explorer ONGC said it had approved the formation of a joint venture company with subsidiary Mangalore Refinery Pvt. Ltd. (MRPL) and ONGC Petro-additives Ltd. (OPAI) integrating the petrochemical marketing divisions of the companies. ONGC would hold 50% stake in the joint venture, with the rest being divided equally among the two subsidiaries. It informed the board on Monday. "The joint venture company will reduce costs and increase revenue through improved pricing mechanism, logistics and grade optimisation and innovation of specialty grades," MRPL said adding, "Creation of the joint venture company will also open an opportunity for undertaking high-quality sales, considering the export dependency of the nation in certain petrochemicals."

SEBI urged to probe ₹275 cr. fund diversion in slum project

A Mumbai-based complainant has urged the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) to investigate alleged fund diversion, investment cheating and money laundering involving more than ₹275 crore in a Slum Rehabilitation Authority (SRA) project in Khar West in Malad East. The complainant filed by Nikesh Raghava relates to a redevelopment project under the SRA scheme at Khar West Marg, of about 5,600 sq metres. It names Shah Housecon Pvt. Ltd. as the lead real estate developer, a higher project Smitraj N. Shah, Manoj Shah and Akash Shah of Shah Housecon, and Premji Shah of Royal Realtors Landmark Pvt. Ltd. as beneficiaries.

TRAI attempts to promote public WiFi hotspots, says

NEWS ANALYSIS

ANAND DEEP
NEW DELHI

Since at first it did not succeed, TRAI is trying again. The Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) came out with a consultation paper seeking a response to the question it asked in 2020: how can public WiFi hotspots like Open WiFi be promoted in India? As the three private telcos steadily implement their plans, that may be a timely step at a familiar problem for the government.

Public hotspots have been beset by many issues. For one, WiFi access points are far cheaper than even Indian mobile data prices but mobile data is still pretty expensive, constituting a demand at scale. A second issue is telco and Internet service providers' aggressive campaign against public WiFi, by charging their customers price-based line rates costing lakhs a year, pricing out small shops where access points can make a difference.

ISP pushback Further contribution and more efficient surveillance of WiFi hotspots has been tried. The results speak for themselves. The PM-WANI scheme, which aims at providing heavy under a Public Data Office (PDO) type arrangement. To date, less than half that number has been set up, four years after the deadline.

Fixed line connections still cost money to build and is usually the post-network generation. This has not been put in place in 2020 and has no equal in most

Fertiliser security strong, stable, well-managed: Centre

For Kharif 2022, the Ministry of Fertilisers has assessed requirement of 190.54 LMT; the current available stock of 190 LMT is 49% of the requirement, says Additional Secretary

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

A mid-criticism by the Opposition that the Centre had failed to ensure availability of cooking gas and fertilisers, the Union Fertilisers Ministry said here on Monday that the country's fertiliser security remained "strong, stable, and well-managed," with availability consistently exceeding requirement across all major fertilisers.



Cleaning the soil Mr. Sharma said a total of 190.21 LMT of fertiliser was available, compared with 190.24 LMT last year. B. VEDARATHNAN

₹268.8, ₹1,380 and ₹1,300 per bag respectively. The overall stock position of fertilisers in the country is improved, with a stock of 7.58 lakh metric tonnes (LMT) as of now compared with 70.47 LMT on the same day last year.

DAP stock remains at 22.15 LMT, compared with 18.07 LMT last year. 87.88 LMT of Nitrogen (N), Phosphate (P2) and Potassium (K) fertilisers are available.

Last year, the stock was

44.49 LMT. Stock of Single Super Phosphate (SSP) is 20.26 LMT. This was 20.43 LMT last year. 12.46 LMT of Muriate of potash (MOP) is available, compared with 12.67 LMT last year, on the same day.

Mr. Sharma said a total of 190.21 LMT of fertiliser was available, compared with 190.24 LMT last year.

For Kharif 2022, the Ministry has assessed fertiliser requirement of 190.54 LMT and the current avail-

able stock of 190 LMT is 49% of the requirement.

The Ministry said this was significantly higher than the usual level of about 13%. "The effective improved planning, advance stocking, and efficient logistic management by the government," the Additional Secretary said.

She added that issues relating to natural gas availability for domestic urea production had also been addressed, with steady supply being maintained in fertiliser plants and additional LMT/PLMT being arranged as required.

"At present 37% LMT/PLMT is available with fertiliser plants. Most of the public buying, there is an optimum level," she said.

India secured 13.07 LMT (urea in the global urea trade) in February and now the government has three-fold import sources and secured 28 LMT of urea through global tenders.

Sun Pharma to buy U.S. firm Organon in \$11.75 bn all-cash deal

Lalathansa Mishra
MUMBAI

Sun Pharmaceutical Industries said it agreed to buy all outstanding shares of U.S. firm Organon for \$14.75 billion in an all-cash transaction at an estimated value of \$11.75 billion.

A global leader in women's health, Organon's portfolio includes more than 70 products across women's health and general medicines, including biotech, commercial-

ised across 140 countries. This global footprint is supported by six manufacturing facilities across the EU and emerging markets.

On completion of the transaction, Sun is poised to be among the top 25 global pharmaceutical firms with a combined revenue of \$12.4 billion.

The deal also enables Sun's entry into biotech as a top-10 global player.

