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“Sleep is the best
meditation.”
— *Dalai Lama*



The State has argued that there was a strong presumption of constitutionality against laws passed by the legislature.

"Courts should be slow in passing interim orders in matters challenging constitutionality of provisions and against the strong presumption of constitutionality. The High Court passed an interim order directing stay of operation of provisions which take away power of appointment of the Chief Justice from the hands of the Chancellor and vest the same in the government," the State petition submitted.

Modi hails 35 million diaspora as India's pride

Sixth generation Indian-origin citizens of Trinidad and Tobago will receive the OCI card soon, says PM

PM refers to close cultural link between Girmitiya community in the Caribbean nation and India

He hails the country for being the first to adopt India's UPI system in the Caribbean

Kallol Bhattacharjee
NEW DELHI

Thirty-five million members of the Indian diaspora spread across the world are India's "pride", said Prime Minister Narendra Modi at an event of the people of Indian origin in Trinidad and Tobago on Friday. Addressing the event, Mr. Modi outlined various cultural, educational and financial measures that India is undertaking to strengthen links between the homeland and the diasporic Indians and announced that sixth generation Indian-origin citizens of Trinidad and Tobago will receive the Overseas Citizens of India (OCI) card soon.

"We deeply value the strength and support of our diaspora. With over 35 million people spread across the world, the In-

dian diaspora is our pride. As I have often said, each one of you is a *Rashtradoot* – an ambassador of India's values, culture and heritage," said Mr. Modi, highlighting the religious connection of the community with India and the Maha Kumbh that took place in Prayagraj earlier this year.

Mr. Modi said the Government of India was working to strengthen ties with the Girmitiyas – the former indentured labourers who were taken from India during the colonial period to Indo-Pacific islands such as Mauritius, Fiji, southern Africa and the Caribbeans.

'Mapping the past'

The Prime Minister referred to the close cultural connection between the strong Girmitiya community of Trinidad and Tobago and India, especially with Bihar, which is recognised



Warm welcome: Prime Minister Narendra Modi is welcomed by the Indian diaspora at the airport in Port of Spain on Thursday. Trinidad and Tobago Prime Minister Kamla Persad-Bissessar is also seen. DPR PMO

– along with eastern Uttar Pradesh – as the homeland of much of the Bhojpuri-speaking members of the

Indian diaspora in the Caribbeans, southern Africa and in the Pacific islands of Fiji and Indian Ocean is-

lands like Mauritius. Mr. Modi announced that the Government of India was "mapping the past" and

reiterated that a number of initiatives were launched during the Pravasi Bharatiya Divas to "honour and connect with the Girmitiya community across the world".

"We are actively working on creating a comprehensive database of the Girmitiya community. Documenting the villages and cities in India from which their ancestors migrated, identifying the places where they have settled, studying and preserving the legacy of the Girmitiya ancestors, and working to organise World Girmitiya Conferences regularly," said Mr. Modi, documenting the various works being undertaken to connect India with the diaspora. He congratulated Trinidad and Tobago for being the first country in the Caribbean to adopt India's UPI (Unified Payments Interface) system that would

help in transfer of finance between the two sides.

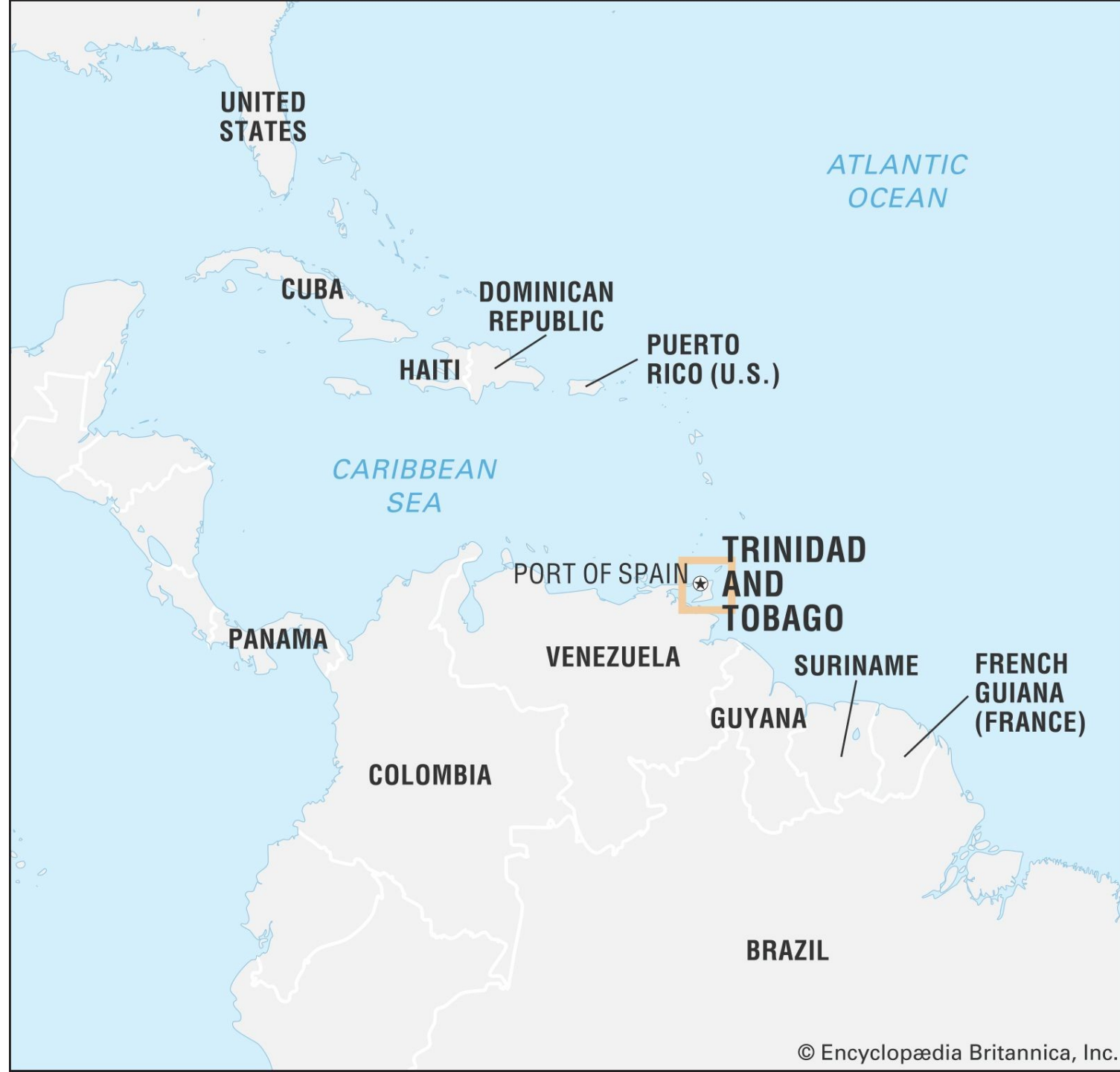
Sixth generation Indian-origin citizens of Trinidad and Tobago will receive the Overseas Citizens of India (OCI) card, the Prime Minister said at the public event in capital Port of Spain. The announcement is the first such outreach by India to the Caribbean nation which is marking the 180th anniversary of the arrival of the Girmitiyas – in 2025.

