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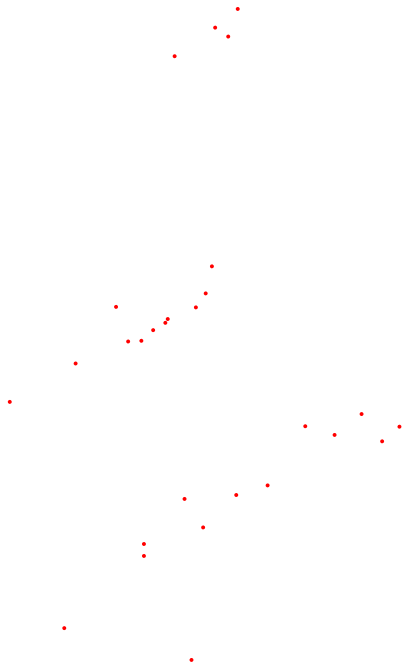
जनसत्ता



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10 MCQ QUIZ



“I can't give you a sure-fire formula for success, but I can give you a formula for failure: try to please everybody all the time.”

— Herbert Bayard Swope



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NATIONAL FILM AWARDS

Shah Rukh Khan, Urvashi Rautela bag honours

Vice-President Poll
Election, counting of votes set for Sept. 9

NEWS > PAGE 4



TELANGANA'S SURROGACY SCAM

The business of selling babies

How small-scale clinics exploit surrogates and patients alike

GROUND ZERO > PAGE 7



MAKING HEADS

Prasidh, Shrivastava lead India's fightback

SPORT > PAGE 14

INSIDE

'Israel killed over 1,300 as they waited for food'

RAJA CITY
Israeli forces killed hundreds of hungry Palestinians waiting for aid outside U.S.-sponsored food distribution points, the United Nations rights office said on Friday. > PAGE 13

Anil Ambani gets ED summons in loan fraud case

NEW DELHI
The Enforcement Directorate has summoned Reliance ADA Group chairman Anil Ambani for recording his statement under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act on August 5 in connection with a bank loan fraud case. > PAGE 9

Bihar draft poll roll slashes voters by 65 lakh

EC publishes list after end of first phase of SIR; Patna draft roll has 3.95 lakh fewer voters than list from Jan. Many on the list yet to submit their papers and, may still be deprived of voting rights; INDIA bloc EC appeals to all turning 18 by July 1 or will do so by October 1 to get names added to the voter list

Jaipurana Chakrabarty
Anil Bishari
NEW DELHI/PATNA

The number of voters in Bihar has dropped by 65 lakh, according to Bihar's draft electoral roll, which was published by the Election Commission on Friday after the completion of the first phase of its special Intensive Survey of Residents (SIR) exercise.

More than 7.54 crore voters registered in the 2023 electoral list but before the SIR exercise. The EC has said that of those 65 lakh "missing" voters have died, registered in two locations, permanently migrated out of Bihar, or are outside the electoral portal. If their names are

not on the list, they have been asked to submit Form 6, along with the declaration form specifying the SIR instructions.

First-time voters, who have to submit their names in the draft list, which is available on the portal. If their names are

added by submitting Form 6. Over the next month, the EC will invite claims on exclusions and inclusions on the list.

"In the one-month period from August 1 to September 3, all eligible voters should also get their names

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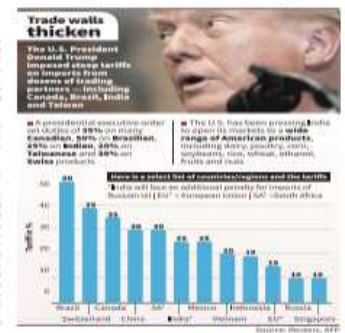
"In the one-month period from August 1 to September 3, all eligible voters should also get their names

Trump unveils slew of new tariffs on nearly 70 nations; Canada faces punitive levy

Agence France Presse
WASHINGTON

U.S. President Donald Trump unveiled new tariffs Thursday on nearly 70 countries — including a blistering 35% on neighbour Canada — as he seeks to reshape global trade to benefit the U.S. economy.

However, in a move to relieve that opens the door to further negotiations, the White House said the measures will take effect in a few weeks, not Friday as previously expected.



The tariffs are a demonstration of raw economic power that Mr. Trump sees putting U.S. exporters in a stronger position while encouraging domestic manufacturing by keeping out foreign imports. But the muscular approach has raised fears of inflation and other economic fallout in the world's biggest economy.

Mr. Trump raised duties on nearly 70 economies, from a current 10% level imposed in April when he unleashed "reciprocal" tariffs citing unfair trade practices.

Varying by partner

The new, steeper levels levied in an executive order vary by trading partner and go as high as 45%.

Any "good" trade-ships" through other jurisdictions to avoid trade wars would be hit with an additional 40% tariff, the order said.

The American leader separately took action on Canadian goods from 25% to 30% — starting on Friday. He had warned of trade consequences for Canada after Prime Minister Mark Carney announced plans to recognise a Palestinian

India-U.S. ties have 'weathered several challenges': MEA

Katol Bhattacharjee
NEW DELHI

The India-U.S. relationship has "weathered several transitions and challenges", and the bilateral ties will "move forward", said a senior official of the Ministry of External Affairs against the backdrop of comments from U.S. President Donald Trump, who, on Wednesday, cited India's purchase of military hardware and energy from Russia and imposed 25% tariffs on Indian imports "plus a penalty".

India and the United States share a comprehensive global strategic partnership anchored in shared interests, democratic values, and robust ties to people-to-people ties. This partnership has weathered several transitions and challenges. We remain focused on the substantial agenda that our two countries have committed to.

Earlier, on Wednesday, President Trump had slammed the BRICS grouping where India and Russia have been the founding members.

"You know, they have BRICS, which is basically a group of countries that are anti the United States, and India is a member of that. If you can believe it, Mr. Trump told the media at the White House on Wednesday.

Responding to this, Mr. Jaishankar said, "Our bilateral relationships with various countries stand on their own merit and should not be seen from the prism of a group of countries that are anti the United States, and India is a member of that. If you can believe it, Mr. Trump told the media at the White House on Wednesday.

Prajwal Revanna convicted of rape by a special court; sentencing is likely today

The Hindu Bureau
BANGALURU

A special court in Bengaluru on Friday convicted former Janata Dal (Secular) MP Prajwal Revanna of rape. The quantum of sentence is likely to be announced on Saturday.

Prajwal is the grandson of former Prime Minister H.D. Deve Gowda and son of former Karnataka Minister D.S. Revanna. The 39 (5) had suspended Prajwal, his daughter, and his wife.

He was accused of the rape of a minor girl in the wake of several rape allegations against him.

Friday's conviction came on the first of the four rape and sexual harassment cases against Prajwal. The case pertains to the family's then domestic help who said Prajwal raped her twice in 2021, and recorded the act on his mobile. While the trial in another rape case is ongoing, a local politician, is ongoing, trials in two other cases against Mr. A.

Prajwal was present in the Special Court of Sessions for criminal cases against former and present MP Prajwal Revanna. The verdict was read out by Judge Santosh Gajanan Bhat. Notably, the trial in the present case was completed on July 16, and an order based on Friday.

Forensic proof

Of the four cases, this case had the strongest evidence. The survivor, 46, was raped once in the family's residence in Hassan and again in the family's home in Banavangudi, and the act was recorded on his mobile in the first instance.

He, however, did not respond directly to the request to file a police complaint. He began the trial in the case on May 2, and held daily

he is Prajwal. The victim had kept her name in a red robe where she was working, and DNA analysis found Prajwal's DNA on one of them. These, apart from the victim's testimony, formed key evidence in the trial. The SIT had filed another rape case, charged with HR witnesses in the case in September 2024.

The victim was also allegedly abducted at the behest of Prajwal's parents, H.D. Revanna and Bhavani Revanna, to prevent her from testifying and was rescued from a farmhouse.

The SIT has also filed a charge-sheet against them for abduction. The trial in that case is yet to begin.

Hundreds of explicit videos of many women, allegedly recorded by Prajwal, were leaked in Hassan in the last week of April 2024, ahead of the 2024 Lok Sabha elections.

A Special Investigation Team (SIT) probe, headed by Mr. Singh, Additional Director General of Police, Criminal Investigation Department, led to four cases against Prajwal in the rape cases and one sexual harassment case.

Bihar draft poll roll slashes voters by 65 lakh

EC publishes list after end of first phase of SIR; Patna draft roll has 3.95 lakh fewer voters than list from Jan.

Many on the list yet to submit their papers and, may still be deprived of voting rights: INDIA bloc

EC appeals to all turning 18 by July 1 or will do so by October 1 to get names added to the voter list

Sreeparna Chakrabarty
Amit Bhelari

NEW DELHI/PATNA

The number of voters in Bihar has dropped by 65 lakh, according to Bihar's draft electoral roll, which was published by the Election Commission on Friday after the completion of the first phase of its Special Intensive Revision exercise.

More than 7.24 crore electors in the State filled up enumeration forms and have been included in the draft roll, the EC said in a statement. There were 7.89 crore voters registered in the 2025 electoral list before the SIR exercise. The EC has said that most of these 65 lakh "missing" voters have died, registered in two locations, permanently migrated out of Bihar, or are untraceable.

Leaders of the Opposi-

tion INDIA bloc in the State said the EC failed to answer their queries about the names left out in the draft list.

According to data shared by the office of Bihar's Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) Vinod Singh Gunjyal, the State capital Patna has the highest number of 3.95 lakh voters not included in the list. There are more than 3 lakh voters missing from the draft roll in each of the three districts of East Champaran, Madhubani and Gopalganj. Another 10 districts have seen a drop of 2 lakh voters each, while 13 districts saw a decline of more than one lakh voters in the draft roll.