RBI tightens bad loan rules to align with global norms

Anshumanthran V.
MUMBAI

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has reigned the rules on non-performing assets (NPAs) and other loans.

On Tuesday, RBI announced that from April 1, 2022, according to the Master Direction, released by RBI on Monday.

The Chair was formally inaugurated by Jayant Chaudhary, Chairman of State Independent

a non-performing asset (NPA), all the other loans would also be considered so. The basis for classifying a loan as NPA, however, remains unchanged.

An NPA borrower, will be considered a "standard asset" only on repayment of the entire amount of interest and principal pertaining to the loan.

The revised norms are expected to align with global standards to establish automated systems to identify NPAs.

Symbiosis unveils Asia's first UNESCO chair on Gender Inclusion & Skill Development

The Hindu Bureau
MUMBAI

Symbiosis Skills and Professional University (SSPU), Pune, announced the launch of a UNESCO Chair on Gender Inclusion and Skill Development, the first of its kind in India.

The Chair was formally inaugurated by Jayant Chaudhary, Chairman of State Independent

Under its aegis, SSPU, which has developed a unique industry-integrated skilling model, enabling large-scale training of underprivileged girls in different domains with strong employment outcomes.

Under the aegis of this Chair, 10,000 girls have been trained on future skills in various sectors like robotics, automation and semi-conductor technology, advanced manufacturing and defence technology.

The UNESCO Chair initiative is spearheaded by Dr. Swati Mujumdar, Professor, SSPU, which has developed a unique industry-integrated skilling model, enabling large-scale training of underprivileged girls in different domains with strong employment outcomes.

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Govt. doesn't foresee any requirement for importing petrol or diesel, says Ministry

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The government does not foresee any situation where the country may be required to import petrol and diesel, Petroleum and Natural Gas (ONGC) told reporters at the inter-ministerial briefing on West Asia Monday.

Responding to a query on the availability of stocks, the senior official told reporters, "As far as the supply of diesel and petrol in the country is concerned, I want to re-emphasise we have sufficient stocks. Sometimes because of the public buying, there may be an issue but then that issue is taken on priority and is resolved. We do not foresee any situation where we have to go for imports of petrol or diesel," she added.

"Panic buying" Concerns over availability of the retail fuels, that is, petrol and diesel, and a potential increase in prices have led to panic buying. Last week, the government had related assertions about considering any increase in prices of the two retail fuels.

In fact, The Hindu had reported earlier in the day that several retail outlets in Andhra Pradesh were facing logistical issues in replenishing stocks only every two days because of the panic buying. This led to certain outlets putting up "Out of Stock" boards.

Addressing the same at the inter-ministerial briefing, Mr. Sharma informed that there had been a "moderate" increase in retail prices of petrol and diesel in certain areas. "We have observed



APCI involved in Monday that fuel availability in A.P. was adequate and stable.

growth in certain areas like 30-33% in HPCL sales. That is the reason certain retail outlets have faced the [stock] situation," she stated, adding, "We are monitoring the situation, and I am sure by today evening, all the stocks would be available at all the retail outlets."

Additionally, State-owned oil marketing company Hindustan Petroleum asserted on Monday evening that fuel availability in Andhra Pradesh was "adequate and stable."

"Temporary surge" It said a "temporary surge" in demand was observed in the previous two to three days because of panic buying of petrol and increased consumption of diesel with the ongoing agricultural season.

"This has led to higher-than-usual sales at retail outlets," the refinery pointed out, adding, "The petrol, the February average sales were 1.8 million tonnes, while HPCL which increased to 2.46 million tonnes on April 26, and 2.38 million tonnes on April 25, 2022, for diesel (195), the February average of 1.7 million tonnes rose to 3.36 million tonnes on April 26, and 3.12 million tonnes on April 25."

UltraTech Cement posts ₹3,000 crore profit in Q4

Press Trust of India
NEW DELHI

UltraTech Cement, the country's leading cement maker, on Monday reported a consolidated net profit of ₹3,000 crore during the quarter ended March 31, 2022.

It had posted a net profit of ₹2,474 crore in the January-March period a year ago, the firm said in a regulatory filing.

Revenue from operations was at ₹28,798 crore in the March quarter of FY22. It was at ₹28,063.32 crore a year earlier.

According to the company's results "for the three months and year ended 31/03/2022 are not comparable with the previous corresponding period" due to the acquisition of cement-based India Cement Ltd (ICL), Birla White Wollaclearifier known as Wonder Wollaclearifier and Raj Al Kharim, UAE-based RANWCT.

Total expenses were at ₹2,894.18 crore. During the quarter, the company addressed "highest ever sales volume," it said in its earnings statement.

"Key seasonal sales volume in India reached 42.4 million tonnes in the quarter, rising 3.2% year-on-year, as capacity utilisation surged to 89%, propelled by robust demand across housing, infrastructure, and commercial construction segments," the company said.

The Hindu Bureau
CHENNAI

City Union Bank, one of the oldest private sector banks in India, reported a 25% growth in net profit during Q4FY 2022. The net profit stood at ₹360 crore compared with ₹286 crore a year earlier, the highest ever for a single quarter.

Total deposits rose 20% to ₹76,306 crore, while total advances climbed to ₹98,098 crore from ₹83,086 crore. The bank at one opened 1,000+ branch at a friction point.

The Board of Management at LANXESS AG said, "India stands at the forefront of robust economic growth, offering significant opportunities for investment."