"Today, I am happy to announce that OCI cards will now be given to the sixth generation of the Indian diaspora in Trinidad and Tobago. You are not just connected by blood or surname. You are connected by belonging," said Mr. Modi. "India embraces" the people of Trinidad and Tobago whose ancestors were brought from India during the colonial era, he said.

- PM Narendra Modi addressed Indian-origin people in **Trinidad and Tobago**.
 - Announced that **6th generation Indian-origin citizens** of Trinidad and Tobago will be eligible for the **Overseas Citizen of India (OCI) Card**.
 - This marks India's first high-level outreach to the Caribbean region in 2025.
-

2. Historical Facts

- **Girmitiya Community:**
 - Descendants of Indian indentured laborers taken to colonies during the British Raj.
 - The term "Girmitiya" comes from the word 'Agreement' under which these laborers were sent.
 - Large-scale migration happened to:
 - **Trinidad and Tobago, Mauritius, Fiji, South Africa, Caribbean islands, Indian Ocean islands like Réunion.**
 - Majority of these laborers were from **Bihar** and **Eastern Uttar Pradesh**.
- The **180th Anniversary** of Indian arrival in Trinidad & Tobago is being observed in 2025.



Tobago

Charlotteville
Plymouth
Canaan
Scarborough

**TRINIDAD
and TOBAGO**

HILLS - MTS.

Caribbean
Sea

Atlantic
Ocean



- **Indian Prime Minister's Visit:** Prime Minister Narendra Modi visited Trinidad and Tobago on July 4, 2025, and held discussions with Prime Minister Kamla Persad-Bissessar, leading to the signing of six agreements to boost cooperation in infrastructure and pharmaceuticals. Modi stated that Trinidad and Tobago will be a priority nation for India.
- **OCI Cards for Indian Diaspora:** Modi announced that the sixth generation of Indian-origin citizens in Trinidad and Tobago will be eligible for Overseas Citizen of India (OCI) cards.
- **UPI Adoption:** Trinidad and Tobago became the first Caribbean nation to adopt India's Unified Payments Interface (UPI).
- **Current Prime Minister:** Kamla Persad-Bissessar was sworn in as Prime Minister on May 1, 2025, following the 2025 general election.

- Strengthening **India-Caribbean Relations**.
- Promotion of **soft power** through cultural diplomacy.
- Trinidad & Tobago is the **first Caribbean nation** to adopt **India's UPI (Unified Payments Interface)** system, aiding digital financial cooperation.
- Creation of a **Girmitiya community database** to document:
 - Migration history.
 - Settlement patterns.
 - Contribution of the diaspora.
- Enhancing India's global image and influence through its diaspora.

7. India's Global Diaspora at a Glance (Data for Prelims/Mains)

Aspect	Data/Facts	
Global Diaspora	35 million people of Indian origin globally	
Largest Diaspora	UAE, USA, Saudi Arabia, Malaysia, UK	
Caribbean Diaspora	Trinidad & Tobago, Mauritius, Fiji	
Economic Impact	Top source of remittances (\$100+ billion)	

- **Consider the following statements regarding India's diaspora and its global outreach:**
- The Girmitiya community refers to indentured laborers of Indian origin who were primarily settled in the Caribbean, Pacific Islands, and South Africa.
- Trinidad and Tobago is the first Caribbean country to adopt India's Unified Payments Interface (UPI) system.
- The term "Girmitiya" originated from a treaty signed between India and the British colonies.
- **Which of the above statements is/are correct?**
- A) 1 and 2 only
- B) 2 and 3 only
- C) 1 and 3 only
- D) 1, 2 and 3

Nipah virus resurfaces in Kerala, two new cases reported

Abdul Latheef Naha
MALAPPURAM

Nipah virus has returned to Kerala, sparking fresh fear in the State. An 18-year-old girl who succumbed to acute encephalitis syndrome (AES) in Kozhikode two days ago and a 38-year-old woman from Thachanattukara in Palakkad district currently undergoing treatment at a private hospital at Perinthalmanna in Malappuram district have tested positive for the virus.

The National Institute of Virology (NIV), Pune, on Friday confirmed Nipah infection in the 38-year-old woman. The scare has resurfaced in the State two months after the previous case.

A 42-year-old woman from Valanchery in Malappuram district tested positive and was admitted to a

private hospital at Perinthalmanna in the first week of May. She is still recovering.

Following the 18-year-old girl's death, a post-mortem examination was conducted at the Government Medical College Hospital, Kozhikode.

Staff quarantined

As her test result came positive for the Nipah virus, the doctors and the health-care personnel who treated her as well as those who conducted her post-mortem examination have been quarantined.

A total of 345 people have been put on the Nipah contact list in the State, Health Minister Vee-na George said in a statement after a high-level meeting on Friday. They include 211 people in Malappuram, 91 in Palakkad, and 43 in Kozhikode.



The latest Nipah case has surfaced in Kerala two months after a 42-year-old woman in Malappuram tested positive. FILE PHOTO/PTI

The Health department had initiated all control measures in Palakkad even before the official confirmation of the disease came.

The route map of the Nipah-positive person in Palakkad has now been released and Palakkad, Malappuram and Kozhikode districts have been put on alert.

They have begun tracing the contacts of the virus-infected persons and started implementing quarantine and surveillance measures.

Earlier, the Health Minister said Nipah protocols have been implemented in the State even before receiving final confirmation from NIV, Pune. As part of the protocol, 26 commit-

tees were formed across Malappuram, Kozhikode and Palakkad districts to coordinate measures and prevent the spread of the virus.

Guidelines issued

She said the help of the police was also sought to trace the contacts. There will be helplines at State and district levels and containment zones at the district level. District Collectors of Palakkad, Malappuram and Kozhikode will follow up the measures to be adopted to prevent the spread of the virus, she said.

Meanwhile, experts cautioned people that roosting bats should not be disturbed by bursting crackers or by any other means. The department directed the affected districts to strengthen contact tracing by focusing around hospi-

tals and other health-care institutions and to ensure that none are missed when preparing the contact lists.

Both patients in Malappuram and Palakkad began showing symptoms from June 25 and 26. Health workers will start collecting local field information from the three weeks preceding this period.

Efforts will be to find if there have been any pneumonia or encephalitis deaths in the localities.

