# Daily Current Affairs



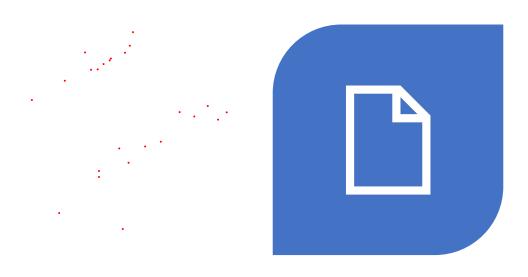








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10 MCQ QUIZ



"Count your age by friends, not years. Count your life by smiles, not tears."

- John Lennon

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#### INSIDE



#### photos helped identify terrorists

#### NEW PRAISE

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#### Delhi court issues notice to Robert Vadra and others

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## Rahul claims 2024 polls rigged; EC labels it 'baseless accusation'

Congress leader says he has '887s proof' to substantiate datms, purry suspects manipulation in 70-400 seats during the LS election, he says election system in India is 'already dead', 'misleading' claims seek to discredit 'impartial hard work, says EE.

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### Present evidence, Rajnath dares Rahul

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Asking the Leader of disc Oppositions to present

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PALL REPORT

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gine these. The EC posted a "lact-deeds" on its seeks! readils accessed, upong that he had been easiling "cressboar-bated" accessations to dis-sired election influide "importals band work" and in "lasin undles primares of the election trackings and even and even thereum it." the SC added that Mr.

and "throutened liable and taking of hardworking elec-tion officials, across the

TELETIFICATION IS

## Prajwal gets jail 'for remainder of natural life' in sex abuse case



of madigine rape altega-tions.
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#### 'Fight is Impiring'

Policettig the verdict, R.E. Singh, chief of the Special Investigation Team (SIT) forced to profes the allega-

trial being completed with in a year and four recetle

## Kerala nuns walk out of Chhattisgarh prison on bail | Odisha girl allegedly set afire

### Historium Hibdae

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**com** 

# Rahul claims 2024 polls rigged; EC labels it 'baseless accusation'

Congress leader says he has '100% proof' to substantiate claims, party suspects manipulation in 70-100 seats during the LS election; he says election system in India is 'already dead'; 'misleading' claims seek to discredit 'impartial hard work', says EC

Abhinay Lakshman Sandeep Phukan NEW DELHI

n a no-holds-harred attack on the Election Commission (EC) on Saturday, Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi alleged that the 2024 Lok Sabha election was rigged, and claimed that the Congress suspects that anywhere between 70 and 100 seats were manipulated.

The BJP had won 240 of the 543 seats and the Congress 99 in that election.

#### 'Going to prove'

The Congress leader alleged that "the election system in India is already dead" and that he had "100% proof" to substantiate his claim. Without spelling out the details, Mr. Gandhi cited the example of one constituency in which "6.5 lakh voters voted, out of which 1.5 lakh were fake".

"The Prime Minister of India is Prime Minister with a very slim majority. If 10-15 seats were rigged, it would have been possible. Although our suspicion is closer to 70, 80, 100 seats. We are going to prove to you in the coming few days how that Lok Sabha election was rigged," Mr. Gandhi said at the AICC's annual conclave on law, human rights and RTI.

At the AICC conclave, Mr. Gandhi said whomever he had "shown this investigation to has fallen off their chair". "It makes it clear that the institution that defends the Constitution has been obliterated and taken



All-out attack: Rahul Gandhi at the party's annual conclave in New Delhi, show known Pushriwan

## Present evidence, Rajnath dares Rahul

Amit Bhelari PATNA

Senior Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) leader and Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Saturday attacked Congress leader Rahul Gandhi over his claim of possessing an "atom bomb of evidence" which would prove that the Election Commission (EC) was engaging in "vote-theft" in Bihar under the pretext of special intensive revision (SIR).

Asking the Leader of the Opposition to present

cannot be scanned. Why

all the evidence before the public, Mr. Singh said making baseless allegations on a credible constitutional institution like the EC does not suit Mr. Gandhi's post.

FULL REPORT

over. Now, there is absolutely no doubt that we have proof that will show that the Election Commission of India does not exis. It has taken us over six months to find this proof. Because the EC does not give us electronic voter lists. It gives us paper-wise voter lists, "he added.

Speaking in the context of its investigation, Mr. Gandhi said, "When they gave us booth-wise paper voter list, that document

would the ECI copy-proof, scan-proof the voter lists? We found that 6.5 lakh voters voted, and 1.5 lakh of them were fake. Physical paper we have from ECI. We compared each photo on the lists. You will see soon when we release this. It's like an atom bomb. The election system in India is dead."

The Opposition leader said he had been suspicious about the election re-

sults since 2014, especially as the BJP managed sweeping victories in Gujarat, Rajasthan, and Madhya Pradesh but the turning point was the 2024 Assembly election results in Maharashtra.

"In the [2024] Lok Sabha, we won the election. And then four months later, we didn't just lose, we were obliterated. Three formidable parties suddenly just evaporated. We started to look seriously for

electoral malpractice. We found that in Maharashtra, one crore new voters appeared between the Lok Sabha and Vidhan Sabha elections and the bulk of those votes go to the BJP," he said.

Stating that he was warned by his sister and Lok Sabha member from Wayanad Priyanka Gandhi Vadra against "playing with fire", Mr. Gandhi said he was taught by his "family not to be scared of cowards".

#### 'Baseless accusations'

Rejecting the allegations, the EC said Mr. Gandhi had been making "baseless and misleading" accusations, "intended to discredit the election officials' impartial and transparent hard work".

The agency said it had shared the electoral rolls of the 2024 Lok Sabha election with all political parties, including the Congress, but no objections had been filed by the Congress then.

The EC posted a "factcheck" on its social media account, saying that he had been making "unsubstantiated" accusations to discredit election officials' "impartial hard work" and to "exert undue pressure on the election machinery and even threaten it".

The EC added that Mr. Gandhi's "baseless claims such as vote *chori* (theft)" had "threatened lakhs and lakhs of hardworking election officials across the country".

### RELATED REPORTS

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Six Odisha workers killed in rock collapse HEWE > PAGE S





begins Hasina's trial

Another slip-up by India in trade pact with U.K. Deal will result in dilution of position TORIAL P PAGE .



Norris pips Plastri. wins Hungarian GP



#### Trump urges 17 pharma CEOs to cut drug prices

In a rare and direct move, the U.b. Proudent Donald Trump U.S. Procedent Demaid Trump wrote to 17 kpp pharmaceutical CEOs to bring down the seyrocletting prices of drups in the country. The sampanius have time till Explanition to infer Americans the same pitters they charge in trucces and other deviced. restings, it Page ht

#### Increase in CISE numbers cleared by Union govt.

enel for Central Industri urity Force over the next five years, anticipating new industrial hains being set up in areas currently affected by Left-wing extremism. Around 14,000 personnel will be recruited each year, to make a

#### 33 more Gazans killed by Israelis while seeking aid

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total forces apended for an
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Manuscrition-related duath toti
has also risen. a Page 24.

#### R.G. Kar murdervictim's kin still awaiting closure

NULKAYA. Nearly a year after a trainer dector was reped and murdered at the B. G. Kar mentical college, Kofsate, fee griswing formly awaits justice, the father land that they have too father land that they have tout faith in the CBI and the

## EC asks Tejashwi to submit his voter ID card for investigation

Commission says document shown by RJD leader does not seem to be formally issued; panel acting at BJP's behest to divert attention from questions over the rolls, says party; commission says that no party has approached it over rolls

he Election Com-mission (EC) on Synday asked Te-jashwi Yadav, Leader of Opposition in the Bihar As-sembly, to provide details of his voter ID card for a thorough investigation". This comes a day after be alleged that his name was missing from the draft electoral rolls published in

In a letter to the Rashtri-ya janata Dal leader, the Electoral Registration Of-ficer (RRC) of the Digha constituency said the elec-tor photo identity eard (EP-IC) that Mr. Vadav claimed

as his did not appear to be formally issued. "Therefore, you are re-quested to provide the detalls of the mentioned EPIC card talong with the origi-nal copy of the card) undensigned, so that it can be thoroughly investigated," the letter said without

Tibetan flair



Injustiver Voday addressing a press conference in Patha on Saturday

Party responds Reacting to the letter, RJD sion, acting at the behast of sion, acting at the behast of the RIP, wanted to diver-attention from questions about the draft rolls raised by Mr. Yadav and other leaders of the INDIA bloc.

## legal action against Tejashwi

NDA calls for

and file a case against him. Party spokesperson Xambit Patra said the EPIC number given by the RJD teader was not the one for had submitted in his 2020 structure afflidays, appointing to the EC's records, is PAGE 9.

in the press conference, you told that your name is not mentioned in the draft voter list. After investigation, it was found that your name is mentioned at serial number 416 of polling suition number 264 O.A. Admini Science, University Admini Science, University and Sci rolls. The EC, however, fur-nished the extract of draft rolls showing Mr. Yadav's name against the EPIC number RARO4863298. Animal Science University), whose EPIC number is RABO450228," the ERO "It is to be informed that

# said in his letter. Mr. Yadav is a voter in the Digha As-sombly constituency, but represents the Ragbupus sear as an MLA.

At his press conference, Mr. Yadav had filled to RAB2916120 as his fPRC number on the EC's official number on the EC's official website and entered the capscha in front of the assimbled. Presignation, presignation, respectively. The presignation of the capscha in the EC was working as a cell of the BR, and asked the upcoming Assembly-election when its name was not even showing it. The commission and that as of 3 p.m. on Sunslay, no political party in Blina had yet approached with had yet approached with a property of the president of the pres

on the draft rolls or remove

ceived 941 such claims and objections from individual

#### Centre may push for passage of key sports Bill

push for the passage of a key sports till in the Lok Sabha on Monday, amid a deadlock in Partiament ov or the Opposition demand for a discussion on the spe cial intensive revision of the electoral rolls in Bilan which the government has refused to accede to. The Lower House has listed the (ational Sports Gover-sance Bill, which envisages nance Bill, which envisages greater transparency in the functioning of sports bu-dies, for consideration and

## FIR filed against Army officer for 'assault' on airline staff in Srinagar



ing and severely injuring the ground staff of Spicejet at the Srinager airport on July 26. The Army extended its "full cooperation" to

he investigation.

A first information report under Sections 115(8), 28(2), 351(2), and 131 of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanbita has been ledged at the has been lodged at the Budgam police station against Lisutemant Golonel Bitesh Kumar Bingh, who is currently posted at the High Abitude Warfare school in Gulmarg in north Kashnic

pay for excess baggage. He forcibly entered the serobridge without completing boarding, violating securi-ty protocols. He became ry protocols. He became aggressive while being es-corted back by a CBF offi-cisl, and physically assust-ed four Spiceles ground In a statement on Sun-

# staff at Srinagar Airport on 26 July has come to the not-ice of the Indian Army. The

kicks, and even used a queue stand as a weapon. It said one employee col-ispsed after falling unconscious but was conting to ly kicked. "And suffered surjous factor

settine de sections facilitàre ricis, including a fractured jaw, after bisting struck while assisting his col-beague," it added, assistant a spinal fracture, and jaw and facial injuries in the violent attack. Medical jured limediately and shifted them to hospital for specialised treatment, they add.

1.2. TV footage shower the color of the c

shows the Army officer vio-lently attacking the air-line's employees.

Spicelet has written to the Civil Aviation Ministry, seeking action over the "murderous assault". The airline's statement added: "We strongly condemn any set of violence against our

## 'Bio-fortified potatoes with added iron to hit Indian market soon'

Bio-fortified potatoes, with added fron content, will soon be available in Indian markets, said simon Heck. Director General of the Peru-based International Potato Cepter (CIP), in an intaro Center (CIP), in an in-torview with The Hindu-Bio-fortified sweet pota-tions, with vitamin A added using technology deve-loped by the CIP, are alrea-by available in Karnataka.

dy available in Karnatzka, Assam, West Bengal, and Odisha.

The CIP, an apex re-search body of international research institutions working on rubular crops, will take efforts to make

the seeds of bio-fortified sweet potato available to more farmers, said Dr. Heck, currently in India for the establishment of the CIP South Asia regional centre in Agra. The focus is on from for-

The facts is an eron for-tification in potatores. "We have already shared the germ places with the in-dian Council of Agricultu-ral Research's Central Pota-to Inatitute in Shimla, The

to Institute in Shimila. The first variety has been re-leased in Peru', he said.
"Now it is under the evaluation of the ICAK, and it needs to be adapted to the Indian growing con-ditions," Do. Nock added. Dr. Nock add inclin has the strongest momentum.

for potato production and farmers wanted better va-rieties of potato that grew well with fewer agro-chem-ical input, and they also wanted to be part of the market chain, including food processing. He ex-pressed hope that the centre will help farmers accentre will help tarmers ac-cent better quality potato and sweet potato seeds and previde them with hes-ter exposure to markets.

for exposure to markets.
The C2P believes that
the location chosen for the
new centre near Agn, in
the heart of the potato belof India, is ideal as the indo-Garagetic pains is the
largest poster-producing
area in the world.
The Heek said the Uttar



Pradesh government had musle avsidable the land and handed it over to the National Iterationary Board, which invited the GP to entablish the centre. The agreement between the GP and the Union Agri-culture Ministry, signed last week of July, was not up Pradesh government had

following the demand from the Government of India in recognition of the "It may be noted that international companies, es-pecially potato firms from Europe and North Ameri-

ca, are increasingly invest-ing in potato production in India," he said. Part of market chain:

"What they [farmers]
meeted is access to potatoseed of the right quality, of
the right variety, and of the
right time of the year.
There are convexions.

