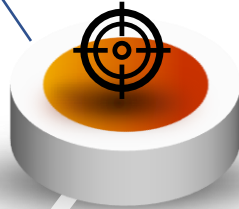


# Daily Current Affairs





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**The Hindu**



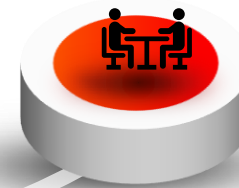
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The incident made the Coordinating Committee on Manipur Integrity (COCOMI), a Meitei organisation, call for a 48-hour general strike. The organisation demanded an apology from Mr. Bhalla for the bus incident, which "undermined Manipur's identity, name, pride, and respect".

The COCOMI also demanded the resignation of Chief Secretary P.K. Singh, Secretary Kuldeep Singh and Director General of Police Rajy Singh.

late 2020s or early 2030s," said Peter Thorne, director of the Irish Climate Analysis and Research Units group at the University of Maynooth. "I would expect the probability to be 100%" in the five-year outlook, he added.

The WMO says there is an 80% chance that at least one year in 2024–2025 and 2029 will be warmer than the current warmest year on record: 2024.

There is no consensus yet on how best to assess long-term warming.

Every fraction of a degree of additional warming can intensify heatwaves, extreme precipitation, droughts and melting of ice caps, sea ice and glaciers.



# There is 70% chance that average warming will exceed 1.5°C in next four years, warns UN

**Agence France-Presse**

GENEVA

The United Nations warned on Wednesday that there is a 70% chance that average warming from 2025 to 2029 would exceed the 1.5 degrees Celsius international benchmark.

The planet is therefore expected to remain at historic levels of warming after the two hottest years ever recorded in 2023 and 2024, according to an annual climate report published by the World Meteorological Organization, the UN's weather and climate agency.

## No signs of respite

"We have just experienced the 10 warmest years on record," said the WMO's de-



**Warning sign:** A block of ice melts in the Argentine Lake in the Parque Nacional Los Glaciares in Argentina. FILE PHOTO

puty secretary-general Ko Barrett. "Unfortunately, this WMO report provides no sign of respite over the coming years."

The 2015 Paris climate accords aimed to limit global warming to well below 2 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels – and

to pursue efforts to peg it at 1.5 degrees Celsius.

The targets are calculated relative to the 1850-1900 average, before humanity began industrially burning coal, oil and gas, which emit carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) – the greenhouse gas largely responsible for climate

change. The more optimistic 1.5 degrees Celsius target is one that growing numbers of climate scientists now consider impossible to achieve, as CO<sub>2</sub> emissions are still increasing.

The WMO's latest projections are compiled by Britain's Met Office national weather service, based on forecasts from multiple global centres.

The agency forecasts that the global mean near-surface temperature for each year between 2025 and 2029 will be between 1.2 degrees Celsius and 1.9 degrees Celsius above the pre-industrial average.

"This is entirely consistent with our proximity to passing 1.5 degrees Celsius on a long-term basis in the

late 2020s or early 2030s," said Peter Thorne, director of the Irish Climate Analysis and Research Units group at the University of Maynooth. "I would expect in two to three years this probability to be 100%" in the five-year outlook, he added.

The WMO says there is an 80% chance that at least one year between 2025 and 2029 will be warmer than the current warmest year on record: 2024.

There is no consensus yet on how best to assess long-term warming.

Every fraction of a degree of additional warming can intensify heatwaves, extreme precipitation, droughts, and the melting of ice caps, sea ice and glaciers.

## 1. 70% Probability of Breaching 1.5°C Limit

- According to the World Meteorological Organization (WMO), there is a **70% chance** that global average temperatures from **2025 to 2029** will exceed the **1.5°C threshold** above pre-industrial levels.

## 2. Recent Trends Reinforce Alarming Pattern

- The **two hottest years** on record were **2023 and 2024**, continuing a trend of rising global temperatures.
- The **10 warmest years on record** have occurred recently, indicating a consistent upward trajectory.

### 3. Paris Agreement Target in Jeopardy

- The 2015 **Paris Climate Agreement** aimed to cap global warming at **well below 2°C**, with efforts to limit it to **1.5°C**.
  - Scientists now believe the **1.5°C goal is nearly impossible** due to continuous rise in **CO<sub>2</sub> emissions** from burning fossil fuels.
-



#### 4. Expected Temperature Range (2025–2029)

- Global near-surface temperatures projected to rise between **1.2°C to 1.9°C** above pre-industrial levels.

#### 5. 80% Chance of Warmest Year Breaking Record

- WMO says there's an **80% chance** that at least **one year between 2025–2029** will be warmer than **2024**, the current warmest year on record.

#### 6. Long-term Outlook Uncertain

- No clear consensus on how best to measure **long-term warming**.
- Some scientists expect a **100% chance of breaching 1.5°C** within the next 2–3 years.

# **! Consequences of Additional Warming**

## **7. Potential Climate Impacts**

- More intense **heatwaves**
- Increased **extreme rainfall** and **droughts**
- Faster **melting of ice caps, glaciers, and sea ice**
- Rising **sea levels**

## Despite oral assurance to HC, plaint filed against CMRL

**The Hindu Bureau**  
NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court on Wednesday clarified that a complaint was registered against Cochin Minerals and Rutiles Limited (CMRL) despite the Centre's oral assurance to the court that no such step would be taken while CMRL's plea challenging an investigation by the Serious Fraud Investigation Office (SFIO) was still pending.

Justice Subramoium Prasad said he clearly remembers that there was an oral understanding between counsel for both sides that the complaint shall not be filed till disposal of the petition, though investigation may continue.

The Ministry of Corporate Affairs (MCA) had on January 31, 2024, ordered a probe into the affairs of Exalogic – a company owned by T Veena, the daughter of Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan – CMRL and Kerala State Industrial Development Corporation (KSIDC) by the SFIO.

Meanwhile, on April 16, the Kerala High Court ordered a status quo in the proceedings in the final complaint filed by the SFIO against CMRL, which is accused of financial fraud.

Justice Prasad observed that the issue is now complicated, as the complaint is under consideration before another High Court, and any remarks made at this stage could interfere with those ongoing proceedings.

## Nurdle spill is a wake-up call: expert

While not inherently toxic, plastic pellets remain a dangerous pollutant; their short- and long-term impacts include habitat contamination and breaking down into micro and nano plastics, and entering the food chain, says expert

**Tiki Raiwal**

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM



Plastic pellets from the sunken Liberian ship's cargo that washed up on a coastal road in Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala, in November.

While not inherently toxic, the pellets remain a dangerous pollutant. Their short- and long-term impacts include habitat contamination and their breaking down into micro and nano plastics and entering the food chain, according to A. Biju Kumar, Senior Professor, Marine Monitoring Lab, Department of Aquatic Biology and Fisheries, University of Kerala.

The 'nurdle spill' on Kerala's coast is a wake-up call for India's coastal management, shipping safety, and marine conservation, Dr. Biju Kumar said on Wednesday after conducting field verifications at the Varkala and Kochuveli beaches in Thiruvananthapuram. "While the crew of the MSC ELIASA were safely rescued, the ocean remains at risk," he said, describing this as the

first major incident of plastic nurdle landings in India caused by a shipwreck. Classified as primary microplastics, these pellets are between 1 mm and 5 mm in diameter. They constitute a major component in the global plastic chain. According to Dr. Biju Kumar, the pellets found in Kochuveli are mostly low-density polyethylene (LDPE) and high-density polyethylene (HDPE). They are the most commonly used material for manufacturing products such as plastic bags and films, flexible tubing, coatings for paper cartons and cables, detergent bottles, hard plastic containers, pipes and crates. They are also used in packaging materials, household goods, electronics and automotive parts and medical equipment. LDPE is quite difficult to recycle, he said.

Volunteers enlisted The State has enlisted volunteers to remove piles of plastic granules washed ashore. The police will use drones to survey the State's beaches.

The Chief Minister's Office (CMO) stated that the government has prepared rapid response teams under the command of the State Pollution Control Board to remove oil slicks and other hazardous materials that are running ashore and posing a threat to fishermen and the marine environment.

## Incremental authoritarianism at work in India, says N. Ram

**The Hindu Bureau**  
KOZHIKODE

A number of factors have combined to cast a shadow over India's democracy and its media landscape, N. Ram, former Editor-in-Chief, *The Hindu*, said on Wednesday, listing troubling trends such as communalism as a political mobilisation strategy and the weaponisation of hate speech, disinformation, misinformation, and toxic propaganda both on social

media and in sections of the mainstream media. Delivering a lecture in memory of M.P. Veerendra Kumar, former Managing Director, Marthandham, Mr. Ram pointed out that the country faced an intensely divisive and polarising communal climate, orchestrated hate campaigns and crimes, and fascistic violence directed at minorities and others.

"India had witnessed and experienced some of the most serious crises from the 1990s. The situation turned qualitatively worse in 2014, when there was a regime change that proved to be much more than a change of government," he said.

Drawing a comparison between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and U.S. President Donald Trump, Mr. Ram said that while the



N. Ram, former Editor-in-Chief, *The Hindu*, delivering a lecture in memory of M.P. Veerendra Kumar, former Managing Director, Marthandham, in Kozhikode on Wednesday.

two leaders might have strikingly different backgrounds and styles, their administrations shared an authoritarian disdain for their countries' Constitu-

tions and the values, spirit, and even the letter of these foundational charters.

