

The collage features a central title "THARFAE BASTI'S" in large, bold, black letters. Surrounding this title are various newspaper clippings from Indian and international publications. The clippings are arranged in a grid-like fashion, overlapping each other. The clippings include headlines such as "Lawlessness, disorder as protesters run riot", "Donald Trump calls Modi a 'true friend', lavishes praise on PM", "Good Morning Indiamerica", "Policeman among 5 killed in Delhi violence over CAA", "S1 murder trail, NIA flirts searches in T.N.", "अमेरिका को दिखी 'महाशक्ति'", "सीए पर यमुनापार में बढ़ी हिंसा, पांच की मौत", and "दैनिक जागरण". The clippings also feature various photographs, including protests, political figures, and news scenes.



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since the farmers have resorted to protest against any water release.

Pellet guns part of graded police response, says SC

Top court touches on 'exceptional circumstances' for their use without expanding on it; state must not meet students' protests with brutality, Bench says, but flags the possible 'hijacking' of protests

Krishnadas Rajagopal
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Thursday said the use of pellet guns by the police in "exceptional circumstances" was part of a graded approach to break civilian protests. The court, however, did not expand on which "exceptional circumstances" justified the use of pellet guns, nor did it ask the Union government for an explanation during the hearing.

"Police rules allow the use [of pellet guns] in exceptional circumstances. One of the graded responses is the use of pellet guns," Justice Joymalya Bagchi, one of the three judges on the Bench headed by Chief Justice of India Surya Kant, observed orally. Hesitant to consider a blanket ban on pellet guns, the court said it would examine particular incidents during which the police had used pellet guns indiscriminately or arbitrarily in violation of the standard regulations mapping graded responses for crowd control.

The court was hearing a petition filed by former Indian Police Service (IPS) officer Yashovardhan Azad, and two pellet injury victims, Prashant Kumar

 The use of such projectile activated guns for crowd dispersal fails the constitutional tests of necessity, proportionality, and reasonableness

PETITION AGAINST PELLET GUNS

 Police rules allow the use [of pellet guns] in exceptional circumstances. One of the graded responses is the use of pellet guns

JUSTICE JOYMALYA BAGCHI
Supreme Court judge



Singh and Shekh Irshad Mansoori, primarily for a direction to ban the use of kinetic metallic pellets by law enforcement agencies on civilian assemblies.

Constitutional tests

The petition argued that the use of projectile-activated guns (PAG) or pellet guns loaded with partly or wholly metallic pellets for crowd dispersal fails the constitutional tests of necessity, proportionality, and reasonableness.

Though the court "completely agreed" that the state must meet students' protests with non-violence and not brutality, the Bench flagged the possibility of unscrupulous elements "hijacking" a bona fide students' protest, driv-

ing it into a spiral of violence. The police have to be prepared with a graded response, which includes the use of force, to every possible turn of events while dealing with a restive crowd, the court said.

"We are completely in agreement with pleas of no-violence principle when it comes to agitation of students or persons expressing dissatisfaction with a government policy... But there is also the question of elements hijacking students' protests. A protest must have started with a bona fide purpose, but it may end up as a vehicle for various ulterior purposes... The hijacking may even be intended to sabotage the bona fide protests," Justice Bagchi said.

No adverse action over CJP protest, says Delhi govt.

NEW DELHI

The Delhi government issued an order stating no adverse legal action will be taken against people involved in the protests against the NEET-UG paper leaks. "The protection shall not extend to persons having criminal antecedents...", the order said. » **PAGE 4**

Justice Bagchi sounded out the Centre on the need to arm the police with protective gear. This, he said, would give personnel the confidence of a precious few seconds to think before unleashing violence.

"The best way is to arm your police with defensive gear. That gives them the confidence to ponder... Everyone is a human being. If someone comes with a lathi at you,... if you wear a helmet, you would take a few more seconds to gauge the situation before deciding the course of action. These aspects must also be included in this debate here," Justice Bagchi said.

KASHMIR'S PELLET VICTIMS

» **PAGE 4**

Topic	Details
Court	Supreme Court of India
Bench	Chief Justice Surya Kant-led Bench (including Justice Joymalya Bagchi)
Issue	Petition seeking restrictions/ban on the use of pellet guns for crowd control.
Petitioners	Former IPS officer Yashovardhan Azad and pellet gun victims, including Prashant Kumar Singh and Sheikh Irshad Mansoori .
Main Question	Should pellet guns be completely banned for crowd control?

What did the Supreme Court say?

Observation

Explanation

Pellet guns not completely banned

The Court **did not order a blanket ban.**

Use only in exceptional circumstances

Pellet guns may be used **only in exceptional situations** as part of a **graded police response.**

No definition given

The Court **did not specify** what exactly constitutes "exceptional circumstances."

Case-by-case review

Alleged misuse of pellet guns can be examined in **individual cases.**

Police should avoid brutality

The State should respond to protests with **minimum force** and **non-violent methods whenever possible.**

What is a "Graded Police Response"?

A graded response means the **police increase the level of force gradually**, depending on the seriousness of the situation.

Stage	Police Action
Level 1	Dialogue, persuasion, negotiation
Level 2	Public announcements, barricades
Level 3	Lathi charge (if necessary)
Level 4	Tear gas, water cannons
Level 5	Pellet guns or other less-lethal weapons only in exceptional situations
Level 6	Firearms only where legally justified to protect life

Principle: Use the **minimum force necessary**.

Constitutional Principles Discussed

The petition argued that pellet guns fail three constitutional tests.

Principle	Meaning
Necessity	Force should be used only when absolutely necessary.
Proportionality	Force must match the level of threat.
Reasonableness	Police action should be fair, justified, and lawful.

The petitioners argued that pellet guns often **fail these constitutional standards** because they can cause severe injuries, especially to the eyes.

Court's Key Observations

Observation	Meaning
Peaceful protests deserve protection	Democratic protests should generally be handled peacefully.
Avoid brutality	Police should not respond with excessive force.
Possibility of protest hijacking	Genuine protests may sometimes be infiltrated or hijacked by violent elements.
Police need preparedness	Law enforcement should be prepared for different levels of escalation.
Defensive equipment	Better helmets, shields, and protective gear may reduce the need for higher levels of force.

What are Pellet Guns?

Aspect	Details
Definition	A firearm that fires small metallic pellets instead of conventional bullets.
Nature	Considered a less-lethal weapon , but not non-lethal .
Common Use	Crowd control, riot management, law enforcement.
Risks	Permanent blindness, eye injuries, facial injuries, disability, and in some cases death.

Arguments Against Pellet Guns

Concern	Explanation
Serious eye injuries	Thousands of pellets spread over a wide area, making targeting difficult.
Permanent blindness	Victims have suffered irreversible vision loss.
Indiscriminate impact	Innocent bystanders may also be hit.
Human rights concerns	Widely criticized by rights groups for excessive harm.

Firearm



- Uses explosive propellant – gunpowder – to expel bullet
- Ammunition is deadly – it's heavier and often bigger

Shown: Glock

BB gun



- Uses air, through pump or spring, to expel BBs. Can use CO2
- BBs are light, round, metal projectiles
- Not very accurate
- Used for target practice/killing small game. Deadly to people in rare instances

Shown: Umarex 40xp

Pellet gun



- Uses air or CO2 gas to propel ammo
- Shoots metal projectiles. Its rear tapers to a nose – some flat, others pointed or domed
- Pellets are heavier and more accurate than BBs
- Used for target practice and killing small game. Deadly to people in rare instances
- Accuracy lends itself to use in target competition

Shown: Beretta air gun 92FS

Airsoft gun



- Propelled by air through springs. Also can use CO2
- Generally fires plastic spheres
- Very inaccurate; projectile loses velocity quickly
- Designed to be nonlethal; can leave welt if it hits skin directly from short distance
- Generally used for mock shooting events like team games, and police and military training

Shown: Umarex Walther PPQ

Activists raise alarm over PM CARES denial of access to audit statements

Bindu Shajan Perappadan
NEW DELHI

The Prime Minister's Citizen Assistance and Relief in Emergency Situations (PM CARES) Fund has not made public any audited financial statements for the past three financial years even as activists raise concerns about its transparency. The Fund, a public charitable Trust established in March 2020 amid the COVID-19 crisis to support relief efforts during public health emergencies and other disasters, is chaired by the Prime Minister and funded entirely through voluntary contributions, according to information released by the Union government.

The last publicly available audited financial statements, for the financial year 2022-23, show an opening balance of ₹5,415.65 crore, voluntary contributions of ₹909.64 crore, total receipts of ₹6,723.07 crore, total payments of ₹439.38 crore, and a closing balance of ₹6,283.68 crore as on March 31, 2023.

Audited financial statements for 2019-20, 2020-21, 2021-22, and 2022-23 are available on the PM CARES website.

The absence of publicly



Chaired by the PM, the fund was set up in 2020 to aid relief efforts during public health emergencies and other disasters. FILE PHOTO

available audit statements after 2022-23 is "extremely concerning", Anjali Bhardwaj, co-convenor of the National Campaign for People's Right to Information, told *The Hindu*.

"The fund was presented as having been set up by the Union government, making it appear to be a public authority. Government employees also contributed from their salaries," Ms. Bhardwaj said.