They do not have enough
positio seeds in they emi-

too late for planting or they are not of good quality. We need to build the capacity for companies to multiply potato seeds. That will be a inajor contribution of the CDP," he said.

The CIP was working with private companies and public research instances and public research instances throughout India would have access to good opacity planting material, in the cip of new varieties, through multiplication except year, in the right and the cip was a many companies of the cip was a considerable parts of access by hundrid and provided the control of the cip was a considerable parts of access by hundrid and provided the control of the cip was a considerable parts of access by multiple and public pub

opportunities along the road; one was to work with the government, with pu-blic sector food procure-ment, for school feeding programmes, such as midday meals. This would give children access to nutrichildren access to natri-tious potato, more specifi-cally and consistently, he said. Another one was to breed potato that was more marillous, he added.

Governing committee
The CIP regional centre
would be governed by a
2018 Malegar
that comprises the Secretrates of Agriculture of india, Nepal, Bhutan, and
langlasleab.

#### Row over remarks by NCP(SP) MLA

Nationalist Congress Party Othered Pawer faction) MLA Jitendra Awhed on Sunday triggered a politi-Sunday triggered a politi-cal storm by saying "Sana-taria Dhurma has ruined hedia". He salled its ideology "porverted" and "his torteally oppressive." This same in the wake of the ac-quittal of all accused in the ZOOM Malegaon blast case. The BJP lashed out at Mi. Awhod and his party.

# 'Bio-fortified potatoes with added iron to hit Indian market soon'

A.M. Jigeesh

NEW DELHI

Bio-fortified potatoes, with added iron content, will soon be available in Indian markets, said Simon Heck, Director-General of the Peru-based International Potato Center (CIP), in an interview with *The Hindu*. Bio-fortified sweet potatoes, with vitamin A added using technology developed by the CIP, are already available in Karnataka, Assam, West Bengal, and Odisha.

The CIP, an apex research body of international research institutions working on tubular crops, will take efforts to make the seeds of bio-fortified sweet potato available to more farmers, said Dr. Heck, currently in India for the establishment of the CIP South Asia regional centre in Agra.

The focus is on iron fortification in potatoes. "We have already shared the germ plasm with the Indian Council of Agricultural Research's Central Potato Institute in Shimla. The first variety has been released in Peru", he said.

"Now it is under the evaluation of the ICAR, and it needs to be adapted to the Indian growing conditions." Dr. Heck added.

Dr. Heck said India has the strongest momentum for potato production and farmers wanted better varieties of potato that grew well with fewer agro-chemical input, and they also wanted to be part of the market chain, including food processing. He expressed hope that the centre will help farmers access better quality potato and sweet potato seeds and provide them with better exposure to markets.

The CIP believes that the location chosen for the new centre near Agra, in the heart of the potato belt of India, is ideal as the Indo-Gangetic plains is the largest potato-producing area in the world.

Dr. Heck said the Uttar



Simon Heck

Pradesh government had made available the land and handed it over to the National Horticulture Board, which invited the CIP to establish the centre.

The agreement between the CIP and the Union Agriculture Ministry, signed last week of July, was set up following the demand from the Government of India in recognition of the potential for economic growth from the thriving potato sector.

"It may be noted that international companies, especially potato firms from Europe and North America, are increasingly investing in potato production in India," he said.

## Part of market chain

"What they [farmers] needed is access to potato seed of the right quality, of the right variety, and at the right time of the year. There are constraints. They do not have enough potato seeds or they come

too late for planting or they are not of good quality. We need to build the capacity for companies to multiply potato seeds. That will be a major contribution of the CIP," he said.

The CIP was working with private companies and public research institutes to make sure that farmers throughout India would have access to good quality planting material, right from the initial breeding of new varieties, through multiplication every year, in the right locations.

He said the CIP would also ensure that the vulnerable parts of society had access to nutritious potato.

. . .

There were a number of opportunities along the road; one was to work with the government, with public sector food procurement, for school feeding programmes, such as midday meals. This would give children access to nutritious potato, more specifically and consistently, he said. Another one was to breed potato that was more nutritious, he added.

## Governing committee

The CIP regional centre would be governed by a coordination committee that comprises the Secretaries of Agriculture of India, Nepal, Bhutan, and Bangladesh.



Bio-fortified potatoes
enriched with iron content
will soon be launched in
India by the International
Potato Center (CIP), a Perubased research organization.

Bio-fortified sweet potatoes with vitamin A are already available in Karnataka, Assam, West Bengal, and Odisha.

The initiative aligns with India's push to improve nutrition, farm productivity, and boost the potato value chain

Category	Details	
Institution	CIP (International Potato Center), based in Peru	
Focus Crop	Potatoes and Sweet Potatoes	
Nutrient Addition	Iron (Potatoes), Vitamin A (Sweet Potatoes)	
↑ Target States	Currently in Karnataka, Assam, Odisha, West Bengal	
Collaboration	ICAR, Central Potato Research Institute (Shimla)	
Breeding Progress	First bio-fortified variety already released in Peru	
Regional Hub	New centre in Agra, Indo-Gangetic plain, India's largest potato- producing belt	
✓ Goals	Better seed quality, fewer agrochemicals, food processing inclusion	

Social Focus	School mid-day meals, nutrition access for vulnerable populations
Governance	Committee with Secretaries of Agriculture from India, Nepal, Bhutan, and Bangladesh
Research Scope	Private + public partnership in breeding, multiplication, and seed access

# Global Context:

• Growing interest from **international companies**, especially from **Europe and North America**, in investing in India's potato sector.

# Q. With reference to the launch of bio-fortified potatoes in India, consider the following statements:

- The International Potato Center (CIP) is based in Peru and is collaborating with ICAR for bio-fortified potato development.
- 2. The CIP's new regional centre in India has been established in Himachal Pradesh due to its highaltitude advantage.
- 3. Bio-fortified potatoes being introduced in India are enriched with iron content, while the sweet potatoes are enriched with vitamin A.
- 4. The regional governing committee includes representatives from India, Nepal, Bhutan, and Bangladesh.

# Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

A. 1, 3 and 4 only

B. 1 and 2 only

C. 1, 2 and 4 only

D. 1, 2, 3 and 4

## INDIA bloc to meet on Thursday to chalk out strategy against SIR

In first in-person meet of the bloc since June 1, 2024, Rabut to host dinner for leaders at his Delhi residence: they will take

mited in their opposition to the special sition to the special of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha.

Excluding Parliament floor strategy meetings, the last time the INDIA bloc leaders sat across the table was on June 1, 2024, just three days before the results of the Lok Salsha election were declared, at the residence of Congres Mallibarjur

president kharge, On July 19, 2024, the bloc had a virtual meeting

on the results.

Thursday's dinner meeting will be followed the next day by a joint protest march to the Election Commission's headquarters here.

The SIR has acted as a cline to bright the block back.

glue to bring the bloc back together after a tumultuous year of speaking out in



Coming toge

"SHI affects all citizeness speaking to The Hindu, Sun majored." Party persident speaking to The Hindu, Sun majored. Party persident speaking to the Hindu State of protesting against the SH (updebte: "We cain protest updebte: "Annexed of special inventors in the Shall a system of the Shall as was essential that the exercise to opposed to the shall as th 1900, affects all citizens?

Manoj K. Jha, Rajya Sab-ha member from the Rashtriya Janata Dal, said that the INDIA bloc was prima-

The Opposition is going

the tourr of the Lob Rath-ha's longest serving Speak-er, lish and had solved and had com-tained and had solved and had com-tained to had solved and had con-tained in hard and had con-tained in hard had been a discussion on the flection Commission, we are demanding a debase on taken by the pull panel, which right now is under-way in filter, and will be country. We congress the con-country. We congress of the con-tained and had been a support of the con-tained and had been as the con-tained and had been a support of the con-country. We congress the con-tained and had been a support of the con-tained tive for the INDIA bloc to

Ihe said.

The top leadership of a majority of the INDA Moc partners are expected at the diamer at Mr. clandhi's residence and the protest may be a made of the three and the protest of the prot

# against Tejashwi Yadav for 'holding two voter ID cards' The Blade Bureau to press again for a debate on the issue in Parliament trees Advisory Committee of both Houses, which study has to be held at the beginning of the week. subject can easily be dis-cussed in hold Houses. He is neared, best week, we will give the stady Mont Hampert and beach them.

The ruling National Democratic Alliance (NDA) on Sunday urged the Election Commission (EC) to take cognissince of the two vo-

RJP spokesperson Ajay Alok: Janata Dal(U) chief Ram Vilas (LJP-RV) leader Rajesh Bhatt; Hindustari Awam Morcha-Secular Rajech Bhairt, Hindustumi Awam Murcha-Seesida GlAM-50 leader Shyam Sundhi) mil Baderiya Isak Sundhi) mil Baderiya Isak Sundhi) mil Baderiya Isak Sundhi Baderiya Baderiya Sundhi Baderiya Baderiya Sundhi Baderiya Baderiya Lagariya Baderiya Baderiya Lagariya Baderiya Baderiya Lagariya Baderiya Baderiya Sundhi Baderiya B

carried out across the country," the Congress day to allege that his name whip in the Lok Sabba. Manickam Tagore, said.

EC and the Patna District Magistrate put the 'whole truth forward as it is'. says party leader

NDA calls for legal action

from the one referred to by the BC to refute his claim. Mr. Patra said the EFIC number given by the EID leader was not the one he had submitted in his 2020 election affidavit, accord-me to the ECX records. ing to the EC's records.

'Exposed his lies' Mr. Patra said the commis-sion and the Patna District the "whole truth forward as it is" by stating that his name was encoded in the voters' list of the Digha As-

voters' list of the Digha As-sembly canathmency.
"That 1676; member is the same that he 16M; Va-dav) had mentioned in his nomination affidavit of 2020... did you give a wrong affidavit? Did you 16M; Vadav? file a verong nomination; paper? Did filling nomination?" Mr. Pa-

if the RIO leader's claim was correct, it meant that he held two EPIC num-

an offence, he said.
"Tild Mr. Yadav have two
voter ID cards? If the su
preme leader of a party premie leader of a party has two EPICs, what would be the condition of its workers? Is this why they are afraid of SIB tapectal in-tensive revision?? Mr. Pa-tra said, accounting the RID and the Congress of indulg-ing in unifair means to win alactions.

'Part of conspiracy'
''Over the past few years,
we have witnessed that the
Opposition, particularly the Congress and RJD, have been deliberately targettra Constitutional institutions without any basis as part o

"Kahul Gandhi was claiming that that he would explode an "arm bomb" and perhaps this was his atom bomb... like that of the perhaps of the state of the firest of atom bomb from Padatan nor from Rahul Gandhi," the senior Rip leader said.

The RIP leader vertical that the perhaps of the perhap

#### Modi and Shah meet President separately

### Press Trust of India

by within hours of each oth er at the Rashtrapati Wasyan

The reasons for the meetings were not known.
"Prime Minister Sheigenarendramodi called on io at Rashtrapati Bhavan, se Rashtrapati Bhavan

the Rashtraparl Bhavan naid on 'C. Hours later, the Rashtra-parl Bhavan again wrote on 'X.' "Union Minister for Home Affairs and Coopera-tion, Star Amit Stah called on President Droupadi Misrimi at Bashtrapari Wa-van."

an."
This was the first meetwith the President after his recent trips to the United Kingdom and the neighbouring Maldives.

## EC's neutrality under | Govt. may push for passage a cloud; debate must, says Congress leader

#### Press Trust of India

Clauray Cogos on Jumilay alleged that the neutrality of the Election Commis-sion is questionable, which is why the Opposition par-ties want a discussion on the revision of the voter list

in Parliament.

Speaking to pressper-sons before the start of the sons before the start of the extended executive meet-ing of the Assam unit of the Congress, Mr. Cogori, who is also the deputy leader of the party in the Lok Sabha, questioned the Csutre's decision not to allow a dis-cussion on the 18° even though the Chief Election Commissioner is amount Commissioner is appoint od by it. "Today, there is a question mark in the minds of the people re-garding the neutrality of the EC. That is why we want adiscussion in Parliament. The government is Effection Commissioner is trying to Inde something.

What is it? Is it their manipore government, he added.

Gogot says the Opposition wants an open discussion in

polls and Lok Sabha lection," he asked.

"The common people should know the status of their voting rights and details of polling stations. We want a discussion on this your the government is saying they cannot discuss the matter," said Mr. Cogo! "Their logic is that the theory of the said of the sa

Parliament regarding the voter list revision

Mr. Gogot said the Op-position wants an open dis-cussion in Parliament regarding the voter list, which is being revised in

"The common people

push for the passage of a key sports Bill in the Lok Sabha on Monday, amid a deadlock in Parliament ov or the Opposition demand for a discussion on the special intensive revision of the electoral rolls in pollernment has refused to

accessed to.
The Lower House has
listed the Nuttonal Sports
Governance Bill, which on-visages agreater transparen-cy in the functioning of sports bodies, for consider-ation and passage.

Resolution in RS The Rajya Sabhu has listed for passage on Monday a resolution from Union Home Minister Amit Shah logic because the Chief Election Commissioner is appointed by the PM and on the extension of Presi-dent's Rule in Manipur by another six months with effect from August (3.

