

Daily Current Affairs





5
The Hindu



1
PIB, PRS & Other newspaper



2
The Indian Express



0
Jansatta



1
Financial Express

The background features decorative curved lines in light blue and green, positioned in the top right and bottom left corners. The text is centered in a bold, black, sans-serif font.

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 Class24

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Centre's investment body flagged Nicobar port as lacking in 'strategic goals'

EXCLUSIVE

Jacob Koshy
NEW DELHI

The Public Investment Board (PIB), a Finance Ministry body that appraises large public investments, had on August 2024 termed the proposed International Container Transshipment Port (ICTP) at Galathea Bay in Great Nicobar Island as lacking in "strategic objectives".

Following the August meeting, it had advised the Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways (MoPSW) to include a strategic case in its proposal. A little over a year later, the same project was formally notified as a "strategic project" by the Ministry of Defence, according to records of a March 2026 meeting viewed by *The Hindu*.

The "strategic" nature of the proposed ₹81,000-crore Great Nicobar Project, which consists of the ICTP, a township, airport, a gas-powered power plant, and a tourism zone, has been the Centre's excuse, since at least 2022, for not making public the contents of a report by a High Powered Committee (HPC) on the cumulative environmental impact of the project.

It has also denied Right To Information requests on environmental clearances for the project on the same grounds.

The PIB's view surfaces in records of meetings held on March 17 and 19, 2026, by another Finance Ministry body – the Public-Private Partnership Appraisal Committee (PPPAC) – tasked with vetting project proposals worth ₹500 crore and above involving a partnership with private players.

The Hindu has viewed

The Nicobar question

The "strategic" nature of the project has been the Centre's excuse for not making public the contents of a report by a High Powered Committee on the environmental impact of the project.

The Public Investment Board, a Finance Ministry body, termed the port-component of the Nicobar project as "lacking strategic objectives" in August 2024.

A year later, the Ministry of Defence labels it as a "strategic project".



In the last year or so, the ₹81,000-crore project is being cast in a maritime security lens, centred around the threat from China.

the PPPAC meeting records and reached out to the Finance Ministry for comment, but has not received one till press time.

The proposal, sponsored by the MoPSW with the Kamarajar Port Limited (KPL) in Chennai as the implementing agency, sought PPPAC clearance to build the port in two phases and, crucially, approval for ₹12,230 crore as Viability Gap Funding (VGF) to make the commercially marginal project bankable.

VGF is a one-time grant given to support infrastructure projects that are economically justified but fall short of commercial (financial) viability.

Shift in narrative

The PPPAC cleared the proposal "unanimously" though it refused the VGF, recommending instead that the MoPSW use its internal budget for the same.

Earlier this week, Congress MP Jairam Ramesh wrote to Environment Minister Bhupender Yadav that "...the narrative on the Great Nicobar Island Project has suddenly shifted... faced with incontrovertible evidence of its hugely adverse ecological impacts, the Union Government is now emphasizing its supposed strategic rationale."

He added that "...the Great Nicobar Island Project as presently conceived is overwhelmingly a com-

mercial enterprise".

"Until the environment clearance [accorded in November 2022] there was no real reference by the Government of it being a strategic project... and even then it was only the airport [with civilian and military use]," researcher and author Pankaj Sekhsaria, who has extensively documented the project's environmental threat, told *The Hindu*.

The ICTP is a significant component of the much bigger Great Nicobar Island Development Project and is a Ministry of Home Affairs initiative, with the Andaman and Nicobar Islands Integrated Development Corporation Limited (ANIDCO) as the proponent of the overall project and holder of environmental clearance.

The 2021 documents that conceived the Great Nicobar programme and the January 2023 Expression of Interest for the port described it as a means of capturing transshipment cargo currently routed through Colombo, Singapore, and Port Klang, with the government estimating annual foreign exchange savings of about \$200 million, cumulatively reaching around \$1 billion by 2047.

In the last year or so, the project has volubly been cast in a maritime security lens, centred around the threat from China.

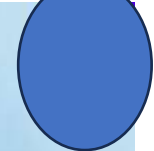
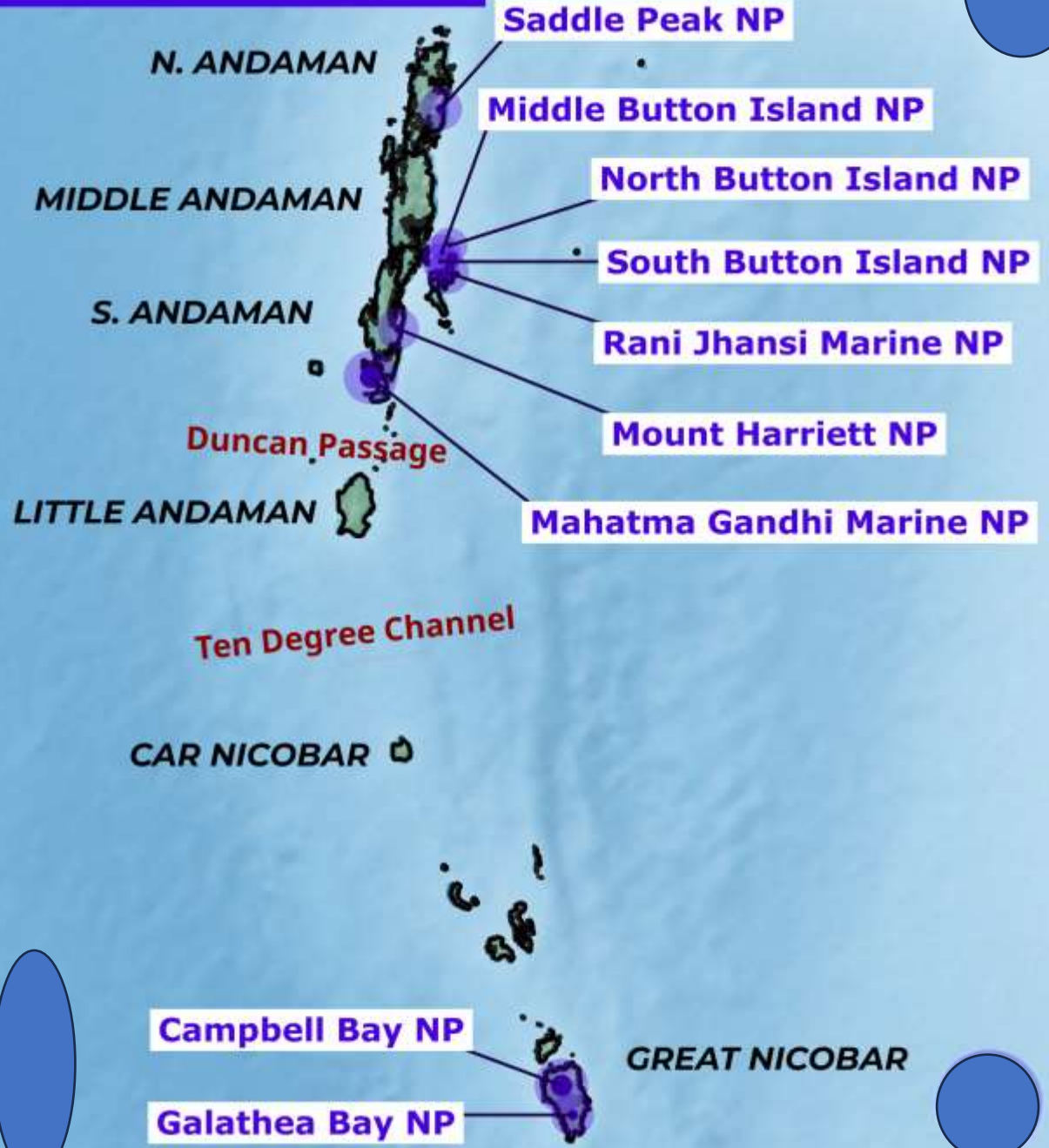


Ten Degree Channel

Andaman & Nicobar Islands
(India)



Andaman & Nicobar Is.





Vishakhapatnam

Pmfias.com

Bay of Bengal

Andaman Is.

Nicobar Is.

Strait of Malacca

Thailand

Bangkok

Cambodia

Phnom Penh

G. of Thailand

Kuala Lumpur

Johore Strait

Rangoon

Vientiane

N. Andaman
Middle Andaman
S. Andaman
Little Andaman

Ten Degree Channel

Car Nicobar

Great Nicobar

G. of Martaban

Myeik Arch.

Kra Isthmus

Andaman Sea

ait

ka

1. MASSIVE DEFORESTATION



- FELLING OF ~8.5 LAKH TO 1 MILLION TREES
- DIVERSION OF ~136 SQ. KM OF PRISTINE TROPICAL RAINFOREST

GREAT NICOBAR PROJECT

2. HABITAT LOSS & BIODIVERSITY THREATS

- THREAT TO SPECIES LIKE LEATHERBACK SEA TURTLE (NESTING AT GALATHEA BAY), NICOBAR MEGAPODE, AND SALTWATER CROCODILES



ENVIRONMENTAL CONTROVERSIES

3. TRIBAL RIGHTS CONCERNS



POSSIBLE DISPLACEMENT AND LOSS OF TRADITIONAL LANDS OF SHOMPEN (SOMPIEN) AND NICOBARESE TRIBES



4. ISSUES WITH COMPENSATORY AFFORESTATION

PLAN TO PLANT TREES IN HARYANA



PLAN TO PLANT TREES IN MADHYA PRADESH



X CRITICISM: CANNOT REPLACE THE UNIQUE ECOLOGY OF GREAT NICOBAR'S TROPICAL RAINFOREST



ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT (EIA)

EIA is a study conducted in the early stages of development project planning to predict and address potential environmental impacts



- **Statutory Status:** Environmental (Protection) Act, 1986 (Made EIA mandatory)
- **Nodal Ministry:** Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEF&CC)
- **Project Categorisation:** EIA Notification of 2006 categorised the developmental projects in:
 - **Category A Project:** Needed prior Environmental Clearance (EC) from MoEF&CC
 - **Category B Project:** Needed prior EC from State/UT Govt.
 - **Category B1 projects** (Mandatorily requires EIA)
 - **Category B2 projects** (Do not require EIA)

There are 39 categories of projects that require an EC process and are subject to EIA

EIA Process as per EIA Notification, 2006

Step	Objective	Carried Out By
◦ Screening	◦ Need of EIA	◦ State Expert Appraisal Committee (SEAC) (Category B)
◦ Scoping	◦ Identifies important issues for EIA	◦ Standard Term of Reference (ToR) prepared by MoEF&CC with EAC/SEAC for Category B Projects*
◦ Public Consultation	◦ Addresses concerns of affected people	◦ State Pollution Control Board (SPCB)/ UT Pollution Control Board (UTPCB)
◦ Project Appraisal	◦ Scrutiny of Final EIA Report/ Environmental Management Plan (EMP)	◦ EAC for category A Projects and SEAC for category B1 Projects
◦ Decision Making	◦ Granting EC	◦ Category A: MoEF&CC ◦ Category B: State EIA Authority (SEIAA)
◦ Monitoring (Post EC)	◦ Compliance of general and specific conditions	◦ SPCB / UTPCB and Regional Offices

Government Initiatives For EC

- **PARIVESH (Proactive and Responsive facilitation by Interactive, Virtuous, and Environmental Single Window Hub):** Single Window System for EC
- Developed by MoEF&CC and National Information Centre (NIC)
- **Environmental Information System (ENVIS):** Collect, Collate, Storing, Retrieving and Disseminating Information Related to the Environment Sector
- **Draft Environmental Impact Assessment Notification 2020:** Published by MoEF&CC to replace existing EIA Notification, 2006

