

Daily Current Affairs





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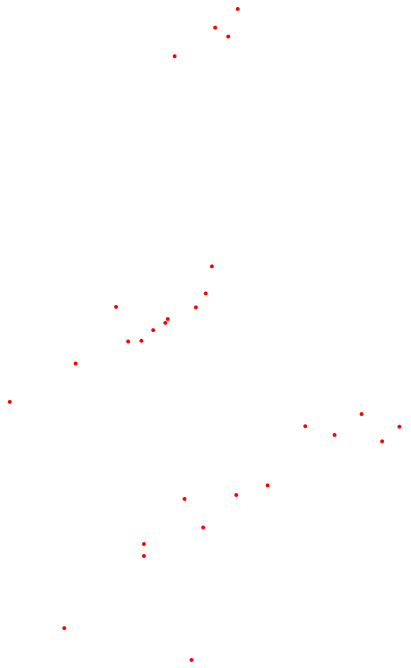
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Jansatta



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Express**



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10 MCQ QUIZ

- “Every sunrise is an invitation to brighten someone’s day — starting with your own.” ☀



AFTER 33 YEARS
Trump tells Pentagon
to test nuclear weapon
WORLD » PAGE 14

Mr. Xi's team, which arrived from Beijing shortly before - the U.S. side was already in South Korea - included Foreign Minister Wang Yi, Commerce Minister Wang Wentao and Vice Premier He Lifeng.

India gets a waiver on U.S. sanctions against Iran port

U.S. relief on sanctions against Chabahar came into force from Wednesday; supplies to Afghanistan can now be sent via the port; in September, the U.S. said it would revoke the waiver offered in 2018

Kallol Bhattacharjee

NEW DELHI

India has received a waiver on the United States' sanctions against Iran's Chabahar port for six months, the Ministry of External Affairs spokesperson, Randhir Jaiswal, announced on Thursday. Officials said that the sanctions waiver had come into effect from October 29.

"Yes, I can confirm that we have been granted exemption for six months on the American sanctions that were applicable on Chabahar," Mr. Jaiswal said, in response to a question during the weekly media briefing.

India has been associated with the Chabahar port at least since 2005, when it agreed with Iran to develop the port.

Shifting prospects

Both sides signed an MoU in 2015 to jointly develop the Shahid Beheshti Port at Chabahar in the hope that it would emerge as a



Vital link: India has been associated with Chabahar port since 2005, when it entered into an agreement with Iran. GETTY IMAGES

major commercial hub. The port's prospects came under a cloud due to Western sanctions against Iran, but in 2018, the first Trump administration gave a waiver to Indian operations at the Chabahar port as it was aimed at helping the development needs of the U.S.-backed Islamic Republic of Afghanistan.

In September, the U.S. Department of State said

that it would revoke the waiver for Indian operations that was offered by Donald Trump in 2018. The move exposed anyone associated with the Chabahar project to U.S. sanctions under the Iran Freedom and Counter-Proliferation Act.

The latest U.S. decision means that supplies to Afghanistan, especially essential items, can still be sent through Chabahar.

'India will help Afghans build hydel facilities'

NEW DELHI

India is willing to support Taliban-governed Afghanistan in building "hydroelectric projects," External Affairs Ministry spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said on Thursday. He said the two sides can build on a "history of cooperation" on water-related issues. » **PAGE 6**

- The **United States** has granted **India** a **six-month waiver** from sanctions imposed on **Iran’s Chabahar Port**, effective **October 29, 2025**.
- This allows **continued Indian operations and supply routes to Afghanistan** via the port, which had been under threat due to renewed U.S. sanctions on Iran.

2 Background: Chabahar’s Strategic Significance

Aspect	Details
Location	Southeastern Iran, near the Gulf of Oman.
Developed by	India & Iran jointly since 2005 .
Key Facility	<i>Shahid Beheshti Terminal</i> — jointly managed by India Ports Global Ltd (IPGL) .
Strategic Role	Provides India access to Afghanistan and Central Asia <i>bypassing Pakistan</i> .
Linked Corridor	Part of International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC) , connecting India–Iran–Russia–Europe.

BEING DIRECT: INDIA TO CHABAHAR





The strategic and economic importance of Iran's Chabahar port will be greatly enhanced by its integration with the planned INSTC corridor (in red).



Year

Event / Policy Shift

2018

Trump administration granted India a waiver for Chabahar citing Afghanistan's development needs.

Sept 2025

U.S. State Department announced plan to revoke that waiver.

Oct 2025

Biden administration reinstated a **six-month waiver**, recognizing Chabahar's humanitarian importance.





U.S. Concern

Iran's alleged nuclear activity & sanctions

Possible dual-use of port facilities

Balancing Iran–U.S. relations

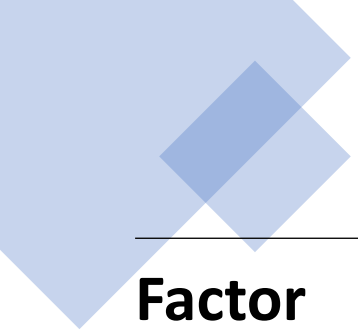
India's Position / Response

India maintains Chabahar is for trade & humanitarian purposes only.

India has ensured transparent, civilian-use operations.

India continues “strategic autonomy” — maintaining ties with both nations.





Factor

Implication

INSTC expansion

Connects Mumbai → Chabahar → Central Asia → Russia → Europe.

China's Gwadar Port (Pakistan)

Chabahar offers India's counterbalance to China–Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC).

U.S.–India Relations

Waiver signals *strategic trust* and U.S. acknowledgment of India's regional role.



IN BRIEF



Nauradehi to become third home for cheetahs in M.P.: CM

Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Mohan Yadav on Thursday said Nauradehi Sanctuary will become the third home for cheetahs in the state after Kuno National Park and Gandhi Sagar Sanctuary. Cheetahs will be brought from Namibia in Africa and released into the Nauradehi Sanctuary, he said. Mr. Yadav said the government is continuously taking steps to conserve various wildlife species. On the occasion, he released six cubs, comprising four females and two males, into the backwaters of India Nagar Dam on the Narmada River. Officials said the cubs were brought from Van Vihar in Bhopal.

Bhima Koregaon case: probe panel issues notice to Uddhav

A commission probing the 2009 Koregaon Bhima violence on Thursday issued a show-cause notice to former Maharashtra Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray for failing to respond to an application seeking production of documents related to the case. The commission, in the notice to Mr. Thackeray, asked why it should not allow an application filed by Prakash Ambekar seeking suitable arrangements for prosecution by Prakash Ambekar, leader of the Vanchin Mahajan Aghadi and a witness in the case, had in February this year filed an application seeking a direction to Mr. Thackeray to produce the documents submitted by NCP (NP) chief Sharad Pawar in 2020.

Absentee Booth Level Officers in West Bengal join SIR work after warnings of suspension

ANURAG BHATTACHARYA

All Booth Level Officers (BLOs) appointed for the special intensive revision (SIR) of West Bengal's electoral roll joined work by Thursday noon after the issuance of suspension warnings to absentee BLOs on the previous day, sources at the official of the Chief Electoral Officer said. While the recruitment, appointment, and training of BLOs started earlier this year, (A) absentee BLOs were warned of suspension by election officials on Wednesday afternoon. Earlier in the month, over 1,000 BLOs in the state were issued show-cause notices for failing to take charge. A section of BLOs had also written to the Chief Electoral Officer Manoj Kumar Agarwal, expressing

Earlier in the month, over 1,000 BLOs in the state were issued show-cause notices for failing to take charge.

apprehension about participating in the SIR process, citing threats to their personal safety. The Chief Electoral Officer allayed their fears, and told the media that he was confident the SIR would be completed smoothly.

'At least one per booth' About 80,000 BLOs had been appointed to execute the SIR exercise, along with 8,000 BLO supervisors, over 3,000 assistant electoral registration officers, and 200 electoral registration officers, he said. The entire BLO workforce as of Thursday afternoon, elec-

Punjab farmers warn of protests, seek withdrawal of stubble burning cases

Over 30 unions to submit memorandums to Deputy Commissioners on November 4; leaders flag shortage of machinery, demand compensation and solutions for clearing fields for next sowing

Vikas Vasudeva
CHANDIGARH

Farmers across Punjab are seeking over the registration of police cases against them for burning paddy stubble, but they are demanding the action as "unfair targeting" and asserting that the act is driven by compulsion rather than choice.

Several farmer unions have warned the state government of widespread protests if the cases are not withdrawn immediately. Over 30 farmer and farm labour unions under the banner of the Samyukt Kisan Morcha (SKM) have announced plans to hold demonstrations and submit memorandums to Deputy Commissioners across the State on November 4 in support of their demands.

"Farmers are being unfairly targeted. We will not tolerate such actions in Punjab to express our anguish. Our primary demand is the immediate withdrawal of police cases filed against farmers for



Smoke clouds A farmer burning stubble in his field in Ludhiana, Punjab. (A. P. Singh)

stubble burning," said Jag Mohan Singh, general secretary of the Bharatiya Kisan Union (BKU) and member of the SKM.

Shortage of machinery He added that many farmers have already burnt their paddy and baled the stubble, but their balers have been lying idle for days due to a shortage of machinery needed for removal. "What is a farmer supposed to do in such a

situation? With no other viable option to clear fields for the next sowing, farmers are forced to burn stubble out of necessity, not choice. The government must withdraw these cases without delay," Mr. Singh said on Thursday.

Mr. Singh said that after the November 4 agitation, farmers would stage a symbolic protest in Chandigarh on November 19 to press for the withdrawal of FIRs and the rise.

other long-pending demands. According to official data, the Punjab police have registered 376 cases under Section 231 of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) since October 20 for alleged disobedience to public orders related to agricultural waste and stubble burning.

Provide alternatives Karan Singh Pandher, senior leader of the Kisan Mardor Morcha, urged the government to offer viable alternatives before penalising farmers. "We demand either a bonus of ₹200 per quintal on paddy or ₹100 per acre as compensation. Otherwise, protests will continue. Instead of penalising farmers, the government should focus on support and solutions, either provide effective residue management options or offer financial assistance," Mr. Pandher said. An estimated 1.5 lakh farmers are sowing paddy, a key kharif season crop, sometimes across the State. Stubble-burning incidents are on the rise.

Fertilizer shortage: farmer's bid to end life triggers uproar

Mayank Kumar
LUCKNOW

A purported video from Aunapur cooperative society in Uttar Pradesh's Shahjahanpur district showing a farmer attempting to take his own life owing to alleged shortage of fertilizer sparked outrage in the State on Thursday.

In the viral video, the farmer alleges that authorities are distributing fertilizer only to some people, leaving marginal farmers like him without access.