Quoting scholars Christophe Jaffrelot and Pratistha Banerjee, Mr. Ram said that Independent India's first dictatorship – the Emergency imposed in June 1975 by Prime Minister Indira Gandhi – was a complex phenomenon that was "neither a parenthesis, nor so much as a turning point, but a concentration of a style of rule, an

idea alive today". This involved, among other things, "a dialectical relationship between populism and authoritarianism." The BJP regime,

backed by the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh and its affiliates, has taken the path of incremental authoritarianism, he added.

"This is a period in which independent and fearless journalism is at a premium in India, or so it seems," Mr. Ram said.

"Several Indian television news channels and mainstream newspapers are clearly engaged in propagandising and manufacturing consent for the ideology, policies, and actions of the ruling party. However, there is evidence that independent, investigative journalism is alive, active, and productive," he added.

## Gold loans: CM Stalin asks FM to advise RBI to reconsider rules

**The Hindu Bureau**  
CHENNAI

Chief Minister M.K. Stalin has written to Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman urging her to advise the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) to reconsider the proposed restrictions in the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) regarding Gold collateral Directions, 2025.

Underlining five major implications that affected the people, he sought Ms. Sitharaman's early intervention in the matter, which is crucial to the farming community and the rural economy.

"This proposal is likely to result in serious disruptions to the rural credit de-

livery system in Tamil Nadu and across many parts of south India, where gold-backed loans serve as a primary source of timely, short-term agricultural credit, especially for small and marginal farmers, tenant cultivators, and those engaged in allied sectors," he contended in his letter to the Union Minister. The proposed prohibition would directly curtail this essential channel, effectively excluding a large segment of genuine and needy borrowers from the formal financial system, he added. Mr. Stalin said: "It is imperative that gold continues to be accepted as collateral for agricultural and allied loans of up to ₹2 lakh."

## Accused in Anna varsity sexual assault case convicted

**The Hindu Bureau**  
CHENNAI

The Madras Court on Wednesday convicted Ganasekaran, 37, the lone accused in the sexual assault on a student on Anna University campus in December 2024, after finding him guilty of the offence.

The quantum of punishment will be pronounced on June 2. He was charged under 11 provisions of the law.

## IN BRIEF



### Kerala govt. planning law to allow culling of wild boars

The Kerala Cabinet on Wednesday examined the legal prospects of introducing a Bill in the next session of the Assembly to sanction regulated and scientific culling of wild animals, primarily feral boars, which endanger human life and destroy farmlands in the State. It directed officials to submit proposals for the draft Bill. The administration has faced repeated criticism from Church-backed settler farmer communities, a significant electoral bloc, for allegedly not doing enough to mitigate human-wildlife conflicts.

### Bodies of three boys retrieved from the Gowthami in A.P.

The bodies of three boys, aged 13, 15 and 16, who drowned in the Gowthami, a branch of the Godavari, on Tuesday, were retrieved on Wednesday, at Raavi Lanka of Achanta mandal in West Godavari district of Andhra Pradesh. The police and swimmers traced the bodies a few metres away from the spot where they reportedly drowned. "The victims were taking a bath in the river. They had come to Raavi Lanka to enjoy a bath in the river located on the other side of the village," said Achanta Sub-Inspector K. Venkata Ramana. The incident came to light after two friends of the deceased brought it to the notice of the victims' parents.

### Bantwal murder: cases booked against 15 persons

The Bantwal Rural police in Karnataka have booked 15 persons in connection with the murder of Abdul Rehman, 32, secretary of Koltamajulu Jamma Masjid, in Koltamajulu on Tuesday. The police have named Deshpak, Sumit, and 13 others as accused. A group had attacked Abdul Rehman and Kalandar Shah when they were unlocking the mosque at dusk on Wednesday. Rehman died on the spot, while Shah was admitted to a private hospital.

## Dhole territory



Houseful: Asiatic wild dogs, also known as dholes, in their specially designed enclosure at the Indira Gandhi Zoological Park in Visakhapatnam on World Dholes day. The park currently houses the highest population of dholes in India. K.R. DEEPAK

## Seized 'MDMA' turns out to be sugar, two accused walk free

**The Hindu Bureau**  
KASARAGOD

A new job opportunity turned into a harrowing five-month ordeal for two men, who were wrongfully jailed on charge of possessing MDMA, only to be released after a test report revealed that the seized substance was rock sugar.

Manikandan, 46, of Kannur and Biju Mathew of Kasaragod, were arrested on November 26, 2024, by the Nadakavu police in Kozhikode. Officers with the District Anti-Narcotic Special Action Force (DANSAF) allegedly found 100 grams of white powder in Mr. Manikandan's pocket.

Despite their claims that the powder was only rock sugar, the two were booked and remanded. Their pleas for bail were rejected. It was only on the 151st day of remand that the chemical analysis confirmed what they had maintained all along.

A senior DANSAF officer, on condition of anonymity, said the duo were arrested based on credible intelligence. "According to our sources, they came to Kozhikode to purchase MDMA, but were duped and were sold rock sugar instead," the officer said. He claimed the duo admitted to using the drug during interrogation.

## Hyderabad teenager becomes youngest Indian to finish Seven Summits challenge

**B. Sai Nikhila**

HYDERABAD

Hyderabad teenager Vishwanath Karthikey Padakanti has become the youngest Indian and the second youngest person in the world to complete the legendary "seven summits" challenge – scaling the highest peak on each continent.

The 16-year-old's final ascent came on May 27, when he climbed Mount Everest (8,848 m) after weeks of grueling climbing. "Standing on the summit of Everest and completing the Seven Summits is a dream come true," said



On top: Vishwanath Karthikey Padakanti is the second youngest person in the world to complete the legendary challenge.

Vishwanath Karthikey. "This journey tested every part of me – physically, mentally, and emotionally. I'm grateful for the love and support from my family throughout this journey." His journey began dur-

**Jagriti Chandra**  
NEW DELHI

The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs on Wednesday approved the construction of a 108-km four-lane greenfield highway between Badvel and Nellore in Andhra Pradesh, with an estimated outlay of ₹3,653.10 crore.

The project, to be developed on National Highway 67, will be implemented under the Design-Build-Finance-Operate-Transfer (DBFOT) model, the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways said in a statement.

According to the Ministry, the proposed corridor

is expected to enhance regional connectivity by linking key industrial nodes along three strategic corridors: the Koppurthy Node on the Visakhapatnam-Chennai Industrial Corridor (VCCIC), the Orvakal Node on the Hyderabad-Bengaluru Industrial Corridor (HBIC), and the Krishnapatnam Node on the Chennai-Bengaluru Industrial Corridor (CBIC).

The highway will also provide direct connectivity to the Krishnapatnam Port. The new corridor would reduce travel distance to the port by 33.9 km, bringing it down to 108.15 km, and cut travel time by nearly an hour.

"We discouraged him," recalled his mother, Laxmi Padakanti, "but his sister insisted we give him a chance. The first trek ended in failure, but something in him had changed." He went on to climb Aconcagua, Denali, Kilimanjaro, Elbrus, Vinson, and Kosciuszko, each climb building towards his final Everest push. Mentorship played a critical role. He trained under Bharath and Lieutenant Romil Barthwal, an Indian Army veteran and noted mountaineer. As for what comes next, Ms. Laxmi says he is only going to better his record. "He is interested in joining the Army as well," Ms. Laxmi says.



# Hyderabad teenager becomes youngest Indian to finish Seven Summits challenge

**B. Sai Nikita**

HYDERABAD

Hyderabad teenager Vishwanath Karthikey Padakanti has become the youngest Indian and the second youngest person in the world to complete the legendary 'Seven Summits' challenge – scaling the highest peak on each continent. The feat ranks among the most prestigious in global mountaineering.

The 16-year-old's final ascent came on May 27, when he climbed Mount Everest (8,848 m) after weeks of gruelling climbing. "Standing on the summit of Everest and completing the Seven Summits is a dream come true," said



**On top:** Vishwanath Karthikey Padakanti is the second youngest person in the world to complete the legendary challenge.

Vishwanath Karthikey. "This journey tested every part of me – physically, mentally, and emotionally. I'm grateful for the love and support I've received throughout this journey."

His journey began dur-

ing the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, when his elder sister Vaishnavi was preparing to trek Rudugaira peak in Uttarakhand. Vishwanath, then just 11, expressed interest in joining her. His family was scepti-

cal. "We discouraged him," recalled his mother, Laxmi Padakanti, "but his sister insisted we give him a chance. The first trek ended in failure, but something in him had changed."

He went on to climb Aconcagua, Denali, Kilimanjaro, Elbrus, Vinson, and Kosciuszko, each climb building towards his final Everest push.

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## 1. Youngest Indian to Finish the Seven Summits

- Vishwanath Karthikey Padakanti (16) becomes the **youngest Indian** and the **second youngest in the world** to complete the **Seven Summits challenge**.
- The Seven Summits entail climbing the **highest peak on each continent**, a prestigious global mountaineering accomplishment.

## 2. Final Climb: Mount Everest (May 27)

- He reached the summit of **Mount Everest (8,848 m)** on May 27, completing the challenge after **weeks of grueling climbing**.
- Called the feat a "**dream come true**".