• THE GREAT NICOBAR PROJECT



Proposed
airport



Power
plant



Proposed
transshipment port

- Project also includes an integrated township

- Project entails diversion of 130 sq km forest land, felling of almost **a million trees**

Great Nicobar
Biosphere
Reserve

Galathea
National Park



Why in News / चर्चा में क्यों

- PIB (Finance Ministry) — Aug 2024: ICTP 'lacks strategic objectives'
PIB (वित्त मंत्रालय) — अगस्त 2024: ICTP में 'रणनीतिक उद्देश्यों का अभाव'
- MoD — March 2026: Same project notified as 'strategic project'
MoD — मार्च 2026: उसी परियोजना को 'रणनीतिक' घोषित
- PPPAC cleared the project but refused ₹12,230 crore VGF
PPPAC ने मंजूरी दी लेकिन ₹12,230 करोड़ VGF अस्वीकार
- HPC environmental report suppressed since 2022; RTIs denied
HPC पर्यावरण रिपोर्ट 2022 से दबाई; RTI अस्वीकार
- ₹81,000 cr project now framed in China maritime threat lens
₹81,000 करोड़ परियोजना अब चीन के खतरे के संदर्भ में

Key Facts & Data / मुख्य तथ्य

₹81,000 cr

Total Project Cost
कुल परियोजना लागत

₹12,230 cr

VGF Refused
VGF अस्वीकार

~90 km

From Malacca Strait
मलक्का से दूरी

84%

Protected Area
संरक्षित क्षेत्र

Strategic Channels / रणनीतिक चैनल

Channel	Separates
Six Degree Channel	Great Nicobar & Sumatra
Ten Degree Channel	Andaman & Nicobar Islands
Malacca Strait	Malay Peninsula & Sumatra
Duncan Passage	S. Andaman & Little Andaman

Multi-Subject Connections / बहु-विषय संबंध

History (इतिहास)

British penal colony 1858; Cellular Jail; Bose raised flag 1943; Japan occupied 1942-45

Geography (भूगोल)

Galathea Bay; Indira Point; 6° Channel; 10° Channel; Malacca Strait ~90 km; Seismic zone

Polity (राजव्यवस्था)

UT (Art.239); EPA 1986; FCA 1980; RTI Sec 8(1)(a); FRA 2006 (Shompen PVTG)

Economy (अर्थव्यवस्था)

VGf; PPP; Sagarmala; Transshipment; ₹81,000 cr; Forex saving ~\$200mn/yr

Environment (पर्यावरण)

Leatherback turtle; 84% protected; Biosphere; Coral reefs; 2004 Tsunami zone

S&T (विज्ञान-प्रौद्योगिकी)

Deep-water dredging; CEIA required; Gas power plant; Seismic vulnerability

Timeline / कालक्रम

2021

Great Nicobar Development Programme conceived (MHA/NITI Aayog)

Nov 2022

Environmental clearance granted; HPC report ordered but not published

Jan 2023

Expression of Interest for ICTP — framed as commercial project

Aug 2024

PIB: 'ICTP lacks strategic objectives'

Mar 2026

MoD notifies ICTP as 'strategic project'; PPPAC clears but denies VGF

Exam Relevance & Statement MCQ / परीक्षा

Statement-Based MCQ:

1. PIB termed ICTP as 'lacking strategic objectives' in August 2024.
2. Implementing agency is ANIIDCO. (KPL = implementing agency; ANIIDCO = proponent)
3. Great Nicobar is separated from Sumatra by Six Degree Channel.
4. Shompen tribe is classified as PVTG.

Correct Answer: (d) Statements 1, 3 and 4 are correct

Prelims: Channels, VGF, PIB vs PPPAC, Galathea Bay location | **Mains GS2/GS3:** Maritime security, String of Pearls, Environmental governance

10 Quick Revision Points / 10 त्वरित पुनरावृत्ति बिंदु

1. PIB (Finance Min) → Aug 2024: ICTP 'lacks strategic objectives'

2. MoD → Mar 2026: Same project = 'strategic'

3. PPPAC cleared but refused ₹12,230 cr VGF

4. Total cost: ₹81,000 cr (port+township+airport+power)

5. HPC env. report suppressed since 2022; RTI denied

6. Galathea Bay = naturally deep harbour, SE coast

7. Six Degree Channel separates Great Nicobar from Sumatra

8. Shompen = PVTG; rights under FRA 2006

9. KPL (Kamarajar Port, Chennai) = implementing agency

10. Counter to China's String of Pearls (Gwadar/Hambantota)

Energy tie-up tops bilateral agenda as Modi meets Delcy

PM holds discussions with Venezuela's Acting President on also expanding cooperation in critical minerals, technology, agriculture and health; importance of Global South solidarity emphasised

Kuldeep Bhattacharjee
NEW DELHI

India's partnership with Venezuela is of immense importance for the Global South, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on Thursday, welcoming Delcy Rodriguez, the President of Venezuela, even as the South American country called "energy security a fundamental pillar of the bilateral relationship".



Prime Minister Narendra Modi with Venezuelan Acting President Delcy Rodriguez in New Delhi on Thursday. (AP Photo/Prakash)

Venezuela is still dealing with the aftermath of the abduction of President Nicolas Maduro by the U.S. military in January. Officials said Mr. Rodriguez, whose country is dealing with political transition and fundamental economic transformation, described India as a "trusted partner". The leader, who arrived here on Wednesday, is on a five-day visit. "We had extensive discussions on expanding our

A press release from the government said the bilateral agenda covers energy, critical minerals, technology, agriculture, health and people-to-people ties. As a vital partner in Latin America, our close cooperation with Venezuela holds immense importance for the Global South. We will continue to work together for the mutual benefits of the people of our nations," Mr. Modi said after the meeting.

mental pillar of the bilateral relationship". Mr. Rodriguez, who was accompanied by Ministers of Economy, Foreign Affairs, Science and Technology, and Transport and Communications, conducted a "comprehensive review of the mutual cooperation map", the press note said, adding that the bilateral relation is in an "excellent state".

Officials revealed that Mr. Rodriguez discussed the political situation in Venezuela in a "frank conversation" with Mr. Modi during official-level talks and a working-level lunch that followed. "We all know there was a transition of power and we are working with a government that is friendly and that wants partnership with India. We want to re-process that" and Modi said, "It described India as 'one of the main destinations for the Nation's energy exports, making energy security a funda-

India, U.K. launch observatory to expand critical minerals partnership

UK to lead in the realm of critical minerals, science and technology sharing

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

India and the United Kingdom on Thursday formally launched the Critical Minerals Global Supply Chain Observatory (CMSCO).



Union Minister G. Kishan Reddy and U.K. Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab launching the critical minerals observatory.

UK, Prime Minister Keir Starmer's visit to India in October last year with an objective to "expand mineral coverage, further integrate advanced technologies and unlock new bilateral investment opportunities".

The platform - to be jointly operated by India's Petroleum Exploration, Exploration & Mining Foundation (PEEMF), in partnership with the U.K.'s University of Cambridge, will feature a data-driven platform to monitor and analyse global critical mineral supply chains.

Minister meets official Meanwhile, during a meeting with visiting British Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab, External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar said India and U.K. were well-positioned to construct a new future-oriented and mutually beneficial partnership on the lack of their newly formed-up comprehensive trade deal and the defence industrial deal map. Mr. Jaishankar said both sides "revisited ongoing progress in our cooperation focusing on trade, technology, supply chains, defence, climate, education and people-to-people ties. Also spoke about new opportunities in clean energy, AI and critical minerals".

Ukraine, West Asia and the Indo-Pacific.

In his remarks, Mr. Jaishankar also highlighted the "remarkable developments" in the bilateral ties in recent months, while pointing to Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to the U.K. last July, followed by U.K. Prime Minister Boris Johnson's trip to India in October.

Mr. Cooper also met Mr. Modi. "Appreciated the deepening of the India-U.K. partnership in recent times that has unlocked unprecedented growth opportunities for both our countries," Mr. Modi said on social media.

Mr. Cooper emphasised greater access to critical minerals and improved information sharing would be mutually beneficial to both countries. According to the announcement read out, Mr. Cooper stated the observatory could also serve "as a foundation for broader cooperation across the critical minerals sector and related strategic industries." "The two sides also exchanged views on global developments including in

Manipur policemen killed in knife attack

The Hindu Bureau
DISPUR

A Manipur policeman died in a knife attack during an anti-drug operation in the state's Thoubal district on Wednesday evening.

Officials said the attack was witnessed on Thursday morning. He was detained along with another person soon after the incident.

"During the operation, one of the detainees, Md. Nazim alias Makh (25) attacked Haveli Kh. Jangra Singh of the 4th Juala Reserve Battalion, with a knife, inflicting fatal injuries before fleeing the spot along with the other detainee," the State Police said in a statement on Thursday. Singh was rushed to the district hospital, where he was declared dead on arrival. He was a member of the state's police constable unit in Thoubal.

Kuki organisation in Manipur opposes SIR of electoral rolls

The Hindu Bureau
DISPUR

An apex Kuki organisation has opposed that ongoing Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls in conflict-ridden Manipur, alleging that it has excluded thousands of Manipuri displaced persons (DPs) from the community.

The Kuki Inpi Manipur (KIM) said it expected the government to resolve the issue of some 50,000 Kuki-DPs, and help them return home to participate in the SIR exercise. "Proceeding with such a critical electoral and administrative exercise without ensuring the participation of a large and vulnerable section of the population undermines the very principle of democratic representation. The exclusion, whether direct or indirect, of these DPs from the SIR process renders the exercise incomplete and unacceptable in its present form," the organisation said in a statement on Thursday.

The government and the opposition should take immediate and concrete steps to establish accessible and inclusive mechanisms to let all affected DPs be duly enrolled and participate in the revision process, the KIM said. "Any continuation of the SIR without such priority would not only be unjust but would also call into question the legitimacy and credibility of the entire exercise," the organisation said.

The KIM said leaving any displaced person out would raise questions on the fairness and inclusivity of the SIR exercise, which was launched in Manipur, Mizoram and Sikkim a few days ago.

Rajnath announces revised financial powers to boost autonomy

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Thursday revised the financial powers of the defence forces via the framework for the delegation of Financial Powers for the Service, including for medical and works projects.

The move aims to enhance operational efficiency, accelerate procurement, and strengthen self-reliance in the defence sector. According to the Ministry of Defence, financial powers have been enhanced by up to 60% and, in certain cases, more than doubled. The move is expected to empower field commanders with greater decision-making authority, enabling faster resolution of contracts and timely execution of projects worth over Rs 25 lakh crore through the revenue route.

Bharatmala project: man held for taking fraudulent funds

The Hindu Bureau
RAIPUR

The ED has arrested a resident of Chhattisgarh's Raipur district who, along with his family members, had fraudulently involved about Rs 27 crore for land acquired under the Bharatmala project, the agency said on Thursday.

The ED is investigating the money laundering alleged in the case, it alleged that Jai Prakash Ganjali, a resident of Ahtanagar near Raipur, and his family members, involved procurement of Rs 283 crore, about 17 times more than the legitimately available amount of 55.76 lakh, through generating proceeds of crime to the tune of Rs 27 crore.

Mr. Ganjali was produced before a Special Court (PM-A) in Raipur which has granted three days custody of the accused to the ED, according to an official in the ED Raipur zonal office. The official said that the investigation revealed that Mr. Ganjali, in compliance with his family members, had acquired land falling within the notified highway alignment for the Raipur-Vishakhapatnam Economic Corridor project under Bharatmala, Jhargana. Subsequently, the accused fragmented the land into plots measuring less than 800 square metres. The fragmentation was allegedly carried out with the sole intention of eluding enhanced compensation from the National Highway Authority of India (NHAI), the official added.