"That is why I am forced to end my life," he is heard saying. Locals later intervened and stopped him from taking the extreme step. Following uproar over the video, local authorities put out a statement claiming that the farmer was a drug addict.

Several videos are circulating online showing farmers unable to obtain fertilizers or seeds despite long queues for hours. "Artificial hoarding and black marketing are worsening the situation. We are unaware of where the fertilizer is going," said a farmer in Lucknow.

The Opposition attacked the government, alleging that while authorities claim there is no shortage of fertilizers, farmers are being driven to desperation. "Farmers are facing severe difficulties due to the BJP government's ineffective policies. The lack of timely access to fertilizers, manure, seeds, and essential resources negatively impacting crops and livelihoods. This government is fundamentally anti-farmer and detrimental to the poor," said Congress national secretary Shashank Alam.

'Officials involved' Lower-level officials in some areas are allegedly helping people with vested interests, including black marketers, leading to long queues and insufficient supply, said Vijay Singh, a farmer from Lucknow. "Fertilizers intended for farmers in Uttar Pradesh are being sold at inflated prices in Nepal. This is another problem," he said.

Those in distress can contact Tele MANAS at 1446 to seek help.

J&K L-G dismisses 2 govt. teachers over suspected terror links

Prerna Trust of India
SRINAGAR

Jammu and Kashmir Lieutenant Governor G. G. Meena on Thursday dismissed two government teachers for their alleged links with terrorist outfits, an action that attracted strong criticism from prominent politicians, including Chief Minister Omar Abdullah and PDP chief Mehbooba Mufti.

The terminated employees were identified as Ghulam Hussain and Majid Iqbal. The district administration claimed, were actively involved in supporting activities of the banned Lashkar-e-Tiba terrorist outfit. Mr. Abdullah condemned the method of dismissal, arguing that such actions should be reserved for those who are involved in terrorism. He said the dismissed employees have an opportunity to present their case.

Mr. Meena charged that the dismissed employees had a role in the 2019 Pulwama terror attack, which resulted in the death of a police officer. He said the dismissed employees had a role in the 2019 Pulwama terror attack, which resulted in the death of a police officer.

Meanwhile, State Congress chief Hardvardhan Sankar criticized Chief Minister Devendra Fadnis for giving a "clean chit" to the main suspects. "Terminating them is 'unfortunate' and 'shameful'," he said. "A young man from a family fighting against all odds became a doctor. He expressed what he felt was unethical and for that he had to pay a price. Mr. Fadnis visited Phaltan and gave a 'clean chit' to the culprit without holding them accountable."

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T/V Kreiterates its position on alliance despite AIADMK and BJP overtures post stampede

The Hindu Bureau
CHENNAI

Despite overtures from the AIADMK and the BJP for a tie-up with the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) in the aftermath of the Karur stampede, actor-turned-politician Vijay's Tamiagam Vetti Keshavam (TVK) has reiterated its stance that it will not align with either the DMK or the BJP.

Month-long hull The party resumed its political activities on Thursday after a month-long hiatus following the death of 41 persons in the stampede at a private resort at Mamallapuram on Monday.

Mr. Vijay met the families of several victims at a private resort at Mamallapuram on Monday.

On Tuesday, Mr. Vijay made his first public appearance after the Karur tragedy and address party members. The meeting is expected to put the speculation on an alliance to rest.

Several AIADMK and BJP leaders had hoped that Mr. Vijay would consider joining their alliance to "save" his fledgling party and take on the DMK in the 2028 Assembly election. However, the TVK's second-term leaders maintain that the party's stand on an alliance remains unchanged.

The DMK has also extended an invitation to the TVK to take part in the all-party meeting on November 2 to oppose the Election Commission's special intensive revision (SIR) of the electoral rolls. The TVK had passed a resolution against SIR at its executive committee meeting in July.

Satarra doctor's death: kin raise suspicions; Cong. seeks SIT probe

Soumitra Mutha
PHALTAN

The family of 28-year-old woman doctor who allegedly died by suicide in Satarra district this month claimed on Thursday that there were discrepancies in the autopsy report and investigation into the case.

The doctor, having been in Satarra, was found dead in a hotel room in Phaltan town on October 26.

"The autopsy report mentioned that the time of death was around 11 a.m. If we were informed about the death around 11 a.m., then when did her death actually take place?" said Prashant Munde, a cousin of the doctor. The post-mortem report mentioned



NCP (SP) workers protest demanding justice over the death of the doctor in Satarra, outside the Maharashtra in Mumbai on Thursday. (P)

the cause of death as asphyxia, indicating that the doctor had died by suicide.

Custody extended During the day, a court in Phaltan extended the police custody of the doctor. The doctor's kin, sought extension of custody in order to analyse the contents of the laptop recovered from Mr. Bankar and three pen drives from

Mr. Bankar's house. Shiv Sena (UBT) leader Shrinika Andhare visited the doctor's family at Kavayojan village in Beed district and raised some suspicions over the case. "Her brother was not allowed to be present for the autopsy. There was a demand that an in-camera autopsy be done. Does it really take eight hours to register an FIR?" she said.

Shiv Sena (UBT) chief Uddhav Thackeray also spoke to the family over a phone. The party threatened that Mr. Bankar in the Phaltan police station on November 3 if proper investigation is not carried out into the case. Mr. Thackeray also said the kin of all support in their fight for justice and promised to provide the views of a lawyer practicing in the Supreme Court.

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Launching a sharp attack on the BJP, the Congress claimed that law and order in Maharashtra is in the State and demanded a judicial inquiry and a decision to demolish the entire structure of Sanjay Gandhi National Park.

Must Congress chief Varsha Galkwad said the incident exposed the "BJP's mentality towards the deprived and women". Speaking after inaugurating development works at Phaltan on October 26, the chief Minister, who is not a fan of the Hindu port, so handles the Home portfolio, had said, "Former MP Kanishk Naik Nimbalkar and local MLA Sankar Dange's names were linked to the case. If I had an iota of doubt, I would

Shimla mosque: court upholds decision to raze entire structure

Prerna Trust of India
SHIMLA

The district court here on Thursday upheld the municipal commissioner's decision to demolish the entire structure of Sanjay Gandhi National Park.

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Nauradehi to become third home for cheetahs in M.P.: CM

Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Mohan Yadav on Thursday said Nauradehi Sanctuary will become the third home for cheetahs in the State after Kuno National Park and Gandhi Sagar Sanctuary. Cheetahs will be brought from Namibia in Africa and released into the Nauradehi Sanctuary, he said. Mr. Yadav said the government is continuously taking steps to conserve various wildlife species. On the occasion, he released six crocodiles, comprising four females and two males, into the backwaters of Indira Sagar Dam on the Narmada River. Officials said the crocodiles were brought from Van Vihar in Bhopal. PTI

Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Mohan Yadav announced that Nauradehi Wildlife Sanctuary will become the third habitat for cheetahs in the state.



The other two existing cheetah habitats are:

Kuno National Park
(Sheopur district)

Gandhi Sagar Wildlife Sanctuary (Mandsaur district)

Nauradehi Wildlife Sanctuary



Feature

Location

Area

Ecosystem Type

Connectivity

Notified as Sanctuary

Core Species

Details

Spread across **Sagar, Damoh, and Narsinghpur districts** of Madhya Pradesh.

Approx. **1,197 sq km**.

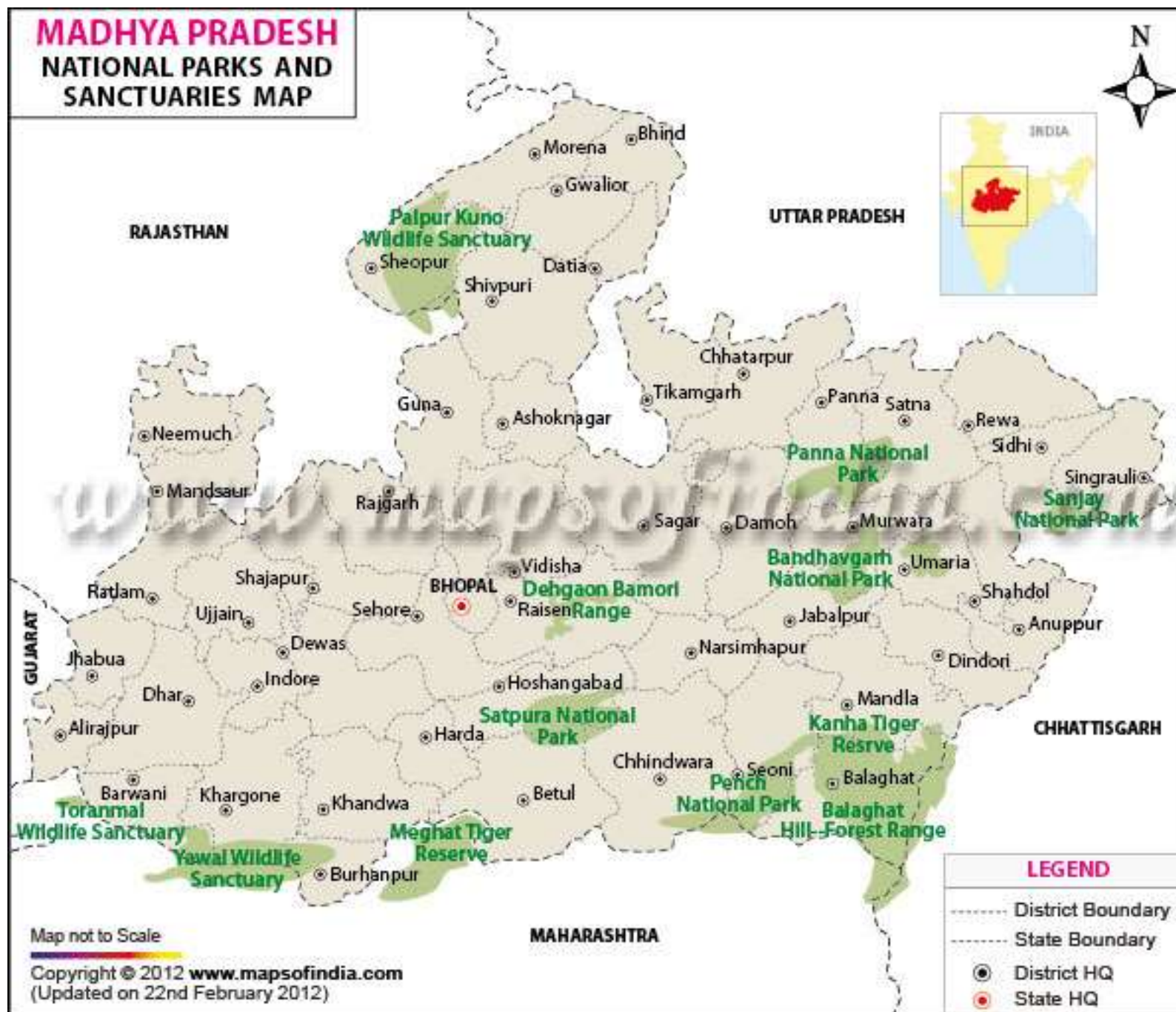
Dry deciduous forest with grassland patches — ideal for cheetah rewilding.