# The Seven Summits Climbed

Continent

Peak

Asia

Mount Everest

South America

Aconcagua

North America

Denali

Africa

Kilimanjaro

Europe

Elbrus

Antarctica

Vinson

Australia/Oceania

Kosciuszko



## Early Beginnings & Journey

### 3. Inspired During COVID-19 (2020)

- At age 11, Vishwanath expressed interest in trekking when his **sister Vaishnavi** was preparing to climb **Rudugaira peak** in Uttarakhand.
- Despite his parents' initial hesitation, he joined and failed his first trek—but showed remarkable resolve.

### 4. Persistence and Growth

- Went on to climb each of the Seven Summits over the next four years, **each climb building towards Everest.**

## Training & Mentorship

### 5. Mentored by Experts

- Trained under **Bharath** and **Lieutenant Romil Barthwal**, a veteran Indian Army mountaineer.
- 

## What's Next?

### 6. Future Aspirations

- Family says Vishwanath is **interested** in joining the Indian Army.
- They believe he's only going to **break more records** in the future.

## Examining the RBI's remittances survey

Remittances have long played a quiet but crucial role in India's external sector balance, but in terms of policy attention, they have often been overshadowed by indicators such as foreign direct investment (FDI) and trade flows. Yet the latest data from the Reserve Bank of India (RBI)'s Sixth Round of India's Remittances Survey, released in March, makes it clear that such flows are integral to the stability and structure of India's external accounts. Inward remittances stood at a record \$118.7 billion in 2023-24, not only exceeding FDI inflows but also financing over half of India's merchandise trade deficit. India's persistently high remittance flows constitute a vital stabilising force in the context of global economic uncertainty and tightening financial conditions.

**Structural shifts**  
However, the data also point to deeper structural shifts that merit closer attention. The most striking is the changing spatial composition of remittance sources. The traditional dominance of remittance from the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) is now giving way to advanced economies (AECs). The U.S. now accounts for 27.7% of India's inward remittances, up from 23.4% reported in the Fifth round (2020-21) survey. The U.K., Canada, Australia, and Singapore together account for 31.2% of the flows, overtaking the cumulative share of the six GCC states (27.9%) by a large margin. This inversion of a historical pattern reflects not only macroeconomic shifts but also a change in the profile of Indian migrants — from predominantly low-skilled workers in West Asia to high-skilled professionals and students in AECs.

This has long-term implications for both the volatility and sustainability of remittance inflows. Migrants in AECs tend to have higher and more stable earnings, which in turn makes their remittance behaviour is often less sensitive to cyclical volatility in



**Amarendu Nandy**  
Assistant Professor of Economics at the Indian Institute of Management Ranchi. Views are personal

commodity markets. At the same time, unlike temporary workers in the Gulf, high-skilled migrants in AECs may remit less as their economic and familial integration abroad deepens.

One concern is the growing concentration of large-value transactions. In 2023-24, transfers above \$5 lakh accounted for nearly 29% of total remittance value, even though they represented a small fraction (1.4%) of overall transactions. This skew suggests that remittances are increasingly driven by higher-earning, professionally mobile Indians rather than broad-based migrant remitters. While this may reflect the upward mobility of the diaspora, it also creates potential vulnerabilities. A slowdown in high-skilled migration due to adverse host-country immigration policy shifts could affect these large inflows disproportionately.

There is also an accelerating shift toward digital modes of remittance. In 2023-24, digital channels, on average, accounted for 73.5% of all remittance transactions. Transaction costs have correspondingly declined. The average cost of sending \$300 to India now stands at 4.9%, below the global average of 6.65%.

Though still above the Sustainable Development Goal benchmark of 3%, this progress is impressive and attributable to the rise of fintech platforms and app-based remittance services.

Despite this aggregate progress, the transition to digital channels has not been uniform across remittance corridors. While the share of remittances via digital channels, others such as those in Canada (40%), Germany (35.5%), and Italy (35%) continue to depend more heavily on traditional channels. These disparities suggest that the infrastructure and regulatory environment remain a binding constraint. For India, the policy challenge lies in deepening

cross-border digital payment linkages. Doing so will not only lower costs and increase efficiency but also ensure that remittance flows remain within formal, trackable financial channels.

At the sub-national level, the remittance map shows persistent asymmetries. Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, and Rajasthan received a total share of under 6% of remittances, while Maharashtra, Kerala, and Tamil Nadu received about 30%. This is not merely a reflection of historical migration patterns but of unequal access to migration-enabling infrastructure: foreign language training, credentialing pathways, and employer linkages remain thin. National skilling missions must become far more State-responsive; else, India risks perpetuating remittance elite-regions and households with the social capital to migrate and the financial literacy to leverage returns, while leaving the rest behind.

**Missing data**  
Notably, this round does not provide data on how remittances are used at the household level. This limits a fuller understanding of the developmental role of remittances beyond their macroeconomic contribution to the balance of payments. As the profile of migrants shifts towards higher-skilled occupations and as transaction sizes become more concentrated at the upper end, it is crucial to assess whether these flows are being directed towards longer-term financial goals such as savings, investment, or asset creation or continue to be primarily consumption-smoothing in nature. Incorporating this dimension would also help inform the design of complementary instruments — savings-linked remittance products, targeted financial literacy, or investment incentives for remittance-receiving households — that can enhance the long-run developmental multiplier of these inflows.

## Gender power play

K. Kavitha and Y.S. Sharmila are fighting hard to cement their place in politics

### STATE OF PLAY

**Ravi Reddy**  
**Sumit Bhattacharjee**  
[sumit.bhattacharjee@thehindu.co.in](mailto:sumit.bhattacharjee@thehindu.co.in)

In both Telangana and Andhra Pradesh, two high-profile women are fighting hard to cement their place in the political arena. While K. Kavitha, the daughter of former Chief Minister K. Chandrababhan Rao, has grabbed headlines in Telangana thanks to a "leaked" letter, Y.S. Sharmila, the daughter of former Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy, has been publicly attacking her brother in A.P.

Recently, a letter by Ms. Kavitha to her father was "leaked" to the public. In the letter, which she acknowledged as genuine, Ms. Kavitha laid bare the simmering differences between the Bharat Rashtra Samithi (BRS) founded by Mr. Rao. She accused her father of having been soft on the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) during the BRS's silver jubilee plenary. She said that his two minutes of criticism of the BJP had created an impression among the cadre that the BJP was amenable to the BRS.

At the centre of this outburst is perhaps a question of legacy. K. Rao's brother, K.T. Rama Rao, the president of the BRS, is being touted as the next head of the party. But Ms. Kavitha, a former MP who has been a member of the Telangana Legislative Council, has found ways of drawing attention to her leadership abilities and to questions of social justice. She has been championing the cause of Backward Classes and women, meeting the party cadre, and touring the State. Her letter prompted Mr. K.T. Rama Rao to meet his



father at his farm house in Er-ravelli in Siddipet district and to discuss the political fallout. Mr. Rao sought to dismiss the letter as well as the possible rebellion by his daughter. However, it became clear that the BRS was worried when it sent Rajya Sabha member, Damodar Rao, to hold peace talks with Ms. Kavitha. The beleaguered party, which was defeated in the 2023 Assembly elections and drew a blank in the 2024 Lok Sabha elections, is afraid that any decision taken by her could spell further trouble for it.

Ms. Kavitha has had no role in bringing the BRS (earlier called the Telangana Rashtra Samithi) to power, though the 2024 general elections saw the wing of the BRS that she headed, did play a key role in bringing about a cultural awakening in the State through the Rathamaama celebrations. Though Mr. Kavitha has said that she will work under her father's leadership, her charge that there are converts in the BRS, is being touted as another round of whispers. The party is said to be closely monitoring her move.

In A.P., political observers have cited many reasons for former Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy's defeat in the 2024 general elections and Assembly elections, but the key factor was said to be his rivalry with his son, who is the Pradesh Congress Committee president.

Mr. Reddy never credited his sister for his historic win in the 2019 elections even though it is a well-known fact that she played a significant role in it. When Mr. Reddy was sent to jail in 2012, it was Ms. Sharmila who held fort and led the 3,000-km-long padayatra which paved the way for him becoming the Chief Minister in 2019.

However, on assuming the top post, Mr. Jagan Reddy sidelined Ms. Sharmila. She moved away from him with her mother, Y.S. Vijayamma, and announced support for the Congress in Telangana. A few months before the 2024 elections, the Congress appointed her as party chief in A.P. She promptly launched a tirade against her brother.

Soon, allegations and counter allegations on property disputes were traded in the open. Ms. Sharmila said that if a Chief Minister could not hold his family together, he could even deprive his own sister of what she deserved. How could he be expected to do justice to the State? These remarks reportedly deepened Mr. Reddy's image.

Recently, she accused Mr. Reddy of not supporting employees of the Visakhapatnam steel plant who have been agitating for the last four years against a 100% strategic sale. She has accused the YSP Congress Party of being hand in glove with the Union government on the issue. She has also alleged that her brother was involved in a scam and has faulted his choice of words against police officers.

Both Ms. Kavitha and Ms. Sharmila have been denouncing their pound of flesh. It is clear that they have refused to concede any ground to their brothers in the male-dominated world of politics.