The Health department has established State and district control rooms in connection with the Nipah outbreaks.

The Collectors have declared containment zones in Palakkad and Malappuram. People here should necessarily wear masks in public places.

(With inputs from Thiruvananthapuram bureau)

1. Recent Developments

- Two new Nipah virus cases reported in Kerala:
 - An 18-year-old girl from Kozhikode succumbed to **Acute Encephalitis Syndrome (AES)**.
 - A 38-year-old woman from **Palakkad** is undergoing treatment after testing positive.
 - A 42-year-old woman from Malappuram had earlier tested positive in May 2025.
 - **National Institute of Virology (NIV), Pune** confirmed the latest infections.
-

2. Health Response & Containment Measures

- Total **345 people** identified as contacts:
 - 211 in Malappuram
 - 91 in Palakkad
 - 43 in Kozhikode
- Healthcare staff who treated infected persons and conducted postmortems have been quarantined.
- **Control rooms** established at State and district levels.
- **Containment zones** declared in Malappuram and Palakkad.
- Route map of infected individuals released for contact tracing.
- Advisory issued to avoid disturbing **roosting bats**, the natural reservoir of the virus.

3. Historical & Scientific Background

- Nipah virus first identified in **1998-99** during an outbreak in **Malaysia**.
 - India experienced outbreaks in **West Bengal (2001, 2007)** and **Kerala (2018, 2021, 2023, 2025)**.
 - Transmitted by:
 - Fruit bats (Pteropus genus) - **primary reservoir**
 - Human-to-human via close contact
 - Contaminated food or surfaces
-

4. Geographical Significance

- Kerala's tropical climate and **dense bat populations** make it vulnerable.
- High population density in Malappuram, Kozhikode, Palakkad increases risk of community spread.

Aspect	Details
Virus Type	Zoonotic virus, RNA virus of Henipavirus genus
Fatality Rate	High (can exceed 70% in some outbreaks)
Treatment	No specific cure; only supportive care available
WHO Classification	Listed as a Priority Disease requiring urgent research
Related SDG Targets	SDG 3 (Good Health & Well-being)

- **Consider the following statements regarding the Nipah virus outbreak in Kerala:**
- Fruit bats are the natural reservoir of the Nipah virus.
- The National Institute of Virology (NIV), Pune is the nodal agency for confirmation of Nipah cases in India.
- Nipah virus can only be transmitted through consumption of contaminated food and cannot spread via human-to-human contact.
- **Which of the above statements is/are correct?**
- A) 1 and 2 only
- B) 2 and 3 only
- C) 1 and 3 only
- D) 1, 2 and 3

BERLIN

Germany considering buying U.S. air defence systems for Ukraine



Germany was exploring the possibility of purchasing more Patriot air defence systems from the U.S. for Ukraine, a government spokesman said on Friday. Media reports previously stated that German Chancellor Friedrich Merz had raised the issue in a telephone call with U.S. President Donald Trump on Thursday. **AP**

KARACHI

Seven dead, eight injured after building collapses in Pakistan



A multi-storey residential building collapsed in Pakistan's port city of Karachi on Friday, killing at least seven persons and wounding eight others. The five-storey building — built in 1974 — was on the lot of dilapidated buildings in the old area of Karachi. Officials say most people are feared to be trapped under the debris. **AP**

LONDON

Jeremy Corbyn, former Labour leader, in talks to start new party



Former leader of Britain's Labour Party, Jeremy Corbyn, announced he was in talks to start a new political party because Keir Starmer's government had "refused to deliver the change" voters expected. He was expelled from the party over how complaints about anti-semitism were handled under his leadership. **REUTERS**

LOS ANGELES

Michael Madsen, *Reservoir Dogs* and *Kill Bill* actor, dies at 67



U.S. actor Michael Madsen — best known for his frequent collaborations with director Quentin Tarantino including *Reservoir Dogs* and *Kill Bill* — died on Thursday at age 67 after suffering cardiac arrest, his management team said. The actor was found unresponsive early on Thursday at his home in Malibu. **AP**

Kyiv struck by Russia's largest aerial assault since the start of Ukraine war

Moscow launches 550 drones and 11 missiles, injuring 23 people and inflicting severe damage across multiple districts of the capital in a seven-hour onslaught; Trump holds telephone conversation with Putin but no progress in terms of ceasefire

Associated Press
KYIV

Waves of drone and missile attacks targeted Kyiv overnight into Friday in the largest aerial assault since Russia's invasion of Ukraine began more than three years ago, officials said, amid a renewed Russian push to capture more of its neighbour's land. The barrage injured at least 23 people and inflicted severe damage across multiple districts of the capital in a seven-hour onslaught. Bombs lit up the night sky and echoed across the city as air raid sirens wailed. "It was a harsh, sleepless night," Ukraine President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said. Russia launched 550



Witnesses said the blasts lit up the night sky and echoed across the Ukrainian capital as air raid sirens wailed. Ukraine officials and the Russian Defence Ministry said another prisoner swap took place on Friday, though neither side said how many soldiers were involved. Mr. Zelenskyy said most of the Ukrainians had been in Russian captivity since 2022. The Ukrainian soldiers were classified as "wounded and seriously ill."

When asked if he made any progress during his call with Mr. Putin on a deal to end the fighting in Ukraine, Mr. Trump said: "No, I didn't make any progress with him today at all." "I'm very disappointed with the conversation I had today with President Putin because I don't think he's there. I don't think he's looking to stop the fighting, and that's too bad," Mr. Trump said.

Mr. Trump said he would call Mr. Zelenskyy on Friday. Ukrainian officials and the Russian Defence Ministry said another prisoner swap took place on Friday, though neither side said how many soldiers were involved. Mr. Zelenskyy said most of the Ukrainians had been in Russian captivity since 2022. The Ukrainian soldiers were classified as "wounded and seriously ill."

China imposes anti-dumping duties on European brandy

Associated Press
BEIJING

China on Friday imposed anti-dumping duties on European brandy, most notably cognac produced in France, as trade tensions between Beijing and United States allies continue to rise. The tariffs, effective on Saturday, will range from 27.7% to 34.9%, China's Commerce Ministry said. They are to be in place for five years and will not be applied retroactively. The announcement came during a European visit by Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi aimed at ironing out trade differences. Mr. Wang was set to visit Paris after stops in Brussels and Berlin. The anti-dumping du-

The tariffs will range from 27.7% to 34.9% and will be in place for five years and not applied retroactively.

ties are the result of a probe China launched last year into European cognac, after the European Union undertook a probe into Chinese electric vehicle subsidies. Besides cognac, China also launched probes into European pork and dairy products. The brandy probe was the first and targeted mainly French makers of cognac and similar spirits such as Armagnac. Mr. Wang was set to meet his French counterpart, Jean-Noël Barrot, later Friday in Paris.