The investigation had further revealed that the proceeds of the crime were subsequently spent, the official said.

Delhi blaze: building owner sent to police custody for four days

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

A day after a major fire left 21 people dead at the Flamingo 'stay' hotel and breakfast in Delhi's Malviya Nagar, the building's owner - Lakshmi Raju - was remanded to four days of police custody by a district court on Thursday, on the charge of culpable homicide not amounting to murder, among others.



Lakshmi Raju at the Malviya Nagar Police Station after the latest court sent him to police custody, in New Delhi, on Thursday.

Mr. Raju's manager Babu and his accounting officer Jay Maltra - in whose name the hotel licence was issued - are still absconding, the Delhi Police said. The Municipal Corporation of Delhi has identified 12 other bed and breakfast (BnB) lodges in the area which also did not have the necessary licence. The BnB was being run without any fire No Objection Certificate, and was missing the permits issued by the state tourism department, the police said.

The Hauz Khas area of Malviya Nagar, where the fire occurred, is a residential hub and has many hotels, providing accommodation for patients at the nearby Max hospital and a dental centre. Twelve of those killed in the blaze were foreign nationals, including from Congo, Mozambique, Liberia, the UK and others, and their bodies were handed over to their respective embassies on Thursday.

Some rebel MLAs still want Mamata as 'supreme leader'

The Hindu Bureau
KOLKATA

A day after 38 MLAs of the Trinamool Congress signed a letter nominating Mamata Banerjee as the Leader of Opposition (LoP) in the West Bengal Assembly, defying party chairperson Mamata Banerjee's stern warning, some of the rebel MLAs on Thursday were seen to be in a state of confusion.

About 20 of the rebel MLAs met the West Bengal Legislative Assembly Speaker Abhishek Banerjee on Thursday to discuss their respective roles. "Mamata Banerjee is not the supreme leader but an elected member of the Legislative Assembly," said one of the rebel MLAs, Gopinath Mukherjee, who said he had no objection to Mamata Banerjee as the LoP. "She is a senior leader and her role should be to guide the party," he said.

Union govt. to train BDOs in planning systems

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

In an effort to strengthen grassroots governance, the Ministry of Rural Development is planning to train 2,000 Block Development Officers (BDOs), focusing the training on decentralised planning. The officers will be trained in the use of Geographic Information Systems (GIS) and Management Information Systems (MIS), which have become crucial especially with the new rural employment survey - Vikas Bharat-Guarantee for Roster and Aajeeviks.

Planning under the new law is driven by the decentralised Vikas Gram Panchayat Plan (VGPSP), linking local wage employment to durable infrastructure. Rural Development Secretary Raju Kanoujia said that training modules such as this are aimed at strengthening the "last-mile delivery architecture".

Mamata Banerjee will remain the undisputed leader of the Trinamool Congress, she said on Thursday. "I am the supreme leader of the party," she said. "I am the supreme leader of the party," she said. "I am the supreme leader of the party," she said. "I am the supreme leader of the party," she said.

India, U.K. launch observatory to expand critical minerals partnership

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Seeking to expand cooperation and technology-sharing in the realm of critical minerals, India and the United Kingdom on Thursday formally launched the Critical Minerals Global Supply Chain Observatory (GSCO).

The observatory was first announced during U.K. Prime Minister Keir Starmer's visit to India in October last year with an objective to "expand mineral coverage, further integrate advanced technologies and unlock new bilateral investment opportunities".

The platform – to be jointly operated by India's Technology Innovation in Exploration & Mining Foundation (TEXMiN), Indian Institute of Technology (ISM) Dhanbad and U.K.'s University of Cambridge – will institute a data-driven platform to monitor and analyse global critical mineral supply chains.

In a social media post, Union Minister for Mines



Union Minister G. Kishan Reddy and U.K. Foreign Secretary Yvette Cooper launching the critical minerals observatory. ANI

and Minerals G. Kishan Reddy wrote, "This is a major step towards strengthening critical mineral supply chains, supporting clean energy transitions, and building resilient global supply chains through the India-U.K. partnership."

Minister meets official

Meanwhile, during a meeting with visiting British Foreign Secretary Yvette Cooper on Thursday, External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar said India and the U.K. were well-positioned to construct a new

future-oriented and mutually beneficial partnership on the back of their newly firmed-up comprehensive trade deal and the defence industrial road map. Mr. Jaishankar said both sides "reviewed ongoing progress in our cooperation focusing on trade, technology, supply chains, defence, climate, education and people to people ties. Also spoke about new opportunities in clean energy, AI and critical minerals".

The two sides also exchanged views on global developments including in

Ukraine, West Asia and the Indo-Pacific.

In his remarks, Mr. Jaishankar also highlighted the "remarkable developments" in the bilateral ties in recent months while pointing to Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to the U.K. last July, followed by U.K. Prime Minister Keir Starmer's trip to India in October.

Ms. Cooper also met Mr. Modi. "Appreciated the deepening of the India-UK partnership in recent times that has unlocked unprecedented growth opportunities for both our countries," Mr. Modi said on social media.

Ms. Cooper emphasised greater access to critical minerals and improved information-sharing would be mutually beneficial to both countries. According to the announcement readout, Ms. Cooper stated the observatory could also serve "as a foundation for broader cooperation across the critical minerals sector and related strategic industries."

(With PTI inputs)

Why in News / चर्चा में क्यों

- **India & UK formally launched Critical Minerals GSCO in New Delhi**
भारत और UK ने नई दिल्ली में GSCO का औपचारिक लॉन्च
- **Jointly operated: TEXMiN + IIT(ISM) Dhanbad + Cambridge University**
संयुक्त संचालन: TEXMiN + IIT(ISM) धनबाद + कैम्ब्रिज विश्वविद्यालय
- **First announced during UK PM Starmer's India visit (October 2025)**
अक्टूबर 2025 में UK PM स्टार्मर की भारत यात्रा में घोषित
- **Built on India-UK comprehensive trade deal + defence industrial roadmap**
व्यापक व्यापार समझौते और रक्षा रोडमैप के आधार पर
- **China controls 60-80% of critical mineral processing — GSCO counters this**
चीन 60-80% महत्वपूर्ण खनिज प्रसंस्करण पर हावी — GSCO इसका जवाब

Key Minerals & Facts / मुख्य खनिज

30

Critical Minerals
India's List (2023)

₹16,300 cr

NCMM 2024
Budget

5.9 mn t

Lithium (Reasi, J&K)
Discovered by GSI 2023

~80%

China's Lithium
Processing Dominance

Top Critical Minerals & Uses:

Mineral	Key Use
Lithium	Li-ion batteries (EVs, phones)
Cobalt	Battery cathodes; superalloys
REEs (Nd, Pr, Dy)	EV motors, wind turbines, defence magnets
Graphite	Battery anodes
Vanadium	Vanadium redox flow batteries; steel

Multi-Subject Connections / बहु-विषय संबंध

History (इतिहास)

ISM Dhanbad founded 1926 (British India)
→ IIT 2016; Colonial mineral extraction;
CMNA 1973

Geography (भूगोल)

Reasi J&K = lithium; Chota Nagpur belt;
Kerala/Odisha = monazite REE; Lithium
Triangle (Bolivia/Chile/Argentina)

Polity (राजव्यवस्था)

MMDR Act 1957 (amended 2021); NCMM
2024; India-UK FTA; MSP (14 nations); KABIL
= NALCO+HCL+MECL

Economy (अर्थव्यवस्था)

Global mineral market: \$320bn→\$770bn
(2040); India imports >90% lithium; China
dominance; KABIL overseas

Environment (पर्यावरण)

Lithium mining (Atacama evap ponds);
Cobalt/DRC child labour; Circular economy;
Sovereign Green Bonds Jan 2023

S&T (विज्ञान-प्रौद्योगिकी)

TEXMiN 2019: deep-sea mining + AI
exploration; REEs = 17 elements for
magnets/lasers; T+1 settlement

Statement MCQ + Exam Angles

Statement MCQ:

1. GSCO launched by Union Minister for Mines & UK Foreign Secretary.
2. Observatory operated by TEXMiN, IIT(ISM), and University of Oxford. (Cambridge, NOT Oxford)
3. India identified 30 critical minerals in 2023.
4. KABIL = NALCO + HCL + MECL JV for overseas exploration.

Correct Answer: (b) Statements 1, 3 and 4 are correct

Prelims: KABIL, MMDR, 30 minerals, TEXMiN, Reasi lithium | Mains: GS3 critical minerals strategy, tech sovereignty, green energy

10 Quick Revision Points / त्वरित पुनरावृत्ति

1. GSCO = Critical Minerals Global Supply Chain Observatory

2. Partners: TEXMiN + IIT(ISM) Dhanbad + Cambridge University

3. First announced: UK PM Starmer's India visit (October 2025)

4. India's 30 Critical Minerals (2023): Li, Co, Ni, Graphite, REEs

5. KABIL = NALCO + HCL + MECL — overseas mineral exploration

6. Reasi, J&K lithium: ~5.9 mn tonnes; GSI discovered 2023

7. MMDR Act 1957 = primary mining law; amended 2015, 2021

8. China: ~60% REE, ~75% cobalt, ~80% lithium processing

9. NCMM 2024: ₹16,300 cr; Ministry of Mines

10. TEXMiN (2019): IIT(ISM) Dhanbad; deep-sea mining + AI

Energy tie-up tops bilateral agenda as Modi meets Delcy

PM holds discussions with Venezuela's Acting President on also expanding cooperation in critical minerals, technology, agriculture and health; importance of Global South solidarity emphasised

Kallol Bhattacharjee

NEW DELHI

India's partnership with Venezuela is of "immense importance" for the Global South, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on Thursday, welcoming Delcy Rodriguez, the Acting President of Venezuela, even as the South American country called "energy security a fundamental pillar of the bilateral relationship".

Venezuela is still dealing with the aftermath of the abduction of President Nicolas Maduro by the U.S. military in January. Officials said Ms. Rodriguez, whose country is dealing with 'political transition' and 'fundamental economic transformation', described India as a "trusted partner". The leader, who arrived here on Wednesday, is on a five-day visit.

"We had extensive discussions on expanding our



Prime Minister Narendra Modi with Venezuelan Acting President Delcy Rodriguez in New Delhi on Thursday. SHIV KUMAR PUSHPAKAR

cooperation in energy, critical minerals, technology, agriculture, health and people-to-people ties. As a valued partner in Latin America, our close cooperation with Venezuela holds immense importance for the Global South. We will continue to work together for the mutual benefit of the people of our nations," said Mr. Modi after the meeting.

A press release from the Venezuelan government said the meeting was aimed at "strengthening the role of both nations in the geopolitical context of the Global South and on boosting mutually beneficial macroeconomic agreements". It described India as "one of the main destinations for the Nation's energy exports, making energy security a funda-

mental pillar of the bilateral relationship".

Ms. Rodriguez, who was accompanied by Ministers of Economy, Foreign Affairs, Science and Technology, and Transport and Communications, conducted a "comprehensive review of the mutual cooperation map", the press note said, adding that the bilateral relation is in an "excellent state".

Officials revealed that Ms. Rodriguez discussed the political situation in Venezuela in a "frank conversation" with Mr. Modi during official-level talks and over the working lunch that followed. "We all know there was a transition in Venezuela, and we are working with a government that is friendly and that wants partnership with India. We want to reciprocate that," said Rudendra Tandon, Secretary (East) of the External Affairs Ministry, while briefing the media.

