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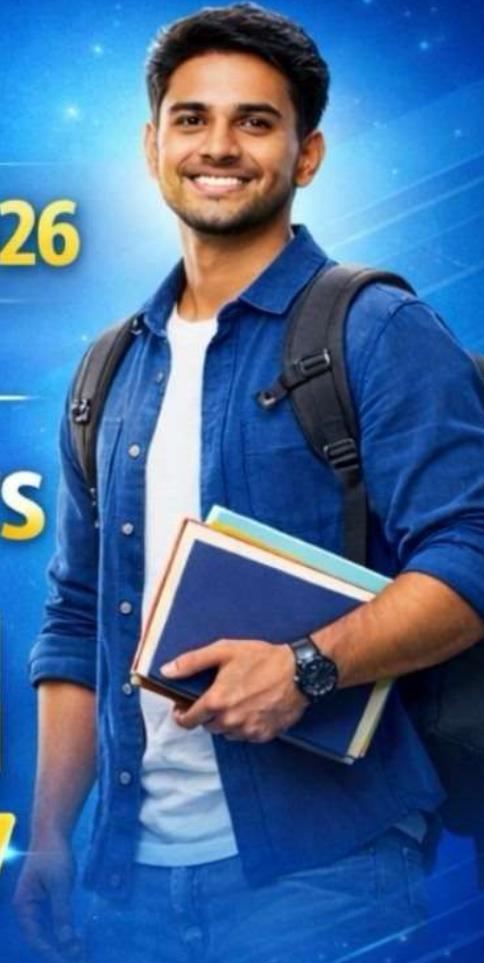
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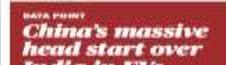
LEFT MIND EXTREMISM
India is now free from Maoists, declares Shah
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China's massive head start over India in EVs
Early adoption reduced its exposure to fuel crisis
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INSIDE



EC adding other voters to Bengal rolls Trinamool

KOLKATA
Claiming that a large number of Form 6 applications for inclusion of new voters were being submitted weeks ahead of the West Bengal Assembly poll, Trinamool Congress leader Aditya Ghose said the Election Commission was adding voters from Bhar and Uttar Pradesh to the state's electoral rolls. ■ PAGE 2



Israel passes Bill on death penalty for Palestinians

JERUSALEM
Israel's parliament on Monday passed a law approving the death penalty for Palestinians convicted of murdering Israelis. The Bill's passage marked the culmination of a years-long push by Israel's far right to escalate punishment for nationalists convicted of nationalistic offences against Israelis. ■ PAGE 14



Myanmar junta head exits, eyes presidential role

NAUYIDDON
Myanmar cleared the way on Monday for coup leader General Min Aung Hlaing to become President. The incumbent has ruled in civilian garb, with lawmakers nominating him to be one among three Vice-Presidents, who will later be considered for President, and the junta replacing him. ■ PAGE 14

Trump threatens Iran's oil, power sites over deal

U.S. President claims to have made 'great progress' with 'more reasonable regime' in Iran; Tehran says it is not engaged in direct talks, terms peace proposals received through intermediaries irrational; Israel says it hit weapons facilities as it continues to exchange fire with the Islamic Republic; Tehran continues to target U.S. bases in the region

stansy tubay

U.S. President Donald Trump said on Monday that his administration was engaging in talks with Iran and threatened to strike its oil, power, and water infrastructure if Tehran did not quickly agree to a deal and reopen the Strait of Hormuz.

Iran denied holding direct talks, saying it had received a proposal through intermediaries that contained "very excessive, unrealistic, and irrational" demands.

"The United States of America is in serious discussion with a new and more reasonable regime to end our Military Operations in Iran," Mr. Trump wrote in a social media post.

"Great progress has been made but, if for any reason a deal is not shortly reached, which it probably



Collateral damage An Israeli refinery on fire after it was hit by drones from an Iranian missile, sources

will be, and if the Hormuz Strait is not immediately "Open for Business," we will conclude our lovely "stay" in Iran by blowing up and completely destroying all of their Electricity Generating Plants, Oil Wells, and Water Infrastructure and possibly all desalination plants."

"It is not clear how much, even inside the U.S.,

show the extent of global trust in the U.S. claims in the field of diplomacy is to account," Kamran Bagheri, spokesperson of Iran's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, said about Mr. Trump's claims about talks. "Reactions and reflections also

mine the end" of the ongoing war.

Iran and Israel continued to exchange fire on Monday. While the Israel Defense Forces claimed to have struck weapons production sites in Iran, Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps said they fired the another wave of attacks targeting Israel and American bases in the region.

"The targets included a site where long-range anti-aircraft missiles are assembled, a manufacturing fa-

Spain denies U.S. permission to use airspace for 'illegal' war on Iran, widening rift with Trump

Spain has closed its airspace to U.S. planes involved in the Iran war, the country's Defence Minister said on Monday, marking another step in the government's opposition to U.S. and Israeli involvement in the conflict in West Asia.

The country had already said that the U.S. could not use jointly-operated military bases in the Iran conflict, which Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez has described as illegal, reckless and unjust.

Minister Margarita Robles said on Monday that the same logic applied to the use of Spanish airspace in the conflict.

"This was made perfectly clear to the American ambassador when he visited the very beginning. Therefore, neither the bases are authorized, nor, of course, is the use of Spanish airspace authorized for any



Protesters hold banners at U.S. President Donald Trump and Israeli Prime Benjamin Netanyahu in Madrid during a demonstration under the slogan 'Stop with Trump and Zionism' on Tuesday

actions related to the war in Iran," Mr. Robles said. Spain's government under Mr. Sanchez has refused to respond to U.S. and Israel's latest military actions in West Asia. He has called on the U.S. to end the war, saying earlier this month, "You cannot respond to me illegality with another, because that's how humanity's great disasters begin."

After Mr. Sanchez's government denied the U.S. use of the Base and Moran bases in southern Spain, U.S. President Donald Trump threatened to cut trade with Madrid.

It was the latest flare-up between Spain and the U.S., which made trade

threats against the European nation last year, too, when Mr. Sanchez said that his government would not increase its defence spending in accordance with a ramp-up agreed to by other NATO members following pressure from Mr. Trump.

At the time, Mr. Sanchez's government said that Spain could meet its military commitments by spending 2.1% of gross domestic product on defence, instead of the 3% the rest of the 32-nation military alliance agreed upon.

Mr. Sanchez was also among the most vocal critics of Israel's actions in the war in Gaza, which invited criticism from Israel's government on several occasions. "I think everyone knows Spain's position; it's very clear," Mr. Robles said, calling the war in Iran "profoundly illegal and profoundly unjust."

Non-durables sector, too, contracted 0.6%, the second consecutive month of contraction.

Manufacturing, capital goods lift IIP growth to 5.2% in Feb.

Industrial uptick



in February 2026 from 8.1% in January. The growth in investment led, with basic metals, automobiles, machinery, and durable light goods in capital goods and infrastructure. The growth in investment led, with basic metals, automobiles, machinery, and durable light goods in capital goods and infrastructure driven

Uniform 50% LS seat hike to benefit North: Revanth

R. Ravikanth Reddy
HYDRABAD
Telangana Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy has criticised the Centre's proposal to increase the number of Lok Sabha seats by a blanket 50% across all states, asserting that the move will disproportionately benefit northwestern states while leaving southern states politically marginalised.

He opposed the idea of applying a uniform 50% hike in every state under the proposed definition as it would widen existing disparities, particularly disadvantaging the southern States. The relative imbalance in the state problem as the Hindu belt would see a rise of roughly 142 seats, he said. The current difference in representation between states must be maintained," the Chief Minister said, adding that "there is no objection to increasing the number of Assembly seats in states but Parliament is a different ball game."

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI
Growth in India's industrial activity accelerated marginally to 5.2% in February, from 5.3% in the previous month. This was also considerably faster than the 2.8% growth in February last year. The mining and quarrying sector, on the other hand, saw growth slowing to a four-month low of 3.1% in February 2026, down from 4.7% in January. This was, however, faster than the 1.6% seen in February 2025. The growth in the electricity sector, too, slowed to 2.3%

Trump threatens Iran's oil, power sites over deal

U.S. President claims to have made 'great progress' with 'more reasonable regime' in Iran; Tehran says it is not engaged in direct talks, terms peace proposals received through intermediaries 'irrational'; Israel says it hit weapons facilities as it continues to exchange fire with the Islamic Republic; Tehran continues to target U.S. bases in the region

Stanly Johny

U.S. President Donald Trump said on Monday that his administration was engaging in talks with Iran and threatened to strike its oil, power, and water infrastructure if Tehran did not quickly agree to a deal and reopen the Strait of Hormuz.

Iran denied holding direct talks, saying it had received a proposal through intermediaries that contained "very excessive, unrealistic, and irrational" demands.

"The United States of America is in serious discussions with a new and more reasonable regime to end our Military Operations in Iran," Mr. Trump wrote in a social media post.

"Great progress has been made but, if for any reason a deal is not shortly reached, which it probably

will be, and if the Hormuz Strait is not immediately "Open for Business," we will conclude our lovely "stay" in Iran by blowing up and completely obliterating all of their Electric[ity] Generating Plants, Oil Wells and Kharg Island (and possibly all desalination plants!)."

48-hour deadline

On March 10, Mr. Trump threatened to hit Iran "20 times harder" if it did not open the Strait of Hormuz. On March 21, he gave a 48-hour deadline to Iran to reopen the strait, threatening to destroy Iran's power plants if it did not do so. On March 23, Mr. Trump backed off, delaying his deadline by five days, which was extended to April 6.