## Measles vaccine prevented '9 crore deaths' worldwide

Vaccines changed the trajectory of measles, preventing long-term immune damage and deadly outbreaks resulting in millions of deaths

### DATA POINT

**Saloni Dattani**

**Elona Stojanovic**

Measles used to be an extremely common disease, just 60 years ago, over 90% of children would get infected by it, and of those who developed symptoms, around a quarter would be hospitalised. However, after John Enders developed the first effective measles vaccine in 1963, vaccination efforts ramped up rapidly in richer countries, and in the 1970s and 1980s, they were scaled up worldwide. In just the last 50 years, it's estimated that measles vaccinations have prevented over 9 crore deaths worldwide (Chart 1). Analysis of over a hundred studies shows that the vaccines reduce the chances of developing measles 20-40%.

Other factors have also played a role in the reduction of measles deaths. In the U.S., deaths had already been falling in the decade before — probably due to better treatment for the infectious diseases that people with measles became vulnerable to, improved sanitation and hygiene, and better childhood nutrition.

However, these improvements did not reduce measles cases. The measles virus is airborne, so improvements in hygiene do not reduce its spread. Since measles is so contagious, nearly every child still got measles before vaccines were available, and the number of cases only began to decline after the vaccines arrived.

Improved sanitary conditions did not mean cases were milder either: before vaccines were available, there were still around 50,000 hospitalisations and hundreds of deaths in just the U.S. each year.

Measles deaths continued to be common in poorer countries until vaccines became widely available. Thousands of people died from

measles annually in Africa and Southeast Asia between the 1980s and 2000s. Chart 2 shows the region-wise number of deaths caused by measles over time. That's because, in low- and middle-income countries, the case fatality rate from measles has been much higher. It's estimated that in the 1980s, 5-10% of children with the disease then died from it.

The number of measles deaths dropped dramatically in 2000s, particularly in Africa, and Southeast Asia. The global roll-out of measles vaccines has been one of history's most successful public health efforts.

Chart 3 shows how far the world has come since the first one-year-olds who have received their first dose of the measles vaccine. In the 1980s, coverage was very low in many parts of the world, especially in Africa, Southeast Asia, and the Eastern Mediterranean. But since then, vaccination rates have increased rapidly. One reason is the scale-up of the Expanded Programme on Immunisation by the World Health Assembly in 1970s. Vaccination efforts reached more than 9 crore children — or 60% of all infants — by the early 2000s.

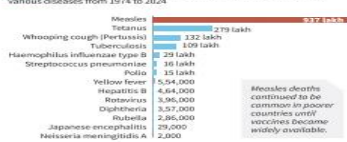
But millions of children were still left behind, particularly in poorer countries. In response, the Gavi Vaccine Alliance was established in 2000 to close these gaps and ensure that life-saving vaccines reached the most vulnerable children. Now, over a hundred million infants receive vaccinations each year, which is over 80% of them. These efforts have dramatically reduced child mortality.

Chart 4 shows estimates of the cumulative number of lives saved by measles vaccinations over time, across regions.

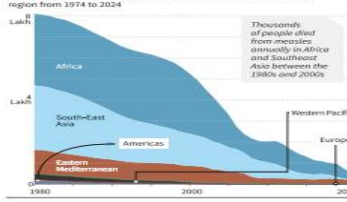
The impact has been greatest in Africa, with 2.9 crore lives saved, and Southeast Asia, with 2.0 crore lives saved. These are regions where measles was a leading cause of death in children until recently.



**Chart 1:** The chart shows the cumulative number of lives saved from various diseases from 1974 to 2024



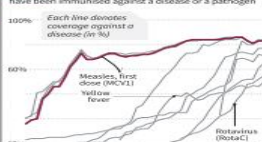
**Chart 2:** The chart shows the number of deaths due to measles by region from 1974 to 2024



## Saved by the shot



**Chart 3:** The chart shows the share of one-year-olds who have been immunised against a disease or a pathogen



**Chart 4:** The cumulative number of lives saved by measles vaccination since 1974 across regions

## FROM THE ARCHIVES

The Hindu

FIFTY YEARS AGO MAY 29, 1975

### India may be elected member of Security Council

New Delhi, May 28: There is a good chance of India getting elected to one of the five non-permanent seats on the Security Council falling vacant at the end of this year when Iraq, Mauritania, Cameroon, Costa Rica and Ivory Coast complete their two-year terms.

Though Pakistan is staking its claims with China's support to the Asian seat, the African, Latin-American and Soviet blocs are inclined to support India's candidature.

India has been a member of the Security Council thrice before, once during the Korean war and twice at the end of the 1967 and 1972 Arab-Israeli conflicts, when it played a notable part in bringing about a ceasefire followed by some positive moves to prevent a wider conflagration. Pakistan also has served twice on the Security Council, but on both the occasions it ended to side with the U.S. on all substantive issues.

This is not the first time that Pakistan is trying to come in the way of India's election to the Security Council by canvassing for its own candidature. At least twice before it tried but failed to block India's election. According to the latest assessment, India stands more than an even chance of getting elected even if China canvasses actively for Pakistan.

It is considered highly unlikely that the U.S., Britain, France and other Western powers will oppose India and back Pakistan in this election. But it coincides with the new American policy of playing tough with the Third World countries at the UN.

A HUNDRED YEARS AGO MAY 29, 1925

### Cotton-growing within the Empire

London, May 23: In the House of Commons, Sir Gerald Strickland suggested the establishment without delay of a department for cotton-growing within the Empire on a commercial basis, as the extension of the work of the British Empire Cotton Growing Association.

Col. Amery replied that he was not prepared to say, without a more careful consideration, whether such a scheme was practicable, or whether it would have the effect of stimulating cotton growing within the Empire.



## 1. Prevalence Before Vaccination

- 60 years ago, over **90% of children** were infected by measles.
- Of those with symptoms, **around 25% were hospitalized**.

## 2. Development of Vaccine

- **John Enders** developed the first effective measles vaccine in **1963**.
- Vaccination efforts ramped up in **wealthier nations**, spreading worldwide in the **1970s and 1980s**.

## 3. Impact of Vaccination

- In the last 50 years, vaccines have prevented **over 9 crore (90 million) deaths** globally.
- Vaccines reduce the **chances of developing measles by 20 times (20-fold)**.

#### 4. In the U.S. before vaccines:

- Measles deaths were already falling due to:
  - Better treatment for secondary infections
  - Improved hygiene and sanitation
  - Better childhood nutrition

#### 5. However:

- These **did not reduce measles cases** because:
  - Measles is **airborne**, highly contagious.
  - Nearly all children still got infected before vaccines were available.



## Data Before Vaccines

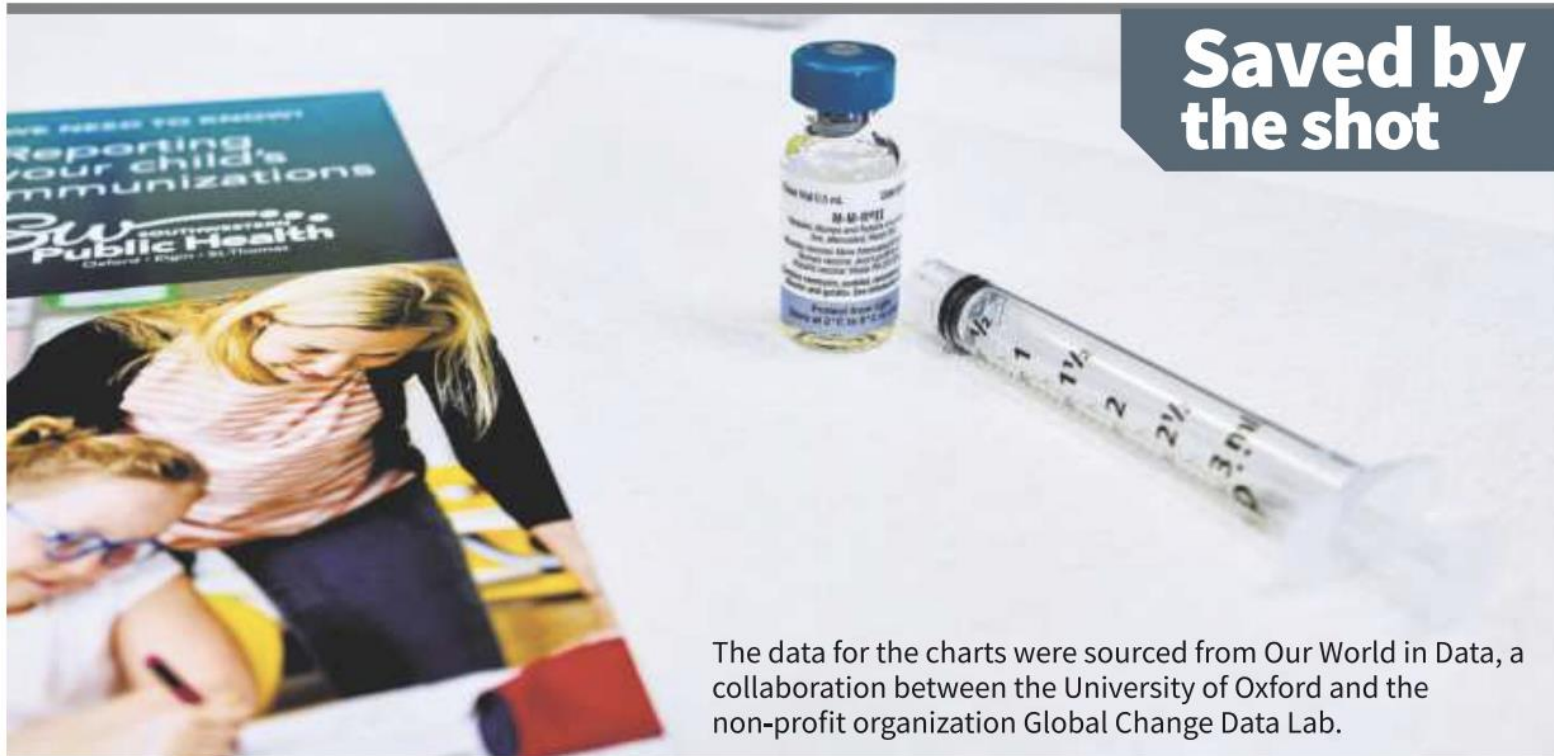
### 6. Case Severity:

- U.S. had around **50,000 hospitalizations** and **hundreds of deaths annually** before vaccines were introduced.