Warm dogs



Dogs wear sweaters to keep warm at a park during winter in Buenos Aires. A polar air mass has brought below-zero temperatures to Argentina, Chile and Uruguay, causing 15 deaths and forcing governments to restrict gas supplies and activate emergency shelters. **AP**

'More than 600 killings near aid sites, humanitarian convoys in Gaza'

Associated Press
DEIR AL-BALAH

The UN human rights office says it has recorded 613 killings in Gaza near humanitarian convoys and as Palestinians try to reach aid at distribution points run by an Israeli-backed American organisation since it first began operations in late May. Spokeswoman Ravina Shamdasani said the rights office was not able to attribute responsibility for the killings. But she said "it is clear that the Israeli military has shelled and shot at Palestinians trying to reach the distribution points" operated by the Gaza Humanitarian Foundation. Ms. Shamdasani said that of the total tallied, 509 killings were "GHP-related," meaning at or near its

distribution sites. Information keeps coming in," she added. "This is ongoing and it is unacceptable." Ms. Shamdasani originally told the UN briefing that the killings were recorded both at GHP sites and near humanitarian convoys. She later clarified that the killings in the vicinity of GHP distribution points were "at or near their distribution sites." The count from the rights office, which used a strict methodology to verify such figures, was based in part on information from Palestinians who receive dead bodies, she said. Meanwhile, Israeli air strikes killed 15 Palestinians in Gaza early on Friday, while a hospital said another 20 people died in shootings while waiting for



Targeted approach: The UN says it has recorded 509 killings near the Israeli-backed U.S.-run Gaza Humanitarian Foundation. At least three Palestinians were killed near aid sites in Rafah, which is close to two operated by GHP. Another 17 were killed waiting for trucks to pass by in eastern Khan Younis in the Talyha area. Of the 15 Palestinians killed in Friday's strikes, eight were women and one was a child, the hospital said. The strikes hit the Nazwa area, where many displaced Palestinians are sheltering in tents. Israel's military said it was looking into the reported strikes. Israel's military also said a soldier was killed in combat in the north of Gaza

and it was investigating. Over 860 Israeli soldiers have been killed since the war began, including more than 400 during the fighting in Gaza. The recent killings took place as efforts to halt the 21-month war appeared to be moving forward. Hamas holds talks Hamas said on Friday that it was holding discussions with leaders of other Palestinian factions to discuss a ceasefire proposal presented to it by Egyptian and Qatari mediators. Mr. Trump said on Tuesday that Israel had agreed on terms for a 60-day ceasefire in Gaza and urged Hamas to accept the deal before conditions worsen. Hamas will give its final response to mediators after the discussions have

concluded, the statement said. The Health Ministry in Gaza said the number of Palestinians killed in the territory has passed 57,000. The ministry says more than half of the dead are women and children. The war began when Hamas-led militants attacked southern Israel, killing 1,200 people and taking roughly 250 hostages. According to Palestinian witnesses and Gaza's Health Ministry, several hundred people have been killed or wounded by Israeli troops when trying to reach the aid sites since they opened in May. The military has repeatedly said it's fired only warning shots, denies deliberately firing at civilians, and says it's looking into reports of civilian harm.

Pakistan Army says it killed '30 militants' at Afghanistan border

Associated Press
ISLAMABAD

Pakistan's Army said on Friday it had killed 30 militants attempting to cross the border from Afghanistan over the last three days, after a suicide attack killed 16 soldiers in the same region. The militants belonged to the Pakistan Taliban or its affiliated groups, the military said in a statement accusing India of backing them. "The security forces demonstrated exceptional professionalism, vigilance preparedness, and prevented a potential catastrophe," a large quantity of weapons, ammunition and explosives was also recovered," the statement added. The killings took place in the border district of North Waziristan, where last week a faction of the Pakistan Taliban claimed a suicide blast on the military. Islamabad has routinely blamed its western neighbour Afghanistan for allowing militant groups to operate on its soil, but in recent months it has also ramped up efforts to halt the diaspora to its east for backing the groups.

Both neighbours deny any involvement. Nuclear-armed India and Pakistan in May traded the worst violence in decades during a four-day conflict that killed 70 people on both sides. It was triggered by New Delhi's accusation that Islamabad supported gunmen killing 26 people on April 22, the worst attack on civilians in the contested Kashmir region in years. Islamabad has denied any involvement. Since their independence from British rule, India and Pakistan have frequently fought over Kashmir, a divided region claimed in full by both sides. Pakistan's Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Friday lauded the security forces for "detering an infiltration attempt." We are determined to completely eliminate all forms of terrorism from the country," his office said. The Prime Minister's statement also accused New Delhi of fomenting militancy in Pakistan. Violence has surged in Pakistan's border regions since the Taliban's 2021 return to power and last year was the deadliest in a decade.



The Pakistan Taliban, a separate group from the Afghan Taliban, is active around the northwest border with Afghanistan. **AP**

Russia becomes first nation to recognise Taliban regime

Associated Press

MOSCOW

Russia on Thursday became the first country to formally recognise the Taliban's government in Afghanistan since it seized power in 2021, after Moscow removed the group from its list of outlawed organisations.

The Russian Foreign Ministry announced that it had received credentials from Afghanistan's newly appointed Ambassador Gul Hassan Hassan. The official recognition of the Afghan government will foster "productive bilateral cooperation," the Ministry said in a statement.

Afghanistan's Foreign Ministry called it a historic step, and quoted Taliban Foreign Minister Amir



Signs of legitimacy: An official stands near the flag of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan at the Afghan embassy in Moscow. AFP

Khan Muttaqi as welcoming the decision as "a good example for other countries."

Chinese nod

Meanwhile, China said on Friday it welcomed Russia's decision.

"As a traditional friendly neighbour of Afghanistan,

the Chinese side has always believed that Afghanistan should not be excluded from the international community," foreign ministry spokeswoman Mao Ning said.

China does not officially recognise the government but hosts a Taliban Ambassador in Beijing.

1. Recent Development

- Russia formally recognised the Taliban-led government in Afghanistan.
 - Removed the Taliban from its list of outlawed organisations (since 2021 Taliban takeover).
 - Russia received official credentials from Afghanistan's newly appointed Ambassador **Gul Hassan Hassan**.
 - Russia aims to promote **productive bilateral cooperation** with Afghanistan.
-


2. Historical Context

- The Taliban first ruled Afghanistan from **1996 to 2001**, imposing strict Islamic rule.
- The US-led invasion in 2001 ousted the Taliban.
- Taliban regained power in **August 2021**, after the withdrawal of US troops.
- Global recognition has remained a contentious issue since the Taliban's return.