The U.S. President said his administration is in talks with Iran to end the war, while the Pentagon is sending additional troops



Collateral damage: An Israeli refinery on fire after it was hit by debris from an Iranian missile. REUTERS

to the region. Iran has denied reports of negotiations and said it has got a proposal from Washington which is not acceptable. It has made its own counter-proposal.

"It is not clear how much, even inside the U.S.,

the country's claims about diplomacy and negotiations are seriously taken into account," Esmail Baghaei, spokesperson of Iran's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, said about Mr. Trump's claims about talks. "Reactions and reflections also

show that the extent of global trust in the U.S. claims in the field of diplomacy is very limited."

Iran's Khatam al-Anbiya Central Headquarters dismissed Mr. Trump's threats and said Tehran "is the party that will deter-

mine the end" of the ongoing war.

"Even though Trump, egoistically and mistakenly, initiated a military aggression against Iran along with the child-killing Zionist regime, he well knows that he will eventually be faced with the heroic and seasoned Iranian nation and its armed forces. This is why he has resorted to other world leaders to end the war," military spokesman Ebrahim Zolfaqari said.

Iran and Israel continued to exchange fire on Monday. While the Israel Defence Forces claimed to have struck weapons production sites in Iran, Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps said they fired the another wave of attacks targeting Israel and American bases in the region.

The targets included a site where long-range anti-aircraft missiles are assembled, a manufacturing fa-

cility for components for anti-tank and anti-aircraft missiles, and a production and R&D site for ballistic missile engines, the IDF said. Israeli authorities said Iran carried out at least six missile attacks. An oil refinery in Haifa came under attack, causing a large blaze.

The Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) said they fired the 87th wave of attacks on Monday, targeting Israel and American bases in the region. According to an IRGC statement, the strikes targeted five U.S. bases in the region, as well as military positions in the southern, central and northern parts of Israel, including Haifa Bay, Kiryat Shmona, Tel Aviv, Be'er Sheva, Dimona, al-Kharj, Jufair and other locations.

EDITORIAL

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DISCUSSION SOUGHT IN LS

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Manufacturing, capital goods lift IIP growth to 5.2% in Feb.

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Growth in India's industrial activity accelerated marginally to 5.2% in February, driven by a quickening of growth in the manufacturing and capital goods sectors, data released by the Centre on Monday showed.

The data on the Index of Industrial Production for February, released by the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation, shows that the final growth for January was also upgraded to 5.1% from the provisional 4.8% stated

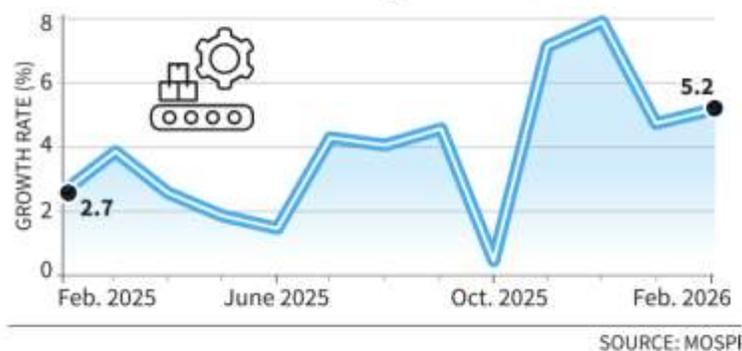
as part of last month's data release.

Within the Index, growth in the manufacturing sector accelerated to 6% in February, from 5.3% in the previous month. This was also considerably faster than the 2.8% in growth in February last year. The mining and quarrying sector, on the other hand, saw growth slowing to a four-month low of 3.1% in February 2026, down from 4.3% in January. This was, however, faster than the 1.6% seen in February 2025.

Growth in the electricity sector, too, slowed to 2.3%

Industrial uptick

The chart shows month-wise IIP growth rates (in %)



in February 2026 from 5.1% in January.

"The growth is investment led, with basic metals, automobiles, machin-

ery, and double digit gains in capital goods and infrastructure/construction goods pointing to a capex and infrastructure driven

upcycle," Rajeev Sharan, Head of Research at Brickwork Ratings said.

Notably, growth in the capital goods sector accelerated to a nine-month high of 12.5% in February 2026 from 4.1% in the previous month. This performance on the back of a relatively strong performance of 8.1% in February of last year.

Consumer demand, however, seems to have slumped, according to the data. The consumer durables sector contracted 2.1% in February 2026, the sector's worst performance in 27 months. The consumer

non-durables sector, too, contracted 0.6%, the second consecutive month of contraction.

"Overall, the data confirms that investment linked sectors are anchoring growth, while softer consumer non durables and modest mining and electricity gains highlight areas where the recovery is still incomplete," Mr. Sharan said. "From a credit rating perspective, sustained manufacturing and investment momentum support credit strength, though uneven demand means fundamentals are still evolving."

- India's Index of Industrial Production (IIP) growth increased to **5.2% in February 2026**.
 - भारत की औद्योगिक उत्पादन सूचकांक (IIP) वृद्धि **फरवरी 2026 में 5.2%** रही।
 - The rise was mainly supported by better performance in **manufacturing and capital goods**.
 - यह वृद्धि मुख्यतः **विनिर्माण (Manufacturing) और पूंजीगत वस्तुओं (Capital Goods)** के बेहतर प्रदर्शन से हुई।
 - The data indicates that investment-linked sectors are performing strongly, though consumer demand remains uneven.
 - यह आँकड़ा दर्शाता है कि निवेश-आधारित क्षेत्र मजबूत प्रदर्शन कर रहे हैं, हालांकि उपभोक्ता मांग अभी भी असमान बनी हुई है।
-

2. What is IIP?

- IIP is a short-term indicator that measures changes in the volume of industrial output in the economy.
- IIP एक अल्पकालिक सूचक है जो अर्थव्यवस्था में औद्योगिक उत्पादन की मात्रा में परिवर्तन को मापता है।
- It is released by the **Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI)**.
- इसे **सांख्यिकी और कार्यक्रम क्रियान्वयन मंत्रालय (MoSPI)** जारी करता है।
- It reflects the performance of three major sectors: **Mining, Manufacturing, and Electricity**.
- यह तीन प्रमुख क्षेत्रों के प्रदर्शन को दर्शाता है: **खनन, विनिर्माण और विद्युत**।
- Among these, manufacturing carries the highest weight in IIP.
- इनमें विनिर्माण का IIP में सबसे अधिक भार होता है।

- Overall IIP growth accelerated to **5.2% in February 2026**.
 - कुल IIP वृद्धि फरवरी 2026 में 5.2% तक बढ़ी।
 - January 2026 growth was revised upward to **5.1%** from the earlier provisional estimate of **4.8%**.
 - जनवरी 2026 की वृद्धि को पहले के **4.8%** के प्रारंभिक अनुमान से बढ़ाकर **5.1%** किया गया।
 - Manufacturing growth improved to **6% in February** from **5.3% in January**.
 - विनिर्माण वृद्धि जनवरी के **5.3%** से बढ़कर फरवरी में **6%** हो गई।
 - Capital goods growth accelerated sharply to **12.5%**, a nine-month high.
 - पूंजीगत वस्तुओं की वृद्धि तेज होकर **12.5%** पर पहुँच गई, जो नौ माह का उच्च स्तर है।
 - Mining and quarrying slowed to **3.1%** from **4.3%** in January.
 - खनन और उत्खनन क्षेत्र की वृद्धि जनवरी के **4.3%** से घटकर **3.1%** रह गई।
 - Electricity sector growth slowed to **2.3%** in February from **5.1%** in January.
 - विद्युत क्षेत्र की वृद्धि जनवरी के **5.1%** से घटकर फरवरी में **2.3%** रह गई।
-

Topic	Content
What is IIP?	<p>IIP stands for Index of Industrial Production. It measures the short-term changes in the volume of industrial production in an economy.</p> <p>IIP का पूर्ण रूप औद्योगिक उत्पादन सूचकांक है। यह अर्थव्यवस्था में औद्योगिक उत्पादन की मात्रा में अल्पकालिक परिवर्तन को मापता है।</p>
Released by	<p>It is released by the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI).</p> <p>इसे सांख्यिकी और कार्यक्रम क्रियान्वयन मंत्रालय (MoSPI) जारी करता है।</p>
Nature of Indicator	<p>It is a high-frequency economic indicator used to track industrial growth.</p> <p>यह एक उच्च-आवृत्ति आर्थिक सूचक है जिसका उपयोग औद्योगिक वृद्धि को ट्रैक करने के लिए किया जाता है।</p>
Purpose	<p>It helps in understanding the trend and performance of the industrial sector.</p> <p>यह औद्योगिक क्षेत्र की प्रवृत्ति और प्रदर्शन को समझने में मदद करता है।</p>
Base Year	<p>The present base year of IIP is 2011–12.</p> <p>IIP का वर्तमान आधार वर्ष 2011–12 है।</p>
Main Sectors Covered	<p>IIP covers three main sectors: Mining, Manufacturing, and Electricity.</p> <p>IIP तीन मुख्य क्षेत्रों को कवर करता है: खनन, विनिर्माण और विद्युत।</p>
Most Important Sector	<p>Manufacturing has the highest weight in IIP.</p> <p>IIP में विनिर्माण का भार सबसे अधिक होता है।</p>
Why Manufacturing Important	<p>Because it represents the largest share of industrial activity in India.</p> <p>क्योंकि यह भारत की औद्योगिक गतिविधि का सबसे बड़ा हिस्सा दर्शाता है।</p>