Why in News / चर्चा में क्यों

- **Delcy Rodriguez (Acting President) visits India — 5-day trip**
डेल्सी रोड्रिगज (कार्यवाहक राष्ट्रपति) की 5 दिवसीय भारत यात्रा
- **Maduro allegedly abducted by US military (Jan 2026)**
माद्रुरो का अमेरिकी सेना द्वारा कथित अपहरण (जनवरी 2026)
- **Focus: Energy, Critical Minerals, Technology, Agriculture, Health**
ध्यान: ऊर्जा, महत्वपूर्ण खनिज, प्रौद्योगिकी, कृषि, स्वास्थ्य
- **Venezuela = 'trusted partner'; India = 'main energy export destination'**
वेनेजुएला = 'विश्वसनीय भागीदार'; भारत = 'मुख्य ऊर्जा निर्यात गंतव्य'
- **Global South solidarity emphasised by both sides**
दोनों पक्षों ने ग्लोबल साउथ एकजुटता पर जोर

Key Facts & Geography / मुख्य तथ्य

~303 bn bbl

Largest Proven Oil Reserves
(World #1)

OPEC

Member since 1960
HQ: Vienna

3rd

India = World's Largest
Oil Importer (rank)

Orinoco

Belt = Extra-Heavy
Crude Oil Region

Key Geography / भूगोल

Country/Place	Key Facts
Venezuela	N. South America; borders Colombia, Brazil, Guyana; Caribbean Sea
Capital	Caracas Language: Spanish Currency: Bolívar Soberano
Angel Falls	World's highest waterfall; Canaima NP; UNESCO Heritage
Orinoco River	Major river; Orinoco Belt = heavy crude deposits

Multi-Subject Connections / बहु-विषय संबंध

History (इतिहास)

Simon Bolivar 1830; Gran Colombia; Hugo Chavez 1999; NAM legacy; Panchsheel 1954

Geography (भूगोल)

N. South America; Orinoco Belt; Angel Falls; Caribbean Sea; Panama Canal proximity

Polity (राजव्यवस्था)

Strategic Autonomy; UN Art 2(1) sovereign equality; FEMA; CELAC dialogue partner

Economy (अर्थव्यवस्था)

OPEC member; PDVSA; Coltan (electronics); Rupee-Bolivar trade; India = 3rd importer

Environment (पर्यावरण)

Amazon rainforest; Tepui ecosystems; Oil sector carbon emissions; Climate goals tension

S&T (विज्ञान-प्रौद्योगिकी)

Heavy crude refining (HPCL/IOC/BPCL); Coltan→Tantalum; NavIC space cooperation

Statement MCQ + Exam Angles

Statement MCQ:

1. Venezuela is OPEC member with world's largest proven oil reserves.
2. Orinoco Belt contains light sweet crude oil. (Extra-heavy crude)
3. India's strategic autonomy = independent decisions, not bloc-bound.
4. India is a full member of CELAC. (Dialogue partner only)

Correct Answer: (a) Statements 1 and 3 are correct

10 Quick Revision Points / त्वरित पुनरावृत्ति

1. Venezuela = World's largest proven oil reserves (~303 bn bbl)

2. Delcy Rodriguez = Acting President (Maduro abducted Jan 2026)

3. OPEC member; PDVSA = state oil company

4. India = world's 3rd largest oil importer

5. Meeting: Energy, Critical Minerals, Tech, Agri, Health

6. Strategic Autonomy: engage despite US sanctions

7. Orinoco Belt = extra-heavy crude; special refining needed

8. Coltan → Tantalum → electronics (EV batteries)

9. Angel Falls = world's highest waterfall; Venezuela

10. Global South solidarity; Venezuela = 'trusted partner' for India

Evolving public health strategies to address under and over nutrition

A recent study conducted in Vellore found that prevalence of thinness and overweight began to rise sharply between ages seven and nine, double burden of malnutrition is a cause of concern in India and needs to be addressed, programmes designed primarily to combat undernutrition need to be re-thought

Ramya Kannan
 CHENNAI

In a recent study conducted in Vellore, that followed children from birth to nine years, it was observed that while most children had a normal Body Mass Index (BMI) in early childhood, prevalence of thinness and overweight began to rise sharply between ages seven and nine. This study bolsters the results from just-released National Family Health Survey (NFHS-5) indicating the double burden of malnutrition that India is currently facing. The double burden of malnutrition is a term used to describe a curious phenomenon — a state where both undernutrition and overnutrition are threats to the health of the population. According to the World Health Organisation (WHO), malnutrition, in all its forms, includes undernutrition (wasting, stunting, underweight), inadequate vitamin or mineral, over weight, obesity, and results in diet-related non-communicable diseases. Coincidentally, the results of both these studies released almost simultaneously provide similar results, but the Vellore studies tell us more — as what stage does thinness and obesity set in, thus providing a way to address the issue at the right time, in order to effectively control it.

Data from the NFHS-5 records improvements in U5M1 nutrition — stunting, wasting and severe wasting have fallen compared to NFHS-5, but this is neither uniform nor even. There are still pockets in the country where the levels remain at the stage of significant concern. The same data shows, at the polar end of the spectrum, a steady increase in overweight and obesity among adults (especially women and urban, wealthier groups), along with growing prevalence or risk of diabetes and high blood pressure.

The Vellore study brings new findings from a collaborative study between CMC-Vellore and ARUMMA at TIFR, and highlights a critical shift in India's nutrition challenge. Children in low/middle income urban communities are facing both thinness and obesity by school age. The malnutrition and excess thinness (MAL-ED) study recruited 281 children from urban slums in Vellore, Tamil Nadu, India, between 2010 and 2012, with further follow-ups conducted until age nine.

As per a paper published by Birsen Yilmaz et al in the peer-reviewed journal *Lancet Regional Health Southeast Asia*, approximately 40% of children were stunted at age two. By age seven, 20.2% of children were classified as thin, and 5.2% of children were classified as overweight/obese. By age nine, the prevalence of underweight was 31.6%, while overweight/obesity had increased to 14.4%.

Interestingly, the mother's BMI was a predictor of childhood thinness, particularly at age 5 and 9. Incidentally, when read along with the NFHS-6 which indicates that 30.7% of women aged 15-49 were overweight or obese in 2022-24, compared to 24% in NFHS-5, it indicates a huge



Watching them grow. The Vellore study brings new findings from a collaborative study between CMC-Vellore and ARUMMA at TIFR, and highlights a critical shift in India's nutrition challenge. RA KANNAN

trans-generational burden in India. Maternal weight is clearly an important factor in foetal and child health as well, but one that has not been sufficiently examined by policy makers in the form of maternal health interventions.

Surgeon colonel Uthu Kolthor of ARUMMA, TIFR, one of the authors of the paper, said the surprise element of the study was not that children born with low birth weight were becoming obese, but the fact that weight-related issues begin so early in children.

Becna Joshi, of CMC Vellore, highlights the importance of monitoring children's growth after the first 1,000 days after birth. "This is a cohort in a low income, urban setting in Vellore, which is part of our MAL-ED group, being studied for years. In these communities, children are facing thinness, yes, but also obesity even before they enter the school."

She explains that in the study location, the mean birth weight is 2.7 kg and 17% of children are born with low birth weight. At age two, about 40% of children are stunted, but 80% of the children have caught up by age nine. "This means the nutrition issue we face today is not only about underweight toddlers, but the entire range of nutrition deficiency or insufficiency through childhood". It also means our understanding of malnutrition has not been on point, or, is

The MAL-ED study recruited 281 children from urban slums in Vellore, between 2010 and 2012, with further follow-ups conducted until age nine

no longer on point. India which has had a long track record of undernutrition, wasting and stunting has come to look upon malnutrition as exclusively stunting in this quarter. More recent evidence shows that it is no longer that simple at all, that there are nuances that we might be missing in childhood.

Dr. Kolthor adds: "What is malnutrition? How must it be handled? We know now, from this study, that feeding all children the same diet might not be such a great idea after all. There must be differentiation in how we tailor the diets of children, early on." Dr. Joshi points out that the easy availability of packaged foods, sugary drinks and deep fried food in suburbs have a huge role to play. "While these foods are available cheap, the access to healthy fruits, vegetables and proteins is still not very good."

Nihal Thomas, senior professor of Endocrinology at CMC Vellore, who was instrumental in leading efforts to offer a differential diagnosis of lean diabetes (Type 2), points out that undernutrition in early life can lead to two potential

trajectories. On one hand, the persistence of undernutrition, besides leading to stunting, can potentially lead to defects in insulin secretion and even situations where lean individuals develop diabetes in relation to malnutrition. On the contrary, in those with overnutrition, there is the danger of increase in overweight and subsequently increasing the risk of diabetes, hypertension and cardiovascular disease, he explains.

Addressing the issue At this juncture, public health experts urge a full complement of health policies that will address a judicious blend of both dietary interventions to tackle undernutrition and lifestyle interventions, and not overnutrition would be a mistake that the country can scarcely afford to make at this stage, headed as it is with huge burdens of metabolic diseases including insulin resistance and hypertension.

The ICMR has meanwhile recommended, based on case studies undernutrition (ICMR, school meals), POS now need to be re-thought to address both inadequate calorie/micronutrients and poor quality, ultra processed, high-sugar, high-fat diets (ramya.kannan@thehindu.co.in)

THE GIST

According to the World Health Organisation (WHO), malnutrition, in all its forms, includes undernutrition (wasting, stunting, underweight), inadequate vitamins or minerals, overweight, obesity, and results in diet-related non-communicable diseases

Children in low/middle income urban communities are facing both thinness and obesity by school age, a collaborative study between CMC-Vellore and ARUMMA at TIFR finds. One author of the paper, said the surprise element of the study was not that children born with low birth weight were becoming obese, but the fact that weight-related issues begin so early in children

A one-sided intervention — addressing only undernutrition, and not overnutrition would be a mistake that the country can scarcely afford to make at this stage, headed as it is with huge burdens of metabolic diseases including insulin resistance and hypertension

Understanding SPF number on sunscreen lotion and how it is measured

Ashira Elasa Johnson
 CHENNAI

Sun Protection Factor, or SPF, is designed to measure UVB protection against ultraviolet B (UVB) radiation, the part of sunlight primarily responsible for sunburns. But it does not tell the whole story about sun protection, nor does a higher SPF automatically mean better protection. Understanding what SPF measures, and what it does not, can help in making more informed decisions about skin protection.

In standard testing, sunscreen is applied to the skin and researchers compare how much ultraviolet exposure is needed to produce redness, or erythema, on protected skin versus unprotected skin. Researchers Naalka, consultant dermatologist, Bala Hospital, Chennai. "If an SPF is 15, theoretically the amount of UV exposure needed to cause minimal erythema on sunscreen applied skin would be 15 times higher than on

unprotected skin," she explains. "Sojayanand A., a dermatologist at RPM Pritone Hospital, Chennai, points out however that "the testing is conducted under controlled conditions using a specified amount of sunscreen. In real life, most people apply far less sunscreen than is used during laboratory tests, meaning actual protection may be lower than the SPF listed on the label."

What do SPF numbers mean? One of the most common misconceptions is that SPF values increase protection in a straight line. According to K.R. Shanmugas, senior consultant dermatologist, RPM Hospital, Chennai, SPF 30 blocks about 97.97% of UV radiation, SPF 50 blocks roughly 97.96%, and SPF 80 blocks close to 99%. The difference is one roughly one percentage point, with protection gain tapering progressively. While higher SPF provides



Shield and defense: Experts and dermatologists say that SPF 30 provides adequate protection for most people when applied correctly. ICMR issues

somewhat greater protection, the difference between SPF 30 and SPF 50 is far smaller than most people imagine. A sunscreen's SPF value only

measures protection against UVB radiation. Padma Ganaray, senior consultant dermatologist, Apollo Specialty Hospital, Vandalur, Chennai, notes that UVA penetrates

more deeply. UVA radiation is strongly linked to pigmentation, photoaging, wrinkles and loss of skin elasticity. For this reason, experts emphasize that SPF alone should not determine sunscreen choices. They recommend choosing a broad-spectrum sunscreen with UVB protection, which indicates protection against UVA rays as well as products that provide protection against both UVA and UVB radiation rather than focusing solely on the SPF number.