As part of the first phase of development, the facility will manufacture specialty lubricant additives.

The facility will primarily aim to contribute meaningfully to India's evolving industrial landscape," he added. The new facility is

The Hindu Bureau
MUMBAI

Under its aegis, SSPU, which has developed a unique industry-integrated skilling model, enabling large-scale training of underprivileged girls in different domains with strong employment outcomes.

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Germany's LANXESS opens lubricant additives production plant in India

The Hindu Bureau
MUMBAI

LANXESS, a specialty chemicals German company, inaugurated a new chemical manufacturing site in Jagadisi, Gujarat, at an investment of ₹150 crore.

As part of the first phase of development, the facility will manufacture specialty lubricant additives.

The Board of Management at LANXESS AG said, "India stands at the forefront of robust economic growth, offering significant opportunities for investment."

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Symbiosis unveils Asia's first UNESCO chair on Gender Inclusion & Skill Development

The Hindu Bureau

MUMBAI

Symbiosis Skills and Professional University (SSPU), Pune, announced the launch of a UNESCO Chair on Gender Inclusion and Skill Development, the first of its kind in Asia, at an International Conference on "Women Leading the Future of Work", organised in collaboration with UNESCO.

The Chair was formally inaugurated by Jayant Chaudhary, Minister of State (Independent

Under its aegis, 10,000 girls have been trained in future skills in sunrise sectors

Charge) for Skill Development & Entrepreneurship and Minister of State for Education, Government of India, recently. Aditi Tatkare, Minister for Women & Child Development, Government of Maharashtra, and Monica Nagelgaard, Consul General of Norway attended the conference.

The UNESCO Chair initiative is spearheaded by Dr. Swati Mujumdar, Pro-Chancellor, SSPU, which has developed a unique industry-integrated skilling model, enabling large-scale training of underprivileged girls in different domains with strong employment outcomes. Under the aegis of this Chair, 10,000 girls have been trained on future skills in sunrise sectors such as robotics, automation and semi-conductor technology, advanced manufacturing and defence technology.

- A **UNESCO Chair** is an academic/research position at a university that UNESCO officially endorses — it signals international recognition of the university's work in a particular field and allows it to contribute to UNESCO's global agenda.
- **UNESCO चेयर** एक शैक्षणिक/अनुसंधान पद है जिसे UNESCO आधिकारिक रूप से समर्थन देता है — यह विश्वविद्यालय के किसी विशेष क्षेत्र में काम की अंतर्राष्ट्रीय मान्यता है।
- This is Asia's **FIRST UNESCO Chair** focused specifically on **Gender Inclusion AND Skill Development together** — meaning it addresses two of the biggest challenges in India and Asia: women's exclusion from technical/vocational training AND the skills gap in emerging industries.
- यह एशिया की पहली UNESCO चेयर है जो विशेष रूप से **लैंगिक समावेश AND कौशल विकास** पर केंद्रित है — महिलाओं का तकनीकी प्रशिक्षण से बहिष्करण और उभरते उद्योगों में कौशल अंतर।
- **Sunrise sectors** = emerging industries of the future (robotics, automation, semiconductor, defence tech, advanced manufacturing) — sectors that will create millions of jobs but currently have very few women trained for them.
- **सनराइज क्षेत्र** = भविष्य के उभरते उद्योग — रोबोटिक्स, ऑटोमेशन, सेमीकंडक्टर, रक्षा तकनीक — जो लाखों नौकरियाँ बनाएंगे लेकिन वर्तमान में बहुत कम महिलाएं प्रशिक्षित।
- The 10,000 girls trained come from **underprivileged backgrounds** — making this a social inclusion + skills + employability combined initiative.
- 10,000 प्रशिक्षित लड़कियाँ **वंचित पृष्ठभूमि** से — सामाजिक समावेश + कौशल + रोजगार।

D1. UNESCO Chair — What Is It? / UNESCO चेयर क्या है?

- **UNESCO Chairs Programme (UNITWIN):** United Nations University Twinning and Networking Programme — established 1992; creates networks of universities to advance UNESCO's mission in education, science, culture, communication.
- **UNESCO UNITWIN Programme (1992):** विश्वविद्यालयों का नेटवर्क — शिक्षा, विज्ञान, संस्कृति, संचार में UNESCO के मिशन को आगे बढ़ाना।
- **UNESCO Chair:** An academic position at a university endorsed by UNESCO — holder conducts research, teaching, training aligned with UNESCO's priorities.
- **UNESCO चेयर:** UNESCO द्वारा समर्थित — अनुसंधान, शिक्षण, प्रशिक्षण।
- **SSPU's Chair:** First in Asia on **Gender Inclusion + Skill Development** — unique because it combines two critical SDG areas (SDG 4: Quality Education + SDG 5: Gender Equality + SDG 8: Decent Work).
- **SSPU की चेयर:** एशिया में पहली — **SDG 4 + SDG 5 + SDG 8** का संयोजन।