# 

Opposition MPs protesting in the Well as Lok Saliria Speaker Om-Birla conducts the proceedings in the House sexses (WPT)

Other than a two-day discussion on the Fahal-gam terror attack and Op-eration Sindsoe in both the Houses, no significant lea-atings was runnacted as far in the Monsoon Seesian of Parliament. Rajpa Sabha Chairman Jagdeep Dhank-har's regignation on the ve-Government sources, bowever, claim that if the Opposition does not pause

har's resignation on the ve-ry first day of the session added to the chaos.

its protests, it will get the

liament and teach fliem how it can be discussed," Trinamool Congress leader Derck O'Brien suid.

The government in volced a precedent from the tenure of the Lok Sab

Manickum Tagore, said.

of key sports Bill in LS amid

deadlock over debate on SIR

National Sports Gover-nance Bill passed in the din. Another Bill larsed for consideration and passage in the Lok Sabba is the Na-tional Anti-Doping Communicanth Bill.

The government's logical latter agencies include the Seadjustment of Represen-

Readjustment of Represen-tation of scheduled Tribes in Assembly Constituencies of the State of Goa Bill, 2024, the Merchant Ship-ping Bill, 2024 and the In-dian Ports Bill, 2025.

## SIR of rolls should be fought politically and legally: Chidambaram

and former Union Minister
P. Chidambaram said on
Sunday that the Special In-tensive Revision (SID) exer-cise carried out by the Election Commission (EC) he migrant workers" and a gross interference in the a gross interference in the ights of the electorate" to

\*Calls it alarming!
Mr. Chidambaram made
the statement on social
media after reports suggested that around \*68
takh voters are in danger of being disenfranchised in fithar, while 6.5 lakh per-sons have been added as voters in Tamil Nadu", calling it alarming and patent-ly illegal. He asked, "Why should the intgrant worker



her home State! to vote in the Assembly election, as they usually do? boes not the migrant worker return to Bithar at the time of the Chitath Full return'd Parties ter must have a fixed and permanent legal home. The migrant worker has such a home in Bithar for in another State!, How can he/she be enrolled as a vo-ter in Tamil State!

is abusing its powers and trying to change the electoral character and patterns

## Thousands march in silent protest in Kolhapur, seek return of elephant Mahadevi from Vantara

Kolhapur witnessed a mas sive turnout on Sunday as thousands walked in a silent protest, urging author-ities to the bring back the 36-year-old elephant Ma-badevi, also known as Madhuri, from the NGO Vantara's wildlife rehabilitation facility in Jamnagar

Vantara is the businchild

Vantara is the brainshild of Aniant Ambani, son of in-dustrialist Mukesh Amban, and is supported by Re-lance Industries Led. and Bellance Foundation. The manch, led by farm-er Swabhimant Risan Sau-gathan chief Raju Sheity, began at 8 a.m. from Nan-dani, and concluded at

at Laking dut a silent march in Adhaput on Sunday seeking the People taking out a silent march in Kolhapur on Sunday seeking the return of a 30-year-old electron. Mahadevi, precise superscripts

where a formal appeal was submitted, "We covered 45 where a formal appeal was submitted. "We covered 45 for today. Over 20,000 pe-ople had gathered from Kollipaur, Sangli and Sata-ra. They joined a beyout of Bo othe Bellance Group te-become company), and in just the last four slays, more than 1.5 lakin model. users in Rothapur, Sangli, and Satara districts ported

Anant) Ambant's interests. to seize temple elephants We will file a formal com-plaint with PETA's head of

fice in the U.S., and seek cancellation of their li-cense in India," he said, terming it a conspiracy.

Over two lakh signa-tures had been collected

religious processions des-pite medical issues. Multiple expert inspections, in-cluding reports by a sub-committee formed by the high-powered commit-tee, found that the ele-phant was suffering from severe foot rot, ulcerated wounds, overgrown tog-nals, and exhibited signs

The Hindu Bureau

## Ahead of election, senior Cong. leader Ashok Kumar joins JD(U)

election in Bibar, State Congress leader Ashok Ku-mar (Ram) on Sunday joined the ruling party la-nata Dukto, alleging that the Opposition party has no "respect for Dality" Mr. Ashok, who has seen a six-time MLA and

in softspay or 5 moltys pessing 198
Mishadoil stront, manuscressist
their minthers to other networks to protest, We plan
to carry out similar protesite in north Karnadas, and seen collections
their minthers to other networks to protest, We plan
to carry out similar protesite in north Karnadas, and seen carregion and several temples
their methods of the compress, quit the Conthe bornbay fligh Court
their minthers to other methods and the control of the Congress, quit the Conthe Congress, quit



Chaudhary, Sharwan Ku-mar and Ratnesh Sada too-wore present during the occasion. State Congress sources told The Hindu that Mr. Ashok had some differen-es with party's State in-charge Reshina Allawaru and ducided to quit the

# Thousands march in silent protest in Kolhapur, seek return of elephant Mahadevi from Vantara

## Purnima Sah

MUMBAI

Kolhapur witnessed a massive turnout on Sunday as thousands walked in a silent protest, urging authorities to the bring back the 36-year-old elephant Mahadevi, also known as Madhuri, from the NGO Vantara's wildlife rehabilitation facility in Jamnagar, Gujarat.

Vantara is the brainchild of Anant Ambani, son of industrialist Mukesh Ambani, and is supported by Reliance Industries Ltd. and Reliance Foundation.

The march, led by former Swabhimani Kisan Sangathan chief Raju Shetty, began at 5 a.m. from Nandani, and concluded at 5.45 p.m. at the Kolhapur District Collectorate,



People taking out a silent march in Kolhapur on Sunday seeking the return of a 36-year-old elephant, Mahadevi. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

where a formal appeal was submitted. "We covered 45 km today. Over 30,000 people had gathered from Kolhpaur, Sangli and Satara. They joined a boycott of Jio (the Reliance Group telecom company), and in just the last four days, more than 1.5 lakh mobile users in Kolhapur, Sangli, and Satara districts ported

their numbers to other networks in protest. We plan to carry out similar protests in north Karnataka, especially since it's a border region and several temples there have elephants. A crucial hearing is scheduled tomorrow in a Bengaluru court," Mr. Shetty said.

"This is a tactic by PETA

(People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals), acting as a slave to (Mr. Anant) Ambani's interests, to seize temple elephants. We will file a formal complaint with PETA's head office in the U.S., and seek cancellation of their license in India," he said, terming it a conspiracy.

Over two lakh signatures had been collected from across Kolhapur, demanding Mahadevi's return.

## Plea dismissed

The Bombay High Court on July 16 had dismissed a petition by a Jain math in Kolhapur, challenging the transfer of the captive elephant Mahadevi to Vantara.

The elephant, owned by the math since 1992, was reportedly kept in solitary confinement and used for religious processions despite medical issues. Multiple expert inspections, including reports by a sub-committee formed by the high-powered committee, found that the elephant was suffering from severe foot rot, ulcerated wounds, overgrown toenails, and exhibited signs of psychological distress.

In a statement to *The Hindu*, Vantara said: "The transfer has since been carried out by the authorities, and Vantara has merely complied with the court's directions. The promoter family, who support Vantara philanthropically, have no involvement in its daily operations and were not party to the proceedings at any stage."



A large-scale silent protest was held in Kolhapur, Maharashtra, demanding the return of a 36-year-old elephant Mahadevi (also called Madhuri) from the Vantara wildlife rehabilitation centre in Jamnagar, Gujarat.

# **Q** Key Points:

Category	Details
🖘 Elephant Name	Mahadevi / Madhuri
P Origin of Transfer	From Jain Math, Kolhapur (Owned since 1992)
Current Location	Vantara Wildlife Centre, Jamnagar, Gujarat
Organizer of Protest	Raju Shetty (Swabhimani Kisan Sangathan)
■ Vantara Backed By	Anant Ambani, Reliance Foundation

Telecom Boycott	Over 1.5 lakh users ported from Jio in protest
Signature Campaign	Over 2 lakh signatures collected
/ Medical Concerns	Severe foot rot, ulcers, overgrown nails, psychological distress
🐀 Legal Update	Bombay HC dismissed petition on July 16
Legal Justification	Transfer complied with court direction
⚠ Allegations by Protesters	Seizure of temple elephants; solitary confinement; misuse for religious processions
	Denied wrongdoing; stated family has no role in operations

Case/Event	Details
Sunder the Elephant Case (2013)	Transferred from Maharashtra to a sanctuary after PETA intervention due to abuse.
Wildlife Protection Act, 1972	Elephants are listed under <b>Schedule I</b> – highest protection.
Project Elephant (1992)	Central government scheme for elephant protection and habitat management.
Wildlife (Protection) Amendment Act, 2022	Tightened regulations on elephants and included them in Schedule I with stricter transfer and captive condition rules.
Captive Elephant Database (MoEFCC)	Initiative for tracking health, ownership, and treatment of captive elephants in India.



## An unravelling

#### Malegaon acquittals expose systemic

investigative failures

Investigative failures

he 2008 Malegons blast, billing six and injuring 88 ordners, during Ramaan, was seatons as a diversor. The indial divession of the form of the property of the failure of the fai

pective of religion, especially after Muslim yearth were wrongly changed and later acquired in the were wrongly changed and later acquired in the week was proposed appeared to failer with the termsdels approach appeared to failer with the termsdels approach appeared to failer with the termsdels are supported to the National Investigation of Hillands and Hillands and the second was transferred to the National Investigation change disease. And allegations that the KIA was under pressure to be lestion, a Special Court rightly ruled in 2018 that a full trial was the loss of the second of the second court of the second of the second court of the second of the second court of the procession of the second of the procession's methods and a reminder of how justice can be undone. The court exposed a foundation of unreliable title, alleging coercion by the ATS – a claim also second by the NIA. The explosive electronic transcripts were devined inadmissible in failing to second with the NIA. The explosive electronic transcripts were devined inadmissible in failing to ling. The court also religious dependent of Purnling The second of the second o Thaker was fielded as a parfamentary cancidates by the Bharatya Instan Farry and won from Bhopal. Her political elevation as a littletava from Bhopal. Her political elevation as a littletava from the meeting relationsy attacks against Muslems. Her subsequent career, marked by an endorsement of Mediatura Gontilia anaesin, Natharam Godes, and Mediatura Gontilia anaesin, Natharam Godes, ing of extremits voices. The acquittal lays bare the unsertiliar positiy that when state agencies fail, extremits organisations can get away with face and, without a competent and extremit policing, prosecution and justice system, the perturbation, whoever they may be, can walk free.

## Rape and punishment

Victims of assault must be encouraged to testify without fear

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analysis and her testimony formed key systemes in the trial which began in May this year. The Spe-cial Court of Sensions to hear criminal cases against former and present Members of Parlia-ment and MLAs protounced the worker on Parlia-ment and MLAs protounced the worker on the heap to other nurvivers battling for Justice in sex-ual annual vases. The court convicted Bevanna on all charges framed against him, including un-der Sections 376(20m) (repeated rape on the Charges and Court of the Indian Parall Charges and Court of the Indian Parall (disappearance of evidence) of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) and SSE (violation of privacy) of the Information Technology Act, 2000, Section 379 (2) of the IPCs states that a person convicted under "shall be pumbed with rigorous imprisonment of the IPCs of the IPCs of the IPCs of the but which may extend to imprisonment for life..." Office, even when multiple complaints are raised, leaders with political cloud get away. The chinery needs to do is act wellly and sensitively, and create a sufe space so that survivors of sexual abuse can come forward without fear. CD of the IPC states that a person convicted unde

## The 'right to repair' must include 'right to remember'

n May 2025, the Indian government took a significant step toward premoting astainable electronics. It accepted a report proposing a Repairability index for multic phones and application, and access, and activars aupport. New e-water policies now

software aupport. New e-waste policies now include minimum payments to insensitivities formal recycling. These are timely moves. At the second making repair as flur as india takes steps toward making repair as the second making repair as the second making repair as and intellectual resource — a form of knowledge that deserves preservation and support. India's digital and Artificial intelligence (A4) policy digital and Artificial intelligence (A4) policy digital and Artificial intelligence (A5) policy and the second formal formal second and economic efficiency. Yes, the systems that informal sepair and maintenance economy—remain largely invisible in digital and policy frameworks.

inseworks. In an age of cloud backups and algorithmic processing, it is easy to forget the value of knowledge that cannot be codified. Much of India's repair expertise lives in muscle memory. India's repair expertise lives in muscle memory, apairet doservolution, and years of hands our improviouslant. This tack is howeved jet is vital to improviouslant and the stack is howeved jet is vital to improviouslant. This stack is howeved jet is vital to be belief is Karrel Bight to appulant exclusions in Chennaris Ritchia Pertent, repairers keep devices working well gast their plantared obsolescence. "It we don't to K. It, who well?" says a mobile repairer in Ritchia Street. "Beophe throw things out. But we see what can be much enew." Their tools may their work reflects don't inapoulty. Their restore their work reflects don't inapoulty. Their restore their work reflects deep ingenuity. They restore devices not by consulting manuals, but by diagnosing faults through sensory cues, reusing components, and adapting creatively to constraints. Yet, this ecosystem is gradually grading. As product designs become less repairable and consumer habits shift toward repaticable and somanner habits shift inward disposability, informat repairers find thoraselves increasingly locked out of markets, of shifting programmes, and of posity attention. What risks being lost is not only economic opportunity but also a vast, undocumented mesevoir is knowledge that has long supported India's technological resilience.