Experts also say that SPF 30 provides adequate protection for most people when applied correctly. "Anything above SPF 30 is okay for Indian skin," says Dr. Naalka. She recommends SPF 30 as a minimum, while SPF 50 or higher for outdoor sports, high sun exposure, or individuals with photosensitive skin conditions.

Application matters Many tend to overlook correct application. Experts recommend applying sunscreen 15 to 20 minutes

before sun exposure and ensuring that exposed areas such as the face, neck, hands and forearms are covered. Reapplication is essential every two to three hours during outdoor exposure, especially after washing the face or if the product is not water resistant. And for people working outdoors, and in sports, experts recommend water-proof formulations. High-SPF sunscreens also require regular reapplication because sunscreen do not block 100% of UV radiation. A properly applied SPF 30 sunscreen may offer better protection than an SPF 100 product applied inadequately. "The difference between the benefits that SPF 30 and SPF 50 offer is small. The more important factors are choosing a broad-spectrum product, applying it correctly, and reapplying it regularly. This summer, stay safe under the sun. Understanding SPF is less about finding the highest number and more about using sunscreen effectively and consistently. (ashira.elasa@thehindu.co.in)

Understanding SPF number on sunscreen lotion and how it is measured

Athira Elssa Johnson
CHENNAI

Sun Protection Factor, or SPF, is designed to measure protection against ultraviolet B (UVB) radiation, the part of sunlight primarily responsible for sunburns. But it does not tell the whole story about sun protection, nor does a higher SPF automatically mean better protection. Understanding what SPF measures, and what it does not, can help in making more informed decisions about skin protection.

In standard testing, sunscreen is applied to the skin and researchers compare how much ultraviolet exposure is needed to produce redness, or erythema, on protected skin versus unprotected skin, says Katheeja Nasika, consultant dermatologist, Rela Hospital, Chennai. "If an SPF is 30, theoretically the amount of UV exposure needed to cause minimal erythema on sunscreen-applied skin would be 30 times higher than on

unprotected skin," she explains.

Narayanan A., consultant dermatologist at SRM Prime Hospital, Chennai, points out however that "the testing is conducted under controlled conditions using a specified amount of sunscreen. In real life, most people apply far less sunscreen than is used during laboratory testing, meaning actual protection may be lower than the SPF listed on the label."

What do SPF numbers mean?

One of the most common misconceptions is that SPF values increase protection in a straight line. According to K.R. Sharmatha, senior consultant dermatologist, SIMS Hospital, Chennai, SPF 30 blocks about 95-97% of UVB radiation, SPF 50 blocks roughly 97-98%, and SPF 80 blocks close to 99%. The difference is one roughly one percentage point, with protection gains becoming progressively smaller at higher SPF values

While higher SPF provides



Shield and defence: Experts and dermatologists say that SPF 30 provides adequate protection for most people when applied correctly. GETTY IMAGES

somewhat greater protection, the difference between SPF 30 and SPF 50 is far smaller than most people imagine.

A sunscreen's SPF value only

measures protection against UVB radiation. Pushpa Gnanaraj, senior consultant dermatologist, Apollo Speciality Hospitals, Vanagaram, Chennai, notes that UVA penetrates

more deeply. UVA radiation is strongly linked to pigmentation, photoageing, wrinkles and loss of skin elasticity. For this reason, experts emphasise that SPF alone should not determine sunscreen choice. They recommend choosing a broad-spectrum sunscreen with PA+++ protection, which indicates protection against UVA rays as well as products that provide protection against both UVA and UVB radiation rather than focusing solely on the SPF number.

Experts also say that SPF 30 provides adequate protection for most people when applied correctly. "Anything above SPF 30 is okay for Indian skin," says Dr. Nasika. She recommends SPF 30 as a minimum, while SPF 50 or higher for outdoor sports, extended sun exposure, or individuals with photosensitive skin conditions.

Application matters

Many tend to overlook correct application. Experts recommend applying sunscreen 15 to 20 minutes

before sun exposure and ensuring that exposed areas such as the face, neck, hands and forearms are covered. Reapplication is essential every two to three hours during outdoor exposure, especially after washing the face or if the product is not water-resistant. And for people working outdoors, and in sports, experts recommend waterproof formulations. High-SPF sunscreens also require regular reapplication because sunscreen do not block 100% of UV radiation. A properly applied SPF 30 sunscreen may offer better protection than an SPF 100 product applied inadequately.

The difference between the benefits that SPF 30 and SPF 50 offer is small. The more important factors are choosing a broad-spectrum product, applying it correctly, and reapplying it regularly. This summer, stay safe under the sun.

Understanding SPF is less about finding the highest number and more about using sunscreen effectively and consistently. (athira.elssa@thehindu.co.in)

UV Radiation & SPF Explained / UV विकिरण

UV Type	Wavelength	Effect	Measured by
UVB	280–315 nm	Sunburn; skin cancer; DNA damage	SPF
UVA	315–400 nm	Tanning; photoageing; pigmentation; deeper penetration	PA Rating
UVC	100–280 nm	Absorbed by ozone layer; does NOT reach earth	—

SPF Scale (NOT Linear!) / SPF पैमाना (रैखिक नहीं!):

SPF 15

93%

Blocks 93% UVB

SPF 30

97%

Ideal for Indian skin — SPF 30 min

SPF 50

98%

Only 1% more than SPF 30!

SPF 100

~99%

Minimal gain over SPF 50

PA Rating System & Application Tips

PA Rating (UVA Protection) / PA रेटिंग:

PA+: Some UVA protection

PA++: Moderate UVA

PA+++ : High UVA (Recommended)

PA++++: Extremely High UVA

Application Tips / लगाने के सुझाव:

- Apply 15–20 min before sun exposure
- Reapply every 2–3 hours outdoors
- Use waterproof for sports/swimming
- Cover: face, neck, hands, forearms
- SPF 30 minimum; SPF 50+ for outdoor sports
- Choose broad-spectrum + PA+++ sunscreen

Key takeaway: Correct application > High SPF number | सही तरीके से लगाना > उच्च SPF संख्या

Multi-Subject Connections / बहु-विषय संबंध

History (इतिहास)

1928: Franz Greiter invents sunscreen; 1962: SPF system; Ancient India: turmeric+sandalwood

Geography (भूगोल)

India (tropical) = high UV index year-round; Ozone hole: Antarctic; Higher altitude = more UV

Polity (राजव्यवस्था)

Drugs & Cosmetics Act 1940; BIS standards; Consumer Protection Act 2019; National Health Policy 2017

Economy (अर्थव्यवस्था)

Global sunscreen market: \$13bn (2024) → \$25bn (2032); India skincare: ₹30,000 cr; Indian pharma exports

Environment (पर्यावरण)

Ozone depletion: CFCs/HCFCs destroy O₃; Montreal Protocol 1987; Oxybenzone = coral reef damage; Hawaii ban 2018

S&T (विज्ञान-प्रौद्योगिकी)

UVB→DNA thymine dimers→cancer; Melanin (natural UV protection); PUVA therapy; Mineral vs chemical sunscreen

Statement MCQ + Exam Angles

Statement MCQ:

1. SPF measures protection against both UVA and UVB. ✘ (UVB only; UVA = PA rating)
2. UVA penetrates deeper; linked to photoageing and pigmentation. ✔
3. SPF 80 offers twice the UVB protection of SPF 30. ✘ (SPF not linear: 97% vs 99%)
4. Montreal Protocol (1987) is most successful ozone protection treaty. ✔

Correct Answer: (c) Statements 2 and 4 are correct

1. SPF = UVB protection ONLY; PA rating = UVA protection

2. SPF 30 → 97% UVB blocked; SPF 50 → 98% (NOT 2x!)

3. UVA (315–400nm): tanning, ageing, pigmentation; deeper

4. UVB (280–315nm): sunburn, cancer; ozone absorbs it mostly

5. Broad-spectrum + PA+++ = ideal sunscreen choice

6. Reapply every 2–3 hrs; apply 15–20 min before sun

7. Montreal Protocol 1987: phases out CFCs/HCFCs; ozone

8. Ozone layer: stratosphere; O₃; absorbs UVB + UVC

9. Chemical sunscreen (oxybenzone) = coral reef damage

10. Melanin = natural UV protection; darker skin = more melanin

IN BRIEF



India and Venezuela seek to boost ties in energy sector

Petroleum Minister Hardeep Singh Puri and head of energy sector PIG's on Thursday met visiting Venezuelan Acting President Diego Rodriguez to strengthen bilateral ties. "Venezuela is already among the largest crude oil suppliers to India in April and May 2020, which is a reflection of the future potential. Our technical team will visit Venezuela soon to further explore this potential," Mr. Puri pointed out at the meeting.

Fire at Tata Steel's U.K. plant; personnel evacuated safely

A fire broke out on Wednesday at Tata Steel's UK plant, which is undergoing transition to a low-carbon steel-making process, a company statement said on Thursday. "All personnel were accounted for and evacuated from the area safely," Tata Steel UK said. The company said that Mid and West Wales Fire service attended the Port Talbot site Wednesday night at around 8.30 p.m. (U.K. time) to deal with a fire at one of the site's processing lines.

Kuku files confidential papers for up to \$3,500 crore IPO

Kuku Technologies Ltd., which operates a virtual-audio platform Kuku FM and short-video streaming app Kuku TV, has filed confidential draft papers with SEBI for a \$3,000 crore IPO. The firm is planning to raise between ₹2,800 and ₹3,800 crore and is targeting a valuation of up to ₹3,000 crore through the proposed public issue, people familiar with the development said on Thursday.

India to drop capital gains tax for foreign investors in govt. bonds

Business
MUMBAI

India plans to scrap capital gains tax on foreign portfolio investments in government securities, which could help boost such inflows, a source familiar with the matter said on Thursday.

The South Asian nation is looking to attract foreign capital to counteract pressure on its rupee currency, which has weakened more than 10% since the start of the year, squeezed by high oil prices and foreign portfolio outflows in equities.

The finance ministry did not immediately respond to a Reuters email seeking comment.

India's benchmark bond yield rose one basis point to 7.01% in opening trade, although it was not immediately clear when the plan would take effect.

A new tax ceiling should help flows at the margin, said Michael Arora, chief economist at Equiray Global Financial Services.

"It won't be a magic bullet in the current context," he cautioned, but added it could prove positive to the median trader.

Foreign investors are subject to a long-term capital gains tax of 12.5% on listed shares and bonds held longer than 12 months.

A withholding tax of 20% they pay on interest earned. In government bonds, they may also be removed, the source said.

As talks stutter, Iran grip on Strait of Hormuz still tight

Recent weeks have seen more non-Iran-linked ships transit with Iranian permission. Lloyd's List data show ships with an Iran nexus accounted for nearly 97% of crossings in mid-March

Rakibnaranjan M.
CHENNAI

Even as the U.S.-Iran talks lurch and both sides are attacked by both sides, there has been a slight uptick in the regularity of stranded ships leaving the Strait of Hormuz over the past three weeks, as per Lloyd's List data.

"Though the U.S. blockade seems to have impacted the transit of ships with direct Iran links, Iran has maintained a tight grip on the Strait."

In the recent three weeks, there has been an increase in the number of non-Iran linked ships transiting with the permission of Iran, while ships have slipped across with support from U.S. forces too.