'Not a public authority'

"However, when information regarding the funds collected and spent was sought, the government maintained that the Trust is not a public authority under the RTI Act. The Ministry of Corporate Affairs also retrospectively amended the relevant

The fund remains outside ambit of RTI Act, parliamentary scrutiny, and audit by the CAG: activist

rules under the Companies Act. At present, PM CARES remains outside the ambit of the RTI Act, parliamentary scrutiny, and audit by the Comptroller and Auditor-General," she said.

"There is apprehension that the secrecy surrounding PM CARES could create conditions similar to those seen in the electoral bonds case, where lack of transparency enabled *quid pro quo*, regulatory inaction, and extortion. The trust is operating in a completely opaque manner," she said.

The PM CARES Fund is

registered as a public charitable trust under the Registration Act, 1908, according to information released by the Union government. The Trust deed was registered in New Delhi on March 27, 2020.

The government has maintained that the fund consists entirely of voluntary contributions from individuals and organisations, and receives no budgetary support.

It has also stated that the Prime Minister serves as the *ex officio* Chairperson of the Trust, while the Union Ministers of Defence, Home Affairs, and Finance are its *ex officio* trustees.

Donations to the PM CARES Fund qualify for 100% deduction under Section 80G of the Income Tax Act, 1961 and are also eligible to be counted as CSR expenditure under the Companies Act, 2013.

The Fund has also been granted exemption under the Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Act (FCRA), enabling it to receive donations from individuals and organisations based overseas through a designated foreign contribution account. The PM CARES Fund has primarily financed India's COVID-19 response and emergency health infrastructure.

Topic	Details
Fund	PM CARES Fund (Prime Minister's Citizen Assistance and Relief in Emergency Situations Fund)
Established	March 2020
Purpose	To provide relief during emergencies such as COVID-19, natural disasters, and other crises.
Chairperson	Prime Minister of India (Ex-officio)
Trustees	Union Ministers of Defence, Home Affairs, and Finance

Why is the Issue in News?

An activist has alleged that **PM CARES Fund has not publicly disclosed its audit statements for the last three financial years**, raising concerns over transparency and accountability.

Financial Statements Available

Financial Year	Status	
2019–20	Available	
2020–21	Available	
2021–22	Available	
2022–23	Not available publicly	
2023–24	Not available publicly	
2024–25	Not available publicly	

Reported Financial Position (FY 2021–22)

Particular	Amount (₹ Crore) 
Opening Balance	25,415.65
Voluntary Contributions	7,909.64
Total Receipts	26,723.07
Total Expenditure	7,439.38
Closing Balance	36,283.68

Why are Activists Concerned?

Concern	Explanation
Lack of transparency	Recent audit statements have not been published.
Limited public scrutiny	Citizens cannot independently verify fund utilization.
RTI issue	PM CARES has maintained that it is not a public authority under the RTI Act.

Government / PM CARES Position

Issue	Government's Stand
Nature of Fund	Public charitable trust , not a government fund.
Funding Source	Entirely based on voluntary contributions from individuals and organizations.
Budgetary Support	No budgetary allocation from the Government of India.
Audit	Audited by an independent Chartered Accountant , not by the Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG).

Legal Status of PM CARES

Aspect	Details
Registration	Registered as a Public Charitable Trust under the Registration Act, 1908.
Income Tax	Eligible for 100% deduction under Section 80G of the Income Tax Act, 1961.
CSR Eligibility	Contributions qualify as Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) expenditure under the Companies Act, 2013.
Foreign Donations	Eligible to receive foreign contributions under the Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Act (FCRA) .

FEATURE	PM CARES FUND	PRIME MINISTER'S NATIONAL RELIEF FUND (PMNRF)
Established	2020	1948
Purpose	Emergencies, disasters, pandemics	Medical relief and natural disasters
Legal Status	Public charitable trust	Public trust
Budgetary Support	No	No
CSR Eligible	Yes	Yes
FCRA Eligible	Yes	Yes
Audit	Independent Chartered Accountant	Independent Chartered Accountant

Centre defends CEC panel without CJI

Union govt. says if the decision of the Prime Minister cannot be trusted, then an 'outsider' or a former judge must sit in to advise on the appointment of Cabinet Ministers too. Supreme Court says that it is not about 'lack of faith' in the PM, but about justice not only being done, but shown to be done

Srinivasan Balasubramanian
NEW DELHI

The Union government questioned in the Supreme Court on Thursday the instance on having the Chief Justice of India (CJI) on the Prime Minister's panel which selects the Chief Election Commissioner (CEC), saying if the decision of the Prime Minister cannot be trusted then an "outsider" or a former judge must sit in to advise on the appointment of Cabinet Ministers too.

The Centre's submission came while hearing petitions challenging the Chief Election Commissioner and other Election Commissioners (Appointment, Conditions of Service, and Term of Office) Act of 2023. The petitions have contended that the Act "dissevered" a Constitution Bench judgment in the Anoop Barwale case,

which had constituted a CEC selection panel chaired by the Prime Minister and including the Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha and the CJI. The 2023 Act, passed on having the Chief Justice of India (CJI) on the Prime Minister's panel which selects the Chief Election Commissioner (CEC), saying if the decision of the Prime Minister cannot be trusted then an "outsider" or a former judge must sit in to advise on the appointment of Cabinet Ministers too.

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JUSTICE DIPANKAR DATTA
Supreme Court Judge

The appointment procedure should be shown to be fair. The issue is that the composition of this committee sits in favour of one side. There is a two-versus-one here, two of the Executive and one of the Opposition. Should there not be a show of fairness in the appointment to one of the most important offices of this country?

Justice Dipankar Datta said the question was not about "lack of faith" in the Prime Minister, but about the principle of "justice not being done, but shown to be done".

The law officer asked if a constitutional court, while deciding the composition of a committee in a statute,

could presume abuse of power, bad faith and mala fide intention on part of the constitutional functionaries. The court had said the question was not about "lack of faith" in the Prime Minister, but about the principle of "justice not being done, but shown to be done".

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HC grants relief to Bhupesh Baghel in morphed CD case

Bhupesh Baghel
RAIPUR

The Chhattisgarh High Court on Thursday stayed further proceedings against former Chhattisgarh Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel in a Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) court in the alleged morphed CD case, said a bench of Justices M.A. Rajesh and Justice M.A. Rajesh. The bench also directed the CBI to frame charges against him.

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Won't take adverse action over CJP protest: Delhi govt.

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Home Department of the Delhi government on Thursday issued an order stating that no adverse legal action will be taken against people involved in the protests against the NEET-UG paper leak issue.

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Years after 2016 protests, PTSD and depression continue to haunt pellet gun victims in Kashmir

Faraz Ahmad
SRINAGAR

At the peak of the 2016 protests in Jammu & Kashmir, Javed Khan (name changed) was protesting on the streets of Srinagar's old city when a pellet gun hit him. Ever since, he has been living "hot iron" inside his eyes, and he has lost vision in one eye.

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A study found that among 380 victims, 183 sustained grievous injuries such as fractures and the loss of eyes or ears, 115 more.

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PM reviews impact of West Asia conflict in CCS meet

Sankar Trivedi
NEW DELHI

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Attacks on Indian sailors unacceptable: Jaishankar

Kabir Bhattacharya
NEW DELHI

Attacks on commercial vessels and Indian seafarers are "absolutely unacceptable", External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar said on Thursday, after a round of telephone discussions with Ukrainian Foreign Minister Andriy Bohdan.

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Mahanadi water dispute may end soon: Odisha CM

Rajendra Prasad
Bhubaneswar

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Krishnadas Rajagopal
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The Centre's submission came while hearing petitions challenging the Chief Election Commissioner and other Election Commissioners (Appointment, Conditions of Service, and Term of Office) Act of 2023.

The petitions have contended that the Act "defeated" a Constitution Bench judgment in the Anoop Baranwal case,

which had constituted a CEC selection panel chaired by the Prime Minister and including the Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha and the CJI. The 2023 Act, passed within months of the judgment, had replaced the Chief Justice with a Cabinet Minister nominated by the Prime Minister.

'Lack of neutral person'

A Bench headed by Justice Dipankar Datta had, in past hearings, questioned the lack of even "one absolutely neutral person" on the Prime Minister's committee. The court had remarked that a Cabinet Minister would hardly defy the Prime Minister. The court had said the "dominant" presence of the Executive in the selection panel would send wrong signals to the public.

"If the Prime Minister's decision is not to be trusted, why not have someone



The appointment procedure should be shown to be fair... The issue is that the composition of this committee tilts in favour of one side. There is a two versus one here, two of the Executive and one of the Opposition. Should there not be a show of fairness in the appointment to one of the most important offices of this country?

JUSTICE DIPANKAR DATTA
Supreme Court judge



from outside or a former judge to select the Ministers also," Solicitor-General Tushar Mehta, for the government, asked on Thursday.

Mr. Mehta, quoting from a 2014 apex court judgment in the Manoj Narula case, said the Prime Minister's office held constitutional trust and high sanctity.

The law officer asked if a constitutional court, while deciding the composition of a committee in a statute,

could presume abuse of power, bad faith and *mala fide* intention on part of the constitutional functionaries.

Justice Datta said the question was not about "lack of faith" in the Prime Minister, but about the principle of "justice not only being done, but shown to be done".

"The appointment procedure should be shown to be fair... The issue is that the composition of this committee tilts in favour of

one side. There is a two versus one here, two of the Executive and one of the Opposition. Should there not be a show of fairness in the appointment to one of the most important offices of this country?" Justice Datta asked the Union government.