Why tacit knowledge matters:
"I learn by watching my uncle;" says in:
"I learn by watching my uncle; says in:
explained with words, lie just showed me once,
and espected me to try. That's how we pass it
must be the says of the says of the says of the says of the
intuition that are difficult to formalize, it indicates
the says of the says of the says of the says of the
dewn through mentorship, observation, and repetition - not through formal training or certification. It is inherently adaptive and



Kinnari Gatare former SIX Dasign Insultani, National Consultant, National Programms on Technology Enforced Learning (NPTEL), Indian Institute of Tucknology Madras

context-sensitive, qualities that structured digital assession, including AI, often struggle to replicate. As AI advances, it increasingly draws on longitus mechanisms to achieveled by the contribution of this knowledge are equitally involve the contributions of this knowledge are impossible. AI systems somitimus to ingrowing imbalance: AI systems somitimus to ingrowing imbalance: AI systems somitimus to ingrowe, while the communities enabling that learning often remain unrecognized. Clobably, the Right to Kapatir unrecognised. Globally, the Right to Repair movement has goined momentum. The European Union recently introduced rules respairing manufactures to provide access to spare purts manufactures to provide access to spare purts. The second of the second control of the s

also as a form of knowledge week digital policy. The billind spot in India's digital policy. In 2021-22, India generated over 1.8 million torsies of e-waste, becoming the worlds. Birtid largest produces. The E-Waste Management Policy. Coll introduced Extended Management Policy. Coll introduced Extended makes manufacturers responsible for post-ase product management. However, while these rules encourage recycling, they make only a passing mention of repair as a preventive structure. The mention of repair as a preventive structure. The mention of repair as a preventive structure. Preventive structure. The product management Moneyor the product management Moneyor they a passing recycling, they make only a passing recycling. The product management in the product of Indian knowledge traditions and experiential learning but offers little guidance on how to support or transmit hands on repair expertise support or transmit handle-on repair experition. Campaigns asset as biasion LHF (LHF26) the For Campaigns asset as biasion LHF (LHF26) the For completementary efforts are needed to support the workers who make such sustainability practices possible. While proficies now champion were possible. While proficies now champion which workers whose skills make it real.

As austainability becomes a national priority, how we design, discard, and extend the life of sveryday products. One enterging idea is research is 'unmisking'—the process of taking

quart, repairing or repurposing devices after that test use, revealing design flaws and opportunitie for receive Breakdowns and repairs are not failured they are feetfluck loops and sources of practical insight. A discarded streat hoard can become a reaction road. A become a teaching tool. A salvaged phone part can restore armatoric's acoust to work or school.

A broken appliance can be repaired and retweet informal registers perform this work delity. Their where reuse is not an afterthought but a design principle. Bacognising them as sewerels or sustainability – not marginal figures – can reshape how within about environmental and digital innovation alike.

AI-enabled solutions for repair justice AI-enabled solutions for repair justice india's estimate of jugand and frugality long pre-dates today's tech-fireward policies. Repaired since always adapted across belows and decadas, a fireward since always adapted across below and decadas. At infrastructure and digital juddic goods, it must align these ambitions with the ground realities of repair. Most modern godgets are built for colling to a 505 HFsig global report, only 23% of smartphones sold in Asia are easily repairable due to design constraints. To change this, design rooms and procurement policies must include genuinely autamated by the contraints. repairability from the mart. To make technology genuinely austainable, juilble policy must consider not only how products are manufactured and used but also how they break down, are repaired, and find new life. A shift toward designing for "unmaking", where disassembly and repair are anticipated from the outset, should inform both hardware standards

toward integrating to violated with which consists in should inform both hardware standards and Al-integrated systems.

This transation will respit coordinated.

This transation will respit coordinated the system of the system

## Another slip up by India in the trade pact with the U.K.

he India-United Kingdom Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CEFA) raises several questions regarding India's commitments in the CEFA's Intellectual property chapter is Article 12.6, "Understandings Regarding TRIPS and Public Health Measurer", in particular its first programs "The Parties recognise the preferable and optimal route to stronge and ensure access to medicines to voluntary licensing which may include sectionized granted and optimized and optimized and ensure access to medicines to voluntary licensing which may include sectionized granted and optimized and optimized and ensure access to medicines to voluntary licensing which may include sectionized granted and manufacturally agreed turns."

technology transfer on mutually agreed terms\* (http://bit.ly/46al.kaj). India's agreeing to this provision would result in difution of its position on two critical issues. Pirst, India consistently backed the use of Prof. insta constates by backed the use of compulsory licensing as opposed to voluntary licensing, to address high prices of parents medicines, second, indua argused that advanced countries must transfer technologies to developing countries on "favourable terms", for the industrialisation, and also for reducing their carbon footprints.

issues of pricing.

High prices of puteriod medicines are a serious amounds of the patent system, thus to essessive restrictions of the patent system, thus to essessive restrictions of the patent system, thus to essessive restrictions of the patent system, the system of the system



Diewalit Dhar a former Professor o

As India invests in At infrastructure and digital

public goods, it must align these ambitions

of repair and an established culture of

innovation

with the ground realities



There is a dilution of India's backing

of the more effective compulsory licensing to address the high prices of

consistently explained in the country control of the properties of compulsory licences.

By backing voluntary licensing to address the problem of access to medicines, India has, de problem of access to medicines, India has, de facto, given up its position as a strong votary of compalsory licensing in the WTO. A coalition of representation of the strong of the strong of the right to issee compulsory licences through the Doha Declaration on the TRIPS Agreement and public Health in 2001, despite surious reposition emphasics, "each Member has the right to grant-compulsory licences and the freedom to determine the grounds upon which such licence which is the strong of the strong of the strong which is the strong of the strong of the strong votarious strong of the strong of the strong of the votarious strong of the strong of the strong of the votarious strong of the strong of the strong of the votarious strong of the strong of the strong of the votarious strong of the strong of the strong of the votarious strong of the strong of the strong of the votarious strong of the strong of the strong of the strong votarious strong of the strong of the strong of the strong of the votarious strong of the strong of the strong of the strong of the votarious strong of the strong of the strong of the strong of the votarious strong of the strong of the strong of the strong of the votarious strong of the strong of

price, or the patented invention is not "worked" in the territory of India, implying, it has not been commercially exploited in the country (http://bit.ly/4f75tg)).

Voluntary licences cannot emure access to affordable medicines due to the weak bargaining position of domestic companies in developing

countries vis-à-vis dominant pharmaceutical corporations. Médechus Sans Frontières (MSF), a medical huminitaria no ignamiation, observed medical huminitaria no ignamiation, observed pharmaceutical corporations can set various limitation, including to control the supply of active pharmaceutical impredents, beatles illumiation, including to control the supply of active pharmaceutical impredents, beatles pharmaceutical impredents, beatles pharmaceutical impredents, beatles principal including the control of the complex pharmaceutical impredents of the control in the cont purchasing power terms, higher than that tillead had charged in the United States.

had charged in the United States.

India's demand will be affected.

The CETA undermines India's demand for technology transfer 'en hoursalds terms' in several multiple forms. This demand was the Assembly Resolution on the New International Footnemic Order (NRCO in 1974. A key aspect of Committee of the Committ

### LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Support, not therapy A report, "Gends cannot quality as therapy for mental heeffits, says expert" (Chenna, July 21, 2020), highlights a crucial point while Artificial intelligence tools auch as ChatGPT may feel supportive in moments

of arosety, they cannot of ansety, they cannot replace professional therapy. These tools often mirror what we wish to hear, creating comfort but not reak change. The fact is that true therapy challenges patterns, provides structured guidance and

builds shills to cope with life — converting that he sigenthm can replicate. Instead of depending on Artificial Intelligence, we must remember that bealing happens through people. Only a trained therapist can

listen deeply, confront painful truths, and guide recovery with care and In an arriors, "World's highest hird math rates at Th. 15-secon page, August 3, 3785), even death rates it among the highest worldwide, and not the highest.

accountability. Let Artificial health must stay firmly in human hands. J.S. Safooraa Sharathi,

must corry the full postal address and the full name of the name with initials.

# The 'right to repair' must include 'right to remember'

n May 2025, the Indian government took a significant step toward promoting sustainable electronics. It accepted a report proposing a Repairability Index for mobile phones and appliances, ranking products based on ease of repair, spare part access, and software support. New e-waste policies now include minimum payments to incentivise formal recycling. These are timely moves.

But as India takes steps toward making repair a consumer right, we must also treat it as a cultural and intellectual resource – a form of knowledge that deserves preservation and support. India's digital and Artificial Intelligence (AI) policy landscape is evolving rapidly. Initiatives such as Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI) and the National Strategy on Artificial Intelligence (NSAI) emphasise innovation, data-driven governance and economic efficiency. Yet, the systems that quietly sustain everyday life – especially the informal repair and maintenance economy – remain largely invisible in digital and policy frameworks.

In an age of cloud backups and algorithmic processing, it is easy to forget the value of knowledge that cannot be codified. Much of India's repair expertise lives in muscle memory. quiet observation, and years of hands-on improvisation. This tacit knowledge is vital to India's material resilience. From mobile fixers in Delhi's Karol Bagh to appliance technicians in Chennai's Ritchie Street, repairers keep devices working well past their planned obsolescence. "If we don't fix it, who will?" says a mobile repairer in Ritchie Street. "People throw things out. But we see what can be made new." Their tools may be modest and their workshops discreet, but their work reflects deep ingenuity. They restore devices not by consulting manuals, but by diagnosing faults through sensory cues, reusing components, and adapting creatively to constraints. Yet, this ecosystem is gradually eroding. As product designs become less repairable and consumer habits shift toward disposability, informal repairers find themselves increasingly locked out of markets, of skilling programmes, and of policy attention. What risks being lost is not only economic opportunity but also a vast, undocumented reservoir of knowledge that has long supported India's technological resilience.

#### Why tacit knowledge matters

"I learnt by watching my uncle," says an appliance repairer in Bhopal. "He never explained with words. He just showed me once, and expected me to try. That's how we pass it on." Tacit knowledge refers to forms of skill and intuition that are difficult to formalise. In India's repair economy, this expertise is typically passed down through mentorship, observation, and repetition – not through formal training or certification. It is inherently adaptive and



#### Kinnari Gatare

is a researcher in Human Computer Interaction (HCI) and a former UX Design Consultant, National Programme on Technology Enhanced Learning (NPTEL), Indian Institute of Technology Madras

As India invests

infrastructure

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in AI

context-sensitive, qualities that structured digital systems, including AL, often struggle to replicate. As AI advances, it increasingly draws on insights shaped by this kind of labour. However, mechanisms to acknowledge or equitably involve the contributors of this knowledge are still evolving. The result is a growing imbalance: AI systems continue to improve, while the communities enabling that learning often remain unrecognised. Globally, the Right to Repair movement has gained momentum. The European Union recently introduced rules requiring manufacturers to provide access to spare parts and repair documentation. In India, the Department of Consumer Affairs launched a Right to Repair framework in 2022, followed by a national portal in 2023 covering electronics, automobiles, and farm equipment. Meanwhile, the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 12 promotes repair as part of responsible consumption. India now has the opportunity to lead by recognising repair not just as a service but also as a form of knowledge work.

The blind spot in India's digital policy In 2021-22, India generated over 1.6 million tonnes of e-waste, becoming the world's third-largest producer. The E-Waste (Management) Rules, 2022 introduced Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) - a principle that makes manufacturers responsible for post-use product management. However, while these rules encourage recycling, they make only a passing mention of repair as a preventive strategy. National skilling programmes such as the Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY) focus on short-term certifications for formal industrial roles. Repair work, which requires improvisation, diagnostic skill and creative reuse does not easily fit this framework. Similarly, the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 celebrates Indian knowledge traditions and experiential learning but offers little guidance on how to support or transmit hands-on repair expertise. Campaigns such as Mission LiFE (LiFEStyle For Environment) promote repair and reuse, but complementary efforts are needed to support the workers who make such sustainability practices possible. While policies now champion circularity, they risk leaving behind the very workforce whose skills make it real.

As sustainability becomes a national priority, policymakers and technologists are reconsidering how we design, discard, and extend the life of everyday products. One emerging idea in research is 'unmaking' – the process of taking apart, repairing or repurposing devices after their first use, revealing design flaws and opportunities for reuse. Breakdowns and repairs are not failures; they are feedback loops and sources of practical insight. A discarded circuit board can become a teaching tool. A salvaged phone part can restore someone's access to work or school.

A broken appliance can be repaired and reused. Informal repairers perform this work daily. Their labour sits at the centre of the circular economy, where reuse is not an afterthought but a design principle. Recognising them as stewards of sustainability – not marginal figures – can reshape how we think about environmental and digital innovation alike.

AI-enabled solutions for repair justice India's culture of jugaad and frugality long pre-dates today's tech-forward policies. Repairers have always adapted across devices and decades, with minimal support. As the country invests in AI infrastructure and digital public goods, it must align these ambitions with the ground realities of repair. Most modern gadgets are built for compactness and control, not repair. According to a 2023 iFixit global report, only 23% of smartphones sold in Asia are easily repairable due to design constraints. To change this, design norms and procurement policies must include repairability from the start. To make technology genuinely sustainable, public policy must consider not only how products are manufactured and used but also how they break down, are repaired, and find new life. A shift toward designing for "unmaking", where disassembly and repair are anticipated from the outset, should inform both hardware standards and Al-integrated systems.