Claims and objections

The EC appealed to all eligible voters to check their names in the draft list, which is available on its portal. If their names are



Making it count: EC has asked voters whose names are not on the draft list to submit a Form 6 along with other required documents. CEO BIHAR-X

not on the list, they have been asked to submit Form 6 along with the declaration form specified in the SIR instructions.

First-time voters, who have completed 18 years on July 1 or are going to turn 18 by October 1, should also get their names

added by submitting Form 6. Over the next month, the EC will invite claims and objections by voters on exclusions and inclusions in the list.

"In the one-month period from August 1 to September 1, any elector or political party can file

claims and objections in a prescribed form before the ERO to add the name of any eligible elector or to delete the name of any ineligible one," the EC statement said.

No State-wide compiled list was made available, but booth-wise lists of all the

90,712 polling booths of all 243 Assembly constituencies have been shared with all political parties by the State's 38 Deputy Electoral Officers (DEO).

Eligible documents

However, the voters included in the draft list are still required to submit proof of residence and birth unless they have already done so, using the list of 11 documents which the EC had listed in the SIR rules. Neither Aadhaar nor voter ID cards are in the list of eligible documents.

INDIA bloc leaders in the State said that there are lakhs of people whose names are on the list but who have not submitted the required documents, warning that such people may yet be deprived of their voting rights.

They asked for a full list of the forms which did not

have any documents attached, and which did not include photographs.

As per SIR orders, no name can be deleted from the draft electoral roll by the ERO/AERO concerned without giving a hearing to the elector and subsequently passing a written order.

Opposition parties have dubbed the SIR as an effort to bring in the National Register of Citizens (NRC) through a "backdoor" process.

They have approached the Supreme Court in the matter, along with several civil society groups. The top court had suggested to the EC, that it consider Aadhaar and Voter ID cards as proof as well. The next date of hearing has been fixed for August 12.

MORE REPORTS

» PAGE 4

- **Election Commission (EC)** has released the **draft electoral roll** for Bihar after the **first phase of Special Intensive Revision (SIR)**.
- Bihar has seen a **reduction of 65 lakh voters** compared to the previous list.

Key Highlights:

Factor	Details
Total registered electors	7.24 crore
Voters in 2025 electoral list before SIR	7.89 crore
Total reduction in voters	65 lakh
Main reasons for deletion	Death, duplicate registration, migration, or being untraceable
Highest deletion	Patna district: 3.95 lakh voters
Districts with 3+ lakh missing voters	East Champaran, Madhubani, Gopalganj
Districts with 2 lakh drop	10 districts
Districts with 1+ lakh drop	13 districts

⚠ Controversies and Challenges:

- **Opposition Concern (INDIA bloc):**
 - Alleged disenfranchisement of eligible voters.
 - Questioned the exclusion process.
 - Criticized SIR as a backdoor for NRC-like process.
- **Eligible Documents:**
 - Voters must submit documents from a list of 11 accepted IDs (Aadhaar & Voter ID **not** accepted).
 - Required for proof of residence and birth.
- **Legal Action:**
 - Supreme Court has been approached.
 - Next hearing: **August 12**.
 - Court has suggested EC to **consider Aadhaar and Voter ID** as valid proof.

+ Trump unveils slew of new tariffs on nearly 70 nations; Canada faces punitive levy

Agence France-Presse
WASHINGTON

U.S. President Donald Trump unveiled new tariffs Thursday on nearly 70 countries – including a blistering 35% on neighbour Canada – as he seeks to reshape global trade to benefit the U.S. economy.

However, in a minor reprieve that opens the door to further negotiations, the White House said the measures will take effect in a week for most countries, not Friday as previously expected.

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Varying by partner

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Any goods "transhipped" through other jurisdictions to avoid U.S. duties would be hit with an additional 40% tariff, the order said.

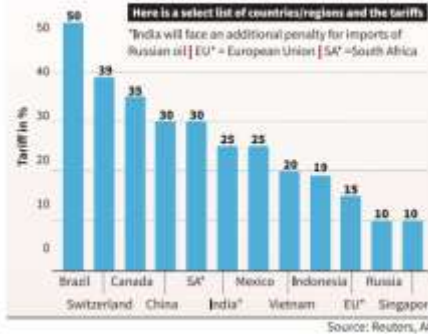
The American leader separately hiked tariffs on Canadian goods from 25% to 35% – starting on Friday. He had warned of trade consequences for Canada after Prime Minister Mark Carney announced plans to recognise a Palestinian

Trade walls thicken

The U.S. President Donald Trump imposed steep tariffs on imports from dozens of trading partners – including Canada, Brazil, India and Taiwan

■ A presidential executive order set duties of **35%** on many Canadian, **50%** on Brazilian, **25%** on Indian, **20%** on Taiwanese and **39%** on Swiss products

■ The U.S. has been pressing India to open its markets to a **wide range of American products**, including dairy, poultry, corn, soybeans, rice, wheat, ethanol, fruits and nuts



state at the UN General Assembly in September. Mr. Trump's order cited Canada's failure to "cooperate in curbing the ongoing flood of fentanyl and other illicit drugs" as well as its "retaliation" against his measures.

Mr. Carney said his government was "disappointed" with the hike, citing its efforts to crack down on fentanyl and increase border security.

Mr. Trump gave more time to neighbour and major trading partner Mexico, delaying for 90 days a threat to increase tariffs from 25% to 30%, after holding talks with President Claudia Sheinbaum.

Exemptions remain, however, for a wide range of

Canadian and Mexican goods entering the U.S. under a North American trade pact. With questions hanging over the effectiveness of bilateral trade deals already struck – including with the European Union and Japan – the outcome of Mr. Trump's overall plan remained uncertain.

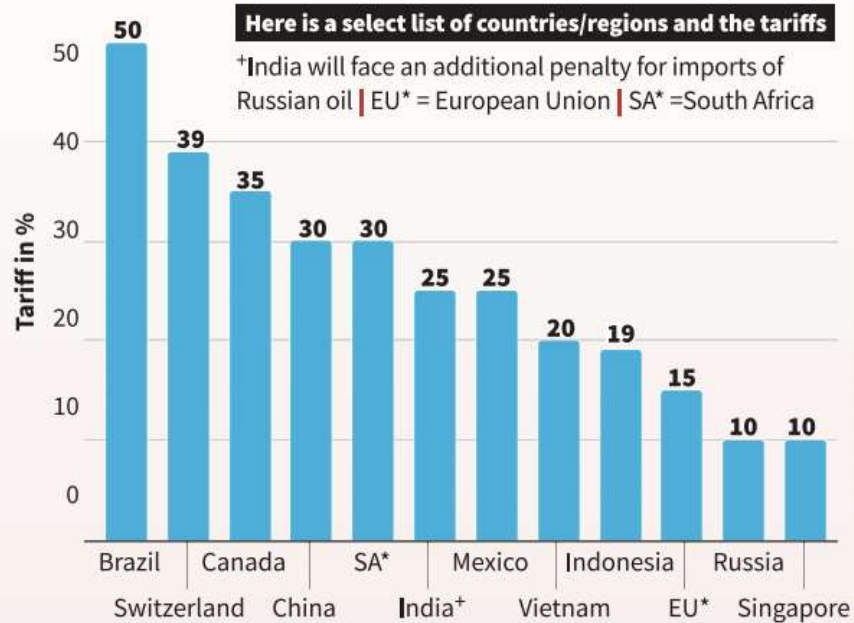
"No doubt about it – the executive order and related agreements concluded over the past few months tears up the trade rule book that has governed international trade since the Second World War," said Wendy Cutler, senior vice president of the Asia Society Policy Institute. "Whether our partners can preserve it without the U.S. is an open question."

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■ The U.S. has been pressing India to open its markets to a **wide range of American products**, including dairy, poultry, corn, soybeans, rice, wheat, ethanol, fruits and nuts



- **US President Donald Trump** has imposed **reciprocal tariffs** of at least **25% on Indian goods**.
- In contrast, **over 50 countries** (incl. **Pakistan, Bangladesh, Vietnam, Malaysia, Indonesia**) now face **lower US tariffs** than India.
- These tariffs will come into effect **from August 7**.

 **Disparity in US Tariffs:**

Country	Tariff Rate by US
India	25% (new tariff)
Pakistan	19%
Bangladesh	20%
Vietnam	20%
Malaysia	18%
Indonesia	19%
Philippines	19%

Impacts on India:

Key Sectors Hit:

- **Labour-intensive exports:** Textiles, garments, footwear
 - **High-tech exports:** RMG (readymade garments), leather
 - **Biotechnology & GM crops:** India refuses to adopt **GM corn/soya**, unlike US demands.
-

Trade Negotiation Status:

- India's refusal to:
 - Accept **Genetically Modified (GM)** food norms.
 - Relax **standards under FSSAI**.
 - Align with US biotechnology norms.
 - US frustrated over **limited structural reforms** from India.
-

Economic Implication:

- **India's job creation sectors may suffer**, especially small and medium enterprises (SMEs).
- **India's exports are becoming less competitive** compared to ASEAN nations.



Q. Consider the following statements regarding the recent U.S. tariffs imposed on India and its implications:

1. Pakistan and Bangladesh currently face lower U.S. tariffs than India.
2. The new U.S. tariff hike is primarily targeting Indian exports in high-tech sectors like satellites and defense.
3. India's refusal to accept GM food norms is a key reason for stalled trade negotiations with the U.S.
4. U.S. has announced reciprocal tariffs of at least 25% on Indian goods effective from August 7.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

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

IN BRIEF



Vice-Admiral Sanjay Vatsayan takes charge as Navy vice-chief

Vice-Admiral Sanjay Vatsayan assumed charge as the Vice-Chief of the Naval Staff (VCNS) on Friday. Upon assuming office, he paid homage to fallen personnel who made the supreme sacrifice in service of the nation by laying a wreath at the National War Memorial in New Delhi. The Indian Navy stated that Vice-Admiral Vatsayan is a specialist in gunnery and missile systems, and has held a broad spectrum of command, operational and staff appointments over a distinguished naval career spanning more than three decades. At sea, he has served aboard several frontline warships, including the guided missile destroyer *INS Mysore* and *INS Michank*.