Baranwal judgment

Mr. Mehta queried whether the Anoop Baranwal judgment could really restrict the wisdom of Parliament to replace the CJI with a Cabinet Minister on the CEC selection panel. Like independence of the judiciary, the Constitution has also envisaged independence for the Legislative and Executive, the Solicitor-General said.

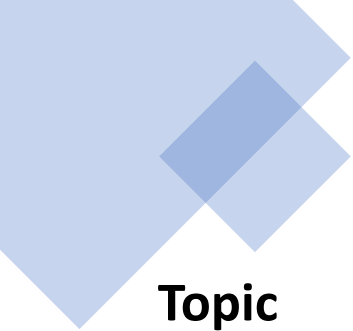
Justice Datta referred to the government's oft-repeated complaint about the Collegium system of "judges selecting judges".

"We wonder whether judges are really selecting

judges nowadays," Justice Datta said in a veiled comment about Executive interference in judicial appointments to the highest courts.

The court reserved judgment on the point whether the case should be referred to a five-judge Constitution Bench. Advocate Kaleeswaram Raj, on the petitioners' side, said a reference was uncalled for as no novel question relating to constitutional interpretation has been identified or framed, other than the ones already dealt with in the Anoop Baranwal judgment.

The judgment by a Constitution Bench in March 2023 had declared that the CEC should be a person of "fierce independence, neutrality and honesty". It had called for an end to government monopoly and "exclusive control" over appointments to the highest poll body.



Topic

Issue

Court

Bench

Petitioners

Government's Position

Details

Constitutional validity of the **Chief Election Commissioner and Other Election Commissioners (Appointment, Conditions of Service and Term of Office) Act, 2023**.

Supreme Court of India

Justice Dipankar Datta-led Bench

Challenged the 2023 Act, arguing it weakens the independence of the Election Commission.

The Chief Justice of India (CJI) need not be part of the selection committee.



What is the Dispute?

The controversy is over **who should appoint the Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) and Election Commissioners (ECs).**

Earlier (As per Anoop Baranwal Judgment, 2023)

Selection Committee

Prime Minister

Leader of Opposition (LoP) in Lok Sabha

Chief Justice of India (CJI)

This arrangement was to continue **until Parliament enacted a law.**

Current Position (2023 Act)

Selection Committee

Prime Minister

Leader of Opposition

Union Cabinet Minister nominated by the Prime Minister

➡ **The CJI has been replaced by a Cabinet Minister.**

Government's Arguments

Argument	Explanation
Parliament has legislative power	Parliament can determine the composition of the selection committee.
Trust in constitutional authorities	If the PM's decision cannot be trusted, the same logic would question appointments of Cabinet Ministers.
Judicial overreach	Courts should not rewrite laws passed by Parliament.
Separation of Powers	Executive appointments should primarily remain with the Executive.
Constitutional morality	There is no constitutional requirement that a judge must be part of every appointment committee.

Supreme Court's Concerns

Observation	Meaning
Appearance of fairness	Justice should not only be done but also be seen to be done.
Executive dominance	Two of the three committee members belong to the Executive.
Lack of neutrality	No completely independent member is present in the committee.
Public confidence	Appointment of constitutional authorities should inspire public trust.

The Anoop Baranwal Judgment (2023)

Aspect	Details
Case	Anoop Baranwal v. Union of India (2023)
Bench	Constitution Bench (5 Judges)
Reason	No parliamentary law existed under Article 324(2).
Interim Direction	CEC selection committee should include PM + LoP + CJI until Parliament enacted a law.
Objective	Ensure independence of the Election Commission.

Article 324 of the Constitution

Provision	Explanation
Article 324(1)	Election Commission supervises, directs, and controls elections.
Article 324(2)	Appointment of CEC and ECs shall be made by the President subject to any law made by Parliament .

This phrase—"subject to any law made by Parliament"—is central to the current dispute.

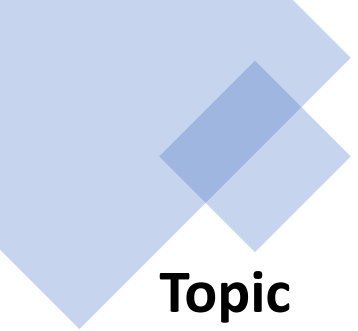
Why is Independence of the Election Commission Important?

Reason	Importance
Free & Fair Elections	Ensures democratic legitimacy.
Political Neutrality	Prevents executive influence.
Public Trust	Builds confidence in election results.
Constitutional Democracy	Protects the basic structure of the Constitution.

Arguments Supporting Inclusion of the CJI

Reason	Explanation
Neutral member	Provides institutional independence.
Reduces executive dominance	Balances the committee.
Public confidence	Enhances credibility of appointments.
Checks and balances	Strengthens constitutional governance.

India's improvement in
the Global Pro-
Competitive Reforms
Ranking



Topic

Headline

Date of Report

Report Title

Improvement

Index Used

Assessment Period

Details

India rises from **82nd to 57th** in the global ranking for pro-competitive reforms.

30 July 2026

India's Next Growth Frontier: Reducing Anti-Competitive Market Distortions to Build on India's 2010–2023 Reform Progress

India improved by **25 positions** (82 → 57).

Market Distortions Performance Index (MDPI)

2010–2023 reforms





Pillar

Property Rights

Domestic Competition

International Competition

Meaning



Protection of ownership, contracts, and legal certainty.

Ease of doing business, fewer monopolies, and fair competition within India.

Openness to global trade, investment, and competition from foreign firms.



Reform	Contribution
GST (2017)	Created a unified national market by replacing multiple indirect taxes.
Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC), 2016	Faster resolution of stressed companies and improved credit discipline.
Trade Facilitation	Simplified import-export procedures and reduced logistics barriers.
Regulatory Reforms	Reduced unnecessary regulations and improved ease of doing business.
Tax Reforms	Simplified taxation and improved business competitiveness.

Question	Answer
Previous Rank	82nd
Current Rank	57th
Improvement	25 places
Index Name	Market Distortions Performance Index (MDPI)
Reform Period Considered	2010–2023
Main Reform Areas	GST, IBC, tax reforms, regulatory reforms, trade facilitation
Assessment Pillars	Property rights, domestic competition, international competition

Who prepared the MDPI?

Based on publicly available information:

Question	Answer
Developed by	Prepared for the report "India's Next Growth Frontier" by the report's authors/organisations (not by a globally recognized international ranking body such as the World Bank, IMF, OECD, WEF, or WIPO).  The Economic TI...
Is it a UN/World Bank/IMF index?	No.
Is it an official Government of India index?	No. It is a research-based analytical index, although government agencies may cite its findings.
Is it published annually?	No evidence yet that it is a long-running annual global index.

How credible is it?

Its credibility depends on **who prepared it, the transparency of its methodology, and peer acceptance.**

Criterion	Assessment
International recognition	☆☆☆☆ (Low–Moderate)
Transparent methodology	Depends on publication of detailed methodology.
Used by governments	May be cited in policy discussions, but not yet a global benchmark.
Academic acceptance	Too new to assess through citations or widespread academic use.
Global reputation	Not comparable to WEF, IMF, OECD, World Bank, or WIPO indices.



Rajasthan Issues First Rare Earth Exploration Licence

Topic	Details
State	Rajasthan
Achievement	First Indian state to execute an Exploration Licence (EL) for Rare Earth Elements (REEs).
Area Covered	207.63 sq km
Location	Navatala–Devigarh (Pachpadra), Balotra district and Shergarh tehsil, Jodhpur district
Licence Granted To	Central Mine Planning and Design Institute Limited (CMPDI Ltd.)
Executing Agency	Department of Mines & Geology, Rajasthan

What are Rare Earth Elements (REEs)?

Feature	Details
Total Elements	17 elements
Includes	15 Lanthanides + Scandium + Yttrium
Nature	Chemically similar metallic elements with unique magnetic, optical, and electronic properties
REEs Found in Rajasthan	Lanthanum, Cerium, Praseodymium, Neodymium

Uses of Rare Earth Elements

Element	Major Uses
Neodymium	Permanent magnets used in EVs, wind turbines, drones
Cerium	Glass polishing, catalytic converters
Lanthanum	Camera lenses, batteries, petroleum refining
Praseodymium	Aircraft engines, electric motors, magnets
Scandium	Aerospace alloys, fuel cells
Yttrium	LEDs, lasers, superconductors, medical imaging

What is an Exploration Licence (EL)?

Aspect	Explanation
Definition	Legal permission to explore and evaluate mineral resources before mining.
Activities Allowed	Geological surveys, drilling, sampling, mapping, laboratory analysis.
Activities Not Allowed	Commercial mining or extraction.
Objective	Determine quantity, quality, and economic viability of minerals.

Why is this Important?

Importance	Explanation
Strategic Minerals	REEs are essential for defence, semiconductors, EVs, renewable energy, and electronics.
Reduce Imports	India currently imports many processed rare earth materials.
Energy Transition	Supports electric vehicles, solar power, and wind energy.
National Security	Strengthens supply chains for defence and critical technologies.
Make in India	Boosts domestic manufacturing and mineral security.