3. Geopolitical Significance

- Russia becomes the **first country** to formally recognise the Taliban regime.
 - Russia maintains strategic interests in **Central Asia**, Afghanistan's stability directly impacts its security.
 - China welcomed Russia's move but **has not officially recognised** the Taliban.
 - China, however, hosts a Taliban Ambassador in **Beijing**, signalling diplomatic engagement.
 - Russia's move is likely to influence neighbouring countries like Iran, Pakistan, and Central Asian republics.
-

4. Economic & Strategic Implications

- Afghanistan holds significant **mineral resources**, estimated at \$1-3 trillion, including lithium, rare earths, etc.
- Recognition may open avenues for:
 - Trade and investment
 - Energy cooperation
 - Counterterrorism collaboration (to contain  S-K)

5. India's Perspective

India has not recognised the Taliban regime.

India maintains a **humanitarian and security-centric engagement**.

Strategic concerns include:

- Rise of extremist groups impacting Kashmir security.
- Influence of Pakistan in Afghanistan.
- Protection of Indian investments and infrastructure projects in Afghanistan.

- **Consider the following statements regarding recent developments in Afghanistan:**
- Russia is the first country to formally recognise the Taliban-led government after its 2021 takeover.
- China has granted formal recognition to the Taliban regime and established full diplomatic relations.
- India has completely ceased all humanitarian assistance to Afghanistan following the Taliban's return.
- **Which of the above statements is/are correct?**
- A) 1 only
B) 1 and 3 only
C) 2 and 3 only
D) 1, 2 and 3

US' 1% tax on remittance to have limited impact on India

SIDDHARTH UPASANI

NEW DELHI, JULY 4

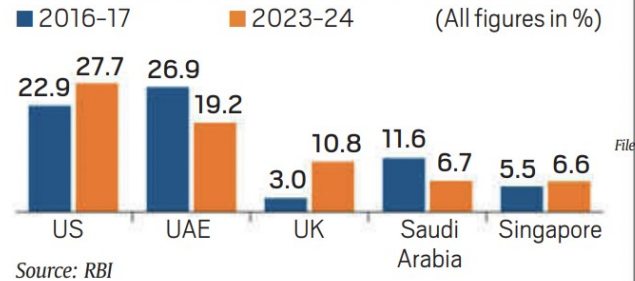
SENDING MONEY back home for Indians and other expatriates working in the US will possibly get a little more expensive after American lawmakers in the Senate on Tuesday and the House of Representatives on Thursday narrowly passed President Donald Trump's 'big, beautiful' spending bill containing a proposal to impose a new 1 per cent tax on remittances.

The 1 per cent tax on remittances in the One Big Beautiful Bill Act (OBBBA) will come into effect from January 1, 2026. Originally proposed as a 5 per cent tax on non-commercial overseas money transfers, the rate was cut to 3.5 per cent and finally to 1 per cent.

Crucially, the version passed by the Senate made some important exclusions which can soothe the pain. For one, the tax only applies to remittances sent using cash, money orders, cashier's checks, or where the sender provides "any other similar physical instrument" to service providers. This means, the tax — which will only apply to transfers of more than \$15 — will not be levied on transfers made through bank accounts or US-issued debit and credit cards. The tax will also not apply if the sender can prove US citizenship.

According to Gaura Sen Gupta, Chief Economist at IDFC

RISING SHARE OF US IN INDIA'S REMITTANCES



FIRST Bank, the impact of the tax on money sent to India is likely to be distributional in 2025-26, with remittances "frontloaded and more concentrated" in the first three quarters of the fiscal given that the tax will only come into effect in January 2026. "But the fact that it's a much lower rate than what was proposed earlier means the impact should be limited," Sen Gupta added. Meanwhile, US-based non-profit Center for Global Development estimates India stands to lose slightly less than \$500 million in formal remittances due to the US imposing the tax, only second to Mexico, which faces a hit of more than \$1.5 billion.

India's record remittances

A tax on remittances can be a big headache for India given that it is the top recipient country. According to the latest data released by the Reserve Bank of

India (RBI) last week, personal transfers from abroad in 2024-25 were up 16 per cent from the previous year at \$124.31 billion on a net basis. In gross terms, they were up 14 per cent at \$132.07 billion.

Of course, not all of India's remittances come from the US. However, it is the biggest source, accounting for 27.7 per cent of remittances India received in 2023-24, as per the RBI's latest remittances survey. Given that the gross personal transfers in 2023-24 stood at \$115.55 billion, India got roughly \$32 billion from the US that year.

What is worth noting here is not so much the amount of remittances from the US but the fact that a larger and larger share of the money India gets from abroad is coming from the US. Back in 2016-17, the US' share of remittances into India was 22.9 per cent.

FULL REPORT ON

www.indianexpress.com

1. Recent Development

- The US Senate and House passed the **One Big Beautiful Bill Act (OBBBA)** introducing a 1% tax on certain remittances.
 - Effective from **January 1, 2026**.
 - Originally proposed as 5%, reduced to 1%.
-

2. Applicability of Tax

- Applies to remittances using:
 - Cash
 - Money orders
 - Cashier's checks
 - Similar physical instruments

- Applies only to transfers over **\$15**.
 - Does **not** apply to:
 - Bank account transfers
 - US-issued debit/credit card transactions
 - If sender proves US citizenship
-

3. Economic Significance for India

- India is the **largest recipient** of global remittances.
- US is the **biggest source** of remittances for India:
 - 27.7% share in 2023-24 (up from 22.9% in 2016-17).
- Total personal transfers to India (2023-24):
 - Gross: \$115.5 billion
 - Net remittances from US: Approx. **\$32 billion**

4. Estimated Impact

- Centre for Global Development: India could lose under **\$500 million** due to this tax.
 - Mexico likely to lose **\$1.5 billion**, highest globally.
 - Majority of remittances likely unaffected due to exemptions (bank transfers, card payments).
 - Most impact will be in cash-based remittance channels.
-

5. Broader Context


- US remittance tax seen as part of measures to boost domestic revenue.
- India's growing share of remittances from the US reflects:
 - Rising Indian diaspora in the US
 - Economic success of NRIs



Consider the following statements regarding recent developments in remittance flows to India:

1. The United States currently accounts for over one-fourth of India's total remittance inflows.
2. The recently passed US remittance tax applies to all forms of remittances irrespective of the transaction method.
3. Remittance flows from the United Arab Emirates to India have increased significantly in the last decade.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

- A) 1 only
 - B) 1 and 2 only
 - C) 1 and 3 only
 - D) 1, 2 and 3
- 

Delhi's fuel ban for old vehicles: What does the law say?

SOPHIYA MATHEW
NEW DELHI, JULY 4

TWO DAYS after fuel pumps in Delhi began refusing petrol and diesel to vehicles older than their mandated lives, the state Environment Minister urged the air quality watchdog for the National Capital Region (NCR) to pause the implementation of the policy, citing "operational and infrastructural challenges".