Lloyd's List data shows that it is done with lights and radar ships with "Iran nexus" accounted for nearly 97% of crossings in mid-March.

After this peak, this figure has steadily declined to 35% in the week of May 25-31.

Nearly 40 non-Iran-linked ships have sailed in the past three weeks, bringing the number of "escapes" to 142 since March.

Richard Meade, editor-in-chief of the Strait of Hormuz, said in a separate article that as of the week of May 25-31, the number of ships with an Iran nexus has declined to 35% in the week of May 25-31.

Some ships are transiting the Strait of Hormuz close to the coast of Oman in coordination with—and

On the trail

Vessels that about Persian Gulf since the Iran war began



under an element of protection of the U.S. military, says Jakob Larsen, chief analyst and senior officer at BIMCO, a global body representing ship owners.

"This is quite risky since it is done with lights and radar that reason the Oman coast has been less well-served."

Through the Persian Gulf Strait Authority set up by Iran to control the Strait, and permit transit along its coast has been sanctioned

by the U.S., more than 300 non-Iranian vessels have applied for transit permits, Lloyd's List analysts estimate that some 20% of the ships above 40,000 dwt that applied were bound for China, 10% for India, 22% for other parts of Asia, 12% for Europe, 10% for Africa and so on.

The PGSA has said it will prioritize permits to ships with affiliations to nations friendly to it and will dial down U.S. and Israel-linked ships.

"As a general observation, the threat level for ships in the Persian Gulf is currently unchanged. However, the situation is volatile, and the threat may increase with short notice," Mr. Larsen told *The Hindu*.

Despite the uptick in activity, overall trade through the Strait of Hormuz in May fell to its lowest level since the crisis began, likely a result of the U.S. action against Iran-associated ships.

U.S. Customs, while refusing to give details to *The Hindu*, however, pointed to a monthly release that reported that it has "disabled" at least six and redirected more than 120 ships involved in Iranian trade since April.

On June 2, a missile launched from a U.S. aircraft carrier a hole on tanker MT Lejar near Kharg island. This provoked an immediate attack on MRC Barika by Iran.

TVS SCS, ALA JV targets ₹2,000 crore revenue by '21

The Hindu Bureau
MUMBAI

TVS Supply Chain Solutions Ltd (TVS SCS), one of India's largest integrated supply chain firms, announced a joint venture (JV) with ALA Group, an Italian aerospace and defence supply-chain integrator, to tap opportunities in India's fast-growing aerospace and defence sectors.

TVS SCS will hold a 55% stake and ALA the balance in the JV which is expected to emerge as a significant growth driver for TVS SCS with cumulative revenue likely to cross ₹2,000 crore by 2021, TVS SCS said.

TVS SCS and ALA will continue to evaluate opportunities to support aerospace and defence supply chain requirements across global markets.

Domestic airlines to pay more for ATF to tap stabilisation fund

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The effective selling price of aviation turbine fuel (ATF) for India's airlines would be ₹115/litre should they opt for the price stabilisation fund announced by the Government, Rahul Raj, Director, Union Ministry of Civil Aviation told reporters Thursday.

This would be frozen for a period of three years, the stipulated contract period, or until the differential financial support is recovered. After accounting for taxation (VAT and Central Excise) and airport-related levies, the effective price comes to ₹115/litre for India's airlines.

Both domestic and international flights through the benchmark price is ₹106.32/litre.

Maruti Suzuki unveils 'India's first' flex-fuel car

The Hindu Bureau
MUMBAI

Maruti Suzuki India Ltd unveiled 'India's first' flex-fuel car giving flexibility to clients to operate on any blend of ethanol and petrol from E20 to E100.

Maruti said it was introducing the technology in Wagon K which has pioneered alternative fuel vehicles in India, including CNG and LPG. In addition, to a significant reduction in CO₂ emissions, the car can help boost farmers' income, Maruti said.

Suresh Gadgil, chairman of Road Transport and Highways, and India imported a large quantity of crude away from Biofuels and India has an important pathway towards reducing its dependence

New-age fraud: 'trust is being weaponised in the digital era'

The Hindu Bureau
MUMBAI

As a time when AI-generated deepfakes, digital art, cyber-enabled financial frauds and crypto-powered online works have become increasingly sophisticated, combining these next generation of fraud would require a fundamental shift towards advanced forensic technologies, real-time intelligence sharing, and stronger collaboration between regulators, flex-fuel vehicles and law enforcement agencies said experts at the FICC Conference on Next-Gen Fraud in Mumbai on Tuesday.

Prakash Singh, IAS, Principal Secretary, Government of Maharashtra, said cybercrime has evolved into a highly organised and multi-faceted ecosystem



The new online chat from data acquisition to money movement via crypto networks is completed in under 20 minutes.

Those who specialise in data theft and identity theft, deepfake generation and crypto-enabled crypto networks are completing in less than 30 minutes, making traditional investigative approaches increasingly ineffective, fraudsters may already

the said rise of AI, deepfake and digital evidence needed complete shift in probing methodologies.

"Trust is being weaponised in the digital era. With voice cloning, deepfake technologies and fraud as a service platform becoming easily accessible, investigators need integrated forensic platforms, real-time intelligence sharing and new evidentiary frameworks to effectively detect, investigate and prosecute digital crimes," he added.

Govindapalli Ram Mohan Rao, IAS, Market Intelligence Regulation and Supervision Department, SEBI, stated market regulator's efforts to strengthen investor protection and digital trace via technology-driven governance steps in the cornerstone of capital markets.

'India was much more corrupt, less able to react 20 years ago': Thrun

T.G.G. Sharan-Baghavan
MADRAS

Twenty years ago, India was much more corrupt and less able to react as a global marketplace and as a changing right now, Google X co-founder Sebastian Thrun told *The Hindu*. However, he also added India is not as corrupt as either the U.S. or China in terms of Artificial Intelligence capabilities.

"India is going through an incredibly great transformation right now," Mr. Thrun said on the sidelines of the South Summit 2020, co-organised by IR Overseas



Sebastian Thrun

A conjunction of factors point challenges for large countries like India, instead of any single factor, such as education, law, anti-corruption government, and finance.

capital, the ability of the government to empower businesses," Mr. Thrun explained. "And, I see India to be on the correct path right now. I've seen a number of countries better than India."

"But what I also see is that India is not as corrupt as either the U.S. or China at this point in terms of AI. It is competitive for large countries like India, instead of any single factor, such as education, law, anti-corruption government, and finance."

AI's impact on jobs
"On the impact of AI on common lives, he said it

was "amazing to see" many highly specialised areas of work now being done as well or better by AI.

"You'll find repetition and precision to be done by machines even better than by people," he explained.

"The repetition of AI in common lives, he said it

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

India's transition into a village-first economy is no longer restricted to metropolitan cities as daily video consumption on Meta platforms and 94% in rural areas, according to a Meta-commissioned study by IPSOS.

The study, comprising over 1,000 interviews across metro, tier-2 and 3 cities and rural India, found 97% of users watch video content daily, highlighting video content as a highly organised and multi-faceted ecosystem

engagement. Also, the study found Meta had become the primary destination for lifestyle, fitness, and wellness content, culture and influence with 80% of Gen-Z users and 73% of rural users engaging with it every day. The engagement is driven by a mix of content types and 94% in rural areas, according to a Meta-commissioned study by IPSOS.

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U.S. FDA okays Aurobindo rheumatoid arthritis drug

The Hindu Bureau
HYDERABAD

Generic drugmaker Aurobindo Pharma has received U.S. Food and Drug Administration (U.S. FDA) final approval to manufacture and market Tocilizumab tablets, 5 mg and 10 mg.

The product is bioequivalent and therapeutically equivalent to reference list drug Actemra tablets, 5 mg and 10 mg of PF-Prism (U.S. Tocilizumab tablets, 5 mg and 10 mg, have an estimated total size of about \$150 million in the U.S., the company said.

India to drop capital gains tax for foreign investors in govt. bonds

Reuters

MUMBAI

India plans to scrap capital gains tax on foreign portfolio investments in government securities, which could help boost such inflows, a source familiar with the matter said on Thursday.

The South Asian nation is looking to attract foreign capital to counteract pressure on its rupee currency, which has weakened more than 5% since the start of the year, squeezed by higher oil prices and foreign portfolio outflows in equities. The finance ministry did not immediately respond to a *Reuters* email seeking comment.

India's benchmark bond yield eased one basis point to 7.01% in opening trade, although it was not immediately clear when the plan would take effect.

Any tax easing should help flows at the margin, said Madhavi Arora, chief economist at Emkay Global Financial Services.

"It won't be a magic bullet in the current context," she cautioned, but added it could prove positive in the medium term.

Foreign investors are subject to a long-term capital gains tax of 12.5% on listed shares and bonds held longer than 12 months.

A withholding tax of 20% they pay on interest earned in government bonds may also be removed, the source said.

Why in News / चर्चा में क्यों

- **India plans to scrap CGT on FPI investments in government securities**
सरकारी प्रतिभूतियों पर FPI के लिए CGT खत्म करने की योजना

- **Rupee weakened >5% since start of 2026 — oil prices + FPI equity outflows**

2026 से रुपया >5% कमजोर — उच्च तेल + FPI बहिर्वाह

- **Benchmark bond yield eased 1 bps to 7.01% on the news**
खबर से बेंचमार्क बॉन्ड यील्ड 1 बेसिस पॉइंट घटकर 7.01%

- **20% withholding tax on G-Sec interest may also be removed**
G-Sec ब्याज पर 20% विदहोल्डिंग टैक्स भी हटाया जा सकता है

- **Madhavi Arora (Emkay Global): 'not a magic bullet but positive medium term'**

माधवी अरोरा: 'जादू की छड़ी नहीं लेकिन मध्यम अवधि में सकारात्मक'

Key Economic Facts / मुख्य आर्थिक तथ्य

12.5%

LTCG Tax (>12 months)
(to be removed on G-Secs)

20%

Withholding Tax on
G-Sec Interest

7.01%

Benchmark Bond Yield
(eased 1 bps on news)

Jun 2024

India joins
JP Morgan GBI-EM Index

Key Bond Market Concepts / बॉन्ड बाजार अवधारणाएँ:

Term	Definition
Bond Yield	Annual return on bond; INVERSE to bond price — if price ↑, yield ↓
FAR	Fully Accessible Route — unlimited FPI investment in select G-Secs
VGF (different)	Viability Gap Funding — infrastructure project support
CAD	Current Account Deficit — India's imports > exports; needs capital inflows
Basis Point	0.01% (1/100 of 1%) — used to measure yield/interest rate changes

Multi-Subject Connections / बहु-विषय संबंध

History (इतिहास)

1991: BoP crisis → IMF → liberalisation;
1993: FII in equities; 1999: FEMA replaced
FERA; 2013: FII→FPI

Geography (भूगोल)

Global fin. centres: NY, London, Tokyo,
Mumbai (NSE/BSE); India imports oil in USD;
GIFT City, Gujarat = IFSC

Polity (राजव्यवस्था)

Art. 265: no tax without law; Finance Act
(Budget); FEMA 1999; SEBI FPI Regs 2019;
RBI Act 1934

Economy (अर्थव्यवस्था)

LTCG 12.5% + WHT 20% to go; FAR; JP
Morgan GBI-EM Jun 2024; FPI vs FDI; CAD;
Basis Point = 0.01%

Environment (पर्यावरण)

Green Bonds: India's Sovereign Green Bonds
(Jan 2023); Climate finance inflows; FPI in
green bonds boosted

S&T (विज्ञान-प्रौद्योगिकी)

Algorithmic trading: tax changes modelled in
ms; NDS-OM: RBI's G-Sec trading platform;
T+1 settlement (equities)

Statement MCQ + Exam Angles

Statement MCQ:

1. India's G-Secs included in JP Morgan GBI-EM from June 2024.
2. FAR allows unlimited FPI in ALL categories of Indian G-Secs. (Selected/specified G-Secs only)
3. Bond prices and bond yields have an inverse relationship.
4. FPIs currently pay 12.5% LTCG on bonds held >12 months.