This transition will require coordinated institutional action. The Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology can embed repairability criteria into AI and procurement policies. The Department of Consumer Affairs could expand the Right to Repair framework to include product classification and community involvement. Platforms such as e-Shram, under the Ministry of Labour and Employment, can formally recognise informal repairers and connect them to social protection and skill-building schemes. The Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship can consider training programmes to account for the tacit, diagnostic nature of repair work, which does not conform to standardised industrial templates. To support this, decision trees can help codify typical repair pathways, while Large Language Models can capture, summarise, and translate tacit repair narratives into structured, shareable knowledge, enabling broader learning without stripping local context or expertise.

Supporting this ecosystem is not merely a question of intellectual property or technical efficiency. It is about valuing the quiet, embodied labour that sustains our digital and material lives – an essential step toward a just, repair-ready technological future. As philosopher Michael Polanyi observed, "We know more than we can tell." By choosing to remember what cannot be digitised, we preserve the human wisdom essential to a meaningful technological future.

• India's move towards the **Right to Repair (R2R)** is commendable for sustainability, but it must also be viewed as a **cultural and knowledge-based right** — including the **right to remember**, share, and build collective knowledge around repair.

## 1. Government Initiatives:

- India proposed a Repairability Index for electronics.
- Part of wider goals to reduce e-waste and promote circular economy.
- Aligns with policies like:
  - Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI)
  - National Strategy on Al
  - Sustainable Development Goals (esp. Goal 12 on responsible consumption)

# 2. Cultural Importance of Repair:

- Repair is not just technical it involves hands-on knowledge, community memory, and adaptation.
- Local Indian examples show people innovating and reusing materials.
- Without institutional support, much of this experiential knowledge is fading.

# 3. Blind Spot in Digital India:

- E-Waste Rules focus on recycling, not repair.
- Programs like PMKVY offer limited skill certifications.
- School curricula (like NEP 2020) don't yet include repair skills meaningfully.
- India needs a policy shift to actively promote and institutionalize repair knowledge.

# 4. Al, Data & the Right to Remember:

- Al and algorithmic systems threaten shared human memory and traditional repair skills.
- Knowledge is being lost when repair documentation is not shared or accessible.
- Emphasizing the "right to remember" would preserve local innovation.

## 5. International Momentum:

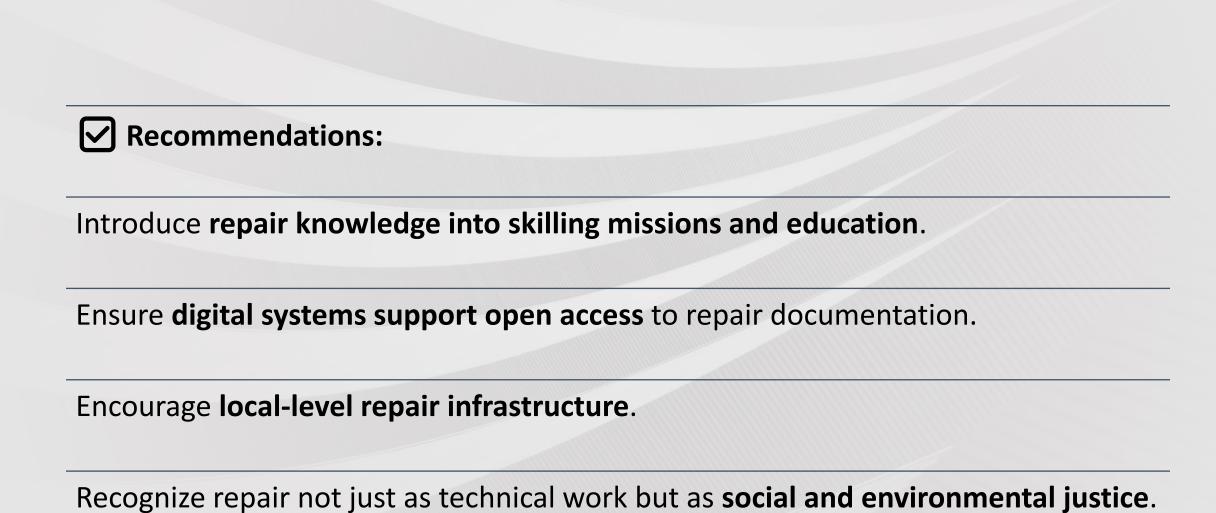
- EU and US pushing regulations to enforce right to repair.
- India has the chance to create inclusive, repair-oriented policies.
- Suggests Ministry of Education, Consumer Affairs, and others collaborate.

# 6. Global Examples

- European Union: Laws requiring manufacturers to provide spare parts and repair documentation.
- USA: Launched Right to Repair framework in 2022 for electronics and vehicles.
- UN SDG Goal 12: Promotes responsible consumption & repair.

## 7. Indian Initiatives

- PMKVY: Short-term repair certifications.
- National Education Policy (NEP) 2020: Emphasizes hands-on learning.
- Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI) & AI Missions: Focus on innovation, but must include repair knowledge.



# Q. With reference to the 'Right to Repair' movement, consider the following statements:

- The European Union mandates that manufacturers must provide access to spare parts and repair documentation.
- 2. India's E-Waste Management Rules, 2022, include mandatory repair clauses for all electronics.
- 3. The National Education Policy 2020 supports repair knowledge as part of vocational education.
- 4. The 'Right to Repair' is included as one of the targets under UN SDG 9 (Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure).

# Which of the above statements is/are correct?

A. 1 and 3 only

B. 2 and 4 only

C. 1, 2, and 3 only

D. 1, 3, and 4 only

connectivity and helps ensure the regular flow of essentials such as food, fuel, and medicine.

roos, tial, and medicine.
For students and patients who
earlier endured long road
journeys over mountainsus
passes, the railway offers comfort.

journeys over mountainess passes, the values of the containt, passes, the values of the containt, passes, the values of the products both the cost and the emotional toll of separation, making it easier for families to stay make the region more attractive to investors and institutions, opening the down for industrial passes, skill development centres, and development centres, and development centres, and baranulas and baranulas, awantiports, and baranulas, the railway becomes a conduit for exchange, as testite bring people to and from the Valley, they also carry stories, memories, and inderentaining, steady social equalities, allowing a steady social equalities, allowing a

steady social equaliers, allowing a common experience to emerge across pregraphies. For many in-fer the common section of the com-paration of the common section of the far beyond that districts, it separa a new window to the rest of the The future now depends on how we build around the hackbone. The completion of the localities of the completion of the followed by careful planning of last sendle influence, station area the completion of the com-traction of the completion of the followed by careful planning of last sendle influence, station area trepressing, sendancement, Local entrepressing, wontern's groups, and artisene must be enabled to the provides of Convernment.

line provides. Covernment agencies and private players must

topother cruste ecosystems around these stations, or they become not just halts, but halts of rural transformation.

This project is a testament to

what democratic development looks like in action – patient, deliberure, and deeply transformational. The tracks may be made of steel, but the promise they carry is one of trust. And that may be the most powerful.

foundation on which to build the future of lammy and Kashmir.

what democratic development

## On the track towards belonging

he completion of the the Odhampur, Srinagar, Baramulla rail link project, or the Jammu-Baramulla line, nearly four decades in the making, marks not only a historic engineering only a historic engineering achievement in one of the most formidable terrains on the planet, but also the quiet radificant of a quiet factoric order to the historic order to the indian state and the people of the indian state and the people of amms and Kashmir. Spanning 272 kilometres through the Fir Panjal and Hundingon ranges, this radivoxy lime is not thus stated and left the state of the

belonging.
Mobility equates to opportunity. The railway line connects places such as Sopore, Anantrag, Gazigund, and Banibal to the national economy. It brings markets closer, education within reach, and jobs within possibility Each train narrows not just physical distance but also psychological gaps. This railway line fosters the sentiment that national integration is not merely about symbolism but practical access, investment, and shared development. In a region long marked by conflict, this railway marked by conflict, this railway little offers a spliciter story "one of shared work, patience, and stoady progress, it won't resolve every issue, but it shifts the conversation towards connection and common purpose. The train carries the immong data Kashmir is not

Audacity and achievement This milestone would not have been possible without the unstaunted spirit of India's railway engineers. From the snow-bound tunisels of Pir Panjal to the vertiginous heights of the Chenabbridge, these professionals and workers toiled through some of the harshest restural conditions imaginable. They worked through deep winters, unpredictable landslides, and security concerns serve the gratitude of a nation. The Indian Railways has a



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More than a feat of engineering.

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adjustment is based on a measure

of global inflation.
This means that the classifica-tion is absolute. Countries are put

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the 19th century, railway engineers built a railway through the treacherous Western Ghats and delivered the Bhor Ghat section that connects Mumb with the Deccan, During the

section that connects Monthal with the thescan. During the Monthal work the the case and the the connecting the Northwest, the Connect the Conne connects lives, aspirations, and identities. It is they who transfer:

stantition. It is they who transform maps into meanings and biseprints into belonging. The symbolism of the Jamms Huramulla line lies not only in what it connects but also in what it overcomes. The project navigated not only geotechnical obstacles and climatic extremitie

Kashmir's northermost railbead with the rest of India's railway grid, it brings unparalleled ngistical advantages for civilian mobility, trade, and even emergency response. The line also reduces dependence on the single Srinagar-Jamosu national highway. which is vulnerable to landslides and closures during winter. In doing so, it enhances the resilience of Kashmir's

# A step forward, but not far enough

There are lacunae in the calculation of welfare cess in the Gig Workers Ordinance

STATE OF PLAY

Mohan Mani

his the Karnataka Platform Mased cial Security and Welfare) Ordinance, 2025, is a step forward, towards basic social security and welfare) ordinance, 2025, is a step forward, towards basic social salient of the welfare ceat. Since the second security of the second security of the security of the second second security of the second security o fee' as ranging from Ps. and Ps. of the payout per transaction to the gig worker. This formulation raises a series of issues. Firet, the range of 1-5% is likely to tend towards the lower bound of 1%. For instance, while the Construction Work-ses Welfare Coss provided for 1-2% coss, across States, the ac-

12% coss, across States, the ac-tual cess collected was 1% of construction cost.

Second, at the lower bound, this is a clear dilution of the provisions of cess under the Secial Security Gode of the Centre. The Code defines cess contra. The Code defines costs at 2% of tremove with a most mum cap of 5% of payment to workers. Plant means that a cost of 1% on turnover is the cost of 1% on turnover is the first of the cost of 1% on turnover is the first of the Karrantas Bill, being the payment from the plat form to the gig worker, is a part of and theesther loss than the turnover of the platform. A cess of 1% on payout is there-fore necessarily less than 1% cass on turnover of the plat-

form and contravenes the So-We could test this care of cess against the financial resubs of Zomato. The company a 'subscription' model. In es-had an Adjusted Revenue of | sence, Namma Yatri does not



E7,790 crore, while the 'deliv-ery and related charges' was E3,900 crore (Annual Report 2024). Therefore, even a 2% cess on payout would barely

cess on payout would barely equal five of company turnover, the minimum provision for platform cess under the Ende. The trend among food delivery platforms is towards diversification into merchandleing and own production. There is every possibility that in such situations, the payout as a ratio to turnover might deline further, with even the cess rate at 2% payout being less than 1% cess on burnover. less than its eess on turnover, from Zomators example, we can calculate that at #5; eess on the payour, the additional cost to be beene by the cus-tomer on a purchase value of 1000 is barely around 50 paise. Surely the customer would not gradge this additional cost for platform, worker. The am-player contribution from Zo-mato at this cess rate would mate at this cess rate would still be less than a third of what ployees' State Insurance and Employees' Provident Fund cover per worker.

There is a further issue related to the ride-hall sector of platform work. With the entry of Namma Yatri in Bengahiru. the operations for the sector for autorickshaws has moved from a 'commission' model to

rides, passing on the entire payment by customers to the driver, Instead, the driver pays a fixed subscription to Namma There are consistent to the particular of the control of the platform to be onboarded with the platform to be onboarded with the platform to be onboarded with the platform the platform to the periode aubscription cost general-to-prove the control of the periode aubscription cost general-to-prove the provided by the provided by the provided by the popular to the introduced by Namura Validions in Bengalaru. The platform to the driver is zero. This Will this mean that platform the platform to the driver is zero. This Will this mean that platform thoused autoriciones drive the platform to be driver to zero. A possible workstraum!

A possible workeround could be that for all platform scription model, the cess pay-ment could be built into the amount. The financial portal for this model of platform work could be designed to transfer the cess amount of each transaction to the Pay-ment and Welfare Fee Verifica

plex and a one-size-fits-all ap-proach will only end in chaes. Com rates will need to be callbrated to fit the average emector, ensuring that some minimum standards of social security can be guaranteed.

Methors Marris, Victoria Politica, National

## How does the World Bank classify countries by income?

The World Bank's income groups are widely used in global data. This article explains how they are defined and updated

#### DATA POINT

hen people talk about hen people talk about countries as 'rich' or 'poor', they can mean many different things. But for re-searchers and pullsymakers, it secretures and pulleymakers, it helps to have a way to compare countries by income using clear criteria. One wisdey used ap-proach is the World Bank's income classification system, which places countries into four groups: low, tower-middle, upper-middle, and

lower middle, upper-middle, and high-income countries.

Twery year, the World Bathi as-signs each country to an interna-tion of the country of the countries.

The countries of the countries of the countries of a country's residents, including income that is earned abroad. Since countries report CMI

Bath converse these fluores into Bank converts these figures into U.S. dollars using exchange rates. It then places countries in one of four income groups based on spec-ific thresholds. Maps 1 and 2 show w countries were classified by ome in 2014 and 2024.