Lies between **Satpura–Vindhyan landscape**, connecting to tiger corridors.

1975

Leopards, wolves, chinkaras, blackbucks, nilgais, and various grassland birds.

MADHYA PRADESH NATIONAL PARKS AND SANCTUARIES MAP





Aspect	Details
Objective	Reintroduction of cheetahs (<i>Acinonyx jubatus</i>) into India after extinction in 1952.
Launched	2022, at Kuno National Park by PM Narendra Modi.
Partner Country	Namibia and South Africa (for translocation).
Coordinating Body	National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA) & Wildlife Institute of India (WII).
Current Status (2025)	20+ cheetahs in Kuno; Gandhi Sagar and Nauradehi selected for further expansion.



Benefit

Impact

Grassland restoration

Cheetahs help maintain prey–predator balance and open-forest ecology.

Biodiversity enhancement

Boosts local tourism, research, and employment in eco-conservation.

Crocodile release

Strengthens riverine ecosystem and promotes aquatic biodiversity.



Site	State	Status
Kuno National Park	Madhya Pradesh	Operational (20+ cheetahs released)
Gandhi Sagar Sanctuary	Madhya Pradesh	Being developed as second site
Nauradehi Sanctuary	Madhya Pradesh	Third site approved (2025)
Mukundra Hills Tiger Reserve	Rajasthan	Proposed future site



IN BRIEF



NIA seeks more details from the U.S. on Tahawwur Rana

The National Investigation Agency (NIA) has asked for more details from its U.S. counterparts with respect to 26/11 Mumbai terror attacks "mastermind" Tahawwur Rana, according to agency sources. The NIA has sent the request under the Mutual Legal Assistance Treaty, through the Ministry of External Affairs and Home Affairs. The queries are based on the interrogation of Rana, after he was extradited from the U.S. to India on April 10 and arrested by the NIA in connection with the terror attacks in which 16 people were killed and close to 240 injured in 2008.

India begins major tri-Service drill along Pakistan border

A major tri-Service military exercise, 'Trishul', kicked off on Thursday along the western border with Pakistan, showcasing the joint operational capability and strategic preparedness of the Indian Army, Navy, and the Air Force. The large-scale drills, being conducted from October 30 to November 10, span across Gujarat and Rajasthan, and are aimed at enhancing coordination, and mission readiness among the three services. The Navy is leading the opening phase of the exercise, followed by the Army and the Indian Air Force. Ahead of the commencement of the exercise, Pakistan announced changes in certain flight routes for the Karachi and Lahore regions.

NMC urges colleges to be part of mental health survey

The Hindu Bureau

NEW DELHI

The National Medical Commission (NMC) has asked medical colleges to participate in a survey being conducted by the Supreme Court-appointed National Task Force (NTF) on mental health.

The website - ntf-education.gov.in - will serve as a central platform to gather different perspectives from college students, parents, faculty members, mental health service providers, and institutions. It also seeks inputs from the public.

The top court had said that the task force will aid in ascertaining the root causes of student suicides.

(With inputs from PTI)

The Hindu Bureau

NEW DELHI

Responding to Congress leader Priyanka Gandhi's remarks that the National Education Policy, 2020 would not address mental health concerns of students and to prevent suicides in higher educational institutions, Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan on Thursday referred to it as a "glaring display of ignorance and political opportunism".

Mr. Pradhan, in a post on social media on Thursday, referred to Ms. Gandhi's remarks posted by the Congress's X account, and said, "By making such irresponsible and misleading statements, she not only distorts facts but

Fully aware of Great Nicobar project's impact, says Centre

The Centre tells the NCT that no tribal persons will be displaced, noting that the project will cover about 18% of the Great Nicobar area, leaving over two-thirds of its land mass as forests

Abhinav Lakshman

NEW DELHI

Defending the Great Nicobar Island mega-infrastructure project at the National Green Tribunal (NGT) on Thursday, the Union government argued that it was fully aware of the project's likely impact on the biodiversity of the surrounding areas, positing that the main issue was whether the government was "alive to this or not".

Noting that the government considers it its duty to undertake mitigation measures, additional Solicitor General Advaya Nath said that the Centre had mandated conservation and monitoring programmes to run for the next three decades as the project was developed. She said that the project was going to be a national asset.

The submissions came in response to a batch of petitions that have challenged the environmental clearance issued for the ₹92,000 crore project, which will include a transshipment port, an international airport, a township, and a power plant to be



Mitigation plan: The Centre has mandated conservation programmes during the project development. (NTT MEDIA)

built on more than 100 sq km of land. Of this, about 180 sq km is forest land inhabited by the Nicobarese and the Shompen communities, both Scheduled Tribes, with the Shompen categorised as a Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Group.

She said that the project, submitted by activist Adish Kuthari, challenges the clearances obtained for the project, citing violations of the 1986 Coastal Regulation Zone (CRZ) notification, 2018 notification and inadequacies in the environmental impact assessment.

Making its arguments before the NGT bench now hearing the matter, the Un-

ion government submitted that it had considered studies and research conducted over decades before mandating the project to translocate, conserve, and monitor the project activities' impact on the biodiversity of the region.

The Centre also defended the environment clearance granted for the project, which has mandated detailed measures to study and monitor the biodiversity of the region as the project is developed, calling it "an alive document" that prescribes conservation measures till 2052.

The next hearing in the matter has been set for November 7.

Class 10, 12 Board exams from Feb. 17, says CBSE

Press Trust of India

NEW DELHI

The Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) will conduct Class 10 and 12 Board exams from February 17, officials announced on Thursday.

While the Class 10 exams will conclude on March 10, Class 12 exams will end on April 9, according to the final date sheet. The CBSE released the final date sheet nearly 100 days in advance.

This is the first time that Board exams for Class 10 will be conducted twice in an academic session and is scheduled from May 18 to June 1.

The second phase of Board exams in May will be optional for students who need the extra marks in performance. The best score of the two will be retained.

HC cites 'defect' in probe, commutes death sentence of four in CRPF attack case

The Hindu Bureau

NEW DELHI

Citing 'defect in investigation', the Allahabad High Court on Wednesday set aside the death sentence of four persons and life imprisonment of another in connection with a pre-dawn attack on January 22, 2006, on a CRPF camp in Ramnagar.

The court cited defects in the investigation of the case, saying the probe was "grossly defective" and "lacked objectivity".

The court pointed out how the FIR stated that prosecution witnesses had never known the accused from before and were never asked to identify them through a test identification parade (TIP).

India ready to help Afghanistan with hydel projects: MEA

Kallol Bhattacharjee

NEW DELHI

India is willing to support Taliban government in building "hydroelectric projects", the official spokesperson of the Ministry of External Affairs, Kallol Bhattacharjee, said on Thursday.

Addressing the weekly MEA press conference, Mr. Bhattacharjee said that the two sides can build on a "history of cooperation" on water-related matters and reiterated that India remains "committed" to the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Afghanistan.

The Taliban side welcomed Mr. Bhattacharjee's remarks about cooperation in hydroelectric projects.

"As emphasised in the recently adopted India-Afghanistan Joint Statement, India stands ready to support Afghanistan in its efforts to manage water resources sustainably, including with hydroelectric projects," Mr. Bhattacharjee said.

The Taliban spokesperson for international media, Suhail Shakeni, welcomed the announcement and said, "There are a lot of opportunities for cooperation between the two countries."



Kallol Bhattacharjee

NEW DELHI

"The need is to send delegates from various Ministries to explore the opportunities and areas of cooperation. Hydel power is one of them," Mr. Bhattacharjee told *The Hindu*. Sources here indicated that India would consider sending delegates if the Taliban made appropriate requests.

Cooperation to build hydel power projects was part of a joint statement issued during a visit by the Taliban's Acting Foreign Minister Amir Khan Muttaqi on October 10.

Referring to Pakistani attacks against Afghan positions along the Durand Line earlier this month and also on the capital Kabul, Mr. Bhattacharjee said, "Pakistan is isolated with Afghanistan exercising sovereignty over its own territories."

The Hindu Bureau

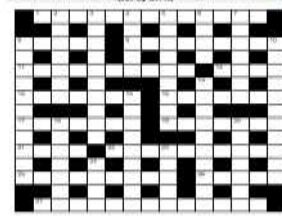
NEW DELHI

2019. "We are deeply concerned with the magnitude and enormity of the force and at the same time we are very concerned to observe that the prosecution miserably failed to prove the case against the accused for the principal offence, beyond reasonable doubt which is a golden rule that runs through the web of criminal jurisprudence," the court noted.

The court noted that the case would have reached a different conclusion had the investigation and the prosecution been conducted by trained police.

The court pointed out how the FIR stated that prosecution witnesses had never known the accused from before and were never asked to identify them through a test identification parade (TIP).