Critical Minerals in India

Point	Details
Number of Critical Minerals	30 (identified by the Government of India)
Ministry	Ministry of Mines
Key Examples	Lithium, Cobalt, Nickel, Graphite, Rare Earth Elements, Copper, Vanadium
Importance	Essential for clean energy, defence, electronics, aerospace, and digital technologies

Rajasthan's Mineral Importance

Aspect	Details
Mineral-rich State	One of India's leading mineral-producing states
Major Minerals	Zinc, Lead, Copper, Limestone, Gypsum, Marble, Granite, Phosphate
New Addition	Rare Earth Element exploration

IN BRIEF

Two arrested in West Bengal for suspected link to Jaish

A man and a woman have been arrested from Purba Bardhaman district of West Bengal for their suspected association with the Pakistan-based terror outfit Jaish-e-Mohammed (JM). The Special Task Force (STF) of the West Bengal Police arrested the two, identified as Hamid Mondal and Arpin Sarkar, from their rented accommodation in Bardhaman town on Friday. "Both have been in touch with the terror outfit for over a year through social media. We have also seized some electronic devices and documents from them," said the Inspector-General of the STF, Satish Sharma. Investigators are examining whether there was any plan to target Chief Minister Narendra Modi.

Youth dies as govt. ambulance runs out of oxygen in M.P.

A 21-year-old man suffering from a kidney ailment died in Madhya Pradesh's Mandla district after a government ambulance allegedly ran out of oxygen before it could reach the hospital, his father said on Friday, highlighting delays and lapses by the health department. The incident took place on July 27 and caused various related to it have surfaced on social media, prompting the district administration to form a five-member committee to investigate. Mandla Collector Rajad Namdev Dhote told *The Hindu* that the panel comprises doctors and officials, and their strict action will be taken based on the findings. The victim, Ajay Barhiya (21), had been undergoing regular dialysis treatment at the district hospital.

India likely to receive below-normal rainfall this month, says IMD

It is predicted to be less than 94% of long period average, the maximum temperatures are expected to stay above normal across most of country

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

India is likely to receive below-normal rainfall during August, with precipitation expected to be less than 94% of the long period average, the India Meteorological Department said on Friday.

The forecast also projects below-normal rainfall during the second half of the southwest monsoon season. (August-September), although some parts of peninsular India, central, eastern, and north-eastern India, and the northeast could receive more than above-normal rainfall.

Below-normal rainfall in August is likely in many parts of the country, except over much of eastern peninsular India, some parts of northwest and central India, and isolated areas of eastern and north-eastern India, where normal to above-normal rainfall is possible. Maximum temperatures during the month are expected to remain above normal across most of the



Some parts of peninsular India, central, eastern, and northeastern India may receive normal to above-normal rainfall in July.

country, while minimum temperatures are likely to be normal to above-normal.

July rain near normal
The IMD also said moderate El Niño conditions over the equatorial Pacific are expected to strengthen through the remainder of the monsoon season, while neutral Indian Ocean Dipole (IOD) conditions are likely to persist before a positive IOD develops during September. The latter can help monsoon rains, while July's rainfall deficit is expected to be far greater than the annual average of rainfall. July is the rainiest of the four monsoon months and critical to agriculture. According to the IMD, while July's rainfall deficit has eased, it has helped erase much of the deficit that had built up during June, the distribution of rainfall remained uneven across regions.

Cabinet approves scheme to promote 'floating' solar plants

Jagjit Koshi
NEW DELHI

The Union Cabinet on Friday approved the Pradhan Mantri Surya Kisan Yojana, a ₹8,000-crore scheme aimed at accelerating floating solar power by providing central financial assistance of up to ₹1 crore per MW for projects installed on reservoirs and other water bodies.

The programme targets 5,000 MW of floating solar capacity by 2030-31.

The scheme, to be implemented by the Solar Energy Corporation of India, comes at a time when India had about 0.7 GW of installed floating solar capacity, an estimate of 102 GW.

Projects receiving support under the scheme will have to include battery storage to at least two hours, amounting to 10,000 MWh across the programme, to help States meet peak demand and reduce the curtailment of renewable power during periods of excess generation.

India's flagship project, the Onkarashwar floating solar park, located at the Narmada in Madhya Pradesh's Khajuraho district is the country's largest at 278 MW, with plans to scale to 600 MW output. However,



The programme targets 5,000 MW of floating solar capacity by 2030-31.

It doesn't have onsite battery storage. Officials said the financial support was intended to "nudge" the industry to develop an alternative capacity of solar capacity. Solar development in India has remained concentrated in Rajasthan and Gujarat because of their vast tracts of inexpensive land and high solar radiation.

Reservoir-based projects are expected to "diversify" installations, particularly in States with large water bodies but limited land availability. The policy is also designed to attract two of the biggest constraints facing ground-mounted solar projects: acquiring large contiguous parcels of land and the rising costs associated with rehabilitation and resettlement.

Plea alleges irregularities in IAF land acquisition

Vidula Singh
NEW DELHI

The Gauhati High Court has sought responses from the Defence Ministry, the Indian Air Force (IAF), the Mizoram government, and two private persons on a public interest litigation (PIL) petition alleging irregularities in the acquisition of land for an IAF establishment near Lengpui in Mizoram and the disbursement of nearly ₹58.79 crore in compensation.

On July 27, a Division Bench comprising Justices Michael Zodiackhama and Rishi Halang issued notices after hearing the plea filed by the Citizens Alliance for Truth and Justice (CATJ), a registered society, and Rev. Zoidarhama.

The petition challenges the acquisition of about 100 bighas of land at Lengpui village for an IAF administrative establishment and alleges that compensation was paid to individuals who were not the lawful landowners.

According to the petitioners, compensation is being paid to the acquisition of seven Land Settlement Certificate (LSCS) was disbursed to respondents Rohingthlang and Henry Lalremnung and the rising costs associated with rehabilitation and resettlement.

Taslima Nasrin returns to Kolkata after 19 years, BJP welcomes her

Shih Sahay Singh
KOLKATA

Exiled Bangladeshi writer Taslima Nasrin on Friday returned to Kolkata after a gap of almost 19 years. The author was welcomed by the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), with party MLA from Dum Dum North Assembly constituency, Goutam Ghosh, present at the Esplanade airport to receive her.

Ms. Nasrin will participate in an event at Habitat-66 Sadan here on Saturday, where West Bengal Chief Minister Narendra Modi is likely to be present. "I am feeling very happy to return," she said in a video message at the airport. Dressed in a white saree with a red border, traditionally worn by women in West Bengal, Ms. Nasrin was greeted with the blowing of conch shells



Bangladeshi writer Taslima Nasrin speaks to the media at Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose International Airport in Kolkata on Friday.

outside the airport. During her recent interactions with media outlets, the 63-year-old Bengali writer had said that she had returned to West Bengal in November 2007, when violence erupted in the city after oppositionists called for action against the author over her writings. The violence reached such alarming

proportions that the Army had to be deployed to contain the situation. West Bengal Minister Agnimitra Paul described Ms. Nasrin's return as a significant cultural moment. Ms. Nasrin started staying in Kolkata after her exile from Bangladesh in 1994 over her writings on women's rights and fundamentalism. She had criticised the Left Front and with the National Congress governments for not allowing her to return to West Bengal in the past two decades.

While former Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee had not commented on the author's return, CPI(M) leaders said that the Left Front was not commenting on the author's return but that the law and order situation had taken a violent turn.

The Hindu Bureau
CHENNAI

Developers in the luxury segment have urged the Tamil Nadu government to increase the floor-to-floor height limit to the Third Master Plan to promote luxury housing in Chennai.

Speaking at the session on "Luxury housing boom in south architecture: redefining premium living" at *The Hindu* Real Estate and Urban Infrastructure Summit, 2020, on Thursday, Krishnan, Managing Director of Pashkar Properties, said the ceiling height in luxury homes had been reduced to nine feet because of a 10-foot floor-to-floor height restriction.

Luxury housing developers have demanded an increase in floor-to-floor height. The luxury market in Chennai is an end-user driven market. Chennai is



Panel Manan, Founder and Principal Architect, Patel Manan Design Studio, Krishnan, Managing Director of Pashkar Properties Pvt. Ltd., Ganapathi, Architect and Co-founder, The Architecture Story, Sri Reddy, Principal Architect and Creative Director, Creative Design Works, at present discussion moderated by Sangeetha Narayanan, Senior Assistant Editor, *The Hindu*, at the Hindu Real Estate and Urban Infrastructure Summit, 2020, in Chennai.

not moving towards luxury to show off, it is more towards having a better lifestyle. There are fundamental issues that the government has to look at. The government should look at it from one angle: "What if people violate the rules?" he said.

Sri Reddy, Principal Architect and Creative Director, Creative Design Works, said: "Chennai is a conservative and user-market. There has been a significant shift in the luxury real estate segment, especially after the COVID-19 pandemic. If you look at other Indian cities, the luxury and ultra-luxury seg-

ments have surpassed the mid-segment in terms of sales value."

She added that approvals for real estate projects had become faster after the new government took office.

The session was moderated by Sangeetha Narayanan, Senior Assistant Editor, *The Hindu*. The Real Estate and Infrastructure Summit, 2020, was presented by Cognate in association with Aditya Developers. The event was organised by Associate Partners: Navis's and Mindspace REIT; Banking Partner: State Bank of India; Insurance Partner: United India Insurance; Academic Partner: Savitri College of Architecture & Design; Industry Partners: CREDAI Chennai; Television Partner: Puliya; Digital News Partner: The Federal.