The income thresholds that sep-arate groups were first set in the late 1980s when this classification

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#### Income thresholds





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in excharge rates, or updates to population data. In the long run, most countries

have moved up the income ladder as their economies have grown. However, countries can also move

down - and some have, particularly in periods of war and economic

crisis. Two examples are Syrta and Yemen, which went from low-mid

dle income to low income in 2017. When we hear that there are

When we hear that there are four income groups, we might imagine that the world's popula-tion is evenly divided across them, with around 25% of people living in each. But this lon't the case,

Bertha Robenhold & Besovell and Date comunica Leval and Public Arringado te Dar Activities at Our World to Dans



#### FROM THE ARCHIVES The Mindn

FIFTY YEARS AGO AUGUST 4, 1975

#### NASA invites India to join space shuttle experiment

Abmedabad, Aug. 3: The National Aeronauties and Space Administration (NASA) has invited huda to propose an experiment that could be placed in the space shuttle, scheduled to become operative in 1980. An Indian scientist can accompany the experiment in the space durile also, said Mr. Arould Frutkin, Assistant can accompany the experience in the space shuttle alon, and the Arroll Praishin, Assistant in a street was a lead to Arroll Praishin, Assistant in an interview to a hereal faith there. Mr. Praishin, who played a leading role in instale, statelline instructional Television Experiment was here to work in manufaction on August 7, the sale that project alone of the statelline instructional Television Experiment was the result for project alone of the statelline programme had ended, project alone of the statelline programme had ended, or the space of the statelline programme had ended of NASA after the Apollic programme had ended of NASA after the Apollic programme had ended as the statelline of the Apollic programme had ended as the statelline of the Apollic programme had ended as the statelline of the Apollic programme had ended as the Apollic programme had ended as the statelline and the statelline and the context of the short space shurtle, well past the design stage, would also carry an entire inhomorrory and change the way "you do hunteres in space. It will make as all the context were hound to go shown if the same booster could be used over and over again.

#### A HUNDRED YEARS ADD. AUGUST 4, 1925 New design for five rupee notes

Within the next few months, most probably in Within the next few months, most probably in November, newly designed five-tupes notes will be issued from the Piper Currency Office. These notes are already being stocked in the more are already being stocked in the more are already being stocked in the stocked of the stocke orms morethe back a large number of forgod notes, especially the five-rapes ones, were in

# How does the World Bank classify countries by income?

The World Bank's income groups are widely used in global data. This article explains how they are defined and updated

#### DATA POINT

#### Bertha Robenkohl Pablo Arriagada

hen people talk about countries as 'rich' or 'poor', they can mean many different things. But for researchers and policymakers, it helps to have a way to compare countries by income using clear criteria. One widely used approach is the World Bank's income classification system, which places countries into four groups: low, lower-middle, upper-middle, and high-income countries.

Every year, the World Bank assigns each country to an income group based on its gross national income (GNI) per capita. GNI per capita is a measure of the average income of a country's residents, including income that is earned abroad. Since countries report GNI in their local currencies, the World Bank converts these figures into U.S. dollars using exchange rates. It then places countries in one of four income groups based on specific thresholds. Maps 1 and 2 show how countries were classified by income in 2014 and 2024.

The income thresholds that separate groups were first set in the late 1980s when this classification system was introduced. At that time, these were aligned with the World Bank's policies for lending money to countries. The Bank used average incomes to determine which countries were eligible for concessional loans.

This threshold for receiving such loans became the boundary between low-income and middle-income countries. The Bank then added two more thresholds to allow for further distinctions. These were chosen based on the distribution of country incomes at the time, rather than on lending rules.

Today, the thresholds are no longer linked to the Bank's operations, but they have been updated yearly to account for inflation. This adjustment is based on a measure of global inflation.

This means that the classification is absolute. Countries are put into groups according to predetermined thresholds, and a country's placement depends only on its GNI per capita, not on how it stacks up relative to other countries. The thresholds for the latest income groups are (in U.S. dollars): low income: \$1,135 or less; lower-middle income: \$1,136 to \$4,495; upper-middle income: \$4,496 to \$13,935; high income: More than \$13,935.

If a country's GNI per capita crosses a threshold, it moves into a new income group in the following update. Because GNI per capita changes over time, and thresholds are revised annually, countries can move between income groups over time. These movements may reflect real changes in income, shifts in exchange rates, or updates to population data.

In the long run, most countries have moved up the income ladder as their economies have grown. However, countries can also move down – and some have, particularly in periods of war and economic crisis. Two examples are Syria and Yemen, which went from low-middle income to low income in 2017.

When we hear that there are four income groups, we might imagine that the world's population is evenly divided across them, with around 25% of people living in each. But this isn't the case. Again, these groups are defined based on absolute thresholds, not relative cut-offs that change based on other countries' progress.

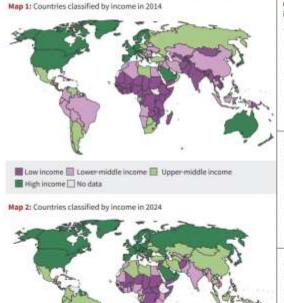
In 2004, 37% of the population lived in low-income countries. Today, that share has fallen to less than 10%. In the same period, the share of upper-middle income countries increased from less than 10% to 35%. You can see this change in Charts 3, 4 and 5.

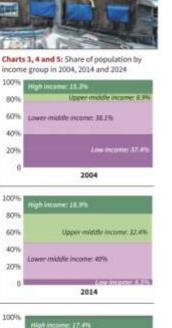
Bertha Robenkohl is Research and Data Economics Lead and Public Arriagada is Data Scientist at Our World in Data

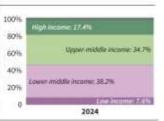
## Income thresholds

The data for the charts were sourced from Our World in Data's story titled "How does the World Bank classify countries by income?"









1. World Bank's Income Classification System

The World Bank annually classifies countries into 4 income groups:

- Low income
- Lower-middle income
- Upper-middle income
- High income

**Basis**: Gross National Income (GNI) per capita (converted into USD using the World Bank's Atlas method).

# 2. Income Thresholds (2024 - USD)

Income Group	GNI per capita (USD)
Low-income	\$1,135 or less
Lower-middle income	\$1,136 to \$4,495
Upper-middle income	\$4,496 to \$13,845
High-income	Above \$13,845

# 3. Adjustments & Revisions

- Thresholds are revised annually to reflect:
  - Global inflation
  - Exchange rate fluctuations
  - · GNI data revisions
  - Population updates
- A country may move between categories if its GNI per capita crosses the threshold.

# 4. Historical Perspective

- Classification system began in late 1980s.
- Aids in:
  - Designing loan policies
  - Monitoring global poverty
  - Targeting aid and concessional loans
  - Debt relief programs

## 5. Global Trends

- Over time, many countries have moved up the income ladder.
- However, some regress due to:
  - War
  - Economic crises
  - Debt burdens
  - E.g., Syria, Yemen regressed from middle-income to low-income.

# 6. Population Distribution by Income Group (% of World Population)

Year	Low Income	Lower-Middle Income	Upper-Middle Income	High Income
2004	37.4%	38.1%	15.3%	9.2%
2014	15.5%	40%	32.4%	18.9%
2024	7.6%	38.2%	34.7%	17.4%

★ Observation: Significant decline in low-income population globally from 37.4% (2004) to 7.6% (2024).

# 7. Key Terms for Prelims

- GNI per capita: Average income earned by a country's citizens (domestically and abroad).
- Atlas Method: A method used by the World Bank to smooth fluctuations in exchange rates over 3
  years for GNI comparisons.
- Income classification: Used to define loan eligibility, development aid, and project focus areas.

# Q. Consider the following statements regarding the World Bank's income classification:

- 1. The classification is based on Gross Domestic Product (GDP) per capita.
- A country is classified as high income if its GNI per capita is more than \$13,845 as per the 2024 threshold.
- The World Bank uses the Purchasing Power Parity (PPP) method to calculate income group classifications.
- 4. The share of the global population in low-income countries has decreased between 2004 and 2024.

# Which of the statements is/are correct?

A. 2 and 4 only

B. 1, 3, and 4 only

C. 2, 3, and 4 only

D. 1 and 2 only

China, Russia start three-day joint naval drills in Sea of Japan



China and Russia began joint naval drifts in the Sea of Japan on Sunday at they cook to reinforce their this and counterbalance who they see as a U.S. fed global order. The "Joint Sea 2013" exercises kicked off in waters near the Russian port of Vladivostok and would

Four Somalis and three Ethiopians among 8 executed by Saudi Arabia



audi Arabia executed eight people in a single day, state media said. arrod a surge in the use of the death penalty in the Gulf monarchy particularly over drug-related correlations. Four Bornalis and three Ethiopians were executed "for smuggling hashes into the country". One Saudi man was executed for the mounter of his mother, we

over crimes against humanity

Prosecution calls Bangladesh former PM the 'nucleus of all crimes' with regard to the violent

Court begins Hasina's trial

#### MONCOW

Fire at Sochi oil depot in Russia put out after Ukrainian drone attack



Wikraintan drone attack caused two oil tanks to catch fire at an oil depot in both in southern Russia but the blazes were later extinguished, local authorities said on Sanday. Busels's air defence units destroyed the Veranian drones overnight, including one over

Volcano in Russia's Far East erupts for the first time in 450 years



volcane erupted for the first time in 450 years in Russia's fa eastern Ramichatka region, the nation's emergency authority said in Sunday, days after one of the attrargest earlyquakes on record hit the region. Plume from the Arasheninnikev volcano, which last

#### Renewed clashes in south Syria kill four

#### Agence France Presse

Renewed secturian clushe in southern Syria's Druge majority Sweida province killed at least four persons on Sunday, a war monitor said, in the first deadly in cident since a conselire las

The prevince witnessed deadly clashes between truze fighters and Sunni hedouins in July that drew the intervention of government forces and tribal debters who came to such fighters who came to sup-port the Bedouins. A ceasefire put an end to the week of bloodshed -

standay commonated the resid of deposed Prime Mi-nitari Sheikh Hashia in al-sentia over crimen against violent suppression of the 2024 student-led protests. The interim govern-ment-appointed Chief Pro-ment-appointed Chief Pro-cipening statement, de-scribed Ms, Hasina as the "madeus of all crimes" and called for the maximum which lifted 1,400 people - but the situation re-mained tense, flaring into violence again on Sunday

penalty.
The prosecution also

Press Trust of India

angladesh's Inter-national Crimes Tritisanal (ICT) on Number commenced the



Tipping point: Last year's student-led protests had toppled Sheith Hadrou's Awarni League povernment on August 5, 2024, APP

named Ms. Hasina's two top aides – former Home Minister — Asaduszaman Khan Kamal and former In-

Chowdhury Abdullash Al Mamun - as the co-ac-cused in the case. The ICT commenced spector General of Police the proceedings against

Ms. Hasina on several charges, with the major one being killings and tor-tures to turne last year's Students Against Discrimi-nation (BAD)-led violent nation (SAD)-led violent afreet campaign that even-tually toppled her Aware League government on Au-gust 5, 2024.
While Ma: Hasina and Mr. Kamal are being tried in absentia, Mr. Martind in custody and has agreed to be the "approver" in the

rifee Palestman eye-witnesses and that shoot-ings occurred on the routes, which are in mil-tary somes accured by la-racli forces. They said they saw soldiers open fire on lungry crowds advancing case.
The prosecution said it would present testimonies from individuals injured during the protests and eyewitnesses to the violence in the coming days.

## At least 33 Gazans killed by Israeli fire while seeking aid

## Associated Press

brueli forces killed at least El Palestinians weeking food on Sunday in Claza, according to hospital offi-cials and witnesses, who cials and witnesses, who a described facing gunfine described facing gunfine around aid attes, as the manutrition-related death null also mee. Two hospi-cials of the second of the real Gasa reported receives leading to the terach-loseling to the terach-point of the second of the power of the second of the power of the second of the visitnesses and that abost-



toward troops.

Meanwhile, far right is-raell minister ttamar Hen-Gvir visited and prayed at

home to the Al-Aqsa Mos-que, the third-holiest site in Islam. During his visit to The area, which just the complete inguity to the complete in t

## At least 54 migrants die as boat sinks off Yemen's coast

#### Besters.

At least 54 migrants died when a host carrying around i50 people sank off Yemen's coast in bad weather on Sunday, with dozens still unaccounted for, health officials said.

The boat capstand off Ahwar district in Yemen's

About district in Vernous conthern Abyan province in the Arabian Sea, securip sources and business. About Ogdir business and one Yement - but desens remained missing. Two medica and rescues to a continuous designations. About October 1988 of the Control of th

ganization for Mignation says Yemen continues to

ular migranta arriving from Africa. Migrants cross the Bab al-Mandab strait that separates Diffeort and Eri-trea from Yemen each year on flimsy boats in the hop

and other Gulf countries in the hope of finding work. Bespite the war that has ravaged vennes since 2014, irregular migration via the impoverished country has continued, in particular from Ethiopia, which itself has been roiled by ethnic conflict.

The IOM describes the route from the Horn of Africa to Yemen as "one of the world's busiest and most perilous mixed migration routes". It said it re corded the arrival of more than 60,000 migrants in Yemen last year.