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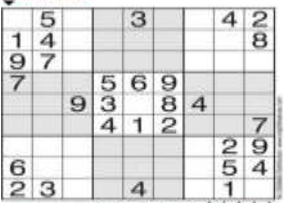


Across

- 1 Person driving very fast is drug dealer (3,4)
- 8 Give birth to a new to arrive across later (3)
- 9 Old pirate's strange device for removing hair (9)
- 13 Cracked Princeton university's latest process of coding (10)
- 15 Captain in trouble after mist of storm (6)
- 16 See 10 Down

- 10 Exiled by performing in drag dress for (2,3,4)
- 17 Character in the new building, one ensuring links (7)
- 18 Range over which one can hear others fighting around afternoon (7)
- 21 Enthusiastic about India's opener smashing ton (4)
- 22 Worker admits missing up task (10)
- 24 Family crushed by attraction has externally endorsing host/guest in Australia (9)
- 25 For holding case of kidnapping in Danish capital (10)
- 27 Externally sensitive Conservative facing parliamentary scrutiny (6,7)
- Down
- 3 Bird in Long Island cranking smooth shelled nut (1)
- 4 All exulted at premiere by extremely slim girl (10)
- 6 Thick fog around delta (3)
- 7 Cut clothes for age (8)
- 11 Embarrassed last lady in retire party (4)
- 12 Murder largely negative profit after costs (1,4)
- 13 Obscure husband, feeling rising finally with Romeo - virtuous moment of feeling pleasure (1,4)
- 14 What good leader will do to adapt to adverse circumstances (4,5,7)
- 17 David's son King's foolishly wearing nothing at all (9,1)
- 18 Fleets is fleetistic, daughter's delighted (3)
- 19 Wants someone disabused in secret among themselves (1,3)
- 20 Hire one carers, embracing state in retire dance (7)
- 26 Problem in ghosts, sliver's teased (5)
- 28 Chief of office, drinking dry sherry (4)

SUDOKU



FAITH

The triumph of dharma

To overcome the evil influences of Kaliyuga, people should listen to and reflect upon epic Ramayana and Mahabharata. Through such contemplation, their minds will become purified and their hearts inclined towards righteousness. In this context, Parimalashastri in his commentary explains that dharma has not only in performing the deeds prescribed in the scriptures but also in abstaining from those that are prohibited. The Ramayana exemplifies how one should follow dharma, as illustrated through the life and conduct of Rama. In contrast, the Mahabharata teaches us through the character of Duryodhana how one should not engage in deeds that are contrary to dharma. Building upon these epic examples, Lanka Sri Jayaraj said in a discourse that a person who indulges in unrighteous acts will inevitably be punished by nature, one way or the other. On the other hand, nature supports and uplifts those who engage in righteous deeds. Thus, dharma is just as the sun burns the boneless worms, virtue tortures the loveless one. By abducting Sita, the worm-like Ravana invited the Sun-like Rama to destroy him, an inevitable consequence of his unrighteous act. Those who walk the path of dharma live in lasting peace and happiness, for righteousness is their constant companion. The unrighteous are, however, never free from fear, for their own deeds become the source of their suffering. This contrast between righteousness and unrighteousness is also evident in the Mahabharata's key events. To uphold dharma, the Lord conducted every evil scheme of Shaka and the Kichaka, ensuring the protection and victory of the righteous.

Fully aware of Great Nicobar project's impact, says Centre

The Centre tells the NGT that no tribal persons will be displaced, noting that the project will cover about 18% of the Great Nicobar area, leaving over two-thirds of its land mass as forests

Abhinav Lakshman
NEW DELHI

Defending the Great Nicobar Island mega-infrastructure project at the National Green Tribunal (NGT) on Thursday, the Union government argued that it was fully aware of the project's likely impact on the biodiversity of the surrounding areas, positing that the main issue was whether the government was "alive to this or not".

Noting that the government considers it its duty to undertake mitigation measures, Additional Solicitor-General Aishwarya Bhati said that the Centre had mandated conservation and monitoring programmes to run for the next three decades as the project was developed. She said that the project "is going to be a national asset".

The submissions came in response to a batch of petitions that have challenged the environmental clearance issued for the ₹92,000-crore project, which will include a transshipment port, an international airport, a township, and a power plant to be



Mitigation plan: The Centre has mandated conservation programmes during the project's development. GETTY IMAGES

built on more than 160 sq. km of land. Of this, about 130 sq. km is forest land inhabited by the Nicobarese and the Shompen communities, both Scheduled Tribes, with the Shompen categorised as a Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Group.

One petition, submitted by activist Ashish Kothari, challenges the clearances obtained for the project, citing violations of the Island Coastal Regulation Zone (ICRZ) notification, 2019 notification and inadequacies in the environmental impact assessment.

Making its arguments before the NGT Bench now hearing the matter, the Un-

ion government submitted that it had considered studies and research conducted over decades before mandating measures to translocate, conserve, and monitor the project activities' impact on the biodiversity of the region.

Coral colonies

Ms. Bhati noted that while plans had been outlined for translocating over 16,000 of the 20,668 coral colonies that are under threat from the project's activities, there is also a plan in place to ensure the monitoring of the remaining 4,500-odd coral colonies. She submitted that

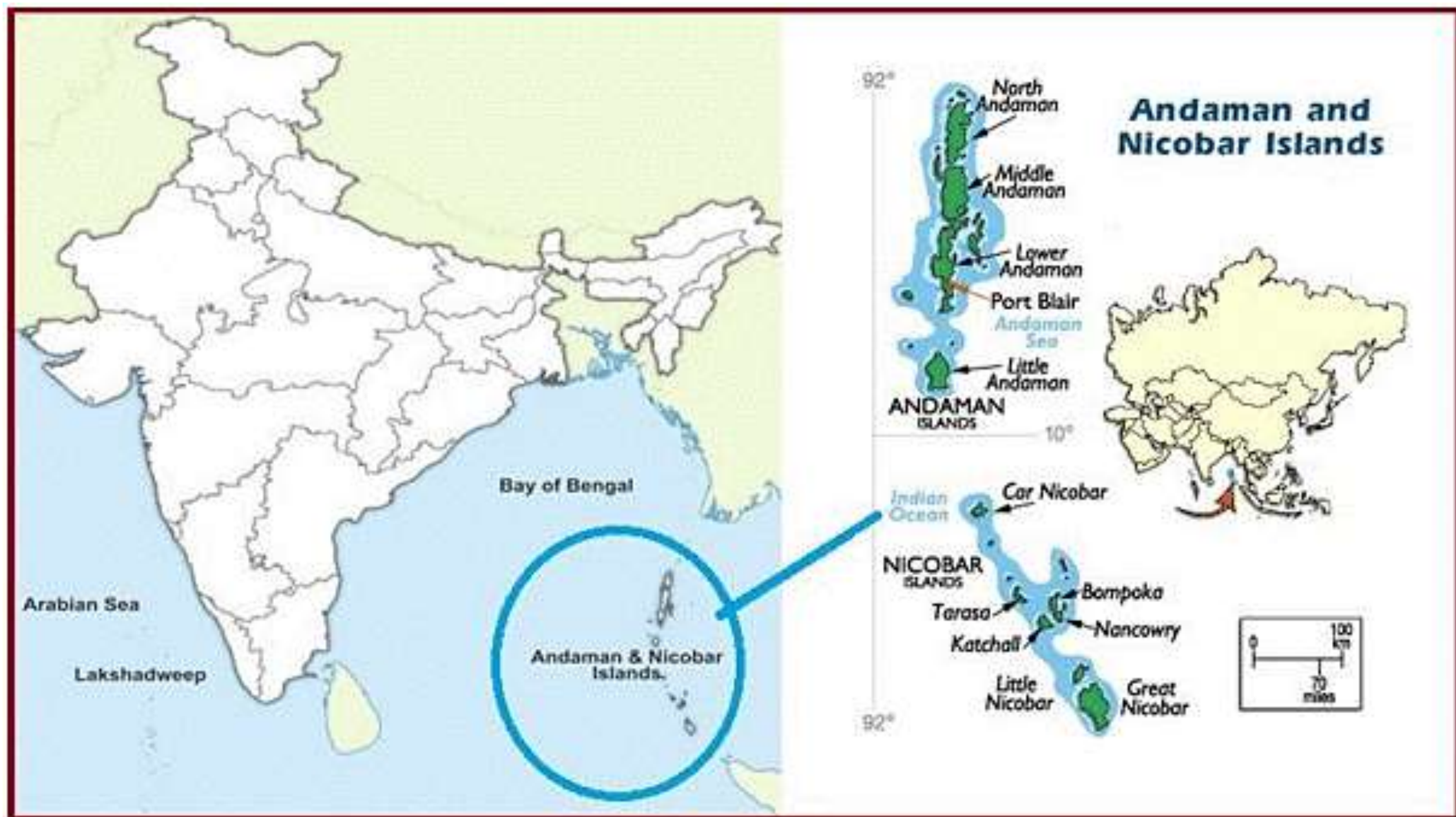
there were about 51 active nests of the Nicobar megapode in the project activities' area; though about 30 will be permanently destroyed, there were also plans in place to conserve the remaining nests.

"There is biodiversity all around the islands, and the conclusion was that this region is the most suitable. All other nesting beaches of the leatherback turtles will be protected and conserved," Ms. Bhati argued.

The Centre added that no tribal persons will be displaced or dispersed, noting that the project will only cover 1.82% of the whole island's archipelago area, which amounts to about 18% of the Great Nicobar area, still leaving GNI with over two-thirds of its land mass as forests.

The Centre also defended the environment clearance granted for the project, which has mandated detailed measures to study and monitor the biodiversity of the region as the project is developed, calling it "an alive document" that prescribes conservation measures till 2052.

The next hearing in the matter has been set for November 7.





THE GREAT NICOBAR PROJECT



The Great Nicobar Island is strategically located astride the sea lanes approaching the Strait of Malacca — the most critical choke point in the Indo-Pacific. The distance from the island's tip, the Indira Point, to Indonesia's Aceh region is a mere 80 nautical miles (148 km). The central government says the project, considering its "strategic and economic importance", will put India on the world map of transcontinental cargo trade.

AND THE PERILS

- **Over 8.5 lakh trees** to be **felled** over an area of **130 sq kms**
- Destruction of tropical rain-forests in Galathea National Park, home to **648 species of flora** and **330 species of fauna**, including Nicobar's **wild pig**, **tree shrew**, the Great Nicobar crested serpent eagle, Nicobar paradise flycatcher and the Nicobar **megapode**.
- **Threat to the Shompen tribe:** Proposed project areas have been important foraging grounds for the hunter-gatherer nomadic community.

- Threat to nesting sites of iconic species like **Giant leatherback turtle** and the **Nicobar megapode**.



- **Threat to coral and marine ecosystem:** ZSI reported presence of 117 species of scleractinian corals in Galathea. But the Environment Impact Assessment of the project states that there is no coral located in the Galathea Bay region.
- Threat to **Dugongs** due to loss of seagrass meadows, rising anthropogenic activities.



-
- The **Union Government** defended the ₹92,000-crore **Great Nicobar Island Mega Infrastructure Project** before the **National Green Tribunal (NGT)**.
 - The Centre said it is “*fully aware*” of the environmental implications and has mandated **decades-long conservation and mitigation programmes**.
 - The project covers **~18% of Great Nicobar’s land area**, leaving over **two-thirds as forest**.

Component	Description
Location	Southernmost part of Andaman & Nicobar Islands
Executing Agency	NITI Aayog with Andaman and Nicobar Islands Integrated Development Corporation (ANIIDCO)
Estimated Cost	₹92,000 crore
Key Components	- International container trans-shipment port (Galathea Bay) - International airport - Township for ~3 lakh people - 450 MW power plant
Area Impacted	~166 sq. km (18% of island's area)
Clearances Involved	Coastal Regulation Zone (CRZ), Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA), Forest & Wildlife Clearances

- **No displacement of tribal persons:**

Both **Nicobarese** and **Shompen** communities will *not* be displaced or dispersed.