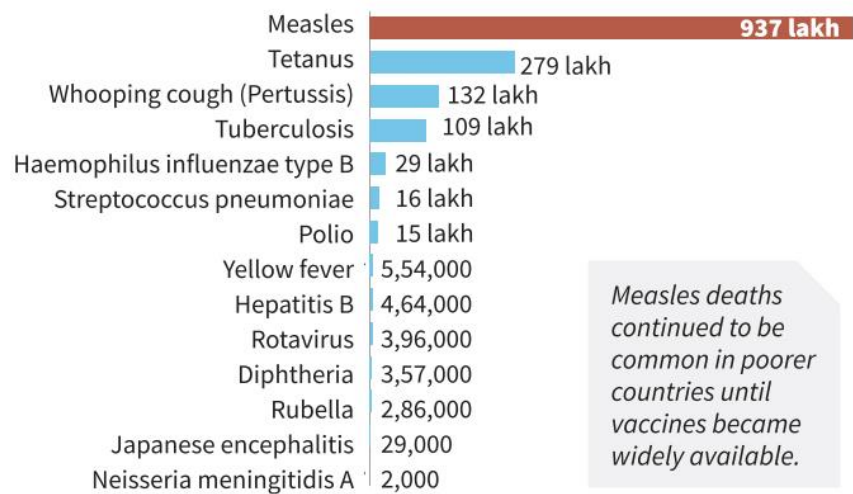
### 7. Global Burden:

- Measles deaths remained **common in poorer countries** until vaccines became widely available.



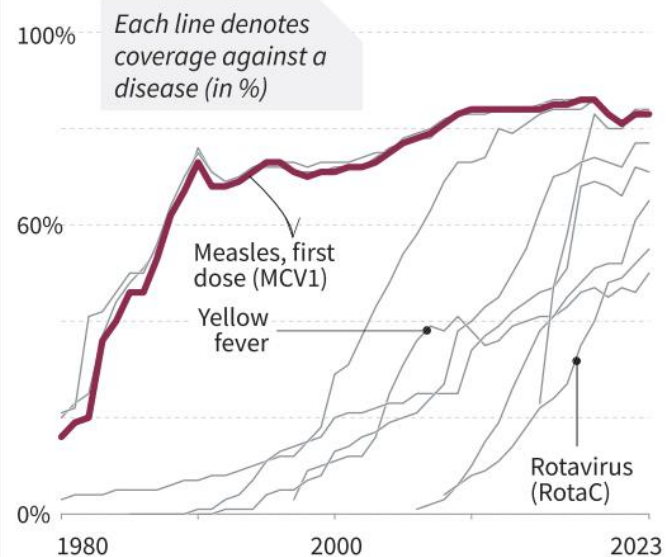


**Chart 1:** The chart shows the cumulative number of lives saved from various diseases from 1974 to 2024

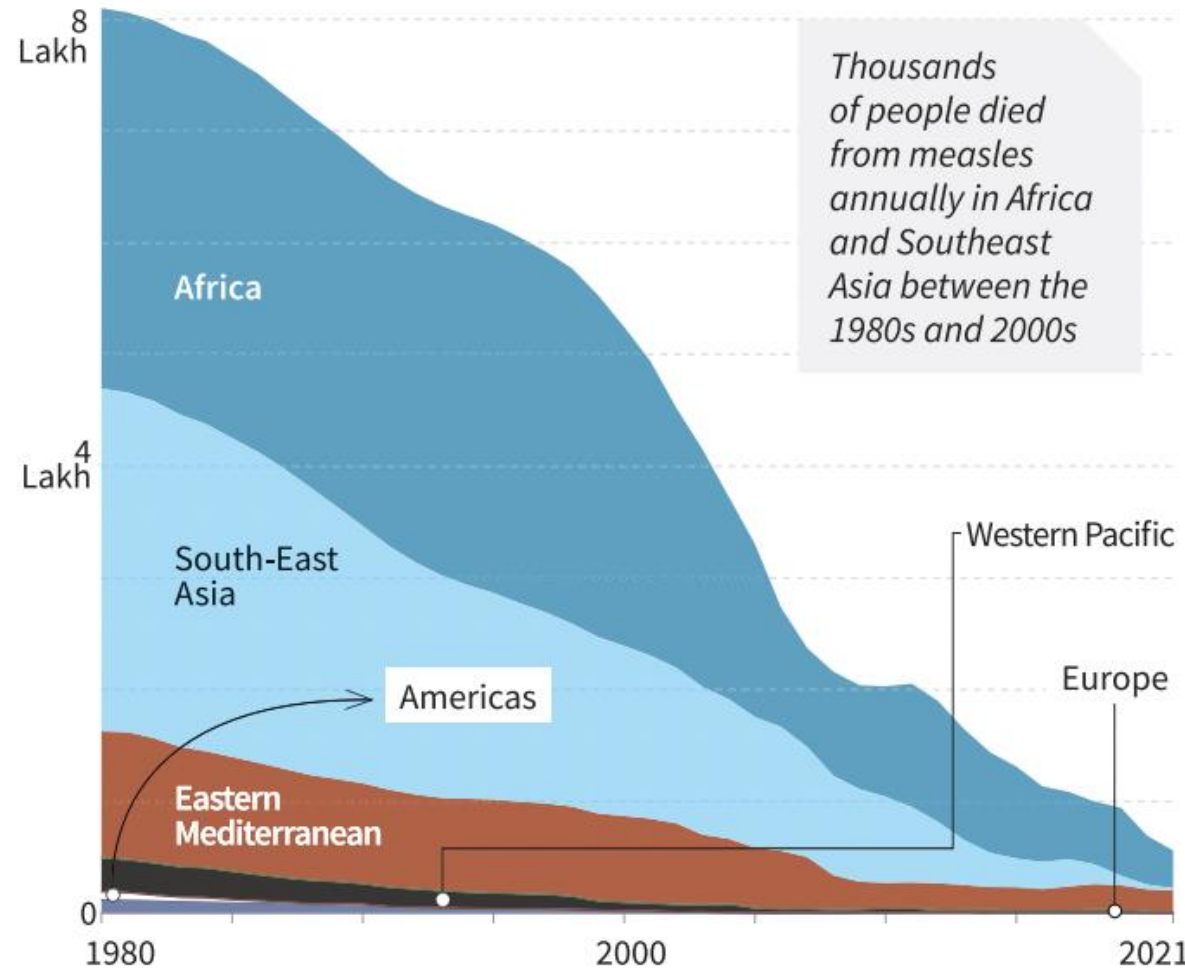


**Chart 2:** The chart shows the number of deaths due to measles by

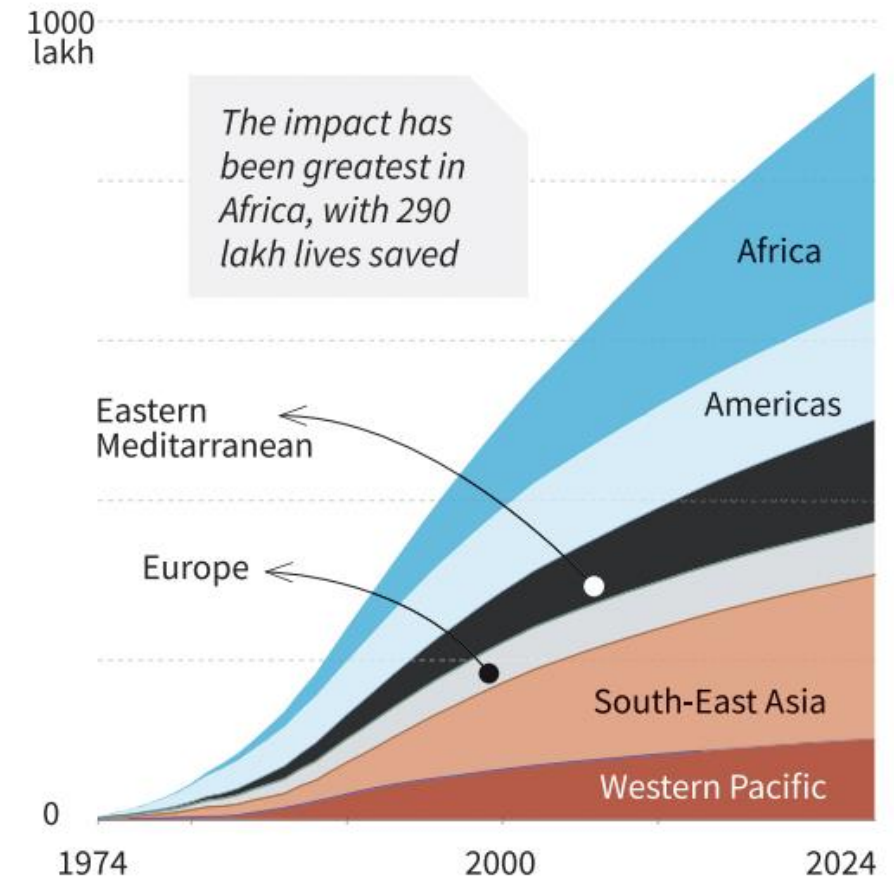
**Chart 3:** The chart shows the share of one-year-olds who have been immunised against a disease or a pathogen