#### Honouring a perfomer



Artists perform at the street street street, Karandash-test, held in momenty of the farmous layers slown Milikell Remyenises, also honous by his stage name Karandash, at Stantas in the Toer region of Russia on Saturday, Acution.

## Pakistan backs Iran's \_ nuclear programme for peace purposes

## Press Trust of India

peaceful purposes, as the two sides signed several greements to expand coperation in multiple

helds.

Tanian President Masoud Pezenhikar, who arfreed in Islamabad on Saturday met Primo Minister
Schelbag Sharif at his offisheltag Sharif at his offisheltag Sharif at his offipress conference following
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their meeting. Mr. Sharif
emphasisonal that Irat has
the right to the possecution
of nuclear energy.

centre of the organing torcentre of the organing torcentre of the ongoing ten-sions with Israel.

"Pakistan stands with fran for the acquisition of peaceful nuclear power," he said.

Interestingly, Mr. Sha-Interestingly, Mr. Sha-tif's remarka come amid heightened tersions bet-ween tran and the U.S., which has designated Pa-lantan a "major non-NATO ally", over Tehran's nu-clear programme. In June, Israel and the U.S. launched coordinated an electric territories of the modern profilers, for any needed coordinated and the control of the needed coordinated with

pended cooperation with the Insernational Atomic Sinergy Agency (IAEA) fol-

and Company and every meet in the international Australia mean in our great country to take the following actually actually and a separate mean the control of the control

Pakistan and Iran are alming to achieve the target of MO billion

ments and hoped that they would soon be trans formed into agreements He said Pakistan and fras

He said Pakistan and fran are aiming to achieve the target of \$10 billion in an-mal trade.

The two leaders also dis-cussed issues related to tur-rorism and agreed to strengthen cooperation to combat militancy along their shared border. Mr. Pezeshkian, in his

remarks, said that the MoUs signed also included one about finalisation of the free trude agreement at the earliest between the

Pakistan and Iran ex-Pakisian and Iran os-changed 12 agreements and Molle in the presence of Mr. Sharif and Mr. Pe-zeihkian. The agreements and Molls included com-eration in trade, agricul-ture, science, technology and innovation, informa-tion of the presence of the culture of the presence of the culture of the presence of the culture of the presence of the company of the presence of the presenc

Puktieran and tran agreed to increase bilateral trade to \$8 billion annually. taking advantage of their geography and the "dis-count of distance," as count of distance," as Trade Ministers from the two countries held discus-sions to despen economic and political ties. The agreement was reached during a meeting between Commissive Minister Jain Kamal Khun and Iruriun Minister for Industry. Minister for Industry, Mines and Trade Moham-mad Atabak on the side-lines of Ivacian President Masoud Pezeshitan's two-day visit to Pakistan.

## Trump writes to 17 pharma CEOs seeking a cut in drug prices

In a rare and direct move, U.S. President Donald Trump has personally written to 17 top pharmaceuti-cal CROs – including in-dian-American Vasant dian-American Vasant Warasimban, MD and CEO of Novartis — demanding an urgent action to bring down skyrocketing drug prices in the United States. The Intern, signed by the President and dis-located at a White House briefing on Triarday, give companies time until sep-tended in 2022. tember 29, 2028, to commit to offering Americans the same prices they charge in Europe and offuer developed nations. The announcement, delivered

by White House press se-



cretary Karoline Leavitte, marks a significant escala-tion in the administration's

war on what it calls "abu practices." "For too long," Mr. Lesvitte told reporters, "Amer-team have paid more than triple for the same life-saydent Trump says this injus-tice ends now."

Four demands The letter addressed to Dr. Narasimban and his peers includes four binding deincludes four binding de-mands extend global pari-ty pricing to Medicaid, ap-ply fair pricing to rew drugs, redirect overseas profits to American pa-tients, and enable direct consumer purchases at in-ternationally neurit marked prices.

Each letter was tailored

but echoed the same ur-gent measage; the days of global freeloading on American isnovation are over.
"This unacceptable bur-den on hardworking Amer-

Frump wrote, warning companies that if they full to comply, the White House will "deploy every tool in our arrenal. Among the many reci-pients of these letters is No-

plents of these letters is No-vartis GRO Vasant Ngaraim-han. a U.5.-trained physicism who has led the Swim pharmaceutical ginnt since 2018. While Novartis is headquartered in Basel, Switzerland, it derives sub-stantial revenue from U.5. patients and government programmes. programmes.

Human story
Behind the policy is a hu-man surry. During the briefing, Ms. Leavitte read a letter from a mother to Ohio who struggles to af

medicine:
In his letter, Mr. Trump
said the unacceptable burdon on hardworking Amerdon on hardworking Amerdon on hardworking Amersalministration. "Mest proposals the Trump administration has received to repromised more of the
same, shifting blame and
requesting polely changes
that would result in billion
thattry." he said.

ford insulin for her son, even while working two jobs. "This is about peo-ple," she said. "Families are being forced to choose

between rent and medicine."

datry," he said.

"Moving forward, the only thing I will accept from drug manufacturers is a commitment that provides American families.

immediate relief from the wardy inflated drug prices and an end to the free ride of American innovation by European and other deve-loped nations. According-

by Pro valling on Rit Lilly and Company and every manufacturer doing busi-

# Pakistan backs Iran's nuclear programme for peace purposes

Press Trust of India ISLAMABAD

Pakistan on Sunday supported Iran's right to develop nuclear capability for peaceful purposes, as the two sides signed several agreements to expand cooperation in multiple

Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian, who arrived in Islamabad on Saturday met Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif at his official residence. At a joint press conference following their meeting, Mr. Sharif emphasised that Iran has the right to the peaceful use of nuclear energy, which has been at the centre of the ongoing tensions with Israel.

"Pakistan stands with Iran for the acquisition of peaceful nuclear power," he said.

Interestingly, Mr. Sharif's remarks come amid heightened tensions between Iran and the U.S., which has designated Pakistan a "major non-NATO ally", over Tehran's nuclear programme.

in June, Israel and the U.S. launched coordinated air strikes on key franian nuclear facilities. Iran suspended cooperation with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) following the attacks.

During the press conference, Mr. Sharif condemned "Israeli aggression" against Iran and expressed solidarity with Tehran's right to self-defence.

He criticised Israel's actions in Gaza and called upon the international community, particularly Muslim nations, to address the ongoing human rights violations in the region.

Pakistan and Iran are aiming to achieve the target of \$10 billion in annual trade

MoUs and made commitments and hoped that they would soon be transformed into agreements. He said Pakistan and Iran are aiming to achieve the target of \$10 billion in annual trade.

The two leaders also discussed issues related to terrorism and agreed to strengthen cooperation to combat militancy along their shared border.

Mr. Pezeshkian, in his remarks, said that the MoUs signed also included one about finalisation of the free trade agreement at the earliest between the two sides.

Pakistan and Iran exchanged 12 agreements and MoUs in the presence of Mr. Sharif and Mr. Pezeshkian. The agreements and MoUs included cooperation in trade, agriculture, science, technology and innovation, information and communications, culture, art, tourism, climate, and maritime safety.

Pakistan and Iran agreed to increase bilateral trade to \$8 billion annually, taking advantage of their geography and the "discount of distance," as Trade Ministers from the two countries held discussions to deepen economic and political ties. The agreement was reached during a meeting between Commerce Minister Jam Kamal Khan and Iranian Minister for Industry, Mines and Trade Mohammad Atabak on the sidelines of Iranian President Mr. Sharif said the two Masoud Pezeshkian's twosides have signed several day visit to Pakistan.

## 1. Context of Visit

- Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian visited Islamabad, Pakistan.
- Met with Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif.
- Multiple MoUs and agreements were signed to expand bilateral cooperation.

## 2. Key Outcomes of the Visit

- Pakistan:
  - Supported Iran's right to develop nuclear capability for peaceful purposes.
  - Emphasized Iran's right to nuclear energy under the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT).
- Both countries exchanged 12 agreements and MoUs in fields including:
  - Trade
  - Agriculture
  - Science and technology
  - Information & communications
  - Tourism, climate, culture, maritime safety

## 3. Trade Ambitions

- Goal: Achieve \$10 billion in annual trade.
- Current agreement: Increase trade to \$8 billion by leveraging geographical proximity and low logistics costs ("discount of distance").

## 4. Regional Security and Defence

- Condemnation of Israeli aggression in Gaza.
- Pakistan expressed support for Iran's right to self-defence.
- Both agreed to enhance counter-terrorism cooperation, especially along their shared border.

## 5. Geopolitical Context

- Visit comes amid:
  - Heightened Iran–US tensions.
  - US-Israel coordinated airstrikes on Iran's nuclear facilities (June).
  - Iran's suspension of cooperation with IAEA.
- US recently designated Pakistan as a "major non-NATO ally", creating strategic complexity.

Topic	Fact	
NPT (1968)	Iran is a signatory; allows peaceful nuclear use under IAEA supervision	
Iran Nuclear Deal (JCPOA, 2015)	Abandoned by US in 2018; led to rising tensions	
IAEA	Monitors compliance of nuclear programs globally	
Pak-Iran Border	Known for <b>cross-border terrorism</b> , drug smuggling; now targeted for cooperation	
INSTC	Iran is central to the International North-South Transport  Corridor, strategic for India	

# Q. With reference to recent Iran-Pakistan relations, consider the following statements:

- 1. Pakistan supported Iran's right to develop nuclear weapons to counter Israel.
- 2. Iran and Pakistan signed over 10 MoUs to deepen cooperation in trade, science, and maritime safety.
- 3. The bilateral trade goal between Pakistan and Iran is \$20 billion by 2030.
- 4. Iran suspended cooperation with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) following airstrikes.

# Which of the statements is/are correct?

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

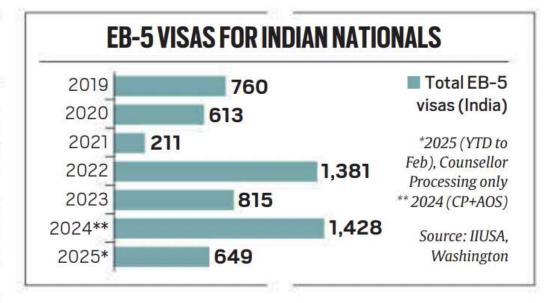
# Amid curbs on H1B and student visas, more Indians are lining up for US investment visas

#### DIVYAA

NEW DELHI, AUGUST 3

"THE TRUMP Card is Coming. Enter your information below to be notified the moment access opens," says the new US government website on the Gold Card, the \$5 million US residency visa programme announced by President Donald Trump in February.

Despite curiosity around the new programme, the launch date and specific details of which are yet to be released, data shows that the existing investmentbased residency programme



EB-5, which the Gold Card will replace, has seen more applications from India over the past one year than ever before.

According to the American

Immigrant Investor Alliance (AIIA), a Washington-based collective of EB-5 investors, demand for EB-5 from Indian citizens has grown sharply since

April 2024, driven by factors such as stricter controls over student and temporary work visas under the Trump regime. Data provided by United States Immigration Fund (USIF), which runs designated EB-5 regional centres in the US, confirms this.

"In the first four months of FY2025 (October 2024-January 2025), Indian applicants filed more than 1,200 I-526E petitions across reserved categories — more than any prior full year," Nicholas Mastroianni III, president and CMO of USIF, told *The Indian Express*, referring to the application forms.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 5

# FROM PAGE ONE Amid curbs, more Indians are lining up for US investment visas

Experts said another factor fuelling EB-5 filings could be a record backlog in other immigration categories, including H1-B and green card. According to estimates, more than 11 million US immigration applications are pending with the authorities. So, EB-5 has become the fastest and most assured route to US permanent residency, they said.

Data accessed by The Indian Express from Washington-based Invest In the USA (IIUSA), an overarching trade association for the EB-5 regional centre programme, show that 1,428 EB-5 visas were issued to Indians in FY2024 (October 2023 to September 2024), as against 815 in the previous year, Between 2014 and 2021, the figures were minuscule, at 96 in 2014, and under 200 EB-5 visas until 2017.

Created by the US Congress in 1992, the EB-5 programme is a pathway to green cards to immigrants who make a minimum investment of \$1,050,000 (Rs 9 crore), or \$800,000 (Rs 6.88 crore) in economically distressed zones called Targeted Employment Areas (TEA), to create jobs for Americans, according to the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services website.

It allows the investor, their spouse and unmarried children under 21, to immigrate to the US. However, changes were brought to the programme in 2022, introducing both flexibility for investors and stronger audit checks on sources of income. Following this, experts said, filings from high net worth Indian citizens looking for US residency increased manifold.

Between October 2024 and March 2025, 649 Indian nationals were issued EB-5 visas via consular processing — a strong indication that a large number of EB-5 VISA AND PROPOSED GOLD CARD — KEY DIFFERENCES

Feature	EB-5 visa	Trump's 'Gold Card' proposal
Minimum Investment	\$800,000 (TEA) or \$1.05M (Non-TEA)	\$5 million (direct payment to government)
Job Creation Requirement	Yes (10 full-time U.S. jobs)	No known requirement
Legal Status	Fully legislated and protected under RIA (until 2027)	Conceptual only, not legislated
Filing Options for Indians in the U.S.	Adjustment of Status + Concurrent Filing	Unknown
Availability	Open now	Not introduced as law yet

Indian filings from the financial year 2022–2023 have matured, Mastrojanni said.

The path is also becoming popular in the adjustment of status category, among those already in the US on non-immigrant status. "Students and individuals on H-1B visas currently represent the primary group seeking lawful means to remain in the US with the ability

to work," said Sukanya Raman, country head, Davies & Associates, LLC, an immigration law firm.