- **Scientific planning:**

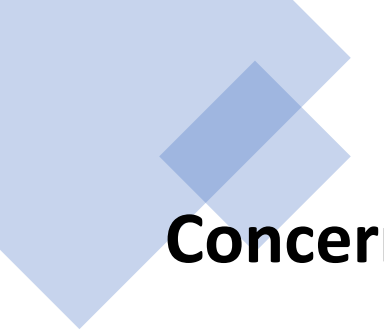
Studies and research conducted to **translocate, conserve, and monitor biodiversity** before construction.

- **Mitigation plan:**

Government has **mandated conservation measures till 2052**, covering flora, fauna, and coral reefs.

- **Project as national asset:**

Declared a “*national asset*” vital for India’s **strategic, economic, and maritime interests**.



Concern Area

Forest Land Diversion

Tribal Impact

Biodiversity Loss

Legal Violations

Key Issue Raised

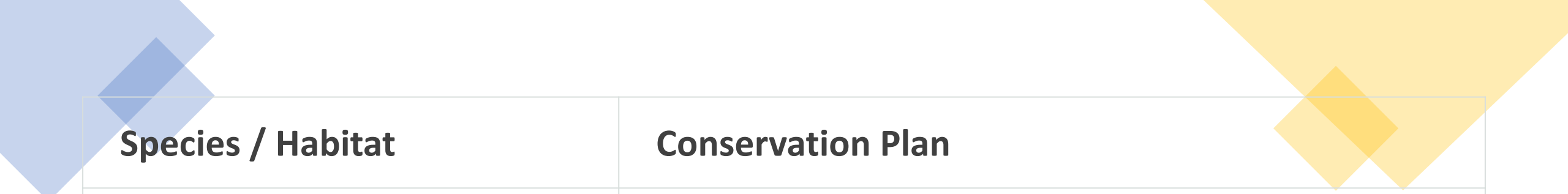
~130 sq. km of forest land to be diverted, affecting endemic flora/fauna.

Possible risk to the **Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Group (PVTG)** — *Shompen*.

Threat to leatherback turtles, Nicobar megapode birds, and coral reefs.

Alleged violations of **Island Coastal Regulation Zone (ICRZ)** norms (2019).





Species / Habitat	Conservation Plan
Nicobar Megapode (bird)	51 active nests identified; 30 may be affected, remaining to be conserved.
Leatherback Turtles	All nesting beaches other than Galathea Bay to be protected.
Coral Reefs	Translocation of 16,000 of 20,668 coral colonies; continuous monitoring of remaining 4,500 colonies.
Forests & Tribes	Long-term biodiversity studies and tribal impact monitoring over three decades.





Government Claim

Tribal protection ensured

Biodiversity safeguarded

Strategic necessity

Supporting Rationale



No tribal displacement; only uninhabited areas to be developed.

Scientific translocation and continuous ecological monitoring planned till 2052.

Enhances **India's maritime security** and **shipping competitiveness** near Malacca Strait.



Shorter, simpler breast cancer treatment: where evidence meets practice

Studies show that injection-based delivery of HER2 drugs matches IV infusions in safety and efficacy — while saving time for patients and hospitals alike; even as the benefits of subcutaneous therapy are well established in major hospitals, experts say that access remains uneven across India's mixed healthcare system.

Anirban Mukhopadhyay

When Vinod Thakker was diagnosed with metastatic HER2-positive breast cancer in December 2020, her doctors postponed surgery and began targeted therapy the next month — an intravenous combination of trastuzumab and pertuzumab, the standard regimen for this form of disease. The drugs were delivered through a chemotherapy, a small device implanted under the skin to allow repeated infusions directly into a central vein.

"Each session took a couple of hours, including the time to flush the line so it wouldn't block," she said. The routine was repetitive and time-consuming, and even a single cycle meant hours at the hospital.

After several months, she discussed switching to a subcutaneous option with her oncologist, in which the same drugs are injected under the skin rather than through an intravenous line.

A subcutaneous injection can be painful at first because about 10 millilitres of the drug are given under the skin of the thigh," said another patient, who also opted for the subcutaneous method, describing the difference between the two treatment modes. "But the whole process takes only two or three minutes. Once you're used to it, you walk in, take the injection, and leave," she added that the switch also eliminates risks linked to chemotherapy, such as infections or blood clots, and replaces a four-hour infusion with a five-minute injection.

These experiences reflect a broader shift in oncology: replacing long intravenous infusions with short subcutaneous delivery that maintains the same therapeutic outcomes while reducing time in hospital.

Science behind the switch
Trastuzumab, a monoclonal antibody that targets the HER2 receptor, has been a mainstay of treatment for HER2-positive breast cancer for more than two decades. Traditionally, it is given intravenously every three weeks, often with pertuzumab — a schedule that is effective but time-intensive for patients and oncology units.

A subcutaneous formulation of trastuzumab was developed using recombinant human hyaluronidase (rHuPH20), which temporarily breaks down hyaluronan in the tissue, allowing large molecules to be absorbed through the skin. Clinical studies such as the Hannafell and FEVER trials showed that fixed-dose subcutaneous trastuzumab, alone or combined with pertuzumab, matched intravenous infusion in safety, efficacy, and drug absorption.

A time-and-motion study by the ADEPT trial found that subcutaneous dosing cut the time patients spent in the treatment chair by about an hour, and pharmacy preparation by a little over an hour.

The fixed-dose combination of pertuzumab and trastuzumab, marketed as PHERSO, delivers both antibodies together in a single subcutaneous injection.

In India, the first real-world report on



Shining the spotlight: People taking part in a breast cancer awareness rally organized by a hospital in Tiruchirappalli, Tamil Nadu. Breast Cancer Awareness Month is observed annually in October. (P)

PHESGO showed similar outcomes across early and metastatic disease. Most patients reported fewer hospital visits and preferred the subcutaneous route, citing comfort and convenience.

While these data establish the clinical equivalence of the two delivery routes, the practical difference becomes clearer when seen in how much time patients actually spend in hospital.

Why shorter treatments

The time needed for drug preparation and administration has long shaped the experience of breast cancer therapy. In the ADEPT study, the mean time in the treatment chair fell from about 80 minutes with intravenous administration to around 20 minutes with subcutaneous dosing. Total hospital time, including waiting and observation, was shorter by nearly 80 minutes.

Meenu Waha, a senior oncologist at Max Super Speciality Hospital, Patparganj, said the time factor affects patients and families in direct ways. "Between travel, waiting, and the procedure itself, it's almost a full-day commitment," she said. "Long hours at the hospital can be especially hard for daily-wage earners or elderly caregivers. Any approach that shortens that time makes a tangible difference."

Shruti Nag, a cancer specialist at Sahakarji Group of Hospitals, Pune, who led the Indian PHESGO study, said the time saving is especially meaningful for women balancing work or care giving responsibilities.

The hospital side

On the hospital side, shorter sessions are changing how oncology units schedule and staff treatment days.

Nit Batra, principal director of medical oncology at Fortis Cancer Institute, Bengaluru, said that subcutaneous delivery had streamlined patient flow. "When procedures take less time, we can manage more cases efficiently without crowding our infusion units," she said. "Subcutaneous

For oncologists, shorter and simpler treatment modes are not just about efficiency — they change how patients experience care.

fixed-dose therapies require less loading and preparation time, saving time not only for patients, but for hospital staff too. It's one of the few innovations that improves efficiency without losing the human element of care."

Raja T, senior consultant at Apollo Hospitals, Chennai, noted that this trend fits into a wider evolution of cancer treatment toward minimally invasive, less intrusive approaches. "When it comes to medicines, we are looking at how we can avoid too much intravenous medication — whether we treat patients with under-the-skin subcutaneous medicines and tablets — making the whole journey easy and comfortable so that they can go back home or to work as soon as possible," he said.

Uneven access

While the benefits of subcutaneous therapy are well established in major hospitals, experts say that access remains uneven across India's mixed healthcare system. Dr. Raja said that facilities and staff training vary widely. "In major cities, good hospitals and infrastructure are available. Then you move to Tier 2 towns and smaller areas where such high-tech care is not available." He added that patients from smaller towns often have to travel repeatedly to larger centres for multiple doses of therapy. "They have to stay near the hospital — that's a big challenge," he said. "Insurance and employer support have helped many, but not everyone benefits equally."

Dr. Raja also noted that public hospitals face high patient volumes, which can make it difficult to introduce newer delivery modes that need specific handling and training. "Government hospitals are doing an excellent job," he

said, "but the sheer numbers they see make it difficult to provide that kind of care to everyone."

Experts said broader adoption in public hospitals would depend on drug availability, staff training, and inclusion in government oncology programmes.

More time for life

For oncologists, shorter and simpler treatment modes are not just about efficiency — they change how patients experience care.

Dr. Nag said the traditional infusion process can be physically and emotionally draining. "The long time they spend in the hospital — the inability of being pricked several times, the discomfort of hours of hospitalisation, and the long wait after the infusion for observation — all interfere with their daily routine, especially if they have young children or are working women," she said. "When it is subcutaneous, they are in and out of hospital — no IV pricks — done very quickly." She added that being able to continue treatment outside hospitals helped during the pandemic. "During COVID, we were able to continue these subcutaneous sessions at the home of the patient so they could complete their treatment."

Ms. Thakker is continuing her treatment. She encourages anyone who is starting or undergoing treatment to seek out the subcutaneous route, adding that it costs less than IV in her experience.

Other small measures also play a part. "When we offer treatment to women, hair loss is an issue. Now, we have things to protect the hair, such as scalp cooling caps. We also use precision surgery, radiation, and medications with fewer side effects," Dr. Raja said. The ultimate goal is not just treating the disease, but making the process less stressful and more comfortable for patients.

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THE GIST

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How advances in screening, stenting techniques have made it possible to prevent many strokes

WORLD STROKE DAY

Athira Elsen Johnson

Every October 29, World Stroke Day serves as a reminder that stroke is a medical emergency and, in many cases, a preventable one. While most awareness efforts focus on the "golden hour" after a stroke — the crucial first few hours for treatment — doctors now say the window should be before the major event occurs. Advances in imaging, screening, and stenting techniques have made it possible to prevent many strokes long before they strike.

Early signals

"Nearly 40% of strokes are preventable," says Pradeep Balaji, senior consultant neurosurgeon at Jawahar Hospital, Chennai. "But we often miss the warn-



Stenting can help in stroke prevention and treatment by restoring blood flow to the brain.

ing phase — the days or weeks when the brain gives early signals in the form of transient ischaemic attacks, or TIAs, or 'mini strokes'.