Indian naval ships arrive in Manila to strengthen ties

Indian Navy's Eastern Fleet arrived in Manila with *INS Delhi*, *Shakti*, and *Kiltan*, reaffirming maritime ties with the Philippines and commitment to the Indo-Pacific. The Navy said that as part of its ongoing operational deployment to Southeast Asia, the ships of the Eastern Fleet, commanded by Rear Admiral Suresh Menon, Flag Officer Commanding, Eastern Fleet, arrived at Manila. The ships were welcomed by personnel of the Philippine Navy. The visit is a reaffirmation of India's commitment to strengthening partnerships in the Indo-Pacific.

SC extends stay on defamation case against Shashi Tharoor

The Supreme Court on Friday asked why the complainant who initiated defamation proceedings against Congress MP Shashi Tharoor for his alleged "accusation on cheating" remark targeting Prime Minister Narendra Modi is being so touchy and remarked there is hardly a case. "Why do you want to be so touchy about all this? Let us close all this," Justice M.M. Sundresh addressed BJP leader Rajendra Badhekar's counsel. The court continued to extend the stay on the defamation proceedings in the trial court. The stay was originally granted in September 2024. On Friday, the court posted the case next for September 15. The case is based on a complaint filed by Mr. Badhekar against Mr. Tharoor in 2018.

Centre halts order granting release of film *Udaipur Files*

The Centre on Friday informed the Delhi High Court that it was withdrawing its decision granting nod to the release of the film *Udaipur Files - Kunihaya Lal Tuli's Murder*, and will take a decision on the revision petitions "afresh". The court, which was hearing two pleas challenging the Centre's decision allowing the release of the movie, directed the parties to appear before the government on August 4 and make their submissions. The court was informed by counsel for the film's producers that the movie was scheduled to be released on August 4 and they would take some time for making arrangements for releasing it by engaging the theatres.

12th Fail named best film; Shah Rukh, Vikrant Massey, and Rani Shah actors

71st National Film Awards announced; best male actor award for a supporting role shared by Vijayaraghavan and Muthupattai Somu Bhaskar; Urvasi and Janki Bodhwala share best female actor award in the same category

The Hindu Bureau NEW DELHI

The best male actor award was shared by Shah Rukh Khan for *Aravan* and Vikrant Massey for *12th Fail*, which won the best feature film award at the 71st National Film Awards announced on Friday. Karthi Mukerji was adjudged the best female actor for her role in *My Chatterjee vs Norway*. This year, a total of 332 feature films, 18 non-feature films, 27 books, and 18 critics' choice for election for the awards for 2023. Mr. Khan and Mr. Mukerji, senior actors, won the best actor awards for the first time.

The best male actor award for a supporting role was shared by Vijayaraghavan for *Aravan* (Malayalam) and Muthupattai Somu Bhaskar for *Parking* (Tamil). Urvasi won the best female actor award for a supporting role for *Udaipur Files* (Malayalam) along with Janki Bodhwala for *Veul* (Gujarati). The best child artist award went to Nabhi Vani Bhargava for *Shilpa Khandari* and Treenda Thomas, Shrinish Pokale and Bhargav. The best director award went to *12th Fail* (Telugu).

The credits roll...

The jury for the 71st National Film Awards picked the winners from 332 feature film entries for 2023.



The award for best debut film was bagged by *Aravan* (Malayalam), and the best popular film by *Rocky Aur Rani Ki Prem Kahani* (Hindi), which was also recognized for best cinematography by Meghna Gulzar, was recognized as the best film promoting national, social, and environmental values. *Naal 2* (Marathi), directed by Sudhakar Reddy Yakkanthi, topped the best children's film category, while *Naal 2* (Marathi) was recognized as the best film in animation, visual effects, gaming and comic category.

The awards for sound design were bagged by *Aravan* (Malayalam) and *Rocky Aur Rani Ki Prem Kahani* (Hindi). The best director award went to G.V. Prakash Kumar for *Naal 2* (Marathi). The best screenplay award went to *Naal 2* (Marathi). The best editing award went to *Naal 2* (Marathi). The best music direction award went to *Naal 2* (Marathi). The best costume design award went to *Naal 2* (Marathi). The best hair and makeup award went to *Naal 2* (Marathi). The best production design award went to *Naal 2* (Marathi). The best visual effects award went to *Naal 2* (Marathi). The best gaming and comic category award went to *Naal 2* (Marathi).

'Report on failure analysis of PSLV-C61/EOS-09 mission to be submitted to PM soon'

Tiki Baidi

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

The failure analysis committee has pinpointed the problem that caused the failure of the Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle (PSLV)-C61/EOS-09 mission in May. V. Narayanan, Chairman, Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO), said on Friday.

The analysis is over and the committee's report will shortly be handed over to Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Mr. Narayanan said on the sidelines of a programme here. The mission's objective was to place the EOS-09 satellite in sun-synchronous polar orbit. The mission failed to achieve its objective, causing an unusual setback for the space agency with the PSLV, often described as the trusted workhorse for its reliability. Immediately afterwards, the ISRO had stated that the "PSLV-C61 performance was normal till Stage 2, but due to a snag in the third stage, the mission failed."

The PSLV-C61/EOS-09 had a perfect lift-off from the Satish Dhawan Space Centre, Sriharikota, on May 1. The mission's objective was to place the EOS-09 satellite in sun-synchronous polar orbit. The mission failed to achieve its objective, causing an unusual setback for the space agency with the PSLV, often described as the trusted workhorse for its reliability. Immediately afterwards, the ISRO had stated that the "PSLV-C61 performance was normal till Stage 2, but due to a snag in the third stage, the mission failed."

ISRO gearing up for next U.S. collaboration with BlueBird communications satellite

The Hindu Bureau

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) is hoping to launch the Block 2 BlueBird communications satellite developed by the U.S. based ACT Space. The satellite is in three or four months, Chairman of the space agency V. Narayanan said here on Friday.

This Indo-U.S. collaboration follows the NASA-ISRO Synthetic Aperture Radar Mission (SARATHI) which the ISRO successfully launched on July 30 using the Geosynchronous Satellite Launch Vehicle (GSLV). The BlueBird satellite will be launched from the Satish Dhawan Space Centre, Sriharikota, around 13:45, ISRO's heaviest launch vehicle in this category, which is known as the GSLV-Mk III.

Whole nation fights war, not just military: Rajnath Singh

Saurabh Trivedi

NEW DELHI

Calling for an enhanced civil-military synergy, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh said on Friday that war was not fought by the military alone, but by the whole nation.

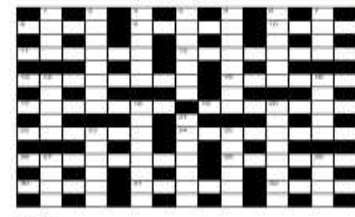
Mr. Singh was addressing the 84th Armed Forces Headquarters (AFHQ) Civilian Services Day at DRDO Bhawan, where he said that in the "rapidly changing security scenario, there is a need to move ahead with dynamism and innovative spirit while making constant improvements according to the evolving trends." Mr. Singh said the "exceptional back support" provided by different departments of the Ministry of Defence to the Armed Forces was key to the success of Operation Sindoor.

"AFHQ Services acts as an operational memory for the Ministry of Defence. It provides competence, domain expertise and uniformity in the administration, while playing a key role in policy continuity and establishing civil-military synergy. It is a strong pillar of a modern and integrated national defence system," he said.



Mr. Narayanan reiterated ISRO's plans to have the first of three uncrewed missions planned ahead of the Gaganyaan human space flight in December 2025. The remaining two uncrewed missions are expected in 2026. The ISRO had earlier announced plans to have the crewed mission in the first quarter of 2027. The shuttle will be kept after studying the performance of the uncrewed mission. On the development of the Gaganyaan programme, he said the human-rating of the launch vehicle has been completed. The development of the orbital module is in an "advanced stage," he said, adding the development of the crew escape system is nearing completion.

THIRU CROSSWORD 14553
(see by Instagram)
To solve this puzzle online, get access to our crossword site at: <https://upgn.pages.fish.gyrfu>



1. Mithun, for example, had our democracy (6)
2. Capital one invested in a case renovation (7)
3. Military unit starts to battle desperate extremists around country capital (7)
4. Women's evening team's tonight, perhaps (8)
5. Sailor by in enclosure gets a lot of salad vegetables (6)
6. Badly heated fight in part of prison holding inmates awaiting execution (5,3)
7. Treasure of volume of ship having no energy source (6)
8. This, for example: "Caught girl leaving blue" (4)
9. Inside cattle (8)
10. Military organisation running arms in the middle of country (3)
11. Couple's normal around 1 (8)
12. Before John, Virginia consumes Indian dish (8)
13. Southern gate guard (6)
14. Instrument got from alien following president (7)
15. It was produced when developing phage apt not having tag (6)
16. Celestial body's jewel in India (6)
17. Saw a female full time (8)
18. As West travels across Indian state (8)
19. Aerial advertising director in department of Government Efficiency at first (10)
20. What an uncle might want to collect unreasonably? (8)
21. Cat following aim put in full effort (2,3,3)
22. Animal in vehicle glared (7)
23. Teen person discombobulating carpool (6)
24. Golem went around with model car (6)
25. General returned with small flag (4)
26. Drop ring at premier technical institution (4)

SUDOKU

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

DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★★★★

Solution to previous puzzle

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

Solution to yesterday's Sudoku

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

FAITH
Bhakta Ramadasu

God does not forsake anyone during difficult times; on the contrary, He comes closer to the devotee who is beseeching Him for divine grace, said Suchithra Balasubramanian.