"Indian nationals currently in the US on non-immigrant status such as H-1B or student visa and who file under the new provisions benefit from automatic issuance of work and travel permits within 3-6 months from the time of filing I-526E petition typically which remain valid until their EB-5 green card is approved," said Raman.

The number of student visas issued by the US government have dropped by 15% globally to 89,000 in the first half of fiscal year 2025 (October-March) with India reporting a massive fall of 43.5% in fresh visas compared to the same period in 2024, according to the US Department of State

data. The numbers are likely to fall further in the second half of fiscal 2025 due to a nearly month-long pause in new visa appointments over May and June, While China remains top

user of EB-5 visas, followed by Vietnam and India, IIUSA data also shows that most Indian filings come through the Indian consulate in Mumbai, showing that high net worth individuals from the financial capital and the region have been using this route to get US residency. Out of the total 638 unreserved consular processing (for those based in India, as opposed to adjustment of status, meant for those already living in the US) applicants between October 2024 and May 2025, 543 filed through the US consulate in Mumbai.

According to Ravneit Kaur Brar, Attorney-at-law in California who deals with immigration issues, the data is always compiled with China and India as two data points because of very high volume coming out of these two countries, in almost every category. China accounts for 51% of worldwide filings. India remains the second-largest market, contributing a total of 1,341 1-526/E filings between FY2022 and July 5, 2024, with 1,057 of them filed under the Reserved EB-5 categories, Brar said

"India shows a positive trend in approval rates over the years. India's approval rate rose from 59% in FY2022 to 82% in FY2024," she said.

The processing time from petition filing to visa issuance varies from the kind of projects being opted for by the applicant. While rural area projects take approximately 8-24 months; High-Unemployment Area Projects take 12-30 months.

Mastroianni said that con-

trary to assumptions, there has been a surge in demand for EB-5 after the announcement of the Gold Card programme. "We are witnessing one of the most promising surges in EB-5 interest from Indian families in recent history. The uncertainty surrounding future visa programmes like the proposed Gold Card, combined with heightened scrutiny of traditional student and work visa routes, has pushed many investors to act now - not later. What's changed is not just demand, but decisiveness," he said.

"With the spectre of visa retrogression looming and the current ability to file concurrently from within the US, families are prioritising stability, permanence, and long-term security, EB-5 is no longer seen as an alternative — it's become the preferred strategy," Mastroianni said.



# EB-5 VISA AND PROPOSED GOLD CARD — KEY DIFFERENCES

Feature	EB-5 visa	Trump's 'Gold Card' proposal
Minimum Investment	\$800,000 (TEA) or \$1.05M (Non-TEA)	\$5 million (direct payment to government)
<b>Job Creation Requirement</b>	Yes (10 full-time U.S. jobs)	No known requirement
Legal Status	Fully legislated and protected under RIA (until 2027)	Conceptual only, not legislated
Filing Options for Indians in the U.S.	Adjustment of Status + Concurrent Filing	Unknown
Availability	Open now	Not introduced as law yet

# 1. Context: Surge in Indian Applications for EB-5 Visa

- EB-5 is a US investment-based residency visa program introduced in 1992.
- Allows green card eligibility to foreign nationals who invest \$800,000-\$1.05 million and create at least 10 full-time US jobs.
- It has become increasingly popular among Indians due to:
  - Stricter H-1B and student visa rules
  - Backlog in other immigration categories
  - Introduction of Trump's proposed 'Gold Card' policy

# 2. Key EB-5 Visa Data for Indian Nationals

Year	EB-5 Visas Issued
2019	760
2020	613
2021	211
2022	1,381
2023	815
2024 (CP+AOS)**	1,428
2025 (YTD till Feb)*	649

<sup>\*</sup> FY2025: October 2024 – February 2025 (Consular only)

<sup>\*\*</sup> CP+AOS: Consular Processing + Adjustment of Status

# 3. Reasons Behind Surge

- Faster and more assured path to US permanent residency compared to H-1B.
- Increased scrutiny and curbs under Trump administration on H-1B and F-1 (student) visas.
- 82% approval rate for Indian EB-5 petitions in FY2024 (up from 59% in FY2022).
- Indian consulate in Mumbai filed the highest number of EB-5 cases.

# 4. Trump's Proposed 'Gold Card'

Feature	EB-5 Visa	Trump's Gold Card
Minimum Investment	\$800,000-\$1.05M	\$5 million
Job Creation Requirement	Yes (10 US jobs)	No clear requirement
Legal Status	Legislated (until 2027)	Conceptual
Filing	Concurrent filing allowed	Not available yet
Availability	Open now	Not launched

# Q. Consider the following statements regarding the EB-5 Visa Program:

- EB-5 Visa requires a minimum investment of \$800,000 in Targeted Employment Areas and the creation of at least 10 full-time jobs in the U.S.
- 2. Trump's proposed Gold Card program requires a higher investment but has not yet been legally introduced.
- 3. India was the top country of EB-5 visa applicants in FY2024.
- 4. The EB-5 visa does not allow dependents to immigrate with the investor.

## Which of the above statements is/are correct?

A. 1 and 2 only

B. 1, 2, and 3 only

C. 2 and 4 only

D. 1, 2, and 4 only

#### STATE EDUCATION RETHINK

# Reservation, 3rd language Hindi: Maharashtra govt rolls back 7 key decisions in six months

'Adjustments' based on feedback: Minister; experts blame lack of consultation

#### **PALLAVISMART**

MUMBAI, AUGUST 3

FROM QUOTAS based on income and caste to Hindi as third language; caste on exam hall tickets to sweet dish in school meals; and even blank pages in textbooks to reduce the weight of school bags.

These are some of the seven key decisions taken in the edu-



Maharashtra School Education Minister Dada Bhuse

cation sector by the BJP-led state government in Maharashtra that were rolled back over the past six months, triggering criticism from experts that they were implemented "without thought" or "adequate consultation".

Six of these decisions were rolled back following a backlash from stakeholders, including the parents of students — for instance, the centralised uniform policy drew criticism for poor quality and delayed availability. In one case, the rollback came after the Bombay High Court granted interim relief to minority trust-run junior colleges that were asked to

implement social reservation.

Of these rollbacks, six came under the School Education Ministry currently headed by Dada Bhuse who took over last December from Deepak Kesarkar (August 2022 to November 2024) — both belong to Shiv Sena led by Eknath Shinde. The other key U-turn involved 10% EWS (Economically Weaker Section) quota in private

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

# THE SEVEN DECISIONS

Policy decision	Announced	Withdrawn reversed
10% EWS quota in Pvt Medical Colleges	Jul 23, 2025	Jul 30, 2025
Hindi as mandatory third language in primary classes	Apr 16, 2025	Jun 29, 2025
Reservation in minority- trust-run colleges for FYJC admissions	Came to light in Jun 2025 first week	Jun 23, 2025
Caste on HSC Hall Ticket	Issued on Jan 11, 2025	Jan 18, 2025
Sweet Dish in midday meal	Jun 11, 2024	Jan 28, 2025
One state one uniform	May 2023	Apr 2, 2025
Blank pages in textbooks	Mar 8, 2023	Jan 28, 2025

# The Seven Rolled-Back Policy Decisions

#	Policy Decision	Announced	Withdrawn
1	10% EWS quota in Pvt Medical Colleges	Jul 23, 2025	Jul 30, 2025
2	Hindi as 3rd language mandatory	Apr 16, 2025	Jun 29, 2025
3	Reservation in minority-run colleges (FYJC)	Jun 2025	Jun 23, 2025
4	Caste on HSC Hall Ticket	Jan 11, 2025	Jan 18, 2025
5	Sweet dish in mid-day meal	Jun 11, 2024	Jan 28, 2025
6	One state, one uniform	Apr 2, 2023	Apr 2, 2025
7	Blank pages in textbooks	Mar 8, 2023	Jan 28, 2025

## 2. Reasons for Reversals

- Lack of stakeholder consultation (parents, schools, civil society).
- Legal interventions (e.g., Bombay HC relief to minority colleges).
- Poor quality and late availability of government-supplied uniforms.
- Implementation hurdles for EWS quota and mid-day meal additions.

## 3. Criticism

- Experts and opposition allege the decisions were:
  - "Unthoughtful"
  - Driven by haste
  - Made without pilot testing or consultations
- Claimed to reflect populist governance rather than evidence-based policymaking.

#### KREMLIN WANTS TO CONTROL INFORMATION AVAILABLE ONLINE AND ALSO WHERE AND HOW INTERNET TRAFFIC FLOWS, SAY ANALYSTS

# In bid to control Internet, Russia launches MAX, state-sanctioned messaging app

#### **PAUL SONNE**

BERLIN, AUGUST 3

RUSSIA IS escalating its efforts to curtail online freedom, taking new steps toward a draconian state-controlled internet.

The authorities are cracking down on workarounds that Russians have been using for access to foreign apps and banned content, including through new laws signed by President Vladimir Putin this week. Moscow has also been impeding the function of services from U.S. tech companies, like YouTube, that Russians have used for years. At the same time, the Kremlin

is building out a domestic ecosystem of easily monitored and censored Russian alternatives to Western tech products. That includes a new state-sanctioned messaging service, MAX, which will come preinstalled by law on all new smartphones sold in Russia starting in September.

The idea, experts say, is to migrate more Russians from an open internet dominated by the products of Western tech giants to a censored online ecosystem, where Russians primarily use software under the gaze and influence of the state. The effort has advanced significantly amid wartime repression, but it is unclear how far it will go. "The goal here is absolute control," said Anastasiia Kruope, a researcher at Human Rights Watch who wrote a recent report on declining Russian internet freedoms.

The Kremlin wants to control not only the information available online but also where and how internet traffic flows, Kruope said, so the Russian internet can function in isolation and be switched on and off at will, Russia's technical capabilities for clamping down are improving, she added.

"They are not perfect," Kruope said. "They are not nearly at the level they would like them to be. But they are getting better,



Since the first decade of Vladimir Putin's rule, Moscow had been articulating a vision for a 'sovereign' internet. Reuters and this is the reason to start paying attention."

Unlike China, where users have been restricted since the dawn of the internet, Russia long boasted one of the most open and freewheeling environments anywhere online. Operating with virtually no barriers, millions of Russians flocked to Western tech platforms, posted critical news and freely expressed their thoughts on the web.

The Kremlin began to see that freedom as a threat, particularly after the rise of the opposition activist Aleksei A Navalny, who died in prison last year. His exposés of the Putin elite, initially publicized in Live lournal blog posts and later

in popular YouTube videos, gave him millions of followers online and the power to mobilize mass protests on the street,

Since the first decade of Putin's rule, Moscow had been articulating a vision for what it called a "sovereign" internet that would sever Russia as much as possible from the rest of the online world and strip power from foreign tech firms, which didn't always give in to the Kremlin's demands.

But Putin's full-scale invasion of Ukraine in 2022 gave the government the opportunity to accelerate the plan. Moscow banned Facebook, Instagram and Twitter outright and took steps that caused TikToktodisable functions

in Russia, Lawmakers passed draconian laws stifling free expression in the streets and online.

Now, with the introduction of MAX, authorities have signaled they may take aim at foreign messaging apps, in particular WhatsApp, which is owned by Meta and counts nearly 100 million monthly users in Russia. Telegram could be a target as well.

At an economic forum in June, MP Anton Gorelkin also called Telegram, based in the United Arab Emirates and owned by the Russian-born internet entrepreneur Pavel Durov, "an entity that worries the state." But he said previously that the app would not be banned. NYT

enanor indianevorose com

# 1. Background

- Russia has launched MAX, a state-sanctioned messaging app.
- Will come pre-installed on all new smartphones in Russia starting September.
- Part of a broader plan for a "sovereign internet", allowing government control over digital traffic, information access, and content flow.

# 2. Strategic Objectives

- Absolute control over:
  - Information availability
  - Internet traffic flow
  - Online platforms used by citizens
- Alternative to Western tech (e.g., YouTube, WhatsApp, Instagram)
- Promote a domestic ecosystem that isolates Russian users from foreign digital influence.

## 3. Context & Justification

- Triggered by:
  - Russia's long-standing desire for a sovereign internet
  - Full-scale invasion of Ukraine (2022), which accelerated digital control measures
- Censorship laws expanded, stifling freedom of expression online and offline
- Opposition figures like Alexei Navalny used foreign platforms to mobilize supporters, viewed as a threat by the Kremlin

# 4. Impact on Existing Apps

- WhatsApp and Telegram could face future restrictions
  - WhatsApp: Over 100 million Russian users
  - Telegram: Though Russian-origin, based in UAE, seen as a threat
- Russia already banned Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and limited TikTok

# Q. With reference to the recent launch of the MAX messaging app in Russia, consider the following statements:

- 1. The app will be optional for Russian smartphone users from September 2024.
- 2. Russia seeks to build a "sovereign internet" to reduce reliance on Western digital platforms.
- Telegram is exempt from Russian scrutiny as it is a Russian-origin app currently based in the US.
- 4. The MAX app is part of a broader attempt to control both information access and internet traffic flow.

## Which of the statements is/are correct?

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

# Word of the day

# Hirsute:

having or covered with hair

Synonym: hairy

Usage: His body was broad, hirsute, and covered with scars.

Pronunciation: newsth.live/hirsutepro

International Phonetic

Alphabet: /hə:'sju:t/, /hə:'su:t/