Correct Answer: (b) Statements 1, 3 and 4 are correct

Prelims: CGT rates, FAR, JP Morgan, basis point | Mains GS3: Exchange rate management, FPI, CAD financing | Interview: Fiscal trade-off

10 Quick Revision Points / त्वरित पुनरावृत्ति

1. India plans to scrap CGT on FPI investments in G-Secs

2. Rupee weakened >5% since start of 2026 (oil + FPI outflows)

3. LTCG = 12.5% (>12 months); STCG = 20% (≤12 months)

4. Withholding Tax = 20% on G-Sec interest — may be removed

5. JP Morgan GBI-EM: India's G-Secs included JUNE 2024

6. Bond yield INVERSE to price: demand ↑ → price ↑ → yield ↓

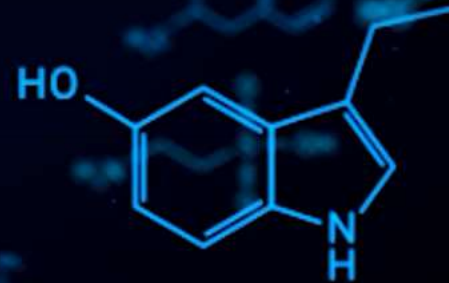
7. FAR (Fully Accessible Route): unlimited FPI in select G-Secs

8. India's benchmark bond yield = 7.01% (eased 1 bps on news)

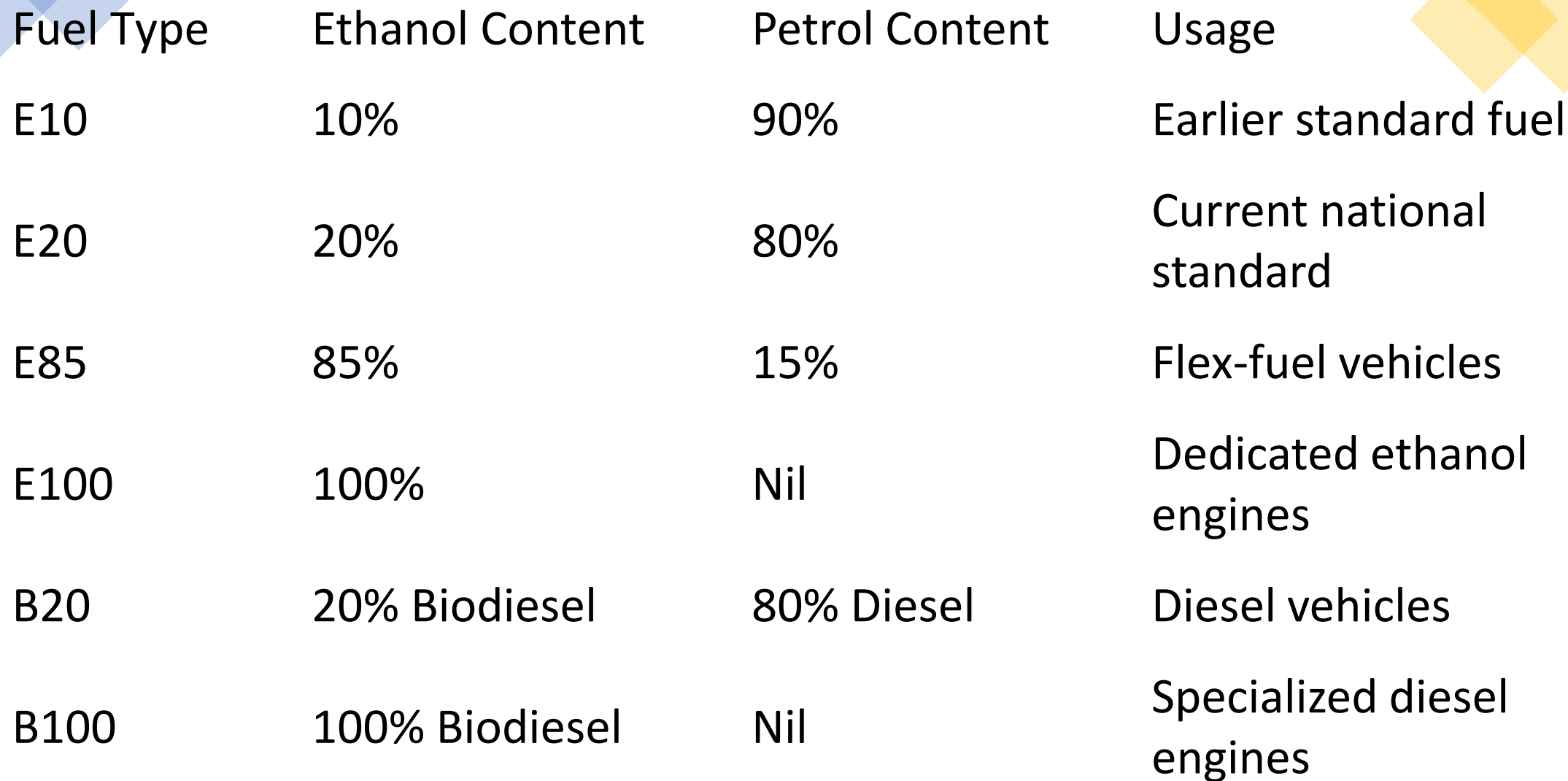
9. Sovereign Green Bonds: India first issued Jan 2023

10. India credit rating: Baa3 (Moody's), BBB- (S&P) — lowest invest-grade

India Expands Ethanol Fuel Network by 2027



Topic	Expansion of Ethanol Fuel Infrastructure
Announcement	500 ethanol retail pumps by end-2026 and 5,000 by end-2027
Objective	Promote ethanol-based transportation fuels
Linked Policy	National Biofuel Policy & Ethanol Blending Programme (EBP)
Current Achievement	India achieved E20 (20% ethanol blending) in 2025
Future Goal	Wider adoption of E20, E85 and E100 fuels
Beneficiaries	Farmers, Sugar Industry, Automobile Industry, Oil Marketing Companies
Key Stakeholders	Ministry of Petroleum & Natural Gas, Ministry of Road Transport & Highways, OMCs



Fuel Type	Ethanol Content	Petrol Content	Usage
E10	10%	90%	Earlier standard fuel
E20	20%	80%	Current national standard
E85	85%	15%	Flex-fuel vehicles
E100	100%	Nil	Dedicated ethanol engines
B20	20% Biodiesel	80% Diesel	Diesel vehicles
B100	100% Biodiesel	Nil	Specialized diesel engines

Flex-Fuel Vehicles (FFVs)

Feature	Details
Definition	Vehicles capable of running on varying ethanol-petrol blends
Fuel Compatibility	E20 to E85 and sometimes E100
Advantage	Consumer can choose available fuel blend
Engine Design	Corrosion-resistant materials and modified fuel systems
Indian Examples	WagonR Flex Fuel, Hero Splendor Plus Flex Fuel, Hero HF Deluxe Flex Fuel
Importance	Essential for large-scale ethanol adoption

Why Flex-Fuel Vehicles Matter?

Benefit	Explanation
Lower Fuel Cost	Ethanol generally cheaper than petrol
Cleaner Combustion	Lower carbon emissions
Reduced Oil Imports	Saves foreign exchange
Supports Farmers	Creates stable demand for agricultural produce

Ethanol Production Sources in India

Feedstock	Source
Sugarcane Molasses	Traditional source
Sugarcane Juice	Direct ethanol production
B-Heavy Molasses	Higher ethanol yield
Damaged Food Grains	Rice, wheat not fit for consumption
Maize	Emerging major feedstock
Agricultural Waste	Second-generation ethanol

Economic Impact

Sector	Impact
Farmers	Additional income source
Sugar Mills	Diversification of revenue
Rural Economy	New investments and employment
Automobile Industry	New vehicle segment growth
Oil Marketing Companies	Infrastructure expansion opportunities

Environmental Impact

Parameter	Petrol	Ethanol
Carbon Emissions	High	Lower
Renewable Source	No	Yes
Biodegradable	No	Yes
Net Carbon Footprint	High	Relatively Low
Air Pollution	More	Less

Contribution to Climate Goals

Target	Contribution of Ethanol
Net Zero by 2070	Supports
Paris Agreement	Supports emission reduction
Green Mobility	Major contributor
Sustainable Development Goals	SDG 7, SDG 12, SDG 13

Challenges

Challenge	Explanation
Water Intensive Crop	Sugarcane requires huge water
Food vs Fuel Debate	Diversion of food crops
Infrastructure Cost	Storage and dispensing systems needed
Vehicle Compatibility	Existing vehicles not fully compatible
Supply Chain Issues	Consistent ethanol availability
Regional Imbalance	Production concentrated in some states

Opportunities

Opportunity	Impact
Rural Industrialization	New ethanol plants
Employment Generation	Direct and indirect jobs
Green Economy	Sustainable growth
Technological Innovation	New engine technologies
Export Potential	Biofuel technology leadership



State

Importance

Uttar Pradesh

Largest producer

Maharashtra

Major sugarcane belt

Karnataka

Significant ethanol production

Bihar

Emerging producer

Gujarat

Biofuel investments increasing



Consider the following statements regarding Ethanol Blending in India:

1. India achieved the E20 ethanol blending target ahead of schedule.
2. E85 fuel contains 85% ethanol and 15% petrol.
3. Flex-fuel vehicles can operate only on E20 fuel.
4. Ethanol blending helps reduce crude oil imports.

Which of the statements given above are correct?

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



- J&K Bank Wins Finacle Gold Award for AI Platform (2026)

Aspect	Details	Exam Significance
News	J&K Bank won Gold Award at Finacle Innovation Awards 2026	Example of AI-led digital transformation in banking
Date	3 June 2026	Current Affairs Fact
Venue	Mumbai	Static Fact
Award Category	Modern Technologies-led Innovation – Data Insights & Analytics Platform	Important Banking Technology Topic
Organizer	Infosys Finacle	Major global banking technology provider
Award Type	Gold Award	Highest category recognition
Theme 2026	"Recomposing Banking: Playbook for the Next Phase of Banking Transformation"	Reflects future of AI-driven banking

Artificial Intelligence in Banking

Area	Application
Loan Approval	AI-based credit scoring
Fraud Detection	Real-time transaction monitoring
Customer Service	Chatbots and virtual assistants
Risk Assessment	Predictive modelling
Investment Advisory	Robo-advisors
Compliance	Automated regulatory reporting
Marketing	Personalized offers

Benefits to Banking Sector

Benefit	Explanation
Faster Decisions	AI processes data rapidly
Lower Costs	Reduced manual work
Better Customer Experience	Personalized banking
Improved Profitability	Better lending decisions

Feature	Details
Founded	1938
Headquarters	Srinagar
Type	Scheduled Commercial Bank
Ownership	Government-backed bank
Area of Operation	Pan-India
Special Focus	Jammu & Kashmir economy



- United States Becomes India's Largest LPG Supplier

Aspect	Details	Significance
News	United States became India's largest LPG supplier in 2026	Major shift in India's energy import strategy
Earlier Dominance	Gulf Countries (Saudi Arabia, UAE, Qatar)	Traditional energy partners
New Leader	United States	Energy diversification
US Share (May 2026)	More than 55% of India's LPG imports	Historic change
LPG Imports from US	666,000 tonnes in May 2026	Record level
Trigger	West Asia tensions and Strait of Hormuz disruptions	Geopolitical impact on energy security
Importance	Strengthens India's energy resilience	Reduces overdependence on Gulf region

What is LPG?