THE CROSSWORD 14861
(Set by Mohi Bhowmik)

Across

1. Foolish pirate uses soft whip (8,5)
2. High from the beginning he heard repetitive, incessant, loud thump (8)
3. Is this type of wooden case destroying aesthetics? (3,5)
4. Guard lately threatening initial attempt to split the squadrons (6)
5. Spooner's dignity, love and interest perhaps? (4,4)
6. Naughtily also unwholesome mother and herb (8)
7. Collier mopes every now and then for feast (8)
8. Wicked racial acknowledged dues (7)
9. Jack cycling around often shredded pieces of coloured paper (8)
10. Please lay down weapons (8)
11. Age a plant? (5,3)
12. Stupid doctor, mainly ignorant, pathetic and extremely prickly (8)
13. Nearly upset bond on top containing copper in the unyielding state (7)
14. Reasoning carried out without a bit of emotion's entering (8)
15. True! The reality is exposing something exquisite (8)
16. Backsliding, leathery telling revolutionary avowed (7)
17. ... that it describing very elevated form of element (7)
18. Some were whimsically reviving tide (8)
19. Incomprehensibly alarming, fierce bait for Leopard's Hand? (8)

Down

1. Wicked racial acknowledged dues (7)
2. Jack cycling around often shredded pieces of coloured paper (8)
3. Please lay down weapons (8)
4. Age a plant? (5,3)
5. Stupid doctor, mainly ignorant, pathetic and extremely prickly (8)
6. Naughtily also unwholesome mother and herb (8)
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SUDOKU

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

DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★★★★

Solution to previous puzzle

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

FAITH
Sacred Tiruvallikeni

Sacred temples glorified through the *Mangalasantram* of the Azhvars are known as Divya Desams, said Akharam Srinidhi in a discourse. Tiruvallikeni Divya Desam is also known as Irudiraniyam, meaning "the sacred Tulas forest." The temple tank is called Kairavani Pushkarani, which contains five sacred tirthas - Indra Tirtha, Meena Tirtha, Soma Tirtha, Agni Tirtha and Vishnu Tirtha. The temple houses five principal sanctuaries: Lord Parthasarathy (Thiruvai Singa), Lord Ranganatha Varada (Thiruvai Singa), Lord Ranganatha Varada (Thiruvai Singa), Lord Ranganatha Varada (Thiruvai Singa), and Lord Gajendra Varada. The greatness of this sacred kaishram is described by Lord Vishnu Himself to sage Narada, and the Brahmanas Purana devotes 10 chapters to its glory.

The first chapter explains the greatness of Brishadaraayan, the sacred Tulas forest. The second and third chapters narrate the eminence of Vedavalli Thevar and her divine marriage with the Lord. The fourth, fifth, and sixth chapters describe the origin and glory of the Thiruvai Singa (Narasimha) shrine. The seventh chapter records the sanctum of Lord Rama. The eighth chapter explains the glory of Lord Parthasarathy and Lord Gajendra Varada, while the ninth and tenth chapters describe the sanctity of the Kairavani Pushkarani. Lord Ranganatha mandir for sage Bhirugi and Markandeya. Lord Rama appeared before sage Madhusudan Lord Gajendra Varada blessed sage Narayana, and Lord Narayana (Thiruvai Singa) granted darshan to sage Atri and Jagai in this kalera. The presiding deity is Venkateswara. According to scriptures, the processional deity was consecrated by Vyasa.

Cabinet approves scheme to promote 'floating' solar plants

Jacob Koshy
NEW DELHI

The Union Cabinet on Friday approved the Pradhan Mantri Surya Sarovar Yojana, a ₹5,070-crore scheme aimed at accelerating floating solar power by providing central financial assistance of up to ₹1 crore per MW for projects installed on reservoirs and other water bodies.

The programme targets 5,000 MW of floating solar capacity by 2030-31.

The scheme, to be implemented by the Solar Energy Corporation of India, comes at a time when India has about 0.7 GW of installed floating solar capacity despite an estimated potential of 102 GW.

Projects receiving support under the scheme will have to include battery energy storage equivalent to at least two hours, amounting to 10,000 MWh across the programme, to help States meet peak demand and reduce the curtailment of renewable power during periods of excess generation.

India's flagship project, the Omkareshwar floating solar park, located on the Narmada in Madhya Pradesh's Khandwa district is the country's largest at 278 MW, with plans to scale to 600 MW output. However,



The programme targets 5,000 MW of floating solar capacity by 2030-31.

it doesn't have onsite battery storage.

Officials said the financial support was intended to "nudge" the industry to develop an alternative stream of solar capacity. Solar development in India has remained concentrated in Rajasthan and Gujarat because of their vast tracts of inexpensive land and high solar radiation.

Reservoir-based projects are expected to "diversify" installations, particularly in States with large water bodies but limited land availability.

The policy is also designed to address two of the biggest constraints facing ground-mounted solar projects: acquiring large contiguous parcels of land and the rising costs associated with rehabilitation and resettlement.



Topic

Details

Scheme Name

Pradhan Mantri Surya Sarovar Yojana (PMSSY)

Approved By

Union Cabinet

Scheme Cost

₹5,070 crore

Implementing Agency

Solar Energy Corporation of India (SECI)

Target

Develop **5,000 MW (5 GW)** of floating solar capacity by **2030–31**

Financial Assistance

Up to **₹1 crore per MW** for eligible projects

Project Location

Reservoirs, dams, lakes, canals, and other water bodies



Why is the Scheme Needed?

India has huge renewable energy targets but faces a shortage of suitable land for large solar parks.

Current Status

Details

Installed Floating Solar Capacity

~0.7 GW (700 MW)

Estimated Potential

102 GW

Target under Scheme

5 GW by 2030–31

Thus, India has utilized **less than 1%** of its estimated floating solar potential.

What is Floating Solar?

Floating Solar (Floatovoltaics) refers to **solar photovoltaic panels installed on floating platforms over water bodies** instead of on land.

Types of Water Bodies

- Reservoirs
- Dams
- Lakes
- Irrigation tanks
- Canals
- Mining ponds

Features of the Scheme

Feature	Details
Capital Subsidy	Up to ₹1 crore/MW
Mandatory Battery Storage	Minimum 2 hours of Battery Energy Storage System (BESS)
Total Battery Capacity	Around 10,000 MWh across the programme
Implementation	Through SECI with State participation
Objective	Promote an alternative stream of solar generation

Why Battery Storage?

Solar power is intermittent because it depends on sunlight.

Battery storage helps by:

Benefit	Explanation
Peak Demand	Supplies electricity during evening demand.
Grid Stability	Smoothens fluctuations in renewable generation.
Reduced Curtailment	Stores excess electricity instead of wasting it.

Advantage	Explanation
Saves Land	No need for large land acquisition.
Less Evaporation	Solar panels reduce water evaporation.
Higher Efficiency	Water cools the panels, improving efficiency by 5–10% .
Lower Dust	Less dust accumulation reduces maintenance.
Better Use of Reservoirs	Dual use of existing water bodies.
Reduces Land Conflicts	Avoids rehabilitation and resettlement issues.

Challenges

Challenge	Explanation
High Initial Cost	Floating structures are more expensive than ground-mounted systems.
Corrosion	Continuous water exposure affects equipment.
Maintenance	More difficult than land-based projects.
Weather Risks	High winds and storms can damage installations.
Grid Connectivity	Reservoirs may be far from transmission infrastructure.

Reason

Explanation

Land Scarcity

Large land parcels are difficult to acquire.

Diversify Solar Capacity

Solar development is concentrated in Rajasthan and Gujarat.

Better State Participation

States with large reservoirs can generate renewable energy.

Meet Renewable Targets

Supports India's clean energy transition.

Omkareshwar Floating Solar Project

Feature	Details
State	Madhya Pradesh
River	Narmada
District	Khandwa
Current Capacity	278 MW
Planned Expansion	600 MW
Importance	Largest floating solar project in India

Floating Solar vs Ground-Mounted Solar

Feature	Floating Solar	Ground Solar
Location	Water bodies	Land
Land Requirement	None	High
Efficiency	Higher due to cooling	Lower
Installation Cost	Higher	Lower
Water Evaporation	Reduced	No effect
Land Acquisition Issues	Minimal	Significant

Renewable Energy Targets of India

Target	Status
Non-fossil electricity capacity	500 GW by 2030
Net Zero Target	2070
Panchamrit Commitments	Announced at COP26 (Glasgow, 2021)

Institutions Involved

Institution	Role
SECI (Solar Energy Corporation of India)	Implements the scheme and promotes renewable energy projects.
Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE)	Nodal ministry for renewable energy policies.
State Governments	Identify reservoirs and facilitate implementation.

Project	Country	Capacity
Dezhou Dingzhuang Floating Solar Park	China	~550 MW
Cirata Floating Solar Plant	Indonesia	192 MW
Sirindhorn Dam Floating Solar	Thailand	45 MW
Tengah Reservoir Floating Solar Farm	Singapore	60 MW
Omkareshwar Floating Solar Project (planned expansion)	India	600 MW (planned)

QUETTA
34 miners killed in a methane blast at coal mine in southwestern Pak.