The devotion of Bhadrachala Ramadasu is a case in point. An ancient devotee of Rama, who gets initiated into Rama mantra, he falls upon bad times and is unable to conduct Rama Navami festival. On the advice of his wife, he approaches his uncle who are high officials in the Moghul court. Rather than giving a handout, the uncle get the ruler to appoint him as tax collector of Bhadrachala. An ecstatic Ramadasu proceeds there, only to find the temple in a dilapidated condition. With tacit agreement from the residents, he uses the money collected as tax to renovate the temple, hoping to replace the same once the harvest is done. However, the ruler notices the absence of tax money and Ramadasu is summoned. He tries to explain to the ruler that he had diverted the funds for a noble cause, but the ruler is firm. Ramadasu is sent on solitary confinement for 12 years; he is also cursed.

The poet composes numerous *kritis*, alternatively beseeching Rama for His forgiveness, pleading with Him and even getting angry with Him. Ramadasu asks, "These are things which served you are beaten with rods. Who else will I tell all this to, Ram? You have a title that says you will use those who surrender to You," he reminds the Lord in his compositions. Rama and Lakshmana appear in a dream to the ruler, wherein Lakshmana gently pulls a thread from a piece of fabric belonging to Sita, and the exact amount of gold coins fall next to the ruler, as settlement of dues and Ramadasu is freed.

12th Fail named best film; Shah Rukh, Vikrant Massey, and Rani best actors

71st National Film Awards announced; best male actor award for a supporting role shared by Vijayaraghavan and Muthupettai Somu Bhaskar; Urvashi and Janki Bodiwala share best female actor award in the same category

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The best male actor award was shared by Shah Rukh Khan for *Jawan* and Vikrant Massey for *12th Fail*, which won the best feature film award at the 71st National Film Awards announced on Friday. Rani Mukerji was adjudged the best female actor for her role in *Mrs Chatterjee vs Norway*. This year, a total of 332 feature films, 115 non-feature films, 27 books, and 16 critics came for selection for the awards for 2023. Mr. Khan and Ms. Mukerji, senior artists, won the best actor awards for the first time.

The best male actor award for a supporting role was shared by Vijayaraghavan for *Pookkaalam* (Malayalam) and Muthupettai Somu Bhaskar for *Parking* (Tamil); Urvashi won the best female actor award for a supporting role for *Ullozhukku* (Malayalam) along with Janki Bodiwala for *Vash* (Gujarati). The best child artist award went to Sukriti Veni Bandreddi; Kabir Khandare; and Treasha Thosar, Shrinivas Pokale and Bhargav Jagtap, for *Gandhi Tatha Chettu* (Telu-

The credits roll...

The jury for the 71st National Film Awards picked the winners from 332 feature film entries for 2023

■ Best film on national values <i>Sam Bahadur</i> (Hindi)		■ Best children's film <i>Naal 2</i> (Marathi)		
■ Best direction <i>The Kerala Story</i> (Hindi) Sudipto Sen		■ Best production design 2018 - <i>Everyone Is A Hero</i> (Malayalam)		
■ Best documentary <i>God Vulture and Human</i>		■ Best film: 12th Fail (Hindi)		■ Best music direction G.V. Prakash Kumar (<i>Vaathi</i>) and Harshavardhan Rameshwar (<i>Animal</i>)
■ Best Editing <i>Pookkaalam</i> (Malayalam)		■ Best male actor Shah Rukh Khan (<i>Jawan</i>) and Vikrant Massey (<i>12th Fail</i>)		■ Best female actor Rani Mukerji (<i>Mrs. Chatterjee vs Norway</i>)
■ Best short film <i>Giddh The Scavenger</i> (Hindi)		■ Best choreography <i>Rocky Aur Rani Kii Prem Kahaani</i> (Hindi)		
■ Best screenplay <i>Baby</i> (Telugu), <i>Parking</i> (Tamil), <i>Sirf Ek Bandaa Kaafi Hai</i> (Hindi)				

gu), *Gypsy* (Marathi), and *Naal 2*, respectively.

The best direction award went to Sudipto Sen for *The Kerala Story* (Hindi), which was also recognised for best cinematography (Prasantanu Mohapatra). PVNS Rohit was adjudged the best male singer for the song *Premisthunna* in the film *Baby* (Telugu), which also won for the best screenplay (Sai Rajesh Neelam). Shilpa Rao won the title of best female singer for *Chaleya* in *Jawan* (Hindi).

The award for best debut film was bagged by Ashish Bende for *Aatma-pamphlet* (Marathi), and the best popular film by *Rocky Aur Rani Kii Prem Kahaani* directed by Karan Johar. *Sam Bahadur*, directed by Meghna Gulzar, was recognised as the best film promoting national, social, and environmental values.

Naal 2 (Marathi), directed by Sudhakar Reddy Yakanti, topped the best children's film category, while *Hanu-Man* (Telugu) won for best film in anima-

tion, visual effects, gaming and comic category.

The awards for sound design were bagged by *Animal* (Hindi) (Sachin Sudhakaran and Hariharan Muralidharan); for editing by Midhun Murali in *Pookkaalam*; production design by Mohandas in *2018: Everyone Is A Hero* (Malayalam), music direction by G.V. Prakash Kumar in *Vaathi* (Tamil) and Harshavardhan Rameshwar in *Animal*; and lyrics by Karsarla Shyam in *Balagam* (*Ooru Palleturu* - Telugu).

The best choreography award went to Vaibhavi Merchant for *Rocky Aur Rani Kii Prem Kahaani* (Dhindhora Baje Re); and the best action direction award (stunt choreography) to Nandu Prudhvi for *Hanu-Man*. *Sam Bahadur*, a biopic on Field Marshal Sam Manekshaw, was named in categories for make-up and costume, while Sanya Malhotra-starrer *Kathal: A Jackfruit Mystery* was adjudged the best Hindi film.

Deepak Kingrani was recognised as the best dialogue writer for the Hindi film *Sirf Ek Bandaa Kaafi Hai*. *Rongatapu 1982* (Assamese), *Deep Fridge* (Bengali), *Parking*, *Kandeelu* (Kannada), *Shyamchi Aai* (Marathi), *Pushkara* (Odia), *Goddad Godday Chaa* (Punjabi), and *Bhagavanth Kesari* (Telugu) won in the language film categories.

The Hindi film *Flowering Man* won for the best non-feature film. The best documentary award went to *God Vulture and Human*; the best director award to Piyush Thakur for *The First Film*; and the best script award was bagged by Kannada short film *Sunflowers* were the *First Ones to Know* by Chidananda Nayak.

- The **71st National Film Awards** were announced.
- Awards covered **332 feature films** across **16 languages**, along with non-feature films, books, and critics.

Major Awards (Feature Films):

Category	Winner
Best Film	<i>12th Fail</i> (Hindi)
Best Actor (Male)	<i>Shah Rukh Khan</i> (Jawan), <i>Vikrant Massey</i> (12th Fail)
Best Actor (Female)	<i>Rani Mukerji</i> (Mrs Chatterjee vs Norway), <i>Kriti Sanon</i> (Mimi)
Best Supporting Actor (Male)	<i>Vijayaraghavan</i> (Pookkaalam – Malayalam), <i>Muthuppettil Somu Bhaskar</i> (Tamil)
Best Supporting Actress (Female)	<i>Urvashi</i> (Ullozhukku – Malayalam), <i>Janki Bodiwala</i> (Gujarati)

The credits roll...

The jury for the 71st National Film Awards picked the winners from 332 feature film entries for 2023

■ **Best film on national values**
Sam Bahadur (Hindi)

■ **Best direction**
The Kerala Story (Hindi) | Sudipto Sen

■ **Best documentary**
God Vulture and Human

■ **Best Editing**
Pookkaalam (Malayalam)

■ **Best short film**
Giddh The Scavenger (Hindi)

■ **Best screenplay**
Baby (Telugu), *Parking* (Tamil), *Sirf Ek Bandaa Kaafi Hai* (Hindi)



■ **Best film: 12th Fail** (Hindi)

■ **Best children's film**
Naal 2 (Marathi)

■ **Best production design: 2018 - Everyone Is A Hero** (Malayalam)



■ **Best music direction**
G.V. Prakash Kumar (*Vaathi*) and Harshavardhan Rameshwar (*Animal*)



■ **Best male actor**
Shah Rukh Khan (*Jawan*) and Vikrant Massey (*12th Fail*)

■ **Best female actor**
Rani Mukerji (*Mrs. Chatterjee vs Norway*)

■ **Best choreography**
Rocky Aur Rani Kii Prem Kahaani (Hindi)

Best Screenplay and Direction:

Award	Winner
Best Director	Sudipto Sen (<i>The Kerala Story</i>)
Best Screenplay	Gajra Kottary (<i>Sam Bahadur</i>), Shilpa Rao (<i>Jawan</i>)
Best Dialogue	Deepak Kingrani (<i>Sirf Ek Bandaa Kaafi Hai</i>)

Best Music & Choreography:

Award	Winner
Best Music Direction	G.V. Prakash Kumar (<i>Pathu Thala</i> - Tamil), Harshavardhan Rameshwar (<i>Animal</i> - Hindi)
Best Choreography	Vaibhavi Merchant (<i>Rocky Aur Rani Ki Prem Kahani</i>)

- *Shah Rukh Khan* won Best Actor for *Jawan*.
 - *Vikrant Massey* praised for his nuanced role in *12th Fail*.
 - *12th Fail* awarded for portraying realistic civil services struggles.
 - *Jawan* won for Best Female Playback Singer (Shilpa Rao) and Best Screenplay.
 - *The Kerala Story* recognized for direction and cinematography.
-

Q. Consider the following statements about the 71st National Film Awards:

1. The Best Film award was given to *Jawan*.
2. Shah Rukh Khan and Vikrant Massey shared the Best Actor award.
3. Rani Mukerji won Best Actress for *Mrs Chatterjee vs Norway*.
4. The Best Children's Film award went to *Naal 2* (Marathi).