Feature	Details
Full Form	Liquefied Petroleum Gas
Composition	Propane (C ₃ H ₈) and Butane (C ₄ H ₁₀)
Storage	Stored as liquid under pressure
Nature	Clean-burning fossil fuel
Color	Colorless
Odor	Ethyl Mercaptan added for leak detection
Calorific Value	High energy content

Uses of LPG in India

Sector	Usage
Domestic	Cooking fuel
Commercial	Hotels, restaurants
Industrial	Manufacturing processes
Agriculture	Drying and heating applications
Automobile	Auto LPG vehicles

Shift in India's LPG Import Pattern

Parameter	Before 2026	After 2026
Largest Supplier	Gulf Countries	United States
Major Route	Persian Gulf	Atlantic-Pacific routes
Import Dependence	Highly concentrated	Diversified
Risk Level	Higher geopolitical risk	Distributed risk
Energy Security	Moderate	Improved

Why Did This Shift Occur?

Reason	Explanation
West Asia Conflict	Increased instability in the region
Strait of Hormuz Risk	Threat to oil and gas movement
Supply Uncertainty	Gulf exports affected
US Production Boom	Massive shale gas production
Diversification Policy	India reducing single-region dependence

Economic Impact on India

Positive Impact

Explanation

Diversification

Reduces dependency risk

Better Bargaining Power

More supplier options

Energy Security

Stable supply chain

Strategic Flexibility

Multiple sourcing routes

Long-Term Contracts

Better price negotiations

Possible Challenges

Challenge

Explanation

Longer Shipping Distance

Higher freight costs

Currency Exposure

Dollar-based payments

Logistics Complexity

Longer delivery times

Global Price Volatility

Exposure to international markets



Chokepoint



Connects

Strait of Hormuz

Persian Gulf – Gulf of Oman

Strait of Malacca

Indian Ocean – Pacific Ocean

Suez Canal

Mediterranean Sea – Red Sea

Bab-el-Mandeb

Red Sea – Gulf of Aden

Panama Canal

Atlantic – Pacific Ocean



Consider the following statements:

1. LPG mainly consists of propane and butane.
2. Strait of Hormuz connects the Persian Gulf with the Gulf of Oman.
3. In 2026, the United States became India's largest LPG supplier.
4. PM Ujjwala Yojana is implemented by the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas.

Which of the above statements are correct?

Option	Statements
A	1 and 2 only
B	2 and 3 only
C	1, 2 and 3 only
D	1, 2, 3 and 4



- FSSAI Vegan Logo
Mandatory for Food
Products from July 2027



VEGAN

VEGAN LOGO

FSSAI launches a logo for Vegan Foods to help consumers easily identify and differentiate from non-vegan foods.



Green coloured leaf depicts that the ingredient/product is of plant origin

To identify it as a vegan product

To help consumer to identify vegan foods and to avoid confusion with the letter 'V'



Aspect

Details

Exam Relevance

News

FSSAI mandates standardized Vegan Logo on approved vegan food products

Consumer awareness & food regulation

Effective Date

1 July 2027

Important Current Affairs Fact

Regulator

Food Safety and Standards Authority of India

Regulation

Food Safety and Standards (Vegan Foods) Amendment Regulations, 2026

Important Regulatory Development

Notification Date

21 May 2026

Current Affairs Fact

Purpose

Uniform identification of vegan products

Consumer protection

Target Group

Food Business Operators (FBOs)

Compliance requirement



Particular

Full Form

Established

Parent Ministry

Headquarters

Legal Basis

Function

Details

Food Safety and Standards Authority of India
2008

Ministry of Health & Family Welfare

New Delhi

Food Safety and Standards Act, 2006

Food regulation and safety standards in India



Parameter

Vegan Food

Vegetarian Food



Milk

✘ Not Allowed

✔ Allowed

Honey

✘ Not Allowed

✔ Allowed

Butter/Ghee

✘ Not Allowed

✔ Allowed

Cheese/Paneer

✘ Not Allowed

✔ Allowed

Eggs

✘ Not Allowed

✘ Not Allowed

Meat/Fish

✘ Not Allowed

✘ Not Allowed

Animal Testing

Not preferred

Not specifically covered



FSSAI Definition of Vegan Food

Requirement	Description
Animal Ingredients	Not allowed
Animal-derived Additives	Not allowed
Animal-derived Processing Aids	Not allowed
Animal Testing	Not allowed except where legally required
Cross Contamination Control	Mandatory

Official Vegan Logo Features

Feature	Description
Shape	Green square-framed symbol
Symbol	Stylized "V"
Additional Element	Sprouting leaf
Text	"VEGAN" below logo
Color	Green
Purpose	Easy consumer identification

Why Standardized Logo?

Benefit	Explanation
Consumer Awareness	Easy product recognition
Transparency	Clear food choices
Trust Building	Prevents misleading claims
International Compatibility	Aligns with global trends
Regulatory Monitoring	Easier enforcement

Compliance Requirements for Food Business Operators (FBOs)

Requirement	Details
Packaging Update	Mandatory before July 2027
Labeling Standards	Must display approved logo
Production Line Separation	Separate vegan/non-vegan lines preferred
Cleaning Protocols	Required for shared equipment
Documentation	Proof of vegan compliance
Audits	Subject to regulatory inspection

Importance of Vegan Market

Indicator	Trend
Global Demand	Rapidly increasing
Health Awareness	Rising
Environmental Concerns	Major driver
Animal Welfare	Growing consumer concern
Plant-Based Industry	Fast-growing sector

Environmental Significance

Parameter	Animal-Based Food	Vegan Food
Greenhouse Gas Emissions	High	Lower
Water Consumption	High	Lower
Land Requirement	High	Lower
Biodiversity Impact	Greater	Lower
Carbon Footprint	High	Lower

Health Perspective

Potential Advantages	Explanation
Lower Saturated Fat	Reduced cardiovascular risk
High Fiber	Better digestion
Lower Cholesterol	Plant foods contain no cholesterol
Weight Management	Often lower calorie density

Possible Nutritional Concerns

Nutrient	Vegan Sources
Vitamin B12	Fortified foods, supplements
Iron	Lentils, beans
Calcium	Fortified plant milk
Omega-3	Flaxseed, chia seeds
Protein	Soy, legumes, nuts

Global Context

Region	Vegan Labeling Status
European Union	Advanced vegan labeling systems
United Kingdom	Widely used certifications
United States	Voluntary certification
Australia	Growing vegan certification market
India	Standardized FSSAI logo from 2027

Related Food Logos in India

Logo	Meaning
Green Dot	Vegetarian Food
Brown Dot	Non-Vegetarian Food
Vegan Logo	Completely animal-free products
Jaivik Bharat Logo	Organic Products
FSSAI License Number	Regulatory compliance



Aspect

Vegetarian



Vegan

Milk



Butter



Cheese



Honey



Eggs



Meat



Animal-derived Additives

May be allowed

Not allowed




Consider the following statements regarding FSSAI Vegan Regulations:

1. Vegan food must be free from animal-derived ingredients.
2. The standardized vegan logo becomes mandatory from July 2027.
3. Honey is considered vegan under FSSAI regulations.
4. Food Business Operators must prevent cross-contamination between vegan and non-vegan products.

Which of the statements given above are correct?

Option	Statements
A	1 and 2 only
B	1, 2 and 4 only
C	2, 3 and 4 only
D	1, 2, 3 and 4

India Leads in US Unicorn Founders

A unicorn-shaped cookie with a wooden stick, decorated with a rainbow of colorful sprinkles. The cookie is surrounded by confetti on a white surface. The background is a soft, out-of-focus white with scattered colorful sprinkles. In the bottom left corner, there is a small piece of paper with pink and yellow hearts.

Aspect	Details	Exam Relevance
News	India is the largest source country for immigrant founders of US unicorns	Highlights India's global entrepreneurial talent
Indian Unicorn Founders in US	96 founders (as of June 2026)	Important Current Affairs Fact
Total US Unicorns Founded by Immigrants	455 out of 775	Immigrant contribution to innovation
Share of Immigrant-founded Unicorns	59%	Significant economic impact
Research Source	Stanford University Venture Capital Initiative	Frequently cited entrepreneurship study
India's Global Rank	1st among immigrant founder origins	Demonstrates strength of Indian talent pool



Term

Definition

Unicorn

Startup valued at **\$1 billion or more**

Decacorn

Startup valued at **\$10 billion or more**

Hectocorn

Startup valued at **\$100 billion or more**

Founder

Individual who starts a company

Co-Founder

One of multiple founders



Indicator	Data
Indian-origin Unicorn Founders	96
Immigrant-founded US Unicorns	455
Total US Unicorns	775
Share of Immigrant Founders	59%
Share of US Unicorn Founders who are Immigrants	44%
India's Rank	1st

Why Are Indians Leading?

Factor	Explanation
Strong STEM Education	Large engineering and science talent pool
IIT Ecosystem	World-class technical education
English Proficiency	Easier integration into US business ecosystem
Entrepreneurial Culture	Growing startup mindset
Global Exposure	Large Indian diaspora network
Technology Expertise	Strong software and AI skills

Role of IITs

Institution	Unicorn Founders Produced
IIT Delhi	16
IIT Bombay	14
IIT Madras	Significant contributor
IIT Kanpur	Significant contributor
IIT Kharagpur	Significant contributor

Major Sectors Dominated by Indian Founders

Sector	Importance
FinTech	Digital payments, lending
SaaS	Software-as-a-Service
Artificial Intelligence	Emerging growth sector
Cloud Computing	Enterprise solutions
Developer Infrastructure	Backend technology tools
Cybersecurity	Digital protection
HealthTech	Healthcare innovation

Famous Indian-Origin Unicorn Founders

Founder	Company	Sector
Jyoti Bansal	AppDynamics	Software
Lakshmi Srinivasan	Zenefits	HR Tech
Sundar Pichai	Google	Technology Leadership
Satya Nadella	Microsoft	Technology Leadership

Brain Drain vs Brain Gain

Brain Drain Argument

Talent leaves India

Innovation occurs abroad

Skilled workforce migrates

Tax benefits lost

Brain Gain Argument

Global Indian network created

Investments flow back to India

Knowledge transfer increases

Global influence rises

Modern View

Concept

Brain Circulation

Reverse Innovation

Global Entrepreneurship

Meaning

Talent moves globally but contributes to multiple economies

Ideas developed abroad return to India

Founders operate across borders

Consider the following statements regarding unicorn startups:

1. A unicorn is a privately held startup valued at \$1 billion or more.
2. India is the largest source country of immigrant founders of US unicorns.
3. IIT Delhi has produced more unicorn founders than IIT Bombay according to the report.
4. Immigrant founders have no significant role in US unicorn creation.

Which of the above statements are correct?

Option	Statements
A	1 and 2 only
B	1, 2 and 3 only
C	2, 3 and 4 only
D	1, 2, 3 and 4

Word of the day

Droll:

comical in an odd or whimsical manner

Synonyms: funny, eccentric

Usage: *The novel features a droll cast of characters who get themselves into completely absurd situations*

Pronunciation: newsth.live/droll

International Phonetic Alphabet: /drəʊl/

Word of the day

Segue:

the act of changing smoothly from one state or situation to another proceed without interruption

Synonyms: shift, transition

Usage: *The comedian's awkward segue between jokes made the audience laugh even harder.*

Pronunciation: newsth.live/segue

International Phonetic Alphabet: /ˈsegweɪ/



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