**Chart 2:** The chart shows the number of deaths due to measles by region from 1974 to 2024



**Chart 4:** The cumulative number of lives saved by measles vaccination since 1974 across regions





# Assam govt OKs arms licences for citizens

## For Indigenous Inhabitants In Migrant Muslim Majority Areas

Prabin.Kalita@timesofindia.com

**Guwahati:** Assam cabinet approved Wednesday a special scheme to grant arms licences to original inhabitants and indigenous citizens living in vulnerable, remote areas near the Bangladesh border, where Bangladesh-origin immigrant Muslims form a majority.

CM Himanta Biswa Sarma said the move aims to deter unlawful threats and enhance personal security and confidence among indigenous communities. The scheme targets areas such as Dhubri, Nagaon, Morigaon, Barpeta, South Salmara-Mankachar, and Goalpara, where indigenous people

### NUTS & BOLTS OF ARMS LICENCE POLICY

#### Rules Under 1959 Act

- 1 Firearms licences are given for Prohibited Bore (PB) & Non-Prohibited Bore (NPB)
- 2 Licences for PB arms, which are automatic or semi-automatic, issued by MHA
- 3 Licences for NPB arms, which are non-automatic, issued by DM or state govt
- 4 PB licence obtained by only those who face grave threat to lives from terrorists
- 5 NPB licence obtained for protection of life and property, sports & crop protection



#### Eligibility

- > Must have attained 21 years of age
- > Must not have been sentenced on conviction of offence involving violence or moral turpitude
- > Must not have been ordered to execute a bond for keeping peace
- > Must be physically, mentally fit

have long expressed concerns over safety, he said.

"This is an important and sensitive decision," said Sarma. "Indigenous people in these districts face insecurity, especially with recent developments in Bangladesh. They are at risk of attacks either from across the border or within their own villages." Notification of the scheme is expected within 24 hours,

with immediate implementation to follow. Calling it a long-standing demand since 1985, Sarma said previous govts lacked the courage to act.

"Had this decision been made earlier, many indigenous families would not have sold their land or been forced to migrate," CM Himanta Biswa Sarma said.

► Continued on P 16



- Assam Cabinet approved a **special scheme** to issue **arms licences** to:
    - **Original inhabitants**
    - **Indigenous citizens**in **vulnerable areas** near the **Bangladesh border**, especially where **Bangladeshi-origin immigrant Muslims** are in majority.
- 

## **Objective:**

- **Deter unlawful threats**
- **Enhance personal security**
- **Boost confidence among indigenous communities**

## Target Districts:

- Dhubri
- Nagaon
- Morigaon
- Barpeta
- South Salmara-Mankachar
- Goalpara

These are districts with **Muslim-majority immigrant populations** near the **Bangladesh border**.

---



## CM Himanta Biswa Sarma's Statement:

- Called it an "important and sensitive decision."
- Claimed **indigenous people face insecurity** and are at **risk of attacks**.
- Cited **recent developments in Bangladesh** for urgency.
- Said previous governments failed to act on this **long-standing demand since 1985**.

## Rules under the 1959 Arms Act:

### 1. Firearm licences allowed for:

- **Prohibited Bore (PB)**
- **Non-Prohibited Bore (NPB)**

### 2. **PB Arms** (automatic/semi-automatic):

- Licence issued by **Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA)**

### 3. **NPB Arms** (non-automatic):

- Licence issued by **District Magistrate (DM)** or **state govt**

### 4. **PB licence** only for:

- Individuals under **grave threat** (e.g. terrorism)

### 5. **NPB licence** used for:

- **Self-protection, property protection**
- **Sports & crop protection**



## ✓ Eligibility Criteria:

- Must be **21+ years old**
- **No conviction** for offences involving **violence or moral turpitude**
- Must **not be bound** to keep peace under any court order
- Must be **physically and mentally fit**

# At 354MT, India's foodgrain output hits an all-time high

Production Up 6.6%, Fastest Expansion In 8 Years

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

**New Delhi:** New Delhi: India's foodgrain production is estimated to have grown 6.6%, the fastest pace of expansion in eight years, to reach a new high of 354 million tonne (MT) in 2024-25. All major crops, including paddy, wheat, maize, groundnuts and soybean, reporting record output during the crop year.

Union agriculture minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan attributed the all-time record foodgrain output in 2024-25 to the Centre's farmer-friendly policies, including fair pricing, loss compensation and low-interest loans, and their proper implementation by state govts.

"Overall foodgrain production is increasing continuously...Pulses and oilseeds output has to be increased further, for which efforts are being made," Chouhan said while releasing the third advance estimates of the overall foodgrain output.

According to the estimates, wheat output was revised upward to 117 MT for 2024-25, compared with an earlier projection of 115 MT, while last year's production was at 113 MT.

Paddy production is estimated at a record 149 MT, up from 138 MT in 2023-24, while maize output is projected at 42 MT. Coarse cereals production is estimated at 6 MT, higher than the previous year. Pulses production is es-

## HOW MUCH DOES EACH CROP GET

Crop	New MSP*	% (Absolute*) hike over 2024-25
Ragi	4,886	13.8% (596)
Jowar	3,699	9.7% (328)
Niger seed	9,537	9.4% (820)
Soybean	5,328	8.9% (436)
Cotton	7,710	8.2% (589)
Maize	2,400	7.8% (175)
Groundnut	7,263	7% (480)
Sesamum	9,846	6.2% (579)
Sunflower seed	7,721	6% (441)
Tur/Arhar	8,000	5.9% (450)
Bajra	2,775	5.7% (150)
Urad	7,800	5.4% (400)
Paddy	2,369	3% (69)
Moong	8,768	0.9% (86)

\*₹ per quintal; Paddy (Common), Jowar (Hybrid), Cotton (Medium Staple)



## Centre okays continuation of interest subvention scheme for farmers

The Centre on Wednesday approved continuation of the Modified Interest Subvention Scheme (MISS) for 2025-26 under which farmers get short-term credit at affordable rates through Kisan Credit Card (KCC) platform. Under this scheme, 1.5% interest subvention will continue to be provided to banks or eligible lending institutions for short-term crop loans up to Rs 3 lakh issued through the KCC. "This decision ensures that farmers will continue to get short-term agricultural loans at an effective interest rate of just 4%, provided they repay on time and avail the 3% Prompt Repayment Incentive (PRI)," said the agriculture ministry in a statement on the Cabinet's decision. It said, "For loans taken exclusively for animal husbandry or fisheries, the interest benefit is applicable up to Rs 2 lakh." **TNN**

timated at 25 MT compared to 24 MT last year. Oilseeds production is projected at 43 MT, up from nearly 40 MT last year.

Soybean production is estimated at 15.1 MT and groundnut production is estimated at 11.2 MT, which is 2.1 MT and 1.7 MT more than last year's production. Similarly, sugarcane production is estimated at 450 MT.

Chouhan said due to increasing maize production, reducing costs, giving of fair

prices, compensating for losses, giving loans at low interest rates and many other initiatives, the foodgrain reserves of the country are full.

"Production is increasing continuously," he said. "The production of pulses and oilseeds needs to be increased, for which efforts are being made," the agriculture ministry said in a statement.

This is also good news for the rural economy and also comes at time of global uncertainty.

## Kharif crop MSP raised; focus on pulses, oil seeds & coarse grains

**New Delhi:** The Centre on Wednesday raised the MSP for paddy by 3% (Rs 69) to Rs 2,369 per quintal, even as it placed special focus on pulses, oilseeds and coarse grains (nutri-cereals), hiking their MSP by 6%, 9% and nearly 14%, respectively, for the 2025-26 kharif marketing season, reports **Vishwa Mohan**.

The move is in sync with govt's growing focus on cultivation of crops other than water-guzzling paddy.

It wants to promote crop diversification and encourage cultivation of climate-resilient and water-efficient crops like nutri-cereals.

The highest absolute increase in MSP over the previous year has, accordingly, been recommended for niger seed (Rs 820 per quintal), followed by ragi (Rs 596 per quintal), cotton (Rs 589 per quintal) and sesamum (Rs 579 per quintal).

"We have taken care that on all the crops farmers receive at least 50% margin on their base cost," said information and broadcasting minister Ashwini Vaishnaw, noting that the total MSP hike is estimated to be worth Rs 2.07 lakh crore.