History / इतिहास

- **Women's education history in India:** Pre-independence struggles — Savitribai Phule (first female teacher); British era — Bethune College (1849); post-independence — Article 15(3) for women; 86th Amendment (2002) — free and compulsory education 6-14 years (RTE).
- **महिला शिक्षा इतिहास:** सावित्रीबाई फुले; Bethune College (1849); अनुच्छेद 15(3); RTE 2009।
- **Skill development history in India:** First Five Year Plan — Industrial Training Institutes (ITIs); National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC) — 2008; Skill India Mission — 2015 (PM Modi).
- **कौशल विकास इतिहास:** ITIs; NSDC (2008); Skill India Mission (2015)।
- **UNESCO history:** Founded 1945; HQ Paris; Dr. Audrey Azoulay (Director-General, from 2017); India — founding member.
- **UNESCO इतिहास:** 1945; HQ पेरिस; Director-General Audrey Azoulay; भारत — संस्थापक सदस्य।

Polity / राजव्यवस्था

- **Constitutional provisions for women's skill development:**
 - **Article 15(3):** State can make special provisions for women and children — affirmative action basis
 - **Article 21A:** Free and compulsory education (6-14 years)
 - **Article 39(d):** Equal pay for equal work — DPSP
 - **Article 42:** Just and humane conditions of work — DPSP
 - **Article 46:** State to promote educational and economic interests of weaker sections — DPSP
 - **अनुच्छेद 15(3):** महिलाओं के लिए विशेष प्रावधान; **21A:** शिक्षा; **39(d):** समान वेतन; **42:** मानवीय कार्य; **46:** कमजोर वर्गों का हित।
- **Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE):** Established 2014 (Modi govt); oversees NSDC, Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY), ITIs, Skill India Mission.
- **कौशल विकास और उद्यमिता मंत्रालय:** 2014; NSDC; PMKVY; Skill India।
- **Ministry of Women and Child Development (WCD):** Beti Bachao Beti Padhao; POSH Act implementation; Mahila Shakti Kendra; One Stop Centres.
- **महिला एवं बाल विकास मंत्रालय:** Beti Bachao Beti Padhao; POSH; महिला शक्ति केंद्र।
- **UNESCO and India:** India is a member of UNESCO Executive Board; UNESCO Chair Programme in India — IITs, IIMs, Delhi University, JNU have UNESCO Chairs in various fields; SSPU's is FIRST in Asia in Gender + Skills combined.
- **UNESCO और भारत:** Executive Board सदस्य; IIT, IIM, DU में UNESCO Chairs; SSPU की एशिया में पहली।
- **Jayant Chaudhary:** RLD (Rashtriya Lok Dal) leader; son of Ajit Singh; MoS (IC) Skill Development and Entrepreneurship; MoS Education since 2024.

Economy / अर्थव्यवस्था

- **Gender and economic participation:** India ranks **127th out of 146** in World Economic Forum's Global Gender Gap Report 2024; female **Labour Force Participation Rate (LFPR)** in India ~37% (World Bank data) — well below global average of ~50%.
- **लैंगिक आर्थिक भागीदारी:** India WEF Gender Gap Index में **127वाँ/146** (2024); महिला LFPR ~37% — वैश्विक औसत ~50% से काफी कम।
- **Economic cost of gender gap:** McKinsey estimate — closing gender gap in India could add \$700 billion to GDP by 2025; IMF estimates ~27% GDP gain from full gender parity.
- **लैंगिक अंतर की आर्थिक लागत:** McKinsey — \$700 बिलियन GDP वृद्धि; IMF — 27% GDP लाभ।
- **Sunrise sectors — economic significance:**
 - **Robotics and automation:** India's automation market growing at ~25% CAGR
 - **Semiconductor:** India Semiconductor Mission (\$10B+ government commitment); TSMC, Samsung, Micron setting up in India
 - **Defence manufacturing:** Defence export target \$5 billion by 2025; Defence Production and Export Promotion Policy (DPEPP) 2020
 - **Advanced manufacturing:** Part of PLI (Production Linked Incentive) scheme
 - **सनराइज क्षेत्र:** रोबोटिक्स, सेमीकंडक्टर (India Semiconductor Mission), रक्षा (₹5B निर्यात लक्ष्य), PLI।
- **Skill gap in India:** India needs ~400 million skilled workers by 2022 (NSDC target); actual training has lagged significantly; quality-quantity mismatch; women especially underrepresented in technical skills.
- **कौशल अंतर:** 2022 तक ~400 मिलियन कुशल श्रमिक (NSDC लक्ष्य); वास्तविक प्रशिक्षण पिछड़ा; महिलाएं तकनीकी कौशल में विशेष रूप से कम।

1	UPSC CSE Prelims	2022	UNESCO was founded in which year?	(a) 1943 (b) 1944 (c) 1945 (d) 1948	(c) 1945 — November 16, 1945
2	UPSC CSE Prelims	2023	The headquarters of UNESCO is located at:	(a) New York (b) Vienna (c) Brussels (d) Paris	(d) Paris, France
3	UPSC CSE Prelims	2021	Under Article 15(3) of the Indian Constitution, the state is empowered to:	(a) Abolish caste discrimination (b) Make special provisions for women and children (c) Provide reservations for economically weaker sections (d) Set minimum wages for all workers	(b) Make special provisions for women and children
4	UPSC CSE Prelims	2022	The 'Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana' (PMKVY) is administered by which Ministry?	(a) Ministry of Labour and Employment (b) Ministry of Human Resource Development (c) Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (d) Ministry of Finance	(c) Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship

5	UPSC CSE Prelims	2022	The 'Sustainable Development Goal 5' primarily focuses on:	(a) Zero hunger (b) Climate action (c) Gender equality and empowerment of all women and girls (d) Life below water	(c) Gender equality and empowerment of women and girls
6	UPSC CSE Prelims	2023	Which of the following correctly describes the 'NSDC' (National Skill Development Corporation)?	(a) A government department under Ministry of Finance (b) A Public-Private Partnership entity under Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (c) An autonomous statutory body under Ministry of Labour (d) An NGO funded by UNDP	(b) PPP under Ministry of Skill Development
7	UPSC CSE Prelims	2021	Article 46 of the Indian Constitution (DPSP) directs the state to:	(a) Provide minimum wages to all workers (b) Promote educational and economic interests of weaker sections, especially SC/ST (c) Ensure free legal aid for all citizens (d) Provide maternity benefits to working women	(b) Educational and economic interests of weaker sections

8	UPSC CSE Mains GS-2	2022	"India's low female labour force participation rate is both a cause and consequence of its gender inequality. Critically examine this statement and suggest policy measures to improve women's economic participation."	(Mains descriptive)	Key: LFPR ~37%; WEF Gender Gap Index; causes (social norms, unpaid care, safety, education); PMKVY; Skill India; Art. 15(3), 39(d); NSDC women-specific schemes; UNESCO SDGs
9	UPSC CSE Prelims	2022	The UNITWIN/UNESCO Chairs Programme was launched in which year to create networks of universities and promote knowledge sharing?	(a) 1945 (b) 1975 (c) 1992 (d) 2000	(c) 1992
10	UPSC CSE Prelims	2023	India's Semiconductor Mission was launched to incentivise semiconductor manufacturing in India. Which of the following is the primary ministry overseeing this mission?	(a) Ministry of Science and Technology (b) Ministry of Commerce and Industry (c) Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) (d) Ministry of Heavy Industries	(c) MeitY

Before the Iran war, how colonial empires fought for the vital Strait of Hormuz

Arav Shah

New Delhi, April 27

THE WAR in West Asia has largely centred around one key geographical lever: the Strait of Hormuz.

Iran responded to the US-Israeli attack on February 28 by effectively closing the narrow waterway that accounts for a fifth of the world's energy flows during peacetime. US President Donald Trump, meanwhile, set up his own naval blockade near the region to maintain pressure against Iran amid a fragile ceasefire.

But the Strait, owing to its strategic location, has a centuries-long history of being entangled at the centre of competing imperial interests.

Among the region's most influential forces were, unsurprisingly, the British who combined naval might with diplomacy to exert control over the region's trade in the 18th and 19th centuries.

Here's how various colonial powers took control of trade through the Strait over time.

Portuguese conquest

For centuries, the Strait of Hormuz was controlled by the Kingdom of Hormuz — one of the world's richest trading states that was strategically located on the island of Hormuz. Founded around the 11th century, it became a major hub linking India, Persia, Arabia, and East Africa.

In the early 16th century, however, the Portuguese empire conquered Hormuz Island and turned it into a heavily fortified toll-gate that extracted tax from the Asian spice and silk trades. The Portuguese held the reins to the Strait through most of the 16th century.

By the early 17th century, however, the English East India Company (EIC) had grown keen to wrest the strait away from the Spanish ally.

Around this time, the Safavids under Shah Abbas I forged a strategic partnership with the EIC to supplement their weak navy.

In 1622, with the Dutch East India Company (VOC) providing support, the British and the Safavid empire defeated the Portu-

guese, captured Hormuz island, and ended a century of Portuguese control in the region.

Anglo-Dutch rivalry

The expulsion of the Portuguese did not result immediately in British hegemony. Instead, it ushered in an era of fierce competition between the EIC and the VOC. The VOC was essentially a quasi-sovereign actor that had been granted the legal right to wage war by the Dutch crown.

Based out of its trading post in Bandar Abbas (on the southern coast of present-day Iran), it remained the region's dominant force for the better part of the 17th century. Boasting a superior fleet and aggressive commercial tactics, the Dutch monopolised the spice trade. In the 18th century, however, they suffered from severe overextension of their resources. This was worsened by rampant internal corruption within the bureaucracy and massive financial costs required to maintain their territorial holdings in the East Indies.

Following the Fourth Anglo-Dutch War

(1780-84), the bankrupt VOC liquidated its holdings and withdrew from the Persian Gulf. Their exit created a power vacuum the British were only too happy to fill.

British hegemony

With their European rivals gone, the British realised their need to secure their maritime flanks connecting to British India — their richest colony. They launched naval campaigns in 1809 and 1819, destroying local fleets and bombarding coastal towns to ensure the route to Bombay remained secure.

To permanently secure the Strait without incurring massive financial burdens, Britain cultivated highly restrictive relationships with local Arab rulers through a series of treaties aimed at maximising their control over foreign policy and trade routes while allowing these Sheikdoms to retain domestic autonomy.

Essentially British protectorates, these states were known as the "Trucial States". Today, they are the United Arab Emirates.

Unlike the Portuguese model of militar-

isation and fortification, the British utilised a mixture of diplomacy and naval authority to subjugate the regions surrounding the Strait.

The highly militarised approach of the Portuguese Empire — building massive, expensive stone fortresses and attempting to force all passing merchants to pay taxes at their custom houses — was financially unsustainable. In contrast, the British bound the local Sheikdom into the Trucial system, effectively outsourcing domestic governance while controlling the region's foreign policy, defence strategy, and economics.