The directive from the Commission for Air Quality Management (CAQM), intended to force end-of-life vehicles (ELVs), a major source of vehicular pollution, off the roads, is grounded in long-standing court orders and strong environmental concerns.

What is Delhi's 'fuel ban' for old vehicles?

As of July 1, diesel vehicles older than 10 years and petrol vehicles older than 15 years cannot legally get fuel in Delhi's fuel stations.

In April, the CAQM directed a phased denial of fuel to ELVs at fuel stations in the NCR — in Delhi from July 1, in high-density NCR districts from November 1, and in the rest of the NCR from April 1, 2026.

Delhi has installed Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) cameras at 498 fuel stations — 382 petrol/diesel and 116 CNG filling stations — and three inter-state bus terminuses (ISBTs) to scan vehicle number plates and check them against the VAHAN database, India's national vehicle registry, in real time.

An audio alert plays when the scan detects an ELV at the fuel pump. The overage vehicle is denied fuel, and may be impounded and sent for scrapping unless valid exemptions or required documents are presented.

Teams comprising personnel from the Delhi government's Transport Department, Delhi Traffic Police, and civic bodies have been put together to enforce the CAQM directive.

However, enforcement has been slack. On July 1, 80 vehicles were seized, but this number fell to seven on July 2. No vehicles were impounded on Thursday and Friday.

What is the reason for the Delhi government's lack of enthusiasm?

In a letter written to the CAQM on Thursday, Delhi Environment Minister Manjinder Singh Sirsa said "immediate implementation" of the directive "may be pre-

maturing and potentially counterproductive".

There were problems with the ANPR-based enforcement system, including "technological glitches, camera placement, sensors not working, [and] speakers not functioning", Sirsa said. Also, "the system is unable to identify EOL (end-of-life) vehicles where there are issues related to HSRPs (the new high-security registration plates)".

The lack of integration with the vehicle data of NCR states may encourage "vehicle owners procuring fuel from adjacent districts...thereby circumventing the ban", Sirsa said. These "technological inconsistencies" were leading to "public discontent and outcry", the Minister said.

How many vehicles are affected by the watchdog's directive?

According to the VAHAN database, there are nearly 62 lakh ELVs in Delhi — 41 lakh two-wheelers, 18 lakh four-wheelers, and the rest comprising goods carriers and commercial vehicles. The NCR districts in Haryana account for 27.5 lakh ELVs, those in

Uttar Pradesh for 12.4 lakh, and those in Rajasthan for 6.1 lakh.

What is the problem with older vehicles, if owners keep them in good condition?

Authorities argue that pre-BS-VI (Bharat Stage VI) vehicles are disproportionately responsible for vehicular emissions. BS-IV vehicles, for instance, emit 4.5 to 5.5 times more particulate matter than BS-VI vehicles. BS-VI emission norms were mandated from April 1, 2020 onward.

Transport emissions account for 28% of PM_{2.5}, 41% of sulphur dioxide (SO₂), and 78% of nitrogen oxide (NO_x) emissions in the NCR, according to official estimates. According to the CAQM, the transport sector's contribution to air pollution in Delhi "needs no emphasis".

Although legal mandates have existed since 2015, officials say enforcement was delayed due to the absence of necessary technological infrastructure.

"The liquidation of such (overage) vehicles can only be done by adopting strict steps

like denying fuel. These measures will help improve air quality," Dr Virender Sharma, Member-Technical at CAQM, has said.

What is the legal mandate for the CAQM's fuel ban?

In 2015, the National Green Tribunal (NGT) directed: "All diesel vehicles (heavy or light) which are more than 10 years old will not be permitted on the roads of Delhi NCR."

Also, "Petrol vehicles which are more than 15 years old and diesel vehicles that are more than 10 years old shall not be registered in the NCR, Delhi," the NGT said.

The NGT's directive was upheld and reinforced by the Supreme Court in 2018. It said that vehicles violating the order should be impounded.

Last year, Delhi framed guidelines under the Motor Vehicles Act and the Registered Vehicle Scrapping Facilities (RVSF) Rules. Most recently, the Environment Protection (End-of-Life Vehicles) Rules, 2025, effective April 1, made scrapping mandatory within 180 days of the expiry of the vehicle's registration.

Age caps are not a new idea. The Motor Vehicles Act, 1988, says the registration cer-

tificate for any motor vehicle other than a transport vehicle "shall...be valid only for a period of fifteen years from the date of issue and shall be renewable".

The Central Motor Vehicles Rules, 1999, say after the "period of validity entered in the certificate of registration" expires, the vehicle "shall not be deemed to be validly registered".

Can measures such as these resolve Delhi's bad air problem?

No single strategy is sufficient, experts have said. The solution lies in coordinated planning and action on multiple fronts, involving a wide range of stakeholders.

On Thursday, the prominent environment policy think tank Centre for Science and Environment (CSE) said placing an age cap is "not a scalable strategy for the entire country". It pointed out that "grossly polluting vehicles can also fall under different or newer age brackets due to inherent technical problems and lack of maintenance".

CSE has pushed for the "improvement of fuel and emission standards", a "stringent Pollution-under-Control regime", and a "massive augmentation of public transport".

**EXPLAINED
ENVIRONMENT**

1. Recent Development

- From **July 1, 2024**, petrol and diesel stations in **Delhi** stopped providing fuel to vehicles older than their **mandated life**.
- Ban applies to:
 - **Diesel vehicles older than 10 years**
 - **Petrol vehicles older than 15 years**
- NCR Phase-wise implementation:
 - High-density NCR districts: From **Nov 1, 2024**
 - Entire NCR: From **April 1, 2026**

2. Background & Legal Framework

- Ban issued by **Commission for Air Quality Management (CAQM)**.
 - Based on long-standing court orders:
 - **National Green Tribunal (NGT) 2015:** Prohibited ELVs (End-of-Life Vehicles) on Delhi NCR roads.
 - **Supreme Court 2018:** Upheld NGT order, allowed vehicle impounding.
 - **Motor Vehicles Act, 1988 & Central Motor Vehicle Rules, 1999:**
 - Registration validity: 15 years for private vehicles, renewable subject to conditions.
-

3. Environmental Rationale

- Older vehicles, especially pre-**BS-VI** (Bharat Stage VI) models:
 - Emit significantly more pollutants:
 - PM2.5
 - Sulphur Dioxide (SO₂)
 - Nitrogen Oxides (NO_x)
 - **BS-VI norms** mandatory from April 1, 2020.
- Transport sector contributes:
 - **28% of PM2.5, 41% SO₂, 78% NO_x** emissions in Delhi NCR.