These warning episodes, called Transient Ischaemic Attacks (TIAs) or 'mini strokes,' are temporary but serious. Specialists stress that a TIA should be treated as a full-blown emergency. "Evaluation should be done immediately,

ideally within 24 hours," says Pradeep Prabhakaran, director and senior consultant, neurology, SIMS Hospital, Chennai. "The earlier we find the blockage, the better our chances of preventing a bigger stroke."

Just as cholesterol deposits can narrow the arteries of the heart, they can also affect the vessels supplying the brain, explains Krishnaven Ramani-vaan, senior consultant neurosurgeon and head of neuro-vascular surgery, Apollo Hospitals, Chennai. "If the narrowing is mild, we manage it with medicines. But when it crosses 70% or causes neurological symptoms, we treat it with a stent or surgery."

Shrivarthan R., consultant neurologist at Mohd Health Care, Chennai, adds that intervention is typically considered when there's more than 50% narrowing. "Every patient that needs lifestyle modification,

blood pressure and sugar control, and antiplatelet therapy. If a significant block remains, we choose between surgery or stenting depending on the patient's condition and vessel anatomy." A brain stent is a tiny mesh tube that keeps narrowed or blocked arteries open, restoring blood flow to oxygen-starved regions.

"These procedures are done to prevent a major stroke before it happens — what we call 'secondary prevention,'" says Dr. Srivarthan. "They're performed once we detect early signs of reduced blood supply or recent transient attacks."

Modern neuroimaging has transformed stroke diagnosis and prevention. Routine screening for everyone, doctors say, might not be cost-effective. But identifying and monitoring high-risk individuals can make a difference. (athira.el@thehindu.co.in)

BIG SHOT



A health worker handing over medicines to a group of people at a shelter camp at Ghalabaddi, near Madhavaram in Andhra Pradesh on Wednesday. Several people were shifted to camps in view of the Cyclone Mocha. KVS/dm

Shorter, simpler breast cancer treatment: where evidence meets practice

Studies show that injection-based delivery of HER2 drugs matches IV infusions in safety and efficacy – while saving time for patients and hospitals alike, even as the benefits of subcutaneous therapy are well established in major hospitals, experts say that access remains uneven across India's mixed healthcare system.

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When Vidya Thakker was diagnosed with metastatic HER2-positive breast cancer in December 2021, her doctors postponed surgery and began targeted therapy the next month – an intravenous combination of trastuzumab and pertuzumab, the standard regimen for this form of disease. The drugs were delivered through a chemoport, a small device implanted under the skin to allow repeated infusions directly into a central vein.

"Each session took a couple of hours, including the time to flush the line so it wouldn't block," she said. The routine was repetitive and time-consuming, and even a single cycle meant hours at the hospital.

After several months, she discussed switching to a subcutaneous option with her oncologist, in which the same drugs are injected under the skin rather than through an intravenous line.

"A subcutaneous injection can be painful at first because about 10 millilitres of the drug are given under the skin of the thigh," said another patient, who also opted for the subcutaneous method, describing the difference between the two treatment modes. "But the whole process takes only two or three minutes. Once you're used to it, you walk in, take the injection, and leave." She added that the switch also eliminates risks linked to chemoports, such as infections or blood clots, and replaces a four-hour infusion with a five-minute injection.

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The ultimate goal is not just treating the disease, but making the process less

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TOP Top 5 cancer sites – India (2022 estimates)

For Females (top 5)

1. Breast cancer – 192,020 cases (~26% of female cases) Global Cancer Ob... +1
2. Cervical cancer (uterus cervix) – 127,526 cases (~17%) Global Cancer Ob... +1
3. Ovarian cancer – 47,333 cases (~6%) Global Cancer Ob... +1
4. Lip and oral cavity cancer – 35,947 cases (~5%) Global Cancer Ob...
5. Colorectal cancer – 26,678 cases (~3%) Global Cancer Ob...

For Males (top 5)

1. Lip & oral cavity – 107,812 cases (~15.6% of male cases) Global Cancer Ob...
2. Lung cancer – 58,970 cases (~8.5%) Global Cancer Ob...
3. Oesophagus cancer – 45,608 cases (~6.6%) Global Cancer Ob...
4. Colorectal cancer – 43,360 cases (~6.3%) Global Cancer Ob...
5. Stomach cancer – 43,060 cases (~6.2%) Global Cancer Ob...

Specific share of breast cancer

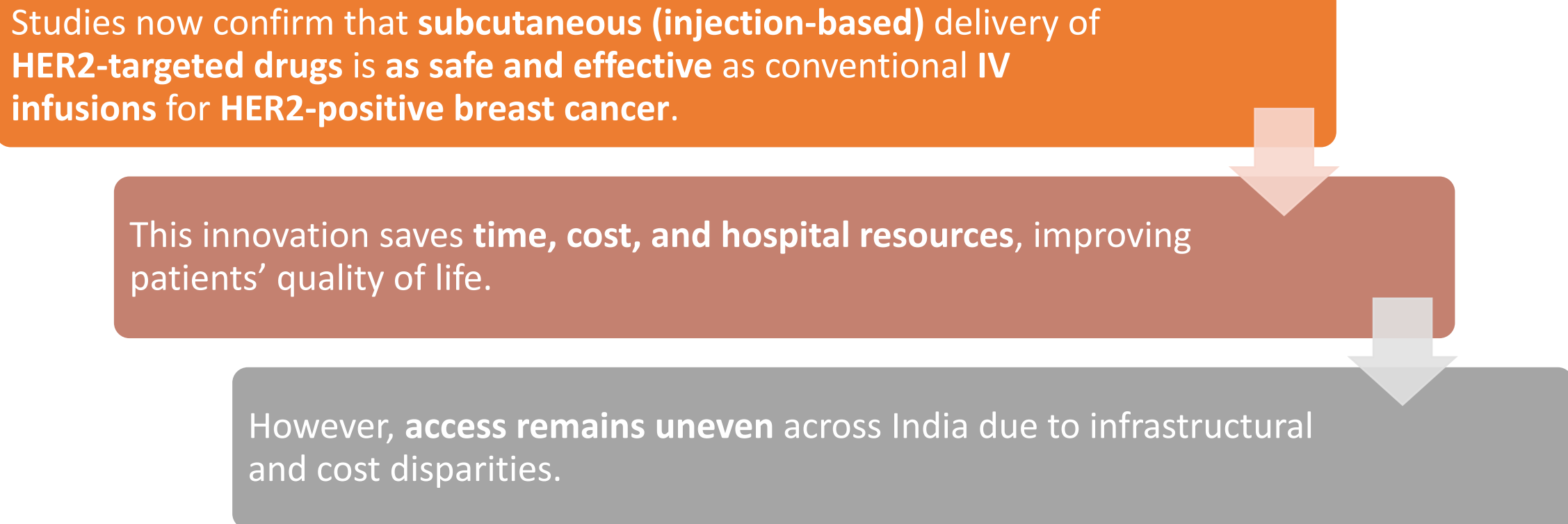
For women, breast cancer accounted for ~ **26%** of all new female cancer cases in 2022 (192,020 of ~722,138). [Global Cancer Ob... +1](#)

Another source says female breast cancer accounted for ~13.5% of all new cancer cases (both sexes) in India around 2020. [PubMed Central](#)

Summary

- Total new cases in India (2022): ~1.41 million.
 - Women's share: ~722 k → ≈51%.
 - Top cancers in women: Breast > Cervix > Ovary > Lip/oral cavity > Colorectum.
 - Top cancers in men: Lip/oral cavity > Lung > Oesophagus > Colorectum > Stomach.
 - Breast cancer among women is very significant (~1 in 4 of female cases).
-

Studies now confirm that **subcutaneous (injection-based)** delivery of **HER2-targeted drugs** is as **safe and effective** as conventional **IV infusions** for **HER2-positive breast cancer**.