The chokepoint on the Persian Gulf was finally secured to effectively remove Indian wealth from the South Asian subcontinent while simultaneously facilitating the export of large quantities of British manufactured goods.

The 20th century

The turn of the 20th century, however, witnessed British rationale evolve from simply protecting their trade with India to

ensuring the extraction of Persian Gulf energy. In 1901, British financier William Knox D'Arcy secured an exclusive concession to explore for oil in Persia.

This gamble paid off. George Bernard Reynolds, a British engineer and geologist, struck oil on May 26, 1908, at Masjed Soleyman — the first major commercial oil strike in West Asia. The next year, the Anglo-Persian Oil Company (APOC, forerunner to oil behemoth British Petroleum) was formed.

By transitioning the naval fleet from coal to diesel, the British government formally recognised the strategic value of oil and the Gulf. It purchased a 51% controlling stake in APOC by 1914. The Strait was now crucial for transporting West Asian oil to London.

With the British securing an uninterrupted flow of petroleum, the Strait transformed into a waterway that facilitated the movement of oil, the world's energy source. Britain's system of binding treaties allowed them to maintain a grip on the Gulf till 1971, when the military officially exited the region, bringing the Trucial States to an end.

Phase / Power	Time Period	Key Actors	Key Developments	Strategic Objective	Outcome / Impact
Pre-European Control	Before 16th century	Kingdom of Hormuz	Controlled Strait; major trade hub linking India, Persia, Arabia, East Africa	Control maritime trade routes	Prosperous trading state
Portuguese Conquest	Early 16th century	Portuguese Empire	Captured Hormuz; turned into fortified toll-gate; taxed spice & silk trade	Monopoly over Asian trade routes	Dominance over Strait in 16th century
Decline of Portuguese	Early 17th century (1622)	Safavids + British (EIC) + Dutch (VOC)	Alliance defeated Portuguese; ended control over Hormuz	Break Portuguese monopoly	Power vacuum created
Anglo-Dutch Rivalry	17th–18th century	British EIC vs Dutch VOC	VOC dominated using naval power; later weakened due to overextension & corruption	Control spice trade & regional dominance	Dutch decline after 18th century
British Hegemony Begins	Early 19th century	British Empire	Naval campaigns (1809, 1819); destruction of coastal powers; treaties with Arab rulers	Secure route to British India	British dominance established
Trucial System	19th century	Britain + Local Sheikhdoms	Indirect control via treaties; outsourced governance but controlled defence & foreign policy	Low-cost control of region	Formation of "Trucial States" (modern UAE)
Economic Strategy Shift	Late 19th–early 20th century	Britain	Shift from military to economic control; trade + diplomacy	Sustain dominance without high cost	Strong economic grip

Economic Strategy Shift	Late 19th–early 20th century	Britain	Shift from military to economic control; trade + diplomacy	Sustain dominance without high cost	Strong economic grip
Oil Era Begins	1901 onwards	Britain, Persia	Oil concession by William Knox D'Arcy; 1908 oil discovery; formation of Anglo-Persian Oil Company (APOC)	Control energy resources	Strait becomes critical for oil transport
Peak British Control	Early 20th century (till 1971)	British Empire	Naval modernization; 51% stake in APOC; ensured oil flow to Europe	Energy security & global power	Complete dominance over Persian Gulf
End of British Era	1971	Britain	Military withdrawal; end of treaties	Strategic exit	Emergence of independent Gulf states

● CULTURE

Francis Xavier: Goa's patron saint, now at centre of YouTuber row

Pavneet Singh Chadha
Panaji, April 27

YOUTUBER GAUTAM KHATTAR, who was booked last week for allegedly making derogatory remarks against Saint Francis Xavier, was brought to Goa on a transit remand on Sunday, after he was arrested in Himachal Pradesh.

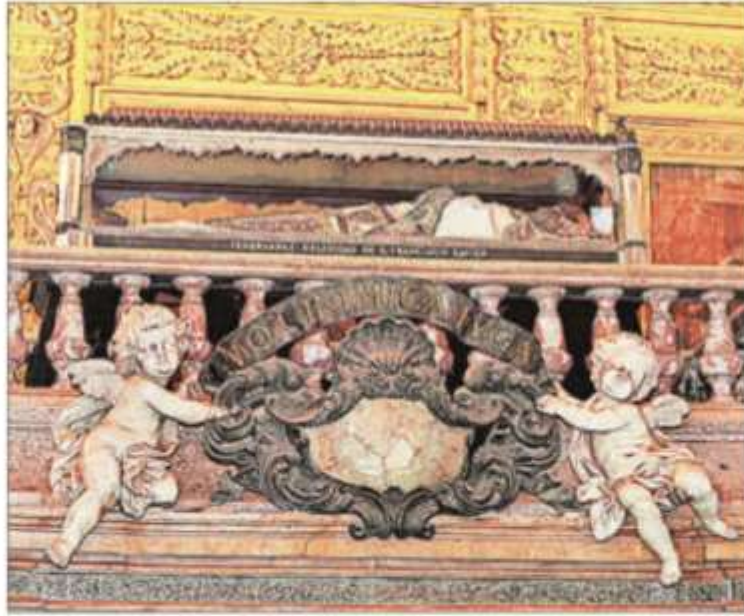
Khattar made the remarks on April 18 at an event organised by the Sanatan Dharma Raksha Samiti Mormugao, attended by Transport Minister Mauvin Godinho and BJP MLAs Sankalp Amonkar and Krishna Salkar. His comments led to several protests across the state.