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

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

ISRO gearing up for next U.S. collaboration with BlueBird communications satellite

The Hindu Bureau
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) is hoping to launch the Block 2 BlueBird communications satellite developed by the U.S.-based AST SpaceMobile in three or four months, Chairman of the space agency V. Narayanan said here on Friday.

This Indo-U.S. collaboration follows the NASA ISRO Synthetic Aperture Radar Mission (NISAR) which the ISRO successfully launched on July 30 using the Geosynchronous Satellite Launch Vehicle (GSLV). The BlueBird satellite will be launched from the Satish Dhawan Space Centre, Sriharikota, aboard LVM3, ISRO's heaviest launch vehicle which was formerly known as the GSLV-Mk III,



V. Narayanan

he said.

The BlueBird satellite, weighing around 6,500 kg, is expected to arrive in India in September. Work is also progressing on the mission launch vehicle.

On whether U.S. President Donald Trump's trade policies would affect collaboration in science and technology, Mr. Narayanan said he "fully believes that whatever technology contracts that India has signed

will be executed".

Mr. Narayanan reiterated ISRO's plans to have the first of three uncrewed missions planned ahead of the Gaganyaan human space flight in December 2025. The remaining two uncrewed missions are expected in 2026.

The ISRO had earlier announced plans to have the crewed mission in the first quarter of 2027. This schedule will be kept after studying the performance of the uncrewed missions.

On the development of the Gaganyaan programme, he said the human-rating of the launch vehicle has been completed. The development of the orbital module is in an "advanced stage", he said, adding the development of the crew escape system is nearing completion.

- The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) is preparing to launch the **Block 2 BlueBird communications satellite** in collaboration with **U.S.-based AST SpaceMobile**.


 **Key Indo-U.S. Space Collaborations:**

Collaboration	Details
NISAR	NASA-ISRO Synthetic Aperture Radar mission, launched July 30 via GSLV
BlueBird Satellite	Developed by AST SpaceMobile (USA), launch expected in 3–4 months from Satish Dhawan Space Centre, Sriharikota , using LVM3 (formerly GSLV Mk III)

 **BlueBird Satellite Details:**

Parameter	Value
Developer	AST SpaceMobile (U.S.)
Weight	~6,500 kg
Launch Site	Sriharikota
Launch Vehicle	LVM3 (ISRO's heaviest)
Arrival in India	September 2025 (planned)

Gaganyaan Programme Updates:

Phase	Timeline & Details	
Uncrewed Missions	3 missions planned; 1st by Dec 2025 , 2 others in 2026	
Crewed Gaganyaan Mission	Initially targeted for early 2027 , subject to performance of uncrewed tests	
Status	Launch vehicle human-rating completed; orbital module in advanced stage; crew escape system under development	

Q. Consider the following statements about the ISRO–BlueBird satellite collaboration:

1. The BlueBird satellite is being developed by NASA in collaboration with ISRO.
2. The BlueBird satellite will be launched using LVM3 from the Satish Dhawan Space Centre.
3. Gaganyaan's first uncrewed mission is scheduled before December 2025.
4. The human-rating of the Gaganyaan launch vehicle has been completed.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

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



A new round of UN talks to hammer out world's first plastic pollution treaty is to be held in Geneva next week.

What are all these microplastics doing to our brains

Agence France-Presse
PARIS

Tiny shards of plastic called microplastics have been detected accumulating in human brains, but there is not yet enough evidence to say whether this is doing us harm, experts have said.

These mostly invisible pieces of plastic have been found everywhere from the top of mountains to the bottom of oceans, in the air we breathe and the food we eat. They have also been discovered hidden throughout human bodies, inside lungs, hearts, placentas and even crossing the blood-brain barrier.

The increasing ubiquity of microplastics has become a key issue in efforts to hammer out the world's first plastic pollution treaty, with the latest round of UN talks being held in Geneva next week. The effects that microplastics and even smaller nanoplastics have on human health is not yet fully understood, but researchers have been working to find out more in this relatively new field.

The most prominent study looking at microplastics in brains was published in the journal *Nature Medicine* in February.

The scientists tested brain tissue from 26 people who died in 2016 and 21 who died last year in the U.S. state of New Mexico, finding that the amount of microplastics in the samples increased over time.

The study made headlines around the world when the lead researcher, UN toxicologist Matthew Campen, told the media that they detected the equivalent of a plastic spoon's worth of microplastics in the brains.

But other researchers have since urged caution about the small amount of microplastics found, noting it should be interpreted cautiously pending independent verification, toxicologist Thore Thomsen of the University of Oslo told AFP.

The amount of plastic the world produces has doubled since 2002 – and is expected to triple from current rates by 2060.

Nationalist agendas fuelled the border fight between Thailand and Cambodia

The conflict can be traced back to pre-colonial times, with domestic politics and nationalism coming into the picture now, while Cambodia's fears of shrinking boundaries hark back to the loss of an empire, Thailand's stem from developments that followed establishment of the French protectorate

NEWS ANALYSIS

Aditya Narayan

On the morning of July 24, Thai and Cambodian troops clashed at multiple locations along their 800-km border. Following five days of fighting that resulted in 41 deaths (including civilians) and the displacement of more than 300,000 people, hostilities arrived at a ceasefire that took effect on July 29. Mediated by ASEAN chair Malaysia, with help from India, under the looming threat of U.S. tariffs, the truce appeared to largely hold despite claims of breach by both parties.

The agreement came Cambodia's call on July 31 for the release of its 20 soldiers detained last week crossing into Thailand. But the ceasefire has not held. Hostilities have resumed, but only upon the fulfilment of legal procedures – proof that the peace deal, despite the 20 soldiers detained last week crossing into Thailand, has not been violated. The ceasefire has not held. Hostilities have resumed, but only upon the fulfilment of legal procedures – proof that the peace deal, despite the 20 soldiers detained last week crossing into Thailand, has not been violated.

But other researchers have since urged caution about the small amount of microplastics found, noting it should be interpreted cautiously pending independent verification, toxicologist Thore Thomsen of the University of Oslo told AFP.



Border tensions: People who fled their homes near the Cambodia-Thailand border during the conflict rest on the grounds of a pagoda in Oddar Meanchey province, Cambodia, on July 29, 2025.

Thailand's former Premier Hun Sen on June 15 to placate the situation as a leaked version of their conversation showed, Mr. Paetongtarn, whose family shares close ties with the Cambodian leadership, had been reluctant by referring to him as a "uncle" and labelling Thailand's military as an "opponent". The ensuing fallout, which cost Mr. Paetongtarn her job, is widely believed to have been orchestrated by Mr. Hun Sen to deflect attention from the international cyber-attack centre operating in his country.

Apart from leaving global scrutiny, these scam offices are also alleged to be run by the Cambodian government's allies and pose a threat to China – Pheum Prea's biggest benefactor.

Another incentive for Mr. Hun Sen to sit the pot is to whip up nationalist sentiments and boost the credentials of his son Hun

Manet, sworn to office in 2024, 33 years after his father relinquished power. For Mr. Hun Sen – who once called Mr. Paetongtarn's father and former Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra his "good brother" – Thailand, with its delicate political landscape, was not a soft target. Separately, Mr. Hun Sen is also accused by its opponents of adopting a soft stance towards Vietnam, whose Army in 1979 overthrew the Khmer Rouge and installed the 72-year-old Cambodian People's Party in power.

Also on Mr. Hun Sen's mind is the Thai government's proposed casino localisation bill, which may adversely impact Cambodia's gambling sector. Thus, bringing down the Shinawatra's Pheu Thai party is a one-stop solution to all his problems and seemed plausible too, given that, with Mr. Paetongtarn suspended from duty and Mr. Thaksin facing legal charges for "insulting the monarchy", the Shinawatas are already out of favour with the Thai citizens.

Nationalist rhetoric However, nationalist rhetoric is not restricted to Cambodia alone but is an overarching sentiment in Thailand, too.

A 2023 remark by a Thai actress, in which she said Cambodia had "stolen" Angkor Wat and that she would not visit the country until the monument was returned, sparked anti-Thai riots.

Taken in isolation, the statement may not carry much weight. But when placed in the larger context, it reflects the overall mood of a country, which, while priding itself as the only one in the region to be not subjected to Western colonisation, still perceives

itself as a victim.

This is because history has been equally unkind to both Cambodia and Thailand. Between the 7th century and the 14th century, the Khmer Empire ruled over a vast tract of the mainland in Southeast Asia. During its heyday in the 12th century, the Khmer empire comprised Cambodia as well as parts of present-day northeastern Thailand and southern Vietnam. The power structure was based on the Mandala system, which consisted of concentric circles of centre-periphery relations. Weak territoriality and a loose central authority marked the setup, with Path Kosal in a chapter in the book, *Cambodia's Foreign Relations in Regional and Global Contexts*, which ensured that Angkor kings were able to rule undisturbed over their allies and vassals, while peripheral regions remained independent.

However, nationalist rhetoric is not restricted to Cambodia alone but is an overarching sentiment in Thailand, too.