Use-Based Classification	<p>IIP is also classified by use into Primary Goods, Capital Goods, Intermediate Goods, Infrastructure/Construction Goods, Consumer Durables, and Consumer Non-Durables.</p> <p>IIP को उपयोग के आधार पर भी वर्गीकृत किया जाता है: प्राथमिक वस्तुएँ, पूंजीगत वस्तुएँ, मध्यवर्ती वस्तुएँ, अवसंरचना/निर्माण वस्तुएँ, उपभोक्ता टिकाऊ वस्तुएँ और उपभोक्ता गैर-टिकाऊ वस्तुएँ।</p>
Capital Goods Meaning	<p>Capital goods are machines and equipment used for producing other goods and services.</p> <p>पूंजीगत वस्तुएँ वे मशीनें और उपकरण हैं जिनका उपयोग अन्य वस्तुओं और सेवाओं के उत्पादन में किया जाता है।</p>
Importance of Capital Goods	<p>Growth in capital goods indicates rise in investment and future production capacity.</p> <p>पूंजीगत वस्तुओं में वृद्धि निवेश और भविष्य की उत्पादन क्षमता में वृद्धि का संकेत देती है।</p>
Consumer Durables	<p>These are goods used for a longer period, such as TV, refrigerator, car, etc.</p> <p>ये वे वस्तुएँ हैं जिनका उपयोग लंबे समय तक होता है, जैसे टीवी, रेफ्रिजरेटर, कार आदि।</p>
Consumer Non-Durables	<p>These are goods used for immediate or short-term consumption, such as food, soap, medicines, etc.</p> <p>ये वे वस्तुएँ हैं जिनका उपयोग तुरंत या अल्पकाल के लिए होता है, जैसे भोजन, साबुन, दवाइयाँ आदि।</p>
Why IIP is Important	<p>It helps the government, RBI, policymakers, and businesses assess the health of the industrial sector.</p> <p>यह सरकार, RBI, नीति-निर्माताओं और व्यवसायों को औद्योगिक क्षेत्र की स्थिति का आकलन करने में मदद करता है।</p>
Link with Economy	<p>A higher IIP generally reflects better industrial activity and supports economic growth.</p> <p>उच्च IIP सामान्यतः बेहतर औद्योगिक गतिविधि को दर्शाता है और आर्थिक वृद्धि को सहारा देता है।</p>
Limitation	<p>IIP measures quantity/volume of production, not value or profitability.</p> <p>IIP उत्पादन की मात्रा को मापता है, न कि उसका मूल्य या लाभप्रदता।</p>

Sector-wise Table

Sector	Meaning	Exam Point
Mining	Extraction of minerals and raw materials from earth पृथ्वी से खनिज और कच्चे माल का निष्कर्षण	Provides raw materials to industries उद्योगों को कच्चा माल उपलब्ध कराता है
Manufacturing	Conversion of raw materials into finished goods कच्चे माल को तैयार वस्तुओं में बदलना	Highest weight in IIP IIP में सबसे अधिक भार
Electricity	Generation of electric power for industrial and domestic use औद्योगिक और घरेलू उपयोग हेतु विद्युत उत्पादन	Core sector support for industry उद्योग के लिए आधारभूत क्षेत्र

Use-Based Classification Table

Category	Meaning	What it Indicates
Primary Goods	Basic goods obtained directly from natural resources प्राकृतिक संसाधनों से सीधे प्राप्त मूल वस्तुएँ	Raw material base of economy अर्थव्यवस्था का कच्चा माल आधार
Capital Goods	Machinery/equipment used to produce other goods अन्य वस्तुएँ बनाने वाली मशीनरी/उपकरण	Investment trend निवेश की प्रवृत्ति
Intermediate Goods	Goods used as inputs in production of final goods अंतिम वस्तुओं के उत्पादन में प्रयुक्त इनपुट	Production chain strength उत्पादन श्रृंखला की मजबूती
Infrastructure/Construction Goods	Goods used in building infrastructure like roads, bridges, buildings सड़क, पुल, भवन जैसी अवसंरचना बनाने वाली वस्तुएँ	Infrastructure growth अवसंरचना वृद्धि
Consumer Durables	Long-lasting consumer goods लंबे समय तक चलने वाली उपभोक्ता वस्तुएँ	Urban demand / purchasing power शहरी मांग / क्रय शक्ति
Consumer Non-Durables	Short-use everyday goods दैनिक उपयोग की अल्पकालीन वस्तुएँ	Mass consumption trend सामान्य उपभोग की प्रवृत्ति

Q. Consider the following statements regarding the Index of Industrial Production (IIP):

प्रश्न. औद्योगिक उत्पादन सूचकांक (IIP) के संबंध में निम्नलिखित कथनों पर विचार कीजिए:

1. IIP is released by the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation.
2. IIP को सांख्यिकी और कार्यक्रम क्रियान्वयन मंत्रालय द्वारा जारी किया जाता है।
3. Manufacturing has the highest weight among the major sectors in IIP.
4. IIP के प्रमुख क्षेत्रों में विनिर्माण का भार सबसे अधिक होता है।
5. A rise in capital goods output generally indicates stronger investment activity in the economy.
6. पूंजीगत वस्तुओं के उत्पादन में वृद्धि सामान्यतः अर्थव्यवस्था में मजबूत निवेश गतिविधि का संकेत देती है।
7. Consumer durables growth always rises when IIP growth rises.
8. जब भी IIP वृद्धि बढ़ती है, उपभोक्ता टिकाऊ वस्तुओं की वृद्धि हमेशा बढ़ती है।

Which of the statements given above are correct?

उपरोक्त में से कौन-से कथन सही हैं?

(a) 1 and 2 only

(a) केवल 1 और 2

(b) 1, 2 and 3 only

(b) केवल 1, 2 और 3

(c) 2, 3 and 4 only

(c) केवल 2, 3 और 4

(d) 1, 2, 3 and 4

(d) 1, 2, 3 और 4

Ensuring federalism within delimitation

Article 81 of the Constitution states that seats should be distributed among States and within constituencies based on population such that "the ratio between the number and the population of the state is, so far as practicable, the same for all States". That ratio was similar in 1951 and 1971, since State populations had not diverged much. However, that situation does not hold any longer.

As India has become the world's most populous nation, and since Census 2011 is right around the corner, the delimitation exercise will also become due shortly. The 84th Constitutional Amendment Act, 2002 extended the freeze on the number of seats in Parliament and State Legislatures from 2002 to 2026, stating that "keeping in view the progress of family planning programmes in different parts of the country, the government...decided...as a motivational measure to enable the state governments to pursue the agenda for population stabilisation".

Hence, Lok Sabha seats shall "remain unaltered till the first census to be taken after the year 2026". The Census results will be announced by October 2026, after which the delimitation Commission (DC) will be constituted. After the outcome is declared, the 2029 Lok Sabha elections will follow.

Equal share to all across the constitutional amendment, it is legitimate to consider how much convergence has been achieved in the fertility rates over the last two decades. The analysis examined which States had achieved a Total Fertility Rate (TFR) needed to stabilise population growth, that is, 2.1 births per woman. The National Family Health Survey (NFHS) were used for this analysis. As per the findings of the third NFHS (2005-06), which is the closest survey to the 2002 constitutional amendment, in



Santhosh Meliorra
Former Professor, IIT

2006, nine States (Himachal Pradesh, Delhi, Goa, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala, and Tamil Nadu) had achieved a TFR of 2.1 or less. By 2011, most major States had achieved a TFR of 2.1 except five States (Bihar, UP, Jharkhand, Meghalaya and Manipur).

Clearly, while there was an improvement in the TFR across the country, the mean TFR among States below the national TFR mean was 1.6, while the corresponding mean for States above the national mean was 2.38. Thus, those States which have a higher mean than the national mean, in the latest NFHS-5 (2019-21), are still 45% higher, with respect to fertility rates, than that of early achievers. Therefore, based on the 2002 constitutional amendment, and in light of this analysis, it is being suggested here that seat allocation should, post the 2026 census, also be partially subject to this differential performance. However, how much weight should be given to States' population stabilisation efforts in delimitation exercise?

Here, the logic underlying the PRC constitution (PRC can be considered. The PRC uses, in addition to total population size (60% weight), various other criteria for allocating finances to its provinces. The PRC also could reward/penalise States for demographic performance. To arrive at the number of seats allotted per State, the PRC could consider the following based on population size and the demographic Performance (DPR) of States.

No change is to be made to the seat allocation by State for the prevailing 543 seats in the Lok Sabha in 2024, the Demerit principle can be applied only to the additional seats over the existing 543, meaning that the population principle still remains overwhelmingly dominant.

Moreover, there are dimensions to the Demerit principle — first, early achievement (TFR of 2.1 or less before 2006), should be given only 10% weightage in the estimation of seat allocation to a State, and second, the rate of decline in TFR between 2005 and 2021 should be given 90% weightage. The share of seats in absolute terms that the less populous ones. This system also ensures that the share of States that performed well in bringing down population growth do not lose their seat share. This is fair federalism.

Upholding federalism
What the Demerit principle acknowledges is that States are meaningful political units, and that democracy is about fair voice, and not just raw numbers. Federal stability matters as much as electoral arithmetic. Applying Demerit to the Lok Sabha would balance democratic equality with federal fairness, reduce regional resentment, protect incentives for good governance, and improve the quality of representation without undermining legitimacy.