The controversy

Khattar, who describes himself as a "spiritual beat journalist" and the founder of Sanatan Mahasangh, spoke at the 'Bhagwan Parshuram Janmotsav' event in South Goa's Vasco.

After his speech went viral on social media, protestors demanded the YouTuber's immediate arrest for hurting religious sentiments and disturbing communal harmony.

The Sanatan Dharma Raksha Samiti distanced itself from Khattar's remarks and issued an apology. "He was invited to speak about Sanatan Dharma, not to make



derogatory remarks about our patron saint," it said.

In a statement, the Archdiocese of Goa and Daman said such rhetoric "deeply hurts the sentiments of lakhs of Goans — irrespective of the religion they profess — who hold St. Francis Xavier in the highest esteem... At the same time, we appeal to all to remain calm and exercise restraint..."

Leaders across the political spectrum also condemned the incident. Chief min-

The holy relics of St Francis Xavier, kept for veneration by devotees during an exposition. SFX EXPOSITION 2024 WEBSITE

ister Pramod Sawant promised strict action, reiterating that the state's "communal harmony cannot be disturbed by outsiders."

St Francis Xavier in Goan history

St Francis Xavier, also referred to as "Goencho Saib" (Lord of Goa), is revered as the patron saint of Goa. The "incorruptible" mortal remains of the Spanish Jesuit missionary — also one of the founding members of The Society of Jesus — have been housed at the Basilica of Bom Jesus in Old Goa since 1624.

The saint arrived in Goa in 1542, when it was a Portuguese colony. His primary mission, as ordered by King John III, was to 'restore' Christianity among the Portuguese settlers who arrived in the early 16th century. He died in 1552 on Shangchuan Island off China's coast and was first buried on the island.

In 1553, his body was exhumed and transported to present-day Malaysia. It was then shipped to Goa in 1554, and kept at St Paul's College in Old Goa — the first building constructed by Jesuits in Goa. The body was later transferred to Casa Professa and placed in the Basilica in 1624. That the remains were found to be "well preserved", showing minimal signs of decay despite being exhumed, was seen as a sign of a "mir-

acle" among the faithful.

Once every decade, the exposition of the sacred relics of Saint Francis Xavier is held. Pilgrims of all faiths, particularly from the Catholic community, and tourists, pay homage to the saint.

During the exposition, a four-century-old silver glass casket holding the relics is lowered from its resting place. It is carried to the Se Cathedral and kept for public veneration for 45 days.

Not the first time

In 2024, former Goa RSS chief-turned-rebel Subhash Velingkar courted controversy after he called for a "DNA test" of the saint's relics.

In a speech, Velingkar had referred to an old claim by a Sri Lankan journalist, who stated that the saint's body was lost at sea while being ferried from the island where he died. The Portuguese switched his body with the 15th-century Buddhist monk Thotagamuwe Sri Rahula Thera, the journalist claimed. Velingkar said that the journalist asked for the body's return to Sri Lanka.

Velingkar said in 2022 that St Xavier was instrumental in the Goa Inquisition during the Portuguese rule, and that the title of "Goencho Saib" conferred on the saint should be given to Lord Parshuram instead.

Aspect	Details
Identity	St. Francis Xavier – Spanish Jesuit missionary
Title in Goa	"Goencho Saib" (Lord of Goa)
Position	Patron Saint of Goa
Organization	Founding member of Society of Jesus (Jesuits)
Arrival in India	1542 (during Portuguese rule)
Primary Mission	Spread Christianity among local population & Portuguese settlers
Death	1552 at Shangchuan Island (China coast)
Body Movement	Exhumed (1553) → Malacca → Goa (1554)
Current Location	Basilica of Bom Jesus, Old Goa (since 1624)
Special Feature	"Incorruptible body" (minimal decay)
Religious Significance	Considered miraculous by followers
Exposition	Held once every 10 years
Exposition Duration	~45 days
Process	Relics taken to Se Cathedral for public viewing
Tourism Importance	Major pilgrimage + international tourist attraction

Aspect**Person Involved****Issue****Location of Incident****Reaction****Government Stand****Church Response****Details**

YouTuber Gautam Khattar

Alleged derogatory remarks on St. Francis Xavier

Goa event (Sanatan Dharma Raksha Samiti)

Protests across Goa

Strict action; maintain communal harmony

Hurt sentiments; appeal for restraint

- 1542 → Arrival in Goa
 - 1552 → Death near China
 - 1624 → Relics placed in Basilica of Bom Jesus
 - Exposition → Every 10 years
 - Title → "Goencho Saib"
 - Jesuits → Major missionary order
-

Statement-Based MCQ (UPSC Pattern)

Q. Consider the following statements:

1. St. Francis Xavier was a Portuguese missionary associated with the Dominican Order.
2. His mortal remains are kept at the Basilica of Bom Jesus in Goa.
3. The exposition of his relics is held annually in Goa.

Which of the statements is/are correct?

- (a) 2 only
- (b) 1 and 2 only
- (c) 2 and 3 only
- (d) 1, 2 and 3

Sun seals \$11.75-bn deal for Organon

MANU KAUSHIK
New Delhi, April 27

INDIA'S LARGEST DRUG-MAKER Sun Pharmaceutical Industries said on Monday that it will acquire US-based Organon & Co, a firm as big as itself, in an all-cash deal for an enterprise value of \$11.75 billion. The move reflects a new aggressive inorganic growth strategy by the homegrown pharma giant amid Donald Trump administration's policies to force both innovator and generic companies to shift production to the US.