Taken in isolation, the statement may not carry much weight. But when placed in the larger context, it reflects the overall mood of a country, which, while priding itself as the only one in the region to be not subjected to Western colonisation, still perceives

ties signed between the French and Siamese in 1893 and 1907 serve as the basis for the present-day border between Cambodia and Thailand. Many discrepancies exist to date; one of the prime examples being the tussle over the Preah Vihear temple – a 12th-century monument claimed by both countries. While the temple and a 1 sq. km area around it were ruled in Cambodia's favour by the International Court of Justice, a 4.6 sq. km patch near it is still contested territory. The verdict spurred a conflict between the two nations over the area in 2011, resulting in 28 casualties, including both military personnel and civilians.

Preah Vihear is merely emblematic of the crisis. Similar temples, such as the Ta Moan Thong around which the latest shooting occurred, exist as hotspots of contention. The temples were built during the reign of the Khmer Empire. As the case with empires, they rise and fall. And wars fought among the neighbouring kingdoms have seen the borders of such temples change ownership.

Like in many other conflicts, here too, the fire may have been lit during the time of conquest and colonialism.

However, the nationalists and the ruling class of both countries in Cambodia has an authoritarian regime and Thailand's is a congression establishment – have seen to it that the flames were fanned throughout history to suit them.

A new office in New Zealand will counter China's sway: FBI Director

Associated Press
WELLINGTON

FBI Director Kash Patel provoked diplomatic discomfort in New Zealand by suggesting the opening of a new office in the capital aimed to counter China's influence, drawing polite dismisals from Wellington and ire from Beijing.

Mr. Patel was in Wellington on Thursday to open the FBI's first standalone office in New Zealand and to meet senior officials. The arrangement aligns New Zealand with FBI operations in other Five Eyes intelligence-sharing nations, which also include the United States, Australia, Canada and the United Kingdom.



FBI Director Kash Patel cuts the ribbon at the official opening of the FBI office in Wellington, New Zealand, on Thursday.

Mr. Patel said the office would provide a local liaison for FBI staff who have operated with oversight from South Pacific Ocean.

New Zealand Ministers who met Mr. Patel, the highest-ranking Trump administration official to visit

New Zealand, quietly dismissed his claims. A government statement on Thursday emphasised joint efforts against crime such as cyber child exploitation and drug smuggling, with no mention of China.

"When we were talking, we never raised that issue," Foreign Minister Winston said on Thursday.

At a briefing on Friday, Beijing's Foreign Ministry spokesperson Gao Hujun denounced Mr. Patel's remarks.

New Zealand, the smallest Five Eyes partner, has faced ongoing pressure to align with U.S. stances on China, its largest trading partner, while carefully balancing relations with Beijing.

Aircraft and drones, believed to be a Turkish-made Bayraktar TB2 at the base of the airbase in Amhara, Ethiopia, was seen in a video, he recalled.

The sight was confirmed by the Ethiopian authorities have not released any information about this attack anywhere and seriously injured people screaming

Still I wait



A dog waiting for adoption sits in a kennel at the Austin Animal Center on Thursday in Austin, Texas. Animal shelters around the U.S. are experiencing a surge of pet surrenders as owners are struggling to keep up with financial demands. (CITY OF AUSTIN)

African armies turn to armed drones, with devastating impact on civilians

Agence France-Presse
PARIS

The Easter period usually offers a rare respite to the dole, in Ethiopia's deeply troubled north, but on April 17, death came from the skies in this sheepy town caught up in the conflict between rebels and the army.

On this important holiday for Ethiopian Orthodox and Protestant Christians, many families had gathered in the morning to repair the local primary school. But out of the blue, shortly before 11 a.m., 74 drone fired on the crowd and pulverised many people

ple right in front of my eyes", a resident said. In Africa and many other African nations are increasingly turning to armed drones as a low-cost means of waging war, often with mixed military results but devastating consequences for civilian populations.

Last year, Ethiopia carried out a total of 54 drone strikes, compared to 62 in 2023, according to data collected by the Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project, a U.S.-based monitor.

According to one of two Gedeo residents, the strike killed "at least" 50 people,

and according to the survey, more than 100 – a figure corroborated by several local media outlets.

It is one of the deadliest in a series of drone attacks since the conflict began in August 2023, pitting the Ethiopian army against the Tigray People's Defence Force (TPDF) militia of the Amhara ethnic group.

A shot at the scene recalled a blame game that was common to "hover in the air" some 30 minutes after the strike. "The sight was horrific; there were heads, torsoes and limbs flying everywhere and seriously injured people screaming

Aircraft and drones, believed to be a Turkish-made Bayraktar TB2 at the base of the airbase in Amhara, Ethiopia, was seen in a video, he recalled.

The sight was confirmed by the Ethiopian authorities have not released any information about this attack anywhere and seriously injured people screaming

region alone at least 669 people have been killed in more than 70 drone strikes since 2023, according to

Remotely piloted aircraft used for reconnaissance and strikes – low-cost technologies now ubiquitous in the region – are generating massive interest in Africa.

"Drones offer sub-Saharan African militaries more affordable and flexible access to air power, which has been out of reach until now due to its cost and operational complexity," said Ibrahim Ghannouchi, a senior African security specialist at the Foundation for Strategic Research, Countries

China, Turkey and Iran have the advantage of selling drones "without attaching any political conditionality related to respect for human rights", she added.

Among African military commands, the most popular is undoubtedly the Turkish Bayraktar TB2 drone, which, along with its big brother, the Akinci, has delivered the Chinese-made Wing Loong in recent years. The TB2 made a notable appearance in 2020 in Libya, the first African theatre of drone warfare, between the Ankara-backed Government of Na-

tional Accord and its eastern rival, Marshal Haftar, equipped with Chinese weapons supplied by the United Arab Emirates.

The TB2 is produced by state company Baykar, headed by the son-in-law of Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan.

It "is now an integral part of Turkey's foreign policy, whose strategy is to export its military production worldwide," said Baris Canbasi, a researcher.

On the ground, however, the tactical and strategic gains from the use of drones do not always match, several experts said.



A new round of UN talks to hammer out world's first plastic pollution treaty is to be held in Geneva next week. AFP

What are all these microplastics doing to our brains

Agence France-Presse

PARIS

Tiny shards of plastic called microplastics have been detected accumulating in human brains, but there is not yet enough evidence to say whether this is doing us harm, experts have said.

These mostly invisible pieces of plastic have been found everywhere from the top of mountains to the bottom of oceans, in the air we breathe and the food we eat. They have also been discovered riddled throughout human bodies, inside lungs, hearts, placentas and even crossing the blood-brain barrier.

The increasing ubiquity of microplastics has become a key issue in efforts to hammer out the world's first plastic pollution treaty, with the latest round of UN talks being held in Geneva next week. The effects that microplastics and even smaller nanoplastics have on human health is not yet fully understood, but researchers have been working to find out more in this relatively new field.

The most prominent study looking at microplastics in brains was published in the journal *Nature Medicine* in February.

The scientists tested brain tissue from 28 people who died in 2016 and 24 who died last year in the U.S. state of New Mexico, finding that the amount of microplastics in the samples increased over time.

The study made headlines around the world when the lead researcher, US toxicologist Matthew Campen, told the media that they detected the equivalent of a plastic spoon's worth of microplastics in the brains.

But other researchers have since urged caution about the small study. "While this is an interesting finding, it should be interpreted cautiously pending independent verification," toxicologist Theodore Henry of Scotland's Heriot-Watt University said.

The amount of plastic the world produces has doubled since 2000 – and is expected to triple from current rates by 2060.



What are Microplastics?

- **Definition:** Tiny plastic particles (usually <5 mm), often invisible to the naked eye.
- **Sources:** Degraded plastic waste, industrial processes, synthetic clothing, packaging, etc.



Microplastics in Human Body:

Area Detected	Evidence
Lungs	Confirmed
Hearts	Confirmed
Placentas	Confirmed
Bloodstream	Confirmed
Human Brain	Recently detected, including across the blood-brain barrier

Study	Details
Published In	Nature Medicine , Feb
Sample	Brain tissue of 28 deceased (2016) & 24 deceased (2023) in New Mexico, USA
Finding	Microplastics found in brain tissue increased over time
Notable Claim	Equivalent to a plastic spoon's worth found in human brain
Lead Researcher	Matthew Campen, U.S. toxicologist
Caution	Further independent verification needed

Global Context:

- A new **UN treaty on plastic pollution** is being negotiated in **Geneva**.
 - The **amount of plastic waste has doubled** since 2000 and could **triple by 2060** if current trends continue.
-

Health Implications:

- Health effects of micro- and **nanoplastics** are **not yet fully understood**.
 - Research is ongoing, particularly regarding **brain health and toxicological risks**.
-

Q. Consider the following statements regarding microplastics and their potential health impacts:

1. Microplastics have been found to cross the blood-brain barrier in humans.
2. The most recent study on microplastics in human brains was published in Nature Medicine.
3. The World Health Organization has officially declared microplastics in brains as a global health emergency.
4. The UN is currently negotiating a treaty to tackle plastic pollution globally.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

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

Why Arya Samaj marriages are under the scanner of courts

AMAAL SHEIKH &
VINEET BHALLA
NEW DELHI, AUGUST 1

THE ALLAHABAD High Court last week directed the Uttar Pradesh government to investigate how “fake Arya Samaj Societies” that solemnise marriages without verifying the age of the bride and the groom, and in violation of the state’s anti-conversion law, “have flourished throughout the State”.

While hearing a case in which a Muslim man is accused of kidnapping, forcibly marrying, and committing statutory rape on a minor Hindu girl, Justice Prashant Kumar said that many marriages in the state, including those officiated by the Arya Samaj, bypass mandatory procedures under the UP anti-conversion law and marriage registration rules. The accused had claimed to have got married at an Arya Samaj temple.