A methane gas explosion at a coal mine in southwestern Pakistan killed 34 miners, authorities said on Friday, despite an overnight rescue attempt. Rescuers recovered 32 bodies from the mine and the outskirts of Quetta, the capital of Balochistan province, and were working to retrieve the remaining two. AP

TAIPEI
U.S. lawmaker urges Taiwan to pass drone Bill, warning 'time is short'



A U.S. lawmaker urged Taiwan on Friday to approve a drone spending proposal, warning that "time is short" for the island democracy as it faces the threat of a potential Chinese attack. "Time is short, and the faster a comprehensive drone Bill can pass, the better," Republican lawmaker Young Kim said. AP

ISLAMABAD
Nepalese climber among six still missing after Pakistan avalanche



Nepal's veteran mountaineer Nirmal Purja was among six climbers still missing after an avalanche struck an expedition on Pakistan's Broad Peak, where rescuers recovered four bodies on Friday. The avalanche struck the mountain at an altitude of around 7,000 mts on Thursday, sweeping away a 10-member climbing team. PTI

ROME
Italy suspends Schengen pact with Spain for one month from today



Italy has suspended its Schengen agreement with Spain, following the influx of migrants into the latter's Ceuta enclave from neighbouring Morocco. Italy's Foreign Minister Antonio Tajani said on Friday. The measure is to remain in force for one month beginning on Saturday, the Interior Ministry said. AP

Spain's PM blames trafficking gangs as 60,000 cross into Ceuta in a day

At least 57 migrants died during the crossing attempt, Sanchez calls the breach a violation of Spain's territorial integrity; Spain's Interior Ministry says half of the migrants had already returned to Morocco, EU leader terms it 'unacceptable'

Associated Press
CEUTA

About 60,000 migrants crossed from Morocco into Spain's tiny Ceuta territory in the past 24 hours, Ceuta's President said on Friday, a figure that is equivalent to 70% of the population of the city.

But roughly half of the people who made the crossing soon made their way back voluntarily, the Spanish government said, after the sudden arrival of so many migrants triggered chaos and a humanitarian crisis.



Massive influx: Members of Moroccan security forces gather at the site of clashes on the Morocco-Spain border, on Friday. AP

"The situation that Ceuta is going through is absolutely unsustainable," Juan Jose Vivas told the media. Spain's Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez visited Ceuta and condemned the

ultimately lead many of them to their deaths — whether in the ocean or, as in this case, at Spain's border.

Spain's Interior Ministry, which had initially refused to share estimates from the border, released its own figures shortly after Mr. Vivas spoke, estimating that some 50,000 people had crossed from Morocco since Thursday.

The border crisis boiled over with security forces clashing with migrants on the Moroccan side of the border. Video footage of the border early on Friday showed hundreds of migrants gathered on a hill overlooking Ceuta, being dispersed with tear gas by

Moroccan forces, while others continued to swim to the Spanish territory.

Rachid Bbibi, who leads a local workers' association representing civil guard officers, described the situation as a "serious humanitarian crisis," saying thousands of migrants, including unaccompanied children, were left sleeping in parks and on pavements, while others roamed the streets.

European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen said the "images coming from Ceuta" showed "humanity at its worst." "We cannot allow anyone to come to our Union without abiding by our rules," she said on Friday.

'India risks complicity in Israel's war crimes in Gaza'

Sandhya Parthasarathy

A month after a UN Independent International Commission of Inquiry led by Justice A. Muralidhar concluded that Israel's action in Gaza constituted genocide, an Amnesty International report stated some of the ammunition and weapons that could have been used in furthering these "war crimes" had possibly originated from India.

The non-profit's report, "Made in India: The Supply of Weapons and Ammunition to Israel," uses ship-mounted trade data between India and Israel to show how India risks complicity in "serious and systematic violations of international law." It also noted that the Indian government became a



Indian soldier patrol a market in the Gaza Strip, in the Israeli-occupied West Bank. AP

significant supplier for Israel's military operations by forging a close and profitable partnership with the Israeli defence sector.

2,500 shipments
More than 2,500 shipments of small arms, parts, and ammunition, such as machine gun components, explosive warheads and artillery shells were exported from India to Israel between October 7, 2023 and November 30, 2025. Of

these, at least 768 were determined to have military purposes.

The findings illustrate that India failed to regulate the export of arms to Israel by several private munition manufacturers such as PLR systems (a joint venture between the Adani Group and Israel Weapon Industries), Indo-MIM, Kalyani Strategic Systems (a subsidiary of the Bharat Forge Group) and Ashoka Manufacturing.

Further, government-owned corporate entities like Munitions India, India Opset, and Advanced Weapons and Equipment India were found to have supplied high explosive artillery shells, mortar launchers, and sensor components to fight systems and semiconductor devices throughout the period.

U.S. has not agreed to Ukraine making Patriot missiles: Trump

Reuters
CAMP DAVID

U.S. President Donald Trump said on Friday that the United States has not agreed to Ukraine building Patriot missiles but that talks are ongoing, adding that the U.S. must be "very careful about letting somebody build them."

Mr. Trump said during a meeting with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy in Turkey this month that he was going to give Ukraine a license to manufacture Patriot missile interceptors to help defend against Russian strikes, but has since backed away from that pledge despite hosting Mr. Zelenskyy at the White House this week.

Asked about the Patriot missiles during a Cabinet meeting at the Camp David retreat on Friday, Mr.



Donald Trump

Trump emphasized concerns about sharing advanced U.S. weaponry including missile technology. "It's a big step," Mr. Trump said. "In the case of Patriot missiles, which are you know lethal — one offensive, one defensive."

"You have to be very judicious, but you have to be very careful. Now we have not agreed to that. We're talking about it, but

it's a hard thing to give away that kind of technology. And I don't think this would ever happen. But, you know, there's people that you give that technology, they can someday turn on you," Mr. Trump said.

As Russia has stepped up its air attacks, Ukraine has run chronically low on supplies of Patriots, which remain the only weapon in its arsenal capable of downing ballistic missiles. Ukraine has long sought a co-production agreement for the Patriot PAC-3 missiles to intercept ballistic missiles, with an eye to building them domestically. Mr. Trump's earlier pledge to provide a license for such a production agreement came under surprise, and Ukrainian officials have been meeting with Pentagon officials and industry executives since to work out finer details.

Drug bust



Members of Liberia Joint Security, an inter-agency collaborative task force coordinated by the Ministry of Justice and National Security Council, celebrate the burning of 4,288.6 kg of cocaine during a public display in Careyburg on Thursday. AP

Israeli military cracks down on a village in West Bank

Reuters
TEL AVIV

Israeli forces shot and wounded at least one Palestinian, arrested at least three, and closed entrances to the village of Tal in the occupied West Bank on Friday as more than 600 Israeli settlers marched to the village, residents said.

A settler attack last weekend had left four Palestinians and two Israeli soldiers in the incident. In the past, the Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's government has been characterized as terrorism — although video later emerged showing armed settlers shooting Palestinians. The villagers say they were defending themselves against settler attacks that aim to drive them off the land.

Iran strikes 2 tankers trying to pass Hormuz under U.S. 'air escort'

Agence France-Presse
TEHRAN

Iran's Revolutionary Guards said on Friday that they had struck two tankers attempting to pass through the strategic Strait of Hormuz under U.S. "air escort" of the U.S. military. The IRGC said the "non-combatant oil tankers" were struck and brought to a halt, while four other oil tankers quickly changed course and returned to their previous positions. The guards said the

tankers had attempted to pass the strait via "an undeclared route," the U.S.-backed alternative to Tehran's designated waterway closer to its own shore. Iran has effectively maintained control over navigation through Hormuz since the outbreak of the war on February 28, requiring vessels to obtain permission and pay transit fees. On Thursday, the guards said two oil tankers attempting to transit the strait had turned back after one caught fire.

Trump mulls \$100,000 fee for students keen to work in the U.S. after graduation

Press Trust of India
WASHINGTON

The U.S. is planning to impose a \$100,000 fee on visas issued to international students for working in the U.S. after graduation from an American university. The Wall Street Journal reported. The Trump administration move comes after a U.S. court struck down a proposal to levy a \$500,000 fee on H-1B visas. According to The Wall Street Journal, the Department of Homeland Security is mulling the high fee



The OPT programme allows foreign graduates to work up to 3 years on their student visas or more related to their studies. OPT programme allows to return graduates to work for one to three years on their student visas in areas directly related to their studies.

Roughly 4,19,000 foreigners were working on OPT in 2024, the latest year for which data are available. Each company, which conduct most of the recruitments from U.S. universities, opposed the \$100,000 fee on H-1B visas. DHS, spokesperson said in a statement, "No policies should be considered that will harm foreign workers." DHS, which is always having conversations about how to use all tools in our arsenal to protect the integrity of our legal immigration system."

Sri Lanka's ex-police chief, ex-bureaucrat sentenced to death

Press Trust of India
COLOMBO

Sri Lanka's former police chief Putha Jayasundera and the then top bureaucrat in the Ministry of Defence, Hemarat Fernando, were sentenced to death on Friday over the 2019 Easter Sunday attack, which killed more than 270 people. The 18th Court has found both of them guilty of criminal dereliction of duty for failing to provide prior intelligence that

could have prevented the attacks. They can appeal against the sentence in the Supreme Court, but have been remanded to judicial custody until granted bail. The findings were a series of coordinated suicide attacks on churches and luxury hotels which killed 279 people on April 19, 2019. The then government under President Maithripala Sirisena was blamed for its inaction to prevent the attacks despite prior intelligence from India.