However, what is the ideal Lok Sabha size after expansion? The average population per seat in a state in 1971 was between 10 and 11 lakh. But then the total population of India was barely 500 million. It is now almost three times as large (1.4 billion). If India is to keep democracy vibrant with serious time allocated to deep debate, then the Lok Sabha size cannot be permitted to increase beyond 700.

Moreover, the delimitation exercise should not be seen as a north-south matter. A host of States across India, such as Punjab, Haryana, Himachal, Goa etc., had adopted the goal of containing their population, not just the southern States. Therefore, fair federalism is critical to the survival of our Union.

Shielding 'choice' from 'honour'

Karnataka's anti-honour killing Bill protects and upholds the right to choose

STATE OF PLAY

By **Harishree S.**
@harishree.s@hindu.com

The Gujarat government recently proposed that couples who want to register their marriage would have to submit identity documents of their parents and declare that they have been kept informed. In contrast, the just-concluded Budget session of the Karnataka Legislature saw the passage of the Karnataka Freedom of Choice in Marriage and Protection and Prohibition of Crimes in the Name of Honour and Tradition (Eva Namamma) Bill, 2020, which provides legal protection for couples in inter-caste relationships who face threats, violence or coercion from anyone, including their own family members.

The Bill positively states that "the consent of the person's parents, family, caste or class is not necessary for two adult individuals agree to enter into a marriage". The debate about the need for a specific law to curb "honour"-related violence had gained traction in Karnataka following the gruesome killing of a pregnant 20-year-old by her father for marrying a Dalit man in the train Newagrah village in Hutball taluk in north Karnataka in December, 2015. According to statistics provided by Home Minister G. Parag Meenakshi in the House, Karnataka has witnessed 18 hate crimes against couples over the last five years.

A long fight
The phrase "Eva Namamma, Eva Namamma" in the title of the Bill harks back to a vintage of 13th century philosopher-reformer Ramanama that

Karnataka

roughly translates as "Do not ask, 'who is he, who is he, who is he?' say 'he is ours, he is ours, he is ours'." It contains a message of inclusivity from a reformer whose decision to facilitate a marriage between a Dalit man and a Brahmin woman led to intense social turmoil and violence.

The Bill notes "an alarming increase in violence, harassment, threats and social ostracism — often perpetrated in the name of caste hierarchy, honour, custom — being directed against individuals, or entire young couples, who exercise their right to marry".

It notes that such crimes disproportionately affect women, who are picked by political parties and chosen to be in power by the electorate.

The stated aim of the Bill is not only "to affirm and protect the liberty, dignity, and autonomy of all persons, to prevent crimes committed in the name of 'honour' and 'tradition'", but also "to provide legal safeguards, remedies, and institutional mechanisms for prevention, redressal, and rehabilitation".

The Bill proposes penalties, including a minimum five-year prison sentence for labelling in the name of "honour", while "stigmatising social boycotts linked to caste", it provides for institutional support for couples, including a unit of protection within six hours of receiving a complaint, estab-

lishment of state-funded safe houses in every district, and access to legal aid and assistance from non-governmental organisations.

It proposes creating a special cell for the prosecution of crimes in the name of "honour" with a 24-hour helpline. Eva Namamma Vedic, in all districts to facilitate solemnisation of marriages, provide counselling services etc.

Lingering ambiguities

The specific provisions envisaged for the protection of couples in inter-caste relationships facing ostracism or violence are undoubtedly welcome. But the question of how effectively they will be implemented remains, considering that crimes against such couples have continued despite existing laws. This question is even more pertinent when the spectre of the times seems more inclined to caste consolidation than mobilisation — even more so in the way we choose our partners, but also to the way candidates are picked by political parties and chosen to be in power by the electorate.

Interestingly, while the new Bill is expected inter-caste couples has been passed, Karnataka is yet to, despite Cabinet approval, roll back the controversial Karnataka Protection of Right to Freedom of Religion Act, 2022 (anti-conversion Act) which in the previous Bharatiya Janata Party government. While this law with its stringent provisions, dealt with a gamut of issues related to conversion, cases across India illustrate how it comes into sharp focus in the case of inter-faith marriages (dubbed 'love jihad').

Clearly, consenting adults in inter-faith relationships facing hostility and violence also deserve support.

U.S.-Israel-Iran war puts India's EV gap in focus

While both India and China rely on oil supplies from West Asia, China's early EV adoption has made its transport sector less exposed to the fuel crisis

DATA POINT

By **Deevanshi Bhatnagar**

The surge in global oil prices after the U.S.-Iran war has exposed the differing levels of energy vulnerability in the two largest economies, India and China. Since the conflict began on February 28, crude and refined fuel prices have increased globally, with the Organisation of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) basket price rising by about 67% between February 27 and March 27, pushing up petrol, diesel and LPG costs.

The rise in fuel costs has revived interest in alternatives such as Electric Vehicles (EVs), plug-in hybrids and electric two-wheelers, especially in countries that rely heavily on imported oil. The war has also increased the risk of supply disruptions due to the closure of the Strait of Hormuz, through which about one-third of global oil supply normally passes. China received 3.4 million barrels of crude oil per day via the Strait in FY2019, the highest in volume. India followed at 2.1 million barrels per day. But while both countries depend on imported oil, China's faster adoption of EVs has reduced its transport sector's exposure to fuel shocks, whereas its transport sector remains heavily reliant on fossil fuels.

Data on EV penetration show the scale of the gap between the two countries. In March 2020 alone, new-energy vehicles accounted for about 12.9% of passenger car sales in China, according to estimates by the China Passenger Car Association, while in India, EVs made up only about 0% of new car registrations in 2020 (Chart 1). Absolute sales numbers highlight the contrast. China sold about nine lakh new-energy passenger vehicles in March 2020 alone, whereas India registered about 7,600 electric cars in the last three months. In the two- and

three-wheeler segment, China sold more than 72 lakh electric vehicles in 2020, while India sold even in 2020 were only about 4.27 lakh (Chart 2).

Because China began electrification earlier, the total number of EVs in use is far larger. China's electric car fleet had reached about 2.3 crore by 2020, compared with about 3.96 lakh in India in 2020. China had about 6.8 crore electric two- and three-wheelers in use, while India has about 33 lakh. Overall, India's total EV stock stood at about 27.3 lakh, still far below China's levels (Chart 3).

Infrastructure and supply chains also reflect the gap. As of February 2020, India had about 14 electric cars per public charging, compared with roughly nine in China by the end of 2018, indicating higher charging availability which has allowed China to push EV adoption faster in the passenger vehicle segment (Chart 4).

These differences have direct implications during oil crises. Countries with high EV adoption are less exposed to such increases in petrol and diesel prices because a larger share of transport runs on electricity.

The recent increase in fuel prices across several Asian countries following the Iran conflict have strengthened the argument for accelerating the transition to electric mobility. The shift is already visible in the market. Bloomberg recently reported that demand for EVs has increased across Asia after the Iran oil shock, with Chinese carmakers such as BYD seeing higher showroom traffic as consumers shift away from fuel-fuel-driven vehicles.

Electric gulf

China leads across the EV ecosystem with higher production, manufacturing, and charging infrastructure. India shows progress with growing EV sales, but faces gaps in infrastructure, maintenance, and supply chains.

CHART 1 EV sales in India and China (in lakh)



CHART 2 EV sales in India and China (in lakh)



CHART 3 EV sales in India and China (in lakh)

EV adoption

China leads across the EV ecosystem with higher production, manufacturing, and charging infrastructure. India shows progress with growing EV sales, but faces gaps in infrastructure, maintenance, and supply chains.

CHART 4 EV adoption rate in India and China (in %)



CHART 5 EV adoption rate in India and China (in %)

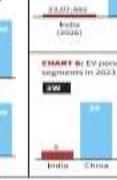


CHART 6 EV adoption rate in India and China (in %)

EV adoption

China leads across the EV ecosystem with higher production, manufacturing, and charging infrastructure. India shows progress with growing EV sales, but faces gaps in infrastructure, maintenance, and supply chains.

CHART 7 EV adoption rate in India and China (in %)



CHART 8 EV adoption rate in India and China (in %)



CHART 9 EV adoption rate in India and China (in %)

EV adoption

China leads across the EV ecosystem with higher production, manufacturing, and charging infrastructure. India shows progress with growing EV sales, but faces gaps in infrastructure, maintenance, and supply chains.

CHART 10 EV adoption rate in India and China (in %)

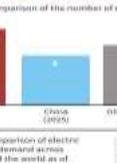


CHART 11 EV adoption rate in India and China (in %)

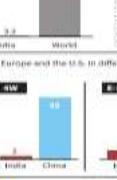


CHART 12 EV adoption rate in India and China (in %)

EV adoption

China leads across the EV ecosystem with higher production, manufacturing, and charging infrastructure. India shows progress with growing EV sales, but faces gaps in infrastructure, maintenance, and supply chains.

CHART 13 EV adoption rate in India and China (in %)



CHART 14 EV adoption rate in India and China (in %)

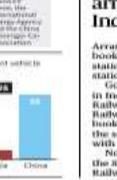


CHART 15 EV adoption rate in India and China (in %)

FROM THE ARCHIVES

The Hindu

FIFTY YEARS AGO MARCH 31, 1970

Indian wagon assembly unit in Iran favoured

New Delhi, March 30: Iran will be the best location for a railway wagon assembly plant to be set up for purposes of export orders, according to a project report written for the Union Ministry of Industry and Civil Supplies. The report written by Wagon India Division Limited, New Delhi has estimated that the assembly unit can be set up in 24 months at a total capital cost of Rs. 243.28 lakhs with an assembly capacity of 6,000 four-wheel wagons and neighbouring about 200 single-wheeler wagons. A limitation that the Government will have to face, if a decision is taken to go ahead with the project, is that Iran has already awarded a contract to Simmering Gram-Pauker of Austria, to design and construct a plant for production of 1,000 wagons per year. This plant is expected to go into operation in 1979.