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graph TD; A[Studies now confirm that subcutaneous (injection-based) delivery of HER2-targeted drugs is as safe and effective as conventional IV infusions for HER2-positive breast cancer.] --> B[This innovation saves time, cost, and hospital resources, improving patients' quality of life.]; B --> C[However, access remains uneven across India due to infrastructural and cost disparities.];
```

This innovation saves **time, cost, and hospital resources**, improving patients' quality of life.

However, **access remains uneven** across India due to infrastructural and cost disparities.

Aspect

Details

HER2 protein

A receptor promoting cancer cell growth; found in ~20–25% of breast cancers.

Traditional therapy

Intravenous (IV) infusions of **trastuzumab** and **pertuzumab**, usually every 3 weeks.

Drawbacks

Each IV session lasts 2–4 hours, requiring trained staff, central lines, and hospital space.

New alternative

Subcutaneous injection (SC) – a fixed-dose combination of trastuzumab + hyaluronidase (Herceptin SC).

- 
- **PHESGO trial results (global)**
 - Compared **subcutaneous vs IV** administration of **pertuzumab + trastuzumab**.
 - Found **no difference in efficacy or safety**.
 - **Treatment time reduced from 150 minutes (IV) to ~10 minutes (SC)**.
 - **Patient satisfaction higher** due to convenience, less pain, and fewer hospital visits.
 - **ADAPT study**
 - Demonstrated that shorter treatment schedules with SC drugs maintained **similar survival outcomes**.

For Patients

 **Saves time** – 10–15 min injection vs 2–3 hour IV drip.

 **Less invasive** – no IV port or central line needed.

 **Lower indirect costs** (travel, absence from work).

 **Better comfort & psychological ease**

For Hospitals / System

 **Reduces hospital load** and infusion chair time.

 **Reduces nursing workload**, freeing staff for other duties.

 **Shortens bed occupancy**, improving efficiency.

 **Potential for outpatient/home use** with trained nurse supervision.

Challenge

Explanation

Cost barrier

SC formulations costlier upfront than generics used for IV infusions.

Infrastructure gaps

Smaller hospitals lack cold-chain, storage, or trained staff.

Awareness divide

Many oncologists outside metro cities remain unfamiliar with newer protocols.

Policy lag

Limited inclusion in national cancer-care schemes (e.g., Ayushman Bharat).

Dimension

Impact

Public Health

Faster treatment → higher compliance → improved survival.

Economic

Reduces hospital expenditure per patient; cost-efficient over long term.

Social

Empowers women patients to resume normal routines earlier.

Medical Innovation

Encourages pharma focus on patient-centric formulations.

ANKARA

Tak-Afghanistan talks will resume in Turkey after dialogue deadlock



Pakistan and Afghanistan are expected to resume peace talks in Ankara on Thursday after a dialogue deadlock. Pakistan's Defence Minister Khawaja Muhammad Asif and state media in both countries said on Thursday. The new round of negotiations is facilitated by Turkey and other friendly nations.

SEOUL

S. Korea and Japan vow to improve relations amid global uncertainty



South Korean President Yoon Suk-yeol and Japan's new Prime Minister Shinzo Abe met in their first summit Thursday, pledging to strengthen ties that have been frequently strained by their bitter wartime history. Mr. Yoon described the first talks with Mr. Abe as "very enjoyable and meaningful".

NAIROBI

Curfew imposed as unrest spreads after Tanzania's disputed election



Hundreds of protesters took to the streets for a second day of demonstrations in Nairobo on Thursday after a disputed election. The government shut down the internet, imposed a curfew and deployed the military to the streets.

KATHMANDU

Nepal PM holds first talks since protests with parties and 'Gen Z'



Nepal's interim leader Pushpa Kamal Thapa held the first talks between political parties and youth representatives since last month's deadly protests that toppled the previous government. "We have succeeded in creating an environment of cooperation by ending the state of lack of dialogue," Mr. Thapa said.

Resume testing nuclear weapons immediately: Trump to Pentagon

The U.S. President was instructing the military to test the nuclear arsenal on an 'equal basis' with other nuclear powers, China calls for the U.S. to abide by its commitment to a moratorium on nuclear testing and uphold global strategic balance

REUTERS

RUSK

U.S. President Donald Trump ordered the U.S. military on Thursday to immediately resume testing nuclear weapons after a gap of 33 years, minutes before beginning a meeting with Chinese President Xi Jinping.

Mr. Trump made the surprise announcement on Truth Social while he was aboard his Marine One helicopter flying to meet Mr. Xi for a trade negotiating session in Beijing. He said he was instructing the Pentagon to test the U.S. nuclear arsenal on an "equal basis" with other nuclear powers.



High order US Armed Forces in California, 2025

"Because of other countries testing programs, I have instructed the Department of War to start testing our Nuclear Weapons on an equal basis. That process will begin immediately," Mr. Trump posted. "Russia is second, and China is a distant

third, but will be even within 5 years." A senior Russian lawmaker said Mr. Trump's decision would herald a new era of unpredictability and open confrontation, state news agency RIA reported. China's Foreign Ministry called for the U.S. to

abide by its commitment to a moratorium on nuclear testing and uphold the global strategic balance and stability.

On his way back to Washington, Mr. Trump said testing was needed to ensure the U.S. keeps up with its rival nuclear powers. "With others doing testing, I think it's appropriate that we do also," Mr. Trump said on board Air Force One, adding that nuclear test sites would be determined later.

Asked whether the world was entering a more risky phase around nuclear weapons, Mr. Trump dismissed the threat, saying U.S. stocks were "well locked up" before adding he would welcome demu-

clearisation. "I'd like to see a de-nuclearisation because we have so many and Russia's second and China's third and China will catch up within four or five years," he said.

The reaction to Trump's announcement on testing was swift. Representative Dina Titus, a Democrat from Nevada, said on X, "I'll be introducing legislation to put a stop to this." Daryl Kimball, director of the Arms Control Association, said it would take months to resume consistent nuclear tests underground at the former test site in Nevada. "Trump is making a bad situation worse," Mr. Kimball said on X.

Israel hits Gaza again after claiming ceasefire is back

AGENCE FRANCE PRESSE

GAZA CITY

Israel said it struck an arms dump in Gaza on Wednesday, hours after the deadliest night of bombing since the start of a U.S.-brokered truce, warning it would continue to operate to take out perceived threats.

The military announced it had carried out a precision strike on a site in the Beit Laha area of northern Gaza where it said weapons were being stockpiled for "an imminent terror attack".

Israeli troops, it said, would remain deployed in the area "in accordance with the ceasefire agreement and will continue to operate to remove any immediate threat".

Hamas-run Gaza's civil defence agency said that one Palestinian was killed



Broken debris litters a building during an Israeli strike on the besieged Palestinian territory on Thursday.

in the latest strike - and that 104 - including 46 children and 24 women - had died in the previous night's bombardment.

The Israeli military chief Yoav Gallant said after one of its soldiers was killed in Gaza on Tuesday, he told morning on Wednesday it said it had begun "renewed enforcement of the ceasefire".

Both U.S. President Donald Trump and regional

mediator Qatar said they expected the ceasefire to hold, but inside Gaza displaced families were losing hope.

United Nations rights chief Volker Turk said the report of so many dead was appalling and urged all sides not to let peace "slip from our grasp", echoing calls from Britain, Germany and the European Union for the parties to recommit to the ceasefire.

Trump administration limits refugees to 7,500, favours white South Africans

Associated Press

WASHINGTON

The Trump administration is restricting the number of refugees it admits into the country to 7,500 and they will mostly be white South Africans, a dramatic drop after the U.S. previously allowed to hundreds of thousands of people fleeing war and persecution from around the world. The Republican administration published the news on Thursday in a notice on the Federal Register.

Dramatic decrease
No reason was given for the numbers, which are a



The U.S. had long offered refuge to hundreds of thousands fleeing war and persecution from around the world, this report.

dramatic decrease from last year's ceiling of 125,000 set under Democratic President Joe Biden. It said that the admission of the 7,500 refugees during 2025 fiscal year was

"justified by humanitarian concerns or is otherwise in the national interest." The statute cap represents another blow for the long-standing programme that until recently has en-

joyed bipartisan support. Mr. Trump suspended the programme on the first day in office and since then only a trickle of refugees have entered the country, mostly white South Africans.

Some refugees have also been admitted as part of a court case seeking to allow entry to refugees who were overseas and in the process of coming to the U.S. when the programme was suspended.

The administration renewed the programme for the Afghans in February, saying that white South African farmers face discrimination and violence at home.

Money heist



A view of the Louvre Museum in Paris, a week after thieves broke into a first floor gallery and fled with jewellery worth an estimated \$10 million. On Thursday, the French police arrested the more people, including the prime suspect in the robbery.

Russia strikes power grid in Ukraine; 2 killed, 17 injured

Associated Press

KYIV

The latest in a sustained Russian campaign of massive drone and missile attacks on Ukraine's energy infrastructure brought power outages and restrictions in all the country's regions on Thursday, officials said, with the Ukrainian Prime Minister Yulia Tymoshenko describing Moscow's tactic as "systematic energy terror".

The strikes, which were the latest in Russia's almost daily attacks on the Ukrainian power grid, hit bitter winter temperatures approaching, killed at least two people and injured 17, including children between ten and 16 years of age, according to authorities. Russian launched more



Ukrainian rescue work at the site of a heavily damaged building following a Russian attack in Zaporizhzhia on Thursday.

than 650 drones and more than 50 missiles of various types in the attack, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said.

Ukrainian cities use centralized public infrastructure to run water, sewage and heating systems, and blackouts stop from them working. Months of attacks

have aimed to erode Ukrainian morale as well as disrupt weapons manufacturing and other war-related activity almost four years after Russia's full-scale invasion of its neighbour.

Two energy infrastructure facilities were damaged in the western Lviv region, authorities said.

Dissanayake launches nationwide drive to end Sri Lanka's drug menace, alleges police links

Sri Lanka

COLOMBO

Sri Lanka President Anura Kumara Dissanayake on Thursday launched an island-wide programme aimed at ending the country's enduring drug problem that, he said, some in the police force are part of.