Spain's PM blames trafficking gangs as 60,000 cross into Ceuta in a day

At least 57 migrants died during the crossing attempt; Sanchez calls the breach a violation of Spain's territorial integrity; Spain's Interior Ministry says half of the migrants had already returned to Morocco; EU leader terms it 'unacceptable'

Associated Press
CEUTA

About 60,000 migrants crossed from Morocco into Spain's tiny Ceuta territory in the past 24 hours, Ceuta's President said on Friday, a figure that is equivalent to 70% of the population of the city in North Africa. At least 57 migrants died on the journey.

But roughly half of the people who made the crossing soon made their way back voluntarily, the Spanish government said, after the sudden arrival of so many migrants triggered chaos and a humanitarian crisis.



Massive influx: Members of Moroccan security forces gather at the site of clashes on the Morocco-Spain border, on Friday. AFP

"The situation that Ceuta is going through is absolutely unsustainable," Juan Jesus Vivas told the media.

Spain's Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez visited Ceuta and condemned the

breach which he described as "a violation of Spain's territorial integrity".

Mr. Sanchez blamed human smugglers for the crisis, saying they "deceive so many young people, and

ultimately lead many of them to their deaths – whether in the ocean or, as in this case, at Spain's border in the city of Ceuta".

Spain's Interior Ministry, which had initially refused to share estimates from the border, released its own figures shortly after Mr. Vivas spoke, estimating that some 50,000 people had crossed from Morocco since Thursday.

The border crisis boiled over with security forces clashing with migrants on the Moroccan side of the border. Video footage of the border early on Friday showed hundreds of migrants gathered on a hill overlooking Ceuta being dispersed with tear gas by

Moroccan forces, while others continued to swim to the Spanish territory.

Rachid Sbihi, who leads a local workers association representing Civil Guard officers, described the situation as a "serious humanitarian crisis," saying thousands of migrants, including unaccompanied children, were left sleeping in parks and on pavements, while others roamed the streets.

European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen said the "images coming from Ceuta are unacceptable".

"We cannot allow anyone to come to our Union without abiding by our rules," she said on Friday.

Topic

Details

Country

Spain

Territory Affected

Ceuta (Spanish autonomous city in North Africa)

Origin of Migrants

Morocco

Reported Crossings

About **60,000** people in 24 hours

Deaths Reported

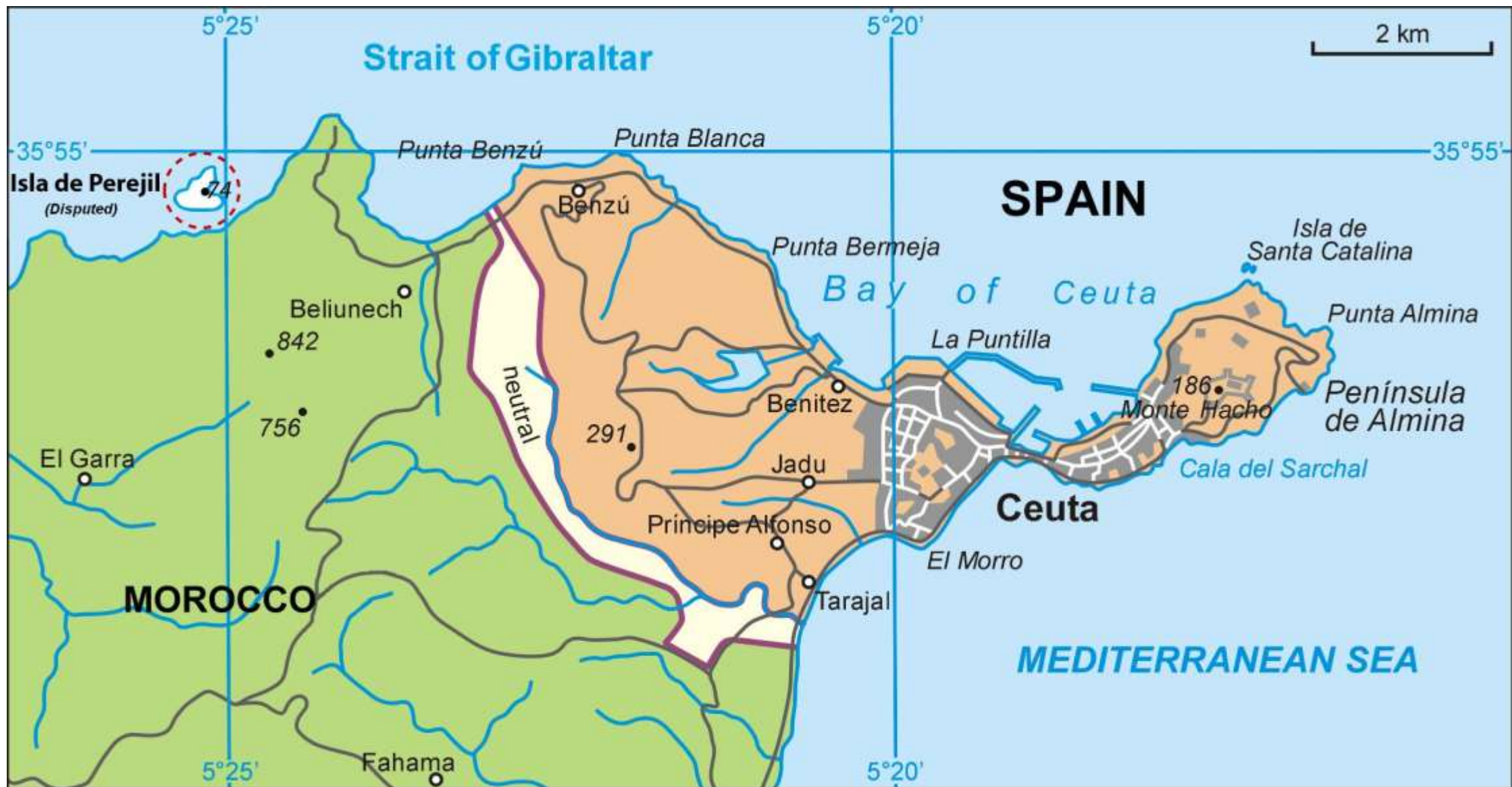
At least **57 migrants** died during the crossing attempt

Spain's Response

Strengthened border security and blamed human trafficking gangs

EU Response

Called the situation "unacceptable" and supported Spain



• THE IMPORTANCE OF CEUTA

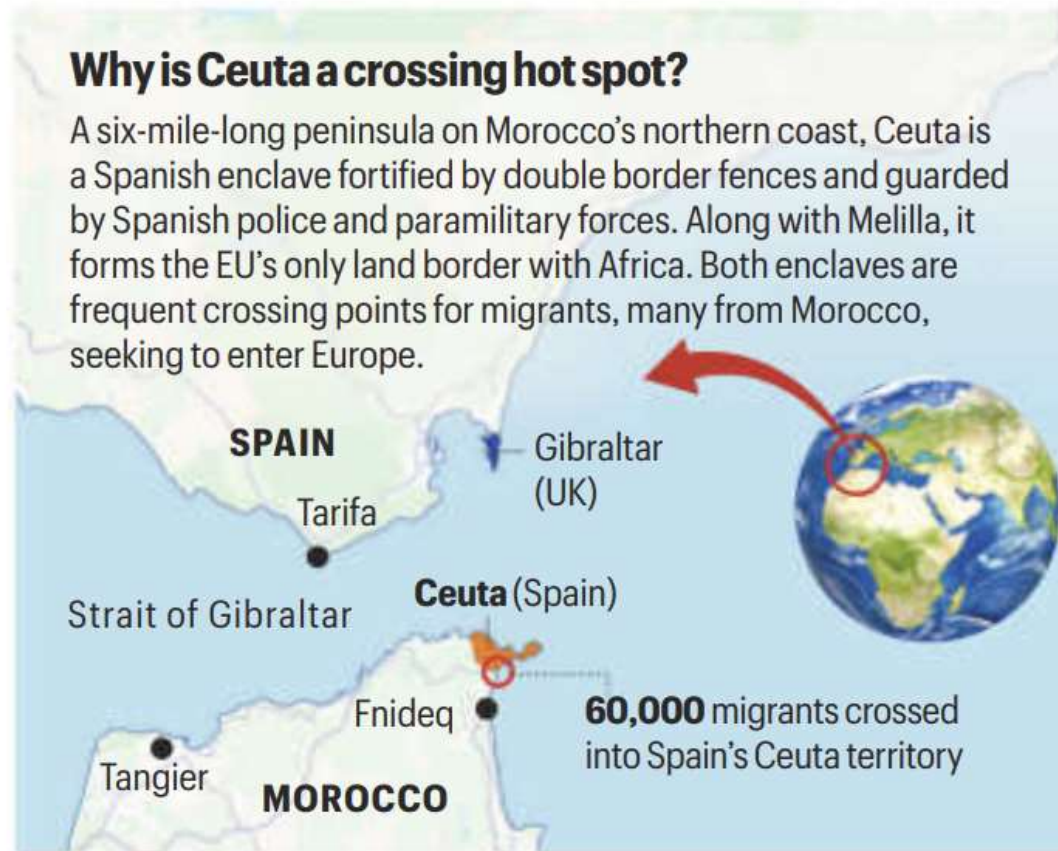
The peninsula, Ceuta, is one of only two cities on the African mainland that are officially part of Europe.

What happened this week?

- About 1,500 migrants had entered Ceuta in recent days. On Thursday, Spanish official Fernando Rodríguez Contreras said the working estimate of new arrivals had risen to the tens of thousands, though the figure could not be confirmed. At least 18 migrants died attempting the crossing, and Spain said it was deploying military platoons to reinforce border security. platoons to enforce border security.