"Implementation of this project," says the report, "will not only affect the prospects of export of wagons to Iran but will also have to be kept in view while considering the location of an assembly plant in one of the countries in West Asia."

The desirability of setting up a wagon assembly plant abroad needs to engage the attention of the Ministry of Industry Ministry, because of the very heavy freight incurred on the export of complete wagons.

A HUNDRED YEARS AGO MARCH 31, 1926

Through booking arrangements between India and Ceylon

Arrangements at present exist for through booking of goods and coaching traffic between stations on the South Indian Railway and stations on the Ceylon Government Railways. Goods and coaching traffic from any stations in India other than those on the South Indian Railway to stations on the Ceylon Government Railway and vice versa, may, however, be booked to the Madras Co. Ltd. Dhanuadhani and the senders should make previous arrangements with them to re-book the traffic onward. No responsibility will be accepted either by the South Indian or the Ceylon Government Railway in the matter of re-booking.

Electric gulf

China leads across the EV ecosystem with higher adoption, manufacturing, and charging infrastructure. India shows progress with respect to electric three-wheelers but faces gaps in scale, infrastructure, and supply chains

2W: Two-wheeler

3W: Three-wheeler

4W: Four-wheeler



Low voltage: An electric vehicle charging station at Freedom park in Bengaluru.
ALLEN EGENUSE J.

CHART 1: A comparison of the share of electric vehicles in new-passenger car sales (in %)

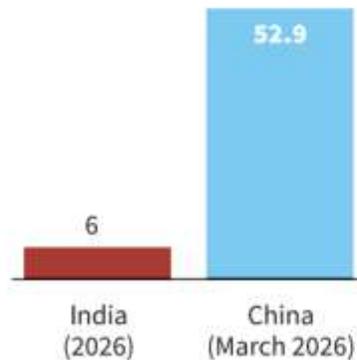


CHART 3: A comparison of the total number of electric vehicles in use

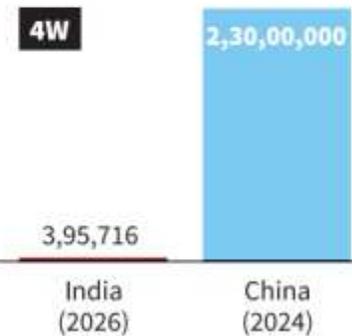


CHART 4: A comparison of the number of electric cars per public charger

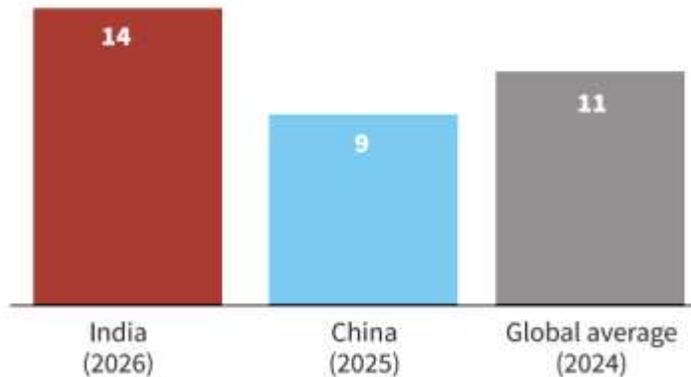


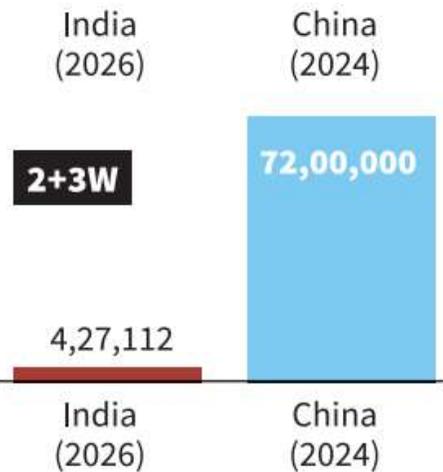
CHART 5: A comparison of electric vehicle battery demand across

The data for the charts

India
(2026)

China
(March 2026)

CHART 2: A comparison of absolute EV sales across the **four-wheeler (4W)** and **two- and three-wheeler (2+3W)** segments



2+3W

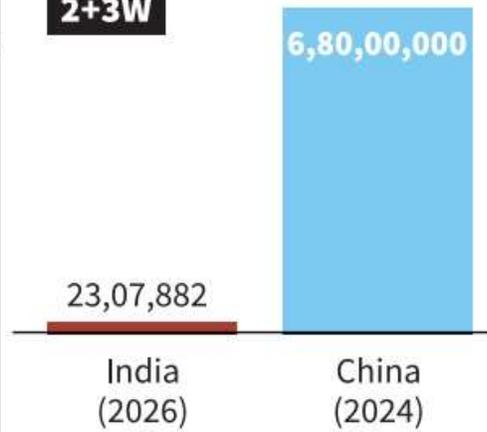
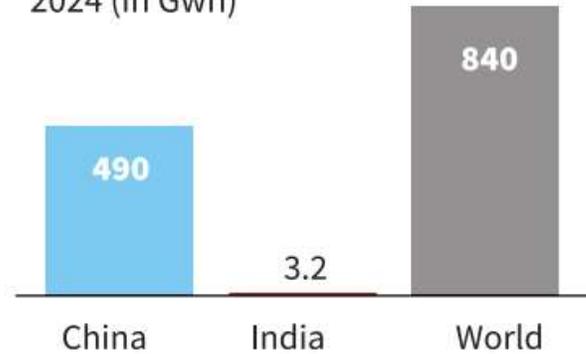
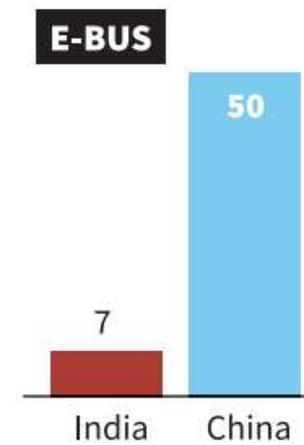
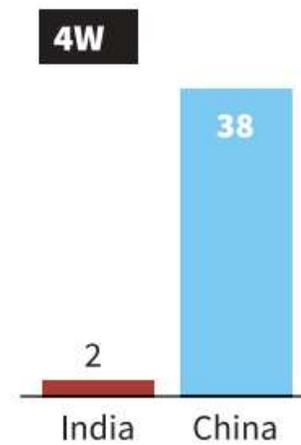
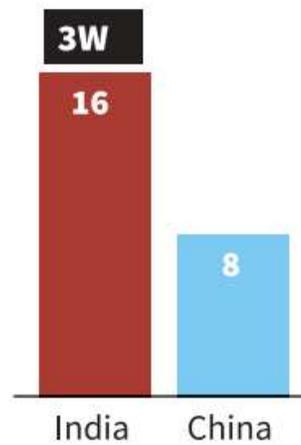
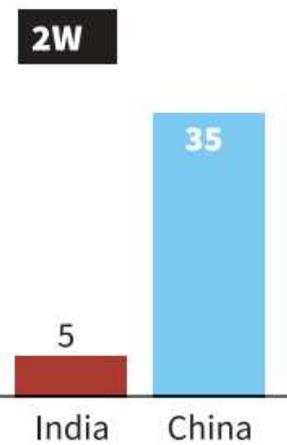


CHART 5: A comparison of electric vehicle battery demand across China, India and the world as of 2024 (in Gwh)



The data for the charts were sourced from the VAAHAN portal, National Energy Administration, China EV home, the International Energy Agency and the China Passenger Car Association

CHART 6: EV penetration rate across China, India, Europe and the U.S. in different vehicle segments in 2023 (in %)



Text & Link

THE HINDU

NEWS IN NUMBERS

Percentage of candidates with criminal cases

23 in per cent. About 23% of candidates contesting the Panchayati Raj elections have declared criminal cases, according to a report by the Association for Democratic Reforms. The analysis also found that 13% face serious charges.

Attacks, misconduct cases against govt. officials in Odisha

1,399 incidents. Odisha reported 1,399 cases of attacks and misbehaviour against government officials over the past two years. Chief Minister Mohan Chandra Mahapatra informed the Assembly.

Israel's approved Defence Budget in 2026

142 in Israeli shekel billion. Israel's parliament approved the 2026 budget early on Monday, providing for a significant increase in military spending as the country remains engaged in wars on multiple fronts.

Police station heads transferred by EC across West Bengal

173 The Election Commission on Sunday transferred 173 police station heads across West Bengal, including 83 under Kolkata Police, as part of measures to ensure fair Assembly polls, officials said.

Number of days ATF supplies will be available

60 There is an adequate supply of Aviation Turbine Fuel (ATF) for the next 60 days in the country without any interruption, Minister of Civil Aviation K. Jaganmohan Reddy said.

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On the implications of euthanasia

The Supreme Court reaffirmed the right to die with dignity under Article 21, allowing withdrawal of life support and emphasising patient autonomy. It shows a shift towards dignity and relief from suffering, while raising concerns about misuse and social inequality.