4. Implementation Challenges

- Technical issues with **Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR)** cameras:
 - Non-functional sensors
 - Speaker malfunctions
 - Inability to detect High-Security Registration Plate (HSRP) issues
 - Lack of NCR-wide data integration encourages circumvention.
 - Enforcement inconsistent due to logistical challenges.
 - Political and public opposition citing inconvenience.
-

5. Scale of the Problem

- Approximate ELVs (End-of-Life Vehicles) affected:
 - **Delhi:** 62 lakh (41 lakh two-wheelers, 18 lakh four-wheelers)
 - **Haryana NCR:** 27.5 lakh
 - **UP NCR:** 12.4 lakh
 - **Rajasthan NCR:** 6.1 lakh
-

6. Can it Solve Delhi's Air Pollution Problem?


- Experts: No single measure is sufficient.
- Recommendations:
 - Comprehensive public transport augmentation
 - Stricter emission standards
 - Better Pollution Under Control (PUC) enforcement
 - Integrated urban planning



Consider the following statements regarding Delhi's Fuel Ban for Old Vehicles:

1. The ban on providing fuel applies to petrol vehicles older than 10 years.
2. The Commission for Air Quality Management (CAQM) is responsible for implementing the fuel ban.
3. Transport sector emissions account for less than 10% of Delhi NCR's PM2.5 pollution.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

- A) 2 only
 - B) 1 and 2 only
 - C) 2 and 3 only
 - D) 1, 2 and 3
- 

HAM RADIO

A licensed radio service used for personal, recreational, and emergency communication, including in space

ANJALI MARAR

BENGALURU, JULY 4

INDIAN ASTRONAUT Shubhanshu Shukla, currently aboard the International Space Station (ISS), interacted with students using a ham radio on Friday. The event was organised by U R Rao Satellite Centre (URSC), which is the Indian Space Research Organisation's (ISRO's) centre in Bangalore for the design, development, and construction of Indian satellites.

What is a ham radio?

Ham radio, also known as amateur radio, is a licensed radio service that relies on radio waves for personal, recreational, and emergency communication. Using a dedicated frequency, a transceiver and an antenna, the service can be set up between two licensed ham radios by trained ham operators.

The communication can be hyper-local, global, and in space. In India, any individual above the age of 12 is permitted to operate a ham radio. The Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology issues licences for ham radio.

The term "ham" was initially used as a pejorative by landline telegraphers in the early 20th Century to describe an operator "who lacks ability" or who had poor or "ham-fisted" skills. With the advent of radio, professional radio operators began to use the term to describe amateur radio operators who would jam operations in an area.

Subsequently, the amateur radio community began to call itself ham, with the term losing its pejorative connotations by the mid-20th Century.

How is ham radio used in space?

Crew members on NASA's space shuttle Columbia first used an amateur radio to communicate with Earth in 1983.

In October 2000, amateur radio equipment was launched to the ISS along



Amateur radio equipment, Seattle, 1957. *Wikimedia Commons*

with its first crew members. Known as the Amateur Radio on the International Space Station (ARISS), the space station's ham radio is used by astronauts to not only make calls around the world but also to interact with students.

"It [the interaction] provides the opportunity for educators and ham operators to encourage and inspire their students with STEM topics culminating in a real-time conversation with astronauts living and working on the space station," NASA astronaut Kjell Lindgren had said in 2023.

Typically, there is a nine-minute window to make contact with the ISS while it revolves around the planet.

Why use ham radio?

Even though technology to establish communications has advanced, the radio service remains one of the most reliable and stable modes of communication.

It has often come to the rescue when traditional communication lines have broken down, either due to man-made scenarios (like wars) or natural disasters such as earthquakes, cyclones, and floods.

In India, ham radio was used for making emergency communications during the Bhuj earthquake (2001), the Indian Ocean tsunami (2004), the floods of Uttarakhand (2013), and other such calamities.

1. Definition

- Also known as **Amateur Radio**.
 - Licensed radio service using **radio waves** for:
 - Personal communication
 - Recreational use
 - Emergency communication
 - Space communication
-

2. Key Features

- Uses **dedicated frequency**, transceiver, and antenna.
 - Operated between **licensed ham operators**.
 - Communications possible at:
 - Local level
 - Global level
 - Space level
-

3. HAM Radio in India

- Regulated by **Ministry of Electronics & Information Technology**.
 - Any individual aged **12 years and above** can apply for a license.
-

4. Historical Background

- Term "ham" originated in early 20th century as a **pejorative term** by professional telegraph operators.
 - Amateur radio community eventually adopted the term positively.
-

5. HAM Radio in Space

- First used by **NASA's Space Shuttle Columbia** in 1983.
 - Since 2000, **Amateur Radio on the International Space Station (ARISS)** operational:
 - Enables astronauts to communicate globally.
 - Facilitates interaction with students for STEM education.
 - Typical 9-minute window to connect with ISS as it orbits Earth.
-

6. Use in Emergency Situations

- HAM Radio is vital when conventional communication fails, e.g.:
 - **Wars**
 - **Natural Disasters:**
 - Bhuj Earthquake (2001)
 - Indian Ocean Tsunami (2004)
 - Uttarakhand Floods (2013)

Consider the following statements regarding HAM Radio:

1. It is an unlicensed radio service primarily meant for recreational communication.
2. In India, individuals below the age of 18 cannot operate HAM Radio even with a valid license.
3. HAM Radio has been used from the International Space Station for communication and educational outreach.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

- A) 1 and 2 only
- B) 3 only
- C) 2 and 3 only
- D) 1, 2 and 3

How astronauts feast on ISS

While having a meal in space is not a piece of cake, astronauts enjoy fairly appetising and nutritious packaged food. With missions becoming longer, scientists are now trying to grow food in space itself

AMITABH SINHA
NEW DELHI, JULY 4

INDIAN ASTRONAUT Shubhanshu Shukla has been in space for more than a week, and would have had several meals during this period. On Friday, Shukla said he had shared the food he carried to the International Space Station (ISS) — *gajar ka halwa*, *moong dal ka halwa* and *aamras* — with other astronauts onboard.

Having a meal in space is not a piece of cake. It requires planning and organisation. But this does not mean that astronauts eat frugally or depend only on liquid diets. The food is also far from being bland or unappetising.

In fact, on the ISS, the permanent space laboratory where Shukla is currently staying, astronauts often enjoy elaborate meals. It is just that they eat packaged food, which is stored and prepared a little differently.

How astronauts eat in space

Due to zero-gravity conditions, food items, like everything else in space, tend to float around. This necessitates a level of organisation not required on Earth.

The spacecraft's safety could be compromised if small crumbs or loose pieces get stuck in some of its critical parts. These can also enter the mouths or nostrils of astronauts, leading to choking or creating breathing problems. As a result, food items are carefully chosen and properly packaged.