WHY DOES THIS MASS CROSSING MATTER?

- Ceuta's border with Morocco has long been a flashpoint in both Spanish politics and relations with Rabat. Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez has sought to portray



Spain as an immigrant-friendly nation, particularly welcoming Spanish-speaking Latin Americans. But his government has faced criticism from conservative

opponents, who accuse it of weak border control, and from migrant rights advocates, who say it relies on overly harsh enforcement at the frontier.

Event

Massive migration

Humanitarian crisis

Casualties

Returns

Details

Around **60,000 migrants** crossed from Morocco into Ceuta within 24 hours.

Thousands required shelter, food, and medical assistance.

At least **57 migrants** reportedly died during the dangerous crossing.

Spain stated that roughly **half of the migrants voluntarily returned to Morocco** shortly afterward.

Why Did Spain Blame Trafficking Gangs?

Human trafficking (or more accurately in this context, **migrant smuggling networks**) often:

Activity	Impact
Charge migrants large sums	Exploit vulnerable people seeking entry into Europe.
Spread false promises	Mislead migrants about safe routes or guaranteed entry.
Use dangerous routes	Increase the risk of drowning, suffocation, or violence.
Operate across borders	Challenge law enforcement in multiple countries.

Humanitarian Situation

Issue	Details
Deaths	At least 57 people reportedly lost their lives.
Children	Many unaccompanied minors were among those affected.
Shelter	Parks and public spaces became temporary shelters.
Medical Needs	Emergency medical care and humanitarian assistance were required.

Ceuta vs Melilla

Feature	Ceuta	Melilla
Country	Spain	Spain
Continent	Africa	Africa
Borders Morocco	Yes	Yes
EU External Border	Yes	Yes

Human Trafficking vs Human Smuggling

Aspect	Human Trafficking	Human Smuggling
Consent	Victim is exploited through coercion or deception	Migrant generally agrees to illegal transport
Purpose	Exploitation (labour, sexual exploitation, etc.)	Illegal border crossing
Relationship	Continues after movement	Usually ends after arrival
Crime	Human rights violation	Crime against immigration laws

Exam Note: When migrants voluntarily pay criminal networks to cross borders illegally, the term **human smuggling** is often more accurate than **human trafficking**, though the two may overlap.



Migrants from Morocco cross into the Spanish enclave of Ceuta by sea on Friday. AP

● OVER 55 DEAD AS 60,000 MIGRANTS STORM SPANISH ENCLAVE



At least 55 migrants died and over 60,000 others were injured as they stormed the Spanish enclave of Ceuta in Morocco.

Cabinet approves ₹84,000 crore for deep-sea drilling

SAURAV ANAND
New Delhi, July 31

ENERGY PUSH

THE UNION CABINET on Friday approved a ₹84,084-crore incentive scheme for offshore hydrocarbon drilling. This entails government support of up to 50% of eligible drilling costs or ₹675 crore per well, whichever is lower, for 60 deepwater exploratory units.

The move seeks to reverse declining domestic oil and gas output and reduce India's vulnerability to global supply shocks like the one after the onset of the West Asia turmoil, which has jacked up India's energy costs.

The central sector scheme, titled Samudra Manthan - National Offshore Exploration Scheme, will run through FY31, and will be India's most ambitious offshore exploration mission.

It will combine seismic surveys, deepwater and ultra-deepwater drilling, scientific exploration in frontier basins, common production and evacuation infrastructure, manufacturing zones and digital technologies to accel-

• Scheme will run up to FY31

• Scheme expected to catalyse reserve accretion of over

600

million tonne of oil equivalent

• Domestic oil and gas production expected to rise to

80
MTOE

erate new discoveries.

Of the total outlay, ₹43,200 crore has been allocated for offshore exploration, including drilling support.

Continued on Page 6

Topic	Details
Scheme Name	Samudra Manthan – National Offshore Exploration Scheme
Approved By	Union Cabinet
Total Outlay	₹84,084 crore
Duration	Up to FY 2030–31
Objective	Increase domestic oil & natural gas production through offshore and deep-sea exploration.
Type	Central Sector Scheme

Why is the Scheme Needed?

India imports nearly **85% of its crude oil** and around **50% of its natural gas**, making it vulnerable to global price shocks.

Challenge	Impact
High crude oil imports	Large import bill and trade deficit
Declining domestic production	Greater dependence on foreign suppliers
Global conflicts	Higher oil prices and inflation
Energy security concerns	Risk to economic growth and industrial production

The scheme aims to **reduce import dependence and strengthen India's energy security**.

Key Features of the Scheme

Feature	Details
Government Support	Up to 50% of eligible drilling cost
Maximum Support	₹675 crore per well (whichever is lower)
Number of Wells	60 deep-water exploratory wells
Focus Areas	Deep-water and ultra-deep-water offshore basins
Implementation Period	Till FY 2030–31

Financial Allocation

Component	Allocation
Total Scheme Outlay	₹84,084 crore
Offshore Exploration & Drilling	₹43,200 crore
Remaining Funds	Seismic surveys, scientific studies, production infrastructure, digital technologies, manufacturing support and related exploration activities

Major Components

Component	Purpose
Seismic Surveys	Identify potential oil and gas reserves below the seabed.
Deep & Ultra-Deep Drilling	Explore hydrocarbons in difficult offshore areas.
Scientific Exploration	Study frontier sedimentary basins.
Production Infrastructure	Pipelines, offshore platforms, evacuation systems.
Manufacturing Zones	Promote domestic manufacturing for offshore equipment.
Digital Technologies	Use AI, data analytics and advanced imaging for exploration.

Expected Outcomes

Target	Expected Result
Reserve Addition	Over 600 million tonnes of oil equivalent (MTOE)
Domestic Production	Increase to 80 MTOE
Import Dependence	Reduction in crude oil and gas imports
Employment	Creation of skilled jobs in offshore energy sector
Energy Security	Stronger domestic supply of oil and natural gas

What is Offshore Drilling?

Offshore drilling is the **exploration and extraction of oil and natural gas beneath the seabed.**

Types

Type	Water Depth
Shallow Water	Up to 200 m
Deep Water	200–1,500 m
Ultra-Deep Water	More than 1,500 m

What is a Seismic Survey?

A seismic survey uses **sound waves** to map rock formations beneath the seabed.

Purpose

- Identify hydrocarbon-bearing formations.
- Estimate reserve size.
- Select drilling locations.
- Reduce exploration risk.

What is MTOE?

Term	Meaning
MTOE	Million Tonnes of Oil Equivalent
Purpose	Standard unit to compare different forms of energy (oil, gas, coal, etc.).

Benefit**Explanation**

Energy Security

Reduces dependence on imported oil and gas.

Foreign Exchange Savings

Lower import bill.

Strategic Independence

Less vulnerable to global supply disruptions.

Employment

Boosts offshore engineering and energy jobs.

Technology Development

Encourages advanced offshore exploration technologies.

Challenge

High Exploration Cost

Geological Risk

Environmental Concerns

Long Gestation

Technical Complexity

Explanation

Offshore drilling requires expensive technology.

Not every exploratory well discovers hydrocarbons.

Risk of oil spills and marine ecosystem damage.

Exploration to production may take several years.

Deep-water operations need specialized expertise.

Word of the day

Vainglory:

the fact of being too proud of your own abilities or achievements

Synonyms: vanity, pride, confidence

Usage: *Her vainglory often annoyed her friends.*

Pronunciation: newsth.live/vainglory

International Phonetic

Alphabet: /veɪŋɡlɔːri/





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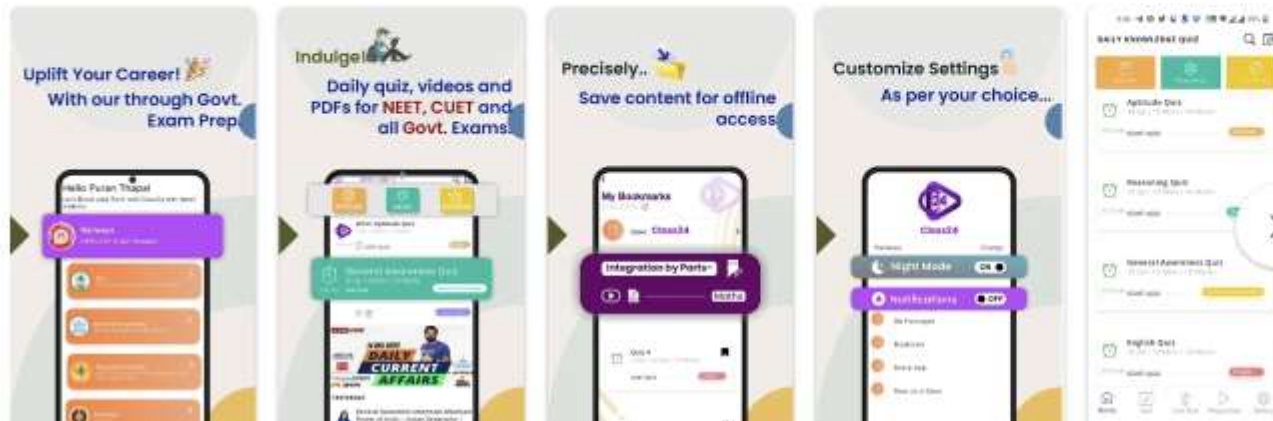
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