LETTER & SPIRIT

C.P.P. Srivastava

The recent judgment by the Supreme Court in the *Harish Bana v. Union of India* (2026) case has raised questions regarding the ethical, legal, and social implications (ELSI) of passive euthanasia. Euthanasia is related to the right to die with dignity, which was recognised by the Supreme Court in *Common Cause v. Union of India* (2008). The court held that the right to die with dignity is inseparable from the right to receive quality palliative care. Hence, in the *Harish Bana* case, the court, for the first time, allowed the withdrawal of the applicant's Clinically Assisted Nutrition and Hydration (CANH). The court had held in the *Common Cause* case that the right to die with dignity is an integral part of the right to life under Article 21 of the Constitution. Allowing passive euthanasia and recognising the Advance Medical Directive (AMD) were the two key aspects of the judgment. In the *Harish Bana* case, the court changed the requirement for two medical boards, a hospital board and a state-level board, refining it to make the process smoother, and mandating immediate judicial oversight in every case was removed. While addressing advance directives living wills, the court emphasised patient autonomy, allowing individuals to refuse life-sustaining treatment and die naturally with dignity. Considering the above, a few questions arise regarding euthanasia and its relevance in India. First, whether granting



BETTY KRANZ

passive euthanasia is ethical. It is logically perceived that birth and death are natural processes; hence, nature should decide when one should die and how the body responds to illness. In this context, any interference with the rules of nature may be considered unethical. However, it is also a fact that life is the period between birth and death, and it is spent in a society where dignity is of utmost importance. Life, therefore, can be viewed as more sociological than biological. Both the birth and the death should be dignified. In this context, the right to die with dignity assumes greater significance.

Ethical aspects of euthanasia
The ethical principle enshrined in this act of granting passive euthanasia further clarifies this issue. The primary and probably the most significant aspect is the principle of autonomy, which grants the patient — or, in cases of terminal illness, their next kin — the right to make

decisions. Second is the principle of beneficence, which is related to the patient's benefit, which the doctors treating the patient should consider. Third is the principle of non-maleficence, which suggests that the decision to allow passive euthanasia should not cause harm. Finally, the principle of justice must be protected to ensure that no iniquity is done to the patient. Apart from these principles, we may look at the decision from the viewpoint of the Theory of Double Effect proposed by St. Thomas Aquinas. According to this theory, every action creates two effects, and the one that is less harmful or beneficial should be considered ethical. In the case of passive euthanasia, the action — withdrawal of life support, or CANH in the *Harish Bana* case — leads to two effects. First, the death of the patient, and second, relief from suffering. If the decision is taken without malice, the act can be considered ethical as the patient was relieved of his

Social implications
The right to die with dignity or passive euthanasia in India reflects a progressive but cautious approach, mainly due to a transition in societal values. This transition is from rigid moral traditions to a more compassionate, rights-based approach. While it promotes dignity, autonomy, and relief from suffering, it raises concerns about misuse, ethical conflicts, and social inequality. There has also been a transition from the social attitude of protecting life at any cost to the quality of life being more important than its length. Another major implication is economic nature, as long-term life-support treatment without any hope of recovery would put the family under severe economic stress, especially in the middle- and lower-income groups. In this context, the right to die with dignity appears to be justified. Further, social implications may include its possible misuse and especially vulnerable people like the elderly, disabled and poor may face coercion. This may create a situation where the decision may be driven by financial constraints, social neglect, and family pressures. Hence, critics may point out that it would amount to disguised abandonment. The court has taken utmost care while delivering the judgment and stated that "passive euthanasia is an obscure and incorrect term, and should not be used either in common usage or legal writing and discussions". It unambiguously confirms the legal position on the issue, as the debate cannot be neatly divided into "acts" and "omissions". Further, the court also held that the patient is not abandoned by withdrawing or withholding medical treatment. Palliative and end-of-life care must continue for these patients. C.P.P. Srivastava is President, Centre for Applied Research in Governance, Delhi

THE GIST

The right to die with dignity is inseparable from the right to receive quality palliative care, and the court allowed the withdrawal of Clinically Assisted Nutrition and Hydration for the first time.

The revised guidelines streamlined the process by modifying the requirement of multiple medical boards and removing mandatory immediate judicial oversight, making implementation smoother.

What the Meta-YouTube ruling means for social media

What did the jury hold the platforms liable for? How did the case focus on platform design over content?

Sara Pankaj

The story so far: Los Angeles Superior Court jury, March 25, found Meta Platforms and Alphabet's YouTube liable for designing algorithms that foster addiction and harm users' mental health. The case centred on a woman who was addicted to social media platforms. The jury awarded \$3 million in compensatory damages, which dispensed 50% to Meta and 30% to YouTube, and designated punitive damages of up to \$3 million, subject to judicial confirmation.

What did the verdict say?
The presiding judge at the Los Angeles Superior Court has yet to formalise the final judgment. The 26-year-old woman, known as Kaley, testified that her social media use began as early as age 9 on YouTube and age 18 on Instagram because of their attention-grabbing design. Kaley's lawyers argued that features like infinite scroll, autoplay, and algorithm-driven notifications were specifically engineered to "hook" young users, she testified that this addiction

exacerbated her depression, anxiety, and body dysmorphic disorder. The case focused on platform design rather than content, sidestepping Section 230 immunity by characterising social media platforms as "defective products," focusing on design elements such as algorithmic amplification and addictive features rather than third-party content, making it harder for the companies to avert liability.

Snapchat and TikTok were defendants in the trial, while both settled with the plaintiff before it began, the terms of the agreements were not disclosed. **What evidence swayed the jury?**
The case reportedly relied on internal corporate documents, expert testimony, and user-behaviour data, pointing to evidence such as the Facebook Files, internal research reported by *The Wall Street Journal* in 2023 showing Meta knew Instagram could wear down body image issues for teenage girls, with one study noting that "25% of teen girls said Instagram made them feel worse." They also cited findings referenced in U.S. Senate hearings, where whistleblower Frances Haugen testified that company

research linked platform design to anxiety and compulsive use. In YouTube's case, it pointed to concerns that its recommendation system steers users toward increasingly engaging content to maximise watch time, an issue noted in academic research and media reports.

Why is this verdict a landmark?
The ruling is significant because it shifts liability from content to platform design. It challenges protections under Section 230 of the U.S. Communications Decency Act, which shields platforms from responsibility for user-generated content. Courts have typically dismissed such cases under Section 230 protections. For instance, in *Comcast v. Google* (2023), the U.S. Supreme Court declined to hold Google liable for YouTube's algorithmic recommendations of R18-related content. Similarly, in *Twitter v. Taamneh* (2023), an appeal, it could mark the beginning of a new era in which algorithmic design is scrutinised not just for efficiency, but for its societal and psychological impact. This parallels a *New York Times* writer with a focus on policy, current affairs, international relations, and geopolitics

What changes for social media companies?

The verdict came a day after a jury in New Mexico found Meta liable for the way in which its platforms endangered children and exposed them to sexually explicit material and contact with sexual predators. If upheld, the verdict could compel platforms to rethink core design features. The ruling heightens demands for algorithmic transparency, as seen in proposals like the U.S. Algorithmic Accountability Act. Crucially, the risk of punitive damages and over 1,000 pending lawsuits could trigger costly, complex litigation, pushing aggressive anti-trust-driven design legally vulnerable.

What is next for regulators?
At least half of Americans teens use YouTube or Instagram daily, according to the Pew Research Center. California is considering stricter rules on teen social media use, including potential restrictions on addictive features. At the federal level, lawmakers have proposed bills mandating algorithmic transparency and stronger child-safety protections. Recently, countries such as Australia have imposed restrictions on children to stop or limit their use of social media. The U.S. is running a pilot program to see how a ban on social media for people under 16 would work. It may also see an appeal, it could mark the beginning of a new era in which algorithmic design is scrutinised not just for efficiency, but for its societal and psychological impact. This parallels a *New York Times* writer with a focus on policy, current affairs, international relations, and geopolitics

THE GIST

A Los Angeles jury found Meta and YouTube liable for platform design that fostered addiction and harmed mental health, shifting focus from content to algorithmic amplification and addictive features.

The ruling challenges Section 230 protections and could trigger costly, complex litigation, pushing aggressive anti-trust-driven design legally vulnerable.

At least half of Americans teens use YouTube or Instagram daily, according to the Pew Research Center. California is considering stricter rules on teen social media use, including potential restrictions on addictive features. At the federal level, lawmakers have proposed bills mandating algorithmic transparency and stronger child-safety protections. Recently, countries such as Australia have imposed restrictions on children to stop or limit their use of social media. The U.S. is running a pilot program to see how a ban on social media for people under 16 would work. It may also see an appeal, it could mark the beginning of a new era in which algorithmic design is scrutinised not just for efficiency, but for its societal and psychological impact. This parallels a *New York Times* writer with a focus on policy, current affairs, international relations, and geopolitics

What the Meta-YouTube ruling means for social media

What did the jury hold the platforms liable for? How did the case focus on platform design over content?

Sae Pande

The story so far:

A Los Angeles Superior Court jury, on March 25, found Meta Platforms and Alphabet's YouTube liable for designing platforms in ways that foster addiction and harm users' mental health. The case centred on a woman who was addicted to social media platforms. The jury awarded \$3 million in compensatory damages, which dispensed 70% to Meta and 30% to YouTube, and designated punitive damages of up to \$3 million, subject to judicial confirmation.

What did the verdict say?

The presiding judge at the Los Angeles Superior Court has yet to formalise the final judgment. The 20-year-old woman, known as Kaley, testified that her social media use began as early as age 6 on YouTube and age 9 on Instagram because of their attention-grabbing design.

Kaley's lawyers argued that features like infinite scroll, autoplay, and algorithm-driven notifications were specifically engineered to "hook" young users. She testified that this addiction

exacerbated her depression, anxiety, and body dysmorphia.