The Allahabad HC’s directives are the latest in a series of judicial orders that have called for a scrutiny of marriages solemnised by the Arya Samaj. Such weddings are granted legal sanction under the 88-year-old

Arya Marriage Validation Act.

What is an Arya Samaj marriage?

The Arya Samaj was formally established by Swami Dayanand Saraswati in 1875 as a Hindu revivalist movement. It gained prominence in northern India, especially Punjab (including present-day Pakistan), in the late 19th century.

Among other things, the Arya Samaj made the very first attempts to convert persons from other faiths or ideologies to its version of Vedic, monotheistic Hinduism through a process it called “*shuddhi*” (purification).

One of the ways it facilitated this was by having a progressive view of inter-caste and even interfaith marriages. In effect, till the Special Marriage Act, 1954 came into force, the Arya Samaj provided the only way for a Hindu to marry out of caste or religion and to still retain their caste.

In 1937, the Arya Marriage Validation Act was passed to “remove doubts” and recognise the validity of Arya Samaj marriages. These weddings take place as per a specific set of Hindu rituals, but only require the bride and groom to be of marriageable age and de-

clare themselves to be Arya Samajis — regardless of their caste or religion.

The 1937 law states: “Notwithstanding any provision of Hindu Law, usage or custom to the contrary, no marriage contracted whether before or after the commencement of this Act between two persons being at the time of the marriage Arya Samajists shall be invalid or shall be deemed over to have been invalid by reason only of the fact that the parties at any time belonged to different castes or different sub-castes of Hindus or that either or both of the parties at any time before the marriage belonged to a religion other than Hinduism.”

Why do eloping couples often prefer Arya Samaj weddings?

The Hindu Marriage Act, 1955 — which covers not just Hindus but also Buddhists, Jains and Sikhs — recognises Arya Samaj marriages. Those belonging to other religions simply need to convert to Hinduism before the wedding.

However, several Arya Samaj organisations complete this conversion ritual expe-

ditiously. This means that Arya Samaj weddings are fast, often not taking more than a couple of hours. This, along with the ease of paperwork and relaxed requirements, make Arya Samaj weddings popular among eloping or runaway couples, who often belong to different castes or religions.

Interfaith couples also have the option to marry under the SMA, which allows marriage without the couple having to give up their faith. However, under the SMA, couples must give a 30-day public notice before they marry, leaving them vulnerable to harassment from their families or the authorities.

Why have questions been raised on Arya Samaj marriages?

A petition on whether Arya Samaj marriages must comply with the requirements of the Special Marriage Act has been pending before the Supreme Court since 2022.

However, since a number of BJP-ruled states have passed stringent anti-conversion laws over the last 10 years, several HCs have raised questions on the validity of Arya Samaj

marriages. This is because the anti-conversion laws bar alternative legal processes for marriage involving religious conversion.

For instance, in Uttar Pradesh, Section 6 of the UP Prohibition of Unlawful Conversion of Religion Act, 2021 renders void any marriage that is preceded by an unlawful or procedurally non-compliant religious conversion. Sections 8 and 9 of the law require both a pre-conversion declaration 60 days before marriage and a post-conversion declaration within a specified timeframe to the district magistrate. The law also mandates an inquiry to verify the voluntariness and legality of the conversion process.

Section 12 of the Act places the burden of proof on an accused to demonstrate that their spouse’s consent for conversion was not obtained illegally. The default legal assumption, thus, is that marriages through conversion are illegal and non-consensual.

This puts Arya Samaj marriages at odds with the UP anti-conversion law. The *shuddhi* performed before most interfaith Arya Samaj marriages does not comply with the onerous process for conversion prescribed in the anti-conversion law.

Courts have, over the last few years, expressed concern over the mass-scale solemnisation of marriages by Arya Samaj organisations without sticking to lawful conversion practices or verifying marriage eligibility conditions.

The Allahabad HC and Madhya Pradesh HC have ordered police investigations into instances where these organisations allegedly married minors using forged documents, and facilitated conversions without following procedures mandated by the anti-conversion laws of these states.

In 2022, the Supreme Court orally observed that the Arya Samaj has “no business” issuing marriage certificates, while the Delhi High Court last year directed an Arya Samaj temple to use verified witnesses to ensure that marriages performed by the temple were genuine.

Justice Kumar referred to one such judgment by the Allahabad HC from May in his order on Thursday. He observed that the marriage between the Muslim man and the Hindu girl would be invalid because the girl was a minor and the man did not convert as per the UP anti-conversion law.

EXPLAINED
LAW

- The **Allahabad High Court** has directed the UP govt to investigate **fake Arya Samaj Societies** solemnizing marriages in violation of laws, especially involving **minors and illegal religious conversions**.
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What is Arya Samaj Marriage?

- Founded by **Swami Dayanand Saraswati** in **1875**.
 - Based on **Vedic rituals** and a process called **Shuddhi** (purification).
 - Popular for:
 - **Inter-caste and inter-faith** marriages.
 - Quick solemnization (few hours).
 - Less documentation and legal formalities.
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Legal Backing:

- Governed by the **Arya Marriage Validation Act, 1937**.
- Recognised under **Hindu Marriage Act, 1955**.
- Anyone marrying must **declare themselves as Hindu**.

Why is it under scrutiny?

Concern	Explanation
Bypassing of laws	Many Arya Samaj marriages allegedly avoid age verification and conversion checks.
Fake documents	Used to marry minors or avoid family/legal objections.
Violation of anti-conversion laws	Especially in BJP-ruled states like UP and MP, marriages are performed without lawful conversion processes.
Pending SC petition (2022)	Seeks clarity on whether Arya Samaj marriages must follow Special Marriage Act (SMA) .



UP Prohibition of Unlawful Conversion of Religion Act, 2021:

- Declares **void** any marriage involving **unlawful or forced religious conversion**.
 - Requires:
 - **60-day pre-conversion notice**.
 - Declaration of voluntary intent.
 - Verification by **district magistrate**.
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Judicial Observations:

- **Supreme Court (2022)**: Arya Samaj has **"no business issuing marriage certificates."**
- **Delhi HC**: Directed Arya Samaj to verify identities.
- **Allahabad HC**: Declared a marriage involving a minor Hindu girl and Muslim man invalid (he didn't convert).

Q. Consider the following statements about Arya Samaj marriages in India:

1. The Arya Marriage Validation Act, 1937 allows inter-caste marriages without declaring oneself Hindu.
2. Arya Samaj organisations are under legal scrutiny for facilitating conversions without following state-mandated procedures.
3. The Special Marriage Act allows interfaith couples to marry without changing their religion but requires 30-day public notice.
4. The UP Anti-Conversion Law mandates a pre-conversion declaration at least 30 days before the marriage.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

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

Anil Ambani faces ED lookout notice in laundering case

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
New Delhi, August 1

THE ENFORCEMENT DIRECTORATE has notified a Look Out Circular (LOC) against Reliance Group chairman Anil Ambani on Friday to prevent him from travelling abroad, according to sources.

The probe agency, earlier in the day, summoned the 66-year-old businessman for questioning in Delhi on August 5 in a money laundering case linked to an alleged bank loan fraud against his group companies.

According to the sources, the agency will record his statement under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) once he deposes. Some executives of Ambani's group companies have been also been summoned over the next few days.

The summons come after the federal agency conducted searches at 35 premises of 50 companies and 25 people, including executives of his business group, last week. The searches, launched on July 24, went on for three days.

The action pertains to alleged financial irregularities and collective loan "diversion" pegged at more than ₹17,000 crore by multiple group companies of Anil Ambani, including Reliance Infrastructure (R Infra).

The agency found, on the basis of a Sebi report, that R Infra "diverted" funds disguised as inter-corporate deposits (ICDs) to Reliance Group companies through a company named CLE. It is alleged that R Infra did not disclose CLE as its "related party" to avoid approvals from shareholders and audit panels.

A Reliance Group spokesperson said in a statement that the allegation regarding alleged

LOSING GROUND

■ ED is probing companies of Anil Ambani for financial irregularities of more than

₹17,000 crore

■ Ambani has been summoned for questioning in Delhi on August 5

■ A Reliance Group spokesperson alleged diversion of **₹10,000 crore** was a 10-year-old matter



■ R Infra has stated Ambani is not on its board since March 2022

diversion of ₹10,000 crore to an undisclosed party was a 10-year-old matter and the company had stated in its financial statements that its exposure was only around ₹6,500 crore.







Reliance Infrastructure had publicly disclosed this matter on February 9, 2025, nearly six months ago, the statement said.

"Through mandatory mediation proceedings conducted by a retired Supreme Court judge and the mediation award filed before the Hon'ble Bombay high court, Reliance Infrastructure arrived at a settlement to recover its 100% exposure of ₹6,500 crore," it said.

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- The **Enforcement Directorate (ED)** has issued a **Look Out Circular (LOC)** against **Anil Ambani** to prevent him from leaving the country.
- Ambani has been **summoned on August 5** for questioning in a **money laundering case** involving his group companies.