Speaking at an event to mark the launch of the initiative, titled "United as one", Mr. Dissanayake said the government came to power a year ago, warned that the island has grown significantly over the last few years, according to officials. Youth, in particular, have been affected.

Mass arrests

Sri Lanka

Located along a crucial shipping route, Sri Lanka has been grappling with the entry of narcotics substances over many years. While the island was earlier used mostly as a transit hub by international peddlers, the problem of trafficking and drug use within the island has grown significantly over the last few years, according to officials. Youth, in particular, have been affected.

Mass arrests
According to data published by the National Dangerous Drugs Control Board, Sri Lanka police made 228,480 drug-related arrests last year, including through a network of alleged possession of narcotic substances, including heroin, cocaine, 'ice' or methamphetamine and cannabis.



Anura Kumara Dissanayake

hounded at the Bandaranaike International Airport in Colombo with a stash of heroin, weighing nearly 2 kg and worth millions, concealed in his luggage. He was travelling from Malaysia, police said.

"Much of the drugs entering Sri Lanka come from Pakistan and Afghanistan," a senior official told The Hindu, requesting anonymity, citing sensitivity of the government's new initiative. "Some types come from Europe and India as well. We now have the support of the international community to target these networks both in land and sea in our respective territories," he said.

Not just the police, but Sri Lanka's military has also been accused of being complicit in narcotics net-

works. In a recent parliamentary address, Tamil National People's Front (TNPF) leader and Jaffna District MP, Gajendrakumar Potmanabalan said members of the military played "a central role" in drug peddling and use across Tamil-majority districts in the island's north and east, "deliberately fostering" drug addiction among Tamil youth.

Drug use took root in Jaffna after it came under military occupation in 1995, and worsened after 2009, when the civil war between the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) controlled the area. It is also been accused of being like a cancer," he said.

Money heist



A view of the Louvre Museum in Paris, a week after thieves broke into a first-floor gallery and fled with jewellery worth an estimated \$102 million. On Thursday, the French police arrested five more people, including the prime suspect in the robbery. AFP

'Silence isn't a yes': France adds consent to its rape law

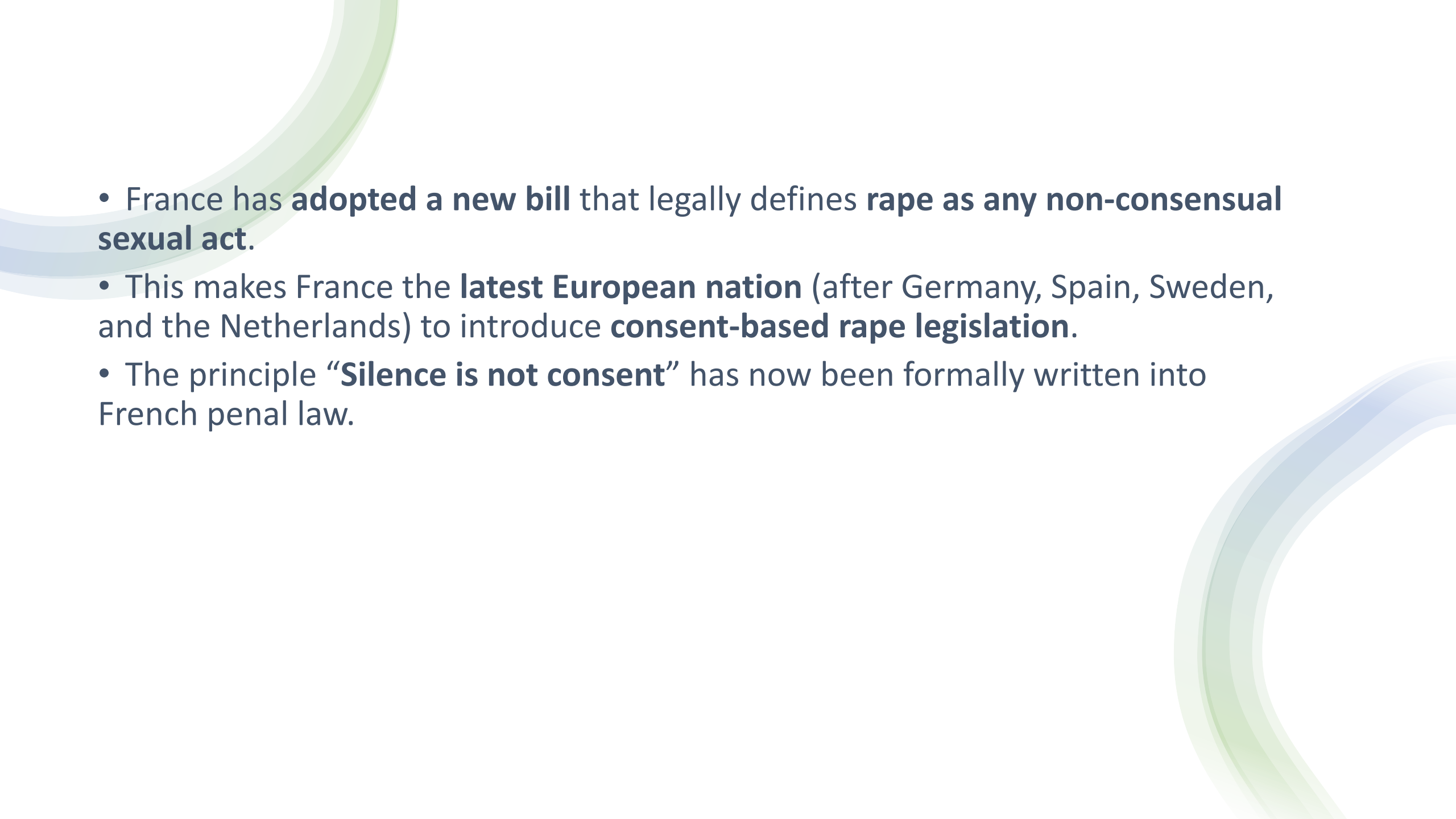
Paris: French lawmakers on Wednesday adopted a bill defining rape as any non-consensual sexual act, making the country the latest European nation to pass a consent-based legislation. The penal code will now enshrine the principle of consent into the definition of the crime of rape, after France's Senate backed the measure.

The text signals a move "from a culture of rape to a culture of consent", centrist lawmaker Veronique Riotton said after the bill, which she co-sponsored, passed the lower house last week. Consent, the text says, must be "free and informed, specific, prior and revocable", noting that it cannot be inferred from "silence or lack of reaction". "There is no consent if the act is committed through violence, coercion, threat, whatever their nature," the text states.



Consent-based rape laws already exist in countries like Germany, the Netherlands, Spain and Sweden. The bill comes after the case of Gisele Pelicot re-ignited a debate over consent in the country. Her ex-husband was convicted of drugging her and inviting dozens of strangers to rape her during marriage.

National Rally lawmaker Sophie Blanc earlier said the change would put the focus on the victim's actions, "not the violence of the perpetrator". But supporters of the reform say it will shift the burden onto offenders to prove consent. "When it's not no, it doesn't mean yes," said Green lawmaker Marie-Charlotte Garin, co-sponsor of the bill, after it was passed in national assembly. "When it's yes, it must be a real yes. Giving in will never again be consent," she said. AFP

- 
- The background features decorative curved lines in shades of green and blue, sweeping across the top and bottom of the slide.
- France has **adopted a new bill** that legally defines **rape as any non-consensual sexual act**.
 - This makes France the **latest European nation** (after Germany, Spain, Sweden, and the Netherlands) to introduce **consent-based rape legislation**.
 - The principle “**Silence is not consent**” has now been formally written into French penal law.

Provision

Definition of Consent

No implied consent

Null consent under coercion

Burden of proof

Cultural shift

Explanation

Must be “**free and informed, specific, prior, and revocable.**”

Consent cannot be inferred from **silence, passivity, or lack of resistance.**

Any act committed through **violence, threat, or coercion** is automatically considered non-consensual.

The **accused must prove consent**, shifting focus from victim’s resistance to perpetrator’s actions.

Law aims to move France “**from a culture of rape to a culture of consent.**”

3 Background and Trigger Case

- The reform was largely inspired by the case of **Gisele Pelicot**, whose husband was convicted of
 - **Drugging her** and
 - **Inviting dozens of strangers to rape her** during their marriage.
 - The shocking case **re-ignited a national debate on consent and marital rape**, accelerating legislative change.
-

4 Parliamentary Debate

- **Veronique Riotton** (Centrist lawmaker):

“The reform transforms our culture—from rape culture to a culture of consent.”
- **Marie-Charlotte Garin** (Green Party MP):

“When it’s not no, it doesn’t mean yes. When it’s yes, it must be a real yes.”
- **Sophie Blanc** (National Rally MP):

Criticised the bill, saying it could overemphasise the victim’s actions rather than the **violence of the perpetrator**, though reformers say it **rightly shifts accountability** to offenders.

Country**Consent Law Introduced****Key Phrase / Principle****Sweden**

2018

“Yes means yes” law – absence of explicit consent = rape

Spain

2022

“Only Yes Means Yes” law after high-profile ‘La Manada’ gang-rape case

Germany

2016

“No means no” principle integrated into sexual-offence laws

France

2025

Explicit inclusion of consent in rape definition



Indian Case Laws on Consent

Case	Year	Key Judgment
<i>State of U.P. vs. Chhotey Lal</i>	2011	Consent must be free and voluntary; passive submission is not consent.
<i>Uday vs. State of Karnataka</i>	2003	Consent obtained under a false promise of marriage is not valid.
<i>Deepak Gulati vs. State of Haryana</i>	2013	Consent must be based on an informed choice, not misrepresentation.
<i>Patan Jamal Vali vs. State of Andhra Pradesh</i>	2021	Consent obtained by exploiting power imbalance or vulnerability is invalid.



Aspect

France (New Bill, 2025)

India (IPC §375, §376)

Definition

Defines rape as any sexual act
without consent

Defines rape as sexual act
against will or without consent

Consent Principle

Must be “free, informed, specific,
prior and revocable”

Must be “unequivocal and
voluntary”

Silence

“Silence or lack of reaction ≠
consent”

Not explicitly stated, but courts
interpret silence ≠ consent

Marital Rape

Debate ongoing; case of Gisèle
Pelicot influenced change

Marital rape not criminalized
(Exception to Section 375)

Burden of Proof

On the accused to prove consent

On prosecution to prove lack of
consent

Consent Withdrawal

Recognized as revocable

No explicit provision on
withdrawal once consent is given



OpenAI Plans Historic
IPO Targeting \$1
Trillion Valuation

OpenAI, the creator of ChatGPT, is preparing for one of the most significant stock market listings in history, with a potential valuation of up to \$1 trillion.

The company aims to raise at least \$60 billion through the initial public offering (IPO), according to individuals familiar with early discussions. Although plans remain preliminary, the scale of the proposed listing has already drawn major market attention.

The firm's revenue is projected to reach an annualised rate of approximately \$20 billion by the end of 2025. However, despite the soaring revenue, sources suggest that OpenAI's expenses and losses are also increasing as it scales its operations.



The company's focus remains on maintaining leadership in the generative AI sector, competing with industry giants such as Google and Anthropic.



Microsoft Partnership and Structural Reforms



OpenAI recently underwent a major restructuring agreement with Microsoft, designed to separate it from its original non-profit framework. This deal, following Microsoft's \$13 billion investment, grants the tech giant around a 27% equity stake in OpenAI. The restructuring enables OpenAI to pursue large-scale financing while preserving its research objectives in artificial intelligence.

NASA Considers Nuclear
Option to Deflect 'City-
Killer' Asteroid 2024 YR4

- NASA has intensified its study of nuclear disruption strategies to avert a potential lunar impact by asteroid 2024 YR4, a 60-metre object projected to pass near the Moon in 2032. Although the asteroid poses no direct threat to Earth, the risk of a lunar collision has prompted detailed mission assessments aimed at preventing secondary space hazards.

- **Renewed Focus on Planetary Defence**

- The asteroid, discovered in December 2024, follows an orbit that occasionally intersects the Earth–Moon system. Recent data suggest a 3.8% probability of lunar impact, sufficient to trigger precautionary planning. NASA and international research teams are evaluating mission windows from late 2029 to late 2031 to develop a response plan that could safeguard satellites and human spaceflight assets from potential debris clouds.



Over 120 Nations Join Eighth International Solar Alliance Assembly in New Delhi

- PM Kusum and PM Surya Ghar schemes promote solar adoption among farmers and households.



Global Firepower Index 2025: World's Strongest Militaries Revealed

- The Global Firepower (GFP) Index 2025 presents a detailed analysis of the world's most powerful armed forces. Covering more than 60 assessment factors — from manpower and defence budgets to logistics and technology — it evaluates each nation's ability to project and sustain military strength.
 - A lower Power Index (PwrIndx) score signifies greater overall capability, reflecting modernisation trends and global strategic realignments.
- 
- A large yellow triangle is positioned in the bottom right corner of the slide, pointing towards the top right.

The United States continues to lead the GFP 2025 rankings, maintaining its position as the most powerful military in the world. With a defence budget surpassing \$860 billion and a vast global base network, America's superiority extends across land, sea, air, and cyber domains.

Advanced assets such as F-35 fighter jets, nuclear submarines, and space-based systems give it unmatched power projection and deterrence. Its global influence remains unparalleled, sustained by continuous innovation and strategic reach.



Global Firepower Index evaluates over 60 parameters to rank military strength.

Lower Power Index (PwrIndx) indicates stronger overall capability.

United States, Russia, China, India, and South Korea occupy the top five spots in 2025.

India's defence modernisation centres on the Atmanirbhar Bharat (self-reliance) initiative.

Word of the day

Capricious:

changeable; determined by chance or impulse or whim rather than by necessity or reason

Synonyms: impulsive, whimsical

Usage: *Authoritarian rulers are frequently capricious.*

Pronunciation: newsth.live/capriciouspro

International Phonetic Alphabet: /kə'pɪfəs/





Thank you 😊