The act of eating itself, that is, food travelling inside the body's digestive tract, is not a problem. While gravity might help this process on Earth, it is not a necessity. Put simply, only management of food is an issue in space.

Astronauts consume packaged and processed food items, which are usually in dehydrated form. They inject hot water through a needle into the packages before eating the dishes. Shukla's *gajar ka halwa* and *moong dal ka halwa* — prepared and packed by the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) and the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) — would also have been in this form.

Beverages such as tea, coffee or juices, and Shukla's *aamras*, are usually in powder form, which can be mixed with water before consumption. There is provision for heating the food on the ISS.

Astronauts on the space station usually have their breakfast and dinner together.



(Left to right) Astronauts Tibor Kapu, Shubhanshu Shukla and Peggy Whitson enjoying a meal aboard the ISS. [Instagram/@astro_peggy](#)

DEALING WITH BODY WASTE IN SPACE

While eating on the ISS is relatively easy, urinating and defecating is not. The lack of gravity becomes a big hurdle here.

■ In space, astronauts urinate into a specially-designed hose with a suction system. This hose, suited both for male and female anatomies, pulls the urine away from the astronaut's body and deposits it into specialised vessels. The stored urine is then purified and recycled aboard the ISS to create drinking water for astronauts. This is a must because liquids both consume space and take up weight — as such it is not viable to send enormous amounts of water required to sustain astronauts in space. Water must be used judiciously, and recycled wherever possible.

■ To defecate, astronauts sit on customised toilets which too are equipped with suction systems. These systems begin working the moment the toilet seat is lifted — this helps eliminate odour. Astronauts need to strap themselves firmly to the toilet seat to ensure they do not drift away while defecating. Faecal matter is directed to waste containers. All solid waste, including toilet paper, wipes and gloves, are loaded onto cargo spacecraft returning to Earth. Most of it is released when the spacecraft is entering the Earth's atmosphere: here it gets burnt due to friction. Occasionally, some samples are sent to laboratories on Earth to check on the health of the astronauts.

Before eating, they secure themselves with footholds to restrict movement. Every astronaut has a food tray with some utensils, including spoons and forks. The cutlery and food packets are fastened to the tray with velcro. Astronauts are advised to snip open only a small part of the package, and dip their spoons inside to pick the food out.

Seasonings such as salt and pepper are available, but they are typically dissolved in water which can be added to the food

through droppers.

After their meals, waste such as food packets is deposited in waste chambers, while cutlery is cleaned with wipes. Utensils cannot be washed with water.

A variety of food choices are available, and astronauts can select their menu or favourite cuisine months ahead of their travel. Once they have made their selection, nutritionists also weigh in with their recommendations to ensure astronauts meet the dietary re-

quirements in space. For instance, astronauts need more calcium, and less sodium and vitamin D to keep their bones healthy.

Such food arrangements for astronauts are relatively new. Early space travellers had to make do mostly with food paste, packaged in toothpaste-like tubes or bite-sized cubes. When confined to a spacecraft, like during the journey to the ISS, these forms of food are still useful due to space and storage constraints.

Why grow food in space

Despite technical advancements in packaging, storing, and preparing food items, scientists are now actively working on ideas for growing food in space. This is because, in recent years, astronauts have begun spending a lot more time in space.

For example, those going to the ISS typically spend a few months at a time. Due to this, all their food requirements are not transported on the same spacecraft that carries them. Cargo missions to the ISS fly at regular intervals, carrying food, apart from other requirements such as maintenance gear and scientific equipment.

Also, various space agencies and private companies are now planning even longer stays in space, including the possibility of creating a permanent settlement on the Moon. There are also plans to travel much further distances than ever before in space — on such missions, it might not be economical to supply food from Earth.

Space-grown plants, for example, can provide a sustainable food source for such missions. Scientists are currently studying different aspects of growing food in space, and exploring various methods to do so. For instance, they are examining the effects of microgravity on the growth of plants.

They are also making attempts to use LED lights to induce photosynthesis. Researchers are developing soilless systems in which plants can be grown in space, and selecting crops most suited to grow in these conditions.

Potatoes, soybean, wheat, spinach, tomatoes, and carrots are some crops that have shown promise for space cultivation.

ISRO is carrying out multiple experiments related to this subject during Shukla's stay at the ISS. At least six different varieties of crop seeds will be grown and studied. There is a separate experiment on the growth of microalgae as well. Besides food, these microalgae can be used as potential fuel or even used in life support systems.

Eating in space is complex due to **zero-gravity**.

Despite challenges, astronauts on the ISS enjoy **elaborate, nutritious meals**, mostly packaged food.

Scientists are working to **grow food in space** to reduce dependency on Earth supplies for long-duration missions.

2. How Astronauts Eat in Space

- **Zero Gravity Impact:**
 - Food items float, need careful storage and handling.
 - Small crumbs can damage equipment or enter airways.
- **Meal Preparation:**
 - Mostly ready-to-eat packaged food.
 - Heated in ovens or eaten as-is.
 - Requires less elaborate cooking compared to Earth.
- **Typical Diet:**
 - Breakfast and dinner usually together.
 - Meals stored carefully; utensils secured to avoid floating.

3. Nutritional Requirements in Space

- Increased calcium intake to maintain bone health.
 - Reduced sodium to control blood pressure.
 - Vitamin D essential due to lack of sunlight exposure.
-

4. Growing Food in Space

- **Rationale:**
 - Long-duration missions demand self-sufficiency.
 - Reduces need for frequent cargo supplies.
- **Examples of Space-grown Food:**
 - Lettuce, wheat, spinach, radishes grown on ISS.
- Research supported by space agencies like NASA, ISRO, ESA.

5. Dealing with Body Waste in Space

- Urination through **vacuum suction system**, liquid recycled as drinking water.
 - Defecation managed through **customised suction toilets**, waste stored for disposal on Earth or incineration.
 - Strict hygiene and recycling protocols followed.
-

6. Space Missions and Food Logistics

- For missions like to the **Moon or Mars**, food production onboard is critical.
 - Growing food in space reduces dependency on Earth.
 - Space farming experiments already underway.
-

Consider the following statements regarding food and water management on the International Space Station (ISS):

1. All food consumed by astronauts on the ISS is grown in space itself.
2. Recycled water obtained from astronaut urine is used as drinking water.
3. Scientific research is ongoing to grow vegetables like lettuce and spinach in space.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

- A) 1 and 2 only
- B) 2 and 3 only
- C) 1 and 3 only
- D) 1, 2 and 3



"A day on Venus is longer than a year
on Venus."

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A blurred background image showing a group of people in a meeting or conference, with several hands raised in the air, suggesting applause or agreement. The image is out of focus, emphasizing the collective action over individual faces.

Thank you
guys.