 **Key Allegations:**

Detail	Description
 Amount involved	₹17,000 crore (financial irregularities and alleged loan diversion)
 Investigation focus	Inter-corporate deposits (ICDs) disguised as loans to related parties
 Companies involved	Multiple Reliance Group firms including Reliance Infrastructure (RInfra)
 Applicable Law	PMLA (Prevention of Money Laundering Act)
 Source of Allegation	SEBI report: RInfra diverted ICDs to group companies via CLE, a non-disclosed related party
 Legal proceedings	Ongoing in Bombay High Court; Rs 6,500 crore recovery claim made

RInfra's Position:

- RInfra claims:
 - The ₹10,000 crore diversion issue is a **10-year-old matter**.
 - **Ambani is not on the board since March 2022**.
 - Exposure limited to **₹6,500 crore**, with attempts to recover underway.
 - Disclosure made in **February 2025** (publicly).
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Other Developments:

- ED searched **35 premises of 50 companies** from July 24 for 3 days.
 - Other group executives may also be summoned for questioning.
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Q. Consider the following statements regarding the recent ED investigation into Anil Ambani's companies:

1. The Enforcement Directorate has issued a Look Out Circular against Anil Ambani under the Benami Transactions Act.
2. The case involves alleged diversion of funds by Reliance Infrastructure through inter-corporate deposits.
3. Rlnfra has claimed that Anil Ambani has not been on its board since March 2022.
4. The financial irregularity is estimated to be over ₹17,000 crore according to ED investigations.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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



Kavach 4.0

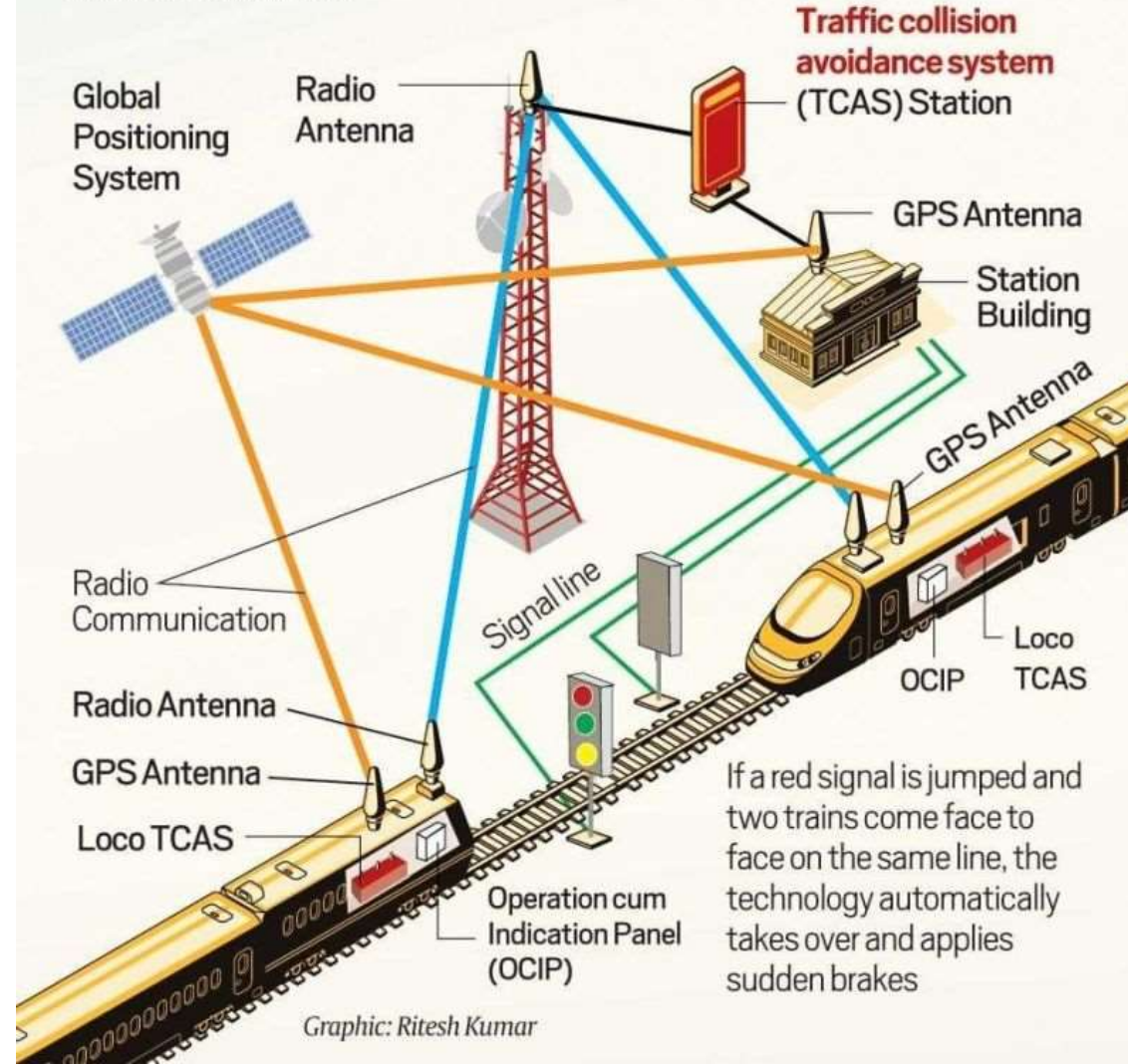
- Indian Railways has commissioned indigenous railway safety system **Kavach 4.0** on the Mathura-Kota section of high-density Delhi-Mumbai route.
- **What is Kavach?**
- It is an indigenously developed **Automatic Train Protection (ATP)** system by the **Research Designs and Standards Organisation (RDSO)** in collaboration with Indian industry.
- Kavach aids the Loco Pilot in running of trains within **specified speed limits** by automatic application of brakes in case Loco Pilot fails to do so and also helps the trains to run safely during inclement weather.

- It is designed to the highest safety standard — **Safety Integrity Level 4 (SIL-4)** — where the probability of failure is just **1 in 10,000 years**.
- The advanced version '**Kavach 4.0**' approved in May 2025 for speeds up to 160 kmph

HOW RAILWAYS' KAVACH PROTECTION SYSTEM WORKS




KPS is a set of electronic and radio frequency devices installed in locomotives, in the signalling system as well the tracks, that talk to each other using ultra-high radio frequencies to control the brakes of trains and also alert drivers



The background features two large, overlapping, curved lines. One line 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 1 MW Green Hydrogen Plant Commissioned at Kandla Port

- India's first indigenously developed **1 MW Green Hydrogen Power Plant** is inaugurated at the Deendayal Port Authority (DPA) in **Kandla, Gujarat**.
- **About**
- The plant is capable of producing approximately **140 metric tonnes of green hydrogen** annually.
- The Deendayal Port Authority has previously introduced India's first **Made-in-India all-electric green tug**, further reinforcing its leadership in eco-friendly port operations.

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- **What is Green Hydrogen?**
 - **Green Hydrogen:** The hydrogen produced via electrolysis, the splitting of water into hydrogen and oxygen with electricity generated from renewable energy sources such as solar or wind, is known as Green hydrogen.
 - **MNRE defines Green Hydrogen** as having a well-to-gate emission (i.e., including water treatment, electrolysis, gas purification, drying and compression of hydrogen) of not more than **2 kg CO2 equivalent / kg H₂**.
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- **About Kandla Port**

- Kandla Port, officially known as **Deendayal Port Authority**, is a major seaport located in the **Kutch district** of Gujarat, India.
- It's situated on the **Kandla Creek**, about 90 km from the mouth of the Gulf of Kutch.
- Kandla Port was **constructed in the 1950s** to serve as the primary seaport for western India after the partition of India and Pakistan.

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Central Empowered Committee Report on CAMPA

- The **Supreme Court-mandated Central Empowered Committee (CEC)** assessed India's **compensatory afforestation initiatives**, finding that while **85% of the target has been met**, only **67.5%** of the **CAMPA funds** have been utilized

ABOUT CAMPA FUND

➤ The Campa fund is a national-level corpus fund where the compensation amount collected from user agencies like industries when forestland is diverted for non-forest purposes is deposited



➤ Fund is to be utilized for compensatory afforestation activities, protection of forests, forest-related infrastructure development, assisted natural regeneration of forests, etc.

- What is Compensatory Afforestation Fund Management and Planning Authority (CAMPA)?
- About:
 - The CAMPA is a statutory body established (in both at centre and states/UTs) under Compensatory Afforestation Fund (CAF) Act, 2016.
 - It aims to manage and oversee funds collected for compensatory afforestation when forest land is diverted for non-forest purposes.

- **Background:** The Supreme Court established **CAMPA** in **2002** through the ***T.N. Godavarman vs Union of India (1995)*** case to monitor and guide **Compensatory Afforestation (CA)**.
 - It was created as an **ad-hoc National Advisory Council** due to **unutilized afforestation funds** and **inconsistent fund management by states**.

- **CAF Act, 2016:**

- The **CAF Act, 2016** came into force in **2018** and **CAF Rules, 2018** institutionalized the management of afforestation funds.
- **Dedicated Funds Created:** The **National CAF (NCAF)** is managed under the **Public Account of India** by **National CAMPA (MoEFCC)**, and the **State CAF (SCAF)** is managed under the **Public Accounts of States/UTs** by **State CAMPA Authorities**. Both are **interest-bearing** and **non-lapsable**.
- **Fund Management:** **90% of the CAMPA funds are allocated to States/UTs** for afforestation, while **10%** is retained by the Centre for oversight and capacity-building. The funds accrue annual interest as determined by the Central Government.

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Human Outer Planetary Exploration (HOPE)

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- Bengaluru-based space company Protoplanet has launched the Human Outer Planetary Exploration (HOPE) station in Ladakh's Tso Kar region to simulate lunar and Martian conditions.




- **What It Is?**

- HOPE is a **moon and Mars simulation research station** located in Ladakh's high-altitude Tso Kar basin, mimicking off-Earth terrain and environmental conditions.
- **Developed By:** The project is spearheaded by Protoplanet, a Bengaluru-based space outreach organisation, with technical and financial assistance from ISRO.



- **Key Features:**

- Located at high-altitude, cold-desert terrain resembling lunar and Martian environments.
 - Two scientists will live in isolation for 10 days to test deep space stress resilience.
 - Research includes studies on mental health, biological adaptation, and mission planning.
 - ISRO guided the selection criteria for crew participants.
 - Periodic crew rotation planned to test individual variability in confined conditions.
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Thank you 😊