## ◆ Production Highlights:

- Total foodgrain output (2024–25): 354 million tonnes (MT)
  - Growth: ↑ 6.6%, fastest expansion in 8 years
  - Last year's output (2023–24): 332 MT
  - New estimate revised upward by 15 MT from earlier projections
-



💰 Highest Hike in MSP:

Crop	New MSP (₹/quintal)	% Hike	₹ Hike
Ragi	₹4,886	13.8%	₹596
Jowar	₹3,699	9.7%	₹328
Niger Seed	₹9,537	9.4%	₹820
Soybean	₹5,328	8.9%	₹436
Cotton	₹7,770	8.2%	₹589
Maize	₹2,400	7.8%	₹175
Paddy	₹2,369	3%	₹69

🟢 Total MSP hike burden: ₹2.07 lakh crore



## **Interest Subvention Scheme (MISS) Extended (2025–26)**

- **Objective:** Provide affordable credit to farmers via **Kisan Credit Cards (KCC)**
- **Benefit:**
  - 1.5% interest subvention
  - Up to ₹3 lakh loan eligibility
  - Timely repayment incentive of 3%, making effective rate = 4%
- **Special provision:**
  - For animal husbandry & fisheries: interest benefit up to ₹2 lakh

## HOW MUCH DOES EACH CROP GET

Crop	New MSP*	% (Absolute*) hike over 2024-25
Ragi	4,886	13.8% (596)
Jowar	3,699	9.7% (328)
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Paddy	2,369	3% (69)
Moong	8,768	0.9% (86)



\*₹ per quintal; Paddy (Common), Jowar (Hybrid), Cotton (Medium Staple)



The background features two large, curved, overlapping bands. One band is a light blue color, and the other is a light green color. They are positioned in the top right and bottom left corners, framing the central text.

# India's First Gene-Edited Sheep

# Development of Gene-Edited Sheep in India

## Identify Research Need

Researchers recognize the potential for genetic enhancement in sheep.

## Secure Funding

The ICAR provides financial support for the project.

## Apply CRISPR-Cas9 Technology

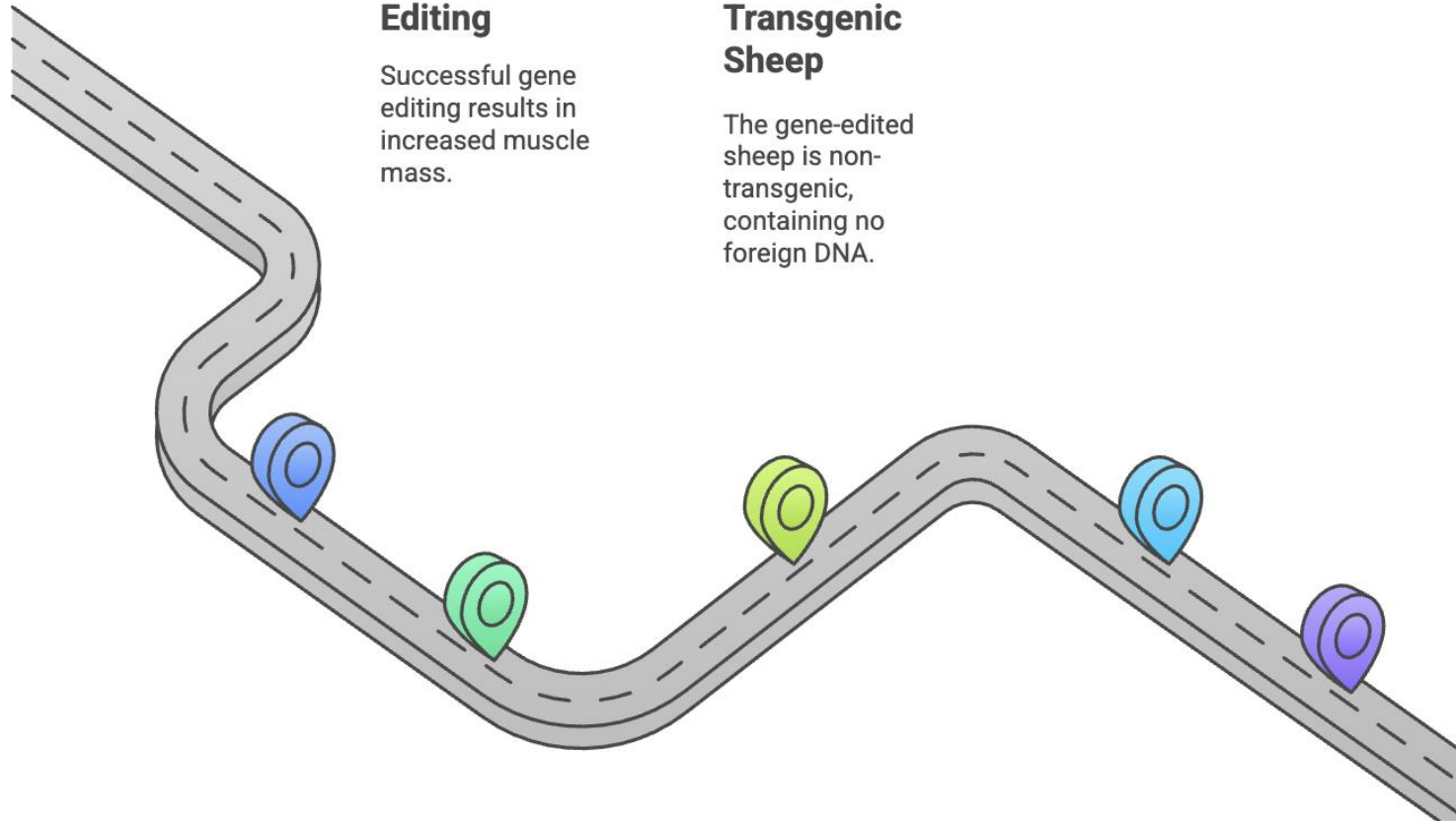
Researchers use CRISPR-Cas9 to edit the myostatin gene.

## Achieve Gene Editing

Successful gene editing results in increased muscle mass.

## Develop Non-Transgenic Sheep

The gene-edited sheep is non-transgenic, containing no foreign DNA.



# Which sheep breed offers better muscle mass enhancement?



## Gene-Edited Merino

Achieves 30% muscle mass increase



## Texel Sheep

Naturally high muscle mass



A close-up photograph of a hand holding a gold Dag Hammarskjöld Medal. The medal is circular with a laurel wreath border and a central emblem. A red ribbon is attached to the top. The background is a bright, hazy sky with a sun flare in the upper left corner.

# Two Indian Peacekeepers Awarded Dag Hammarskjöld Medal

# UN Peacekeepers Honored Posthumously

## International Day of UN Peacekeepers

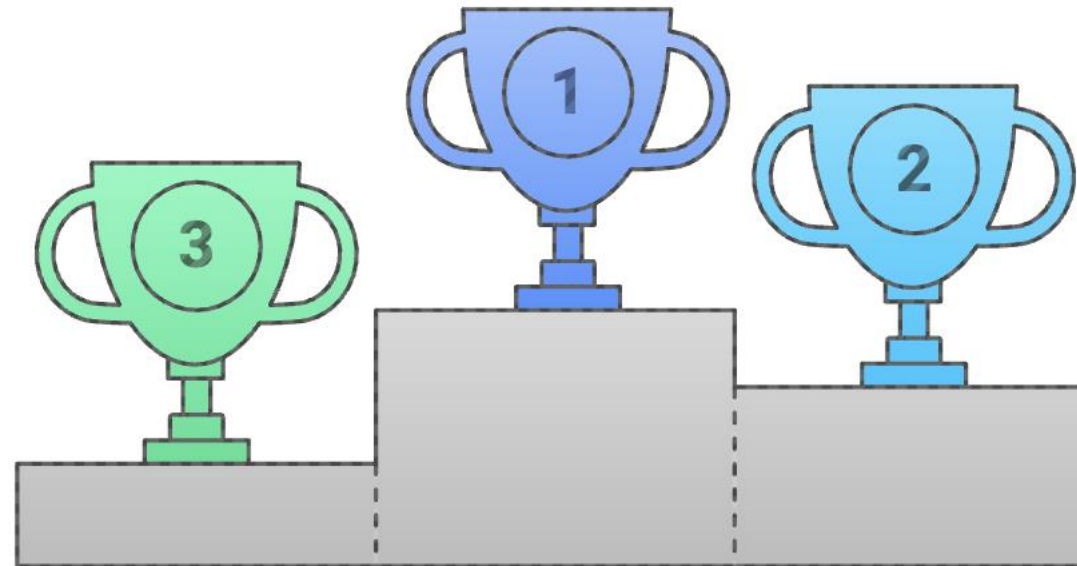
International Day of  
UN Peacekeepers to  
honor fallen  
peacekeepers.