The case focused on platform design rather than content, sidestepping Section 230 immunity by characterising social media platforms as "defective products," focusing on design elements such as algorithmic amplification and addictive features rather than third-party content, making it harder for the companies to avert liability.

Snapchat and TikTok were defendants in the trial, while both settled with the plaintiff before it began; the terms of the agreements were not disclosed.

What evidence swayed the jury?

The case reportedly relied on internal corporate documents, expert testimony, and user-behaviour data, pointing to evidence such as the 'Facebook Files', internal research reported by *The Wall Street Journal* in 2021 showing Meta knew Instagram could worsen body image issues for teenage girls, with one study noting that "32% of teen girls said Instagram made them feel worse." They also cited findings referenced in U.S. Senate hearings, where whistleblower Frances Haugen testified that company

research linked platform design to anxiety and compulsive use.

In YouTube's case, it pointed to concerns that its recommendation system steers users toward increasingly engaging content to maximise watch time, an issue noted in academic research and media reports.

Why is this verdict a landmark?

The ruling is significant because it shifts liability from content to platform design. It challenges protections under Section 230 of the U.S. Communications Decency Act, long used to shield firms from responsibility for user-generated content. Courts have typically dismissed such cases under Section 230 protections. For instance, in *Gonzalez v. Google* (2023), the U.S. Supreme Court declined to hold Google liable for YouTube's algorithmic recommendations of ISIS-related content. Similarly, in *Twitter v. Taamneh* (2023), claims against Twitter, Facebook, and Google for aiding terrorism were rejected due to insufficient proof of direct liability. These rulings reinforced that platforms are generally not responsible for third-party content, even when amplified by algorithms.

What changes for social media companies?

The verdict came a day after a jury in New Mexico found Meta liable for the way in which its platforms endangered children and exposed them to sexually explicit material and contact with sexual predators. If upheld, the verdict could compel platforms to rethink core design features. The ruling heightens demands for algorithmic transparency, as seen in proposals like the U.S. Algorithmic Accountability Act. Crucially, the risk of punitive damages and over 1,600 pending lawsuits could trigger costly, copycat litigation, making aggressive engagement-driven design legally vulnerable.

What is next for regulation?

At least half of American teens use YouTube or Instagram daily, according to the Pew Research Center. California is considering stricter rules on teen social media use, including potential restrictions on addictive features. At the federal level, lawmakers have proposed bills mandating algorithmic transparency and stronger child-safety protections.

Recently, countries such as Australia have imposed restrictions on children to stop or limit their use of social media. The U.K. is running a pilot programme to see how a ban on social media for people aged under 16 may work. If upheld on appeal, it could mark the beginning of a new era in which algorithmic design is scrutinised not just for efficiency, but for its societal and psychological impact. (Sae Pande is a freelance writer with a focus on politics, current affairs, international relations, and geopolitics)

THE GIST

▼ A Los Angeles jury found Meta and YouTube liable for platform design that fostered addiction and harmed mental health, shifting focus from content to algorithmic amplification and addictive features.

▼ The ruling challenges Section 230 protections and could trigger costly litigation, regulatory scrutiny, and changes to engagement-driven design.

- A Los Angeles jury found Meta and YouTube liable for platform designs that allegedly fostered addiction and harmed mental health.
 - लॉस एंजेलिस की एक जूरी ने मेटा और यूट्यूब को ऐसे प्लेटफॉर्म डिज़ाइन के लिए उत्तरदायी माना, जिनसे कथित रूप से लत बढ़ी और मानसिक स्वास्थ्य को हानि पहुँची।
 - The ruling is important because it shifts attention from user-generated content to the design and algorithmic structure of platforms.
 - यह निर्णय इसलिए महत्वपूर्ण है क्योंकि यह ध्यान को यूज़र-जनरेटेड कंटेंट से हटाकर प्लेटफॉर्म के डिज़ाइन और एल्गोरिथ्मिक संरचना पर ले जाता है।
 - The case may influence future regulation of social media, especially regarding children and teenagers.
 - यह मामला भविष्य में सोशल मीडिया के विनियमन को प्रभावित कर सकता है, विशेषकर बच्चों और किशोरों के संदर्भ में।
-

2. Story So Far

- The Los Angeles Superior Court jury, on March 25, held Meta and Alphabet's YouTube liable in a case related to addictive platform design.
 - लॉस एंजेलिस सुपीरियर कोर्ट की जूरी ने 25 मार्च को मेटा और अल्फाबेट के यूट्यूब को नशे जैसी लत पैदा करने वाले प्लेटफॉर्म डिज़ाइन से जुड़े मामले में उत्तरदायी ठहराया।
 - The case centred on a woman who argued that prolonged social media addiction harmed her mental health.
 - यह मामला एक महिला पर केंद्रित था, जिसने तर्क दिया कि लंबे समय तक सोशल मीडिया की लत ने उसके मानसिक स्वास्थ्य को नुकसान पहुँचाया।
 - The jury awarded compensation damages and also indicated punitive damages, subject to judicial confirmation.
 - जूरी ने क्षतिपूर्ति हर्जाना दिया और दंडात्मक हर्जाने का भी संकेत दिया, जो न्यायिक पुष्टि के अधीन है।
 - Snapchat and TikTok were also defendants in the broader matter, but the article notes that both settled before trial.
 - स्नैपचैट और टिकटॉक भी व्यापक मामले में प्रतिवादी थे, लेकिन लेख के अनुसार दोनों ने मुकदमे से पहले समझौता कर लिया।
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3. What Was the Core Legal Issue?

- The key issue was not simply harmful content, but whether the platforms were designed in a way that encouraged compulsive use.
 - मुख्य कानूनी प्रश्न केवल हानिकारक कंटेंट नहीं था, बल्कि यह था कि क्या प्लेटफॉर्म इस तरह डिज़ाइन किए गए थे कि वे बाध्यकारी उपयोग को बढ़ावा दें।
 - The lawsuit argued that features like infinite scroll, autoplay, and algorithm-driven notifications were intentionally designed to keep users hooked.
 - मुकदमे में तर्क दिया गया कि अनंत स्क्रॉल, ऑटोप्ले और एल्गोरिथम-आधारित नोटिफिकेशन जैसी सुविधाएँ उपयोगकर्ताओं को बाँधे रखने के लिए जानबूझकर बनाई गई थीं।
 - Thus, the focus was on platform architecture, not only on what third parties posted.
 - इसलिए ध्यान केवल तीसरे पक्ष द्वारा डाले गए कंटेंट पर नहीं, बल्कि प्लेटफॉर्म की संरचना पर था।
-

4. Why Is This Case Different?

- Traditionally, many social media companies have relied on legal protections for third-party content.
 - परंपरागत रूप से कई सोशल मीडिया कंपनियाँ तीसरे पक्ष के कंटेंट के लिए कानूनी सुरक्षा पर निर्भर रही हैं।
 - This case tried to sidestep those protections by calling the platforms “defective products” because of their design features.
 - इस मामले ने उन कानूनी सुरक्षा प्रावधानों को दरकिनार करने की कोशिश की, यह कहकर कि प्लेटफॉर्म अपनी डिज़ाइन विशेषताओं के कारण “दोषपूर्ण उत्पाद” हैं।
 - In simple terms, the argument was: the harm came not only from content, but from how the platform kept amplifying and delivering it.
 - सरल शब्दों में तर्क यह था: हानि केवल कंटेंट से नहीं हुई, बल्कि इस बात से हुई कि प्लेटफॉर्म ने उसे किस प्रकार बढ़ाया और लगातार उपयोगकर्ता तक पहुँचाया।
-

- The article says the case relied on internal company documents, expert testimony, and user-behaviour data.
 - लेख के अनुसार मामले में आंतरिक कंपनी दस्तावेज़, विशेषज्ञ गवाही और उपयोगकर्ता-व्यवहार संबंधी आँकड़ों का सहारा लिया गया।
 - It refers to reports suggesting that companies knew certain platform features could worsen anxiety, depression, and body-image issues among teenagers.
 - इसमें उन रिपोर्टों का उल्लेख है जिनसे संकेत मिलता है कि कंपनियों को पता था कि प्लेटफ़ॉर्म की कुछ विशेषताएँ किशोरों में चिंता, अवसाद और शरीर-छवि संबंधी समस्याएँ बढ़ा सकती हैं।
 - The article also links platform design with anxiety and compulsive use.
 - लेख प्लेटफ़ॉर्म डिज़ाइन को चिंता और बाध्यकारी उपयोग से भी जोड़ता है।
 - In YouTube's case, recommendation systems were highlighted for pushing users toward increasingly engaging content to maximise watch time.
 - यूट्यूब के मामले में अनुशंसा प्रणाली को रेखांकित किया गया, जो वॉच टाइम बढ़ाने के लिए उपयोगकर्ताओं को अधिकाधिक आकर्षक कंटेंट की ओर धकेलती है।
-

A. Algorithmic Amplification

- It means digital systems automatically boost, rank, recommend, or prioritise certain content to increase engagement.
- इसका अर्थ है कि डिजिटल प्रणालियाँ जुड़ाव बढ़ाने के लिए कुछ कंटेंट को स्वतः बढ़ावा देती हैं, रैंक करती हैं, सुझाती हैं या प्राथमिकता देती हैं।

B. Addictive Design / Dark Patterns

- These are design choices meant to capture attention and prolong usage, sometimes against the user's best interests.
- ये ऐसे डिज़ाइन विकल्प हैं जो उपयोगकर्ता का ध्यान खींचने और उपयोग समय बढ़ाने के लिए बनाए जाते हैं, कभी-कभी उपयोगकर्ता के हितों के विरुद्ध भी।