The transaction marks the second-largest overseas acquisition by an Indian company, and the largest in the pharma sector. Analysts said the move would strengthen Sun Pharma's global presence by entering the fast-growing China market and expanding its product portfolio to cover biosimilars and a new array of women's health products. Sun might be able to position itself as a global leader in a decade, if all goes well, they added.

The combined entity will have annual revenues of around \$12.4 billion. Sun posted revenues of \$6.1 billion in FY25 with an Ebitda of \$1.8 billion.

Under a definitive agreement signed between the two firms, Sun will acquire all outstanding shares of Organon for

SYNERGIES OF SCALE

Acquirer	Target	Year	Deal Size (\$ billion)
Tata Steel	Corus	2007	12
Sun Pharma	Organon	2026	11.75
Bharti Airtel	Zain Africa	2010	10.7
Hindalco	Novelis	2007	6
Tata Motors	Iveco Group	2025	4.36



DILIP SHANGHVI, EXECUTIVE CHAIRMAN, SUN PHARMA

I am happy, excited, (and) also a little bit anxious. It's a large transaction that we are entering into



»INSIDE«

WE'RE DEBT-AVERSE, BUT NOT RISK-AVERSE: SHANGHVI P4

ANALYSTS FLAG NEAR-TERM HURDLES P6

\$14 per share, a premium of over 24% to its April 24 closing price. Shares of Sun Pharma closed 7% higher on Monday, adding ₹27,136 crore to its market cap.

The transaction will be funded through a mix of internal accruals and bank financing. Organon bore a net debt of \$8.6 billion at 2025-end, compared with Sun's benign \$198.4 million debt as the

company has been cautious about leverage.

The acquisition is at a price 1.9 times Organon's estimated sales in 2026 and six times its estimated Ebitda. Yet, analysts said Sun got a "cheaper" deal. "Organon wasn't able to grow due to its high debt. The company was focussing more on the debt repayment, and couldn't invest in growth opportunities. The debt issue seems addressable now post the acquisition," said Vishal Manchanda, senior VP (institutional research), Systematix Group.

Continued on Page 16

Aspect

Acquirer

Target Company

Deal Value

Type of Deal

Year

Significance

Global Rank

Strategy

Key Sector Focus

Revenue Impact

Sun Pharma FY25 Revenue

EBITDA (Sun Pharma)

Details

Sun Pharmaceutical Industries Ltd.

Organon & Co. (USA-based pharma firm)

\$11.75 billion

All-cash acquisition

2026

Largest pharma acquisition by an Indian company

2nd largest overseas acquisition by an Indian firm

Aggressive inorganic growth

Biosimilars + Women's health products

Combined entity ~ \$12.4 billion annual revenue

\$6.1 billion

\$1.8 billion

Financial & Deal Structure

Aspect	Details
Acquisition Price	\$14 per share
Premium	~24% over April 24 closing price
Funding Source	Internal accruals + Bank financing
Organon Debt	~\$8.6 billion (2025 end)
Valuation Metrics	1.9x sales (2026 est.), 6x EBITDA
Market Reaction	Sun Pharma shares ↑ ~7%

Strategic Importance

Dimension	Impact
Global Presence	Entry into China market
Portfolio Expansion	Women's health + biosimilars
Market Position	Potential global pharma leader
Cost Synergies	Economies of scale
Debt Advantage	Opportunity due to Organon's high debt

Top Indian Overseas Deals (Comparison)

Acquirer	Target	Year	Deal Size (\$ bn)
Tata Steel	Corus	2007	12
Sun Pharma	Organon	2026	11.75
Bharti Airtel	Zain Africa	2010	10.7
Hindalco	Novelis	2007	6
Tata Motors	Iveco Group	2025	4.36

Key Challenges

Issue	Explanation
High Debt of Organon	May impact integration
Execution Risk	Large-scale integration complexity
Near-term Hurdles	Analysts cautious on short-term gains
Global Policy Risks	US pharma policy changes

- Largest pharma deal by India: **\$11.75 bn (Sun Pharma–Organon)**
 - 2nd largest overseas acquisition by Indian firm
 - Focus sectors: **Biosimilars + Women's Health**
 - Deal valuation: **1.9× sales, 6× EBITDA**
 - Funding: **Mix of accruals + debt**
-

Statement-Based MCQ (UPSC Pattern)

Q. Consider the following statements:

1. Sun Pharma's acquisition of Organon is the largest overseas acquisition by any Indian company.
2. The deal is entirely funded through internal accruals without borrowing.
3. The acquisition is expected to expand Sun Pharma's presence in biosimilars and women's health segments.

Which of the statements is/are correct?

- (a) 3 only
- (b) 1 and 3 only
- (c) 2 and 3 only
- (d) 1, 2 and 3

Word of the day

Formidable:

inspiring fear

Synonyms: redoubtable, unnerving

Usage: *The army faced a formidable enemy on difficult terrain.*

Pronunciation: [newsth.live/3nYFYA/](https://www.newsth.live/3nYFYA/)
formidable

International Phonetic

Alphabet: /fə'mɪdəbəl/

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