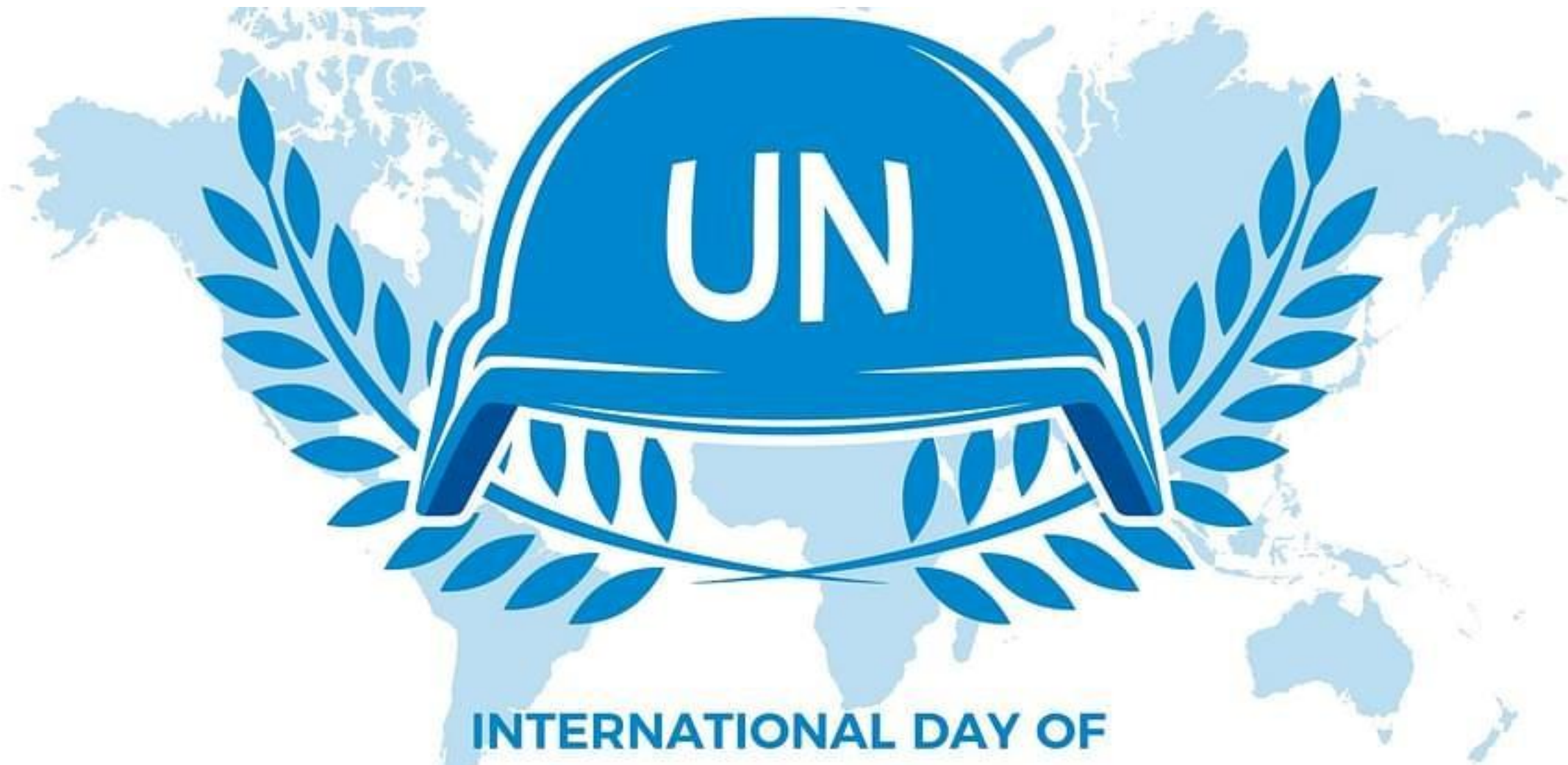
## Brigadier General Amitabh Jha

Brigadier General  
Amitabh Jha to  
receive Dag  
Hammarhjöld  
Medal  
posthumously.

## Havildar Sanjay Singh

Havildar Sanjay  
Singh to receive Dag  
Hammarhjöld  
Medal  
posthumously.





INTERNATIONAL DAY OF  
**UNITED NATIONS  
PEACEKEEPERS**



# India's Contributions to UN Peacekeeping

Characteristic	India	UN Peacekeepers
Global Role	4th largest contributor	Receives contributions from member states
Honoured Individuals	Brig. Gen. Jha, Hav. Singh, Maj. Sen	Individuals serving under UNDOF, MONUSCO
Sacrifice	179 peacekeepers since 1948	Personnel who laid down lives
Recognition	Dag Hammarskjöld Medal, UN Gender Advocate	Honouring dedication and bravery

# UN Peacekeeping Operations Overview

Characteristic	Description
 <b>Established</b>	1948, first mission in Middle East
 <b>Coordinated By</b>	Department of Peace Operations (DPO)
 <b>Personnel</b>	68,000+ from 125 countries
 <b>Key Objectives</b>	Conflict management, civilian protection
 <b>Legal Mandate</b>	Chapter VII of UN Charter
 <b>Instruments</b>	Blue Helmets: military, police, civilians



A photograph of a tropical landscape featuring several palm trees. The fronds of the palm trees are green and some show signs of aging or damage. The background is a clear, bright blue sky. The text is overlaid on the center of the image.

# Philippines Offers Visa-Free Entry to Indian Tourists under New Categories

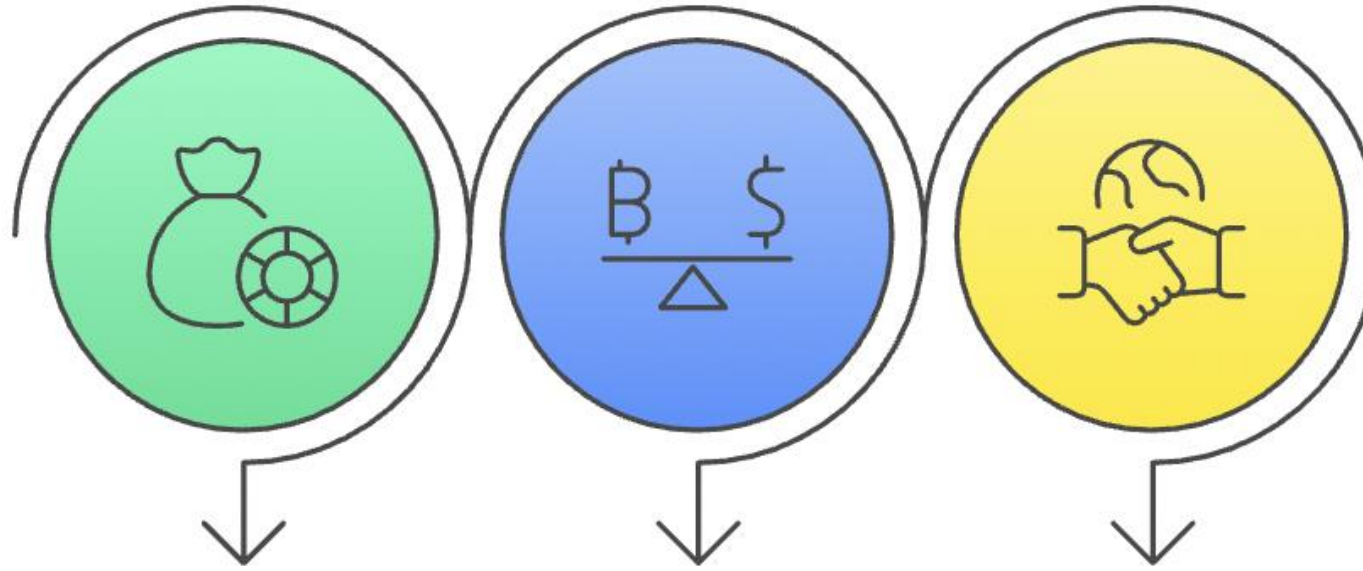


<b>Why in the news?</b>	Philippines Offers Visa-Free Entry to Indian Tourists under New Categories
<b>Effective From</b>	May 2025
<b>Countries</b>	Covered under AJACSSUK Australia, Japan, America, Canada, Schengen, Singapore, United Kingdom
<b>14-Day Visa-Free Criteria</b>	Indian passport holders for tourism with valid documents
<b>30-Day Visa-Free Criteria</b>	Indian nationals with valid AJACSSUK visa or PR
<b>E-Visa Option</b>	Still available for other Indian tourists via official portal
<b>Purpose of Visa-Free</b>	Travel Tourism only; non-extendable and non-convertible

Algeria Becomes New Member of  
BRICS' New Development Bank



# BRICS Objectives



## Resource Mobilization

Funding infrastructure and development projects.

## Financial Alternatives

Providing alternatives to Western financial institutions.

## Global Cooperation

Strengthening partnerships between Southern Hemisphere countries.



# New Development Bank (NDB) Details

Characteristic	Description
Established	2015, by BRICS nations
Headquarters	Shanghai, China
Approved Projects	Over 120 projects, \$40 billion
Focus Areas	Clean energy, water, transport, digital, environment
Leadership	Rotates among BRICS members
Current President	Dilma Rousseff (Brazil)

# Algeria's Key Attributes



## Strategic Location

Algeria is located in North Africa, providing access to both Europe and Sub-Saharan Africa.



## Natural Resources

The nation possesses abundant natural resources and substantial energy reserves.



## Strategic Importance

Algeria is recognized for its strategic importance and potential for growth.



# Word of the day

## **Gloat:**

malicious satisfaction; gaze at or think about something with great self-satisfaction, gratification, or joy

---

**Synonyms:** glee, triumph

---

**Usage:** *The leaders will gloat over what they have achieved*

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## **Pronunciation:**

newsth.live/gloatpro

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**International Phonetic Alphabet:** /gləʊt/

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# UPPSC RO/ARO

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3. DETAILED EXPLANATION
4. TEST RANKING AND ANALYSIS

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