C. Product Liability

- Product liability refers to the responsibility of a producer or seller for harm caused by a defective product.
- उत्पाद दायित्व का अर्थ है कि किसी दोषपूर्ण उत्पाद से हुई हानि के लिए निर्माता या विक्रेता की जिम्मेदारी।

D. Section 230

- Section 230 of the U.S. Communications Decency Act broadly protects platforms from liability for third-party content.
- अमेरिकी कम्युनिकेशंस डीसेंसी एक्ट की धारा 230 सामान्यतः प्लेटफ़ॉर्म को तीसरे पक्ष के कंटेंट के लिए दायित्व से सुरक्षा देती है।

Q. Consider the following statements regarding the Meta–YouTube ruling mentioned in the article:

प्रश्न. लेख में उल्लिखित मेटा–यूट्यूब निर्णय के संबंध में निम्नलिखित कथनों पर विचार कीजिए:

1. The case focused mainly on platform design features such as infinite scroll, autoplay, and algorithmic recommendations.
2. यह मामला मुख्यतः प्लेटफ़ॉर्म डिज़ाइन विशेषताओं जैसे अनंत स्क्रॉल, ऑटोप्ले और एल्गोरिथ्मिक अनुशंसाओं पर केंद्रित था।
3. The ruling is significant because it shifts the legal focus from third-party content to platform architecture.
4. यह निर्णय इसलिए महत्वपूर्ण है क्योंकि यह कानूनी ध्यान को तीसरे पक्ष के कंटेंट से हटाकर प्लेटफ़ॉर्म की संरचना पर ले जाता है।
5. Section 230 broadly protects digital platforms from liability for third-party content in the United States.
6. धारा 230 संयुक्त राज्य अमेरिका में डिजिटल प्लेटफ़ॉर्म को तीसरे पक्ष के कंटेंट के लिए व्यापक कानूनी सुरक्षा प्रदान करती है।
7. The article suggests that the ruling completely bans social media use by children in the United States.
8. लेख यह संकेत देता है कि यह निर्णय संयुक्त राज्य अमेरिका में बच्चों के सोशल मीडिया उपयोग पर पूर्ण प्रतिबंध लगा देता है।

Which of the statements given above are correct?

उपरोक्त में से कौन-से कथन सही हैं?

(a) 1, 2 and 3 only

(a) केवल 1, 2 और 3

(b) 2 and 4 only

(b) केवल 2 और 4

(c) 1 and 4 only

(c) केवल 1 और 4

(d) 1, 2, 3 and 4

(d) 1, 2, 3 और 4

LOOKING AT LONG-TERM PICTURE



NAVEEN KRISHNA (24, Kerala)

Works at Larsen & Toubro,
Mumbai

Investing in MFs since 2024

MONTHLY SIP

₹8,000-₹10,000

Average returns (-5%)

SHREYA MATHEW (25, Odisha)

Works at MX Advertising,
Mumbai

Investing in MFs since 2021

PER MONTH SIP

₹1,000

Average return - 15%



Nisha Mehta Becomes
Nepal's Health Minister

Topic	Content
News	<p>Nisha Mehta has been appointed as Nepal's Minister for Health and Population.</p> <p>निशा मेहता को नेपाल की स्वास्थ्य एवं जनसंख्या मंत्री नियुक्त किया गया है।</p>
Why Important	<p>Her appointment is notable because she is a nursing professional moving into a top political and policy-making role.</p> <p>उनकी नियुक्ति इसलिए महत्वपूर्ण है क्योंकि एक नर्सिंग पेशेवर शीर्ष राजनीतिक और नीतिनिर्माण पद पर पहुँची हैं।</p>
Date Mentioned	<p>She took oath on March 27, 2026.</p> <p>उन्होंने 27 मार्च 2026 को शपथ ली।</p>
Educational Background	<p>Nisha Mehta is an alumna of AIIMS, New Delhi.</p> <p>निशा मेहता AIIMS, नई दिल्ली की पूर्व छात्रा हैं।</p>
Course Studied	<p>She pursued B.Sc. Nursing from the College of Nursing, AIIMS New Delhi between 2006 and 2010.</p> <p>उन्होंने 2006 से 2010 के बीच AIIMS नई दिल्ली के कॉलेज ऑफ नर्सिंग से बी.एससी. नर्सिंग की पढ़ाई की।</p>
Early Career Traits	<p>During her academic years, she was known for leadership qualities, academic excellence, and active co-curricular participation.</p> <p>अपने शैक्षणिक वर्षों में वे नेतृत्व क्षमता, शैक्षणिक उत्कृष्टता और सह-पाठ्यक्रम गतिविधियों में सक्रिय भागीदारी के लिए जानी जाती थीं।</p>
Broader Significance	<p>Her elevation reflects the growing recognition of nursing professionals in leadership and governance roles.</p> <p>उनकी उन्नति नेतृत्व और शासन में नर्सिंग पेशेवरों की बढ़ती मान्यता को दर्शाती है।</p>
Governance Significance	<p>It signals that domain expertise in healthcare is being valued in ministerial roles.</p> <p>यह संकेत देता है कि स्वास्थ्य क्षेत्र की विशेषज्ञता को मंत्री पदों में महत्व दिया जा रहा है।</p>

Electoral Fact

RSP reportedly secured 182 out of 275 seats in Nepal's House of Representatives.
रिपोर्ट के अनुसार RSP ने नेपाल के प्रतिनिधि सभा में 275 में से 182 सीटें जीतीं।

Public Mood

The elections were linked to youth-driven protests against corruption, nepotism, and restrictions on social media.
ये चुनाव भ्रष्टाचार, भाई-भतीजावाद और सोशल मीडिया पर प्रतिबंधों के खिलाफ युवाओं के विरोध से जुड़े थे।

Nepal Parliament Fact

Nepal's Parliament includes a 275-member House of Representatives.
नेपाल की संसद में 275 सदस्यीय प्रतिनिधि सभा शामिल है।

AIIMS Fact

AIIMS New Delhi is one of India's premier medical institutions and was established in 1956.
AIIMS नई दिल्ली भारत के प्रमुख चिकित्सा संस्थानों में से एक है और इसकी स्थापना 1956 में हुई थी।

Exam Significance

This topic is important for exams from the perspective of international relations, public health governance, women in leadership, and Nepal politics.
यह विषय अंतरराष्ट्रीय संबंध, सार्वजनिक स्वास्थ्य शासन, नेतृत्व में महिलाओं की भूमिका और नेपाल की राजनीति के दृष्टिकोण से परीक्षाओं में महत्वपूर्ण है।

Question

Consider the following statements:

निम्नलिखित कथनों पर विचार कीजिए:

1. Nisha Mehta became Nepal's Health Minister.
1. निशा मेहता नेपाल की स्वास्थ्य मंत्री बनीं।
2. She studied nursing at AIIMS New Delhi.
2. उन्होंने AIIMS नई दिल्ली से नर्सिंग की पढ़ाई की।
3. Nepal's House of Representatives has 275 members.
3. नेपाल की प्रतिनिधि सभा में 275 सदस्य हैं।

Which of the above statements are correct?

उपरोक्त में से कौन-से कथन सही हैं?

Options

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

Word of the day

Besmirch:

charge falsely or with malicious intent

Synonyms:

sully, tarnish, dishonour

Usage: *They tried to besmirch his name during the campaign.*

Pronunciation:

newsth.live/besmirch

International Phonetic

Alphabet: /bɪsmɜːtʃ/



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—  Complete Preparation for —
CGL | CHSL | CPO | MTS

 **Batch Starts: 1 April**

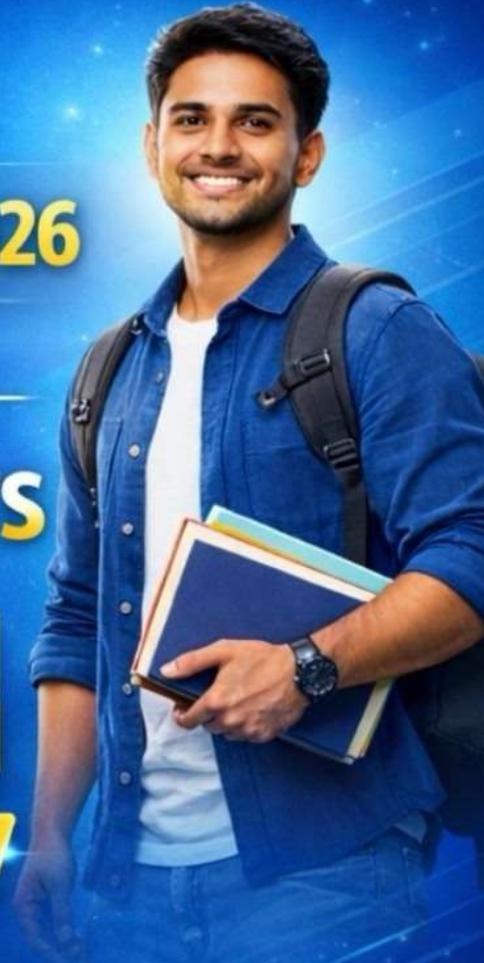
 **Time: 8:00 AM**

 **3 Days FREE Demo Classes**

 **201, Basant Vihar**
Opp. Bhandari Hospital
Gopalpura Mode, Jaipur

 **Helpline: 9257021070 / 71/72/73**

JOIN NOW





Thank you 😊